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**CREDITS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**





# Executive Summary





# Introduction

The people of Laredo have spoken, and they want public art. They are excited about the transformational benefits that artworks in public spaces can bring to their city.

In late 2019, the City of Laredo took the wise and visionary step of passing Ordinance 2019-O-177. It created the first dedicated funding source for public art in the city's history. Laredo thus joined the ranks of cities and public agencies nationwide that each allocate for public art a percentage of their Capital Improvement Project budgets, each year.

City Ordinance 2019-O-177 also established a municipal Public Art Program -- necessary to administer the funds to create vibrant works of public art for the benefit of all. It also specified an advisory role for the Fine Arts and Culture Commission, an appointed body of arts-savvy citizen volunteers. Yet without a master plan, a Public Art Program has remained an aspirational goal.

With this Laredo Public Art Master Plan (LAMP), the City of Laredo has taken the essential next step. It provides a roadmap for realizing the aspirational goals stated in the City Ordinance. Its adoption by the City Council provides a full set of adopted policies for operating the day-to-day aspects of the Public Art Program. The LAMP focuses on creating a strong foundation. It details the administrative practices required to plan, create, maintain, communicate and conserve a Civic Art Collection. And it lays out a Strategic Action Plan for further developing the program, collection, and community partnerships over time.

The LAMP shines a light on all of the wonderful benefits that public art can bring to Laredo. But it also shines a light on the hard work ahead. Making this plan "real" will require commitment over time. City officials and management need to provide sustained attention and resources. The municipal Public Art Program has a pressing need for the basics -- staff, expertise, and an operating budget. The community's enthusiasm for public art needs to be channeled into an effective organization, or coalition, that can partner with the City to help realize this plan.

Laredo has what it takes. It now has a LAMP. Let there be light!



## Vision, Mission, Goals & Policies

### VISION STATEMENT Laredo Public Art Master Plan

Laredo will become a more attractive place to live, work, do business, and play, through its Public Art Program. The city will build a high-quality public art collection that improves and enlivens the places where people gather, in Downtown and distinct neighborhoods. Public art will contribute to Laredo's character and future as a vibrant city and destination. It will celebrate and reflect our community's creativity, culture, inclusiveness, history, potential, people and natural environment.

### We Envision ...

- ★ **We envision** a powerful public art program that elevates the image of Laredo and its quality of life.
- ★ **We envision** a city where public art is an enduring source of community identity and civic pride.
- ★ **We envision** a city with engaging, beautiful public spaces, where Laredoans and visitors enjoy works of public art that engage and delight them.
- ★ **We envision** the creation of memorable, meaningful works of art that improve the streets, parks, historic districts, civic buildings and other "people places" in our city.
- ★ **We envision** a city with an attractive Downtown and historic districts, that demonstrate the city's commitment to excellence in urban design and placemaking, inclusive of public art.
- ★ **We envision** a city with public artwork that celebrates the rich diversity and unique history of our community, is inclusive of all people, and embodies our collective aspirations for the future.
- ★ **We envision** a city where all arts and culture thrive – and where local and regional visual artists, designers, and artisans are celebrated contributors to the quality of our public realm.
- ★ **We envision** beautiful, walkable streets enhanced by artworks that attract tourism and economic development.
- ★ **We envision** a public art program that celebrates Laredo's Hispanic-American culture, its bilingual and multicultural people, and its special relationship with Mexico as a border city.
- ★ **We envision** a public art program that builds an artistic legacy that will live on for generations to come.

## GUIDING POLICIES

The Vision, Mission, and Goals for public art will be achieved through the following Guiding Policies of the City of Laredo. They are adopted as official City policy through the formal adoption by the City Council of the Laredo Public Art Master Plan.

For the policies on specific City practices, please see Chapter 3. Program Administration and Chapter 4. Collection Management.

- **Policy 1:** Use public art as a tool to build civic pride and enhance the attractiveness of the public realm.
- **Policy 2:** Invest in public art as a tool to implement Viva Laredo and promote a walkable city with a bright future.
- **Policy 3:** Create and maintain a high-quality municipal public art collection on city-owned sites.
- **Policy 4:** Bring the benefits of public art to all people, social groups, and areas of Laredo equitably.
- **Policy 5:** Support and invest in local artists, arts and culture organizations, visual art education, and the creative community in Laredo.
- **Policy 6:** Administer a Public Art Program that adheres to high standards and national best practices.
- **Policy 7:** Commit expanded funding and resources to public art, including cultural arts grants.
- **Policy 8:** Adhere to rigorous ethics and transparency in administering the Public Art Program.





## Listening to the Community

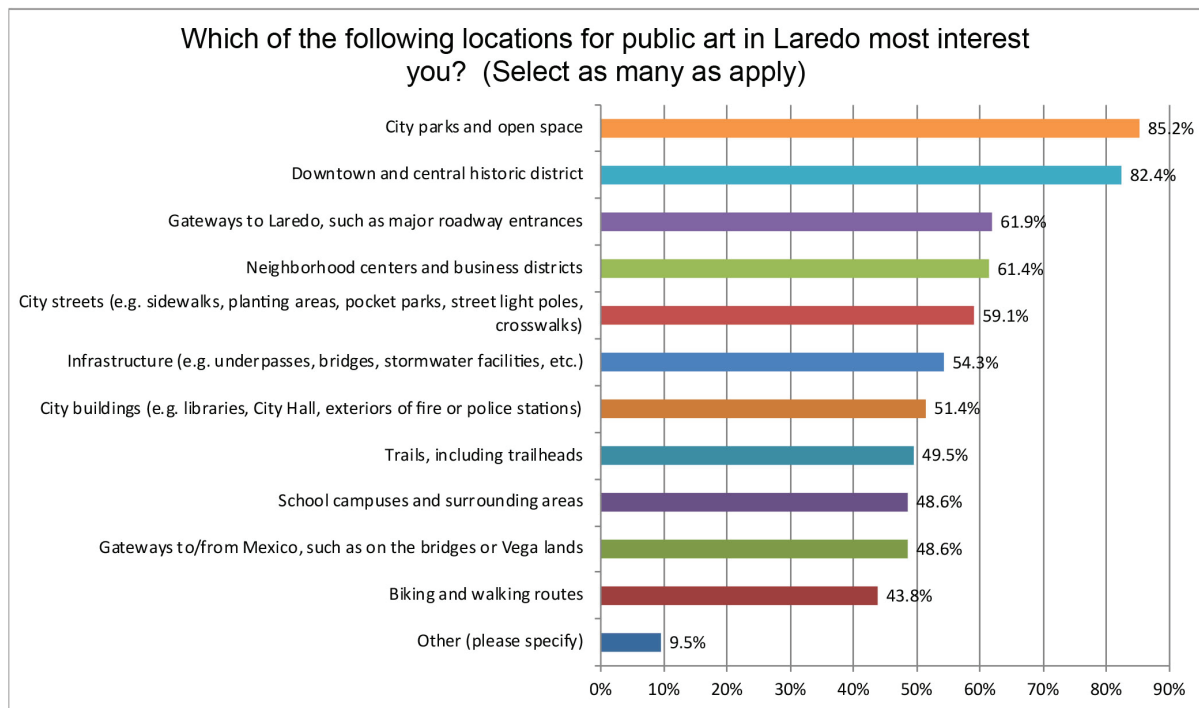
Public art is for everyone. This master plan therefore is grounded in the needs and desires of the Laredo community. Its development involved several forms of outreach. This included a community survey; in-depth interviews and conversations with key cultural stakeholders; monthly presentations and discussion with the Fine Arts and Culture Commission; discussions with city staff across departments; and interviews with elected officials.

People in Laredo want and care about public art. In implementing this plan, the City should continuously refer to both the Viva Laredo Comprehensive Plan and Chapter 2 of this plan. Both capture a depth of community perspectives related to improving the arts, culture, and physical attractiveness of Laredo.

Key themes and priorities that emerged from the community dialogue shaped the vision, goals, and policies detailed in Chapter 1. Please read Chapter 2 in full for a deeper understanding of what the community needs and desires from public art, and its priorities.

### Community Survey: Key Results

- The overwhelming majority of respondents reported positive attitudes towards public art
- Approximately 50% of respondents self-identified as “cultural stakeholders”
- Approximately 30% self-identified as visual artists, whether amateur or professional
- Over 83% of survey respondents want the City to provide public art in the District where they live and/or work; 11% were unsure; 6% did not.
- Over 73% of survey participants consider Downtown, the historic district, and immediately surrounding neighborhoods as a priority for beautification, improvements, and public investment



## Program Administration

As a new municipal program, the Public Art Program of the City of Laredo requires a clear set of administrative policies, practices, and day-to-day duties and procedures that is well-communicated and understood. This need was a primary rationale for developing the Public Art Master Plan.

The lack of policies and a framework for program administration, combined with the lack of any dedicated program staff or budget, has led to general confusion and lack of clarity. This fundamental gap has prevented the City from making progress, despite the funding available. This has been noted by the citizens, who look to the City for a well-run program that is transparent about practices and opportunities, and delivers quality public art.

The content of Chapter 3 provides the essential tools to start-up and administer a quality public art program and evolve towards true program excellence. Its content needs to be well understood by elected officials, city management, and all who desire to see public art advance.

### ESSENTIAL READING

1. Initial Evaluation of Program Status
2. **Ordinance Update:** Recommended Language
3. **Public Art Program Manager:** Job Description
4. Administrative Policies and Guidelines
  - A. Working with The Community
  - B. Working with City Departments
  - C. **Annual Program Budget** and Funding
  - D. **Annual Public Art Plan**
  - E. Annual Report
  - F. Public Information, Marketing-Communications, and Engagement
5. **Artist Selection Process**
6. Cultural Arts Funding and Grants (HOT Funds)
7. Capital Improvement Projects: Process for Integrating Public Art

As the allocation and use of City monies and bond funds is a core administrative practice, and Laredo is eager to make progress on advancing a set of public art projects with these monies, key material from Section 3.7 follows.

... The plan should address the city as a whole.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent



## INTEGRATING PUBLIC ART WITH THE ANNUAL CIP PROGRAM

An initial assessment of the potential for public art, on sites and projects included in the 2021 Bond Program and FY2022 CIP Plan

The “2% for Art” allocation from the annual Capital Improvement Program (CIP) project budget must be spent on permanent artworks. These artworks become part of the City of Laredo Civic Art Collection. The funding source for general government projects is largely bond monies. To conform with rules for use of bond funds, the artworks funded with bond monies should be *on the site of CIP projects within the same bond program*, or otherwise meet CIP requirements.

The chart below summarizes the consultant’s initial assessment — as sites for public art — of projects and sites included in the City of Laredo 2021 Capital Improvement Project program, as approved by the City Council. This assessment considered the following criteria:

### Site/Project Evaluation Criteria

Priority project sites for public art are those that meet multiple criteria on this list, ideally one or more in each category.

#### Site

- Site has high public visibility, suitable for beautification with artwork
- Site is in/near Downtown, or a historic district
- Site has special significance/meaning to the community and visitors
- Project site can have positive impact on economic development or tourism

#### Project

- Project is a significant city building, which can contribute to civic pride
- Project improves a public space or facility that people use daily
- Project improves a major street, streetscape, or park
- Project includes landscaping and/or potential public gathering space

#### Equity

- Project and investment contributes to advancing equity across Districts
- Site is appealing and accessible to diverse people, of all income levels

**Note:** The recommendations indicated in the chart are provisional, based on the very limited information provided to the master plan consultant. Each potential site should be further reviewed and discussed with the relevant City Department. Community representatives can also be consulted for input.

The individual project sites selected to receive a public art installation should be named in the final **FY2022 Annual Public Art Plan**. The project identifications can be general at this stage, e.g. “Public Artwork, Corpus Street Beautification Project.” This process needs to occur annually.



... I would love to see more [public art] and liven up areas that seem drab or in a depressed state.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent

... Public art adds value to our city. It shows the community and guests our value and culture.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent



# FY2022 CIP/Bond Program

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PUBLIC ART

DISTRICT-IDENTIFIED PROJECTS					
<b>PUBLIC ART BUDGET: \$300,000</b> (Allocated in City Budget)					
District	Project	Project Type	Strong Site for Public Art	Recommended for 2021 Art Project	Artwork Types
1	<b>Independence Hills Park</b> Improvements	Park	Yes	Potential	See Park Projects list
	Lomas Park	Park	Yes	Potential	"
2	<b>Villa del Sol Park</b> Shade Structure	Park	Yes	Potential	"
	Turning Lanes	Street	No	No	N/A
	Cigarroa Recreation Center	Building/ Equipment	Yes	Potential	Building façade artwork
	Turning Lane	Street	No	No	
	Shade Structure, Basketball Court, Subdivision	Sports Facility	No	No	Pavement painting
3	Corpus Street Beautification	Street	Yes	<b>YES</b>	See list for Streetscapes
	Canseco House Improvements	Building	Unknown	Unknown	Artwork on fencing, site
	Bat Park Entrance Improvements	Park	Yes	<b>YES</b>	See Park Projects list
	Park Improvements	Park	Unknown	Unknown	"
	Lighting	Equipment	No	No	Light pole banner art
4	Park Improvements	Park	Unknown	Unknown	"
	<b>Clark Street Beautification</b> (includes new median)	<b>Street</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>YES</b>	See list for Streetscapes
	Sidewalks	Sidewalk	Unknown	Unknown	Sidewalk poetry
5	Turning Lanes	Street	No	No	N/A
	<b>Heritage Park</b> (new park, walking trails)	Park	Yes	<b>YES</b>	Park Entrance Structure



District	Project	Project Type	Strong Site for Public Art	Recommended for 2021 Art Project	Artwork Types
6	Intersection Improvements	Street	Unknown	Potential	Traffic signal control cabinet (Mini Murals)
	North Central Park Improvements	Park	Yes	<b>YES</b>	See Park Projects list
7	Wolf Creek	Park/ Environmnt	Unknown	Unknown	“
	<b>Belmont/Hillside Park Improvements</b>	Park	Yes	Potential	“
	Neighborhood Improvements	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
	<b>Father McNaboe Park / Trail Improvements</b> (includes restrooms) and walking trail	Park / Building	Yes	<b>YES</b>	Restroom façade, other
	<b>Muller Park Improvements</b> (includes restrooms)	Park / Building	Yes	<b>YES</b>	Restroom façade, other
8	Plaza and Park Improvements	Park	Yes	<b>YES</b>	See Park Projects list
	Sidewalk	Street/ Sidewalk	Unknown	Potential	Sidewalk poetry
	<b>Downtown Pedestrian Street, Security and Lighting</b>	Street	Yes	<b>YES</b>	Streetscape, llght pole banner art
<b>CITYWIDE PROJECTS</b>					
<b>2% of Project Budgets Below</b> (Not yet allocated)					
ALL	<b>New Traffic Signals</b> (includes traffic signal control cabinets)	Street	Yes	<b>Potential</b>	Traffic signal control cabinet (Mini Murals)
	<b>Street Improvements – Right turn lanes</b>	Street	No	No	N/A
	Building Department Annex	Building	No	No	Warehouse façade painting
	Animal Control Facility Expansion	Building	Yes	<b>YES</b>	Façade/entry, images of pets
	Fire Department Fleet	Fleet	No	No	N/A
	<b>Public Art Program</b> (Alternate priority sites)	Public Artwork	Yes	<b>YES</b>	ALL

## Collection Management

As each municipal public art project is completed, on city-owned property, it becomes a part of the Civic Art Collection of the City of Laredo. The City then has a duty to inventory, maintain, and conserve the art -- and keep it in the eye and awareness of the public.

A public art collection is a valuable City asset, paid for with taxpayer dollars, and provided for the benefit of the whole community. It requires the same attention to planning, quality assurance, durable materials, inventory management, maintenance and conservation as other city assets such as streets, library collections, and equipment.

Chapter 4 contains a detailed set of city policies for carrying out all of these duties. (See the Table of Contents for the list of individual policies). It also includes an assessment and inventory of the current City of Laredo Public Art Collection. (The inventory document is included in the Appendix.) The work for this plan included assembling an inventory of the artworks already in the Civic Art Collection. City staff have some additional work to do, to complete the inventory database. Please see the inventory document in the Appendix.

Finally, it provides recommendations for collection management into the future. Collection management responsibilities will require staff, public art expertise, a budget and other resources, and periodic evaluations and actions by a professional curator/conservator.





## 10-Year Strategic Plan: Public Art

The Viva Laredo Comprehensive Plan serves as a foundational roadmap for the LAMP. In planning for the ongoing growth of the Civic Art Collection, it is important to envision and plan for the future -- as well as attending to day-to-day needs.

Thinking long-term is necessary to assemble partners, including other public agencies. For Laredo to develop the most iconic, exciting installations, it needs to plan ahead. These “signature” projects typically require partners and multiple funding sources, assembled over a period of years.

Looking five years out is critical for integrating artworks into the Capital Improvement Program for the City, and its five-year forecasts and lists of potential projects. Below are the key sections of the LAMP that discuss these opportunities. They merit thoughtful discussion now by community members, their elected officials, and city staff.

... place art where people actually hang out.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent

... It's got to contribute to the art world as a whole. Let the artist speak through art, and not just about Laredo ... We all love Laredo and downtown, let's help it shine with the right kind of art force behind it. It is possible and I can see in the future having locally run businesses that cater to artists with lots of art on the walls, a space where Laredo and Border life art can truly be part of the conversation. Si se puede, we just have to use our imagination a bit more.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent

... Our city needs more cultural education

— Anonymous Survey Respondent

## Strategic Action Steps: Phase One

### TOP PRIORITY TASKS: YEAR 1

#### Laredo Public Art Master Plan Implementation

The City of Laredo should initially focus its resources and energies on establishing an adequately staffed and resourced Public Art Program, and standard fiscal practices. The most important Strategic Actions are listed below. (From Chapter 5. 10-Year Strategic Plan.)

#### Establish A Public Art Program

- **Fill the position of Public Art Program Manager — a critical hire to allow the implementation of this plan.**
- **Provide a Public Art Program budget.** Immediately available funding sources include the permitted 15% of the Public Art allocation from the CIP Budget, and Hotel Occupancy Tax monies.
- Obtain contract assistance with program start-up and initial LAMP implementation, from professional consultant/vendor with public art expertise
- Adopt the Annual Public Art Plan FY22 (by City Council vote) and begin implementation.
- Initiate the projects contained in that plan, funded with the \$300,000 FY22 public art budget, following the policies and procedures contained in this Master Plan. This includes criteria-based project and site selection processes.
- Expend the full budget for public art from the prior fiscal year, on permanent public art projects, in accordance with this plan. The Public Art Program or its consultants should assume project management responsibilities for all funded but unfinished projects, to ensure they follow standard policies and procedures and are completed within the current fiscal year.
- **Update City Ordinance 2019-O-177**, which established a Public Art Program and the 2% for Art CIP allocation to be consistent with this master plan
- Provide training in public art best practices, and in the policies of this Master Plan, to all involved City staff and officials, and key community partners.
- Establish and follow **clear and consistent artist selection processes**, following the policies, criteria, and procedures in this Master Plan
- Communicate and follow clear and consistent roles and responsibilities for city staff, the Fine Arts and Culture Commission, and elected officials
- Establish initial resources and communications as required for public information, education, and community partnering and engagement related to public art.



## Fiscal and CIP Program Integration

- Integrate the Public Art Program with the Capital Improvement Program, including training for all city staff and contractors involved
- Establish the citywide Public Art Fund, as well as separate public art funds within the budget of each CIP Project
- Establish and follow a standard process for identifying which CIP projects will include artwork onsite (vs. Transferring art funds to the citywide Public Art Fund)
- Establish and follow clear and consistent fiscal practices, for the “2% for Art” CIP funds

## Focus Areas: Years 1 & 2

- Engage an assistant, consultant, or intern to handle the extensive Program public information, public engagement, and marketing-communications duties
- Engage and fund at least one nonprofit arts organization to advance public art in Laredo, and help implement this plan. The funding could be provided through a Cultural Arts Grant program. (Note: If Laredo Center for the Arts is selected, it will require significantly more City funding, for the staff and resources necessary for this work.)
- Officially allocate 15% of Hotel Occupancy Tax monies to arts and culture initiatives that support tourism. With a portion of these funds, create a Cultural Arts Grant program, to provide grants to artists and community organizations. Specify that some grants are available for public art projects and/or related community education and programs.
- Research, apply for, and obtain at least one major grant or funding partner for public art projects, such as a federal or major philanthropic foundation grant.
- Identify at least one Foundation or other philanthropic entity in Laredo, that can commit to create and fund at least one significant public art project
- Begin community dialogue and planning for a Cultural Arts Master Plan, inclusive of all of the performing and literary arts, music, and the ecosystem of resources that will allow creatives and arts nonprofits to thrive in Laredo, including physical spaces.

For additional recommended actions over time, please see Chapter 5. 10-year Strategic Plan.



## 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan FY 2022-2026

### Recommendations for Maximizing Opportunities for Public Art

All CIP Projects for which the city provides funds, in whole or in part, are subject by City Ordinance to the “2% for Art” allocation. Therefore, all types of CIP projects should be included in the Public Art Program, even if some monies come from other sources, if any city funds are expended on them. Many project types appear to be missing from the FY2022 allocation.

The analysis below of the adopted 5-Year CIP Program for FY 2022-2026 considers all project categories and the public art opportunities that they offer. To date, the City has not included all eligible CIP types in the annual “2% for Art” allocation for public art .

In particular, Airport building projects, CDBG projects, and many transportation infrastructure projects can be greatly enhanced by public art, and offer excellent opportunities to beautify Laredo and add to its attractiveness for both residents and visitors.

The diversity of CIP project types offer many opportunities. The City should actively seek co-funding from partner agencies. It can elect to apply the 2% allocation to CDBG monies and developer contributions, unless barred by law. Some sources may be subject to limitation for the use of public art, but most *allow permanent public art installations created as an integral part of the facility during its planning, design and construction.*

Please see the 10-Year Strategic Plan for additional detail. The consultant also has provided to City staff a color-coded and annotated copy of the adopted 5-Year CIP plan document.





## CIP Monies Expensed by Category Strong Potential for Public Art

**Recommendation:** The City should pursue all opportunities, in all project categories.

### General Government (\$10,600,000)

Bond monies will finance projects throughout the City, including \$1M identified by Council District. *These are the projects included in the FY22 \$300,000 public art allocation, above.*

### Transportation (\$225,859,340)

*Not included in the FY22 public art allocation, unless noted.*

#### Airport (\$70,004,723)

Public art opportunities: Incorporate iconic public art into the terminal expansion and renovation project; future new headquarter offices and training facilities, Department of Homeland Security facilities. At a minimum, for portion funded by the City of Laredo: *"2% for Art" allocation required.*

#### Bridge (\$10,000,000)

Bridge Expansion Project. **Public art opportunities:** Painting/Mural on bridge, e.g. an iconic "Welcome to Laredo" message and imagery. For portion funded by the City of Laredo: *"2% for Art" allocation required.*

#### Streets (\$37,058,913)

**Public art opportunities:** Painting/murals or illumination art on the infrastructure for major arterial roads. Permanent art should be financed with 2% of city bond monies. For portion funded by the City of Laredo: *"2% for Art" allocation required.*

Confer with TxDOT to determine if up to 1% (which the State allows for public art) may be allocated from its monies. More temporary installations may be funded with developer contributions, etc. Also applies to General Government monies (\$4,000,000) for arterial roads. *The General Government monies were included in the FY2022 \$300,000 allocation.*

#### Traffic (\$3,550,000)

**Public art opportunities:** Original artwork painted on traffic signal control boxes. While these may be considered equipment, they could meet the standard as permanent structures installed in streets. The bond monies for traffic appear to be included in the FY22 \$300,000 allocation.

... To provide artistic opportunities to local artists  
and develop a sense of culture in our community.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent

**Transit** (\$15,525,380)

**Opportunity:** The FTA encourages, and sometimes requires, public art included in the design and construction of bus shelters, stations, and mobility/transfer centers. All funded transit projects should be included in the public art program.

For portion funded by the City of Laredo: *“2% for Art” allocation required.*

**TxDOT** (\$85,720,324)

Public art opportunities: Painting/murals or illumination art at highway “gateway” entrances to Laredo, and on other infrastructure. Confer with the agency and Regional Mobility Authority to determine if up to 1% of these State funds may be allocated for permanent public art that is fully integrated into the projects. *Any monies contributed by the City of Laredo are subject to the 2% allocation.*

**Public Utilities** (\$137,277,630)**Wastewater** (\$53,552,630)

The 2% for Art allocation applies to all above-ground structures and improvements financed through City bonds; the City may also elect to include developer contributions. Does NOT apply to below-grade improvements.

**Water** (\$83,725,000)

The 2% for Art allocation applies to all above-ground structures financed through City bonds. The City may elect to include system revenues and developer contributions. **Public art opportunities:** Iconic, permanent murals and artwork on visible portions of projects such as the 8MG Booster Station, storage tank at Unitec, etc. *“2% for Art” allocation required.*

**Cultural & Recreation** (\$41,750,000)**Parks** (\$41,750,000)

**Public art opportunities:** Parks are the #1 priority identified by citizens of Laredo as their desired sites for public art. Note: The requirement to allocate 2% for art applies to ALL park projects. This includes the Water Park & Sports Complex. *The latter major project needs to be included in the Public Art Program. A “2% for Art” allocation is required.*

... My vision is that we will have an active art scene because of our murals — that cultivates innovation and unique Laredoisms that create an inviting atmosphere.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent



**Public Works** (\$4,150,204)**Environmental Services** (\$850,000)

**Public art opportunity:** Artwork could be incorporated as trailhead entrance features for the trail, and along the Rio Grande Vega. Confer with TxDOT on any restrictions on the use of its monies, or potential matching funds for this purpose.

**Solid Waste** (\$3,250,204)

Financed through bonds. *Allocation does not apply to equipment.*

**Drainage** (\$50,000)

**Public art opportunity:** Installation incorporated into site design for recreational pond in North Central Park. *"2% for Art" allocation required.*

**General Government** (\$15,211,563)**Community Development** (\$1,050,000)

CDBG program allows public art as a use of its monies. Allocation equally across Council Districts provides built-in geographic equity. **Public art opportunity:** Qualifying project types include new sidewalks, park improvements, and new bike lanes. *Not included in FY2022 Public Art Allocation. Recommend adding this entire category annually.*

**Fire** (\$3,561,563)

**Public art opportunity:** Exterior artwork for new building, Fire Pumper and Ambulance Unit, and neighborhood fire stations. *"2% for Art" allocation required.*







# Chapter 1. Vision, Mission, Goals & Policies



## Introduction

Public art is for everyone! The following set of guideposts were developed with input from the Laredo community, key cultural stakeholders, city staff, and elected officials. These inspiring principles can be returned to repeatedly over the years, as the community and city government work together to expand the presence and benefits of public art in Laredo.

Public art offers a powerful tool for realizing the Viva Laredo Comprehensive Plan for the City of Laredo. As a public investment in the built environment, the city's public art collection and program should be guided by the broad goals of the comprehensive plan.

### **VISION: Viva Laredo Comprehensive Plan**

- ★ Make the downtown great
- ★ Create attractive, walkable destinations
- ★ Complete the streets
- ★ Plan new and improved spaces
- ★ Create a prosperous and affordable city

## 1.1 Vision for Public Art

### VISION STATEMENT

#### Laredo Public Art Master Plan

Laredo will become a more attractive place to live, work, do business, and play, through its Public Art Program. The city will build a high-quality public art collection that improves and enlivens the places where people gather, in Downtown and distinct neighborhoods. Public art will contribute to Laredo's character and future as a vibrant city and destination. It will celebrate and reflect our community's creativity, culture, inclusiveness, history, potential, people and natural environment.

... In downtown and historic districts, have outside murals on all buildings to bring people downtown.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent

## 1.2 Mission of the City Program

### MISSION STATEMENT

#### City of Laredo Public Art Program

Our program mission is to enhance our community's attractiveness; grow and capitalize on our arts and culture sector; create opportunities for local artists; and build a collection of high-quality public art.

We encourage community engagement and dialogue. We encourage creativity, curiosity and contemplation. We produce high-quality public art by adhering to professional best practices that are sustainable, transparent, and equitable. We contribute to visual art education in Laredo.

### CORE PRACTICES

To achieve its mission over time, the City program and its partners and contractors will adhere to the following professional standards.

- We will proactively build community knowledge, understanding and trust. This will be achieved through excellence in public information, fiscal transparency, community engagement, ongoing communications, and education.
- For each project, the City will actively communicate at each stage of public art project development, funding, and artist selection.
- The City will seek out and utilize the expertise of public and visual art professionals and external organizations. Aesthetic decisions will be made by qualified panels.
- A simple, streamlined process will be adopted for the funding, commissioning, and delivery of public art projects.
- The City will exemplify best practices in program and collection management. It will foster creativity, innovation, and artistic excellence.
- The City will commission qualified artists for projects and will pay them a living wage for their work. The selected artists will represent a diverse variety of styles, mediums, creative approaches, backgrounds, and lived experience.
- The City will provide national-quality public art training to its staff, key partners, local artists, capital improvement project teams, and the creative community.
- Rigorous program administration and fiscal management practices will ensure that city funds are wisely invested in high-quality public artworks.
- In addition to building its own collection, the City will encourage, support, and incentivize the creation of public art by the private sector, other organizations, and its agency partners.
- The City will actively engage with local schools, the college, and the university to expand opportunities for visual art education through public art.
- By adhering to excellence, and a commitment to equity, we will build broad support and trust for the Laredo Public Art Program.
- We will seek to continuously learn, gain expertise, and improve as the program matures over time.



### Key Tasks: Public Art Master Plan Implementation

- Establish a City Public Art Program that is empowered to implement the Laredo Public Art Master Plan. Provide the professional staff, budget, and resources required for success.
- Empower the Fine Arts and Culture Commission with clear duties and powers in implementing this plan. At least bi-annually, take action to continuously improve its capacity, effectiveness, structure, and role.
- Develop a staffing plan and budget that will grow over time, sufficient for the incremental implementation of the 10 Year Strategic Plan contained in this master plan.
- Embrace opportunities to engage qualified visual arts professionals, public art consultants, and community visual art nonprofit organizations to assist in administering the Public Art Program.
- Create a program that actively supports, funds and encourages the creation of quality public art by local leaders, nonprofits and the private and philanthropic sectors.
- Continue to develop long-term funding options and resources for public art, to ensure implementation of the 10-Year Strategic Plan.

## 1.3 Program Goals

Specific goals will guide community and municipal efforts to realize the Public Art Vision over time.

- Public art will help to bring people together, enhance neighborhoods, and advance community development.
- The City will commission diverse and artistically excellent artworks, including work in contemporary styles.
- Artwork will be sited in meaningful and accessible places, where the residents and visitors can most readily enjoy them.
- The City's public art collection will be strongly shaped by the desires and character of the community.
- The City will encourage others to contribute to public art in Laredo. It will collaborate with partners, institutions, and funders to develop and co-fund iconic artwork in Downtown and other major gathering places, to enhance them as destinations.
- The Public Art Program will support and grow capacity within the local artist community. It will celebrate, highlight, and grow the creative talents of artists in Laredo and regionally.
- Permanent public artworks will be funded and installed as part of the City's capital improvement program, through its "Percent for Art" funding program.
- The City will promote public art as part of the "branding" of Laredo as a cultural tourism destination. It will actively integrate art into the architecture, landscape, and story of Laredo.

... I want our city to grow and become a place that people will remember as beautiful and holding so much potential.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent

## 1.4 Guiding Principles

The Vision, Mission, and Goals for public art will be achieved through the following Guiding Policies of the City of Laredo. They are adopted as official City policy through the formal adoption by the City Council of the Laredo Public Art Master Plan.

For the policies on specific City practices, please see Chapter 3. Program Administration and Chapter 4. Collection Management.

- **Policy 1:** Use public art as a tool to build civic pride and enhance the attractiveness of the public realm.
- **Policy 2:** Invest in public art as a tool to implement Viva Laredo and promote a walkable city with a bright future.
- **Policy 3:** Create and maintain a high-quality municipal public art collection on city-owned sites.
- **Policy 4:** Bring the benefits of public art to all people, social groups, and areas of Laredo equitably.
- **Policy 5:** Support and invest in local artists, arts and culture organizations, visual art education, and the creative community in Laredo.
- **Policy 6:** Administer a Public Art Program that adheres to high standards and national best practices.
- **Policy 7:** Commit expanded funding and resources to public art, including cultural arts grants.
- **Policy 8:** Adhere to rigorous ethics and transparency in administering the Public Art Program.

... That it will represent our culture, the history of Laredo and the people of Laredo.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent

... For art to mirror who we are, for our culture to be reflected in our public art, for citizens to feel pride in our shared history.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent

## About the Cultural Arts

During discussion of this plan, people across Laredo raised ideas, desires, needs and concerns about all the arts in Laredo. These include music, the performing arts, the literary arts, and other “creative sector” community assets. The scope of the LAMP is limited to visual public art.

It is therefore recommended that the City of Laredo develop a Cultural Arts Plan. It should develop a Cultural Arts Department, or Division, with staff and resources devoted to this area. Typically, this is housed within Economic Development or a department that combines city planning and civic betterment.

The discussion of Cultural Arts Grants in this plan is a first step towards a true Cultural Arts Program, which could house an Art in Public Places program in the future.





## Chapter 2. Listening to the Community





## Introduction

Public art is for the people! Listening to the community is essential and a backbone of this master plan. The comments shared in this chapter express what people care about, in their own voices.

In order to understand the needs, priorities, and desires of residents, cultural stakeholders, and various groups within the City, the consultants and staff invited everyone to participate. In total, nearly 350 Laredoans participated in the planning process and shaped the content of this plan.

## Key Community Engagement Activities

- Public Art Community Survey (provided online in English and Spanish (see following section 2.1)
- Interviews with Key Cultural Stakeholders (see following section 2.2)
- Fine Arts and Culture Commission: Monthly briefings, discussions (public meetings; see following section 2.3)
- Interviews with Mayor and Council Members (see following section 2.4)

A strong consensus emerged from the community, on the top community priorities listed below. Please see the APPENDIX for additional detail on the survey results.

Community involvement will continue to be essential as the Public Art Program progresses. Please also see Section 2.5, Ongoing Community Dialogue.

## TOP COMMUNITY DESIRES AND NEEDS

These concerns and priorities expressed by the community should steer public art decision-making and investments in Laredo -- today and well into the future.

## General Principles: Public Art

1. People who have been involved with public art to date expressed a common frustration with the City's lack of professional, well-administered public art program. They called upon the City to provide one. They want to understand and hear about how decisions are made.
2. The cultural community advocated strongly that public art opportunities -- and the selection process for artists, artworks, and sites -- should be actively communicated, transparent, fair, equitable, and based on objective criteria. There is widespread dissatisfaction with processes to date.
3. Laredoans want some public art opportunities to be open only to local or regional artists; but they also want to bring high-quality artwork to Laredo by talented national and international artists.
4. Public art commissioned by the City for its Civic Art Collection should be the work of professional artists, not children or amateurs.
5. Citizens want the City to allocate ongoing funding for public art, related arts education and programming activities, and care of the public art collection.

6. The City needs to actively build trust with the community, by continuing to engage people with each public art project, distributing public art investments fairly, creating high-quality public artwork, and demonstrating over time that it has a well-run public art program.

## Sites for Public Art

7. People want to see public art in the places they visit regularly, such as neighborhood parks. They want it to be sited equitably throughout Laredo -- but they also agree that adding artwork in the Downtown and central city is especially important.
8. Site public artwork where people gather -- and create more appealing gathering spaces with public art. Use public art to create "people places" that enhance daily life and draw people out to visit local restaurants and businesses, creating both a social benefit and an economic benefit.
9. Citywide, the top-ranked sites were city parks and open space; downtown and central historic district; gateways to Laredo, such as major roadway entrances; and neighborhood centers and business districts.
10. Nearly everyone interviewed cited "the 4 blocks" at International Bridge #2 as a priority site for public art.
11. In Downtown, the top-ranked sites were anywhere people walk, eat and drink, shop, and gather; San Agustin Plaza; and the Rio Grande riverfront.

## Artwork Types and Themes

12. Tell Laredo's story. Elevate Laredo by honoring the past and expressing potential for the future.
13. People are enthusiastic about the idea of public art that celebrates their heritage and cultural traditions. They see public art as a potential source of civic pride, and are hungry for it.

... A vibrant community for living artists and a deep connection with the past.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent

... I would like for [public art to help] our children to feel proud of our city.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent



14. Artwork themes and imagery must respect, reflect, and honor the diversity of people in Laredo -- and in the world. People want public art in a diversity of styles, subject matter, and mediums.
15. As international trade is the main economic driver of the city, public art should reflect the bi-cultural identity of Laredo as a border town.
16. Artwork types that citizens most favored are outdoor artworks in parks, large-scale murals, and art-enhanced spaces for performing arts and music. The least desirable artwork types were memorials and objects for contemplation, and traditional statues, e.g. historic figures.

## Art and Culture in Laredo

People embraced this community input opportunity to share broader thoughts about arts and culture in Laredo, beyond public art.

17. People want the City to invest in Arts and Culture. They feel that the city government has ignored it for too long, at the expense of Laredo and its competitiveness. They want the city to help create or fund (e.g. through grants) a wealth of arts programs and opportunities for residents and visitors. This includes music and the performing arts, literature, and fine and traditional crafts.
18. Laredoans want the City government to actively help develop or incentivize facilities and spaces where “art happens.” A strong need was expressed for affordable art studios, spaces for cultural groups, outdoor venues, art installations near schools, and adaptive reuse of older buildings for cultural uses.
19. A common refrain is that the Laredo Center for the Arts is underfunded, and not the thriving central civic center its name suggests. People want the City to invest more in making it a great art space.
20. People are concerned about the weakness of visual arts education in public schools. Elementary students have no art class. Middle school students must choose between visual arts or music. Many people suggested that the City develop a Cultural Arts Program that partners with the schools.
21. The City should provide supportive opportunities through public art, cultural arts, and economic development programs for Laredo artists to earn income and sustain their livelihoods. Talented artists leave Laredo for greener pastures, because opportunities are lean in Laredo.
22. Residents repeatedly cited the lack of a central information source where people can reliably find out about cultural arts activities and events. They expressed a need for a website with a calendar, to which organizations can post their events. A weekly e-mailer or column in the newspaper also could help. They’d like the City to help fund community group(s) to provide an arts and culture calendar and communicate arts opportunities and events in various neighborhoods.
23. The City should incentivize private developers to incorporate public art into new developments.

## 2.1 Community Survey: Public Art in Laredo

In developing this plan, a community survey was conducted to gather broad-based input about public art. It was open to all Laredo residents and offered in both English and Spanish. Overall, the survey responses documented strong community desires and support for public art.

Topics the survey covered included: Public Art Program Vision and Goals, Project Types, Locations/Sites, Potential Partners, and Volunteer Opportunities. The survey included open-ended questions that provided opportunities for write-in comments (representative examples are quoted in this master plan). It also collected demographic information and the Council District of the respondent - to help ensure that input came from diverse residents.

In all, 289 people participated and shared more than 1,000 written comments.

City of Laredo staff and officials were responsible for promoting and distributing the survey. It was promoted through the City e-newsletter, social media posts, and media interviews.

### What People Appreciate About Public Art in Laredo Today

Size of words indicates how often they were used.

public Jovita Idar Mural spaces Outlet Shoppes love see Rialto Hotel reflect look Clark  
parrots favorite outlet buildings Na public art airport work One favorite  
colorful street pieces people love located downtown place  
North Central Park nature art see murals wall  
Laredo also city Abrazo area history one need made N  
parks historic artwork culture artists sculpture mural downtown Azteca  
Abrazo mural different local building downtown S Clark Blvd local artists dejes de Soñar  
paintings

### Key Findings

Top findings are summarized in this section. Please see **Appendix A** for a complete summary of survey responses. All individual comments received were provided to city staff.

**Demographics.** Survey participants reported a wide diversity of age and income levels. Over 90% were of Hispanic or Latino origin, which corresponds to the city as a whole. Over 90% had some college-level education. No one used the Spanish-language survey provided.

## Survey Section 1: About You

- The overwhelming majority of respondents reported positive attitudes towards public art
- Approximately 50% of respondents self-identified as “cultural stakeholders”
- Approximately 30% self-identified as visual artists, whether amateur or professional
- Over 83% of survey respondents want the City to provide public art in the District where they live and/or work; 11% were unsure; 6% did not.
- Over 73% of survey participants consider Downtown, the historic district, and immediately surrounding neighborhoods as a priority for beautification, improvements, and public investment

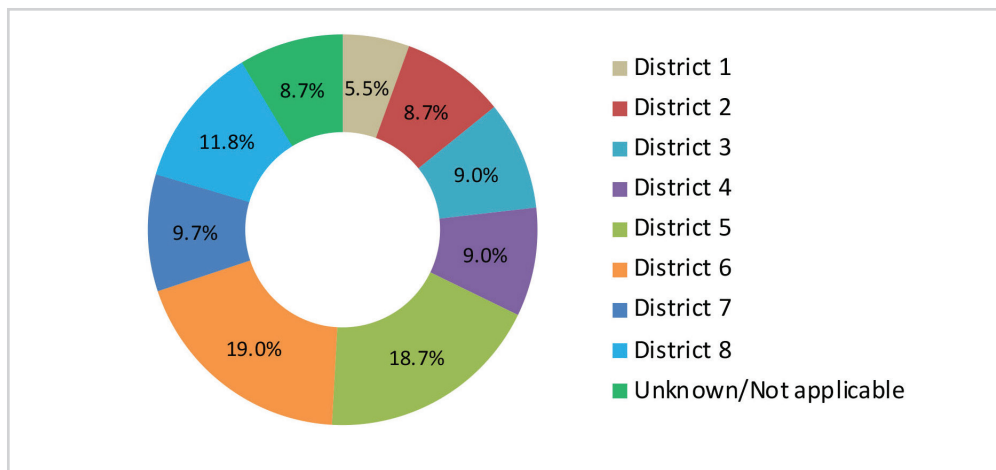
### Volunteer Involvement:

- 70% of respondents would like to vote on the selection of artists, themes, or artwork (e.g. through an online survey)
- 60% would be willing to help promote public art and get the word out about opportunities

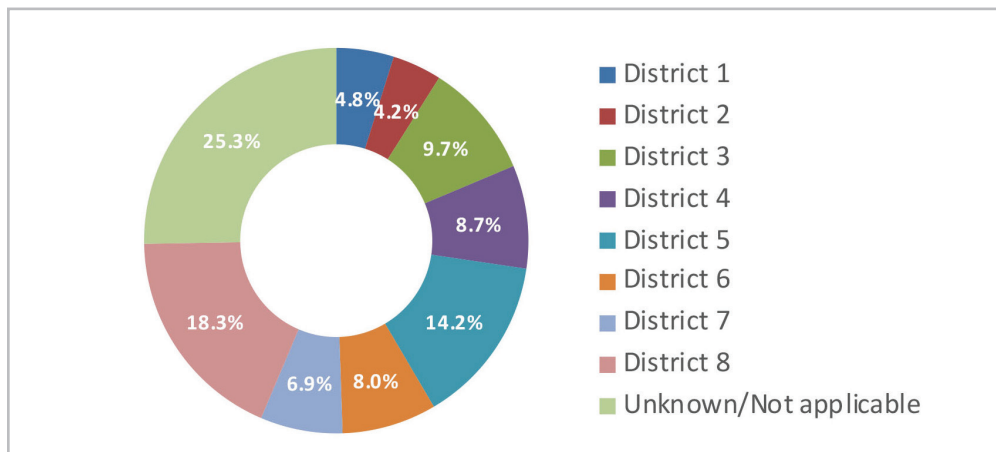
### Geographic Diversity

- Residents from all Council Districts were represented, reasonably equally.

### Q5. Which Laredo City Council District do you live in?



### Q6. Which Laredo City Council District do you work or attend school in?





## Survey Section 2: Public Art Program Vision and Goals

- 87% of survey respondents agreed with the draft Vision Statement for the City's Public Art Program

### Q26. What is your vision for public art in Laredo?

The word cloud below indicates how often top words were used in people's comments.

#### Community Goals

Below is the ranking of the community's top five goals for public art.

- Encourage tourism that helps the economy
- Provide for the citizens of Laredo high quality, publicly accessible works of art, which contribute to the urban landscape and symbolize the City's sense of place.
- Increase job opportunities in the arts
- Encourage creation of public art by other groups, in addition to the City
- Integrate artwork into City buildings and facilities

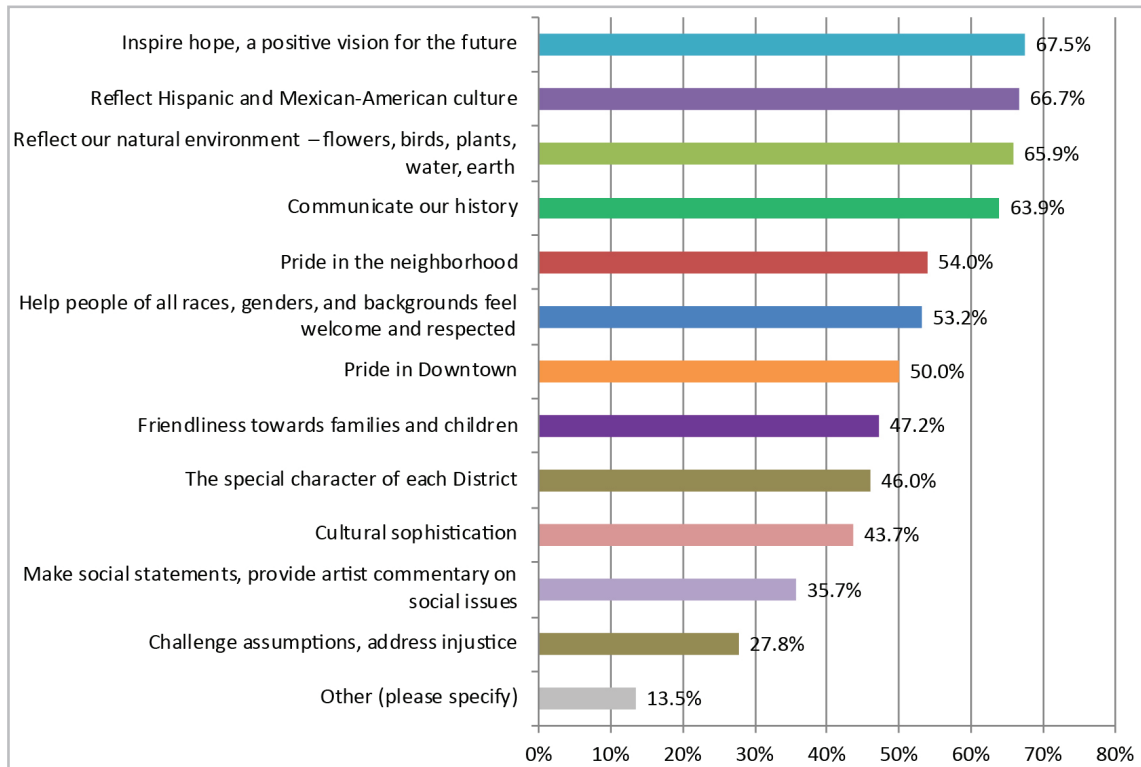
lots strong community know public spaces vision public art collection opportunities educating  
talent educational promote improve need building local great make beautify create  
pieces will supported culture display artists feel community  
start city become art vibrant Laredo well public art one  
see downtown local artists work people history culture show come  
history potential vision spaces bring live represent visual cultural world pride Center  
beautiful want love people will ideas

#### Public Art Policy

Below is the community's ranking of city policy priorities for public art.

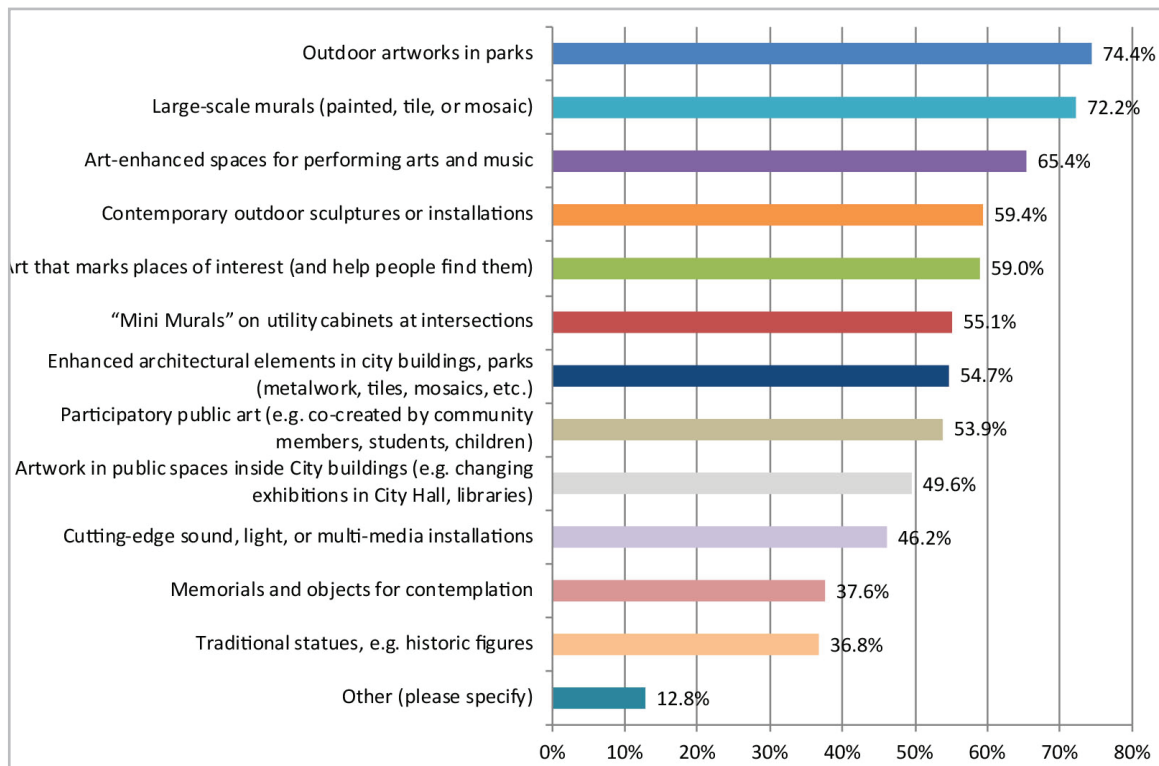
- Support economic growth by beautifying the historic streets of Laredo, encouraging tourism
- Promote Laredo as a unique place, community, and destination
- Support the creative and professional growth of the visual art community
- Promote children's art programs
- Commission local visual artists for public art (using a public process for selection) to support and attract quality visual artists in Laredo
- Work to create studio, exhibition, performance, and office space for artists and arts organizations
- Make arts and culture the cornerstone of Laredo's identity

**Q12. What would you like to see expressed in public artworks? (Select as many as apply)**



**ARTWORK TYPES**

**Q13. The City will consider different types of visual public art projects. Which of the following would like to see in Laredo? (Select as many as apply)**



## Survey Section 3: Project Types

The **top-ranked** choices (>60%) were:

1. Outdoor artworks in parks
2. Large-scale murals
3. Art-enhanced spaces for performing arts and music

The **least selected** choices (<40%) were:

1. Memorials and objects for contemplation, and
2. Traditional statues, e.g. historic figures
3. About half of respondents want public art that is created by local artists and groups; however, there was also strong support for artists from Mexico and those with national and international reputations.

## Survey Section 4. Locations / Sites

**Citywide, the top-ranked sites were:**

1. City parks and open space
2. Downtown and central historic district
3. Gateways to Laredo, such as major roadway entrances
4. Neighborhood centers and business districts

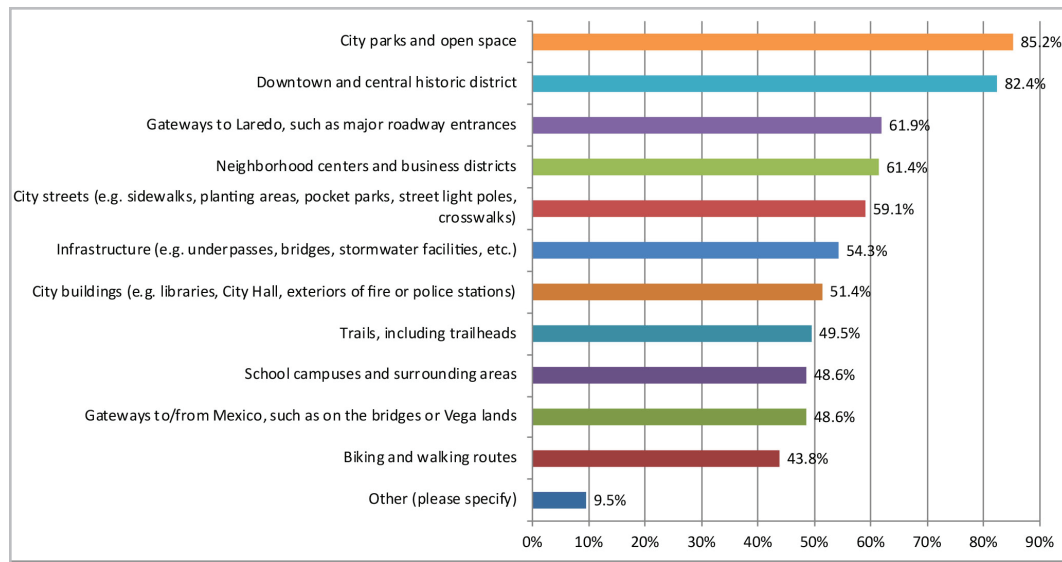
**In the next three years, the top-ranked sites were:**

1. Downtown and central historic district
2. City parks and open space
3. Gateways to Laredo, such as major roadway entrances

**In Downtown, the top-ranked sites were:**

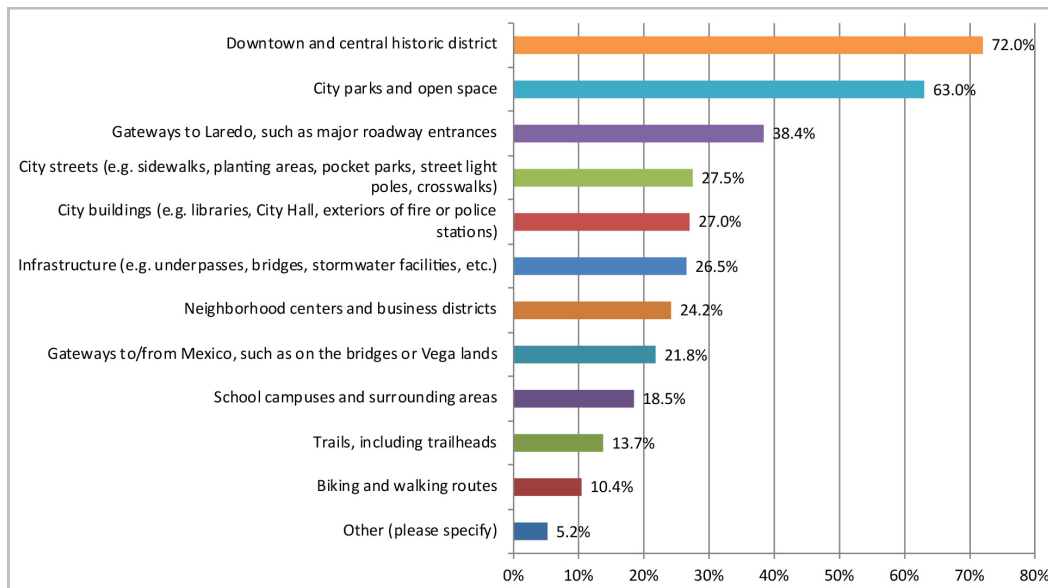
1. Anywhere people walk, eat and drink, shop, and gather
2. San Agustin Plaza
3. Rio Grande riverfront

### Q19. Which locations for public art most interest you?

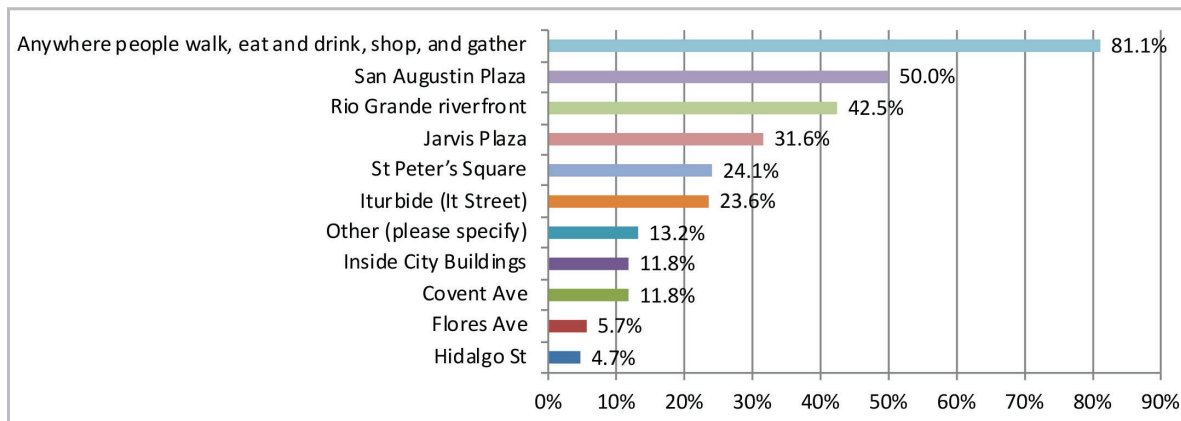




**Q20. Over the next three years, which would be your TOP priority sites for public art?**



**Q21. Viva Laredo calls for making Downtown more attractive. Which of the following would be your TOP 3 priority Downtown sites for public art?**



## Survey Section 5. Potential Partners

Laredoans submitted more than 100 comments about specific potential partners, ranging from private entities to the university and college. (See complete document that tabulates all survey responses.)

The potential partners named most often include:

- Banks (IBC, BBVA Compass, PNC)
- Chamber of Commerce
- Corporations/Big Box stores (H-E-B, Walmart, Target, Home Depot, Lowes, Sherwin Williams)
- CultivArte
- Foundational families (Killam, Sanchez, Fasken, Hachar, Jacamans, Benavides, Fernando Salinas Trust)
- Hospitals
- Import/Export/Freight forwarding companies
- Laredo College
- Laredo Cultural District
- Laredo Center for the Arts
- Laredo Film Society
- Laredo Main Street
- Local businesses
- National Endowment for the Arts
- Private developers
- Rotary clubs
- School districts
- TAMIU
- TXDOT
- Texas Commission on the Arts
- Vidal M. Trevino School of Communication and Fine Arts
- Webb County

### Q26. What is your vision for public art in Laredo?

Full list of written comments has been provided to staff. The word cloud below indicates how often words were used in people's comments about the vision for Laredo.

lots strong community know public spaces vision public art collection opportunities educating talent educational promote improve need building local great make beautify create pieces will supported culture display artists feel community start city become art vibrant Laredo well public art one see downtown local artists work people history culture show come history potential vision spaces bring live represent visual cultural world pride Center beautiful want love people will ideas



## 2.2 Cultural Stakeholder Interviews

Over 30 key cultural stakeholders were interviewed, individually or in small groups. The list of interviewees was developed with input from community advisors, from the Viva Laredo Comprehensive plan, and with city staff. The in-depth interviews allowed gathering of many thoughtful perspectives.

In addition, a broader list of stakeholders was engaged and provided their input via the survey. Representatives of the organizations below received a personal email with a link to the survey, a request to fill it out, and a request to share it with their memberships. (Survey responses were anonymous.)

### Interviews

Representatives and staff of:

- Able City
- CultivArte
- Fine Arts and Culture Commissioners
- Gallery 201
- Laredo Center for the Arts (incl. CaminArte)
- Laredo College, Fine Arts Department
- Laredo Cultural Arts District
- Laredo I.S.D
- Rio Grande International Study Center
- TAMIU, Department of Performing Arts
- Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) 1
- United I.S.D.
- Visual Artists in Laredo

### Surveys

- Able City
- Casa Ortiz
- City Makery
- CultivArte
- D.D. Hachar Charitable Trust Fund
- Fine and Performing Arts Gallery (TAMIU)
- Fine Arts and Culture Commissioners
- Gallery 201
- Hecho a Mano
- Helen Richter Watson Art Gallery (TAMIU)
- Imaginarium of South Texas
- La Posada and Fasken Family (Foundation)
- Lamar Bruni Vergara Environmental Science Center
- Lamar Bruni Vergara Planetarium
- Laredo Area Community Foundation
- Laredo Center for the Arts (incl. CaminArte)

### Surveys (continued)

- Laredo College
- Laredo College, Fine Arts Department
- Laredo College, Guadalupe and Lilia Martinez Fine Arts Center Theater
- Laredo Cultural Arts District
- Laredo I.S.D
- Laredo I.S.D., Trevino School of Communications & Fine Arts
- Laredo International Fair & Exposition
- Laredo Little Theater
- Laredo Main Street (Farmer's Market)
- Laredo Marketing
- Laredo Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorale
- Laredo Poet Laureate
- Laredo Theater Guild International
- Laredo Water Museum
- Mexican Cultural Institute of Laredo
- Paint Crusaders
- Republic of the Rio Grande Museum
- Rio Grande International Study Center
- Sames Auto Arena (fka Laredo Energy Arena)
- Sketchbomb Laredo
- TAMIU, Department of Performing Arts
- TIRZ 1
- The Guadalupe and Lilia Martinez Trust
- The Lamar Bruni Vergara Trust
- The Outlet Mall
- United I.S.D. and Fine Arts Department
- Villa Antigua Border Heritage Museum
- Washington Birthday Celebration Association
- Washington Birthday Celebration Museum
- Webb County Heritage Foundation



## Key Findings

All interviews covered the same core questions, with supplemental topics. The insights gathered by the consultants informed this plan. Interviewees spoke with the understanding of anonymity. Some additional anonymized insights from the interviews are available for future consideration and review.

## Partnerships

The stakeholder interviews yielded a number of recommendations for how community groups can partner with the City of Laredo on public art, or pursue their own initiatives.

Organization	Partnering Opportunity
<b>Able City</b>	Able City can help <b>provide knowledge and expertise</b> in urban planning which public art should be a part of. City Makers non-profit could provide staff person with expertise in public art to help with <b>advocacy</b> ; or help with <b>community engagement</b> .
<b>CultivArte</b>	CultivArte would like to help provide <b>training, workshops, etc. to artists</b> . They are working on being able to provide <b>studio spaces</b> via residencies to artists. Could become an art incubator maker space. They can act as a fiscal agent for grant opportunities to local artists, collectives, and organizations, and provide direct grants to artists. Plans to be a membership based organization within the next few years.
<b>Gallery 201</b>	As the only traditional gallery space in Laredo, Gallery 201 can <b>provide space for workshops, gallery shows, other art events</b> .
<b>Laredo Center for the Arts (incl. CaminArte)</b>	<b>Leadership role</b> is possible for public art. However, LCA <b>needs more funding from the City</b> to fulfill the promise that its name states. LCA could create significant public art-related programming and play a big role in the Public Art Program, if funded appropriately. They may be able to <b>leverage funds</b> received by the City for grant funding they receive from other sources.
<b>Laredo College, Fine Arts Department</b>	The College and its Fine Arts Program would be enthusiastic partners in all public art and community education initiatives. <b>However, they would require grants or funds – potentially to hire a part-time person to run these programs at the College.</b> (Staff has been reduced.) They also have <b>many spaces that can be enhanced by public art</b> . The empty <b>former military housing units</b> could be used creatively – focus residencies, workshops. Collaboration with TAMU could be explored.
<b>Laredo Cultural Arts District</b>	Partner to unify arts and culture in the district and community. Matching funds from the city would allow them to receive Cultural Arts grants from the Texas Commission for the Arts. <b>Priority use of City funds, as they would be leveraged by matching grants.</b>

Organization	Partnering Opportunity
<b>Laredo I.S.D</b>	<p>The Fine Arts Director is piloting after-school visual art clubs in elementary schools, since no visual arts education exists at that level. <b>The public art program could provide information about public art in Laredo, or involve the children in projects.</b></p> <p>Vidal M. Trevino School of Communication and Fine Arts</p> <p>The I.S.D. can <b>help with community engagement</b> and <b>suggesting sites</b> near their campuses that would be impactful. They would be interested in creating a <b>school mural program</b>, and have the capacity for <b>grant writing</b>. They need funding and more staff assistance to expand their fine arts offerings. Even <b>small grants</b> could make a huge difference.</p>
<b>Rio Grande International Study Center</b>	<p><b>Funding and leadership for public art projects related to water and other environmental issues.</b> Interested in artwork themes that raise environmental awareness. Could become an officially designated educational art partner for the utility department.</p>
<b>TAMIU, Department of Performing Arts</b>	<p>The TAMIU Department of Performing Arts could establish a Public Art <b>internship program</b> and <b>undergraduate research project for credit</b> (<i>for example, a project could be to research the story of all the public art that does exist in Laredo and create a website about it and interview the artists and capture and collect the story of the artist's inspiration</i>).</p> <p>TAMIU could potentially provide <b>space and education</b> for community-based public art projects and events. They could also establish a <b>continuing education program and speaker series</b>. They currently accommodate visiting artists, one per semester (gallery show, artist talk), but this program could be expanded. Collaboration with Laredo College could be explored.</p>
<b>TIRZ 1</b>	<p>Once the TIRZ is firmly operating, it could <b>provide supplemental funding for public art</b> in the community. TIRZs in other cities are known to make this sort of investment in addition to other infrastructure upgrades.</p>
<b>United I.S.D.</b>	<p>Teachers should be provided <b>with small stipends (grant program) to provide their time for after-school art projects related to public art.</b></p> <p>ISD can help with <b>community engagement</b>, as well as <b>suggesting sites</b> near their campuses that would be great for public art, where there is a lot of student visibility. High School students could also obtain <b>community service hours</b> via community-based public art projects.</p>
<b>Visual Artists in Laredo</b>	<p>Artists are important community advocates. They can serve on advisory bodies. Those with public art experience may serve on artist selection panels and on the Commission.</p>

## Interview Questions: Summary

The following questions were asked during all interviews:

**1. Overall, the City's public art collection should reflect the desires, pressing needs, potential and special character of the Laredo community. A goal of civic art is to boost civic pride for residents.**

**From your perspective, what would a successful Public Art Program in Laredo look like?**

- Art groups working together. Currently everyone is siloed.
- Educational component – public art curriculum connected to every school
- Artworks and programming that are free and accessible – not inside public buildings that people don't frequent often
- A program that unifies the youth, the emerging artists and the professional artists that are all here and having them involved together in some in some way.
- Murals culturally make sense in a city like Laredo
- A successful public art program here in Laredo would reflect the people in our community, and the different areas that exist
- We should have an art museum
- That it is standalone program, a standalone department and that it's clear who to go to about anything public art related as it relates to the city and that there be a standard process for selection of work or for proposing ideas to the city. Standard applications that anybody can access. Also, that it would be a program that is open to both local art and artists and outside of Laredo artists, even international. Being well-rounded in sourcing our art, also well rounded in terms of what public art can look like, like it can take lots of different forms. So really being open to what's out there and not just sticking to murals, for example, but having a variety like sculptures and tactical urbanism, public art events, and really anything that goes with the culture of the city and the desires of its residents.
- A successful public art program is one that involves the public – a professional artist, community artists or volunteers, people to market the project, media, etc.
- Integrate the public art projects with local school curriculum
- Paying artists for materials, equipment, and a fair wage for their work
- Creating a graffiti park for the youth, so they have an outlet
- Creating a Culture pass – to the museums, etc.
- A program that is inclusive – access to resources
- We would have cultural festivals
- Creating public artworks that are focused on celebrating the history of the area and the people – especially in a place like this that's so rich in the history of the border and being in South Texas
- Diverse types of artwork beyond murals – sculptures, installations, lighting, reviving dead spaces; and works that can function as both works of contemplation, but interactive as well; a sculpture park
- Using public art as a vehicle to educate people about their city and their history
- A successful public art program would incorporate all of the thriving elements that are here already... music, theatre, poetry, physical art and so forth. What has always lacked is a hub for it to all come together.
- The City needs a grant program
- A commitment to the art history of Laredo



## 2. Public Art can be actively integrated into the architecture, landscape, history and story of Laredo. It can help to make Laredo more attractive.

### What are the biggest concerns with Laredo's attractiveness – and how could public art help?

- Poor maintenance; poor landscaping
- Public spaces need a facelift
- There is a great lack of public artwork, more is needed
- Historic buildings downtown need to be better cared for
- We're lacking culture and flavor
- Many empty storefront – could be used temporarily for installations
- A big concern is the weather and how hot it gets, and that affects how and when people interact
- I know that in I know public art can exist in different ways, but just creating those spaces for those conversations to happen and for those things to be activated, I think are very important.
- One of my biggest concerns with Laredo is the fact that we're a very sprawled out city, and so we do have urban areas, but a lot of our residents live in either sprawled out suburban areas or just sort of outside of what we call the inner city. And so my concern with that is that public art is most accessible in an urban area. But I also think that if we if we focus on the inner city and focus on enhancing our urban areas that may be with public art, we can shine a light on kind of going back to that urban feeling of being in a city.
- Public Art can help because it speaks to the community; it would be great to have something that speaks more to the younger generation that they can make connections from traditional culture that that we come from to newer things
- Some art should just be art for the sake of art without all of the direct community involvement, but with a video explaining why the project came to be, why it's not traditional, why it's important, etc.
- Our culture should be woven into the architecture
- My biggest concern is always the red tape involved with a historical building or something that you can't touch it.
- Activating spaces that have been vacant for a long time
- A sculpture park, for example, it could be a gathering space for art workshops like drawing workshops or even food events and things like that. So just having a reason and a place to gather
- I envision a downtown that's walkable
- Public education about public art is needed
- The downtown area was abandoned and is still partially abandoned, which is a great cause for concern. It is a great dismay for me because it's amazing. The buildings are amazing, the homes are amazing.
- The downtown area is starting to get a lot of attention. I'm glad that they got designated as a cultural district. That'll be good because the downtown area is included.
- South Laredo is a very important area that we need to not neglect.
- The Heights area, is the second oldest neighborhood, which is seeing a resurrection
- There hasn't been a prior commitment to showcasing art

**3. The Public Art Plan will establish a set of policies for adding public art citywide. The goals include enhancing Downtown, central historic neighborhoods, and all Council Districts. The artwork in each area should reflect its special character.**  
**How would you see this working best in Laredo? What is the most equitable approach? Should the type and character of the artwork vary, in different neighborhoods?**

- Needs to be inclusive
- Equitable
- Accessible
- Citywide outreach and opportunities are needed
- Commissioners need to be empowered
- Each district has its own distinct character
- The City needs to find purpose for the Fine Arts and Culture Commission so that there's oversight of the Public Art program
- Need a qualified city staff person with an arts background to make it all work
- Opportunities open to anyone, in any area
- Taking opportunities as they come – for example, if someone comes up with a great idea for a historic district that defines the character of the neighborhood, then that should be supported.
- Involve the schools
- An open and transparent process
- There should also be training, or a set of guidelines, for artists to follow for quality control.
- If you have the community involved they will respect the artwork more
- It's a very important thing to stress that we are the border with another country with influences from that country
- it's about bringing that flavor and that uniqueness out, and every neighborhood does have its own characteristics and its own story to tell; and it varies. So I think that is important.
- I think every neighborhood has its own character

**4. The City is approaching public art as a tool for attracting more tourism and visitors, who spend money with local retailers, restaurants, hotels, and other businesses.**  
**Where would you site public artworks to attract visitors?**

- **"Four Blocks"** because it's a major gateway (mentioned in every interview)
- "The Heights" neighborhood
- **Bridges**
- Bus wraps, bus stations
- Chacon Creek
- City Hall – it can become an exhibition space with rotating exhibitions
- **Downtown**
- Downtown and the historic neighborhoods make sense, but public art should be in all districts because public art should be for everyone and accessible
- Gateway to the North of Laredo coming in from I-35 San Antonio – something big, loud, and impactful (landmarks)
- **Historic plazas** – would be great to add lighting, lighting installations
- I-35 Infrastructure projects – underpasses (columns) and retaining walls (*examples mentioned: (1) I-35 at Mann Rd infrastructure has an old mural in disrepair that should be restored; it's on highway property; historical content*)
- Jarvis Plaza

- Lake Casa Blanca International State Park
- Laredo College
- Laredo Cultural District
- Laredo I.S.D. parks have shared maintenance between the City and the I.S.D – these are good locations for public art
- Libraries
- Library in South Laredo
- Local business – there should be incentives for local businesses downtown to have art in and around their places of business
- Near the Arena
- Old courthouse Downtown – to be potentially developed into a library
- Parks
- Public housing facing I-35
- Railroad bridges at I-35
- Renovation of the Plaza Theater
- Rio Grande linear park / River Trail
- Roadways
- Routes to Schools – long lines
- San Agustin Plaza
- San Bernardo corridor
- San Bernardo and Santa Ursula. It's right by the highway. It's a triangular piece of property - gateway to San Bernardo
- Sidewalks (imprinted)
- St. Peters Plaza
- Streets – planters or tactical urbanism to make them feel safe
- TAMIU
- The Max (golf course by the river)
- The Outlets

### ... and what kind of artwork would be effective?

- Artwork about the history of Laredo
- I just went to visit my sister in Cleveland and the big Cleveland letters that they've been putting out everywhere. I don't know who picked the sites for those, but there you are with the skyline of Cleveland in the back, and I think they're in several different locations, but somebody picks some really great sites to put those in. I wish we had something like that here in Laredo, maybe down by the river and the Laredo's park with Mexico building in the background or something. That's always a cool thing to people to stand there and Mexico's like, you know, a touch away.
- I think it's the quality, not necessarily the type or the genre that you're going to be using for the walls
- Celebrating roadside architecture – A lot of Laredoans don't understand that we are at the end of what's called the Meridian Highway, which is Route sixty 66, and is currently I-40 from Chicago to Los Angeles. It has been celebrated as America's highway with great mid-century roadside architecture and gas stations and diners, and has been completely celebrated and branded. And the Meridian Highway is basically the east west connection of the migration to the West. The Meridian Highway is the old Highway 81, which is the NAFTA highway now, which is I-35 and the Pan-American Highway, which is the longest highway in the world. But the Meridian Highway begins in Canada and ends in Laredo and connects to the Panama canal.



**5. One of our tasks is to recommend an artist selection process. Our firm is recommending that the City establish a process that is fair, equitable, transparent, and results in high-quality public art.**

**What will make the artist and artwork selection process successful?**

- A good standard RFQ and RFP process – transparent and fair; with clear evaluation criteria
- Accept unsolicited proposals for ideas from artists
- Need a better artist selection process that is well-thought out
- The open calls need to be more widely publicized – News, newspaper, not only social media
- Workshops with experienced professional artists
- I think the city should be looking to promote their bid process or their projects outside of Laredo as well, open to non-local art as well, depending on the project
- An Artist selection committee that is diverse and changes annually, or each grant period
- An equitable process

**What issues are likely to arise?**

- Concerns on the part of the community that maybe it was pre-wired or although it appeared to be a public process, that maybe it wasn't really
- Sometimes council members have a very their own opinion about how things are, and sometimes they want to persuade things to go a certain way instead of letting the staff take a process.
- Rumors have always been that the staff don't always get a fair, equitable shot to make an educated decision based on what they read that they're always as someone maybe helping guide that decision
- The process for public art should not political; it is ok for the art to be political in nature – as a city, we should shy away from that if it's relevant to our story
- In the past there have been concerns with the same artists being selected all of the time
- Compensation and content

... My vision for public art is to try to get people of all ages involved .... Once people see the beauty in art, I know that more people will be involved.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent

... Something grand, memorable, and eternal.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent

**Follow up:**

**Do you have any direct experience with the “Calls for Artists” issued by the City of Laredo, or other public art selection processes to date? If so, what worked well, and what did not?**

- The ones I’ve had direct involvement with were not well publicized, very few applications were received.
- The process worked well when the architecture firm was involved in managing the project – via the community development department
- Pricing for the artwork was low
- Another artist who was not chosen through the artist selection process was still commissioned by the council member to create her design – other artists were feel like what’s the point of submitting. Brings up the question if Council Members will have discretionary funds for projects outside of CIP funds
- One artist shouldn’t be the one to get all of the City commissions; there should be opportunity for other artists

**6. The Public Art Plan will include a process for selecting the top priority sites for public artwork. Generally, the best sites are public spaces that are visible and important to the community – places where many people from all walks of life can see and enjoy the artwork.**

**Where would public art have the biggest impact in Laredo, and why? What are 3 top sites to consider?**

- “Four Blocks” – entrance at Bridge #2
- Central Library
- Downtown
- Gateway from Mexico – big statement piece
- Jarvis Plaza – near the transit center
- McKendrick Library
- Near schools – Nixon High School and VMT mentioned several times
- Outdoors, not indoor spaces
- Overpasses/Underpasses
- Parks
- River banks – convert more of the area into parks

**7. The City will need to collaborate with partners to develop and co-fund major public artworks. Partners can include community groups, companies, philanthropists, the college and university, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations.**

**Who would be good partners in Laredo? Can you suggest specific partners or potential co-funders?**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • Banks (IBC)   | • Boys and Girls Club                     |
| • Billboard companies (donating the billboard space for art)  | • City Makery                             |
| • Beer gardens – both Frontera and Kuchera, they are really interested in in having art events in their in their property and use their spaces for art events as well | • Corporations                            |
|   | • Freight forwarders / Transportation     |
|   | • Garza Import/Export                     |
|   | • Guadalupe and Lilia Martinez Foundation |
|   | • H-E-B                                   |

- Lamar Bruni Vergara Trust
- Laredo Center for the Arts
- Laredo Community Foundation
- Laredo Main Street program
- Private Developers (with tax incentives) – the City needs to encourage developers to build in plazas, so that there are places within neighborhoods for them to congregate
- Sister of Mercy
- TAMIU – the university, the community garden, and the Helen Richter Gallery
- TIRZ
- The Institute of Mexican Culture
- Washington’s Birthday Celebration Association
- Webb County

**Follow up: Who are likely to be the strongest public art “champions” in Laredo? What potential partners, specifically, should we and the City speak with?**

- Linda LaMantilla
- The Killam Family
- The Sames Family

**8. The City of Laredo has established a “Percent for Art” program for capital improvement projects. It allocates 2% of eligible project costs for public art. The project types include all new city buildings, facilities, streets, parks, etc. For the past two years, this has generated an annual public art budget of about \$300,000 per year.**

**What would you consider a priority use for these funds? Should the artwork be incorporated into City buildings and other projects as they are built, or would it have a greater impact elsewhere?**

- Artwork on the outside of buildings preferred over inside of buildings – Needs to be accessible to the public
- Big water tanks
- Outside walls, in parks – publicly displayed
- I would push for public art to be placed elsewhere
- Funding should have maximum flexibility while also having very careful guidelines
- A percentage of it should be incorporated into city buildings and other projects as they are being built; another percentage should be targeted for buildings and locations that are really needing public art

**9. A new City of Laredo “Art In Public Places Program” will need to earn the trust and confidence of residents.**

**What is the general level of confidence, in the community, that the City will develop a high quality public art collection and program, and use the funding well?**

- Low confidence level
- Public art needs more attention and publicity; “awareness”
- Concerns that artist open calls will be “pre-wired”



**Follow ups:**

**What does the city need to do to earn the trust of the community, as it establishes a public art program? How else can we help the city set up its public art program for success?**

- A lot of education
- Transparency – they don't have a culture of transparency
- Someone needs to lay the foundation for a good public art program, but if the City were left to come up with that alone, it would not be something that I would have confidence in
- Involving younger people, high school students or even younger in public art is a really great way to get the community buy-in
- Consistency
- Follow-up. It's not not a matter of just talking, but it's actually doing and providing and facilitating
- The City needs to do projects so that people can feel confident that they can do it
- Need more communication and publicity
- For confidence to be higher, people will need to see that can be done with those funds

**10. In some places, the City chooses to contract with a local nonprofit organization (or creates a new nonprofit). A separate organization, rather than a City department, runs the whole public art program, and spends city funds to commission artwork. This approach can allow a public art program to be more nimble, closer to the community, better staffed, and minimize governmental "red tape."**

**Do you think this approach could work well in Laredo? Why, or why not?**

- Yes, they should **figure out how to better support Laredo Center for the Arts**
- It makes sense that an arts nonprofit be involved one way or another
- An idea is to have the program housed with one of the universities – TAMU or Laredo College
- I think it could work, but I'm not super convinced that it's the best option because I also see the problem with local nonprofits. I would be concerned about the staff that the non-profit would be able to find
- In the future, I think there should be a separate program that a non-profit runs (a nonprofit with a director and a board)

**11. A city goal for the Public Art Program is to support, elevate, and grow the local artist community.**

**In Laredo, what do artists need? What would MOST help local visual artists to grow their careers?**

- Community art spaces that artists can work in and show their work
- Education about public art is very important
- Income opportunities – artists should not be asked to volunteer their time
- More access to visual arts
- It would be great to have a makerspace that provides resources and opportunities for artists such as studios, woodshops, welding, ceramics, etc.
- A subsidized program for use of city owned land or facilities for art creation and programming.
- To give artists a combination of ways to participate. If they're uncompensated, there should still be some kind of benefit or incentive to the artist; but we really need to work on paying the artists

## 12. The Plan will contain policies and recommendations to strengthen local visual arts organizations.

### What's working, and what's not working, in the visual arts in Laredo?

- It's very challenging to get access to funding that will support specifically visual art projects or programs
- Need more education around what art is the power of art, the importance of artists in society
- If the City wants teachers and students to volunteer for art projects, they need to provide the supplies and materials at a minimum
- We should be more interactive with the schools

### What kind of city support is most needed, as it might relate to public art?

- Work with the schools (TAMIU, Laredo College)
- Bridge the gap or create some type of access to funding that will allow visual arts education in elementary schools
- Provide programming at the local libraries, recreation centers, and private spaces
- Any type of funding that an organization could get to be regranted to others.
- The public art program needs oversight
- Donation of spaces for professional and budding artists
- Students should be encouraged at a young age
- A pool of resources that includes supplies, masking tape, drop clothes, space, water, etc.
- Utilizing the city's ability to publicize art events and opportunities

## 13. Is there anything we didn't talk about that you'd like to address?

- I'm glad you guys are looking at this from the outside. we're looking to you to have that open, honest set of eyes to go in there and kind of get things cleaned up so that it moves forward smoothly.
- We need to think about how we get more patrons of the arts in Laredo
- "I've always felt that it's really powerful when you tie in nature with art. And I think there's a visceral component to that that people can relate to and it gets to their very core."
- The City Council no longer allows "street murals"
- I think certain historic moments of the city should be told through public art, whether it's murals or sculptures.
- I'm really excited about this. I'm just really excited to see what's to come, and I thank you for your time and energy.
- "I also think in our culture, the Mexican American Mexican culture, you have a very, very rich tradition of murals that I think just culturally resonates with people here and. I just think that's really important. While. It serves so many purposes, you beautify a place you can create a landmark, a place for somebody to go visit and you're creating awareness, you're creating appreciation, you're letting people think and relax and imagine and hopefully fostering a deeper sense of. Like stewardship and appreciation for what we've got."
- I think that what you're doing is very exciting. I think that what you're doing is something that has been long awaited for.
- I think you all are fabulous, I'm so happy. It just made me feel so good when this all started to happen.
- I just really want to see Laredo flourish with art, and it does deserve to be recognized as an important gateway, from a historical perspective and a cultural perspective. Everybody's doing it -El Paso is doing it. San Antonio is doing it. There's no reason for Laredo not to be doing it.
- There's a need for public art to bring in the philanthropic community

## 2.3 Fine Arts and Culture Commission

The Fine Arts and Culture Commission (FA&C Commission) serves as a vital link between the citizenry and elected officials. Its monthly public meetings offer transparency in government; citizens are encouraged to attend and to make public comments at the meetings. As an official city body with duties and powers, the Commission has specific roles and responsibilities for all City policy, procedures, fiscal and budget matters, and processes related to the Public Art Program.

The Commission has many committed members who care deeply about elevating the arts and culture in Laredo, for the benefit of the whole community. It is crucial that the Commission be a competent, proactive, well-informed, present and involved civic body, in order for the Public Art Program to operate in the manner described in this master plan. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that developmental work be done with the Commission and elected officials, in order to bring the full Commission up to the level required. ***Please see the recommendations below.***

The Commission is composed of nine voting members – one appointed by the Mayor, and one by each Council Member. Commissioners are volunteer public servants, who are selected for their professional competence and experience (arts and culture expertise). The role and responsibilities of the Commission was delineated in City Ordinance No. 2019-O-177, which created the Public Art Program with the required “Percent for Art” funding allocation (2% of eligible expenses of eligible Capital Improvement Projects). The Commission was created on April 11, 2017.

For more information on the Fine Arts and Culture Commission -- including meeting dates, a list of the current appointees, videos and agendas for past meetings, and its Bi-Annual Reports -- visit the webpage for the City Secretary’s Office.

## MASTER PLAN ENGAGEMENT AND INPUT

### Interviews

All Commissioners were requested to provide an in-depth Key Cultural Stakeholder Interview to the consultant. All were contacted and offered interview opportunities multiple times, either as a one-on-one or with their council member. The following did provide interviews, which have helped to inform this master plan:

- Armando Lopez, Chairman of the Commission
- Gayle Aker
- Julio Mendez
- Rosie Santos
- Jesse Shaw (group interview with two other TAMIU art faculty members)



## Commission Meetings

During the development of this master plan, April-December 2021, the consultant and city staff (Library Director Maria Soliz and CVB Director Aileen Ramos) provided Commissioners with monthly briefings, presentations, and a training workshop. Dialogue about public art and the emerging master plan was encouraged, and the Commissioners present at each meeting provided input to the consultant and staff.

### Key Topics Discussed

Commissioners who attended the meetings, and/or read the backup materials, are now well-informed on the following topics.

- Purpose of the Laredo Public Art Master Plan (LAMP)
- LAMP Scope of Work, Work Plan, and progress
- Community Engagement Plan and activities, including community survey
- Public Art Ordinance 2019-O-177, and its specific provisions
- Consultant recommendations to the City and The Commission
- Annual Report, Public Art Program - prior years (Commission voted to endorse)
- Annual Public Art Plan FY2022 (Commission voted to endorse)
- Program Administration Needs and Personnel Needs
- Public Art Funding available, prior years and current fiscal year (2% for Art)
- Recommended Artist Selection Process
- Vision, Mission, and Goals for Public Art
- Funding Allocations and Options
  - Percent for Art Funds
  - HOT Funds (Hotel Occupancy Taxes)
- Building a Public Art Program
- Establishing Excellence, Building Trust
  - Program Administration – City vs. Nonprofit models
- Role, Duties and Powers of the Fine Arts and Culture Commission

The consultant observed that **the Fine Arts and Culture Commission is in need of more attention, support and development**, in order to fulfill its mission and role in the public art program.

Issues observed and the consultant recommendations to address them are below.

- The Commission lacks the official Vision Statement and by-laws required by City Charter. *The Commission should hold a retreat or designate a meeting to develop and adopt them.*
- The Commission often fails to make quorum. It therefore cannot take official actions, at many of its monthly meetings. City policy states that Commissioners who miss more than three meetings are to be removed from the Commission. *Replace members in violation of the attendance policy.*
- Only about a third of Commissioners have specific knowledge or expertise in public art and/or visual art. It appeared that little or no subject-matter training had previously been provided to Commissioners. *Staff should provide ongoing training for Commissioners. New members appointed should have familiarity with public art. A re-training on LAMP should be provided to all new members, and annually.*

- The Commissioners reported that they did not feel empowered to fulfil their role, duties, and powers. In many cases, they did not understand them or assert them.  
*The City should appoint a staff liaison with the time, capacity and interest to do developmental work with the Commission.*
- Commissioners reported that they had not previously been allowed to fulfill the role assigned to them by City Ordinance and City Charter; specific duties related to public art had been usurped by elected officials.  
*This master plan clarifies their role, responsibilities, duties and powers.*
- Commissioners were not observed to initiate activities that fulfilled their intended function, such as proactively seeking out additional funding sources or partners for arts and culture in Laredo.  
*The Commissioners reported that they need to see the Commission's role and powers being respected, in order to become motivated to step up to a stronger role that benefits the community. It should assert its powers, as defined by Ordinance and City Charter.*
- Commissioners are intended to screen and channel community input to elected officials. Yet, most Commissioners report that they rarely or never have provided information to the Council Member who appointed them.  
*Each Commissioner should each provide a report to the Council Member who appointed them, after each monthly meeting, as a standard matter of course. Elected Officials should meet in person with their Commission at least quarterly, respect their duties and powers, and utilize them as a valuable resource.*
- Primarily it was only the Commissioners with a visual arts background who faithfully attended each month. Little or no other business of substance was brought before the Commission. As there was little or no activity related to music or the performing arts, the Commissioners focused on those areas tended to skip the meetings.  
*The full spectrum of Arts and Culture issues in Laredo should be brought before the Commission, as described by Ordinance and City Charter.*
- During the master planning process, a new Commissioner, Jesse Shaw (a TAMIU art department faculty member), was appointed by the Mayor.  
*Each new Commissioner should receive an orientation and training on the role, duties and powers of the Commission, and its prior history and business.*
- The Public Art Program creates a large body of work for the Commission. For public art projects and programming to progress each month, the Commission must respond to issues in a timely fashion. It must provide input, recommendations, or take action at each of its monthly meetings. This will be difficult to achieve, without addressing the lack of visual art expertise of many members and the current failure to make quorum every month.  
*The Commission should form an active Public Art Subcommittee, made up of the members who have the most visual art expertise and public art interest. The Subcommittee should review in detail the monthly business related to Public Art. As this business is substantive, it should be reviewed prior to each monthly meeting. The Subcommittee should make recommendations to the full Commission, which should then discuss and act on them as a body.*

... public art could give us an authentic identity as a Border City.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent

## 2.4 Elected Officials

The role of the Mayor and Council is to represent the will of the people of Laredo. They set City policy, direct the City Manager, and set priorities for the City budget. They have a duty to engage, lead and represent the people in their Districts and in the community as a whole. They also have a duty to encourage community awareness and participation in decision-making, listen to their constituents, and to meet a high ethical bar. Their charge is to consider the needs of the people today, and those who will live in Laredo in the future.

It is vital that elected officials fulfill all of these roles for the Public Art Program and Civic Art projects -- and provide the support, budget and resources required by City staff and community partners -- in order for the vision and 10-Year Strategic Plan of this master plan to be realized.

All nine current elected officials were invited to be interviewed for this master plan. All received multiple requests for interviews, over a period of months, from both the consultant and the Department Directors serving as the liaisons for the City.

The following elected officials responded to the request and were interviewed. Their input shaped this master plan.

- Mayor Pete Saenz
- Council Member Alberto Torres, District 5
- Council Member Dr. Marte Martinez, District 6
- Council Member Vanessa Perez, District 7
- Council Member Alyssa Cigarroa, District 8

Council Member Cigarroa and her team also responded to multiple consultant requests for assistance and information, throughout the master plan development process. Council Member Martinez brought an item before Council during master plan development.

- The elected officials interviewed all agreed on the following points:
- The officials and their constituents are excited about the positive things that public art can do for Laredo, and eager to see the benefits realized.
- Public art equity across all Council Districts is desired. At the same time, all see the Downtown as a key focus area for initial city-wide investment.
- The City should follow a fair and transparent process for artist selection, in commissioning public artworks that will become part of the Public Art Collection.
- It is a city priority to develop a Public Art Program that is well run and administered.

Prior to engaging a consultant and starting master plan development, Council Members took individual control of public art funds, divided by District, due to the lack of a functional Public Art Program. This interim solution should not be carried forward, after the LAMP is adopted. Any unspent public art funds from prior years are recommended to be reassigned to the Public Art Program, after it is staffed.

... [Public Art] helps to create a more dynamic , open-minded and united society.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent



## Interview Questions & Responses

The standard set of questions below was used for all elected official interviews. Responses have been edited for conciseness and clarity.

**1. Vision.** Overall, the City’s public art collection should reflect the desires, pressing needs, potential and special character of the Laredo community. A goal of civic art is to boost civic pride for residents. **What is your vision for a successful Public Art Program in Laredo?**

### Mayor Saenz

- Artwork that is visible, accessible, beautiful, and located where people congregate.
- Public art should not get politicized.

### CM Torres (District 4)

- My vision for a successful art program in our city would be one that involves the culture and the heritage of the people that live in our community - to ensure they connect with the art.
- I think that also exposing our people to different types of art [is important].
- I see that our arts program could serve as a tool to showcase local talent.

### CM Martinez (District 6)

- I believe that public art should be not just a representation of what we are, but also a representation of what other communities are.
- Art should be a way to tell the world who we are, but it should also be a way of allowing people and children (especially those who don’t have an opportunity to go to other places) to travel with their imaginations. To see that there’s a larger world.
- Illustrate to the world through art who we are as a culture and as a community.
- Use the city as its canvas, such that points of interest throughout the whole community are illustrated, and no one area is underrepresented.

### CM Perez (District 7)

- Tell the story of the long, rich history of Laredo – things that have never been told, like the first electric rail car ever.
- Ideas for Laredo artwork themes shared:
  - Highlight trade – Laredo has two trade commercial bridges; the World Trade bridge is the largest inland. We are connecting goods to people all over the country. That could be a theme.
  - There’s not a clear image of the city – some people think we’re trying to be too much like Mexico, and Laredo needs its own identity.
  - We’re the gateway to the U.S. from Mexico.
  - Building bridges and not building walls.

### CM Cigarroa (District 8)

- I support a standalone program devoted to public art. Ideally, we will have a department (e.g. Cultural Arts) in the future to run the public arts program.
- My vision is that artists are treated by the City as a valuable resource.
- Public art should be created, managed, maintained, and promoted.

**2. Attractiveness.** Public Art can be actively integrated into the architecture, landscape, history and story of Laredo. It can help to make Laredo more attractive.

**What are the biggest concerns with Laredo's attractiveness – and how can public art help?**

**Mayor Saenz**

- Public art can help by communicating a positive image of the family unit.
- Artists can help make the city come alive.

**CM Torres (District 4)**

- Right now, Laredo is only attractive to economic development, the business world and the economy; I don't see it attractive when it comes to tourism.
- We lack a lot of that attractiveness in order to bring people from all over the country and all over the world to Laredo. We need that integration of the arts to be able to attract different people to visit our city.

**CM Martinez (District 6)**

- I think what hurts us isn't Laredo itself, but the persona of Laredo. And I think, we got a bad rap there for a few years with our proximity to the border and violence across the border – it is our blessing, but it's also our curse. Public art can improve our image.
- An active public art program can represent our culture and our values, including family. It can communicate to the whole state that we're a very family-friendly atmosphere. Come on down and visit us!
- Art can give us that extra oomph that we need... that extra secret sauce to get past our identity as just a border town. I think public art can soften that.

**CM Perez (District 7)**

- There's not enough public art, particularly in my district.
- Because of all of the trucks, there's a lot of diesel emissions, so there's environmental issues with that. (Perhaps public art can carry a positive environmental message)

**CM Cigarroa (District 8):**

- Laredo has a rich culture and rich history, but it's not easily accessible.
- Even in our own inner city and children in schools, people don't know what we have here. For both locals and outsiders, public art could help define and tell our story.
- I think we're missing the cultural essence that you see in other places; Laredo is getting more stale as we grow in the suburbs.
- Need more vibrancy.

**3. Tourism.** The City is approaching public art as a tool for attracting more tourism and visitors. An iconic public artwork can become a tourism destination. Public art can also add appeal to destination areas for people travelling to Laredo for business, vacations, and special events.

**What sites should be priorities for public art, specifically to boost tourism that helps the economy?**

**Mayor Saenz**

- We have places where people congregate, and that's what needs public art. Good places for public art include the campus of the university and college.
- We should prioritize the places that people are drawn to by business or social gatherings.
- Planning on a convention center soon, so that's a place to plan for public art.

**CM Torres (District 4)**

- Definitely our downtown needs [to be a focus] in order to ensure that we showcase our historic downtown area.
- The areas that should be focused on for public art should be all those and have entry, welcoming areas (gateways).

**CM Martinez (District 6)**

- I think it should be citywide. One area specifically won't be enough. The art should be distributed so that people can take a tour of public art and see the whole city.
- I advocated for this public art master plan, because I wanted to change the mindset of our city. I don't want a certain section of our city to be known as the art district. I want Laredo to be known as an artistic city.
- The whole city needs to be the public art canvas and no area should be underrepresented.

**CM Perez (District 7):**

- Priority sites include Downtown, the Heights areas, South Laredo, North Central Park, the Max golf course, the entertainment district, Columbia Bridge, Father McNaboe Park.

**CM Cigarroa (District 8):**

- Priority sites are Downtown, the entrances of our city along I-35, and some of our historic neighborhoods as well

**4. District Priorities.** The Public Art Plan will establish a set of policies for adding public art citywide. It will also include a list of priorities by Council District. We have recommended that funding be equitably distributed across all Council Districts, and city staff concurs. What makes your community distinctive? What qualities of its people, history, or character should be reflected in public art?

**CM Torres (District 4)**

- My district is unique in that it is landlocked. My goal has always been to reinvest and take advantage of the area being landlocked. It's an advantage because it can't grow in size.
- It's the central area of our city.
- This district is also a very old community. Homes were built in the 40s and 50s, but grew rich in culture.

**CM Martinez (District 6):**

- My district is very patriotic. We have a lot of soldiers, CBP officers, and police officers.
- We're probably some of the most well-traveled people in the city.
- To tell our story, Laredo should aggregate funds for bigger projects. A colossal scale public artwork is going to have a much bigger impact than just a mural.
- The strong way our culture values family connections also makes us distinctive.

**CM Perez (District 7):**

- Trade. Connections – connecting people, connecting goods
- The river... two commercial bridges in my district
- Laredo is the gateway into the United States
- Traditional people; traditions passed down through the older generations; the people value age, history and culture (like cooking; and making things by hand)
- Very family oriented; multi-generational



**CM Cigarroa (District 8):**

- Our proximity to Mexico. The history of having been our own country, the Republic of the Rio Grande.
- We have our river and our border culture, the collision of cultures.
- The architecture downtown is incredible and it's a mix of different cultures; every building has its own character.
- The plaza system. Public plazas are ideal for public art.

**What are priorities for public art in your council district?****CM Torres (District 4)**

- Art should be placed throughout the district.
- Reinvesting in that community and utilizing the key locations of the district that identify it
  - City cemetery
  - Two major hospitals
  - J.W. Nixon High School, Vidal Martinez Trevino School of Communications and Fine Art

**CM Martinez (District 6):**

- North Central Park has a lot of great art, but I also want to take art to the people. I want people to walk out and see a living embodiment of Laredo, which is the public art system, a living representation of Laredo.
- We would love to do an old school water tower

**CM Perez (District 7):**

- The water towers in my district would be great, but very costly.
- Mines Road
- In between the two bridges (Columbia Bridge and World Trade Bridge), that's where you'll see most of that traffic and activity

**CM Cigarroa (District 8):**

- The "four blocks" [area between the river and Downtown] is one of them.
- The downtown. Murals on downtown buildings. Installations in the plazas. In District 8, communicate that we're in one of the oldest parts of the city,
- I would love to see the public art that reflected the identity of these historic neighborhoods that surround downtown, including: 1) El Tonto, 2) El Rincon Del Diablo, 3) El Cuatro, 4) El Trece, 5) La Ladrillera, 6) Canta Ranas, 7) Los Amores, 8) Sal si Puedes, 9) Siete Viejo, 10) La Guadalupe, 11) La Azteca, 12) St Peter's, and 13) San Bernardo
- The people of District 8 feel forgotten. A priority is public art that makes them feel valued.
- We want public art that stimulates our youth to feel something extraordinary.

**5. Priority Sites.** The Public Art Plan will include a process for selecting the top priority sites for public artwork. Generally, the best sites are public spaces that are visible and important to the community – places where many people from all walks of life can see and enjoy the artwork.

**For your Council District, what are priority sites for public art?****CM Torres (District 4)**

- same as previous question

**CM Martinez (District 6):**

- I want art everywhere.
- I want art on the roadways. Dahlmeier, McPherson, and Shiloh. (e.g. creative crosswalks)
- All different kinds of art, not just murals.

**CM Perez (District 7):**

- Same as the previous question

**CM Cigarroa (District 8):**

- Parks
- Plazas
- Fountains – repurposed
- Highways and the bridges – underpass
- Lafayette Park or bridge under the Lafayette Bridge.
- Walking bridge over the from the Madrid towards downtown
- Historic neighborhoods that surround downtown, including: 1) El Tonto, 2) El Rincon Del Diablo, 3) El Cuatro, 4) El Trece, 5) La Ladrillera, 6) Canta Ranas, 7) Los Amores, 8) Sal si Puedes, 9) Siete Viejo, 10) La Guadalupe, 11) La Azteca , 12) St Peter’s , and 13) San Bernardo

**Citywide, what are priority sites for public art?****Mayor Saenz:**

- All areas need public art. We’re behind.
- The entry points of our bridges, the convention center, the airport, hospitals, and other public places.
- Places where people congregate.

**CM Torres (District 4)**

- Major corridors of downtown
- The places people from all over the city commute: I-35, the loop, Clark Boulevard, Saunders
- The bigger community parks, for example, North Central Park, which a lot of people go to.
- Our entertainment area, which would be our arena, and our baseball stadium
- Our bridges to showcase the gateway internationally would also be an area that I would prioritize.

**CM Martinez (District 6):**

- All of our public spaces need public art since we’re so behind: the entry points, the convention center, the airport and other public places.
- I think Downtown and the historic areas are high priorities, but I really think it should be equitable. We can put a little more emphasis in certain areas, key areas. But make sure that everybody’s getting something.

**CM Perez (District 7):**

- Downtown, Heights area, the river
- CM Cigarroa (District 8):
- Parks
- Chacon Creek
- Libraries

**6. Partners and Assets.** The City will need to collaborate with partners to develop and co-fund major public artworks. Partners can include community groups, companies, philanthropists, the college and university, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations.

**Who would be good partners in Laredo? What about potential co-funders?**

**CM Torres (District 4)**

- Laredo College and TAMIU
- Nixon and VMT
- Lilia Martinez Trust Fund, the Prairie Foundation
- Laredo Center for the Arts
- Bruni Vergara Foundation
- Sam Johnstone Trust

Corporation. That could incorporate public art into their discussions with new businesses looking to come to Laredo.

- The city's economic development department
- Our bus or metro system, the buses could be a good opportunity for some art.
- TAMIU and Laredo College

**CM Perez (District 7):**

- The county
- The school districts could be major players
- The Laredo Chamber of Commerce could get their members to get involved.
- The Laredo Economic Development

**CM Cigarroa (District 8):**

- Banks
- Hospitals
- Laredo Center for the Arts
- Philanthropic families

**What other assets for visual art, and public art specifically, can you identify in your District?**

**CM Torres (District 4)**

- Clark Boulevard and Saunders

**CM Martinez (District 6):**

- We have a lot of green spaces, and they should have artistic features added. Art doesn't just have to be paint or bronze or metal or wood. Green spaces can be beautified in an artistic way, where it captures people's imagination. Water and land are our assets.

**CM Perez (District 7):**

- The World Trade Bridge
- Columbia Bridge
- Avocados – major industry players are moving to Laredo
- Father McNaboe Park

**CM Cigarroa (District 8): *Citywide assets***

- Business Districts
- Cultural Districts
- San Bernardino – shopping
- The Riverfront
- Golf course on the riverfront
- Parks – they need more creative playgrounds

**7. CIP Projects.** The City of Laredo has established a “Percent for Art” program for capital improvement projects. It allocates 2% of eligible project costs for public art. The project types include all new city buildings, facilities, streets, parks, etc. For the past two years, this has generated an annual public art budget of about \$300,000 per year.

For FY2022, an Annual Public Plan will identify all projects for the use of these funds. There will be projects in each District, and a set of citywide projects, with the allocation generally following the geographic distribution in the CIP plan as a whole.

**What major CIP projects are coming forward in your District this fiscal, that you would suggest as good candidates for incorporating public art?**

**CM Torres (District 4)**

- The waterpark

**CM Martinez (District 6):**

- Roads – crosswalks, lighting, even the poles themselves can be painted.
- ADA Park

**CM Perez (District 7):**

- Connecting neighborhoods – ones that have one way in and one way out
- Skate Park
- Dog Park

**CM Cigarroa (District 8):**

- The basics – sidewalks, lighting
- Parks and Plazas

**Do you support the use of these funds for stand-alone Public Art Projects, so long as they meet the durability requirements for municipal capital improvements?**

**Mayor Saenz:**

- Equity is a conversation - some districts won't contain a convention center, or an airport. But yes, stand-alone public art projects at key locations are appropriate. We truly have to focus on adding public art to areas where people are gathering, in order to have more of an impact, so we may have to set some priorities. In these areas, public art makes the most sense as an investment, to capture minds and hearts.
- We have a lot of warehouses. Council could provide incentives or requirements, for warehouses to add public art in the entrance areas, public art on public-facing walls. We could require it from those who are asking for funds [or concessions] from the city.

**CM Torres (District 4)**

- I support using CIP funds for new CIP projects; If it's CIP funds that are being used to rehab and there's existing art, then it would be counterproductive to have that money tied there when there are areas that need [the vibrancy] art stimulates.

**CM Martinez (District 6):**

- As long as it's spread around the city, I don't mind waiting my turn if I need to.

**CM Perez (District 7):**

- Yes

**CM Cigarroa (District 8):**

- I'm not opposed to [aggregating funds for] one big project



**8. Community Trust.** A new City of Laredo “Art In Public Places Program” will need to earn the trust and confidence of all residents. This is especially important within the visual arts and cultural community.

**What does the city need to do to earn the trust of the community, as it establishes a public art program?**

**Mayor Saenz:**

- Input from early on – having meetings for example, where people have a voice and can hear different options of what is being proposed, especially in the districts where the art will be located.

**CM Torres (District 4)**

- We need to demonstrate to them that we we’re really committed funding to the arts.
- Showing the commitment, but also involving public input to ensure that they know where their tax dollars are going, that they know what is happening and most importantly, that they know that they have a say over the decision making of the designation of these dollars.

**CM Martinez (District 6):**

- Accountability of the funds.
- Affordability. Keep in mind creative freedom vs a commission. Giving artists creative freedom gets you more bang for your buck.
- Accessibility of the artwork.

**CM Perez (District 7):**

- Transparency
- Communication
- Community engagement – surveys, meeting people where they are
- Give people multiple ways to communicate their feedback – not everyone will attend a meeting, or not everyone will go online; some only read the newspaper; texts

**CM Cigarroa (District 8):**

- Being transparent and as accessible as possible, so by posting the process, the funds, the resources like having resources, online, hosting informative workshops about the program and even just the process of how to do these things.
- We have to make it not intimidating.

**9. Supporting Artists.** A city goal for the Public Art Program is to support, elevate, and grow the local artist community.

**In Laredo, what do artists need? How can a city public art program help them?**

**Mayor Saenz:**

- Artists need work, and recognition of their talents. They need this so that they stay in Laredo and make a living.

**CM Torres (District 4)**

- They need the encouragement that the city of Laredo supports local artists, and we have a budget that we can utilize to support them and be able to teach them
- We [should be] giving our locals an opportunity before we go with out-of-towners, to demonstrate to them that we value their artistic contributions to our community.

**CM Martinez (District 6):**

- Canvasses and monetary support.
- Creative freedom
- Encourage more art – provide incentives to private developers
- They need to feel engaged

**CM Perez (District 7):**

- Money – pay them; providing income
- Providing “exposure” for artists is not enough; public art should pay a living wage.

**CM Cigarroa (District 8):**

- Gallery space, exhibitions spaces, studio space
- Public Art workshops [to learn how to be competitive for public art commissions, and how to execute projects successfully]
- Large-scale art opportunities

**10. Artist Selection Process.** One of our assignments is to help city staff establish a standard process for selecting the artists to receive city commissions. Our firm is recommending that the City establish a process with the following characteristics. **Which of these do you support?**

- An open, competitive artist selection process that is fair and transparent?
- A process that prioritizes diversity, equity, and inclusion?
- Making some opportunities available only to local artists, both emerging and experienced, and making others open to Texas, national, and international artists?
- Establishing rigorous criteria to ensure that the city invests in high-quality public art?

**Mayor Saenz:**

- All of those. Obviously, that’s fair. But also keep in mind that, the quality – these artists need to prove themselves too.
- The process needs to be structured; artists need to exhibit professionalism.

**CM Torres (District 4)**

- I agree with all of those.

**CM Martinez (District 6):**

- I selected artists in my district through a selection process, working with Keep Laredo Beautiful. They set up a public art committee of 5 people of various backgrounds.

**CM Perez (District 7):**

- Prefer to keep it to local artists
- Emerging and experienced artists
- Rigorous criteria seems like a roadblock, but artists should definitely demonstrate their competency and their dedication; demonstrate that they have an understanding of how to properly create the art; provide a portfolio of work.
- Set clear expectations.
- Have a list of artists who didn’t fulfill their obligations.

**CM Cigarroa (District 8):**

- Agree with especially the first and last statements
- I think it’s important that the criteria be rigorous. But the City program also needs to help artists and make the process less intimidating.

**We have recommended a three-stage selection process.** [Described the process detailed in this master plan, which involves staff and an independent selection panel, then the Commission, then Council for major projects.]

- **How would you see this working best in Laredo?**
- **What is the most equitable approach?**

**CM Torres (District 4)**

- I see it working using the same process that we essentially utilize for any other type of bid.

**CM Martinez (District 6):**

- I agree with this process outlined.

**CM Perez (District 7):**

- Yes, and I agree that the Council Members should be kept informed.

**CM Cigarroa (District 8):**

- I think the process (outlined) would work great, as long as the selection committee reflects diversity and equity and is inclusive.

**What else would you like to tell us or be sure that we understand?**

**Mayor Saenz:**

- Program Sustainability is a priority. Once we launch the public art program, we need to sustain it.
- We have a few public artworks already, but I think we need to truly encourage more citywide.

**CM Torres (District 4)**

- No, I think you've covered at all.

**CM Martinez (District 6):**

- I am in full support of the master plan.

**CM Perez (District 7):**

- I really like the art ideas we discussed.

**CM Cigarroa (District 8):**

- I'm very excited and I can't wait to get the Public Art Program up and running.

## 2.5 Activating the Plan: Ongoing Community Dialogue

This master plan is just the beginning. After it is adopted, education about the plan and ongoing community dialogue will be needed. The City should actively engage community partners in implementing this public art vision for the city. This is critical to ensure that the plan is a living document that drives positive outcomes.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, and a limited budget, the community engagement during plan development was focused on the community survey and key cultural stakeholder interviews. When the City is ready to host in-person events, these will be beneficial to spark actions.

Toward that end, suggested topics have been provided to City staff and community leaders. We recommend Town Hall meetings at least annually about the master plan and progress on its implementation.

The community conversations should be organized by the City, or its designee, and co-hosted with community groups. If a large number of people are invited to public events, it's recommended that the format be an open house in which participants circulate among tables, dedicated to specific topics. If a session is limited to invited stakeholders, a facilitated discussion would be a recommended format.

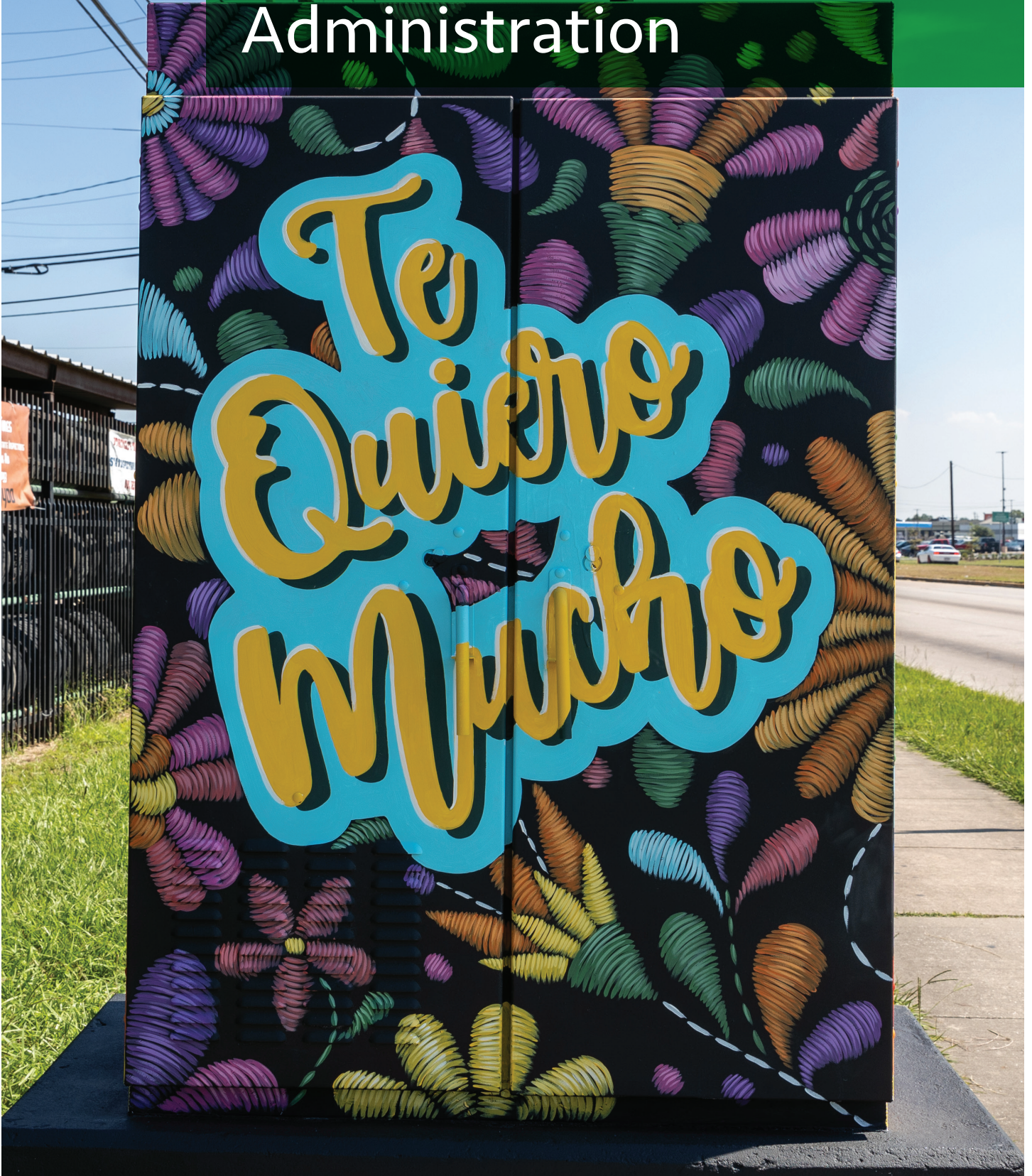
The city should assign an experienced public meeting planner and facilitator to be responsible for the meeting. Note takers should be engaged to record all comments. The comments will need to be transcribed and all of the feedback captured in a document. This document would then be provided to city staff and the Commission, to help inform master plan implementation and next steps.

**Please also see Section 3.4.A, “Working with the Community,” which contains recommendations for City staff on ongoing engagement.**





## Chapter 3. Program Administration





## Introduction

Establishing excellence in administration of the Public Art Program is essential, foundational work. In Year 1 of implementing this Master Plan, the energies of the City of Laredo should be focused on establishing sound practices and providing sufficient resources to manage an ambitious program of work for public art.

Like any municipal program, the Public Art Program is likely to require two years to be fully established. It should continue to develop and evolve over the next decade, as outlined in **Section 5. 10-Year Strategic Plan**. Most immediately, a set of specific public art projects need to be identified and initiated with the allocation provided in the current fiscal-year budget (and the unspent allocated funds from prior years). The standards and processes for these projects should fully adhere to the policies contained in this Master Plan.

### About the Administrative Policies and Guidelines

This chapter contains a set of policies and guidelines for managing and administering the Public Art Program and Public Art funds. They are based on Best Practices in governmental Art in Public Places (Public Art) programs, Laredo's current status and needs, and the consultant's experience. Upon the adoption of this Master Plan by City Council, they become the adopted policies of the City of Laredo. At least annually, they should be reviewed and updated as best practices evolve.

### Evolving Towards Excellence

Annually, City staff and management should review what's working, what's not, and identify areas for attention. City procedures, practices, and ordinance will need occasional updates to best support the Vision, Mission, and Goals contained in the Master Plan.

Every 5 years, at a minimum, the City should review and update this plan and the policies it contains. A Master Plan provides long-term guidance, but it is a living document that should reflect evolving visions, opportunities, and priorities. Making the plan real, and realizing the vision, is the shared responsibility of elected officials, City staff, and the people of Laredo.

... Have all types of public art represented in Laredo. From murals to sculptures, to plays, to concerts. ... We have so many traditional artists, musicians, and poets that leave Laredo for bigger opportunities and it is important that Laredoans feel they can accomplish anything here.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent

## 3.1 Initial Status Evaluation: Public Art Program in Laredo

*Note: The material that follows was provided to city staff by the consultants in Spring of 2021, in a series of interim reports.*

In October 2019, the City of Laredo established a funding source for public art, and a set of policies for the administration and oversight of a City public art program and collection, through **City Ordinance 2019-O-177**. This was a positive, forward-thinking, and historic first step.

In FY2020, the City began to commission artworks to be incorporated into the City Public Art Collection. In addition, elected officials directed the creation of the Laredo Public Art Master Plan. The scope of work for the Master Plan recognized the need to further define a city program and its goals.

By early 2021, when work on the Master Plan began, the City had not yet established a formal City program, adequate administrative practices and funding allocations, or other resources required to manage the Public Art Program and the Public Art Collection. These have therefore been a focus area.

### FOUNDATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Development of the Laredo Public Art Master Plan (LAMP) began in March 2021. The consultant's initial tasks focused on an assessment of the current status of the program. This resulted in a set of initial recommendations that the Master Plan development process focus on establishing sustainable practices for Public Art Program administration, based on national Best Practices.

City Ordinance 2019-O-177 established and delineated City policies for the Public Art Program – inclusive of Purpose, Definitions, Funding, Use of Monies, Administration, Artist Selection Process, City Art Collection (Selected Works of Art, Ownership and Maintenance), and the role of the Fine Arts and Culture Commission. It was adopted October 21, 2019; it is included in this plan as an Appendix.

However, few of the policies and fiscal and administrative practices set forth in the ordinance had been implemented to date. This was primarily due to a lack of staff capacity and expertise. No staff or contracted resources were in place. The Public Art Program and its administration were established in name only. The role, duties and powers of the Fine Arts and Culture Commission were unclear to commissioners, staff, and elected officials.

As the consultant began working with city staff to develop this plan, significant time was devoted to advising staff on the meaning and significance of City Ordinance-O-177. In working with the consultants to develop this master plan -- and the policies, procedures, and best practices it contains -- City staff have made progress in establishing basic administration for the new program.

Below are key points from the initial status assessment. This information, with follow-on consulting and recommendations, was provided by the consultant to city staff in March, April, and May of 2021.

## Funding      Sec. 17-43

City Ordinance 2019-O-177 required the allocation of “**2% for Public Art**,” from the city’s annual Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) Program, applicable to the construction costs of eligible projects.

Other funding sources, including Hotel Occupancy Taxes, were permitted and allowed.

**Status:** An initial appropriation for the Public Art Program was applied to a portion of the city’s CIP program. In Fiscal Year 2020, \$300,000 had been appropriated. However, the method of calculation, fiscal practices, establishment of the city’s Public Art Account, use of monies, and method of distributing the funds did not fully conform to the requirements of the ordinance.

Some Capital Improvement Projects that qualified under the ordinance, for the 2% for Art allocation, had not yet had the funds allocated and transferred into designated Public Art Accounts.

Funds had been transferred to individual City Council offices to expend. This fiscal approach did not conform to the Ordinance. Some of the funds had been spent on public art projects, by each Council Office in their Districts; some funds remained unspent, with no specific projects planned or executed.

## Use of Monies      Sec. 17-44

The Ordinance allows “15% of the total annual public art appropriation to be expended for the administrative costs of the Public Art Program.” (e) This funding allocation had not been implemented.

As a result, no funds were available to provide staff to administer the program.

## Administration      Sec. 17-45 to 17-48

The Ordinance delineated the desired policies for program administration. Few of them had yet been implemented. The Program was assigned to the Director of the Library Department; however, the Director had not been provided with the essential resources, staffing, training, or professional development opportunities necessary to fulfill the duties defined. The Director was to act “collaboratively” with the Fine Arts and Culture Commission. However, the volunteer Commissioners also lacked the resources, time, staff, training, or budget authority to carry out these duties. The delineation of specific roles and responsibilities between City staff and Commissioners was unclear.

As a result, the Public Art Program had not progressed in compliance with City policy. Confusion was evident as to the roles, duties, and powers of the respective involved parties – City staff, the City Commission, elected officials, and the citizenry.

The key program administration responsibilities and requirements defined in the ordinance are sound. They include:



## Key Duties

- Provide **appropriate staffing** and administrative support of the Public Art Program
- Establish **program policies, guidelines, and budget**
- Provide an **Annual Report** on the activities of the Public Art Program, to include fiscal reporting
- Provide an **Annual Public Art Plan**, describing the projects to be initiated in the following Fiscal Year, as well as a status report on projects in process.
- Establish practices and criteria, and provide oversight, for the **selection of artists and works of art**
- Management of the **Artist Selection Process** and **Artwork Selection and Siting** determinations
- Oversight of **artist proposals** for commissioned artworks, design concepts, siting, and suitability
- **Oversight** of the physical **Public Art Collection**, including acquisitions, sites, survey of condition, repairs and maintenance, conservation, artistic breadth and diversity, and removal of works
- Develop recommendations for **additional funding sources**, and management of funds and uses
- **Community education**, engagement, and awareness activities related to the public art collection
- Staff liaison to the **Fine Arts and Culture Commission**, in order to provide ongoing reports, information and training and to obtain Commission review and votes on key actions. These include reviews of the Annual Report, Annual Public Art Plan, Artist Selections, Artwork Selections, and public information and community engagement practices.



## 3.2 Recommendations for Update to Ordinance

**City Ordinance 2019-O-177** established the Public Art Program, the policies for its administration, and the funding mechanism of an allocation of “2% for Art” from eligible City of Laredo capital improvement projects in late 2019.

**Overall, it is a strong and comprehensive ordinance and should continue to serve as a guide for city practices.** To be consistent with the Laredo Public Art Master Plan (LAMP), specific passages within the ordinance should be updated. Below are recommended updates. The language recommended will provide: Greater clarity overall and alignment with the Master Plan; better alignment with the city’s capital improvement program, and the City’s CIP fiscal and project management practices; updated language, to align with LAMP, on the roles and duties respectively of staff, elected officials, and Commissioners.

**Legal Note:** The recommended edits and updates below should be reviewed by the Legal Department of the City, to ensure that an ordinance revision uses language that is legally accurate and enforceable.

### Section 1

**Assignment to City Department.** The Ordinance assigns the program to the Library Department and its Director. The City has since determined that the program can be more successful and is a better fit within the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB). The CVB Director has already taken on this assignment. As these determinations change from time to time, the following edits are recommended:

- State that the program will be assigned to a Department Director designated by the City Manager.
- Replace references to “Library Director” with “Department Director” or “Public Art Program Manager” in the body of the ordinance.

**Comment:** *The City Manager suggested the approach above, without naming the CVB specifically*



## 17-42. Definitions

**Capital Improvement Project.** Additional detail is recommended in the list of eligible project types, to align more clearly to the categories used by the City in its capital improvement program plan.

Recommend editing the list of eligible capital improvement project types to read:

... to construct, improve, or renovate “the following project types, initiated by any City department or partner agency: All buildings and their related facilities; other above-ground structures; parks, recreational and sports facilities; trails, plazas, greenspace, and related facilities; the transportation system (including airport, bridge, roadway, street, transit, streetscape and corridor beautification, sidewalk, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, right-of-way improvements, utility cabinets, parking facilities); above-ground water, wastewater, and other utility structures and improvements” or any portion thereof ...

*Comment: This list is consistent with the intent of the Ordinance. Stating a more comprehensive list of project types will assure consistency in future staff determinations of projects to which the 2% for Art allocation applies.*

**Construction Cost.** The total construction cost figure to which the 2% for Art allocation applies. “Includes the total budget for design costs and construction costs. Excludes real property acquisition costs. At its discretion, the City may exclude demotion, equipment, and major maintenance costs.”

*Comment: The City breaks out line items for design and for construction costs, for CIP projects. It applies the 2% for Art allocation to both, as stated in the edited text above. The Ordinance should state “design costs and construction costs” to remove any ambiguity. For ease of fiscal tracking, the exclusions should be rare and optional.*

**Work of Art or Artwork.** Means “any original work of visual art, in any style or medium. Includes unique artworks of the following types: two-dimensional, three-dimensional, multimedia, sensory, landscape, architectural, site-based, streetscape amenities, and unique creative elements of buildings and facilities. A visual artwork may be permanent and temporary, interior and exterior. Creation of the artwork typically requires artist participation and services throughout all planning, design, and construction phases of a capital improvement project. The performing and literary arts are excluded, except as they are integrated into a work of visual art. Mass-produced decorative art and interior decor is excluded. The standard services of professional graphic or environmental designers are excluded.”

*Comment: The current language does not align sufficiently with CIP projects and their artwork opportunities. Adds language from later in the Ordinance about exclusions.*

... We need public art throughout the City; in public and private spaces.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent

### 17-43. Funding.

For clarification of implementation, edit as follows:

“For the funding of public art, the City shall allocate 2% of the Construction Costs for all eligible Capital Improvement Projects. This allocation shall be known as “2% for Art” monies. It applies to all projects funded wholly or in part by the City of Laredo, whether through general obligation bonds, revenue bonds, certificates of obligation, or other sources. The “2% for Art” allocation applies to the City funding provided for major infrastructure projects co-funded by other governmental agencies, programs, or grants. It also applies to Capital Improvement Project monies provided to the City by developers and other sources.

*Comment: The existing language is silent on projects co-funded by other sources. It is consistent to the Ordinance intent to apply the 2% allocation to the city funding for such projects. These may be monies obtained from developers, grants, and other sources.*

- (d) Add “through adoption of the Annual Public Art Plan” related plan amendments.
- (e) Delete “but not necessary by the City Council in total or in part for the project” and replace with “if it does not meet the criteria for a visible, accessible, priority site for public artwork”

*Comment: This language is consistent with the Administration section of the Ordinance. Reference to the City Council is confusing here and should be removed.*

- (f) Change references to Library Department, per above

**17-44 Use of Monies.** Add: “They may be used for informational plaques, interpretative signage, and other permanently installed features to assist the public in identifying and experiencing the artwork.”

*Comment: Public art requires signage. This is a best practice in Art in Public Places Programs.*

- (d) Add “For city buildings, ...”
- (e) Edit to read: “Fifteen percent of the total annual allocation for public art from the Capital Improvement Program **shall be transferred** to the Public Art Administration Fund. This shall occur at the **start of each fiscal year**. Allowable uses of this fund include **all expenditures related to managing and delivering public art projects**. Examples include, but are not limited to, program staff, consultants, third-party contracts, materials and supplies, community outreach and engagement functions, communications and education activities, insurance, and **other standard expenses for capital improvement project planning, execution, and delivery**. Unspent monies may be carried over to future fiscal years, as projects typically require multiple years to execute.

*Comment: The edited text states more clearly the policies and procedures recommended in this master plan. Annual automatic transfer of the 15% is a best practice in Art in Public Places Programs. The Ordinance allows the 15% transfer currently. As CIP projects, public art projects may allow an administrative fee for project management.*



## 17-45. Administration

Change “Director of the Library Department” to “the Department Director selected by the City Manager.” Add: “The Director shall oversee a Public Art Program Manager responsible for day-to-day duties of the program.”

Change “the Fine Arts and Culture Commission, activating in cooperation with the Library Director” to “the **assigned Department Director** or their designee”. Add as the first in the list of duties: “1. Brief and confer with the Fine Arts and Culture Commission Monthly. All briefings and potential actions presented to the City Council shall first be brought to the Commission for its input, review, and recommendations. The volunteer Commission shall be actively engaged for its input, visual art expertise, community relationships, and other support of the work of the Public Art Program.”

*Comment: The existing wording in the Ordinance has created confusion about the powers and duties of the Commission. It is the duty of City staff to manage and administer the City program and expend city funds. This role cannot be filled by a volunteer citizen commission. Commissioners can only review and recommend. The text as edited above describes the policies and process laid out in the Master Plan.*

9. Edit to read: “Make recommendations for additional sources of City funds for public art. Include funding recommendations in the Annual Public Art Plan and budget, which is subject to City Council approval. **Actively work to obtain outside grants, contributions, and partners for public art.**”

*Comment: This wording is clearer and consistent with the policies in the Public Art Master Plan.*

## Section 17-46. Selection Process.

**To be consistent with LAMP, this section needs to be rewritten as follows:**

- (a) “The Department Director and Public Art Program Manager shall oversee an Artist Selection Process that is fair, standardized, equitable, publicly communicated, and designed to select the most qualified artist for each opportunity. This process shall utilize a well-qualified, impartial Artist Selection Panel in the manner set forth in the Laredo Public Art Master Plan. The process includes review by the Fine Arts and Culture Commission of the Panel’s recommendation.”
- (b) All public art projects listed in the Annual Public Art Plan shall follow the standardized Artist Selection Process. A Call for Artists shall be issued and the opportunity broadly communicated for all artwork commissions and purchases.
- (c) The Department responsible for the associated capital improvement project, or other artwork site, shall be consulted and invited to name a representative to the Artist Selection Panel.

*Comment: These edits are necessary to be consistent with the policies in the Public Art Master Plan.*

## Section 17-47. Permanent Artwork Sites

### Recommended language:

All artworks that become part of the City Collection must be sited on City property. Exceptions may be made in cases where a site on private property affords an exceptional opportunity for public visibility; in these cases, the private property owner must contractually agree to maintain the artwork onsite for at least 10 years.

All artworks funded with Capital Improvement Project monies, funded through bonds or certificates of obligation, shall be permanent installations with an expected life cycle consistent with that of other capital improvement project materials, fixtures, and finishes. Artworks funded with other sources may be permanent or temporary.

*Comment: (a) is simplified to its essence. (b) provides more specific guidance, appropriate to the nature of artwork, that references the lifespan of materials, fixtures and finishes. (c) some works already commissioned by the City are on private property.*

## Section 17-48. Ownership and Maintenance

(c) Change “manual” to “worksheet.”



## Section 2 Commission

**Global Recommendation:** Change the name of the Commission to “Cultural Arts Commission.” This creates alignment with a future Cultural Arts Plan, a future municipal program of Cultural Arts Grants, and a potential future Cultural Arts Division. The term “Fine Arts” is perceived by some people to be exclusionary and academic. It can be perceived to exclude traditional cultural art forms that do not require formal education, self-taught artists and musicians, grassroots street art or theater, some forms of public art, and other creative expression.

240 (d.) Add “public art” to the experience fields listed. Add: “At least four members shall have experience with visual art, with knowledge of the field of public art.”

*Comment: This expertise on the Commission is necessary to carry out the duties of the Commission in the LAMP.*

- (f) Commission members must **recuse themselves from votes** on matters where they have a direct or perceived financial interest or conflict of interest. This includes votes on the awarding of contracts, commissions, or city monies to an organization or company of which the Board member is an employee, owner, officer, or board member.

*Comment: This provision as written would exclude many qualified potential Commissioners, including individuals who currently serve on the Commission. As there is a very limited pool of qualified persons in Laredo, this is not in the best interests of the city. Per LAMP, the Commissioners do NOT directly distribute funds or select the organizations that receive city monies. They take votes only to review and recommend. The final decisions rest with city staff and elected officials. Therefore, the ethical bar can be met by requiring that commissioners recuse themselves from specific votes where they have a conflict of interest.*

### Sec. 2-241 Duties and Powers

- (c) In order to be consistent with LAMP, this section should be updated to read as follows:
  - (1) Actively promote City-funded public art opportunities to local artists. Help to publicize and encourage applications to Call for Artist, commission, artwork purchase, and grant opportunities.
  - 5) Regularly advise the city on its Public Art Program, as detailed in the Laredo Public Art Master Plan. Actively track and review progress in implementing the master plan. Actively seek out and recommend resources, partners, and potential sources of outside funding for public art in Laredo.
- (d) Review, recommend, and vote on adoption of the Annual Public Art Plan and the individual public art projects it contains. The Commission has the power and duty to review and vote on recommendations for all individual artworks intended to enter the City of Laredo Public Art Collection. Review and vote on acceptance of the Annual Report for the Public Art Program. Fulfill other specific duties detailed in the Laredo Public Art Master Plan.

*Comment: These edits are necessary to make the Ordinance consistent with the policies in the Public Art Master Plan, and the role, powers and duties it describes.*



### 3.3 Public Art Program Manager

The creation of this position, and acting to fill it with a qualified professional, is a top recommendation and priority Year 1 action item within this Master Plan.

Towards that end, the consultant provided to staff the following statement of need and draft job description in the fall of 2021. The language in the job description below was drafted by the consultant; it will require internal reviews, edits, and approval for use as an official City job posting.

#### Public Art Program Manager (Interim)

##### Fiscal Year 2022

**Position Type:** Permanent Full-Time Employee, City of Laredo, TX

**Interim Position:** Contracted consultant and/or or temporary staff position

**Timeframe:** Immediately. Services are needed in FY2022 (Oct. 1, 2021 to Sept. 30, 2022)

**Required Experience & Knowledge:** Visual art and public art expertise; administration and start-up of a municipal program; project management of Public Art Projects; specific duties and tasks listed below. Understanding of best practices in public art programs, procedures, practices, and fiscal management.

##### Duties and Tasks

The duties performed under each task shall be scoped to correspond to the available budget, under minimal supervision. At a minimum, they include:

- Fulfill the duties of the Public Art Program Manager for the City of Laredo, under the direction of Aileen Ramos, CVB Director, as detailed in the Laredo Public Art Master Plan.
- Assist the Department Director in carrying out all Public Art Program duties as required by City Ordinance 2019-O-177, for program administration and delivery.
- Assist the Department Director in implementation of the city's Annual Public Art Plan, including project management of the individual public art projects it contains.
- For multiple significant projects, key duties include: Manage the Call for Artists, Artist Selection Process, required City approvals, budget and schedule, community engagement, oversight of the contracted artist, project delivery in coordination with the Engineering Department and other City departments, quality assurance, and public information.
- Advise and consult on public art projects integrated into the CIP program and funded with city funds, to help ensure that the public art project components will progress on time and on budget, to meet the requirements of the Engineering department and sponsoring departments.
- Upon City Council adoption of the Laredo Public Art Master Plan (LAMP), manage or assist with the Top Priority Tasks it lists for Year 1 implementation of the Plan.
- Provide coordination of day-to-day tasks and communication required for implementation.
- For public art sites in Laredo, participate in site analysis and project planning
- Prepare and train the City of Laredo, community nonprofits, contractors, and community partners to implement LAMP and administer the Public Art Program



## Job Description (DRAFT)

### Public Art Program Manager (Permanent Position)

#### Position Summary

The City of Laredo is seeking a knowledgeable, energetic, charismatic, and detail-oriented professional for the new position of Public Art Program Manager. This professional will establish and administer all aspects of the city's new Public Art Program, under the direction of the Convention and Visitors Bureau Director. The Program Manager is responsible for implementing all policies, best practices, and program administration responsibilities detailed in the Laredo Public Art Master Plan. Creative problem solving, a positive attitude, flexibility, and a commitment to continuous improvement are necessary to start-up and evolve a dynamic and successful public art program.

As the sole City employee dedicated to start-up of the program, the Program Manager requires a well-rounded skill set to carry out diverse position responsibilities – which includes creative vision, plan implementation, partnering, project management and delivery, collection management, and community engagement. This position will have primary day-to-day responsibility for managing the implementation of the city's "2% for Art" program, which is funded through the city's Capital Improvement Project program. In addition, this position will assist the CVB Director with administration of other arts and culture projects and contracts, to be funded with hotel occupancy taxes and other sources. Performs all of the essential functions and meets responsibilities as listed below.

#### Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

- Knowledge of principles and best practices in public art and the visual arts. Demonstrated ability with the administration of a public art program and project delivery preferred.
- Knowledge of the principles and best practices of project management, with demonstrated ability managing the delivery of similar projects
- Knowledge of public art project design process, plans, conceptual/schematic drawings, construction documents, project specifications, and bid documents
- Knowledge of the principles and practices of artist selection and contracting, for public art projects
- Demonstrated ability to provide community engagement, public information, marketing-communications, and media engagement
- Knowledge of standard database use and reporting methods, techniques, and procedures.
- Knowledge of principles related to properly executing a city procurement contract, purchasing, issuing an RFP, bidding and contract procedures.
- Ability to understand Capital Improvement Projects, including detailed design plans, drawings, sketches, and architectural renderings. Ability to read and interpret project maps, plans, and blueprints.
- Ability to provide reports and professional presentations to executive leadership, boards and commissions, citizen groups, and elected officials.
- Demonstrated ability to manage an annual program budget and individual project budgets.

- Ability to follow a construction plan from bidding through completion phases.
- Ability to communicate clearly and concisely to coordinate the efforts of multiple parties.
- Ability to present ideas and projects to individuals with little knowledge of public art.
- Ability to produce specifications, reports, and correspondence.
- Ability to relate to, lead and motivate teams and diverse people; to establish and maintain positive and effective working relationships with co-workers and management; and to serve as a program liaison to the general public.
- Demonstrated ability to engage partners and secure funding; grant writing experience preferred.
- Ability to communicate clearly and effectively, both orally and in writing, in the English language; bilingual fluency in Spanish language preferred.
- Ability to perform all the physical requirements of the position.
- Ability to travel independently to project sites throughout the city of Laredo
- Required to comply with the highest ethical standards and all City of Laredo policies and procedures.
- Skill in utilizing a personal computer and Microsoft Office suite programs; CAD and GIS knowledge preferred
- Ability to positively and professionally represent the City of Laredo.
- Ability to maintain good health and physical condition sufficient to perform the duties of the position.

### **Essential Functions and Responsibilities**

- Serves as the public face and voice of the Public Art Program for the City of Laredo.
- Inspires, motivates, leads, and coordinates others to understand and help to realize the community benefits of public art projects.
- Prepares the Annual Report, Annual Plan, Annual Budget, and quarterly workplan.
- Implements the Strategic 10-Year Plan for Public Art, engaging all necessary partners, under minimal supervision.
- Manages all essential program processes, as detailed in the Laredo Public Art Master Plan, including: Site and project identification, public art project identification, issuing Calls for Artists, oversight of Artist Selection Panels, procurement and contracting with selected artists.
- Manages the planning, design, and delivery of projects and the public art components of Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) in collaboration with other city departments.
- Responsible for Collection Management and ongoing maintenance of inventory database.
- Assists with creating an online gallery of the city art collection on the City of Laredo website.

- Responsible for coordinating ongoing maintenance and conservation of the City of Laredo public art collection.
- Secures and coordinates community partners and public art sponsors and funders.
- Leads public engagement with citizens, artists, nonprofit visual arts organizations, key arts and culture stakeholders; knowledge of the Laredo community or similar preferred.
- Serves as Staff Liaison to the Fine Arts and Culture Commission; provides monthly briefings to the Commission and other groups as requested.
- Responds to requests from the media, citizens and elected officials.
- Assists with administration of other arts and culture projects, including Cultural Art Contracts, funded with hotel occupancy taxes and other sources.
- Develops graphics and visual presentations to communicate program plans and concepts to citizens, city officials, and others, and to represent the program on the city's website.
- Other duties as required.

#### **Minimum Qualifications**

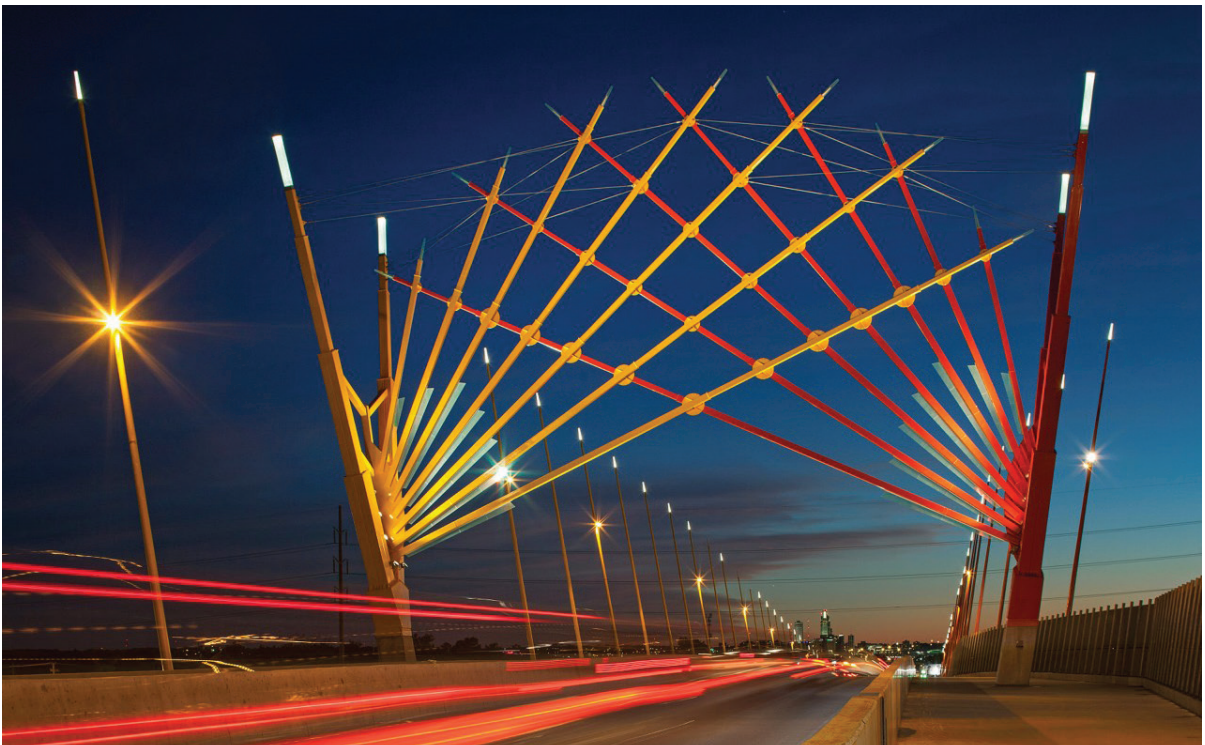
Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or university in a related field

-OR -

Four (4) years of related professional experience may substitute for academic credentials

-AND-

At least four (4) years of related professional experience with a public art program, nonprofit visual arts organization, administering a governmental program similar in scope, managing a business or company in the arts sector, or other relevant experience with similar duties and functions.



## 3.4 Administrative Policies and Guidelines

### DEFINITIONS

The field of public art has its own terminology and language. To understand some of the more technical discussions, it is helpful to learn (or review) key terms and their definitions, as they are being used by the City of Laredo.

All readers of this master plan are encouraged to read through the definitions below, prior to reading Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

### Public Art Program

<b>“Public Art”</b>	Visual artworks sited in accessible public spaces, intended to benefit the public. Public Art includes stand-alone artworks created for a specific site (“site-specific”) and artist-created elements that are integrated into the architecture of a building (interior or exterior), a landscape or site, or infrastructure project. Public artworks may be temporary or permanent. Excludes performing arts.
<b>“Artwork”</b>	An original, unique aesthetic creation in any medium by an artist or artist team. Does not include decorative, mass-produced items such as posters. May include artworks created as part of a numbered and signed limited edition, such as a lithograph.
<b>“Artist”</b>	An individual who creates original, unique works of visual art and is recognized as a professional practitioner.
<b>“Civic Art Collection”</b>	The collection of permanent public artworks funded and owned by the City of Laredo, on behalf of its citizens. Does not include temporary artworks (those intended to have a life of less than 10 years) or work on loan to the City for public display.
<b>“Public Art Program Manager”</b>	The City of Laredo staff member responsible for the management and administration of the Public Art Program, and all its activities. Reports to Department Director and City Manager, who assist the Program Manager in implementing the Laredo Public Art Master Plan. Provides briefings and assistance to the Fine Arts and Culture Commission.
<b>“Public Art Program”</b>	The municipal program responsible for all City of Laredo duties and activities related to public art. Core elements include community engagement and education; the Annual Public Art Plan and Annual Reports; the convening and oversight of Artist Selection Panels; the planning, commissioning, project management and delivery of all city-funded public artworks; oversight of the Civic Art Collection; and other related administrative duties. Advised by the Fine Arts and Culture Commission.



## Capital Improvement Projects

The following “plain English” definitions apply to public artworks funded through the Capital Improvement Program. Please also see the legal language in City Ordinance 2019-O-177 or its successor ordinance(s).

<b>“2% for Art”</b>	The allocation for public art from a Capital Improvement Project budget, equal to 2% of the total construction cost budget, for an Eligible CIP Project.
<b>“Construction Cost”</b>	For the purposes of the “2% for Art” allocation, this is defined by Ordinance as the total City-funded portion of a Capital Improvement Project; includes design and construction phases; excludes costs for equipment, demolition, major maintenance, and land acquisition.
<b>“Capital Improvement Project (CIP)”</b>	A new construction, expansion, renovation, or replacement project for a city-owned building, facility, asset, or infrastructure. Project costs can include land, engineering, architectural planning and design, and other contract services. Due to the fact that these projects are funded by bonds or other debt, the project must be a permanent improvement with a useful life of at least 20 years, or the bond term. A Capital Project may also be a purchase of major equipment, a major maintenance or rehabilitation project for existing facilities, or a major stand-alone public artwork; these three project types must have a useful life of at least 10 years. All projects funded for a given fiscal year are included in the City-Council-approved Annual CIP Plan; all identified future projects (funded and unfunded) are included in the approved 5-Year CIP Plan, which is updated annually.
<b>“Eligible CIP Project”</b>	A project for which the “2% for Art” budget allocation is required, per City Ordinance 2019-O-177. Eligible CIP Projects are those funded wholly or in part by monies appropriated by the city; these projects are listed in the City of Laredo Capital Improvement Plans (Annual Plan and 5-Year Plan). The specific project types are identified as eligible by the Ordinance: “construct, improve, or renovate a building, including its appurtenant facilities, a decorative or commemorative structure, a park, a street, a sidewalk, a parking facility, a utility, or any portion thereof, within the city limits or under the jurisdiction of the city.” Excludes below-ground improvements (e.g. water and wastewater), and Capital projects that are the solely the purchase of equipment, land acquisition, or major maintenance of existing facilities.
<b>“Final Design and Construction Documents”</b>	The phase of a public art project, included within a larger Capital Improvement Project, in which the artist finalizes the artwork’s design, placement, installation specifications, and cost estimate. For architectural and landscape architecture projects, the final documentation may need to be prepared/reviewed and stamped by a licensed engineer.

## Collection Management

<b>“Accession”</b>	The act of adding or acquiring a unique, original work of art into the Civic Art Collection through a commission, a purchase, or the acceptance of an artwork donation.
<b>“Deaccession”</b>	The act of permanently removing an artwork from the Civic Art Collection
<b>“Acquisition”</b>	An artwork that is acquired through the act of accession.
<b>“Maintenance”</b>	The acts of routine care and maintenance of artworks (e.g. cleaning, polishing, changing light bulbs, lubrication of moving parts, periodic reapplication of protective coatings, minor graffiti removal).
<b>“Conservation”</b>	The examination, documentation, recommendation, and actions for the treatment and preventative care of artwork; conducted by a professional art conservator. Includes major repairs or restorations, including those caused by accidents or vandalism.
<b>“Donation”</b>	An artwork gifted to the City for its Civic Art Collection. Proposed donations must be reviewed, approved, and accepted by the City. Includes gifts from an individual, institution or other outside source.
<b>“Donor”</b>	An individual or entity that donates an artwork or makes a monetary contribution to the Public Art Fund.
<b>“Loan”</b>	An artwork temporarily provided to the City for public exhibition on City property, for a defined loan period of time. Proposals for the loan of artworks must be reviewed and accepted by the City.



## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Summarized below are the Public Art Program roles, responsibilities, duties and powers of each City of Laredo entity. It is essential that each party understand, adhere to, and fulfill its role, for smooth administration of a well-regarded and successful program.

### Citizens of Laredo

- Advocate for quality public art in Laredo, and assist in its creation
- Elect officials who support public art; make elected officials aware of issues and concerns
- Follow the proceedings of the Laredo Fine Arts and Culture Commission, where the public art program is discussed each month
- Participate in opportunities to help shape the Civic Art Collection, including serving on Selection Panels and providing community input for major public art projects
- Track the implementation of this Master Plan, and assist in realizing its vision

### Mayor and City Council

Elected officials are primarily responsible for policy and fiscal actions. They direct the City Manager to administer the program and its day-to-day responsibilities.

#### Role and Responsibilities

- Develop, update, and vote on ordinances and other policy actions related to public art
- Review and approve funding mechanisms and annual City budget allocations
- Nominate and approve members of the Fine Arts and Culture Commission
- Approve the Annual Public Art Plan (includes budget, list of projects)
- Approve the Public Art Annual Report
- Approve procurements over \$50,000
- Approve accession and deaccession of public artworks to/from the City's collection
- Approve gifts and long-term loans of art to the City
- Communicate monthly with selected Fine Arts and Culture Commissioner
- Communicate about the public art program with constituents (in each Council District)
- Direct the City Manager to pursue policy initiatives; communicate constituent interests

### City Manager

The City Manager oversees the day-to-day operations of the City, and is responsible for the work of all city staff and departments. The City Manager's Office includes Assistant City Managers, who will serve as liaisons for the Public Art Program.

#### Role and Responsibilities

- Oversee, direct and approve the Public Art Program, its projects, and budget
- Provide the staff and other resources necessary for a successful program and projects
- Annually, ensure progress in implementation of the Laredo Public Art Master Plan (10-Year Horizon)
- Ensure appropriate management of the Civic Art Collection
- Approve contracts up to \$50,000, including artist contracts
- Liaison with Department Director responsible for the Public Art Program

### Department Director

- Directs all Public Art Program administration, activities, fiscal matters, and project delivery.
- Final review/approval of Project Plans, Concept Designs, and Final Designs for public art projects

See City Ordinance 2019-O-177 (APPENDIX) for a detailed list of key duties.

### Public Art Program Manager

The Program Manager is the staff person responsible for day-to-day operations and administration of the program, under supervision of the Department Director. This includes ongoing management of the civic art collection. The Program Manager is responsible for the key functions described below, for which the Commission serves as a community advisory board.

See **Section 3.3 Public Art Program Manager** for a detailed list of recommended job duties.

The Program Manager actively supports the Commission in fulfilling its advisory duties, below. This includes providing ongoing education and training to Commissioners in the LAMP, at least annually.

### Fine Arts and Culture Commission

As an official City advisory commission, the City of Laredo Fine Arts and Culture Commission is intended to have impact and authority. The overall charge of City Commissioners is to connect citizens, city staff, and elected officials and to ensure that the public's voice is heard on important civic issues. Its posted public meetings provide transparency and an opportunity for citizen comments and dialogue.

Each Commissioner is named by a Council Member of the Mayor. Commissioners are responsible for keeping their corresponding elected official up to date on matters before the Commission.

With respect to the city's Public Art Program, the duties and powers of the Fine Arts and Culture Commission were established by City Ordinance 2019-O-177. Relative to the duties of city staff, key responsibilities are clarified below.

**Annual Public Art Plan.** City staff will develop the plan and present it to the Commission for review and comment. The Commission votes on whether to endorse the Annual Public Art Plan, which includes an annual budget for the public art program.

**"2% for Art" Funding for Public Artwork.** Review and vote on the "Call for Artists" process, and selection and evaluation criteria, through which artists may apply for opportunities to receive City public art program commissions. Actively promote opportunities and encourage qualified artists and organizations to apply.

**Artist Selections.** City staff will administer a public process to select artists for City public art commissions, utilizing an independent Artist Selection Panel and objective selection criteria, with Commission oversight. The Commission will vote on whether to endorse the artist recommended by the panel, for each major public art commission.

**Selection Panels.** The Commission will review and make recommendations on the process for convening Selection Panels; the evaluation criteria used in making selections; and the resulting recommendations. This applies to open Call for Artist applications (for opportunities to create permanent public artworks) and to applications to receive Cultural Arts Grants (with HOT Funding).

**Cultural Arts Grants (HOT Fund Expenditures).** Annually, the Commission is recommended to confer, review and vote on 1) Current fiscal year City budget for Cultural Arts Grants; 2) Public outreach plan to encourage a broad diversity of applications, 3) the grant application and review process, as created and administered by City Staff, 4) list of applicants selected by city staff as current fiscal year Cultural Arts Grant recipients. As a body, the Commission votes on these items.



**Recommendations for Projects, Funding, and Locations.** The Commission primarily fulfills this duty through its review and discussion of the Annual Public Art Plan, and its vote to endorse the plan. It may help to recommend and develop opportunities for the coming fiscal year as well. In addition, the Commission may work with private entities to advance public art activities that are not projects of the City of Laredo.

(See City Ord. No. 2017-O-087 , § 1, 8-4-17; Ord. No. 2019-O-177 , § 2, 10-21-19)



## A. WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY

### The Commission

Commissioners are community volunteers who are knowledgeable and passionate about the arts. As appointed City Officials, they can provide an extremely valuable link between the public, elected officials, and city staff. The City should provide training and strong support to the Commission. Likewise, the Commissioners should serve as the eyes and ears of the community. Please see discussion of the duties, powers, and role of the Commission in the preceding chapters.

**Recommendation:** Change the name of the Commission to “Cultural Arts Commission.” This creates alignment with a future Cultural Arts Plan, a future municipal program of Cultural Arts Grants, and a potential future Cultural Arts Division. In addition, the term “Fine Arts” is more academic, and may seem to exclude self-taught artists and musicians, street art or theater, traditional cultural arts that do not require formal education, and other grassroots creative efforts.

### Supporting Local Artists

Laredo has a diverse group of local visual artists, as well as a rich cultural tradition of visual arts and crafts from both sides of the border. However, the community is in agreement that local artists need more opportunities and support from the City, to develop their careers and stay in Laredo. By investing in its creative economy, Laredo helps itself prosper.

Artists need to hear regularly about the opportunities and services available through the Public Art Program.

To date, artists have experienced few or weak communications about open Calls for Artists, commission opportunities for City projects, and even had difficulty learning the outcomes of artist selection processes. First and foremost, then, an excellent, proactive public information program is a baseline requirement.

The City should take care to establish budgets for City public art commissions that pay artists a living wage. Artists need to be paid for all creative work, including developing preliminary concepts and renderings.

To support a diversity of artists, the City should ensure that the Public Art Program and City Art Collection include many artists, not just a “tried and true” group of regulars. We heard repeated concerns that the same handful of artists keep getting City commissions. City policy should specify that each artist can receive only one commission per year, and/or only two to three commissions every five years.

It is the City’s goal to have a public art collection that is representative of a wide diversity of artists – local, regional, and national. By designating specific programs and Calls for Artists as open only to those who reside in and around Laredo, the City can help more artists become trained to work in the field of public art. This provides them with project experience that makes them competitive for opportunities elsewhere, as well.

- Recommendation: Create A Temporary Public Art Program**  
 Many talented Laredo artists are interested in City commissions for temporary art installations. Temporary art allows emerging artists to gain practical experience with smaller-scale public art projects. They benefit from paid engagements to explore new themes and media. This also benefits the public, who enjoy seeing new artworks each year on Downtown streetscapes and in local parks. See the City of Austin TEMPO Program as a model. As this boosts tourism, HOT funds provide a potential funding source.
- Recommendation: Fully fund the Laredo Center for the Arts**  
 Artists and their advocates identified a need for the City to provide stronger financial support to Laredo Center for the Arts, so that it can expand its staff, provide more resources to local artists, and sustain a more robust exhibition program. This would allow Laredo Center for the Arts to expand into curating public art and provide related educational workshops and seminars.
- Recommendation: Host exhibitions of local artwork in City buildings**  
 Laredo artists would value the opportunity to have their work on display in changing exhibitions in City Hall, libraries, and other City facilities. (Model: The People's Gallery, Austin City Hall)
- Recommendation: Create a Vacant Storefront Artwork Display program**  
 The City can help its artists by creating a City-sponsored program that places their artwork, available for sale, in the many empty storefronts throughout Downtown. It also could commission artists to create site-specific works for the windows of empty buildings. This program would help nearby businesses and activate the downtown, making it more attractive and welcoming to visitors. Many cities have established successful vacant storefront artwork programs. These include small to mid-size cities, as well as Houston, New York, San Francisco, New Orleans, and others. Some small cities even require owners of empty buildings in retail districts to display art in their empty storefronts.

**Resources:**

[www.fastcompany.com/90448807/want-to-get-rid-of-vacant-storefronts-let-artists-take-over](http://www.fastcompany.com/90448807/want-to-get-rid-of-vacant-storefronts-let-artists-take-over)

[Art in Storefronts Toolkit | San Francisco Arts Commission](#)

[Vacant Storefront Program – Downtown New Orleans](#)

[WindowWorks - Downtown Houston](#)

... Public art in Laredo will create a vibrant city with a strong community identity that promotes our unique and diverse neighborhoods.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent

... [Goal:] To support local artists

— Anonymous Survey Respondent



## Professional Development and Training for Artists

The process of working on a public art project is a learning experience which develops professional skills. This is true for artists, and visual art organizations, as well as for everyone that plays a project role – the planner, engineer, architect/designer, landscape architect, project manager, construction contractor – and interested members of the community. Public art, like every other area of expertise, requires investment in education and training for all involved.

- **Recommendation: Host a series of educational public seminars and workshops on public art**

Artists and all the project participants listed above need more education and training about public art. All would be invited, and presentation materials would be available online. Some programs could include the school districts, Laredo College, and TAMU. This community education program could be developed and hosted by a community partner, and funded by HOT funds and a cultural grant.

### Workshop & Seminar Topics

- Public Art 101: Current national trends in public art
- Workshop on the substance of this Public Art Master Plan
- Training for artists and project team members, on how artwork can be integrated into CIP projects
- A training for artists in how to submit a competitive application for a Call for Artists
- A collaborative brainstorming session, to develop community-driven ideas for specific public art projects
- Ongoing training and technical assistance to visual artists; guest speakers in the public art field
- Small business training for artists in legal, financial, IT, insurance, and other business fundamentals
- **Recommendation:** Host talks on public art, and invite the whole community  
The Public Art Program, together with the Fine Arts and Culture Commission, should invite the whole community to talks about public art and visual art. Laredoans who can benefit include artists, creatives and design professionals, high school art students, college students, potential funders and partners, and city staff across departments. Community partners can be asked to organize and fund these talks. Events could be held at Laredo Center for the Arts, Casa Ortiz, TAMU, Laredo College, city libraries, recreational centers, parks, cultural facilities, or spaces provided by hotels or other partners.

... We need to have more opportunities for our elementary students to experience visual art. I see after school, Saturday and summer classes for free.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent

... [Goal:] To make us Laredo proud.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent



## Public Art Champions

Laredo needs community leaders who will embrace and champion public art, both at the City of Laredo and with other curatorial and funding partners. What will drive progress is a local group, organization, or other platform through which people work together to advance the Vision Statement in this plan. Champions are needed to drive the addition of quality public art in many sites in Laredo, in a sustained manner over time. City government cannot do it alone.

The Cultural Art Stakeholders interviewed for this master plan, and other identified champions of cultural vibrancy and the public realm in Laredo, include potential future champions. To solidify a base of support, a community group is needed that is specifically dedicated to advancing public art. Currently no central organization drives this initiative in Laredo and engages the philanthropic sector.

- **Recommendation: Provide a start-up grant for a “Friends of Public Art” group of champions**

The City program would benefit from establishing a community partner dedicated to public art. A start-up grant would assist Laredoans in coming together to form a Friends of Public Art group. It should include dedicated individuals, philanthropists who have experienced the benefits of public art in other cities, and fund-raisers. These champions would share their time, treasure, and talent to help implement this plan and individual public art projects. Laredo needs a go-to group of people who will work together on realizing the Vision of this public art master plan, in a sustained manner over time.

## Arts Education in the Schools

Many communities take advantage of public art – free and accessible to all – as an educational tool for providing K-12 students with friendly arts education. United and Laredo ISD can include it in art classes, or after-school programs. Laredo and United ISD also could develop (or obtain) learning modules for the classroom, and organize field trips (or provide extra-credit projects) to visit local public artworks. In Miami, Florida, the city developed a public art curriculum for elementary schools, in which students learn about public art and then tour local works.

During the community outreach for this master plan, representatives of the art departments at both Laredo ISD and United ISD expressed an interest in getting students involved with local artists creating public artworks. The art departments at Laredo College and TAMU include instructors who are willing partners.

### **Best Practice: Cross-Border Arts Education.**

The border cities of San Diego and Tijuana have developed an ongoing collaboration of public art installations, additions to the City of San Diego collection, and K-12 arts education projects that cross the border. For example, Artists Onsite, a program devoted to expanding public awareness of and interaction with artists, offered an inSITE2000 art education program to students from both San Diego and Tijuana schools. It brought artists into residencies in local schools. See: [www.nytimes.com/2016/10/30/arts/design/between-tijuana-and-san-diego-an-art-ethos-thrives.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/30/arts/design/between-tijuana-and-san-diego-an-art-ethos-thrives.html)

## Community Dialogue about Projects

A public art program depends on the input of the public for its success. This can be challenging, as many people in the community (particularly those who are Spanish speaking and lower income) do not generally participate in public processes. As with all issues in all cities, people tend to show up when they want to object to something.

Laredo should continue to actively engage the public, but not be held back by modest levels of responses or lack of involvement. On principle, the City should always seek opinions from the community – yet understand that in the realm of art, the goal is not to please all of the people, all of the time. Rather, the role of art is to stimulate contemplation and productive dialogue.

- Recommendation: Hold community dialogue sessions for each major project**  
 To ensure that the community is aware of major art installations in progress, the Public Art Program should require that for each major project, **the artist participate in three community dialogue sessions**. For projects with smaller budgets, a single artist meeting may suffice. The goal is not to “design by committee” but rather to build community understanding and support for the artist’s own unique vision. A goal is to allow people of all backgrounds, races, education and economic levels to have a voice in major visual art installations that become part of the city and individual neighborhoods.
- At the first session, the artist meets interested members of the community, introduces the project, and engages in dialogue. For example, the artist might solicit information about the character and history of the neighborhood.
- At the second meeting, the artist presents preliminary creative concepts and listens to community responses.
- At the third meeting, the artist and city staff present the final design of the artwork, not for community *approval*, but to allow the community to be informed.

This commitment to community dialogue helps to ensure that the art is appropriate for the site and the community. By raising awareness in advance, it also prevents controversy over public art after it is installed.





**Best Practice: Public Art for Water Use and Environmental Education.**

The City will have many ongoing opportunities to incorporate public art into new Capital Improvement Projects for its wastewater and water facilities, as well as Environmental Services Projects. The themes of large-scale public artwork on this infrastructure can serve to advance environmental education, raising the awareness of all who pass by.

Cities nationwide have taken this approach to good effect. Suitable projects can include storm drains, water tanks, pump stations, treatment plants, reservoirs, elevated water towers, and water treatment ponds in all areas of Laredo. The electric utility also can partner to create public art on its infrastructure and facilities. In Laredo, the themes of the public artworks can be tied to themes of water use and conservation, recycling, the Rio Grande river, climate action, respect and understanding for natural systems, native plants and animals, fighting pollution, and related themes. This has long been done successfully by other utilities. In 2001, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California published a catalog of its public artwork, "Liquid Art: A Celebration of Water in Public Spaces." The City of Seattle is another good example of its city that has taken this approach. Many cities have public art programs where community members paint storm drains, including the message "Drains to Creek" or similar, to communicate that dumping should not occur in these drains.



## B. WORKING WITH CITY DEPARTMENTS

Civic artworks will be sited on city properties managed by individual City departments. In many cases, their funding and planning will need to be coordinated as part of a departmental capital improvement project. Therefore, it will be essential to work closely with multiple city departments in developing the public art program.

The development of this master plan included cross-department outreach, meetings, and a survey form distributed to all involved departments. Many departments expressed enthusiasm and interest. As all departments develop project requests for the 5-Year CIP Plan, and these projects are funded and implemented department-by-department, all require basic staff understanding of the goals and criteria for the public art components of their projects. Some departments have already been developing and executing their own creative ideas for public art.

### Training and Professional Development

All city departments have demonstrated or expressed a need for an initial training in the City's policies and standard procedures for public art projects. In addition, there is a citywide need for ongoing professional development in the field of public art.

A Top Priority recommendation for Year 1 is therefore to provide all involved city staff with a foundational training in this Master Plan, and the city policies and best practices it contains. This training focus should continue on an annual basis. Key staff should also seek out national conferences about public art, online seminars or courses, experts within the community, helpful staff at other Art in Public Places programs, and other resources.

All permanent public artworks commissioned by the City of Laredo are capital improvement projects, and they enter the citywide Civic Art Collection. It is therefore essential to provide basic training in policies and procedures to key staff in the Engineering and Public Works departments, and in other city departments that lead CIP projects likely to include public art. An open and ongoing cross-departmental dialogue, in a spirit of learning together, will be essential to success.

### Department Survey Responses

The Master Plan consultant sent a survey to a representative for each involved city department. Please see **Appendix C. City Departments: Engagement Process and Survey Results** for a chart that contains the departmental information collected through the survey.

The following partner departments responded with completed information, which is included in the chart:

- Airport
- Community Development
- Convention & Visitors Bureau
- El Metro (Transit)
- Engineering
- Environmental and Solid Waste Services
- Human Resources
- Library
- Police
- Public Works
- Utilities

The following departments are important partners but were non-responsive:

- Parks & Recreation Department
- Planning & Zoning



#### Other Key Findings:

- 100% of Departments who responded had at least a medium interest in seeing the City of Laredo develop a citywide public art collection. 33% had a high interest.
- Approximately 56% of the Departments felt like the mission of their department includes placemaking - that is the creation of thoughtfully designed public spaces that make Laredo more attractive, walkable, and welcoming to all people.
- 56% of departments indicated that their department staff consults the goals and policies of Viva Laredo, in planning and implementing its CIP projects and other programs.
- Nearly 80% of respondents had a role or involvement in public art projects in the past 5 years. Details about these roles, processes, and challenges can be found in **Appendix C. City Departments: Engagement Process and Survey Results.**
- 100% of the respondents were satisfied with the final art installations.
- The vast majority of departments do not have staff members who are knowledgeable and experiences in issues related to creating and maintaining a municipal public art collection.
- The vast majority of departments did not think it was likely that their department could provide some dedicated funding from its annual budget for public artworks, beyond the “2 % for Art”.
- Nearly 80% of departments feel like they are not currently resourced to take on its ongoing public art maintenance responsibility



## C. ANNUAL PROGRAM BUDGET & FUNDING SOURCES

Every program needs a budget. To date, the Public Art Program has not been allocated an administrative or operating budget. This task is therefore a Top Priority Action for Year 1.

Annually, the designated Department Director and Public Art Program Manager should develop an all-inclusive budget for the following fiscal year. It should reflect all potential revenue sources, as well as expense line items and budget requests. The timing of this process will need to occur early in the annual development cycle for Department Budgets and the City Budget.

The Program Budget is a component of the Annual Public Art Plan. Estimated budgets for individual public art projects will need to be included in that plan, as well as budget for administrative costs.

### Potential City Revenue Sources

- “2% for Art” allocations -- 15% is available for program administration
- Hotel Occupancy Taxes (HOT funds) -- 15% is available for Cultural Arts initiatives
- Departmental budget allocations
- Contributions from developers, CDBG grants, and other sources (when included in the City’s CIP budget for a project)
- In-kind contributions of services by City departments (e.g. for street closures, painting and preparation of city infrastructure, public safety for events, project coordination)
- General fund monies, if allocated and approved

**Note:** It will be important to include all “2% for Art” allocations, from all eligible CIP projects of all types, citywide. This will provide a deeper base for the 15% allocation for public art. To date, some City public art projects have been implemented outside of this fiscal tracking system.

### Other Potential Resources

- Grants from State or Federal agencies, or foundations
- A Cultural District project grant from Texas Commission for the Arts (submit application in coordination with the Laredo Cultural District)
- A Creative Placemaking grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (See [www.arts.gov/grants](http://www.arts.gov/grants))
- Private donations and local philanthropic gifts to fund major iconic artworks
- Direct donations of artworks, proposed and accepted into the Civic Art Collection
- In-kind contributions by community partners (e.g. the school districts, the college, the university, local businesses, major employers, hotels and restaurants)

Researching available grants for public art in Laredo would be an excellent special project for the Fine Arts and Culture Commission, an intern at the Public Art Program, or students in a related course at Laredo College or TAMU. A wealth of online information is available. It also can be illuminating to review the budgets of established programs in other cities and to talk to staff who have obtained grants. A few useful online articles to start the conversation include:

- *Art in Public Places Budget, City of Minneapolis* [ART01 - Art in Public Places - OpenGov](#)
- *National Endowment for the Arts Grant Spotlight: Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture Neighborhood Grants Program* [www.arts.gov/stories/blog/2019/national-endowment-arts-grant-spotlight-phoenix-office-arts-and-culture-neighborhood-grants-program](http://www.arts.gov/stories/blog/2019/national-endowment-arts-grant-spotlight-phoenix-office-arts-and-culture-neighborhood-grants-program)
- *Funding Sources for Public Art, Project for Public Spaces* [www.pps.org/article/artfunding](http://www.pps.org/article/artfunding)

### Public Art in Private Development

Although not part of the City Budget, considerable resources can be devoted to public art when it is included in private development. Developers recognize that onsite artworks increase the value, appeal, and marketability of their properties, and earn community goodwill.

Increasingly, cities nationwide are actively encouraging — or even requiring — the public developments include a budget for artworks that are accessible to the public. For example, a requirement for the inclusion of public art can be negotiated by the City when a developer seeks entitlements beyond those allowed by code.

This is an emerging area that merits further research and attention by the City of Laredo and its community partners. Useful model documents include resource guides, city ordinances, and implementation manuals for developers such as:

- *PUBLIC ART AND PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT RESOURCE GUIDE FOR DEVELOPERS*, Public Art Network, [www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2013/by\\_program/networks\\_and\\_councils/public\\_art\\_network/PublicArtPrivateDevelopmentFINAL.pdf](http://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2013/by_program/networks_and_councils/public_art_network/PublicArtPrivateDevelopmentFINAL.pdf)
- [Public Art in Private Development Ordinance - Los Angeles](#), CA  
**Adopted September 15, 2021.** The new ordinance allocates 1% from the building valuation of eligible private sector commercial, industrial, and residential projects, excluding affordable housing, in unincorporated areas of the County to fund public art, cultural facilities, conservation, artistic and cultural services, and programs within the project's site area.
- *Implementation Manual for Art in Private Development*, City of Rockville, MD [www.rockvillemd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/3333/Implementation-Manual-for-Art-in-Private-Development](http://www.rockvillemd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/3333/Implementation-Manual-for-Art-in-Private-Development)
- *Art in Private Development Projects*, San Diego [www.sandiego.gov/arts-culture/publicart/artpd](http://www.sandiego.gov/arts-culture/publicart/artpd)



## D. ANNUAL PUBLIC ART PLAN

What projects and initiatives will the City of Laredo be embarking upon, each year? Developing an exciting yet achievable plan, which clearly identifies the major public art installations that will be pursued each year, is the purpose of the **Annual Public Art Plan**.

*In the course of developing this Master Plan, the consultant assisted city staff in drafting a first Annual Plan, for Fiscal Year 2022.*

Annually, the City of Laredo requires a clear plan of work for its Public Art Program. This includes developing, reviewing, and deciding upon a list of all major public art projects that are planned and will be funded and initiated in the next year. The Plan also may include a narrative describing other planned initiatives by the Public Art Program and its community partners.

The Plan should include some flexibility. Opportunities will arise over the course of the year, and the City should remain nimble and flexible enough to respond to them – especially to respond to the needs and opportunities forwarded by community partners.

An essential component is the plan for spending City funds. The Annual Public Art Plan, at a minimum, must clearly delineate the spending plan for the next fiscal year's "2% for Art" allocation in the annual capital improvement budget. It should also include the complete budget for the public art program, and all anticipated revenues and expenses.

When the Annual Plan is adopted by City Council, each of the individual projects it names is also thereby approved and adopted. If unforeseen events dictate changes to an individual project approved in the plan, the addition or removal of a project must follow the full public process set forth here. It is the duty of the presiding Department Director, the Public Art Program Manager, and the **Fine Arts and Culture Commission** ("Commission") to ensure that the Annual Plan is followed and implemented in a conscientious, ethical, and transparent fashion.

An Annual Public Art Plan is a requirement of the city's Public Art Program Ordinance (2019-O-177). The annual process of developing a plan requires input from multiple city departments and the community. The draft Annual Public Art Plan must be reviewed and voted upon by the **Fine Arts and Culture Commission**. The plan becomes final after it is reviewed and adopted by the City Council. The development of the Plan is the annual opportunity for stakeholders at the City and in the community to have a voice in the projects moving forward, year by year.

### Process for Adoption

The process recommended below meets the requirements set forth in Ordinance 2019-O-177.

### Annual Development of Plan

The Annual Public Art Plan corresponds to the city's Fiscal Year (FY), which begins on Oct. 1.

This is the date on which the annual City Budget becomes official, including the budget for the Public Art Program, and the total allocation through the "2% for Art" Program for public art projects, as part of the annual Capital Improvements Projects (CIP) budget.

The FINAL Annual Plan will include the final list of individual new Public Art projects. For each, it must provide a description, artwork type, site, budget, and schedule, as required by Ordinance.



- **Percent for Art Projects (CIP Program):** Project opportunities should be developed well in advance, in consultation with city departments with budgeted FY capital improvement projects. *In most cases, permanent public art will be incorporated on the site of a CIP project. Priorities for public art projects on other city-owned sites also should be identified well in advance.*
- **Community & Council District Priorities:** Annually, these need to be identified early in each calendar year, by consulting the Master Plan and CIP Plan. An opportunity for community input on priorities also should be offered early in the cycle of developing projects each year.

With that in mind, the following annual schedule is recommended. This should be followed (and updated as needed) by City staff and the Fine Arts and Culture Commission.

- **Fine Arts and Culture Commission Oversight:** A specific duty and power of the commission is to review and guide the Annual Public Art Plan each year. It therefore should be a standing monthly agenda item for Commission meetings, generally following the calendar below. (Note: The artist selection committee for each project will include one Commissioner. In most cases, this will be the Commissioner corresponding to the Council District in which the project will be located. This provides for ongoing Commission involvement and oversight.)

## PLAN DEVELOPMENT CALENDAR

### Key Tasks: Prior Fiscal Year

<b>January</b>	Discussion and planning begins. Review Laredo Public Art Master Plan, 10-Year Strategic Plan. Initiate relevant procurement, contracting, review, approval processes.
<b>February</b>	Survey of opportunities, define goals, identify CIP Program Opportunities
<b>March</b>	Presentation to Commission. Presentation to City Council, with discussion.
<b>April</b>	Obtain CIP program budget projection from Finance Office. Develop list of priority opportunities for Public Art projects. Presentation to Commission. Invite community input.
<b>May</b>	Presentation to Commission. Complete anticipated scope of work for all other Public Art Program activities. Initiate relevant procurement, contracting, review, approval processes.
<b>June</b>	City staff provides DRAFT Annual Public Art Plan to Fine Arts and Culture Commission. Includes overview of planned projects and initiatives, and anticipated overall budget. (Detailed information on all projects may not yet be available.) Commission discussion; posted for possible vote and action on recommendation for advancement to City Council.
<b>July</b>	City staff provides DRAFT Annual Public Art Plan to City Council. Council discussion, posted for possible vote and action on approval.
<b>August</b>	City Council votes to approve DRAFT Annual Public Art Plan.
<b>September</b>	City Council approves City Budget, including Public Art Program Budget.

## Key Tasks: Fiscal Year

<b>October</b>	List of public art projects is finalized, with City Departments. Draft Plan updated with final project list, with complete project information. Public Art Program Manager begins developing Calls for Artists, for project opportunities.
<b>November</b>	FINAL Annual Public Art Plan is presented to Commission and then to City Council. Posted for action on final adoption.
<b>December</b>	Plan implementation officially begins. Calls for Arts may be issued for project opportunities. Artist selection procurement and contracting begins.

## Background

The process of developing this Master Plan included consultant assistance with the development of a new City of Laredo process for the Annual Public Art Plan. This initial work focused on the process for FY2022, as a pilot project. Recommendations were provided by the Master Plan consultant and the development process included City Staff, the Fine Arts and Culture Commission, City Management, and discussions with elected officials.

### Percent for Art Funds: Project Types

The Annual Public Art Plan should include a diverse set of project types. The following types of public art projects are examples of those specifically allowed, for integration into City CIP projects, per Ordinance 2019-O-177.

- **BUILDINGS:** Architectural element or enhancement (e.g. mural, mosaic, building details)
- **SITES:** Landscape or site element or amenity (e.g. sculpture, fountain, plaza, screen)
- **STREETS:** Streetscape element or ROW amenity (e.g. artist-enhanced benches or street furniture, artwork embedded in sidewalks, murals on traffic signal infrastructure)

To make program administration feasible with limited staff resources, given the desire for multiple projects to advance across all districts of Laredo, it is recommended that the City **focus on permanent murals in Year 1 and Year 2** and other smaller-scale public art projects. These are achievable within the budgets available per council district.

### Public Involvement

The responsible Department Director, or their designee, will provide monthly reports to Fine Arts and Culture Commission on the development/implementation of the Annual Public Art Plan. Community members interested in the Plan, and the projects it contains, should make public comments during the monthly Commission meetings, or otherwise provide input directly to Commissioners. (Each project within the plan also will need a community engagement process, once it is underway.)

Commissioners will be asked to review and comment on the projects under development, at major project milestones. Citizen feedback should be shared with Commissioners; it is their duty to serve as conduit and share citizen input and concerns with City staff and elected officials, as appropriate.

Each Commissioner is responsible for providing monthly updates to the Council Member (or Mayor) who appointed them, on the progress of the Annual Public Art Plan and its projects.

## E. ANNUAL REPORT, PUBLIC ART PROGRAM

Each year, an Annual Report on the activities of the Public Art Program also should be produced and shared with the community, as public information and a celebration of the latest accomplishments of the City and its partners.

Each year, the Annual Report should be designed to be a colorful and visual storytelling document, with images of public art projects. It should be posted on the City website. Its availability should be announced by the Public Information Office, with a social media campaign that reaches media outlets and the community.

The Public Art Program Ordinance (2019-O-177) requires an Annual Report for the Public Art Program. It states that it should be “presented to the City Council setting forth the prior year’s Public Art Program activities, including a detailed accounting of expenditures of the Public Art Program and administrative expenses related thereto.”

In the course of work on this Master Plan, the consultant assisted staff with compiling a first report. This was the **2020 Public Art Program Annual Report**, below. Staff produced a report on all activities of the Fine Arts and Culture Commission, related to all of the arts. In future years, it should report only on public art. See Appendix for a copy of the report.

*Note: As of this writing, both the 2020 Annual Report and the FY2022 Annual Plan still need to be presented to City Council and posted for action and adoption.*



## F. PUBLIC INFORMATION, MARKETING-COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Public art is for the whole community! New artwork projects and artist opportunities are of great interest to community members, who want to get involved. They generate positive media interest and coverage and are high-visibility stories that can earn the City the goodwill of its citizens. Communicating about opportunities to see public art is important for visitors, tourists, and meeting planners as well.

**For all of these reasons, the Public Art Program needs a strong, proactive effort dedicated to public information and marketing-communications.** The City Public Information Office (PIO) has very limited staff capacity. During the development of this plan, it was unable to provide an optimal level of service for public communications needs and opportunities presented, due to competing demands. The community survey received only minimal support, at a late date in the process. A planned set of community meetings, intended for the Public Information Office to organize and produce, never came to fruition.

**This is a communication-intensive Program.** Staff will need to write, edit, and distribute multiple Calls for Artists each year, and provide ongoing information to the public at each phase of the artist selection project and resulting project. Each major project should include the recommended series of three meetings for the public to learn about the project and have a dialogue with the artist. Staff will need to communicate about public input events and opportunities, surveys, and ribbon-cutting celebrations for individual public art projects. The Program also has community education duties. Photos and narratives for each project must be gathered for media releases, responses, the Annual Report, and Civic Art database. The program needs a dedicated website that is kept updated with news, artist opportunities, new acquisitions, and updated documents and reports. The media will need releases and responses. This all adds up to a large volume of essential, ongoing tasks.

See also Chapter 2, Listening to the Community, and section 2.5, Ongoing Community Dialogue.

**Recommendation:** In the light of limited PIO capacity, the Public Art Program should secure its own resources and personnel for public information, public engagement with projects, and marketing-communications. The Public Art Program Manager should have strong skills in writing and communications, and the ability to supervise and direct the efforts of others. Additional capacity could be provided by a contracted vendor, a part-time assistant with these skills, or an internship program.

**Internship Recommendation:** The Program should offer a marketing-communications internship each semester, available to capable students at Laredo College or TAMU, or recent graduates. It will attract the most qualified candidates if established as a paid part-time position, for which students can earn college credit if desired. Staff will need the capacity to supervise and direct the intern.



## G. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Laredo City Ordinance 2012-O-126 provides a Code of Ethics establishing standards of conduct for all officials, employees, board members and persons doing business with the City of Laredo. The provisions below relating to the Public Art Program supplements the provisions of the City's Ethics Ordinance, as codified in Section 2.01 of the Laredo Municipal Code.

### A. City of Laredo Staff and Elected Officials

Current employees and officials of the City of Laredo are ineligible to be selected for commissions for City-funded public art projects. They should not apply.

### B. Fine Arts and Culture Commission

A member of the Fine Arts and Culture Commission who has a financial interest in the outcome of any policy, decision or determination before the Commission shall: 1) disclose this fact in a timely fashion to the full Commission and the staff liaison, and 2) be recused from participation in any debate or vote on the matter.

Commissioners are ineligible, and should not apply, to be selected for commissions for City-funded public art projects.

### C. Capital Improvement Project Consultants

For public art commissions related to a City Capital Improvement Projects: The professional service firms already under contract for the project, and their employees, are ineligible to receive public art funds or be commissioned to create public artwork. This rule applies to project management, project architect, engineering, landscape architecture, environmental design and subconsultant consulting firms. (These firms are encouraged to collaborate creatively with the artist selected through the City's standard artist selection process.)

### D. Artists and Artist Selection Panels

1. Artists who were involved in the planning, development or recommendation of a public art project may apply, through the City's standard artist selection process, to be considered for the project. However, their prior involvement must be fully disclosed in their application and/or letter of interest for the project.
2. Artists who have received commissions for City of Laredo public artworks may serve on Artist Selection Panels for other City projects. However, an artist is not eligible to serve on an Artist Selection Panel, or any project, while under consideration for another public art commission or project.
3. An artist serving on an Artist Selection Panel is precluded, during the artist's term of service, from having his/her work considered for any public art commission or project funded by the City of Laredo. This includes the project for which they sit on the Selection Panel.

## H. TRAINING AND EDUCATION

The Public Art Program requires a program of activities and a budget for ongoing staff training and professional development. Public Art is a specialized field, in which city staff currently have little or no background. Professional development should be provided on an ongoing basis.

### Recommended Activities: Staff Training and Professional Development

**1. Public Art Program Staff.** The Department Director, Program Manager, and program staff should be provided ongoing training and learning opportunities in the field. These may include association memberships, conferences, webinars, newsletters and publications, peer city visits, and other activities relevant to their Public Art Program and Civic Art Collection Management duties. The City should join Americans for the Arts and its Public Art Network, and participate with other members in Texas in information-sharing activities.

**2. Annual CIP Planning Workshop.** Early in the planning cycle for each fiscal year, a workshop for Commissioners and city staff should be held. Participants should include representatives of the departments that will participate in CIP projects for the coming fiscal year. Professionals with public art expertise may be invited to present. Workshop training and topics should include, at a minimum:

- Review of the Laredo Public Art Master Plan, and its Vision, Mission, Goals, and Policies
- Best practices and project examples, from peer city public art programs internationally
- A visual presentation on the works in the Laredo Civic Art Collection
- Annual Public Art Plan
- “2% for Art” Ordinance
- Public art opportunities in the next fiscal year CIP plan, and the 5-year CIP Plan
- Review of the Call for Artist procedure and City policies related to the artist selection process.

**3. Commissioners and Artist Selection Panel Members**

Provide an orientation and training, annually and for all new members and panels, that covers the above topics, at a minimum.

... Highlight local history, local geography,  
international trade.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent

## Recommended Activities: Community Education

- 1. Annual “State of Public Art” Forum.** At least annually, the City or its designee should organize and present an educational workshop about public art for community leaders. A speaker of national caliber should be invited to present at a breakfast, luncheon, or evening event. The LAMP vision and 10-year strategic plan should be revisited. Invited participants should include representatives of major employers, downtown businesses, and the hotel, tourism and meeting industry. The philanthropic community also should be invited, as should elected officials. Artists who have created works of public art, and visual arts nonprofit leaders, should be invited to participate and converse with the community leaders. The purpose is to build a broad base of understanding, support and partnerships for ongoing public art program development. Invite media representatives.
- 2. Artist Workshops: Public Art Projects.** Provide professional development trainings for artists, that help them to be competitive for public art opportunities. This may be done in concert with Laredo College or TAMU. Content would cover the technical aspects of planning and delivering public art, and working with the community. They should also provide technical assistance with responding to Call for Artist opportunities. The goal is to increase the pool of qualified artists who can be considered for City commissions and other opportunities -- locally, regionally, and nationally. This is also an equity initiative to build career paths for local, diverse, and underserved creatives. Invite media representatives.



## 3.5 Artist Selection Process

### A. ARTIST SELECTION POLICY

This policy establishes the standard procedure for the selection of artists who receive city funds to create works of public art. It incorporates review of the artwork proposed by the artist.

This policy applies to all city-funded public art, created on city property, intended to become part of the City of Laredo Civic Art Collection, regardless of funding source.

#### Principles

Community members have called for the City to ensure equality of opportunity, transparency, fairness, and a commitment to artistic excellence in the artist selection process. To achieve this, the Public Art Program will issue a public “Call for Artists: Request for Qualifications” for each project so as to provide equal opportunities to all qualified artists.

The Call for Artists will be public information actively promoted to the community and local media. Some artwork commission opportunities will be open only to local artists. Others may be statewide or international.

**Artists will be selected (or short-listed) based on demonstrated qualifications and portfolio.** In some cases, a short list of finalists will be asked to submit creative concepts for the final selection process. They will be compensated for this work (e.g. a \$250-\$500 stipend).

**The artist selection process will utilize objective criteria, with the review of submissions and recommendation of an artist to be made by a qualified, impartial selection panel.**

Most of the following policies pertain to artist and artwork selection via an open call process for all public art projects, regardless of funding source. This is the method that we recommend establishing at the inception of the Public Art Program. Other cities also use other artist selection processes such as pre-qualified artist registry, direct selection, and curatorial process, among others. These can be discussed or considered by the City of Laredo over time.

#### Selection Process Administration

The City will engage qualified staff, contractors, or consulting resources with public art expertise. The city will assign a **Public Art Program Manager** to manage multiple Calls for Artists and the follow-on contract administration with the artists selected, project management and delivery, and other Program duties. The City requires qualified staff or a designated contractor, vendor organization, or consulting firm to fulfill these duties.

Community arts advocates, Commissioners, and City Council Members will be kept updated by the Public Art Program and provided with multiple opportunities for input into the project, artist and artwork selection processes.

The City of Laredo will adhere to national Best Practices in Public Art Project Selection and Administration, as recommended by Americans for the Arts, a national professional organization and exemplified by top Art in Public Places programs around the country.

Commissioners and Elected Officials will be kept informed and invited to share insights during the process, which will follow the standard procedure below.



**Project Site Selection**

In most cases, sites should be researched and identified before issuing a call for artists. For the relevant considerations for CIP Projects, and stand-alone artworks funded with “2% for Art” monies, please refer to the Policy for Integrating Artworks into Capital Improvement Projects and Section 3.7 of this master plan.

**Project Identification and Artist Selection Process****Step 1. Call for Artists**

The Public Art Program Manager for the City, or their designee, will issue and publicize a “Call for Artists” that describes the project, site, scope, submittal requirements, budget, schedule, and other information.

**Selection Criteria.** The criteria for the selection process will be objective. The selection criteria will be included in the Call for Artists. It will be written, including numeric scoring, and based on national best practices.

**Submission Requirements.** Artists will digitally submit a letter of interest, CV and credentials, prior experience, and visual examples from their portfolio of work, by an established deadline. For ease of administration, the use of an automated public platform (e.g. Submittable) for review and scoring of submissions by the selection panel is recommended.

**Artist Compensation.** Artists will not be required to participate in design competitions, or develop artistic concepts or proposals unique to the project, without compensation. If a short list of artists is asked to submit conceptual proposals, they will be appropriately compensated for the time and talents required. For example, a stipend would be paid to each of three short-listed artists for conceptual renderings. The commission paid to the selected artist should be aligned with standard rates of pay for public art commissions in Texas, and reflect the complexity of the project.

**Equity.** The City will make every effort to achieve cultural and racial equity in providing opportunities for artists for public art commissions. It will include opportunities for both established and emerging artists. Lived experience and cultural awareness of the area where the artwork is sited may be included as a selection criteria.

**Step 2. Review of Submissions by Artist Selection Panel**

**Selection Panel.** The selection of an artist will be made by an impartial volunteer Selection Panel. The City Manager or their staff designee will determine the composition of the seven (7) member panel, following the guidelines below. The panel may be reduced to 5 members for smaller projects.

**Criteria for Scoring and Selection**

- The artist’s body of work demonstrated artistic excellence and creative vision
- The submitted portfolio demonstrates skill and technical ability, in the commission medium
- The past work examples are relevant to this commission, and give evidence of competence
- The artist cites the experience necessary to successfully complete a project of this scope
- The letter of intent addresses the specifics of the project opportunity and the site

### Panel Composition

Three (3) qualified Texas visual art professionals (e.g. curators, museum directors, art historians/ academics, Art in Public Places program administrators, experienced public artists). These panelists shall serve for one-year or two-year terms, and shall sit on all selection panels during their terms.

Two (2) representative **members of the community** where the specific project will be located

One (1) member of the **Fine Arts and Culture Commission** (e.g. from the District in which the project is located)

One (1) Project Designer for the CIP project (if artwork is integrated) or their designee of City Department with jurisdiction.

The selection panel will provide its recommendation to the Public Art Program Manager and the corresponding Department Director.

Projects with a total budget of less than **\$10,000** may be administratively approved by City Staff, without requiring review by the Commission.

### Step 3. Artwork Proposals (Major Projects)

For major projects, the selection process may include two steps. The first step is the selection of three to five finalists, based solely on artist qualifications. The second step is the evaluation of Artwork Proposals.

Proposals should describe the creative and collaborative approach. For artworks that are part of city buildings and facilities, this may include a single artist or artist team, that is:

- (1) creating an artwork independently of the architectural design team
- (2) working collaboratively with architects, landscape architects, urban planners, and engineers

The finalists will each have the opportunity to prepare an artwork proposal that is responsive to the brief, which should include a narrative project description, a consideration of the site, and a visual conceptual rendering.

Artists should be paid a stipend for all required artwork proposals, and provided sufficient time to develop them. The stipend should be commensurate with the time required, in the range of \$400 to \$1,000. For the artist selected, this payment may be treated as the first installment of the artist fee.

The artwork proposals are submitted to the Selection Panel, which may also choose to interview the finalists to discuss the discussed project. If issues are identified, one or more of the artists may be asked to revise and resubmit their artwork proposal. The Selection Panel will:

- Select a finalist as the recommended artist, based on their proposed artwork, OR
- Recommend the City reopen the Call for Artists (if none of the proposed artworks are deemed satisfactory)

### Selection Criteria

- Quality of concept (rigorous, original, dynamic, engaging, accessible, compelling)
- Demonstrated artistic excellence
- Dynamic and suitable relationship to project site, and likely audience at that site
- Imagery is culturally sensitive and appropriate for public art viewed by people of all ages and backgrounds

Additional criteria and information may be provided to the finalists.

Note: The proposals also should be reviewed by the project manager or designer for the associated Capital Improvement Project, if relevant, to identify any technical/site issues and concerns.

### Step 4. Fine Arts and Culture Commission Recommendation

**Commission Role.** For each project, the Fine Arts and Culture Commission will review the recommendation of the Selection Panel. At a public meeting, they will take action on whether to endorse the Selection Panel recommendation. Citizens should be advised of the public meeting, and the opportunity to comment.

Commissioners will make a recommendation to staff for each artist selection. (This step may be omitted, and the final recommendation made by City Staff, for minor projects with small budgets.) Their recommendation will be considered final, for projects with a budget of \$10,000 but not more than \$50,000.

Projects with a total budget under **\$50,000** may be administratively approved by City Manager with a Commission Recommendation.

### Step 5. City Council Action (Major Projects)

**City Council Role.** The Council Member of the District in which the project is located will be kept updated at major milestones, by both their respective Commissioner and the Public Art Program Manager, on the progress of each artist selection process.

The Council Member in whose district a specific project is sited will have the opportunity to name their Commissioner to the selection panel for that project.

The City Manager or their staff designee will distribute information to Council Members, and respond to Council Member concerns or requests for information.

Council must vote to approve the selection of an artist on projects with a budget over **\$50,000**.

... Promote our culture.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent

## Step 6. Procurement

Public Art Program Procurements of **no more than \$50,000** may be administratively approved by the City Manager. This includes artist contracts.

Public Art Program procurements **over \$50,000** require full City Council approval.

### Artist Contracts

The provisions below serve to make public art commissions economically feasible for artists.

- Selected artists will be required to sign a written agreement (contract) with the city that clearly articulates the scope of work, budget, schedule, quality assurance and control standards, deliverables, and other contractual details. Agreements will be written in clear, layperson language.
- Artists may include the cost of city-required liability insurance as a direct line-item cost in the project budget. The city may choose to waive certain insurance requirements and permits for public artists, to make projects more affordable and increase equity of opportunity.
- The total project budget shall be sufficient to cover the costs of graffiti abatement measures (e.g. the clear-coating of murals) and/or ongoing graffiti removal and maintenance for five years. If the artist is designated the responsibility, it will be included as a line item in their project budget.
- Payments to artists will recognize and accommodate their needs as sole practitioners and micro businesses. This includes a flexible project payment schedule that provides for the artists' cash flow requirements to cover project expenses by phase, and pay fees in installments, according to the project delivery schedule.
- Artists must provide a final report, to include photographs documenting completion of the project and final delivery, with their final invoice.

For additional background information, consult online and Texas peer city resources on best practices in governmental public art programs.

... A place that sparks tourism through the engagement of the arts.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent

... create visually pleasing artworks that motivate people to explore Laredo.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent



## B. GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH ARTISTS

Once an artist is selected and under contract, city staff will need to provide ongoing assistance and oversight throughout project planning, design and construction. *Please also see Section 3.7. Capital Improvement Projects: Process for Integrating Public Art.*

### Artist Community Engagement

Each City of Laredo commission for a public art project should have a specific plan for how the artist will participate in community education, engagement, outreach, and communications. Overall public engagement should begin as soon as a project is being developed. It is particularly essential during the initial announcement, artist selection, design and construction, and project unveiling stages. This function should be coordinated through the Public Art Program Manager, who is responsible for overall community engagement.

To ensure that the community is aware of major art installations in progress, the Public Art Program should require that for each major project, the artist participate in three community dialogue sessions. For projects with smaller budgets, a single artist meeting may suffice.

The goal is not to “design by committee” but rather to build community understanding and support for the artist’s own unique vision. A goal is to allow people of all backgrounds, races, education and economic levels to have a voice in major visual art installations that become part of the city and individual neighborhoods.

- At the first session, the artist meets interested members of the community, introduces the project, and engages in dialogue. For example, the artist might solicit information about the character and history of the neighborhood.
- At the second meeting, the artist presents preliminary creative concepts and listens to community responses.
- At the third meeting, the artist and city staff present the final design of the artwork, not for community approval, but to allow the community to be informed.

This commitment to community dialogue helps to ensure that the art is appropriate for the site and the community. By raising awareness in advance, it also prevents controversy over public art after it is installed.

### Artist Tasks by Project Phase

The artist should be provided a copy of Section 3.7. on the Capital Improvement Projects: Process for integrating public art into Capital Improvement Projects.

**Final Design and Engineering.** Once the artwork concept proposal is approved, the artist will develop final design and engineering drawings, if needed. These are subject to technical/site review and approval by the City; the artist must receive these approvals before proceeding with fabrication. The Public Art Program Manager will coordinate meetings with the appropriate City Departments to provide a technical review of the drawings.

**Re-design.** If the artist proposes any significant design changes from the conceptual renderings in the Artwork Proposal, the Public Art Program Manager will review them. Design changes should be minor. Any major changes proposed by the artist should be re-submitted as an updated Artwork Proposal, and presented to the Fine Arts and Culture Commission for review and comment.

If the City requests any modifications, due to changes in the project, the Public Art Program Manager will review the proposed changes with the artist. A formal change order should be submitted to the CIP project manager.

**Fabrication of Artwork.** Once the final design and engineering drawings have been approved by the City, the artist will proceed with the fabrication of the artwork. The fabrication may be done by the artist, or part or all may be done by subcontractors supervised by the artist. The Public Art Program may request a studio visit, photographs or written updates from the artist. In some cases, the Public Art Program may elect to contract directly with a fabricator, per contract with the artist.

**Installation of Artwork.** In most cases, the artist will be responsible for the installation of the artwork. The Public Art Program will coordinate installation with the artist and the appropriate City Department(s) and their contractors. An outside contractor may install the work, per the contract with the artist.

**Project Completion Communications.** The artist should make themselves available for interviews, photo opportunities, ribbon cuttings, and other elements of the City's communications plan.

**Project Documentation and Project Closeout.** The artist is required to submit documentation, including all drawings and a maintenance and conservation worksheet, at the time of project closeout. This is required to receive the final payment.



## 3.6 Cultural Arts Funding and Grants

Many excellent initiatives for arts and culture arise in the community. The City therefore should directly fund artists and organizations that create the projects, activities, and events that add richness, stature, and attractiveness to Laredo as a community. This is a practice of peer communities that directly compete with Laredo in the tourism, convention, and hotel market. Laredo is behind its peers in providing Cultural Arts Grants.

The Laredo community believes that the City of Laredo needs to provide stronger support for all of the arts, cultural activities, local artists and nonprofit arts organizations. This was expressed in Viva Laredo and during community engagement for this master plan, as well. Cultural Arts Grants are one of the most significant and concrete actions that the City of Laredo can take.

### Goals: Cultural Arts Grants Program

- Directly support projects emerging from local creatives, nonprofits, and community leaders
- Allow community partners to create temporary and long-term works of public visual art. Grants should be given to fund artworks of high artistic quality, by both emerging and established artists.
- Support musicians and music venues, the performing arts and venues, and literary arts
- Support the growth and health of the “creative economy”
- Provide opportunities for Laredo-based artists to contribute civically, build careers and earn income

### A. FUNDING SOURCE: HOTEL OCCUPANCY TAXES

The State of Texas allows up to 15% of municipal Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) revenues to be dedicated to cultural arts funding, which makes an area a more attractive destination for tourism and promote the hotel and convention industries.

Cities across Texas use this funding source to provide grants to local artists and arts organizations. It also is used to fund municipal administrative costs for a Cultural Arts Program, including Art in Public Places Programs that build municipal art collections.

State policy is contained in the Municipal Hotel Occupancy Tax Statute (the MHOT Statute), Texas Tax Code § 351.101. Section § 351.101(a)(4) provides that: “Revenue from the municipal hotel occupancy tax may be used only to promote tourism and the convention and hotel industry, and that use is limited to the following: the encouragement, promotion, improvement, and application of the arts, including instrumental and vocal music, dance, drama, folk art, creative writing, architecture, design and allied fields, painting, sculpture, photography, graphic and craft arts, motion pictures, radio, television, tape and sound recording, and other arts related to the presentation, performance, execution, and exhibition of these major art forms.”

Grants should fund activities and events that meet the following criteria, per guidelines co-developed by Texans for the Arts and the Texas Hotel and Lodging Association.

- Recipients present or otherwise make possible activities listed in the MHOT Statute
- These activities must be actively promoted, and open and accessible to the public and visitors
- The recipient should enhance Laredo with projects, events, and activities that directly or indirectly support the tourism, hotel and convention industry

As HOT revenues vary year-to-year, the annual fiscal year budget for grants should be based on HOT revenues already collected by the City in the prior year, rather than a projection for the current or following years.

Note: The process described below is recommended to replace the current process for Third Party Grants, when the City of Laredo provides funds to arts and culture recipients.

**The total annual allocation for Cultural Arts Funding should be calculated as 15% of the previous fiscal year's Hotel Occupancy Tax revenues.** Of this total budget, a portion should be designated and reserved for City administration of the Arts and Culture Program, including public art (e.g. 10% to 50%) The remainder should be designated as a budget for making annual Cultural Arts Grants.

## B. GRANT-MAKING PROCESS

**Eligible Recipients.** The City of Laredo may provide direct grants to the following eligible Laredo-area applicants:

- individual artists, and artist teams
- independent curators
- nonprofit organizations, and projects they fiscally sponsor
- local small businesses, for arts programming and projects fiscally sponsored by a nonprofit

Educational institutions and faith-based organizations may not be funded directly, but may participate in projects led by a local nonprofit arts organization. Nonprofits may charge a fiscal sponsorship fee of up to 8% of the project budget; for this fee, they should provide substantive administrative assistance.

Laredo should support both temporary and permanent public art projects, expanding opportunities for local artists and arts organizations to initiate projects based upon their own interest and artistic practice. Ideas for projects are generated and proposed by the applicants. Grant recipients retain ownership and stewardship responsibilities for the artwork created.

### What May Not Be Funded

Program funds may not support the following:

- Any activities taking place outside of the City of Laredo limits
- City of Laredo employees, elected officials, Mayor's Office staff, and their immediate family
- Grants to K-12 public, private or charter schools, colleges, or universities including collaborative projects or programs
- Events not open to the general public and visitors
- Competitions, award ceremonies, scholarships, cash prizes, fundraising activities and events, sports and recreation activities, or parties and private celebrations
- Trade fairs, events of primarily commercial nature, or consumer shows
- Activities that are religious, political, advertising, or promotional in nature and purpose
- The following specific project expenses:
- Travel outside of the City of Laredo
  - Deficits, loans, interest on loans, fines, penalties or cost of litigation
  - Meals or training for program project staff, contractors, and volunteers
  - Purchase of equipment exceeding \$250; essential equipment rentals are allowed
  - Capital expenses



## C. FUNDING CATEGORIES

The City will require in-house staff (or an administrative partner organization) to administer the Cultural Arts Grant program. This requires significant resources. Even with limited staff, however, the City could administer a small number of grants in Year 1 and Year 2. Per the State Statute (see above), eligible activities and projects include not only public art, but also art exhibitions; film screenings; music, dance, and theater performances; digital and online art projects; literary readings and publications, arts festivals, and activities related to their creation, promotion, and production.

Public Art Projects can be funded by both Organization Grants and Artist Grants. Funding of temporary and shorter-term installations is encouraged, as these cannot be funded with CIP monies. (Note: The creators own these artworks, which do not enter the municipal Civic Art Collection, except by special arrangement.)

The City is recommended to offer grants each year in specific categories.

**Nonprofit Organization Grants. Up to 25% of total organization budget (max of \$XX,000)**  
This grant provides annual operating funds to organizations that create, promote, and produce arts and cultural activities open to the public, including public art projects. Includes cultural facilities.

It is strongly recommended that a portion of these monies be reserved for small and emerging cultural arts nonprofits, to advance equity and expand opportunity.

### **Artist Grants. Up to \$15,000**

This grant provides funds directly to artists. Projects must be public art (temporary or permanent), and have a verified public presentation component.

### **Project Microgrants. Up to \$2,500**

These grants allow lighter, quicker, cheaper arts interventions. Recipients may include artists, independent curators, non-profit arts organizations, and fiscally sponsored projects. Projects must have a verified public presentation component. (May be offered quarterly, with simplified process and reporting.)

### **Arts and Culture Festival Grants. Up to \$15,000**

This grant provides funds to nonprofit organizations and fiscally sponsored projects, for art related festivals or the arts components of cultural festivals.

### **Allocations by Grant Category**

The City should assign annual allocations for each grant category, as a percentage of the total HOT funds available. For example, the City of Houston allocates approximately 40% of total monies available for Support for Organizations Grants; 40% for Artist Grants, including Project Microgrants; and 20% for Festival Grants.

## D. GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS

*This recommended process is based on the City of Houston cultural arts grant program, administered by the Houston Arts Alliance, slightly adapted for the City of Laredo.*

Annually, the City will issue grant application guidelines and publicly announce an open period for grant submissions. The opportunities to apply for these grants should be widely communicated.

For ease of administration, the use of an automated public platform (e.g. Submittable) for the review and scoring of submissions by the selection panel is recommended.

The Guidelines should instruct applicants in how to digitally submit their application packet. This includes a completed application form (with basic information and narrative questions), a budget table (if applicable), and eligibility verification documents, including proof of residency.

The application guidelines should clearly state what to include in the application packet. This would include a description of the artistic project or programming, and a CV or credentials describing relevant prior experience. Artists proposing public art projects should submit visual examples from their portfolio of work, and a corresponding image sheet that identifies each image.

The form should state that the applicant will be solely responsible for securing the necessary City permits (e.g. street closures), permissions, insurance, and approvals.

Applicants that are nonprofits with a mission other than the arts (e.g. education, social service, health, environmental etc.), should describe their overall programming, and explain how the proposed arts and culture project or programming relates to it, and will be accessible to the general public.

### **Call for Applications and Public Information**

Grant opportunities should be well publicized to the Laredo arts community. A media advisory should be issued prior to the start of the application period, which should be at least 30 days. City staff should conduct media interviews and community outreach well before the application period opens.

The Public Art Program Manager should develop a database of local artists, arts advocates, educational and nonprofit organizations, which should receive an email or other notification. Community partners should be asked to help promote the opportunity.

The Public Art Program Manager should promote the grant opportunities through social media; the City newsletter; standard media promotion or advertising; websites; mailing lists; local, regional, and national listings in publications and calendars (as applicable); and other tools available to the City.

The Laredo Public Art Program should join the national Public Art Network and Americans for the Arts, and their respective online listservs as a valuable networking resource for posting opportunities.

Opportunities may also be posted on national call for artist websites such as PublicArtist.org and CAFÉ – CallforEntry.org.

**Workshops for Applicants.** The Public Art Program should host **informational workshops** at the start of the open grant application period. These workshops should provide application information, coaching and assistance – especially valuable for organizations and artists who have not written grants before. This is an equity initiative.

## E. ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS BY GRANT TYPE

### Artist Grants:

- For individual artists
- Award amount: Up to \$15,000
- Applicants are notified of results within twelve weeks of each deadline.
- Length of grant: One year from award notification
- Artists must create their own work and not interpret the work of others.
- Artists who work in an artistic capacity with nonprofit organizations, such as artistic directors, executive directors, lead artists, resident artists, and conductors, must apply for a project that is independent of their organization.
- For collaborative art projects, one artist must serve as the applicant for the project, and all members must meet eligibility requirements. A collaborator is defined as someone who is a co-owner of the project and a generative part of the team. Subcontractors are not collaborators.

### Festival Grants:

- For 501(c)(3) organizations and fiscally sponsored programs
- Award amount: Up to \$10,000
- Applicants are notified of results within twelve weeks of each deadline.
- Length of grant: One year from award notification
- A festival is defined as:
  - An annual or twice a year celebration
  - An immersion around a unifying theme or programmatic focus
  - Featuring a varied and curated program of events
  - Occurring within a specific, condensed time, such as one day or over a week
  - Open to the public

### Support for Organizations:

- For:  
501(c)3 organizations, in existence for at least one year, with the arts named in its mission which is verified by staff review of an applicant's 990 on the IRS website; or  
  
Fiscally sponsored or a non-arts specific 501(c)3 organizations with arts-specific programming.
- Applicants may apply for up to a maximum of \$50,000 depending on its operating expenses, excluding the value of in-kind contributions.
- Applicants are notified of results within twelve weeks of each deadline.
- Length of grant: One year from award notification

### Project Microgrants:

- For individual artists, 501(c)(3) organizations, and fiscally sponsored projects
- Award amount: Up to \$2,500
- Applicants are notified of results within eight weeks of each deadline.
- Length of grant: One year from award notification

## Required Documents for All Applications

1. Proof of headquarters or residence: All applicants must upload an image of official documentation, such as utility or insurance that includes a visible City of Laredo address with the applicant's or organization's name.
2. Proof of Age (Artists Only): All applicants must upload an image of a state-issued ID, passport, or other official document.
3. Fiscal Sponsorship Agreement: All fiscally sponsored applicants must upload a copy of their fiscal sponsorship agreement
4. Work Samples: All applicants must upload documentation of their work meant to support the excellence and merit of the proposed project and/or artists. Applicants may include a total of five individual files, not to exceed a file size of 100MB each. Include descriptions to help panelists understand work samples in the appropriate context.
5. PDFs: submit images; links for audio or video samples with any passwords; fiction or nonfiction manuscripts; other literary samples; and articles, reviews and sample publications as PDF documents not exceeding 10 pages.
6. Images: submit images as .jpg or .tif files.
7. Audio or video samples: submit files as .mp3, .mp4, or .mov files.
8. W-9 and ACH Form for contracts and payment processing if the applicant becomes a grant recipient.

**Financial Reporting Requirements for Organizations:** Organizations and fiscally sponsored projects must complete and submit the budget table form in the online application, to provide a detailed full-cost budget for the proposed arts and cultural programming. If applicable, grant awards are calculated by an organization's annual operating budget (not including in-kind contributions). Therefore, it is essential that organizations properly report their financial information. The grant amount may be up to 25% of the organization's annual operating budget.

The budget is a summary of income and expenses sources. **Income sources** include: contributed revenue (City of Laredo, foundations, corporations, in-kind donations, government, and other) and earned revenue (admission, classes/workshops, art sales, and other). **Expense sources** include: marketing expenses, artistic personnel, administrative personnel, technical personnel, production expenses, and other expenses.

## F. APPLICATION SCORING, AND SELECTION PROCESS

The City of Laredo will utilize a standard, transparent, and fair process, for the review of submitted applications, their scoring and ranking. This standard process includes the steps described below.

### Step 1. Staff Review

Applications are reviewed by the Public Art Program Manager or their designee to verify eligibility, completeness, public presentation requirements, and scores for objective criteria (below).

An application must be submitted by the posted deadline, and include all required documents and packet components, for the application to be considered. All fields in the application form must be completed. Staff may, at their sole discretion, request completion of minor missing



information. Staff should notify ineligible applicants via email after the verification process has ended. Any applicant concerns regarding eligibility determination must be raised within two weeks (this must be specified in the guidelines).

Note: This process removes city staff and the Fine Arts and Culture Commission from the evaluation of grant applications, except for verifying these objective eligibility criteria.

### **Objective Eligibility Criteria: City Staff**

The application form should state these criteria, and encourage applicants to address them clearly in their narrative descriptions. Each application will be scored as to how it meets these criteria.

- **Tourism Impact**

The application must make the case for how the project or program contributes to tourism, and supports the local hotel/motel and convention industry. It may discuss associated marketing campaigns, projected ticket sales and event attendance, and destination areas for tourism.

- **Mission Alignment**

The application should clearly describe the mission of the proposed program or project, and how it relates to 1) the mission of the applicant, and 2) the mission of advancing Arts and Culture in Laredo. Includes demonstrated commitment to historically underserved communities.

- **Capacity for Project Completion**

The application should address the demonstrated capacity and ability of the organization to accomplish the project as described. Project elements that increase scores in this area include a well-described planning and delivery process, a feasible budget, staff and volunteer capacity, and a detailed plan for a marketing and publicity campaign to reach locals and visitors. Also considered is evidence of fiscal responsibility and previous successful efforts by the applicant.

- **Payments to Artists**

The application budget should clearly show dollar amounts to be paid to artists. (These payments will be verified by staff.)

City staff may assign a score of up to 50 points to each application, based on these objective criteria.

## **Step 2. Grant Review Panel: Scoring and Selection**

The City of Laredo will engage a Grant Review Panel to score and rank eligible grant applications. For the panel, it will engage community representatives with arts expertise. A new panel should be appointed annually for each grant program. The City may provide panelists with a stipend for their service.

Panelists may submit questions over email to applicants, which will be asked to reply by email within 48 hours.

The evaluation criteria that the Panel will use to score applications should be developed by staff and standardized. They will vary by grant type. The same criteria should be used for all projects (subject to periodic review and updates).

Example Criteria for an artist proposal (e.g. one of multiple criteria):

- **Quality**  
The artist's narrative description and submitted imagery should make a compelling case for the quality, interest, and impact of the proposed project or activity. It should present a strong "pitch" and be persuasive. Artistic and cultural quality and relevance should be addressed.

Individual panelists may assign a score of up to **50 points** to each application, based on these criteria. The scores assigned by all panelists will be averaged, to arrive at a final Grant Review Panel score.

The staff scores and Panel scores will be combined to determine the final score and ranking of each application, on a scale of **100 points**.

Based on the available budget for the grants category, the top applicants will be selected, to arrive at a set of grants that can be funded within the budget. This will result in a final list of recommended grant recipients. This recommendation will be presented to the Fine Arts and Culture commission, for a public review.

### **Panel Composition**

The Panel should include five to seven community members and include professionals in the visual arts (artist, curator, art historian, art educator, conservator, graphic designer, etc.); professionals in the field of design, architecture, landscape architecture or urban planning, artists, and at-large members. Panelists should have no direct relationship with the project or conflict of interest with applicants.

If applicable, a representative from the City Department affected should be invited to participate in the panel review if proposed projects will take place on its property or are in areas the Department has conducted planning studies.

For Artist Grants, the Panel should be a peer-panel that includes five members who are professionals in the visual arts (artist, curator, art historian, art educator, conservator, graphic designer, etc.).

## **Step 3. Fine Arts and Culture Commission Review and Action**

City staff will provide the final list of recommended Cultural Arts Grant recipients to the Department Director and City Manager. It will be presented within 30 days to the Fine Arts and Culture Commission. Citizens may comment at this public meeting.

The Commissioners may not alter the recommendations of the panel, as to the individual selected grant recipients. Their role is to verify that the standard scoring and selection process was followed in a fair and transparent fashion. They may note concerns for review and action by the Public Art Program Manager. The grant recipients become official after the Commission votes to verify the results.

## Step 4. Elected Officials

The responsible Department Director will announce the final approved list of Cultural Arts Grant recipients in a memo to the City Manager, mayor and council, and involved City staff. Elected officials may not intervene in the selection process, except to verify that the standard process was followed.

After artists are notified, the City of Laredo will publicly announce the list of grant recipients and the award amounts.

## G. AWARDS PROCESS

**Award Dollar Amounts.** City staff determine the final dollar amount for each grant, based on apportioning the total annual budget available for grants. This should be the full amount requested, or at least 75% of the total (if the full amount is not feasible due to limited funding).

**Award Notification.** The Public Art Program Manager will email final decisions to applicants. These award notification emails include instructions about receiving panel feedback and, if the grant was awarded, details on completing contracts, payment schedules, and more.

**Panel Feedback.** Panelists' evaluative comments are available to applicants who may find it of value for their work, or future applications. Applicants may email the Public Art Program Manager to request comments. Comments should be available for 10 weeks after award notifications.

**Final Reporting.** A final report on the completed project or activity must be delivered to the Public Art Program Manager, within 30 days after the completion of the grant term. A simple form should be provided to recipients for this purpose.

**Acknowledgment.** It is vital that grant recipients acknowledge the support of the City of Laredo to demonstrate how City funds support arts and culture. Recipients receiving funds must include the City of Laredo and Cultural Arts Program logos and a credit line on all printed and electronic materials that discuss or advertise the project and related public events. For organizational support grants, the credit should be provided throughout the grant period. Required logos will be made available for download. Required language:

"This [work or organization or artist] is funded in part by the City of Laredo through its Cultural Arts Grant Program."



## 3.7 Capital Improvement Projects: Process for Integrating Public Art

### A. IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE: PUBLIC ART IN CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

***A guide for City Management, Public Art Program Staff, CIP Program Staff, Project Managers, City Departments, and project implementation consultants and partners, City of Laredo, Texas***

*Note: subject to final review by staff at the City of Laredo. The final document should be distributed as a stand-alone guidance document to everyone involved.*

#### Background: Percent for Art Program

At the City of Laredo, the Public Art Program Manager and Department Director will lead the process of coordination with Engineering Department and City Department staff to integrate public art, funded with a 2% allocation, into Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects. The “2% for Art” Ordinance (2019-O-177) specifies calculation methods to be followed. This applies to all projects funded, in whole or in part, with City monies.

A core purpose of the Public Art Program is to commission public artworks in conjunction with City capital improvement projects. By ordinance, the City established an intention to incorporate public art, where feasible, into CIP projects. Where inclusion is not feasible or desirable, the 2% shall be provided to a citywide Public Art Administration Fund, to be used by the Public Art Program for projects elsewhere in the city and/or for Public Art Program administration, which includes project management by the program.

The Public Art Ordinance (2019-O-177) defined an allocation of 2% for Public Art, and defined eligible Capital Improvement Projects as the following project types:

- **Buildings.** All new City buildings and their associated facilities; all projects to improve or renovate buildings
- **Parks.**
- **Transportation.** Streets, sidewalks and parking facilities. (Except street resurfacing and repairs)
- **Utility projects.** (Except below-grade improvements, drainage improvements)
- **Decorative** or commemorative structures

As a standard practice, below-ground facilities and project components are not included in the 2% budget calculation. Construction costs for all eligible above-ground facilities are included. Please see the Ordinance for additional detail.

#### Identifying Opportunities for Public Art

CIP projects sited in visible locations, where the art can be enjoyed by everyone in public space, offer priority public art opportunities. These should be identified at the earliest possible stage of project planning.



The **Public Art Program Manager** and staff will proactively collaborate with City departments to explore opportunities to integrate public art into the city's overall Capital Improvement Program.

The **City Manager** will ensure that public art is integrated into Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects, and direct staff to identify and evaluate projects and opportunities in advance, within the 5-Year CIP Program.

The **CIP Program Manager** and **Project Manager** are responsible for ensuring the artwork is included in the early project planning and addressed in all project phases. These phases typically include: master planning, programming, preliminary engineering and design, design development, construction documents, and construction administration.

### CIP Plan and Annual Public Art Plan: Alignment

Each year, the Public Art Program has the responsibility to develop an Annual Public Art Plan and budget. This will be based on the annual CIP Plan and the individual eligible projects it contains. All eligible project types funded by the City and included in the annual CIP Plan are subject to the 2% for art allocation. This projection and budget should be developed in consultation with the Finance Department, the CIP Program Manager, the Engineering Department, and the individual departments with funded projects in the CIP Plan.

In addition, the Public Art Program should consider opportunities for public art through projects funded by partner agencies. If any City resources are contributed, the City should approach its funding partners about including public art and a budget allocation.

The **Annual Public Art Plan** will describe new and ongoing public art projects. For each proposed project, it will include a brief description, proposed location, anticipated budget, recommended selection process for the artist and artwork, anticipated completion date, a description of related key tasks and steps, and other information.

The **Annual Public Art Plan** will describe an overall program budget for the coming fiscal year, with separate project budgets for a prioritized list of CIP projects.

Over the course of the year, new projects can be added to the Plan. New projects can be developed and detailed by the Program Manager; they should be reviewed and approved as described below.

### Roles & Responsibilities

**Public Art Program Manager** – Develops the plan, in consultation with department heads, project managers and City Management. Provides a preliminary draft. Provides final draft.

**CIP Program Manager** – Provides review, approvals, and all necessary information and support to fully integrate the public art project component into the larger CIP project.

**Department Project Manager** – Provides all necessary information and support to Public Art Program Manager, as needed to allow integration of the public art project component into the larger CIP project.

**Fine Art and Culture Commission** – Reviews and approves the draft plans, both Annual Plan and Project Plans. After review by the Commission, Program Manager forwards with comments to City Manager's Office.

**City Management** – Reviews and approves the draft plan, before it is submitted to City Council.

Over the course of the year, also reviews and approves each Project Plan for individual projects; may forward individual Project Plans to Council for review/approval, if deemed necessary.

**City Council** - Reviews final draft **Annual Public Art Plan** submitted. Approves inclusion in the City budget.

Once a public art project is included in an approved **Annual Public Art Plan**, the Public Art Program can proceed with the development of a **Project Plan**.

## The Project Plan

For each project, the Public Art Program will prepare a Project Plan. A Project Plan documents and describes how the individual public art project will be planned and executed. It must be shared with all parties involved, to include representatives of the Engineering Department, the lead “client” Department for the project, the Fine Arts and Culture Commission, and relevant partners and key community stakeholders.

Each Project Plan will provide a clear framework for managing the project, to provide for accountability, high quality artwork, a smooth project delivery process, and evaluation. As a standard, a Project Plan will include the following elements:

- **Goals**
- **Approach**, roles and responsibilities, implementation plan
- **Location** and **siting considerations**
- **Schedule** / timeline
- **Budget and funding** sources
- Artist selection process (anticipated)
- Community engagement process (anticipated)
- List of key internal and external **stakeholders (to be included)**

The Public Art Program Manager has the lead responsibility for drafting, distributing for review, finalizing, and administering the Project Plan.

***Please see additional guidance in the Public Art Master Plan on the artwork selection and community engagement processes, as well as overall goals for the City of Laredo Public Art Program and Collection.***

## Capital Improvement Program: 5-Year Plan

The City’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Plan prioritizes proposed capital investments and establishes budgets and schedules for project development. The CIP Plan is updated annually, and looks ahead five years.

Each year, when the new 5-Year CIP Plan is published, the **Public Art Program Manager** should review the projects on the list with respective department heads. They should collaborate to identify projects with a strong potential for public art that serves the community. These projects should be added to the Public Art Annual Plan.

As CIP projects may take years to fund and deliver, a given project may remain in the plan for several years.

Projects for which funding has been identified, and that are initiating in the current fiscal year, should be the top priority for review and planning for public art opportunities.

## PROCESSES FOR DEVELOPING PROJECTS

### Civic Art Project Management: Integration with Capital Improvement

Public Art Program staff are responsible for establishing a standard annual process – integrated into the CIP Plan of the City – that considers and identifies priority public art opportunities.

The Program Staff should closely monitor CIP Project planning and project development processes to ensure that public art opportunities are identified, explored, and decided upon. The plans for artwork need to be integrated into the project scope, budget, and design from the earliest possible stages of project development.

Public Art Program staff will serve as the lead entity in recommending the inclusion of public art and facilitating public art projects within CIP projects. This requires involvement at all steps of the process – from early scoping and budgeting through construction and evaluation.

Public Art Program staff should work closely with both the Engineering project manager and the project manager from the department leading the capital improvement, as well as the lead consultant firm implementing each project, where relevant (e.g. an architecture or urban planning firm).

The Fine Arts and Culture Commission should be informed of progress in planning and project development, and should review and provide recommendations as appropriate.

### Project Phases

The capital project development process comprises a series of phases that need to align with the public art project development process.

#### 1. Master Planning & Scoping

Capital projects are first identified and prioritized in master plans created by individual City departments as part of the Departmental CIP plan and the City's overall CIP Program and Plan.

During the early master planning process, City departments (and their planning consultants) are required to consult with Public Art Program staff to identify projects in which public art could be considered.

Master plans should include recommendations for whether the City capital project should include public art. Each recommendation should be submitted to the **Fine Art and Culture Commission**, for review and, before master plans are sent to the **City Manager** and **City Council** for review and approval.

It is the responsibility of the CIP Program Manager, and the Public Art Program Manager, to coordinate to ensure that the 2% for Art is included as a line item in the capital project budget.

#### Note on Budgets and Funding

Budgeting should include all costs associated with delivering a public art project. The 2% for Art budget needs to include all costs, including 15% for project management to be transferred to the Public Art Program.

Project costs should be broken down by project phase. They typically include preliminary planning and design, particularly if architectural or engineering services are required; site preparation; artist fees for materials and creative services; fabrication, transportation,

installation and insurance; a maintenance set-aside budget; public engagement and ribbon-cutting events.

Generally these costs should be covered by the 2% of the total CIP project cost, budgeted for public art. In some cases, supplemental funds from other sources and partners are needed to realize the artwork vision.

## 2. Scoping, Preliminary Design, and Preliminary Engineering Report

This phase results in a report and an understanding of what is going to be built and its cost. This phase for a major project can take approximately one year.

Public art should be considered in this phase, through consultation between the client Department, the City's engineering department and consultant, and the City's **Public Art Program Manager**.

The Preliminary Design and Engineering Report should include recommendations for public art, if its inclusion has been deemed appropriate.

The recommendations should not only address public art opportunities, but also outline how the public art project should be coordinated with the further development of the capital project. This would include initial plans for siting, budget, approach, artist selection, concept approval, design, fabrication, delivery and installation.

For each capital project in which public art will be included, the **Public Art Program Manager** is responsible for developing a Project Plan that documents the approach to public art and the roles and responsibilities of all partners. **Project Plans** must be submitted to the **Fine Arts and Culture Commission** for review and comment, and then submitted to the **City Manager**. Projects involving public art contracts greater than \$50,000 must be approved by City Council.

## 3. Design

The design phase of a major capital project typically takes about one year. For each capital project in which public art will be included, the design phase should include an evaluation of options for public art. The **Project Manager** for the project and a representative of the lead Department (and their consultants) should collaborate with the City's **Public Art Program Manager** to refine the approach to integrating artwork into the design.

Depending on the nature and timing of the project, the City may commission an artist to work as part of the design team, or to develop concepts concurrently with the design phase. The findings of the design phase should be submitted to stakeholders for review and incorporated into an updated Project Plan.

Conceptual development of the artwork type, and the artist selection process, may be conducted during this phase, or earlier.

### A Note on Community Involvement

Each public art project should have a specific community education, engagement, outreach, and communications plan. Public engagement should begin as soon as a project is being developed. It is particularly essential during the initial announcement, artist selection, design and construction, and project unveiling stages. This function should be coordinated through the Public Art Program, which will invite the artist to participate.



#### 4. Construction and Completion

The commissioning, fabrication and installation of the public art project must be coordinated with the project's construction schedule. It should be evaluated and approved as part of construction administration and project close-out.

Public art provides a positive focal point for project completion celebrations and ribbon-cutting events, to which community members and project partners are invited.

#### B. EVALUATION CRITERIA: PRIORITIZING SITES FOR PUBLIC ART

Annually, the Public Art Program and the appropriate City Departments will need to assess the potential for public art, on sites and projects included in the 2021 Bond Program and FY2022 CIP Plan. This assessment should be based on the criteria below. It will produce a list of recommended priority sites. The final list of selected sites will be included in the Annual Public Art Plan.

To conform with rules for use of bond funds, the artworks funded with bond monies should be on the site of CIP projects within the same bond program, or otherwise meet CIP requirements.

#### Criteria for Evaluation: Potential and Priority for Public Art

Priority project sites for public art are those that meet multiple criteria on this list, ideally one or more in each category.

##### Site

- Site has high public visibility, suitable for beautification with artwork
- Site is in/near Downtown, or a historic district
- Site has special significance/meaning to the community and visitors
- Project site can have positive impact on economic development or tourism

##### Project

- Project is a significant city building, which can contribute to civic pride
- Project improves a public space or facility that people use daily
- Project improves a major street, streetscape, or park
- Project includes landscaping and/or potential public gathering space

##### Equity

- Project and investment contributes to advancing equity across Districts
- Site is appealing and accessible to diverse people, of all income levels

## C. ANNUAL CIP BOND PROGRAM: ALIGNMENT WITH ANNUAL PUBLIC ART PLAN

### A Standard Process for Identifying Public Art Opportunities

#### Annual CIP Bond Program: District-Identified and Citywide Projects

Each year, the list of Capital Improvement projects, funded through the approved sale of bonds, should be reviewed early on. Each individual project should be assessed as a candidate for on-site public art. The optimal sites should be identified, and prioritized. A final set of selected projects will be incorporated into the Annual Public Art Plan for the year.

Please refer to the **Evaluation Criteria** in the preceding section, 3.7-B.

**Project Identification Process:** The Public Art Program Manager should review and recommend the specific CIP projects that offer optimal sites for public art. These recommendations will be included in the **Annual Public Art Plan**. In making this evaluation, the Program Manager should engage and consult with the Engineering Department, the respective sponsoring Departments (by type), the Fine Arts and Culture Commission, affected community members as appropriate, and the Council Member and Arts Commissioner from the district.

#### Peer City Resources

Processes used by cities with long-standing public art programs should be consulted by Laredo as it develops its processes. The City of Laredo should review these materials from other cities as it further develops its own processes and written guidance. For example, the Future Projects section of the 2014 [El Paso Public Art Master Plan](#) contain a useful level of detail on the following topics:

- Project Identification Principles
- Project Evaluation Criteria
- Technical Considerations for Integrating Public Art into a Site



## Laredo Model: 2021 Bond Program

### District-Identified Projects

In 2021, the City of Laredo practice is to sell **\$15M** in bonds to finance this set of projects. This yielded a total public art budget of \$300,000. Each council district is assigned \$1M in CIP project funds. Each Council Member helps city staff to identify the set of top priority projects for the monies available in their District. The City prefers that the 2% for Art monies, generated by this set of projects, also be distributed roughly equally across council districts.

**District Allocations for Public Art:** The **2% for Art** allocation, applied to **\$1M** in CIP projects per District, yields a budget of **\$20,000** for public art per Council District. These monies can be spent either 1) on the site of a single CIP project in the District, to be enhanced with a single \$20,000 artwork project, or 2) on multiple CIP project sites, with smaller budgets assigned to two or more projects .

Given the City's current limited staff capacity to manage public art project implementation, it is recommended that one site and public art project is selected and implemented per District. (It is also allowable to pool funds across districts, and rotate the district to receive an artwork each year.)

**Citywide Projects:** The 2% for Art allocation, applied to the remaining **\$7M** in CIP projects, will result in a budget of **\$140,000** for public art that can be sited at any priority site citywide. *These should be drawn from the list of recommended priority sites included in this master plan.*

These funds will allow for the creation of higher-budget public art projects. The Downtown area is recommended to receive at least one major artwork each year, to be funded in this manner. The remaining funds could be spent on one major artwork in a different area of Laredo annually, selected on a rotating basis, or as otherwise directed by the City Manager.

**Note on Permanent Artwork:** Public Art Projects funded through this program should meet the "permanent improvement" standards of the CIP program as a whole. Each installed artwork should utilize materials and finishes of sufficient quality and durability to last over time.

... I see public art in Laredo as a gateway that the Gateway City should constantly strive to commission. Public art in our city has provided its citizens with many benefits and continuing to beautify our city with gorgeous artworks will continue to attract more benefits to them.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent

## 2021 Bond Program Projects

### Assessment of Potential for Public Art

### MODEL FOR ANNUAL PROCESS

Below is the consultant's initial assessment of the potential for public art, summarized in a chart. This is only a "first pass" assessment completed in October 2021, but it is useful as a model for future years. The annual assessment and recommendation process should be led by the Public Art Program, in cooperation with the Engineering Department.

To conform with rules for use of bond funds, the artworks funded with bond monies should be *on the site of CIP projects within the same bond program*, or otherwise meet CIP requirements.

The chart below summarizes the consultant's initial assessment — as sites for public art — of projects and sites included in the City of Laredo 2021 Bond Program and Capital Improvement Project Program, as approved by the City Council. *These assessments were provisional, based on the very limited information provided to the master plan consultant.*

The final prioritization and selection of projects will be reflected in the **Annual Public Art Plan**. Each potential site should be first reviewed and discussed with the relevant City Department. Community representatives can also provide valuable input.

The individual project sites selected to receive a public art installation should be named in the final Annual Public Art Plan. The project identifications initially can be general in the plan, e.g. "Public Artwork, Corpus Street Beautification Project."

### FY2022 Annual CIP/Bond Program

**Please see chart included in Executive Summary on p. 16-17, that addresses individual project opportunities for the current fiscal year.**





## D. 5-YEAR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

### Maximizing Opportunities for Public Art

A Capital Improvement Program engages in placemaking – that is, it creates and enhances physical structures and places. Through human-centered design and the integration of public art, these places and facilities can be made attractive, appealing, and welcoming to all people.

As City funds are limited, the City of Laredo is encouraged to think holistically about all sources for funding public artworks. **The City is encouraged to be proactive, in securing the participation of CIP project partners and including monies they contribute, in budgeting for public art financed through its Capital Improvement Project (CIP) program.**

To the extent allowable by law and funder policies, it can engage all of its funding partners and resources in its initiative to create public artworks that help to beautify and enliven the streets, visible infrastructure, and public spaces of Laredo.

**All public art projects related to City CIP projects, of any type, are to be administered by the Public Art Program.** This includes managing all related processes and procedures in accordance with the City's consistent adopted practices. These responsibilities include project identification and scoping, public Calls for Artists, the artist selection process, community engagement, artist contracts and oversight, public information, and media relations. Accordingly, 15% of each Public Art Project budget should be transferred to the Public Art program to fund its related administrative costs.

*Please also see the review and recommendations for specific public art opportunities within the current City of Laredo 5-Year CIP Plan. This is included in the Executive Summary and in **Chapter 5. 10-Year Strategic Plan.***

### Onsite Artwork vs. Funds Transfer

In some cases, the project offers a strong opportunity. In other cases, the monies may be better spent on a project at another location. By City ordinance, they may be transferred to another CIP project site (ideally the project that yielded the funds, or another project within the same bond program). The 3% allocation also may be transferred to a Public Art Fund and aggregated for use on a major artwork at a priority site (as allowed by law).

Evaluation of Potential for Onsite Artwork. City staff should first consider whether an artwork can be integrated into a CIP project and its site. Please see the evaluation criteria in the preceding section.

... I hope to see more contemporary pieces as well as cultural, and statement art.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent

## Embracing All Funding Sources: City, Partner Agency, Developer Contributions, Grants, Other

**City of Laredo Funding.** Per city ordinance, the intent is to proactively seek opportunities to integrate public artworks into all eligible and suitable Capital Improvement Projects, regardless of funding source, in which the City of Laredo participates.

The “2% for Public Art” funding appropriation applies to the Construction Cost – defined in the ordinance as “**the total City-funded portion of a Capital Improvement Project**” less costs for land acquisition, demolition, equipment, maintenance. This applies to all city buildings, facilities, parks, streets, utilities, and other included projects “**whether funded by general obligation bonds, revenue bonds, or certificates of obligation.**”

To date, the City has included all General Government projects that receive City funds. Other categories of projects should also be included, as discussed in the Executive Summary and Chapter 5: 10-Year Strategic Plan.

**Other Funding Sources.** The stated purpose of the Public Art Program is to maximize all opportunities to provide public art in Laredo, including artwork funded by other agencies and partners.

To realize this goal, the City of Laredo can seek to appropriate for public art 2% (or other amounts) of other funds obtained for the city’s Capital Improvement Projects and program. Care should be taken not to pay for artwork with funds that are explicitly barred from being used for this purpose.

The City should review each of the following funding sources, to determine whether any prohibitions apply to use of the funds for public art integrated into the project. The City is encouraged to confer with other Texas cities with mature public art programs on this issue.

Prohibitions should be carefully assessed; flexible interpretations exist. For example, if the “artwork” is specified as an integral element of the building or infrastructure – a façade element created by an artist, for example – it may be an allowable use of funds, even where the purchase artwork for the decoration of interiors is not allowable (e.g. FAA grants). Many cities include artists as integral members of the project design team.

Funding sources the City may consider for public artwork included in CIP projects may include the following.

- TxDOT Contributions (see separate section on TxDOT opportunities)
- Developer Contributions
- Private Sector Contributions
- Grants
- State Infrastructure Bank Loans
- Texas Water Development Board

A review should be made of the rules of funding source, to determine whether any specific prohibitions exist against funding public art. If not, the City should proactively seek to include these sources in calculating the public art budget for each CIP Project, on a case-by-case basis.





# Chapter 4. Collection Management



## Introduction

A Civic Art Collection is a wonderful asset to be enjoyed by all of the people in the community, in their daily lives, and by everyone who visits Laredo. In a sense, it allows every citizen to be a significant collector of art.

The original works of art created or purchased for the City's Civic Art Collection represent a significant asset. These artwork assets will need to be appropriately managed for many years, and conserved for future generations. This master plan therefore contains a set of written policies for Civic Art Collection's ongoing development, care, and protection. They are based on the collection management policies of peer cities with long-established public art collections. These policies should be stringently adhered to by the City. They should be reviewed annually and updated over time, as needed.

Historic artworks in the City's possession (such as the fountains and statues in historic plazas) should be fully documented and formally accessioned into the Civic Art Collection. This is required to integrate them into the City's ongoing maintenance and conservation responsibilities, plans, and efforts. City staff should develop a database of these historic artworks and present them as a group to the City Manager and to the Fine Arts and Culture Commission for review and action.

### 4.1. Civic Art Collection

*Note: The full set of Collection Management Policies is in the following section, 4.2.*

#### A. CURRENT STATUS

The artworks commissioned or funded by the City of Laredo become part of its Civic Art Collection. Just as the Library Department is responsible for a collection of books, the City and its Public Art Program are responsible for the care and maintenance of a valuable collection of original works of art.

##### 2021 Collection Summary

*Note: The information below is current as of the inventory provided by City staff Nov. 20, 2021. Some artworks may not have been included.*

**Scope:** The collection includes at least [NUMBER] city-owned artworks. Nearly all have been commissioned and/or accessioned in the past five years (City staff need to confirm final number).

**Types of Artworks:** Primarily murals. Few other types of artwork. (For future commissions, the city should expand into more diverse types of artworks, such as sculptures.)

**Subject matter:** The themes of the murals reflect cultural pride, Laredo history, the natural environment, or/or community identity. (These appear to be themes of continuing interest.)

**Diversity of Artists Represented:** The City should tally and track the number of men vs. women artists represented, and seek to make them roughly equal. Future commissions should seek to expand the diversity of artists, and include new artists.

**Sites:** The most common sites are City parks. Other sites include city buildings, infrastructure, and some privately owned buildings.



**Maintenance Needs:** Some artworks currently require maintenance to keep them in good condition.

**Condition:** Professional assessment recommended, with maintenance needs documented. Most works are in good condition, but some murals have quickly degraded, due to insufficient surface preparation, use of substandard materials, or lack of coating. Professional assessment by a conservator is recommended.

**Value:** Professional assessment recommended. Comprehensive information on expenditures on public art was not available.

## B. INVENTORY OF COLLECTION

For this master plan, the consultants worked with city staff to conduct an inventory of the civic art collection. The consultant developed and provided an artwork documentation form, provided instructions and training for staff on its use, and tracked staff progress in gathering complete information on all artworks owned by the City.

The information provided by City staff is included in **Appendix B. 2021 Inventory of Civic Art Collection, City of Laredo** (database document).

Note: The inventory in the Appendix is current as of the final draft of this master plan; additional work is needed by City staff to enter complete information into all fields in the database.

More detailed information about the Civic Art Collection database can be found in **4.2-A. General Collection Management Policy**.

## C. PROCESS: UPDATING INVENTORY

The 2021 Civic Art Collection Inventory database needs to be updated on an ongoing basis. For this purpose, we have provided a **Civic Artwork documentation form**, included in **Appendix F**, which should be used by the Public Art Program.

As each new artwork is commissioned or acquired, information on it will need to be gathered using this form. Public Art Program staff should add it to the inventory database. The database itself should be reviewed, corrected for any errors or omissions, and updated and published at least annually. In addition, artists should be asked for information about the materials used, and any special maintenance needed, when each work is completed. This information should be stored in the database.

A thumbnail photograph of each artwork should be added to the inventory database. This will prove essential as the collection expands, for tracking and identifying the artwork.

## D. ONGOING MAINTENANCE AND CONSERVATION

Maintenance is the ongoing efforts to keep artworks in good repair. Conservation refers to periodic efforts required to restore or otherwise conserve an artwork.

The City does not currently allocate funds for maintenance of the artworks in its collection. This responsibility will need to be resourced and funded as the collection grows. At present, the City department that commissions the project is responsible for its ongoing maintenance.

The Public Art Program Manager should oversee collection maintenance and conservation citywide, and provide expertise and resources to departments. By city ordinance, this responsibility can be funded as part of ongoing public art program administration, through the Public Art Fund.

Each department should have a maintenance plan and standard procedures for tending to the artworks it commissions. Related tasks, deadlines, necessary tools, parts, frequency of maintenance, and costs should be recorded and integrated into the general maintenance plan for all assets.

**At least every three years, the City should hire an independent professional to assess the collection and recommend specific conservation measures.** The Public Art Program Manager should manage this process.

In 2022, the Public Art Program Manager should retain a professional conservator to conduct a comprehensive baseline inventory and assessment of the City's public art collection. The deliverable should provide clear documentation of the current status of the collection and make recommendations for how to address outstanding maintenance and conservation needs, including special techniques that may be required, cost estimates and a recommended schedule or priorities for implementation.

Funding for both the assessment and the resulting work should be allocated in the Annual Public Art Plan and Budget. This is a periodic expense that should be included in the program budget.

Community members may ask the Public Art Program Manager to provide recommendations on the maintenance and conservation of other public art in Laredo, as well. The City should provide advice and assistance for significant works, as resources allow. In some instances, the artwork could be accepted into the city's art collection, and the City could assume responsibility for its ongoing care.

Alternatively, a grant could be recommended to cover the costs of conservation.

Upon request, the Fine Arts & Culture Committee could review public artworks not owned by the city, and make a recommendation on whether to accept the work for the City's collection and conservation assistance, if the work is offered as a donation. Criteria may include the artwork's history and significance to the community, its condition, its ability to be satisfactorily conserved, and its structural integrity.

*The full Maintenance and Conservation Policy can be found in section 4.2-B.*

## E. ONLINE COLLECTION

Cities and other governmental entities with public art collections make the entire collection available online, to make the artwork digitally accessible to all. The City of Laredo should begin work on developing such a website. It will require high-resolution, quality photography of each work, as well as quality narratives and descriptions.

This is a recommended action step within the next three years, in the 10 Year Strategic Plan. This special project could be conducted by a community partner, and funded with a Cultural Arts Grant (third-party) by the City. This would be an excellent use of Hotel Occupancy Tax funds, as the website would be used by tourists. The City could also apply for a grant to fund this website project.

The website should provide descriptions of all artworks, in a standard format, based on the information in the Inventory Database.

The website is recommended to include an interactive map showing all significant public art in Laredo, including works that are not in the city's collection. Assembling the map will require research, city staff input, community input, and site visits. Public art on sites such as the TAMU campus could be included. An existing platform that could be utilized is the Database of Public Art | Public Art Archive.

Developing a print brochure is also recommended, within the next two to three years. This tool can encourage the public and visitors to visit artwork sites. The brochure should provide an overview of the city's collection, a map and route for a self-guided tour, and other information. Copies can be provided online (PDF), through visitor information centers, hotels, libraries, and other sites.

#### **BEST PRACTICE: City Art Collections Online**

Cities, counties, transit agencies, and federal agencies around the U.S. and the world have posted their civic art collections online. This makes images from the collection accessible to all people in a community, at any time. It also supports tourism and destination marketing efforts. Examples of model websites include:

[Public Art Collection Online](#), Bernalillo County, NM

[Explore the Collection | Commission for Arts and Culture](#), City of San Diego, CA

[Austin Art in Public Places](#) Collection, City of Austin, TX

[Public Art Interactive Map](#), City of Dallas

[Houston Arts Map](#), Houston, TX



## 4.2 Collection Management Policies

### INTRODUCTION

Excellence in management of the City of Laredo Civic Art Collection supports cultural expression. It communicates to the public that both art and community are valued and respected. These responsibilities should be resourced and prioritized.

As a public asset, funded with taxpayer dollars, the Civic Art Collection owned by the City of Laredo requires Collection Management policies. The City has a duty to adhere to its policies in order to preserve artworks in the best possible condition. Ensuring adherence to city policy is a duty of all city staff and elected officials.

The following policies were developed for Laredo, as part of the consultant's tasks in developing this master plan. They are based on a survey of best practices and policy language used by peer cities.

Through the adoption of this master plan by the City Council, this set of policies is formally adopted by the City of Laredo.

This section includes the following individual policies:

- A. General Provisions
- B. Artwork Maintenance and Conservation Policy
- C. Policy for Purchases of Existing Artwork
- D. Deaccession and Relocation Policy
- E. Policy for the Inclusion of Public Art in Capital Improvement Projects
- F. Art Donation and Loan Policy
- G. Ownership, Record Keeping, and Documentation of the Collection





## A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

The objective of this policy is to manage the Civic Art Collection to ensure and maintain its quality, condition, and value over time, for generations to come.

The City of Laredo acquires artworks by commissions of the City's Percent for Art Ordinance and through gifts from groups and individuals. Processes for these acquisitions are dictated by the Public Art Program Ordinance, the Fine Arts and Culture Commission, and by the Donation Policy and/or by the City's contract with the artist(s). Artworks acquired through these processes are considered to have been accessioned into the City's Permanent Collection and must be cared for in accordance with the Maintenance Policy and the Collection Management Policy.

### Primary Collection Management Duties

- Formally accessioning and deaccessioning artworks
- Inventory
- Periodic surveys and condition assessments
- Maintenance Plan and oversight of maintenance tasks
- Conservation Plan and oversight of conservation tasks

**Integrity of Artworks.** The Laredo Public Arts Program will seek to ensure the ongoing integrity of the artwork and the sites for which they were created, to the greatest extent feasible, in accordance with the artist's original intentions. It shall respect the rights of visual artists in this regard.

**Rights of Artists.** The City must respect the rights afforded by the U.S. Visual Artists Rights Act, federal law which grants certain rights to artists. The City should refer to the act and ensure artists sign waivers in advance, if needed, as required by law..

**Access to Artworks.** The City will seek to ensure continuing public access to the artworks in its Civic Art Collection.

**Lifespan of Artwork.** At the time an artwork enters the Collection, it will be assigned an expected lifespan. At a minimum, work should be fabricated such that it lasts at least 10 years. The anticipated lifespan will reflect the durability of the materials and fabrication methods used. The projected life span will inform future decisions about conservation and keeping the work in the collection.

**Insurance.** The City has a duty to properly insure its Civic Art Collection. In addition, it should provide insurance against theft or loss for any artwork accepted for display on City of Laredo property.

**Project Signage.** Each Civic Art Collection artwork should have signage that provides viewers with project information. This signage should be permanent, budgeted and executed as part of the project. The signage should be placed in a highly visible location. It may be painted as part of a mural or similar installation, provided it is durable and lasting.

The signage should include the following information, at a minimum: Title, Artist, Date, Medium, Credits, Ownership (Civic Art Collection, City of Laredo). A brief narrative or other interpretive signage is also encouraged.

When the city creates an Online Art Collection, it is recommended that the signage include a QR code (or similar) that links to additional information on the website.

As a special project, signage should be created or updated for previously installed works in the City's collection. This is needed to ensure that the works are recognized as belonging to the City of Laredo Civic Art Collection and to help people learn about the work.



## B. ARTWORK MAINTENANCE AND CONSERVATION POLICY

Public art is a valuable community asset that needs to be properly maintained, and conserved (repaired or restored) as needed. The City and its departments have a duty to plan, budget, train staff, and manage to ensure that regular maintenance and conservation occurs.

The Public Art Program is responsible for the oversight of ongoing maintenance and conservation of artworks in the Civic Art Collection. To carry out these duties, it should budget to engage contractors and professional conservators. It should also engage other City departments, which are responsible for the routine maintenance of works they create.

**Funding.** The City should establish a separate maintenance and conservation fund for its public art collection, within the Public Art Fund. These monies should be held in reserve and expended as needs arise. As the City's public art collection grows, maintenance and conservation needs will grow as well -- so the City should plan ahead. Monies in the maintenance and conservation fund should be carried over, from year to year.

**Artist Responsibilities.** The terms of the artist contract may include maintenance and conservation/repair responsibilities for one year from artwork completion. The contract may also state that the artist will be allowed "first refusal rights" on repair contracts with a fair-market rate of remuneration. After the contracted period, maintenance is the responsibility of the City, not the artist.

**Definitions.** Please see the definitions at the beginning of Chapter 3. The following amplifications are included as part of this Policy.

The term "**maintenance**" refers to the routine care and minor repair of works of public art. These tasks may be performed by City staff or contracted entities.

The term "conservation" refers to tasks that require specialized expertise, including the restoration of older works of art. Conservation should be performed by a professional art conservator.

### Maintenance Policy | Guidance for Routine Maintenance

#### City Department Responsibilities

Routine maintenance of artworks can be conducted by the City Department that maintains the facility and/or site where the art is located. Custodial staff would receive training and/or supervision in the care of the artwork. Each artwork should have a maintenance and conservation worksheet, provided to the maintenance/custodial staff manager, appropriate to the medium and characteristics of the artwork as recorded in the Civic Art Collection database.

The Public Art Program Manager is responsible for communicating this information and duty to the appropriate city department, and ensuring that regular routine maintenance occurs.

Any reports of artwork damage or loss, or observed needs for conservation, should be communicated to the Public Art Program Manager, for appropriate action.

The Public Art Program Manager should organize and provide periodic training on maintenance to City field workers in departments responsible for maintaining public artworks.



## Maintenance Partners

In some cases, maintenance agreements may be created with community organizations. They can be contracted to perform needed tasks on a regular basis. A written agreement with clear duties and metrics should be created, including for volunteer commitments. A Downtown Management District would be a natural partner, for example. In some cities, nonprofits also assist.

Every three to five years, the City of Laredo will conduct an assessment of the condition of all public art with a qualified professional conservator and develop a prioritized list of works in need of conservation or maintenance. This list will be the basis of the annual Public Art Maintenance Plan.

Under this plan, trained City staff may carry out routine maintenance which should be funded by the Departments. For specialized long term care and conservation treatments, the Program may expend “2% for Art” monies that have been transferred to the Public Art Fund.

## Planning Ahead: Artworks Proposed to Enter the Collection

For each artwork commission, the artist should include information about anticipated maintenance needs and costs in the submitted Design Concept. At this early stage, it should be submitted in the form of a draft Maintenance and Conservation Worksheet. Upon project completion, In the final project documentation, the artist is required to include a final Maintenance Plan (submitted as a final Maintenance and Conservation Worksheet).

Artwork donation proposals need to include similar information, and cost estimates, for projected maintenance needs. Topics to be addressed include the artwork’s valuation, condition, any observed deterioration, the quality and sustainability of materials, and special maintenance needs (e.g for lighting, electrical or moving parts).

### Collection Maintenance Plan

Annually, the Public Art Program should develop or update the maintenance plan for the Civic Art Collection, and its individual artworks. It should include a description of goals and needs, a scope of work, a budget, a schedule, an assignment of specific tasks and responsibilities in the work program, and identify the funding and resources necessary to carry out the plan.

### Maintenance Plan for Individual Artworks

For the Maintenance Plan for an individual artwork, City staff should develop a worksheet with prompts for collecting information from the artist on the following issues.

### Maintenance and Conservation Worksheet

Topics:

- All materials used, with notes on their durability and integrity
- Construction/fabrication technique
- Internal supports, anchoring and joining, footings, installation methods and materials
- Vulnerable and delicate elements; interactive or seating elements, etc.
- Information related to the site conditions, landscape elements, drainage of artwork and site
- Potentially dangerous elements
- Security, and potential damage or vandalism issues (e.g. skateboarding damage, graffiti,



City staff should also communicate with the artist to add:

- A record of the artist's intentions for the work of art, and any intended changes with age
- Recommendations to mitigate potential problems
- Anticipated needs for periodic conservation treatment or repairs
- Projected lifespan of the artwork (10 years; 11-20 years; 21-40 years; more than 40 years)

Note: At the early Design Concept phase, it is the responsibility of City staff to review the submitted draft Maintenance and Conservation Worksheet. It should be used to:

- Finalize approvals of design proposals, or inform requests for modifications
- Troubleshoot the production of construction drawings, the fabrication of the artwork, the preparation of the site, and installation plans
- Ensure that the project manager follows the artist's recommendations
- Prepare a final report and a punch-list to complete the project.

This should be done without unduly interfering with the aesthetic intent of the artwork.

- Post Fabrication/Installation Inspection
- City staff should conduct an inspection that includes the following:
  - Confirm that the artwork is executed as proposed and agreed upon, in accordance with the artist's contract
  - Confirm that there are no missing or incomplete elements
  - Establish that the materials, fabrication, and installation are of permanent quality and stability
  - Confirm that any stainless steel is fully and properly "passivated"
  - Confirm that, if required, protective coatings have been applied
  - Ensure that warranties for electronic and other media are submitted
  - Identify any remaining vulnerabilities
  - Confirm that no damage resulted from the installation process

## Conservation Policy | Guidance for professional services by a professional art conservator

Conservation refers to the regularly scheduled examination, documentation, treatment and preventative care of public art. Conservation encompasses three activities: Examination, preservation, and restoration. Preservation actions retard or prevent deterioration or damage and thus keep the artworks in a stable, unchanged state. It is recommended that some monies from the artwork project budget be set aside for future conservation needs.

Every three to five years, the Public Art Program Manager will engage a qualified art conservator to conduct a survey of all works in the Laredo Civic Art Collection. The survey report should include a condition assessment, recommendations for conservation, cost estimates and a recommended schedule/timeline. The Public Art Program Manager is responsible for carrying out the recommendations. This requires a work plan, a budget with funding, and a contract with a qualified conservator.

For proposed major works, including proposed donations, the Public Art Program Manager is recommended to consider and identify the conservation needs and costs up front. For example, the proposed design (or later design documents) can be reviewed by an independent conservator

prior to executing the fabrication and installation portion of a contract.

The Scope of Services for the periodic Conservation assessment should include:

- Examination: On site inspection and assessment of artworks in the Civic Art Collection
- Documentation: Condition report, with recommendations for specific necessary repairs
- Treatment: Description of recommended treatment methods and providers
- Preventative care: Recommendations for any additional regular maintenance
- Action plan in accordance with the highest standards of professional conservation



## C. POLICY FOR PURCHASES OF EXISTING ARTWORK

**Major public artworks generally should be individually commissioned for a specific site.**

However, for certain needs, the City may determine that acquisitions of existing work (purchased directly from an artist, or their gallery or dealer) may best serve the community and a specific site.

Purchased artworks should be of a high caliber, created by recognized professional artists. Artworks purchased should be formally accessioned into the Civic Art Collection.

**Peer City Model.** See the Call for Artists issued for the [City of El Paso 2020 Art Purchase Program](#). This program acquired artworks that became part of the City of El Paso Art Collection. They are displayed in City Hall buildings for the benefit and enjoyment of the general public. All are artworks created by local El Paso area artists, with a goal to recognize the artistic talent and cultural diversity in El Paso, Texas.

*Note: The City of Laredo may also acquire artwork through donations. The Art Donation and Loan Policy is in Section 4.2-F.*

**Definition.** The term “acquisition” refers to the purchase of existing artworks, for the City’s collection, including for permanent display inside City buildings. The City should acquire only original, authenticated artworks for its collection.

Any mass-produced items such as posters, are considered interior decoration, rather than assets of the city’s art collection. Works included in temporary exhibitions of art by children or local artists, etc., placed on display for limited periods, are loans rather than acquisitions.

**Calls for Artists.** Opportunities for artists to have existing artworks acquired by the City should follow an open, transparent, and well-communicated Call for Artists process, that follows the same principles as Calls for Artists issued for commissions. This includes the use of an independent Artwork Selection Panel that provides recommendations for selecting acquisitions from the submitted artworks. It also includes review and recommendation of the Panel’s recommendations by the Fine Arts and Culture Commission.

**Application Process.** Artists should be invited to submit an application for each individual piece of existing artwork available for purchase (with a limit per artist). The applications should include one or more images of the artwork with the title, dimensions, materials, year of completion, brief description, condition, and documented retail value (unframed). The artist may also include a resume, bio, and/or artist statement.

### Administrative Duties

For the selected artworks, the Public Art Program will handle all duties and tasks related to the acquisitions. These duties include:

- Execute the purchase agreement
- Oversee art handling and installation
- Provide public information about the acquisitions
- Ensure that artists are promptly paid
- Add the artwork to the Collection Inventory Database
- Install informational signage by the artworks and
- Other related responsibilities.

## D. DEACCESSION AND RELOCATION POLICY

The term “deaccession” refers to the permanent removal of a work from the City’s Civic Art Collection. When a work is no longer suitable or in good condition, it may be sold, donated, or otherwise disposed of. Works may need to be relocated when conditions change at the original site.

### Roles and Responsibilities

The Public Art Program Manager and Fine Arts and Culture Commission should review and make recommendations on any proposal for deaccession or relocation of an artwork. Community stakeholders should be informed that the work is being considered for removal or relocation, and provided the opportunity to share their perspectives.

The final recommendation should be submitted to the City Manager’s Office for a final determination. The City Manager may at their discretion bring the matter before City Council. The City should not remove any artwork from its site without going through the process described in this policy, unless it poses a clear and imminent safety hazard.

Consideration of deaccession should involve the same degree of careful review as a decision to commission a work of art; decisions should be informed by professional judgment and in the interests of the public. In general, works of art commissioned with the intention of permanent display should only be considered for deaccession after a minimum of 10 years.

### Criteria

City staff and the Fine Arts and Culture Commission may recommend deaccession, relocation or removal of a work of art for any of the following reasons. These concerns may be brought forward by community members, the artist, the Commission, or city staff.

- The condition or security of the artwork cannot be reasonably guaranteed
- The artwork requires excessive maintenance, or has defaults of design or workmanship such that ongoing maintenance and conservation is not feasible
- The artwork has been damaged beyond repair
- The artwork endangers public safety
- Significant changes in the use, character, or design of the site have occurred which affect the integrity or relevance of the work;
- Significant adverse public reaction has been documented over an extended period of time (a minimum of three years); an example would be widespread concerns raised that the subject matter or imagery is racially insensitive
- The work is of inferior quality or is judged to have little aesthetic and/or cultural value;
- An artwork is not, or is only rarely, on display because of lack of a suitable site;
- A new location for the artwork has been identified that better satisfies the original goals of the project, or makes it more accessible to the public;
- A written request from the artist.

Actions taken must comply with standard procedures and laws related to the disposition of city property and with artists’ rights. Please see the applicable federal law, the Visual Artists Rights Act.



## Request Process

**Preliminary Request.** The Public Art Program will provide a form for submitting a request and making the case for why deaccession or relocation is needed.

Deaccession or relocation requests may be initiated by one of the following:

- City Staff and City Departments, including the Public Art Program
- City Council Member
- Neighborhood organization
- Stakeholder organization

Individuals are required to work with one of these entities to advance a request.

The Public Art Program will review external requests using objective criteria, as to whether it meets the standard to advance for further consideration. If so, it is submitted to the Fine Arts and Culture Commission for a recommendation. If the Commission takes action to endorse the request, City staff will make the final determination. Some requests related to major works of high public interest may be advanced to the City Council.

**Public Comment.** The Public Art Program Manager will notify the public and provide an open period for comment. This applies to deaccessioning, but is not required for simple relocations. The matter will be discussed at least one public meeting (e.g. the Commission meeting at which the item is considered) which should be posted in advance for public comments. The Commission may also decide to gather community input through other methods and/or to seek information regarding the work from the artist, galleries, curators, appraisers or other professionals prior to making a recommendation.

**Artist Involvement.** If deaccession or removal is recommended, the Public Art Program Manager has a duty to make a good-faith effort to notify the artist that the work is being considered for deaccession or relocation and invite the artist to provide input. The artist's contract, along with any other agreements or pertinent documents should be reviewed. If there are any questions as to violating the artist's rights, the matter should be sent to the City Attorney's Office, which should issue an opinion within 15 days.

### Information Packet for Commission

- Request form, which includes the rationale for the request
- Information on file about the artwork and its original acquisition, including artist contract
- A written description and images of the artwork, including site photographs
- A formal appraisal of the artwork, or estimate of its market value
- Information about the artwork condition, and the estimated cost of its conservation and maintenance, if relevant to the request
- Any information gathered through public comment or other input
- Cost estimates to remove or move the artwork, and restore/remediate its site

**Commission Recommendation.** The recommendation may include dismissing the request, approving the request, or otherwise resolving the issues raised by modifying or storing the artwork.

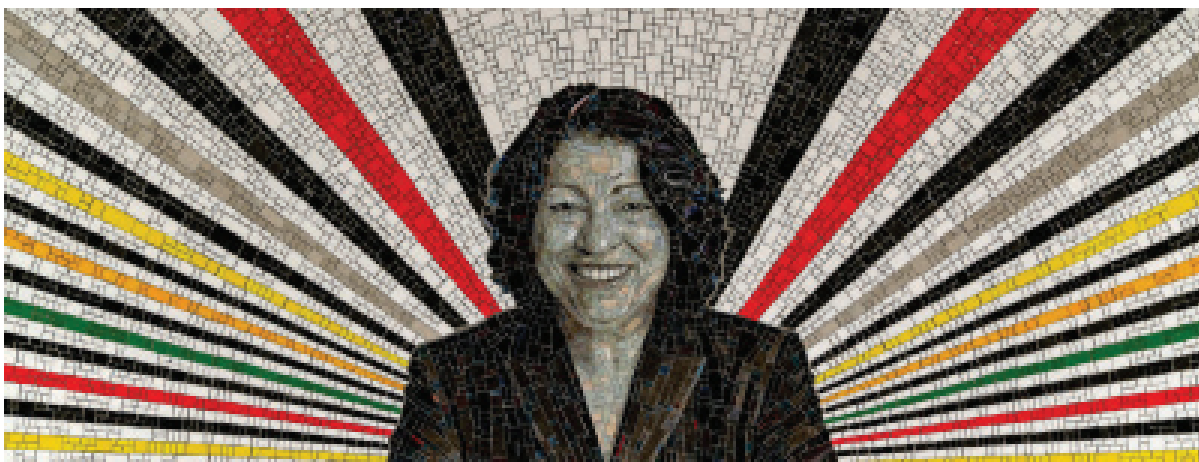
If removal or disposal is directed, the Fine Arts and Culture Commission shall consider, in order of priority, the following options for the artwork's disposition:

- Relocation or re-siting. Options should be considered for a range of new sites, and the optimal new location selected; this process should include community dialogue. The new location should have public visibility equal to or greater than the original site.
- Removal of the work from its site and placement in storage, with the intent of finding a new site for the work. If a new site is not found within a five-year period, disposal of the work shall be considered.
- Removal and deaccessioning of the work from the collection.
- If deaccessioned, options for the artwork include:
  - 1. Sale or Exchange** - sale shall be in compliance with the State of Texas and City of Laredo laws and policies governing sale of municipal property.
    - a. Artist, or estate of the artist, will be given the first option to purchase or exchange the artwork(s). The artwork may also be gifted to them.
    - b. Sale may be through auction, gallery resale, direct bidding by individuals, or other form of sale in compliance with the State of Texas and City of Laredo law and policies governing surplus property.
    - c. Exchange may be through an artist, gallery, museum or other institution for one or more artwork(s) of comparable value by the same artist.
    - d. No works of art shall be sold, traded or given to Fine Arts and Culture Commission Members or City of Laredo Staff.
    - e. Proceeds from the sale of artwork shall be placed in the Public Art Account
    - f. Ownership may be transferred to a nonprofit or government agency.
  - 2. Destruction or disposal** – Allowed if artwork is deteriorated or damaged beyond repair or deemed to be of negligible value, or no entity desires the artwork.

**Funds from Sale.** These funds shall be deposited in the Public Art Account.

**Conflict of Interest.** No works of art shall be given, sold, or otherwise transferred publicly or privately, to officers, directors, or employees or staff of the City of Laredo, or their immediate families or representatives of the City of Laredo.

This process will be conducted in a manner that complies with all other applicable City of Laredo, state of Texas, and federal procedures, policies and regulations.



## E. POLICY FOR THE INCLUSION OF PUBLIC ART IN CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

The City shall follow all policies, procedures, guidelines, and actions consistent with **City Ordinance 2019-O-177** (or its successor ordinance) and the **2021 Laredo Public Art Master Plan**, for including public artworks in its Capital Improvement Projects and Policies.

Please refer to the city Ordinance for details, and to the sections of this document that cover Capital Improvement Projects and related topics. Policies and practices addressed within the Master Plan include the handling of “2% for Art” funds allocated for each project, the artist selection process, and roles and responsibilities.

**Section 3.7-A Implementation Guide: Public Art in Capital Improvement Projects** provides phase-by-phase guidance for how to incorporate artwork. It also provides the criteria for determining whether a new CIP project should have public art included on the site, or whether the 2% for Art budget allocation should be transferred to the Public Art Account for use on another site.

The City of Laredo shall conduct the work necessary to integrate public art while following the practices listed below. Leading these efforts and adhering to these best practices is the joint responsibility of the Public Art Program and the Engineering Department.

- Plan ahead to fully integrate references to public art into bond language, project descriptions, and the Annual and 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).
- Build excellent working relationships among the Public Art Program, the Engineering Department, and City staff in all departments that lead Capital Improvement Projects.
- Facilitate ongoing communication that helps City staff to work together throughout a project, for a more seamless integration of public art.
- Review the City CIP Plans (Annual and 5-Year) on at least an annual basis. Establish liaisons in each City department who are assigned to work with the Public Art Program to define the details on project scope, budget, site, design and construction process, and schedule for upcoming projects.
- Track the allocations of “2% for Art” funding across the entire CIP program. Ensure that funds are allocated and spent on public art.
- Prioritize high visibility, fully-funded projects within bond programs where public art will have a visible impact.
- The Public Art Program will convene quarterly meetings with staff liaisons to review timelines and address issues, to ensure the ongoing coordination required for site-integrated public art.

... I want Laredo to have color and feel more alive.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent

## F. ART DONATION AND LOAN POLICY

Gifts and loans of high-quality work can be an affordable and positive way to enrich Laredo's public spaces and expand the city's art collection. However, it is important to consider carefully whether the gift or loan meets the vision, goals, and policies of the Public Art Program before it is accepted. The City review process should ensure that any ongoing costs and risks are understood.

All proposals for donations and loans must be carefully reviewed and approved by the City and Fine Arts and Culture Commission, before an artwork can be accepted into the Civic Art Collection. Proposals should be submitted to the Public Art Program Manager and the Fine Arts and Culture Commission, for their review and recommendation. No work should be accepted for loan or display on city property for longer than one year, without going through the process described below.

Please refer to the definitions at the start of Chapter 3 in this master plan.

If a donor or philanthropic entity offers to commission a new artwork to be given to the City, for its Civic Art Collection, all the policies contained in this policy and other Collection Management policies shall apply.

**Note:** The provisions of this policy do not apply to temporary "placemaking" installations approved by a City Department for city streets, streetscapes, landscaped areas, parks and trails, and similar public spaces. Such installations are short-term activations of public space. They may include street painting and similar community-based efforts. These projects require separate plans for their installation, maintenance, and eventual removal by the sponsoring City department.





## Donations

### Procedure for Proposed Donations

#### Step 1. Preliminary Inquiry

The donor should begin the process by conferring with the Public Art Program Manager about the requirements and process for proposed donations of artworks.

#### Step 2. Proposal

Donors shall submit a proposal form and information packet. This shall include the following information.

1. Rationale for the intent, purpose, and value to the City. This may include an explanation of how the artwork supports the vision for public art established in the master plan.
2. Photographs and/or renderings of the artwork.
3. Photographs of proposed site, if applicable.
4. Form should include description, title, artist, dimensions, weight, materials, condition, and other information.
5. Biographical information about the artist, including resume, bio, and supporting materials;
6. Needs for installation or display, including required site improvements
7. Cost estimates for installing the artwork.
8. Proof of ownership and provenance. Statement of authenticity.
9. The estimated fair market value of the artwork.
10. A condition report, preferably prepared by a professional conservator.
11. The anticipated date(s) for the gift or loan to occur.
12. If a commemorative artwork, a description of the individual, chapter of history, or event commemorated and how it has shaped or impacted Laredo.
13. Project timeline.
14. Any additional information the Public Art Program Manager deems necessary or appropriate.

The following additional information must be provided for a **commissioned** artwork to be created especially for a City-owned property:

15. Detailed budget, with costs for the project including site preparation, installation, and insurance that meets City requirements; and
16. Funding committed to date and proposed source(s) of funds.

The following additional information is recommended for a **donation**:

17. Evaluation by a qualified professional public art conservator and/or arts professional such as a museum director, curator, historian, or writer/critic.

#### Step 3. Preliminary Review

The Public Art Program Manager should conduct a preliminary review of the application form and information packet to determine whether it is complete and factually accurate.

### Step 4. Technical Review

The Public Art Program shall conduct a technical review, including other City Departments as needed. The review should consider whether the City deems the proposed donation or loan, and its proposed site, to be in the best interests of the city

#### Technical Review Criteria

- The artist and artwork meet the definitions in the Laredo Public Art Master Plan.
- The artwork supports the City's vision for public art and its urban design goals.
- The artwork demonstrates excellence in aesthetic quality, workmanship and creativity.
- The artwork is appropriate to the proposed site in scale, form, and materials/media.
- The donation contributes to and enhances the Civic Art Collection.
- The artwork is deemed likely to be well-received by the community.
- The donor agrees to be responsible for funding the design, fabrication, transportation/ shipping, insuring, site preparation, installation, signage and lighting of the proposed donated artwork. This requirement may be waived by the city, or it may agree to participate in the costs.
- The donor agrees to fund conservation of the artwork and/or to provide a maintenance and conservation fund equal to 10% of the value of the artwork. May be waived in special circumstances.
- The City, a donor, or a benefactor agrees to provide the funds necessary for all other costs and ongoing needs related to donation or loan.

Note: The standards for artistic excellence, for accepting a donation into the permanent collection, are higher than those for accepting a loan.

### Step 5. Fine Arts and Culture Commission Review

If the proposal has passed the technical review, City staff shall advance the proposal to the Fine Arts and Culture Commission. The Commission should conduct its own discussion and vote on a recommendation. They may choose to include community members and stakeholders in the review and recommendation process by establishing an ad hoc review committee. The review should consider whether the work of art will be welcomed and benefit city employees, residents, or other affected people at the proposed artwork site. The Fine Arts and Culture Commission should also review the proposed gift or long-term loan for aesthetic and site considerations.

The donation review process will include, but will not be limited to, the following criteria:

- **City-owned Property** – Donated public artwork must be located on City-owned or City-managed property;
- **Relevance and Site Context** – Works of art must be appropriate for the proposed location and its surroundings, and/or complement the architecture, topography, history, and social dynamic of the location in which it is placed;
- **Artist and Artwork Quality** – The artist demonstrates the ability and potential to execute the proposed artwork, based on previous artistic achievement and experience. The artwork must enhance the City's public art collection;
- **Physical Durability** – The artwork will be assessed for long-term durability against theft, vandalism, and weather;
- **Public Safety and Liability** – The artwork will be assessed for any public safety concerns, as well as for any potential liabilities for the City;
- **Sustainability** – Consideration will be given to the environmental impact and sustainability of the proposed artwork, including its operations and maintenance requirements/costs; and
- **Legal** – Any relevant legal issues

**Memorials.** From time to time, individuals may propose to fund a memorial to an individual, historic chapter, or event of considerable community interest. In such cases, the donation should be a monetary gift to the public art fund, for this specific purpose. Before accepting the gift and agreeing to create a memorial statue or other artwork, to become part of the Civic Art Collection, the City and Commission shall consider the following additional criteria.

- **Significance** – The person or event being memorialized must be deemed significant, such that interest in the memorial will stand the test of time.
- **Community Value and Timelessness** – The person or event being memorialized represents broad community values and will be meaningful to future generations
- **Location** – The proposed site is an appropriate setting for the memorial

#### Step 6. Acceptance and Accession of the Artwork

If a donation is made that is valued at \$10,000 or less, the Fine Arts and Culture Commission may recommend acceptance of the donation by the City Manager. If the donation is valued in excess of \$50,000, the acceptance of the donation must be approved by the City Council.

If the donation is declined, City staff will notify the applicant and provide a rationale.

If the donation is accepted, City staff will follow the standard procedures for accessioning a work into the Civic Art Collection.

A legal agreement should be contracted with the Donor. It will address transfer of ownership, project funding commitments, transportation, insurance, siting, installation, the right of removal or transfer, and other issues as necessary.

An informational plaque shall be installed at the artwork site, that acknowledges the gift and the donor. It shall identify the work as part of the City of Laredo Civic Art Collection.

After the work is accessioned, all standard practices related to deaccessioning or relocation apply.

#### Loans

Upon occasion, a major work of art may be offered to the city for a long-term or lifetime loan. The work may or may not convey to the city upon the death of the donor, or another milestone date. In these instances, the City should apply and slightly adapt the above process for artwork donations.

More frequently, artworks may be offered for loan to the city for temporary exhibition or display. The following provisions apply to these short-term loans.

The City shall provide a contract to all lenders that covers the terms of the artwork loan.

... I would like to see a mixture of local, state, and international artists' work in the city.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent

### Duties of the City

In accepting or soliciting artworks for display on city property, the City of Laredo had the following duties.

- To promote artists and help to develop their careers and audience, including allowing artists to sell their work placed on display
- To enhance the community's knowledge of art and awareness of local artists
- To provide for the security and care of loaned art object(s)
- To report to the lender evidence of damage, regardless of cause, while in the custody of the City.
- To not undertake alteration, restoration, or repair without the written authorization of the Lender.

**City Exhibitions.** A city representative will install the exhibition in cooperation with the artist(s). When appropriate, installation experts, including the artist(s), will work with the city representative.

### Duties of the Lender

- Delivery of object(s), unless otherwise specified in the contract between the lender and City
- Return of object(s), unless otherwise specified in the contract
- Biographical information on the artist and/or artist's statement (submitted by an advance deadline)
- Two-dimensional object(s) must be framed or otherwise installation-ready
- Hanging hardware and mechanisms must be pre-installed on the artwork, as approved by the City

**Insurance and Claims.** Unless otherwise agreed upon, objects will be insured by the City. The lender agrees that in the event of loss or damage, recovery, if any, shall be limited to such amount as may be paid by the City's insurer, thereby releasing the city, its officers, agents, and employees from liability for any and all claims arising out of such loss or damage.

In the event that the lender and the insurer disagree on the amount of loss, the issue must be decided between them and the loan agreement between the Lender. The City will assume no responsibility for loss beyond the amount provided for above.

If the lender elects to maintain his/her own insurance coverage, the city shall be an additional insured party or be provided with a written waiver of subrogation.

The city will not be responsible for any error or deficiency of information furnished to the lender's insurer, or any lapse in coverage by Lender's insurer.

**Return of Loaned Artwork.** Upon expiration of the loan of public artwork, the loaned object(s) will be released to the lender, his/her duly authorized agent, or a legal representative, according to the Lender's instructions. The lender is responsible for notifying the Public Art Program Manager as to whom may receive the artwork, and about a change in his/her return address.

No claim for damages shall be filed after loaned objects have been removed or shipped from the exhibition site by the lender or by an agent of the lender.

If there is a change in ownership of the artwork (e.g. the artwork passes to an estate, or a company is dissolved or acquired that owns the artwork), it is the duty of the lender or their successor to notify the Public Art Program Manager and establish his/her legal right with written documentation.



## G. OWNERSHIP, RECORD KEEPING AND DOCUMENTATION OF THE COLLECTION

### Ownership

The City of Laredo owns all completed artworks that it funds, commissions, and executes. It also owns artworks accepted as a donation or gift to the City. In addition, it owns existing artworks located on City-owned property, unless other documentation and arrangements are made. This includes artwork sited in both interiors and exteriors of City buildings. The City has a duty to appropriately care for all of the artwork it owns, on behalf of the people of Laredo. This includes the provision of insurance that would cover the costs of replacing or restoring damaged or stolen works of public art.

Per the contract with artists, the artist retains the copyright and other intellectual property rights in and to the final design and the final artistic work itself.

In the circumstance in which commissioned art is physically part of the building or landscape and is not an independent object or objects that can be safely removed, the City may require the artist to waive all rights that she/he may have under the Visual Artists Rights Act, 17 U.S.C. § 101 et.seq. (1990) ("VARA") to protect the City's interest, in regards only to the destruction of the art piece. Prior to the destruction of the art, the City will attempt to contact the artist and secure advice on the future of the work that may include redesigning the art for the new situation. In the event that the remodeling of the building or landscape destroys part of the art, the City will deaccession the art and, at the request of the artist, remove any attribution to the artist.

The artist will grant to the City a perpetual, irrevocable license to graphically depict or display the final artistic work for any non-commercial purpose, unless otherwise specified by contract.

### Record Keeping

The Public Art Program Manager will maintain records on each project, which will include, but not be limited to the following:

1. All materials in proposals submitted and other visual or written materials relating to the artist's design or method of execution as submitted or become available.
2. Conveyance of title enumerating any donor conditions.
3. Records of the Commission and City action bearing on the project.
4. Any agreements relating to the project.
5. Correspondence and memoranda relation to the project.
6. Records of all billings made in connection with the project.

... Laredo has lots of culture art can help express the city unique history and be a great tourist destination.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent

## Documentation of the Collection

The City and its Public Art Program Manager are responsible for documenting all of the artwork in its collection. It must maintain accurate and up-to-date records for each project, and maintain a comprehensive inventory of the collection. This includes ensuring complete documentation of existing works commissioned or owned by the City, and documenting new works entering the collection. These records should be made available to all, as public information.

**Projects.** Artworks may be of interest decades into the future. Complete digital records should be maintained by the Public Art Program Manager for each commission or acquisition, and organized and stored according to City standards for records maintenance. Key records to maintain for posterity in each project folder include:

- Signed artist contract
- Plans, drawings, and other information generated by the artist during the design process
- Other relevant contracts and fiscal records
- Key project correspondence
- Maintenance instructions provided by the artist and subsequent conservation records
- Images of the artwork
- Media coverage

**Information to Be Provided by The Artist.** The artist contract should state that the artist must provide the following information, at a minimum, with their final invoice. Staff should ensure that it is received and included in the project records and database.

- Artist's statement of intent
- Provider of blueprints, working drawings, shop drawings, and construction drawings
- Names and locations of fabricators of finished work, maquettes, sketches, and photographs
- Artwork dimensions
- Materials
- Construction details: Joining materials and methods (such as hardware, types of welds)
- Surface treatment
- Original cost/budget and final valuation of completed work

**Civic Art Collection Database.** The following data points for each artwork must be maintained in the appropriate field in the database that serves as a complete inventory of the Civic Art Collection. The unique accession number assigned to each artwork will be needed for cross-referencing documentation kept in both hard files and digital files.

The database should be maintained in a visual, searchable format. It should be made available to the public upon request, provided annually to the Fine Arts and Culture Commission, and adapted for a City of Laredo web page about its public art collection.

... One where public art and artists are valued and compensated in the participation in the cultural and artistic enrichment of public spaces.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent

**Database Fields.**

- Title of Artwork
- Artist
- Dimensions
- Type of Artwork
- Media
- Site/Location with street address
- Council District
- A brief description of the work suitable for publication
- Cultural or historical relevance
- Condition and Maintenance needs
- Source of funding or acquisition
- Year funded/acquired
- Other project credits
- Parking on Site
- Digital photograph of the work, including "path" to where digital images of the work can be found
- Owner of work (if City department)
- City of Laredo Project Manager (contact information)
- Associated CIP Project, if applicable
- Budget/cost
- Insurance value
- Date of Artwork Completion
- Commission Fee to Artist
- Project Schedule
- Status
- Condition
- Maintenance Responsibility
- Additional Comments

**Maintenance and Conservation.** In the Maintenance Responsibility field in the database, the following information should be maintained, or its location in the collection records system noted:

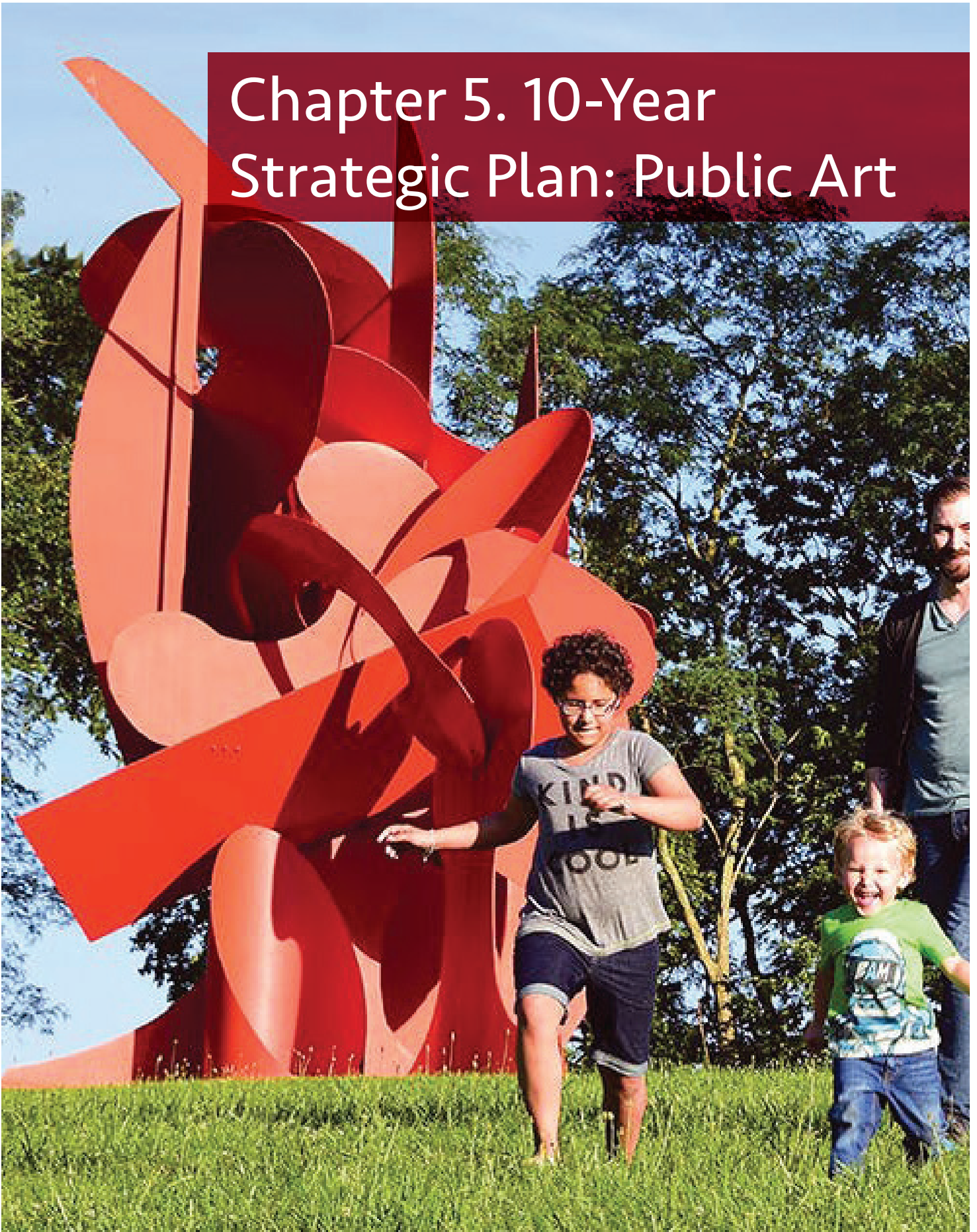
- Needs defined by the artist; background on materials, fabricators, etc.
- Conservation assessments and history
- Maintenance and conservation worksheet







## Chapter 5. 10-Year Strategic Plan: Public Art



## Introduction

To ensure that Laredo enjoys maximum benefit from public art, the community is encouraged to dream, think, and plan ahead over five-year and ten-year timeframes. In this effort, the Viva Laredo Comprehensive Plan should continue to serve as a foundational guide.

Longer-term planning is especially critical for integrating artworks into the Capital Improvement Program for the City, which is planned out using 5 year forecasts and lists of potential projects. For that reason, this section primarily focuses on 5-Year CIP Plan opportunities.

Thinking long-term is also necessary to develop the most exciting installations. These are the projects that can become iconic artworks for the city -- and which may require numerous partners and funding sources, assembled over a period of years.

A long-term perspective is also needed to ensure that a broad variety of public art, by diverse artists working in diverse styles, is added to the city over time. Geographically, one District of the city could receive special focus and funding each year, so that public art gradually is installed citywide over a decade. In this work, priority should be given to places of meaning to Laredoans and visitors -- especially to "people places" where they gather.

Finally, the City can call upon the private sector, developers, and community groups to fund and create public art in Laredo over time. For example, incentives can be offered to developers to include public art as a community benefit.

Each year, as the Annual Public Art Plan is developed, this section of the LAMP should be revisited for ideas and opportunities.

## 5.1 Annual Actions

### STRATEGIC ACTION STEPS: PHASE ONE

#### Top Priority Tasks: Year 1

Please see Executive Summary for a list of recommended CIP projects/sites for public art, in FY2022. The City of Laredo should initially focus its resources and energies on establishing an adequately staffed and resourced Public Art Program, and standard fiscal practices. The most important Strategic Actions include:

#### Establish a Public Art Program

- **Fill the position of Public Art Program Manager — a critical hire to allow the implementation of this plan.**
- **Provide a Public Art Program budget.** Immediately available funding sources include the permitted 15% of the Public Art allocation from the CIP Budget, and Hotel Occupancy Tax monies.
- Obtain contract assistance with program start-up and initial LAMP implementation, from professional consultant/vendor with public art expertise
- Adopt the Annual Public Art Plan FY22 (by City Council vote) and begin implementation.

- Initiate the projects contained in that plan, funded with the \$300,000 FY22 public art budget, following the policies and procedures contained in this Master Plan. This includes criteria-based project and site selection processes.
- Expend the full budget for public art from the prior fiscal year, on permanent public art projects, in accordance with this plan. The Public Art Program or its consultants should assume project management responsibilities for all funded but unfinished projects, to ensure they follow standard policies and procedures and are completed within the current fiscal year.
- **Update City Ordinance 2019-O-177**, which established a Public Art Program and the 2% for Art CIP allocation to be consistent with this master plan
- Provide training in public art best practices, and in the policies of this Master Plan, to all involved City staff and officials, and key community partners.
- Establish and follow **clear and consistent artist selection processes**, following the policies, criteria, and procedures in this Master Plan
- Communicate and follow clear and consistent roles and responsibilities for city staff, the Fine Arts and Culture Commission, and elected officials
- Establish initial resources and communications as required for public information, education, and community partnering and engagement related to public art.

#### Fiscal and CIP Program Integration

- Integrate the Public Art Program with the Capital Improvement Program, including training for all city staff and contractors involved
- Establish the citywide Public Art Fund, as well as separate public art funds within the budget of each CIP Project
- Establish and follow a standard process for identifying which CIP projects will include artwork onsite (v.s. Transferring art funds to the citywide Public Art Fund)
- Establish and follow clear and consistent fiscal practices, for the “2% for Art” CIP funds

#### Focus Areas: Years 1 and 2

- Engage an assistant, consultant, or intern to handle the extensive Program public information, public engagement, and marketing-communications duties
- Engage and fund at least one nonprofit arts organization to advance public art in Laredo, and help implement this plan. The funding could be provided through a Cultural Arts Grant program. (Note: If Laredo Center for the Arts is selected, it will require significantly more City funding, for the staff and resources necessary for this work.)
- Officially allocate 15% of Hotel Occupancy Tax monies to arts and culture initiatives that support tourism. With a portion of these funds, create a Cultural Arts Grant program, to provide grants to artists and community organizations. Specify that some grants are available for public art projects and/or related community education and programs.
- Research, apply for, and obtain at least one major grant or funding partner for public art projects, such as a federal or major philanthropic foundation grant.

- Identify at least one Foundation or other philanthropic entity in Laredo, that can commit to create and fund at least one significant public art project
- Begin community dialogue and planning for a Cultural Arts Master Plan, inclusive of all of the performing and literary arts, music, and the ecosystem of resources that will allow creatives and arts nonprofits to thrive in Laredo, including physical spaces.
- Develop an incentive program that encourage private developers and institutions to provide public art onsite, in publicly accessible spaces

## Focus Areas: Years 3 through 10

Once the fundamentals of the program are operating smoothly, the City and community partners should come together and conduct another visioning and planning session to develop a more detailed long-range strategic plan through 2032.

It is recommended that a community conversation to revisit the Laredo Public Art Master Plan and its goals occur in the Fall of each year, starting in 2022. Each year, a few specific goals can be identified as a focus for action steps. Ongoing community engagement will be essential.

## Annual Staff Planning Sessions

City staff across departments should meet at least annually -- both before and after the start of the Fiscal Year on Oct. 1 -- for a strategic planning session focused on public art. This should include a brainstorming component about opportunities, as well as development of a work plan with achievable action steps.

## Topics for Annual Planning

- Review of prior year: Wins, achievements, focus areas for continuing improvement
- Annual Report for past Fiscal Year
- Artwork Vision, Goals, Upcoming Opportunities
- Program Development Milestones: Staff, Resources, Budget, Performance Indicators
- Staff Trainings and Professional Development
- City Budget Forecasts
- Additional Funding Sources
- Annual Public Art Plan
- Metrics: Number, Scope, Type of Projects, etc.
- Community Dialogue, Allies and Partners
- Public Information and Education
- Work plan with Action Steps
- Calendar of Key Tasks: Month-by-Month
- Schedule for quarterly assessment and progress reports



## 5.2 Metrics, Evaluation, and Tracking

The positive impact on Laredo of public art will owe much to the City's rigor in implementing this master plan. Plans are living documents that must be regularly consulted and followed to be effective.

**Metrics.** The Public Art Program Manager, once they are in place, should create a set of metrics – or key performance indicators – for the program itself. What gets measured gets done. Each should be assigned an achievable goal for each year. The metrics should be reviewed as benchmarks for quarterly and annual assessment, and referenced in the annual report.

The metrics should be tied to the Goals of this Master Plan, in Section I. Suggested annual metrics include:

### Quantitative

- Number of artwork projects initiated and funded
- Number of artists selected and under contract
- Number of artwork projects completed
- Number cultural arts grants awarded for community-driven public art
- Number of community engagement sessions
- Number of public information communications
- Number of educational programs
- Number of partners engaged
- Number of project sites, neighborhoods, and council districts included

### Qualitative

- Demonstrated positive impact on the community
- Demonstrated positive impact on tourism and economy
- Demonstrated positive impact on the attractiveness of Downtown
- Demonstrated positive impact on gathering spaces for people, vibrant streets, and walkability

**Ongoing Program Evaluation.** As a new city program, the Public Art Program will be in a developmental stage for its first two years, at a minimum. City staff should embrace this as a time for ongoing evaluation, in a spirit of learning and trying new approaches, and continuous improvement. Some approaches will work, others won't and will need more work – which is normal for a new effort.

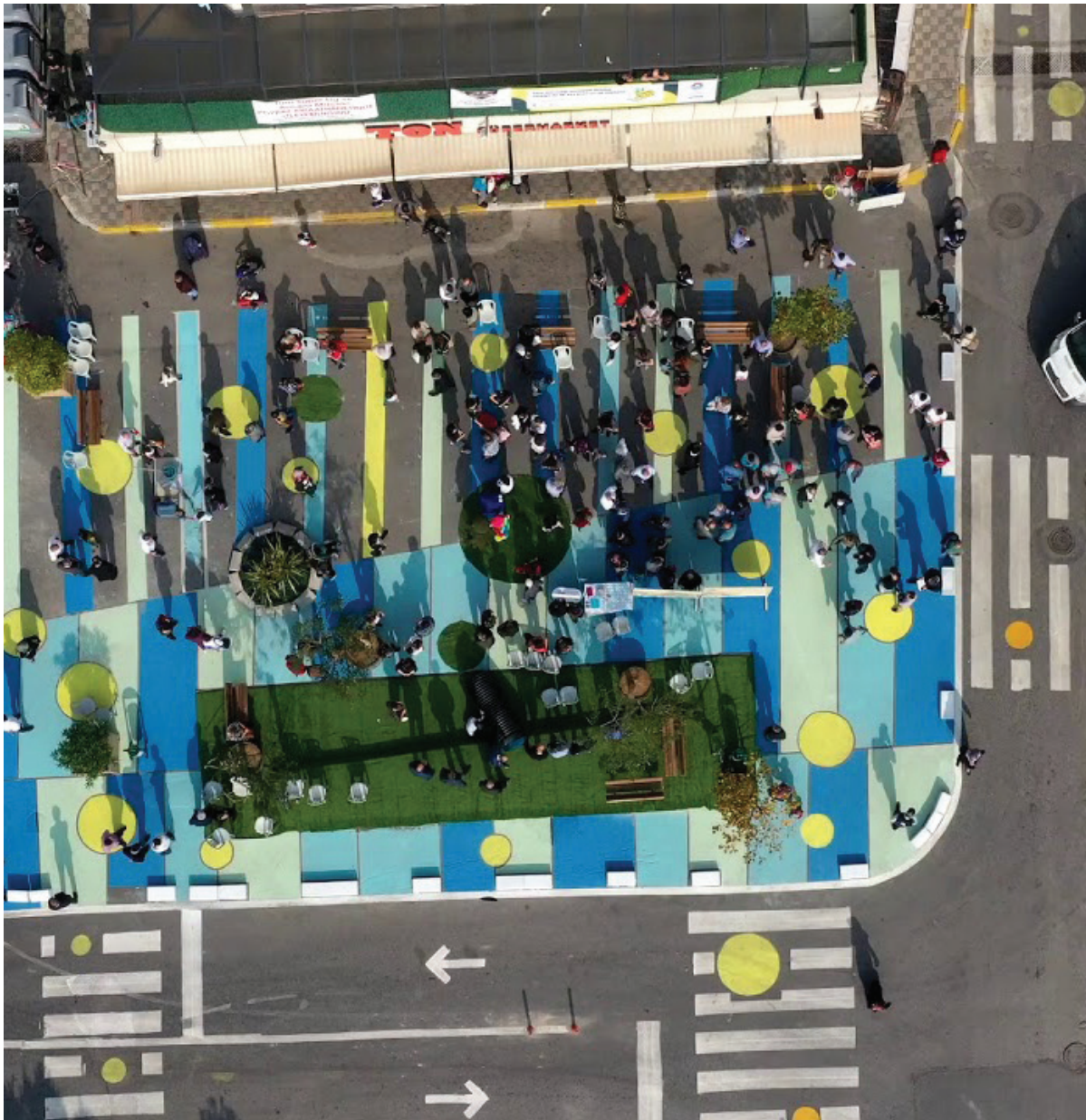
The Fine Arts and Culture Commission should provide oversight for ongoing program evaluation. Some aspects will show success, some will need more attention, and some will need to be changed over time. As representatives of the community, and advisors to elected officials, it is the duty of Commissioners to actively observe the progress of the Public Art Program, ask questions, and provide their support, encouragement, and constructive criticism.

It has been recommended to the Commission that it hold an annual retreat, which can include reviewing the Laredo Public Art Master Plan, City and community progress in implementing it, and developing specific feedback and action steps to assist with advancing public art.

**Tracking Master Plan Implementation.** For optimal success, it is recommended that implementation of this master plan be formally tracked and reported on annually. Master Plans only remain effective if they are regularly consulted, followed, and used as ongoing guidance.

The metrics and ongoing program evaluation discussed above will help in this effort. The Commission, or a community-based visual arts organization, should conduct a formal annual review of progress in realizing the vision of this Laredo Public Art Master Plan. It should report out to the community, using a report card format or other brief, accessible report.

At the 2-Year, 3-Year, and 5-Year milestones, a formal community review of LAMP progress should be conducted by a community-based group. This Master Plan should be updated every five years.



## 5.3 Key Strategic Opportunities

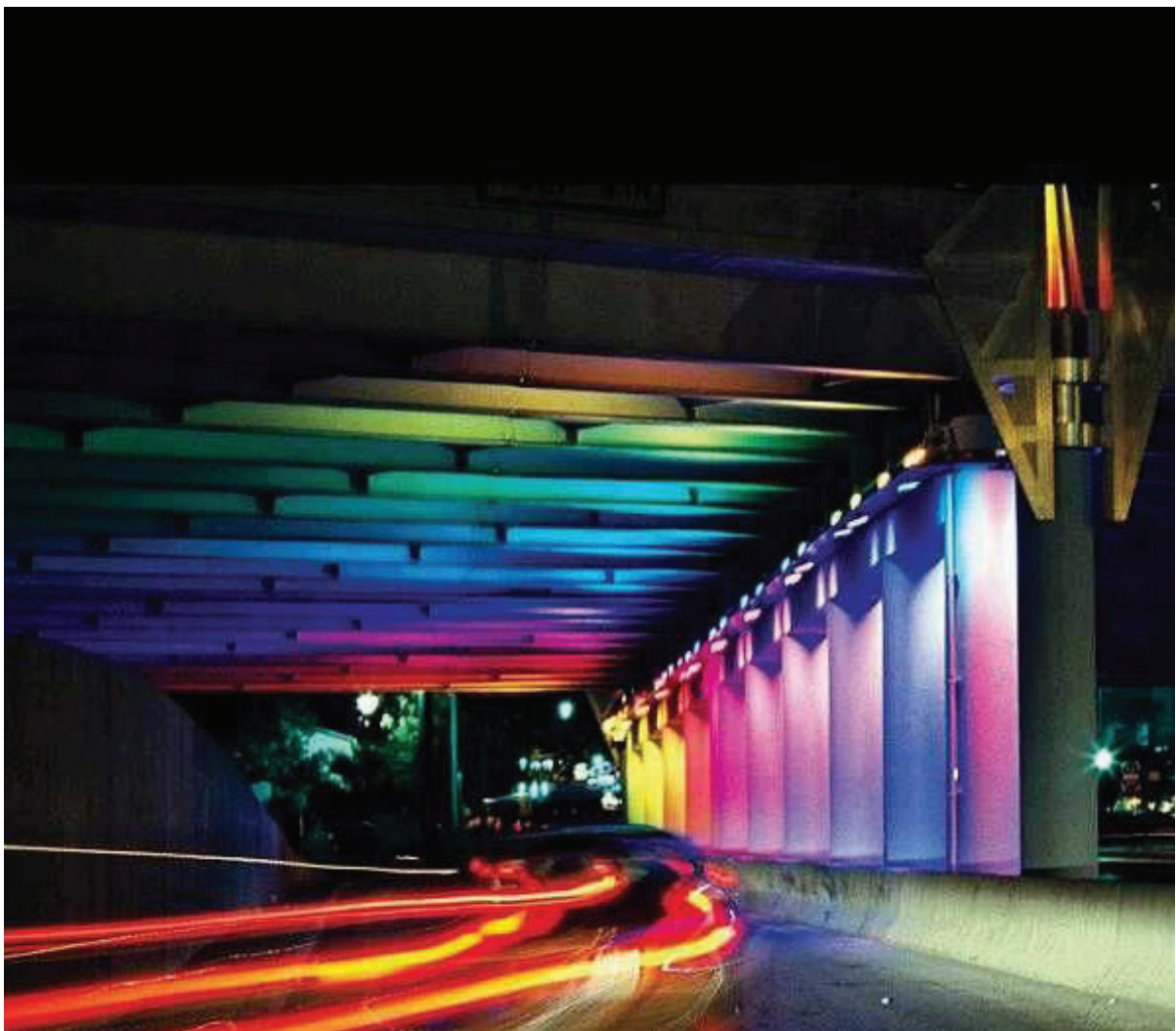
### A. 5-YEAR CIP PLAN

#### Recommendations for Public Art Opportunities by Funding Categories

The best available guidance on long-term opportunities for public art is the City of Laredo 5-Year CIP Plan. Many of the projects meet the standard for allocating 2% for Art from the project budget. City staff across departments, the Fine Arts and Culture Commission, and community members should actively begin planning now for these longer-term opportunities.

The 5-Year CIP Plan is updated annually, with one additional year added. Therefore, this list of public art opportunities should also be updated. Any new projects identified within the 5-Year horizon should be added to the 10-Year Strategic Plan for Public Art.

The recommendations below follow the sequencing of project types in the City of Laredo 5-Year CIP Plan.





## TRANSPORTATION

By City Ordinance, all Street projects are subject to the 2% for Art calculation. All transportation projects that include buildings and other above-ground structures may also be included.

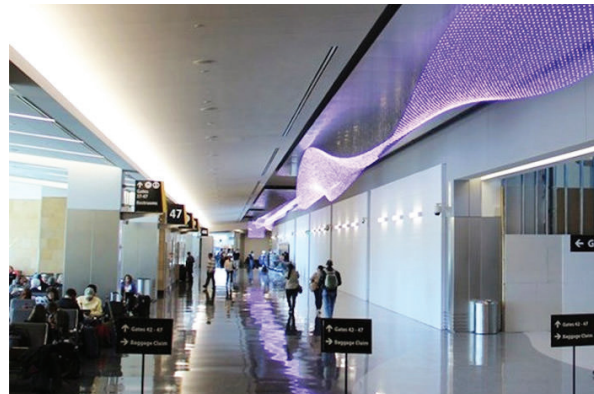
The 2% for Art allocation applies to all City of Laredo monies invested in an eligible project. Optionally, it may be applied to other monies, such as developer and private-sector contributions. Grants, loans, and state agency monies may have restrictions; each source should be reviewed. As a rule, governmental agency partners should be proactively approached about budgeting for public art as part of the project. The State of Texas allows up to 1% of project costs to be spent on public art; many federal agencies have Percent for Art programs as well.

**Airport** – *The Airport Department has an expressed goal to develop a public artwork program, as many peer cities have successfully done. The 2% for Art allocation applies to CIP Project portions funded by the City.*

Federal Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grants may not be used for artworks purchased to decorate interiors. Integrated structural elements designed by artists may be allowable. Airports in peer cities fund the procurement of public artwork for airports with other sources, including City funds and private sponsors and contributions.

### **Airport: Public Art Opportunities to Explore**

- **Terminal Improvement and Expansion** – artwork incorporated into terminal structure
- **Department of Homeland Security Facilities** – artwork on exteriors in public view
- **Rental Car Service Center** (future) – graphic mural on exterior façade visible to the public

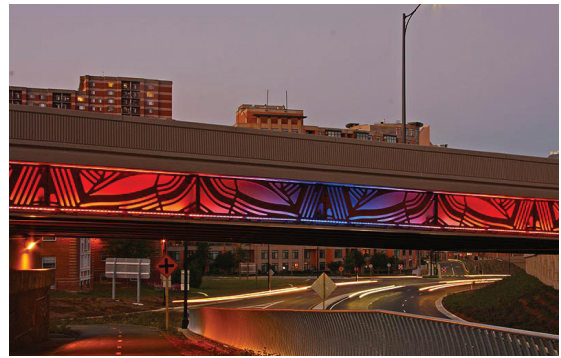




**Bridge** – The international bridges in Laredo rated high on a list of community priorities (especially Bridge #2), as sites and infrastructure to be enhanced with public art. If not specifically prohibited by the funding source (State Infrastructure Loans), a small portion of the World Trade Bridge Expansion Project could be budgeted for artwork to enhance the bridges. The City could also contribute or obtain funds for this purpose.

**Bridge: Public Art Opportunities to Explore**

- Painting colorful “welcoming” artwork on the World Trade Bridge
- Rio Grande Vega Lands – Sculptures, artist-designed park furniture, trailheads/wayfinding
- Welcome signage and artist-enhanced pedestrian furniture and facilities at the “4 blocks”



**Streets** – Streetscapes offer highly visible, high-priority sites for public art. **All projects funded with City bond monies are subject to the 2% for Art allocation.** Projects (or portions of projects) funded with developer contributions may also be considered. Where TxDOT monies are used, that agency should be consulted.

**All “General Government” street projects funded with City monies are subject to the 2% for Art allocation.**

**Streets: Public Art Opportunities to Explore**

- Beautification of City Boulevards and Avenues – public art in the ROW, medians, intersections
- Sidewalk Poetry – poems by local poets and inspirational quotes imprinted into sidewalks
- Creative Crosswalks – Artist-enhanced crosswalks on low-volume streets near schools and parks
- Art Banners – High-flying artworks created as banners affixed to streetlight poles
- Street Furnishings – artist-enhanced or designed benches, bike racks, etc.

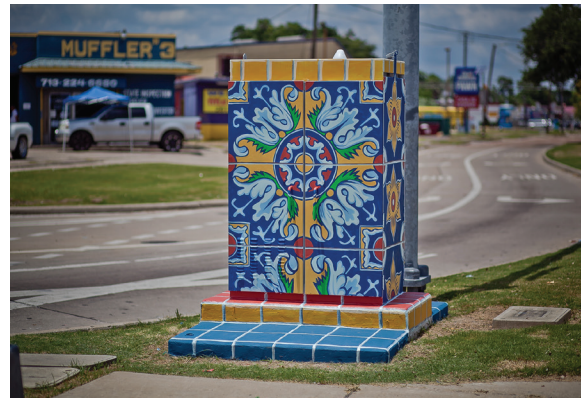




**Traffic** – Equipment is excepted from the public art program. **Traffic signal control cabinets funded with bond monies may be considered “streetscape” facilities as they are proven to lend themselves well to public art.** Many cities have long-standing programs that enhance these drab utilitarian structures at intersections with original artwork, to turn them into a community asset. Therefore, whenever the City installs new traffic signals, it may wish to include artwork on each now traffic signal control cabinet. Some vendors have programs that include this artwork in the estimated cabinet cost.

#### **Traffic Control Cabinets: Public Art Opportunities to Explore**

- Mini Murals – original artworks painted on utility cabinets at visible intersections



**Transit** – The FTA is a strong advocate of public art and its inclusion in transit projects. **In some cases, it requires that public artwork be integrated into the projects that it funds.** The City and its transit agency should proactively partner with the FTA on these opportunities.

#### **Transit Facilities: Public Art Opportunities to Explore**

- Artwork enhancing bus stops and shade structures
- Artwork incorporated into the planning and design of transit center facilities

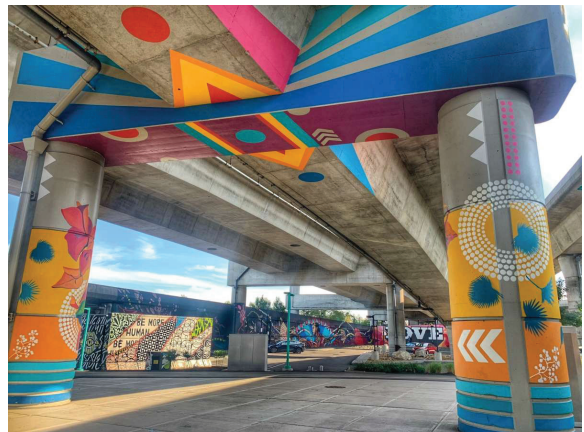


**TxDOT – All City monies contributed to street projects, per City ordinance, are subject to the 2% for Art allocation.** TxDOT should be engaged early in project planning to explore opportunities to incorporate artwork. TxDOT has approved and funded public artwork on its roadways in other cities in Texas.

### Highways and Arterial Roadways: Public Art Opportunities to Explore

- Colorful graphics and simple artistic motifs painted on underpass columns
- Illumination Art – lighting that adds color and enhances pedestrian safety at night
- Overpass and embankment murals

*NOTE: Please also see guidance on engaging TxDOT in public art projects, and the agency's relevant design guidelines and review criteria, included in this section.*



## PUBLIC UTILITIES

By City Ordinance, all above-ground Utility projects are subject to the 2% for Art calculation. Projects that make a large visual impact on the adjacent streets and neighborhoods are strong candidates for beautification with public art, to make them “good neighbors” for citizens.

**Wastewater** – Below-ground improvements are excepted from the 2% for Art calculation. **All above-ground buildings and facilities – such as a Water Treatment Plant – are eligible.** All eligible projects funded with City monies are subject to the 2% for Art allocation. The City may, at its discretion, choose to apply the calculation to the entire project construction cost, regardless of funding source. For example, developer contributions may be included.

**Water** – As they are highly visible, elevated water storage tanks and towers are strong candidates for enhancement with public art.

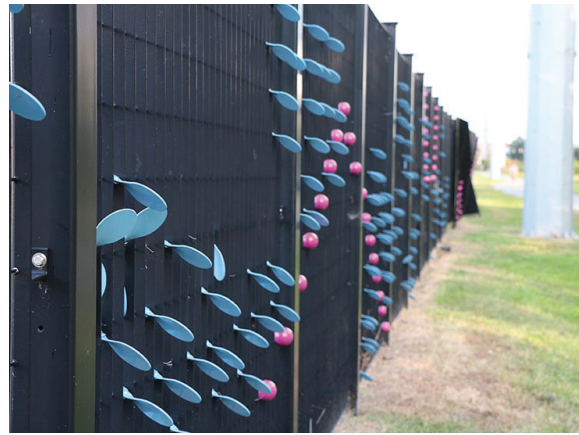




As with wastewater, above-ground facilities should be included; below-ground improvements should not be included in Percent for Art calculations. Monies from utility revenue bonds, or certificates of obligation, may be used for public art. At its discretion, the City may also allow use of developer contribution monies and system revenues.

### Utility Structures: Public Art Opportunities to Explore

- South Laredo WWTP, Sombreretillo WWTP, Colombia and Penitas WWTPs, Unitex Expansion – artwork on walls or fences adjacent to street, highly visible structures
- Colorful graphics, motifs, City symbols and name on tall water towers
- Artwork on elevated water storage tanks (Lyon Tank, Unitex Tank)
- Artwork on City buildings that serve the utility departments, at visible locations
- Water Quality Projects – storm drain murals with a “Don’t Pollute” message



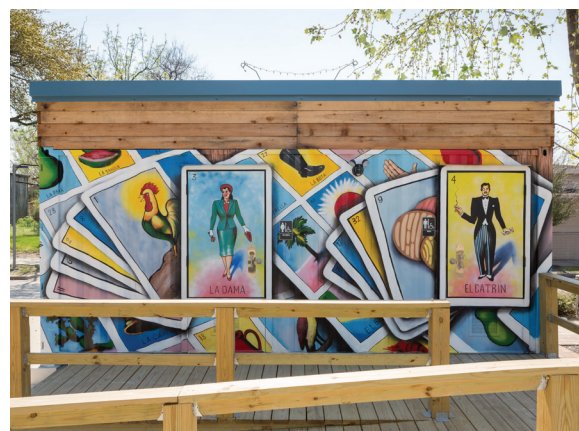
## CULTURAL & RECREATION

By City Ordinance, all parks projects, and new buildings and associated facilities for recreational or cultural uses, should set aside 2% for Art.

**Parks – Parks were the top priority site identified by the community, as a site for public art.** All Parks projects are subject to the 2% for Art calculation.

### Parks: Public Art Opportunities to Explore

- Sculptures and monuments in public parks and plazas
- Artist-enhanced benches, shade structures, fountains, and landscaped amenities
- Dog parks, playground areas, tot lots
- Pedestrian entrances, parking lot entrances, trailheads, exterior fencing
- Buildings, public restrooms, and recreation facilities within parks
- Sculptural features/fountains within pools, splash pads, and water parks





- Artist-designed custom bike racks
- Artist-enhanced sports court surfaces (basketball, tennis)

**Water Park and Sports Complex Venue** – These Parks projects are City-funded and subject to the 2% for Art calculation. The Public Art Program should begin planning now for the inclusion of public art.

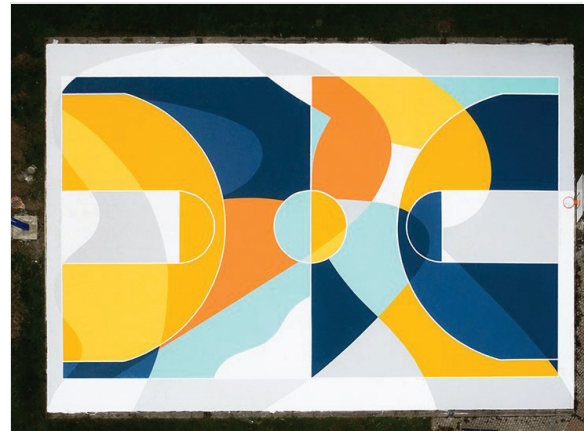
#### Public Art Project Types to Explore

- See opportunities for Park Facilities, above.

**Libraries** – All Library building projects are subject to the 2% for Art calculation.

#### Library: Public Art Opportunities to Explore

- San Isidro Branch Library (future), exterior and interior artwork, architectural elements
- Playful sculptures, murals, and play structures created with artists
- Artist-enhanced benches, shade structures, and landscaped amenities
- For key interior walls, purchase of existing artwork by local artists



## PUBLIC WORKS

**Environmental Services** – These projects – particularly in spaces where people gather – may provide highly visible, priority sites for public art. Project types may include trails, trailheads, and land and structures adjacent to waterways.

#### Trails: Public Art Opportunities to Explore

- **Rio Grande RiverVega Trail Project:** the trailheads at Anna park and Dovalina Elementary offer opportunities for trailhead structures designed by artists.
- **Spillways:** Murals
- **Drainage** – Facilities in Parks should be evaluated for opportunities to include public art.

#### Drainage Projects: Public Art Opportunities to Explore

- Recreational pond in North Central Park; enhance with sculpture, artist-designed benches, informational signage, etc.



## GENERAL GOVERNMENT

**Animal Services** – All buildings and services should be planned to include 2% of the budget for public art. Imagery can be related to the mission of these facilities. They can graphically engage the public to encourage animal adoption.

### Future Projects: Public Art Opportunities to Explore

- **Feline Adoption Facility** – Graphics or murals depicting cats
- **Animal Care Facility Expansion** – Graphics or murals encouraging adoption of animals

**Community Development Block Grant Projects** – CDBG monies advance equity by improving low-income neighborhoods. Including them provides equity in the artwork sites selected for the public art program. **These federal grant programs typically allow public art as an eligible project expense.**

CDBG monies finance project types to which “2% for Art” allocation applies. For example, projects identified by Council Districts typically include sidewalks, street design improvements for walking and biking, facilities for youth and seniors, and neighborhood parks. Particularly where any City of Laredo funds are contributed to a project, these projects should be included in the public art program.

Nationwide, hundreds of local arts organizations have received CDBG funds for projects ranging from **afterschool arts programs** to building disability ramps at **museums** to building artist studio and exhibition spaces, even building housing for local artists. Americans for Arts offers a helpful guide to using CDBG monies for public art, available online: [www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/pdf/get\\_involved/advocacy/CDBG07Guide.pdf](http://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/pdf/get_involved/advocacy/CDBG07Guide.pdf)





### CDBG Projects: Public Art Opportunities to Explore

- All CDBG monies distributed by District, annually. See opportunities identified by project type (streets, parks, etc.) above.

**Fire and Police** – As fire and police stations are focal points for neighborhoods, sited on highly visible street locations, they are strong candidates for beautification with public art, to make them a source of neighborhood identification and pride. **All Fire and Police Department building projects to which the City contributes are subject to the 2% for Art calculation.** Developer contributions can also be included.

### Fire Station #3 and #16 Projects: Public Art Opportunities to Explore

- Creative building element, such as a mosaic mural, on the exterior of the fire station
- Mural memorializing significant figures, heroes, or events from Laredo history
- Artwork in future Fire Fitness Center

### Police Department: Public Art Opportunities to Explore

- **New Annex Building**, exterior artwork (mural) or architectural elements, welcome signage

**Council District CIP Projects** (General Government) – **These projects are City bond-funded; all are included in the 2% for Art calculation.** They form the bulk of the projects to which the City has applied the 2% for Art allocation to date.

### Council District Projects: Public Art Opportunities

- One significant artwork included in one priority CIP project in the District, annually
- Minor artwork elements included in several CIP Projects
- Iconic artwork at other site identified as a top priority by constituents (e.g. neighborhood park)



## B. TOURISM AND DESTINATION MARKETING

### Strategic 10-Year Opportunity for Public Art

Over the next decade, Laredo can harness the vibrancy, creative expression, and broad-based appeal of public art to position the city in the destination marketplace, for both business and leisure visitors.

**Lead:** Laredo Convention and Visitor Bureau (CVB), City of Laredo

**Funding Source:** Hotel Occupancy Tax (generated by about 45 lodging facilities in Laredo)

### CVB Goals for Public Art

- Add fresh appeal to Laredo as a destination
- Make Laredo a more desirable choice for meeting planners and conventions
- Provide compelling visuals for marketing Laredo, e.g. for website, social marketing campaigns
- Create public art that helps promote Laredo as a destination for birding, tourism, sports events, and travel to/from Mexico
- Boost the city's economy, by attracting customers to local businesses, eateries, and lodging

### Destination Marketing Strategies: Public Art

The City is recommended to fully integrate the following strategies, and action plan, into its CVB program and destination marketing plan.

- Develop a City public art collection that includes iconic "destination" artworks for visitors to enjoy.
- Create public art that strengthens the appeal of key tourism districts, including Downtown and the Laredo Cultural District
- Site some artworks close to major shopping destinations, as well as in restaurant/hotel areas
- Site highly visible artworks on/ near the Laredo Bridge System, with welcoming imagery, messages
- Site artwork in parks, plazas, and other natural spaces with appeal for tourists and visitors
- Integrate art into wayfinding signage, visitor information centers, safety improvements, maps
- Create public art that appeals to families and youth, in popular locations, including sports venues
- Inform, educate, and advise visitors about how to tour and discover interesting public artworks
- Feature public artworks of interest as stops for group and DIY tour routes
- Encourage art that tells the story of Laredo's strengths e.g. People, border culture, historic interest, inland port, community pride, Mexican arts and crafts, cuisine, birds and nature, etc.
- Communicate about Laredo public art as destinations of interest on an ongoing basis
- Educate tourism partners about public art in Laredo, including ambassadors, people in hospitality, at attractions, law enforcement, realtors, restaurateurs, retail outlets, students/ parents.
- Engage hotels, meeting venues, airlines, and other partners in promoting public art destinations
- Targeted marketing campaign for Mexican nationals who visit Laredo for shopping, leisure, and business (via Casa Laredo, for Nuevo Leon and Monterrey) e.g. "Be sure to see our public art too!"



## ACTION PLAN

### Initial Activities    Years 1 - 3

#### Public Art Commissions and Grants

- Commission an iconic #HolaLaredo artwork at a primary tourism site, as a destination for “selfies” such as letters that spell out the city’s name, painted with original imagery by a local artist
- Continue series at other key tourism sites
- Create a Cultural Arts Grant program, and offer a grant to a community nonprofit specifically to create public art that can be promoted through a tourism campaign
- Coordinate with the Laredo Cultural District to submit a grant application to Texas Commission on the Arts, for a major public art installation in the District

#### Communications & Education

- Education program: Educate all tourism partners about the value of public art in destination marketing, and existing public art attractions
- Education intern: Engage a college/university intern each semester (Ideally marketing major with a demonstrated interest in the visual arts, or an arts major with strong writing/ photography skills)
- Newsletter: Include an image and/or brief story about a public art destination in each issue
- Website: Add a web page about public art destinations, featuring a few destinations on a DIY tour
- Marketing Packets: Include materials about public art for meeting organizers and planners
- Social Media: Feature a photo of an engaging public artwork at least monthly, with visitor info, tag
- Media: Work with media partners to get coverage of the story of public art in Laredo

#### Engaging Event Partners

Partner with the organizers of major annual events, encouraging them to integrate a “legacy” public artwork into their budget and programming. Participatory community painting, etc. provides a draw. The artwork will remain in place in a public space, as a legacy of that year’s event. Examples:

- Washington’s Birthday Celebration
- Sister Cities Festival
- Birding Festival
- Jamboozie
- CaminArte

## Engaging Arts Venue & Museum Partners

Encourage each of these venues to commission a public artwork on the exterior or grounds of its facilities, or at another destination or site. Encourage partnerships with hospitality organizations.

- Laredo Center for the Arts (e.g. along First Friday CaminArte route)
- Laredo Community College Art Gallery
- Gallery 201
- Texas A&M International University (including Student Gallery)
- Helen Richter Watson Gallery
- Republic of the Rio Grande Museum
- Border Heritage Museum
- Washington's Birthday Celebration Museum

## Future Activities Years 4 - 10

After Laredo has installed at least 8-12 major public artworks near sites of interest to visitors, the City should plan and budget for an expanded program of tourism-focused activities.

- Campaigns: Integrate photographs of public art into campaigns that target well-educated visitors and promote it alongside culture, dining, walkable destinations, birding and outdoor recreation
- As marketing materials are updated and reprinted, add images of public art of interest
- Train and use fine arts and marketing-communications majors at TAMU as public art docents
- Rack Card: Feature public art that appears in Downtown, historic district destinations, etc.
- Create a promotional campaign for each major "iconic destination artwork" as they are completed
- Develop group tour and full tour map, when Laredo has 10-12 public art destinations of interest
- Market a public art tour to Winter Texans and traveling retirees, who visit to see cultural sites, play golf, attend festivals, birding, nature and outdoor activities; promote as an "add-on" to their visit



## C. LAREDO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

### Key Strategic Opportunity for Public Art

Building a significant public art collection at Laredo International Airport offers an exciting opportunity. Airports across Texas, the U.S. and the globe have developed excellent public art programs that excel at creating a unique sense of place for their city as a destination.

The development of this master plan included discussions with the Airport Department, which expressed a strong desire and interest in this effort. The City is encouraged to seize this opportunity in the near term. This includes ensuring that “2% for Art” allocation is made for each Capital Improvement Project at the airport, to the fullest possible extent.

Please see the **City Departments: Engagement Process and Survey Results Section in Appendix C**, for specific input provided by the Airport Department. Please also see the earlier discussion of specific project opportunities in the 5-year CIP Plan, for airport projects.

### Key Strengths

- The Airport Department currently has plans, some preliminary designs, and funding for a significant expansion and Capital Improvement Program
- As a portal to the city, the airport creates strong first impressions of Laredo for visitors
- The airport is a key public space related to Destination Marketing and Public Art
- Artworks at the airport can be enjoyed by business and leisure travelers, and those coming to town for conventions and meetings – as well as the people of Laredo

### Action Steps: Year 1

- The Airport Department should develop an Airport Public Art Master Plan, within the next six months, that applies the policies, principles and practices contained in this citywide Public Art Master Plan.
- Planning for public art should be fully integrated into the current terminal expansion project.
- The Airport Department, in partnership with the Public Art Program, should research airport art programs in other cities, and available funding sources, to inform a Laredo initiative.

### Peer City Models

City staff and community members should study the airport public art master plans developed by other cities, for a wealth of useful information, models for program development, discussion of funding sources, and benchmark studies of the public art programs at other airports.

## Recommended Reading

[Austin Bergstrom International Airport Public Art Master Plan](#)

[San Diego International Airport Arts Master Plan](#)

Minneapolis: [MSP Arts & Culture Program](#)

[Best Airport Art in the U.S. | Travel + Leisure](#)

*Article discusses public art in the Miami, Chicago O'Hare and Midway, NYC La Guardia, Denver, Sacramento, Dallas/Fort Worth, and Seattle-Tacoma airports.*

In early 2022, the City of Laredo, and its Airport Department and Public Art Program, should develop a draft document that describes Vision, Goals and Desired Outcomes for a public art program at the airport. As a model, below is the corresponding section of the San Diego plan.





## SAN DIEGO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ARTS MASTER PLAN

### Vision, Goals & Outcomes

**Vision** The Arts Program enriches the travel experience and airport environment for customers through innovative and memorable arts programming and exemplifies the airport's role as a respected community partner and regional resource.

**Goals and Outcomes** The Arts Program will achieve the above vision by focusing on the following four goals and corresponding outcomes. These were developed through a content review of a variety of airport documentation, including the Airport's Arts Program Policy 8.50, the Airport's Strategic Plan, the Arts Program's 2006 Master Plan, the Airport Development Plan Customer Experience section of the PDD and other documentation.

#### 1. Customer Experience

##### Create a Superior Experience for SAN Customers

- Strong overall visual identity for the airport
- Experiences that are accessible in both content and location to the airport's diverse audience
- Experiences that entertain and enrich
- Experiences that are fresh, new, memorable, and unforgettable; that are "takeaways"
- Experiences that people recognize, seek out and enjoy
- Enhanced appearance of airport infrastructure and design elements
- Enhanced experience of monotonous or generic spaces
- Enhanced wayfinding through practical visual cues and landmarks
- Environments / features / amenities that elevate the experience of travel and of public space
- Environments / features / amenities that are comforting and calming, mitigating the stress of travel

#### 2. Placemaking

##### Tap into Customers' Emotions, Feelings and Experiential Connections to Place

- Art projects and programming that serve as a gateway to the San Diego region and its culture
- Experiences that create a sense of welcome
- Experiences that leave lasting memories
- Sense of important civic function and presence of the airport
- Experiences that bring to life the narratives embodied in airport travel

#### 3. Civic and Community

##### Connect with the Community Beyond the Fence Line

- Recognition of the airport as a civic icon
- Arts experiences that local residents and visitors can access without entering secure areas
- Loyal following for the Arts Program among airport customers and the broader community
- Strengthened audience for arts, culture, historic, nature and science organizations throughout the region
- Vivid contributions from San Diego's rich arts and culture communities
- Strengthened relationships with local stakeholders
- Reflecting or showcasing the racial, ethnic and cultural diversity of the region

#### 4. Artistic Excellence

##### **Reach New Levels of Innovation in Excellence in the Overall Arts Program, as well as in the Work that Individual Artists Produce at the Airport**

- Recognition by peers and the public for its exemplary permanent collection, temporary exhibitions and performing arts work and for its role as a leading arts organization in the region and program in the field
- Recognition by artists as a place where they can develop fresh, challenging work in a unique environment with a unique audience
- Recognition by patrons as an airport with excellence in the arts

... My vision for public art extends beyond a 2% of funds of new construction projects, though that is a great start. It is one that truly sees artists as important members of society, that work closely with the City to collaborate on projects that involve people from the community, people who are exhilarated by the idea of participating in an art project that documents who they are and what matters to them. That vision includes the City making it a focus of constantly having funds available to hire artists to maintain existing works, and to partner with other agencies in the creation of public art projects and the documentation of the works created. It involves an online archive with stories. It involves people of all ages. It is honored and looked at with pride.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent

## D. TXDOT PROJECTS

### Key Strategic Opportunity for Public Art

TxDOT projects offer good opportunities for public art. The City of Laredo should initiate discussions with TxDOT, to plan ahead for public art on TxDOT infrastructure. The Agency has approved these installations at State highway “gateways” and in the right of way for the State-managed roadway system.

The State agency has a duty to be a good community partner and has developed Design Guidelines for including public art. It has experience incorporating public art and placemaking elements into its projects, in partnership with local governments and communities. This includes artwork on visible underpass columns, embankments, highway “gateways” to cities, monument markers, and other infrastructure that has a strong community presence.

### Approach & Advocacy

Typically, city officials advocate to TxDOT during early design and planning for the inclusion of public art in TxDOT projects to be constructed within city limits. A strong case for including public art as a line item in the budget can be made – particularly if the City of Laredo and Webb County are contributing matching funds (or ROW land) to the project. The City should advocate early and often for thoughtful planning and an adequate budget for public art, as an integral part of the project development and delivery process. For example, 1% of construction costs could be budgeted, or a lesser amount agreeable to all parties.

In order to have the overall project budget include public art components, as a line item, they should be integrated during the earliest scoping and cost estimate stages. However, public art can be added to drab highway infrastructure at any time, with agency involvement and approval.

It may be helpful to share a Vision Statement and project photos and examples to the District Engineer. The Public Art Program Manager should remain involved in tracking project opportunities over the long timespan required for design and construction.

City officials and departments, and community representatives, should be proactive about creating a vision, a business case, making specific budget requests, and contributing resources to public art installations on TxDOT infrastructure. City officials should proactively convene discussions with TxDOT about including public art in all local projects.

### Contacts

**TxDOT:** The District Engineer should be engaged. Request that they set up informational meetings with contacts in other cities in Texas, where public art has been installed on TxDOT roadways.

**Texas Commission on the Arts:** The State of Texas allows up to 1% of the budget for new state facilities to be spent on public art. For more information on State of Texas policies on funding public art, contact Laura Wiegand at 512/936-6565 or [laura@arts.texas.gov](mailto:laura@arts.texas.gov).

## Potential Project Types: TxDOT Infrastructure

What kind of art can be created on TxDOT roadways and infrastructure? The possibilities are endless.

Below are examples of public art project types that TxDOT has approved in other cities in Texas.

- Murals
- Decorative texturing, reliefs, and paint treatments wall textures
- Reliefs
- Decorative metalwork
- Illumination installation
- Free-standing sculptures
- Monument markers (City of Laredo)

TxDOT Infrastructure where public art has been permitted includes:

- Gateway/Underpass/Bridge/Columns
- Retaining Walls
- Roundabouts
- Traffic Signal Control Cabinets
- Monument Markers (identifying cities)

This TxDOT resource also may be of interest, for projects involving historic infrastructure or sites: [Planning a Successful Historic Preservation Program](#)





## Public Art Project examples in other Texas cities

### Underpass Installation (San Antonio)



### Column Painting (El Paso)





## Illumination Installation (El Paso)



5. 10-Year Strategic Plan: Public Art

## Monument Marker (New Braunfels)



## CIP Plan FY 2022-2026: Project Opportunities, City of Laredo

The information below was captured from the City's current 5-Year CIP Plan. Opportunities should be updated annually over time, as project funding is determined and new projects are considered.

**TxDOT** (\$69,763,659) – Monies from the Texas Department of Transportation and the Regional Mobility Authorities to finance with the City of Laredo various arterial roads and interstate highway improvements. If applied to total budget: **1% for Art: \$909,700.**

Project	#	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26
I69 West Widening Project	19-TX-001	17,900,000	17,900,000			
Vallecillo Road	19-TX-003	41,471,000	41,471,000			
H. Reuthinger Parkway Phase I	19-TX-004	31,599,324				
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>		<b>\$90,970,324</b>	<b>Example 1% for Art: \$909,700</b>			





## TxDOT Design Manual – Public Art

The **TxDOT Landscape and Aesthetics and Design Manual** includes **Section 11. Public Art**. It should be reviewed, prior to discussing public art opportunities for specific TxDOT projects. The Design Manual notes, “Projects that are a joint effort with city officials and volunteer arts [advocates] have the best chance of success.”



*TxDOT Design Manual Figure 4-73. “Public art projects can be a viable way to allow residents to express their sense of community in creative ways.”*

Below is the content of **Section 11. Public Art** of the **TxDOT Design Manual**, available online at: [http://onlinemanuals.txdot.gov/txdotmanuals/lad/public\\_art.htm](http://onlinemanuals.txdot.gov/txdotmanuals/lad/public_art.htm)

“Urban centers may have an active interest in acquiring or placing public art on the right-of-way (see [Figures 4-73](#) and [4-74](#)). Some examples of TxDOT accommodation of public art projects are the murals in El Paso and Dallas and the Sam Houston statue in Huntsville. The primary concern is that public art projects meet the environmental demands of the roadside and the minimum requirements governing safety, access, and management of the highway.”





*TxDOT Design Manual Figure 4-74. Drab concrete surfaces set a somber tone and often invite graffiti.*



*TxDOT Design Manual Figure 4-75. Experience shows that appropriate themes can enhance a corridor and discourage graffiti vandalism.*

## Design Considerations

For evaluating public art projects proposed for state rights-of-way

### Safety

- If public access is allowed to the artwork, all ADA requirements must be met.
- Reflective surface finishes should be avoided to minimize visibility hazard to highway users.

### Finishes

- Durable, all weather finishes are essential. Finishes should be evaluated for their reflectivity, ability to resist pollutants associated with highway environments, and weathering characteristics.
- Finishes should be used that will allow repair if the structure or art piece is damaged.
- Finishes should be selected that allow the removal of graffiti.

### Location

- Unless proper facilities are provided, the placement of artwork should not invite viewers to stop or access the piece on foot.
- All setbacks and sight triangle requirements must be met based on the type of highway.

### Vandalism

- Sites that are subject to vandalism should be avoided.
- Night lighting should be provided to discourage vandalism and highlight the artwork.

### Theme

- Symbols, motifs, or colors must be sensitive to cultural issues.
- Review all art pieces to be sure that they do not consciously or unconsciously include gang or high school colors, logos, symbols, or images that could be racially or ethnically biased.

### Complexity

- Artwork placed on the right-of-way should be simple. Complex pieces can distract drivers or will not be understood or appreciated.
- Avoid placing artwork in locations where there are important driver orientation signs.

## 5.4. Priorities by Council District

Public art offers many benefits, and all people and neighborhoods of Laredo should have the opportunity to benefit equally from the City's public art collection and legacy. Towards this end, the development of this master plan has included outreach that gathered priorities and input from the people in all 10 council districts.

**Chapter 2: Listening to the Community** contains input received from Council Members, residents of each District, and Key Cultural Stakeholders who spoke to different goals and needs in Downtown and in central, north and south Laredo.

### Priorities Expressed in Public Art Survey

Participants in the 2021 community public art survey identified their council district. This information should be consulted on an ongoing basis. It can serve as important guidance about the desires and priorities of the people in each district.

Priorities evolve over time. Therefore, people in all council districts should be provided and actively informed of annual opportunities to have input into the Annual Public Art Plan, and the projects it contains. Listening to the whole community, and making an extra effort to include hard-to-reach populations, is strongly recommended in the annual planning and art project development process.

### Input from City Council Offices

Council Members are elected to represent the will of the people in their District, and can be a powerful resource for building community support and momentum, finding partners, and getting the word out about public art program opportunities. City Council members and their staffs hear from their constituents daily. They should immediately forward any input they receive about public art – expressed priorities, ideas for projects, concerns or requests – to the *City Manager* (for the Public Art Program staff) and to *their appointed Commissioner* on the Fine Arts and Culture Commission (for Commission discussion).

*City ethics standards require that politics be stringently removed from the selection process for artists and artworks. It is the job of professional staff to award artist commissions (which are city contracts) using standardized, fair, objective, and transparent processes as described elsewhere in this plan.*

Each City Council office may wish to maintain a list of priorities for public art, which can be consulted as opportunities arise. Any input from *Council Members should be provided early in the planning cycle each year*, so that it can be considered by professional city staff in assembling the Annual Plan.

### District vs. Downtown Investment

Advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion is a core emphasis of this master plan and the Viva Laredo comprehensive plan. In areas of historic disinvestment, and lower-income council districts, the City may need to invest more funding and effort in public art, to help achieve true equity.

At the same time, people living in all districts benefit from investment in the central city, Downtown, and historic neighborhoods. Laredoans work in these areas and spend time in them for shopping, entertainment, and services. Everyone benefits economically from a strong

Downtown. In particular, there is strong citywide support for investment and redevelopment in the four city blocks Downtown adjacent to the Rio Grande River – which offers prime sites for public art. Therefore, Downtown and central Laredo is a planning priority for robust public art funding, resources, and investment over time.

### Percent for Art Funds: Projects By Council District

The Program Administration chapter of this report addresses Capital Improvement Projects and “2% for Art” funding in **Section 3.5**. It provides detailed guidance on the use of these funds annually.

A portion of the budget for the annual CIP Program is divided equally among City Council Districts. Currently, this yields \$1M in improvement projects for parks, trails, streets, and other community-driven projects per district per year. A \$1M district CIP budget generates \$20,000 for public art projects on one or more sites. (Note: The CIP budget allocated by district may change over time.) *This subset of public art funds should be spent within the same Council District, on projects that reflect **the identified priorities of its residents**.*

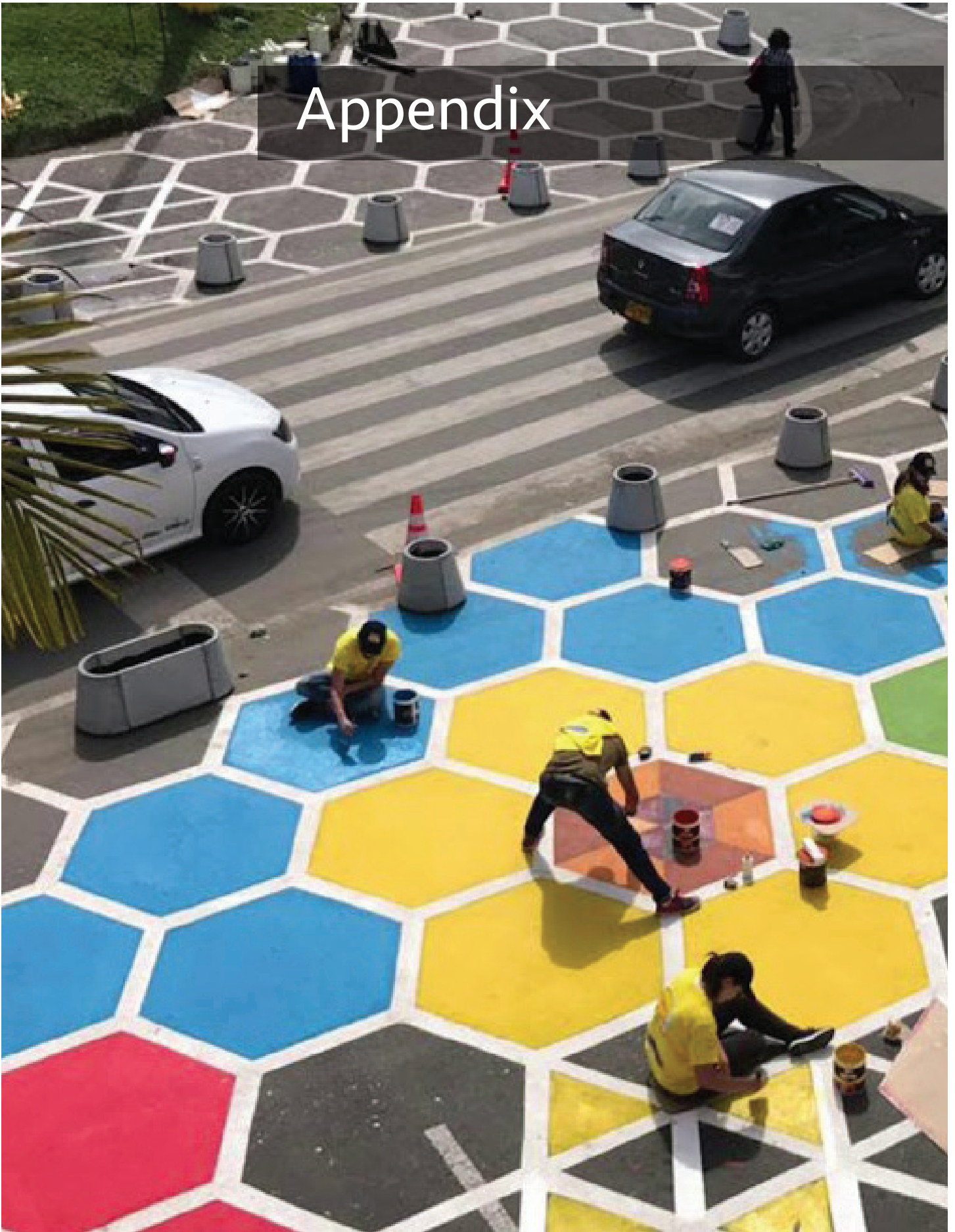
In addition, many general *citywide* CIP projects occur. As these projects serve the whole citizenry, they should be informed by *citywide* public art priorities and goals. At sites where they impact a particular neighborhood, local voices also should be heard and consulted.

... Art in public spaces plays a distinguishing role in our country’s history and culture. It reflects and reveals our society, enhances meaning in our civic spaces, and adds uniqueness to our communities. Public art humanizes the built environment. It provides an intersection between past, present, and future between disciplines and ideas. Art in public spaces plays a distinguishing role in our country’s history and culture. It reflects and reveals our society, enhances meaning in our civic spaces, and adds uniqueness to our communities. Public art humanizes the built environment. It provides an intersection between past, present, and future between disciplines and ideas.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent



# Appendix

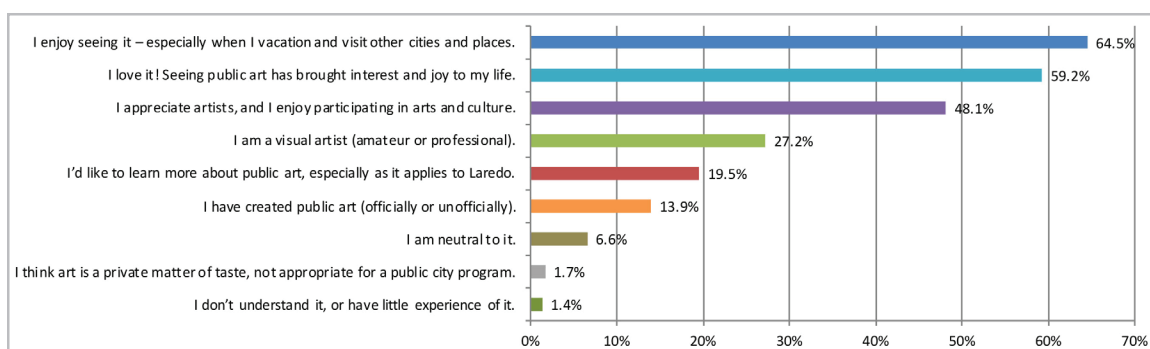


## Appendix A. Community Survey: Summary of Responses

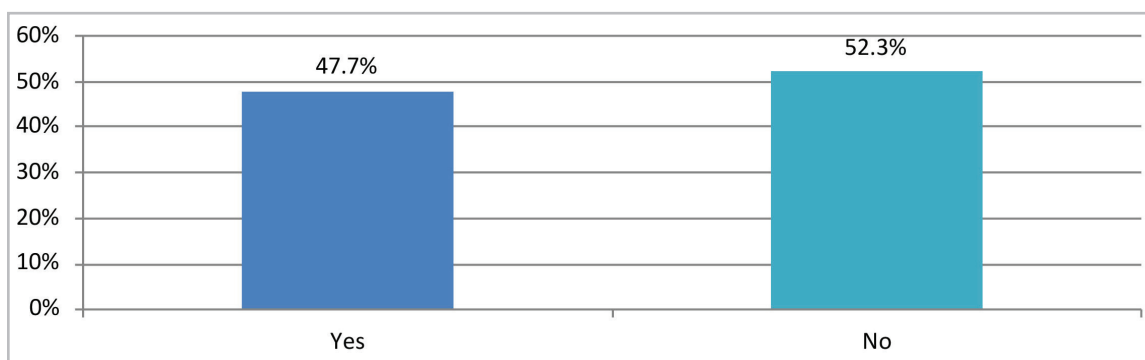
### Section 1: About You

- The overwhelming majority of respondents had positive feelings about public art
- Approximately 50% of respondents self-identified as “cultural stakeholders”
- Approximately 30% self-identified as visual artists, whether amateur or professional
- Residents from all Council Districts were represented.
- 83% of survey respondents want the City to provide public art in the District where they live and/or work; 11% were unsure; 6% did not.
- 73% of survey participants consider Downtown, the historic district, and immediately surrounding neighborhoods as a priority for beautification, improvements, and public investment

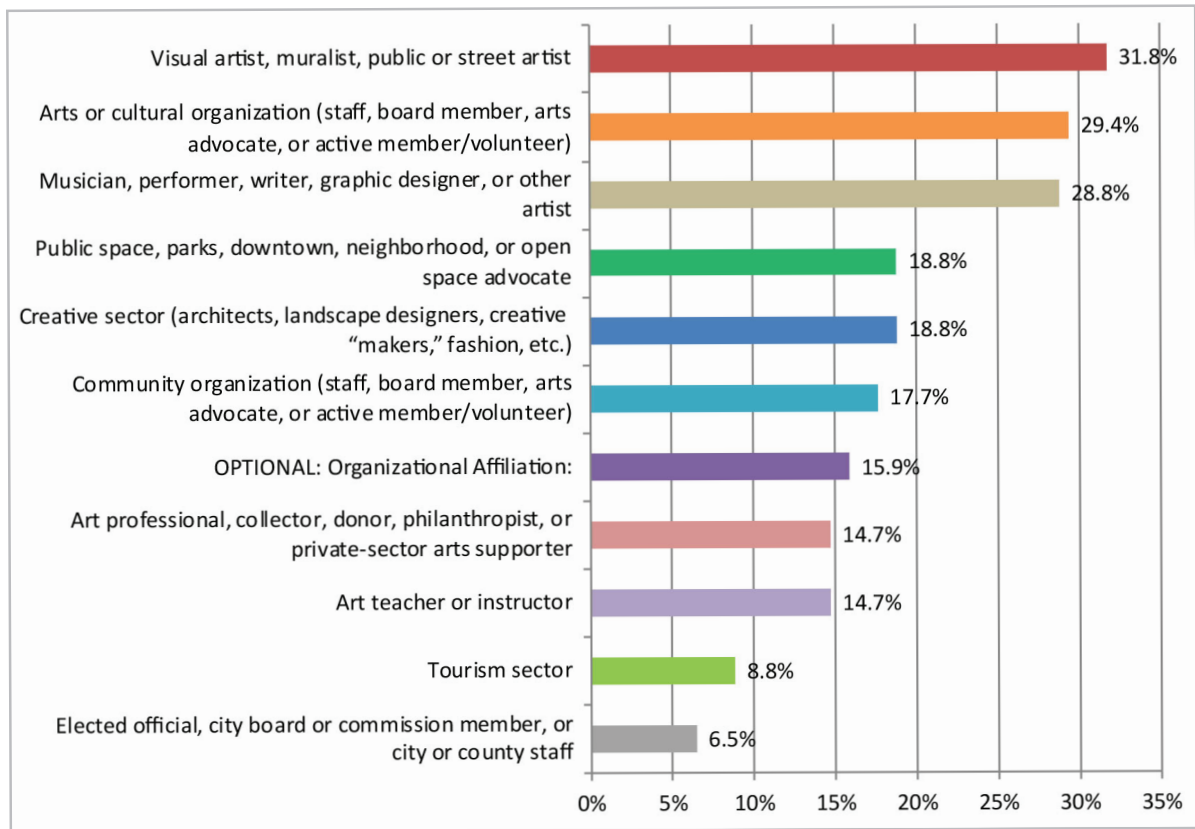
#### Q1. What is your relationship to public art? (Select as many as apply)



**Q2. By the following definition, would you consider yourself a Laredo “Public Art Cultural Stakeholder”?** Definition: A representative of a group that has an interest in city decisions and activities related to public art — such as artists, arts advocates, and arts-and-culture/ community organizations.



**Q3. If you answered yes to question Q2, please share your affiliation**  
(Select as many as apply)



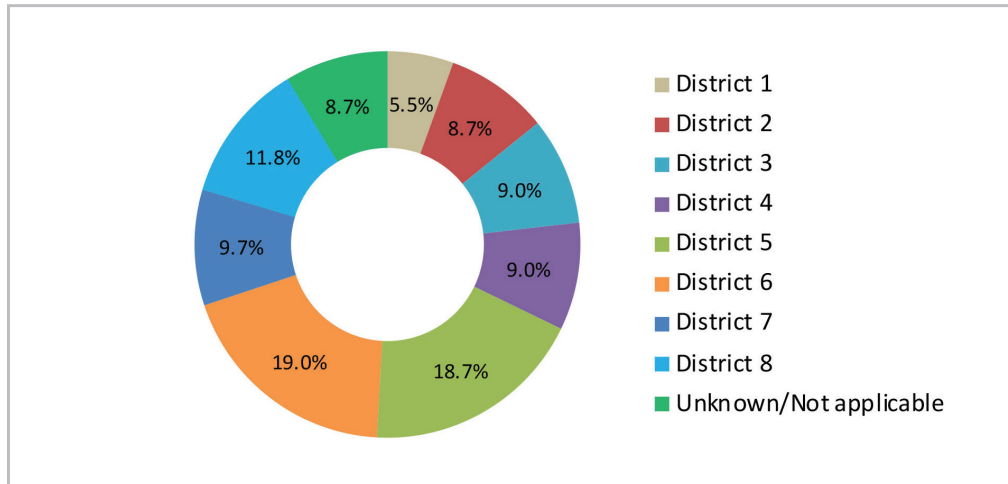
**OPTIONAL Question: Organizational Affiliation**

- Fine Arts and Culture Commission
- GALLERY 201
- Church Media
- Citizen of district 8 that would like to see it clean up for once and all. THAT would be lovely to see as well.
- College visual and performing arts program
- Cultivarte Laredo
- Dance teacher
- Laredo Arts and cultural district
- Laredo Center for the Arts (multiple)
- Laredo Cultural District
- Laredo Housing Authority
- Laredo Local Vendors
- Laredo Mainstreet
- Laredo Theater Guild
- Sketchbomb Laredo founder
- UISD Fine Arts Coordinator

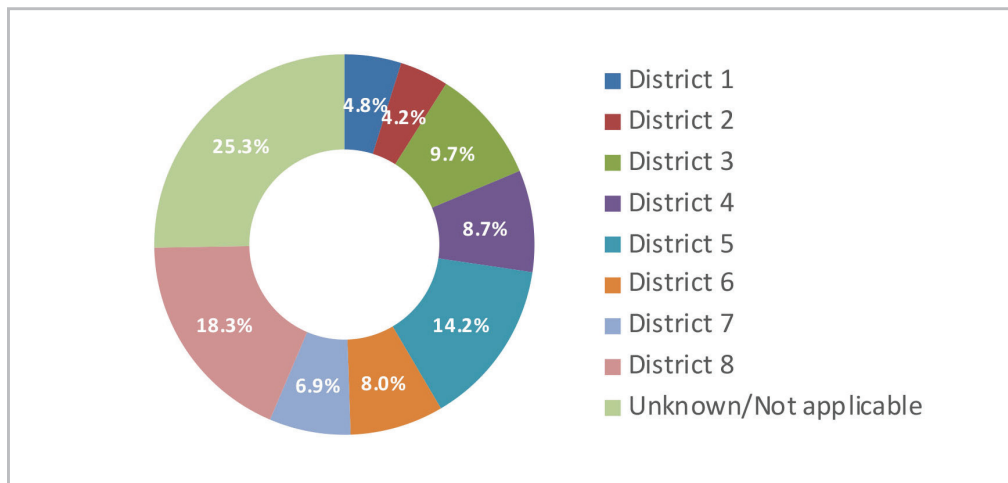
**Q4. Would you like to be added to a "Public Art Cultural Stakeholder" list, to receive news and updates?** If so, please provide your contact information for our email database.

More than half of the survey respondents opted to be added to the mailing list.

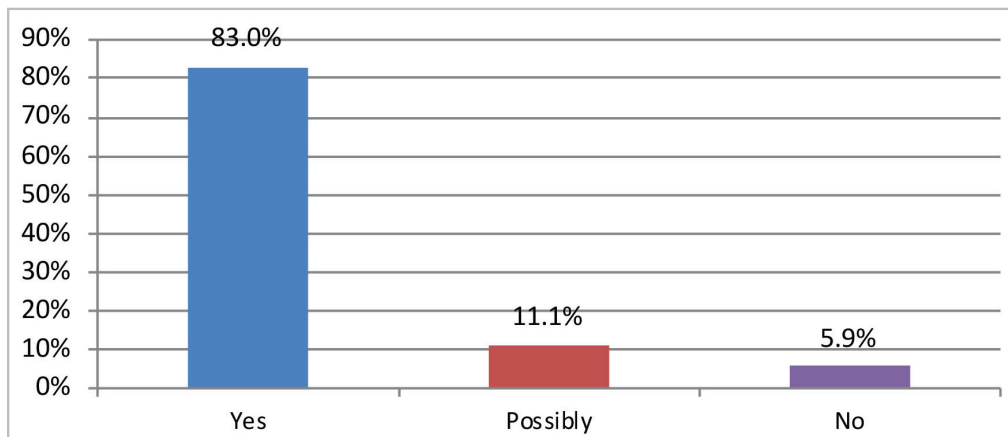
### Q5. Which Laredo City Council District do you live in?



### Q6. Which Laredo City Council District do you work or attend school in?

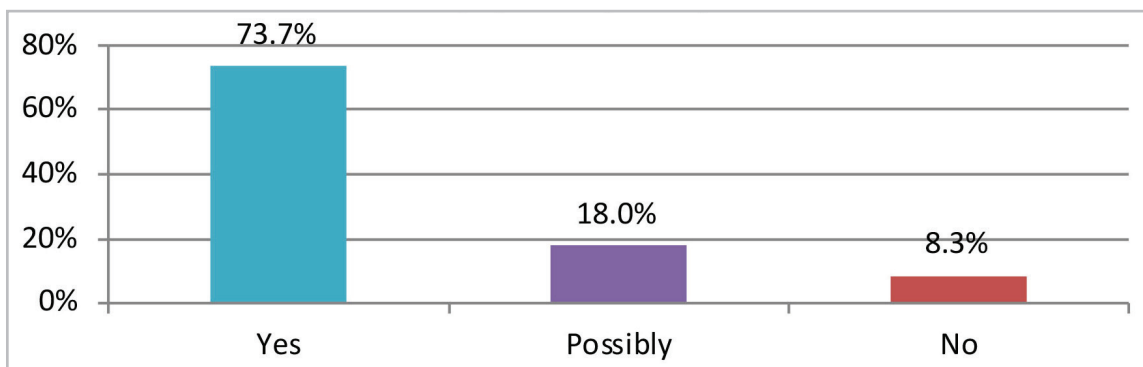


### Q7. Would you like to see the City provide public art in the District where you live and/or work?





**Q8. The Viva Laredo Comprehensive Plan identified Downtown, the historic district, and immediately surrounding neighborhoods, as a priority for beautification, improvements, and public investment. Do you consider these areas a top priority for public art?**



## Section 2: Public Art Program Vision and Goals

The majority of survey respondents agreed with the proposed Vision Statement for the City's Public Art Program (87%)

The five primary goals were ranked as follows (from highest priority to lower)

- Encourage tourism that helps the economy
- Provide for the citizens of Laredo high quality, publicly accessible works of art, which contribute to the urban landscape and symbolize the City's sense of place.
- Increase job opportunities in the arts
- Encourage creation of public art by other groups, in addition to the City
- Integrate artwork into City buildings and facilities

The seven policies were ranked as follows (from highest priority to lower)

- Support economic growth by beautifying the historic streets of Laredo, encouraging tourism.
- Promote Laredo as a unique place, community, and destination.
- Support the creative and professional growth of the visual art community.
- Promote children's art programs.
- Commission local visual artists for public art (using a public process for selection) to support and attract quality visual artists in Laredo.
- Work to create studio, exhibition, performance, and office space for artists and arts organizations.
- Make arts and culture the cornerstone of Laredo's identity

Themes for public art that garnered the **most support** (>60%) are:

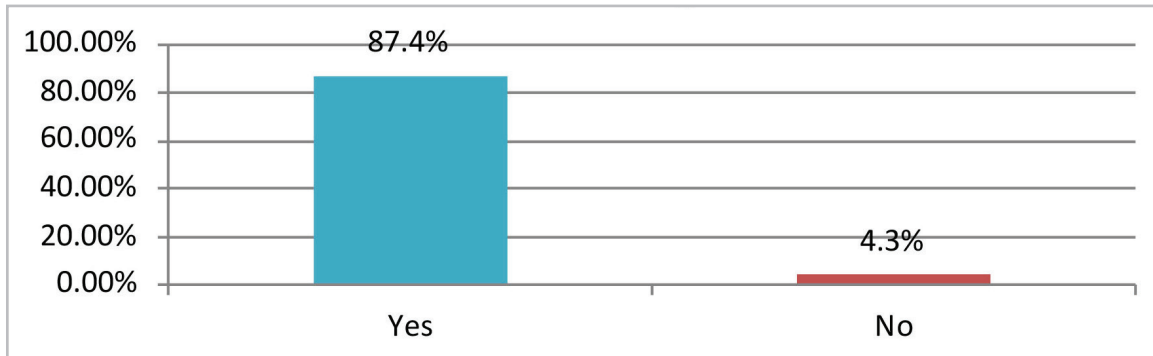
- (1) Inspire hope, a positive vision for the future,
- (2) Reflect Hispanic and Mexican-American culture,
- (3) Reflect our natural environment, and
- (4) Communicate our history

Themes that garnered **the least support** (<40%) are:

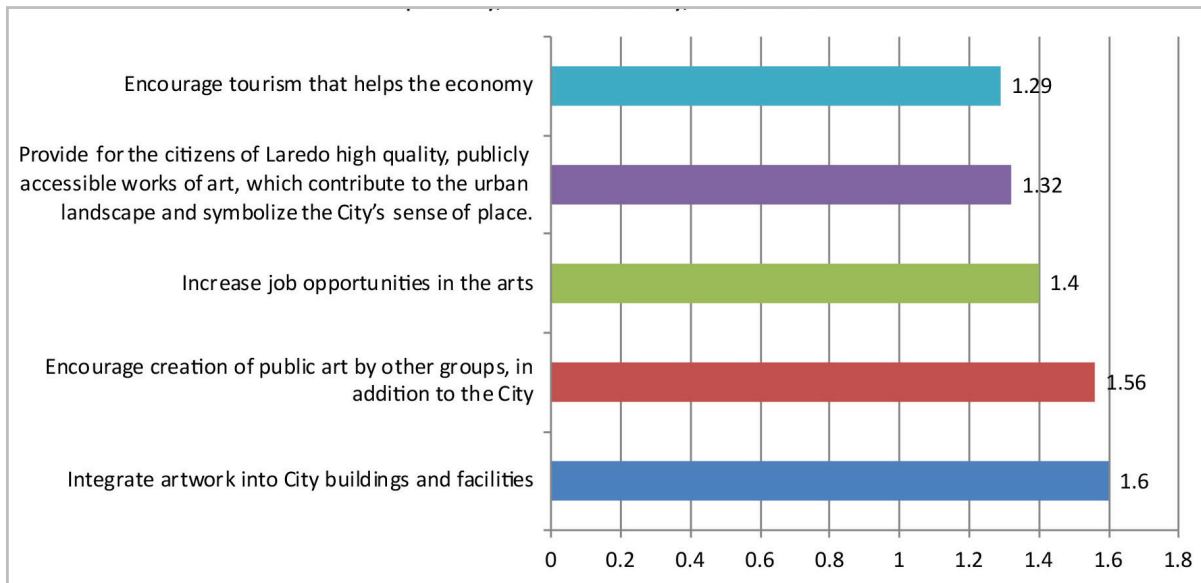
- (1) Make social statements, provide artist commentary on social issues, and
- (2) Challenge assumptions, address injustice

**Q9. The consultants have proposed the following Vision Statement for the City's Public Art Program. Do you support this statement? Comment on why, or why not.**

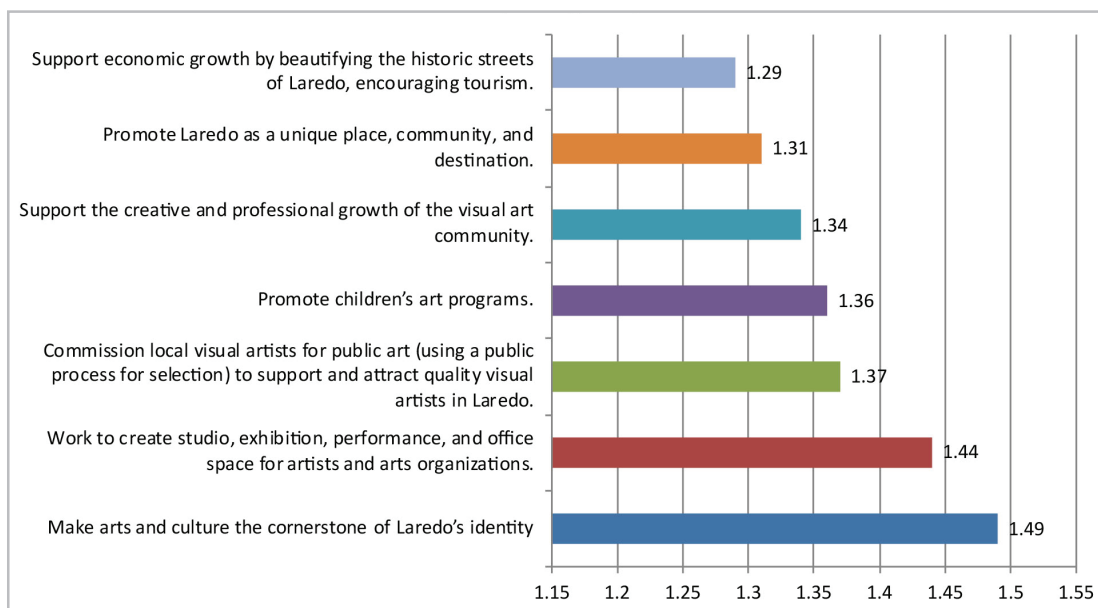
VISION Laredo will become a more attractive place to live, work, do business and play, through its Public Art Program. The city will build a high-quality public art collection that improves and enlivens the places where people gather, in Downtown and distinct neighborhoods. Public art will contribute to Laredo's character and future as a vibrant city and destination. It will celebrate and reflect our community's special pride, history and potential, character, culture, and natural environment.



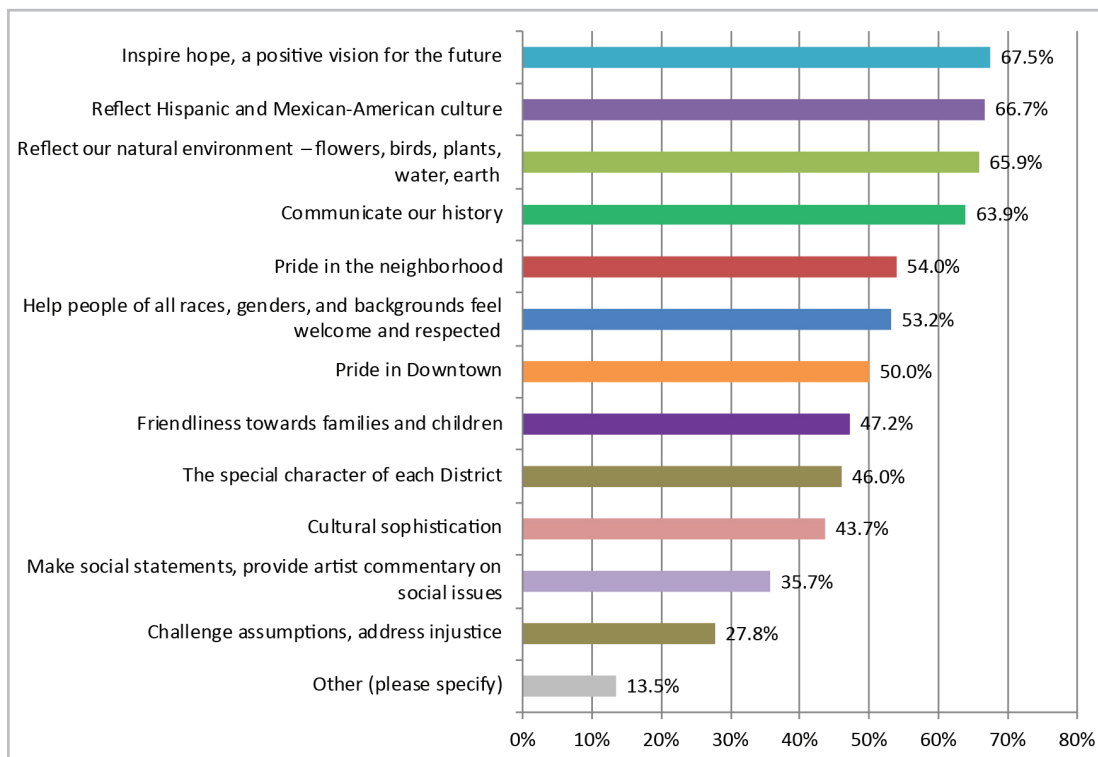
**Q10. The five primary goals for Public Art cited in the city's originating 2019 ordinance (2019-O-177) are summarized below. Please rate each goal as a priority, in your opinion. Each can be rated as 1, 2, or 3. (1 = highest priority, 2 = secondary, 3 = lower)**



**Q11. For Arts and Culture overall, the following policies were established in the Viva Laredo Comprehensive Plan. As focused for the city's Public Art Program, specifically, please rate each one as a goal.** Each policy can be rated as 1, 2, or 3. (1 = highest priority, 2 = secondary, 3 = lower)



**Q12. What would you like to see expressed in public artworks?**  
(Select as many as apply)





### Section 3: Project Types

Public art types that were **most selected** in the survey include (>60%) are:

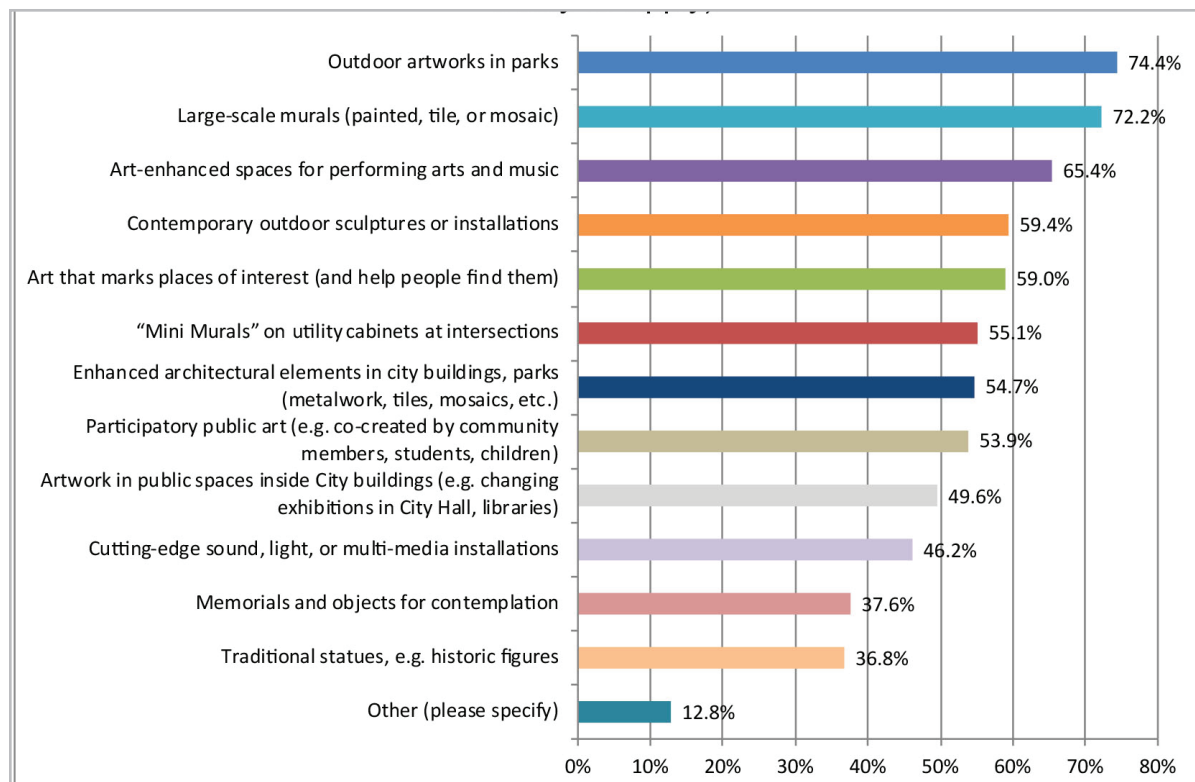
- (1) Outdoor artworks in parks,
- (2) Large-scale murals, and
- (3) Art-enhanced spaces for performing arts and music;

Project types that garnered **the least support** (<40%) are:

- (1) Memorials and objects for contemplation, and
- (2) Traditional statues, e.g. historic figures

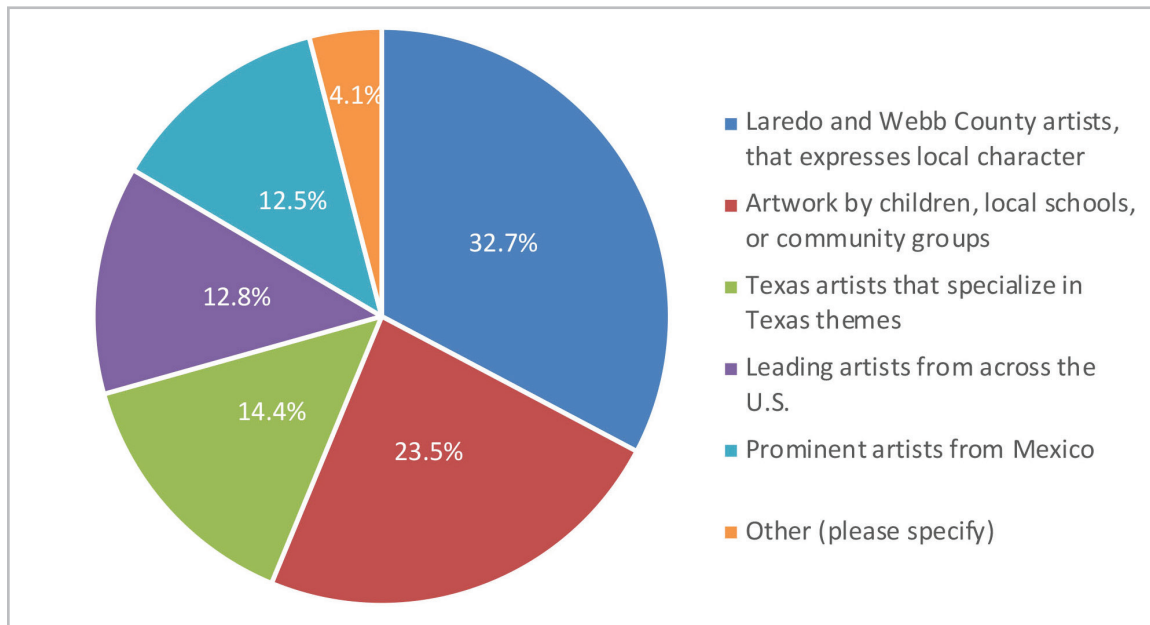
Most survey respondents think that Laredo and Webb County artists should be commissioned to create public art in Laredo

**Q13. The City will consider different types of visual public art projects. Which of the following would you like to see in Laredo? (Select as many as apply)**



**Q14. Who do you think the City should commission to create its public art?**

(Select as many as apply)



Questions 15 – 18 were open-ended questions in this section of the survey. The full list of written comments can be found in Appendix D.

**Q15. What are your favorite work(s) of public art in Laredo, and why?**

The following is a word cloud generated by the survey tool (Survey Monkey), in which the size of the words symbolizes how frequently they were mentioned.

public Jovita Idar Mural spaces Outlet Shoppes love see Rialto Hotel reflect look Clark  
 parrots favorite outlet buildings Na public art airport work One favorite  
 colorful street pieces people love located downtown place  
 North Central Park nature art see murals wall  
 Laredo also city Abrazo area history one need made N  
 parks historic artwork culture artists sculpture mural downtown Azteca  
 Abrazo mural different local building downtown S Clark Blvd local artists dejes de Soñar  
 paintings

**Q16. What work(s) of public art have you seen in other places, that are good models for us – and why?**

**Q17. What public art do you NOT like?**

**Q18. What else would you like to tell us about public art?**

## Section 4. Locations / Sites

The location types that were found to be of most interest to survey respondents are:

- (1) City parks and open space
- (2) Downtown and central historic district
- (3) Gateways to Laredo, such as major roadway entrances
- (4) Neighborhood centers and business districts

The location type of least interest included Biking and walking routes.

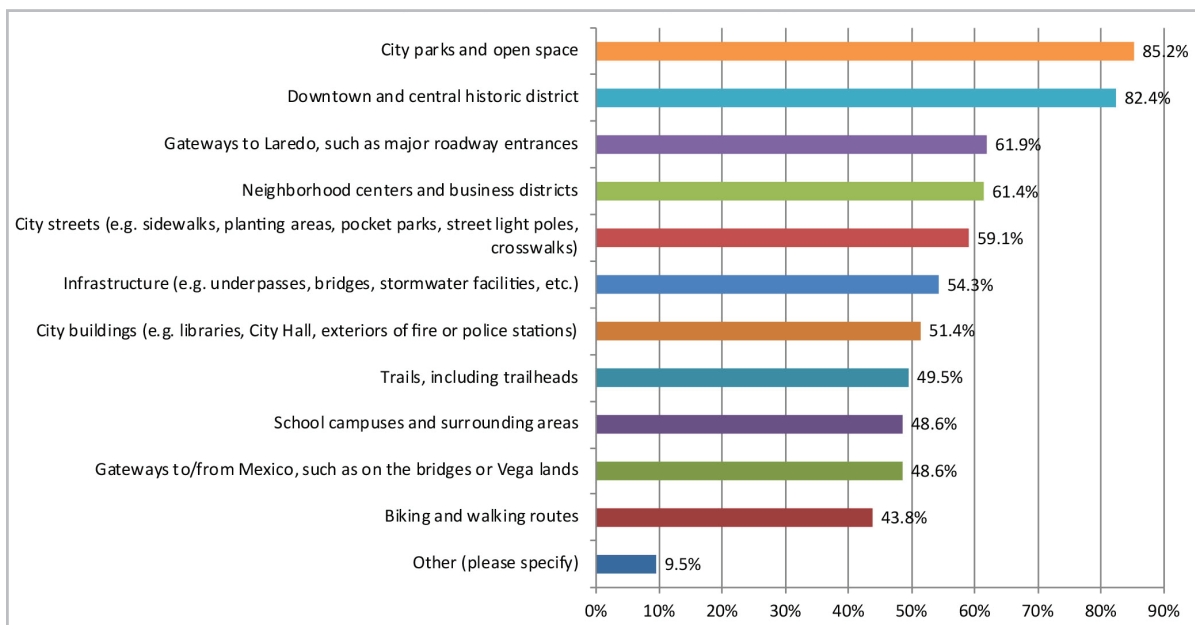
Over the next three years, the TOP priority sites selected are:

- (1) Downtown and central historic district
- (2) City parks and open space
- (3) Gateways to Laredo, such as major roadway entrances

The TOP 3 priority destinations for Downtown are:

- (1) Anywhere people walk, eat and drink, shop, and gather
- (2) San Augustin Plaza
- (3) Rio Grande riverfront

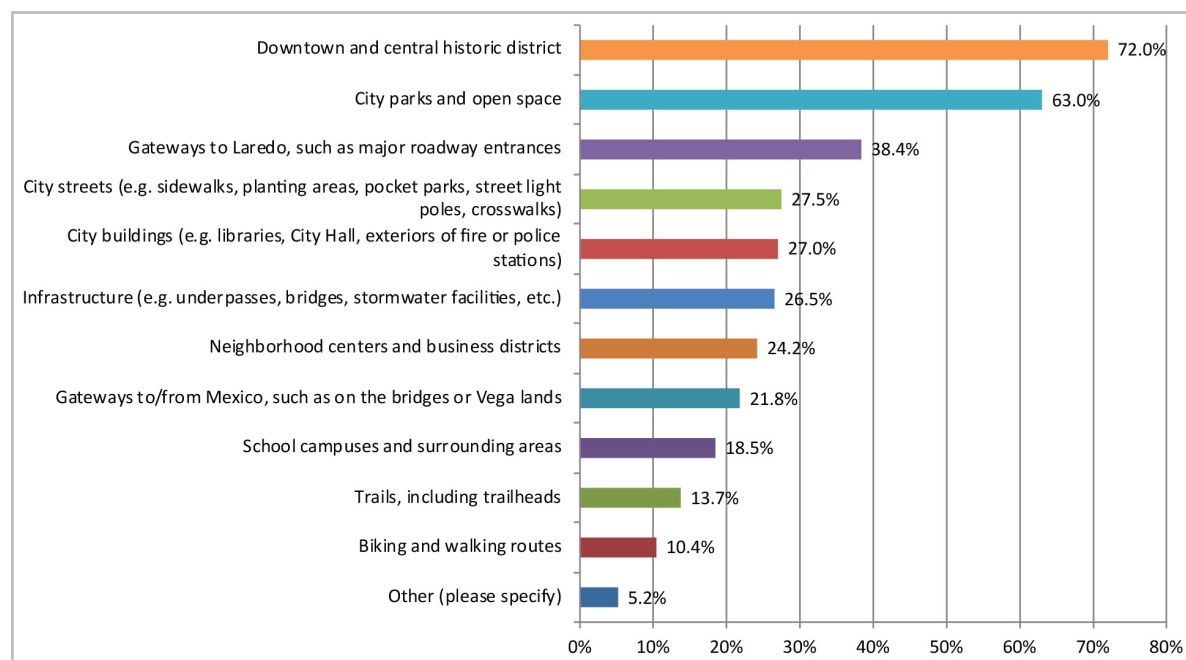
**Q19. Which of the following locations for public art in Laredo most interest you?**  
(Select as many as apply)



### Other (please specify)

- Airport, bus stations
- All historic districts and inner city neighborhoods
- All public areas are good for public art. Art is so important in a city!
- Areas of low income housing.
- Buildings can incorporate art at the expense of the entity developing or maintaining the building...
- citizen of district 8 that would like to see it clean up for once and all. THAT would be lovely to see as well.
- Empty walls designated for graffiti artists. Although I'm not a graffiti artist, I have heard this need expressed.
- Everywhere, let's make Laredo beautiful
- Public art everywhere since we all enjoy taking pictures.
- Right as you entering Laredo on i35
- The barrios.....where the neighborhood can enjoy the art
- The four blocks on Mile One.
- The Ladrillera bridge and many of our buildings in District 8
- This shouldn't be just about pleasing the tourists....this should also be about bringing art within the community...the barrios need art too
- Unexpected places i.e. inside a city bus. Perhaps contrasting colors or one focal artful seat while soothing music is playing
- We need an building that will house art by Laredo artists. One that will house all sorts of art. Museum of our Laredo history.
- You can paint the manholes like they do in Japan.
- Zacate creek (location of the battle of Laredo)

### Q20. Over the next three years, which of the above would be your TOP priority sites for public art? (Select up to 3)

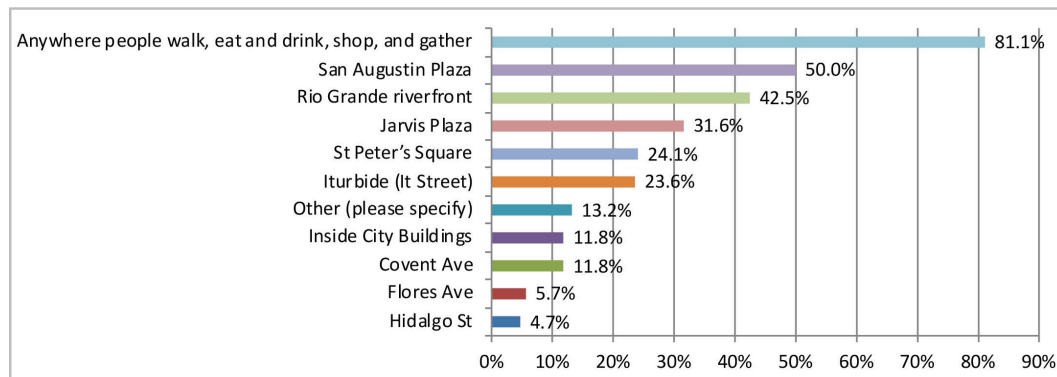




### Other (please specify)

- A building that will house Laredo art. Downtown would be perfect. Bit no parking and it is very dirty. Streets smell like urine. Getting rid of the bars
- A welcome to Laredo artwork sign
- Anywhere mostly visible, although Art can make any place look way better.
- Empty blocks by Bridge#2
- NOT DOWNTOWN.
- Places where the majority of people congregate
- The area where our neighbors to the south enter Laredo is very sad. It is dirty and unkept. The little vegetation that is there is not taken care of.
- The art should be in areas that are extremely visible!
- Within the barrios

### Q21. Viva Laredo calls for making Downtown more attractive. Which of the following would be your TOP 3 priority Downtown sites for public art?



### Other (please specify)

- Abandoned buildings
- All downtown plazas.
- Around the Laredo center for the arts
- As we are entering our city
- Buy one remodeled specific building that will feature local art.
- City hall; Veterans place downtown
- Downtown needs way more than art to be attractive.
- Empty blocks by bridge #2
- Historic District distinctions, please invite the Historic District Board to these proposals.
- Inside city buildings pertaining to the theme of the building like the department/s
- Ladrillera bridge
- Main Street intersections around the city
- Needs more shaded areas, more trees, beautifying buildings
- NONE. Downtown needs fixing internally before "beautifying" it.
- Neighbors out side of downtown. In order to make downtown nice the buildings need to be reconstructed as well as well painted and actual people opening business.
- San bernardo....saunders....guadalupe.... within the barrio
- Slaughter Park
- The downtown area is not attractive to the older generation nor the younger one. They see it as a dirty filthy area.
- I liked the idea of building something next to the arena.
- We need to repaint the houses and older buildings. There is a nice aesthetic to vintage structures, but I feel like our downtown is so old and plain that no one really wants to visit there anymore.
- Where ever there are large flat walls - like what was done near Downtown Pharmacy; at the senior housing Convent & Washington
- Zaragoza St.

**Q22. What other specific places around the city do you see as high priority sites for public art? Please list as many as possible.**

Full list of written comments was provided to staff. The following is an auto-generated word cloud.

mall Laredo College TAMIU Center Tourism Plaza Near neighborhoods  
International S entering highway look people North Central Park  
downtown N parks south city public art area I-35  
Laredo Public parks art buildings see Mall del Norte street think  
places spaces need Na South Laredo walking bridge general anywhere  
Center Arts Schools

## Section 5. Potential Partners

More than 100 ideas were submitted for potential partners ranging from private entities to the university and college.

**Q23. The City will need partners for funding and creating public art.** Do you have any suggestions for potential partners or sponsors? (Please share as much information as possible)

Full list of written comments can be found in Appendix D. The following is an auto-generated word cloud.

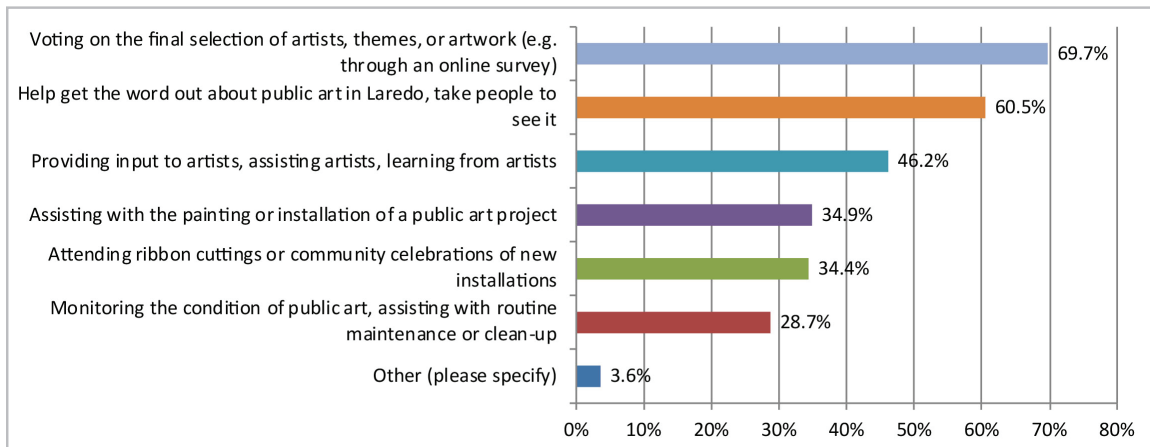
Schools National Endowment Arts N Laredo College sponsors Cultivate Local sure  
TAMIU create Grants Laredo Cultural District Bank public art art  
Local businesses Laredo IBC city project fund Local Artist  
artists private partners Texas businesses help companies  
School Districts promote Laredo Center Arts public

## Section 6. Volunteer Opportunities

70% of survey respondents would like to vote on the final selection of artists, themes, or artwork (through an online survey).

Another popular volunteer opportunity included helping to get the word out.

**Q24. The City may offer opportunities for people to volunteer with the Public Art program.**  
Which volunteer activities potentially interest you? (Select as many as apply)



**Q25. Please add me to an interest list to learn of upcoming opportunities for public art input and volunteerism, at this email address:**

47% of respondents provided their contact information.

## Section 7. Summary

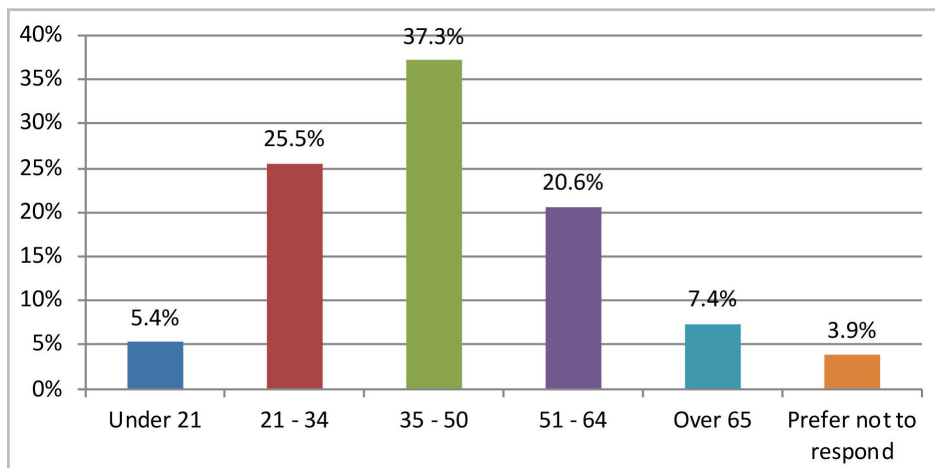
**Q26. What is your vision for public art in Laredo?**

Full list of written comments can be found in Appendix D. The following is an auto-generated word cloud.

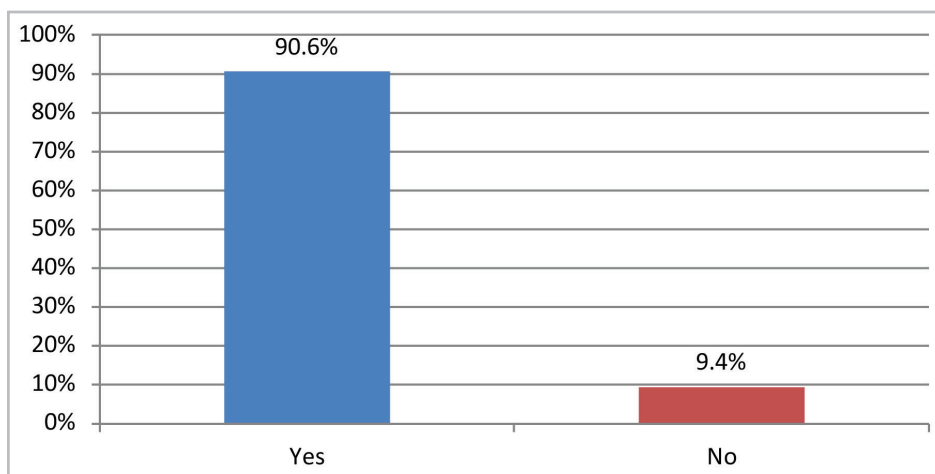
lots strong community know public spaces vision public art collection opportunities educating  
talent educational promote improve need building local great make beautify create  
pieces will supported culture display artists feel community  
start city become art vibrant Laredo well public art one  
see downtown local artists work people history culture show come  
history potential vision spaces bring live represent visual cultural world pride Center  
beautiful want love people will ideas

## Section 8. Demographic Information

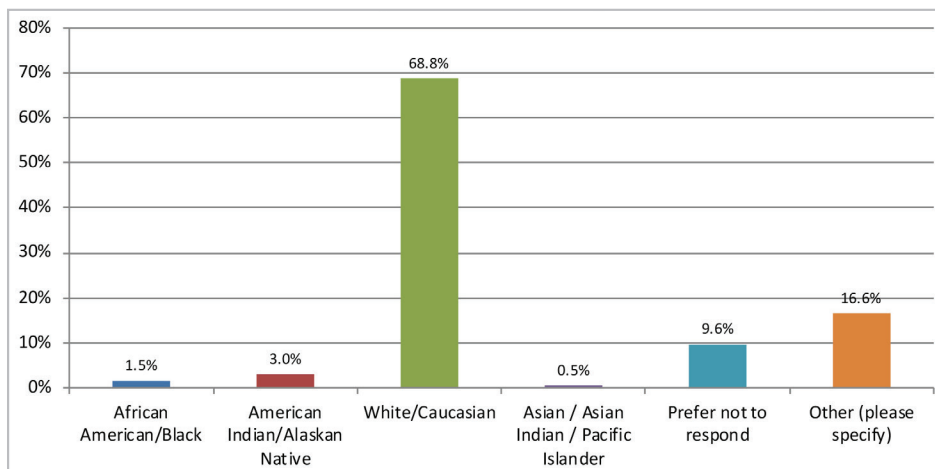
### Q27. Age



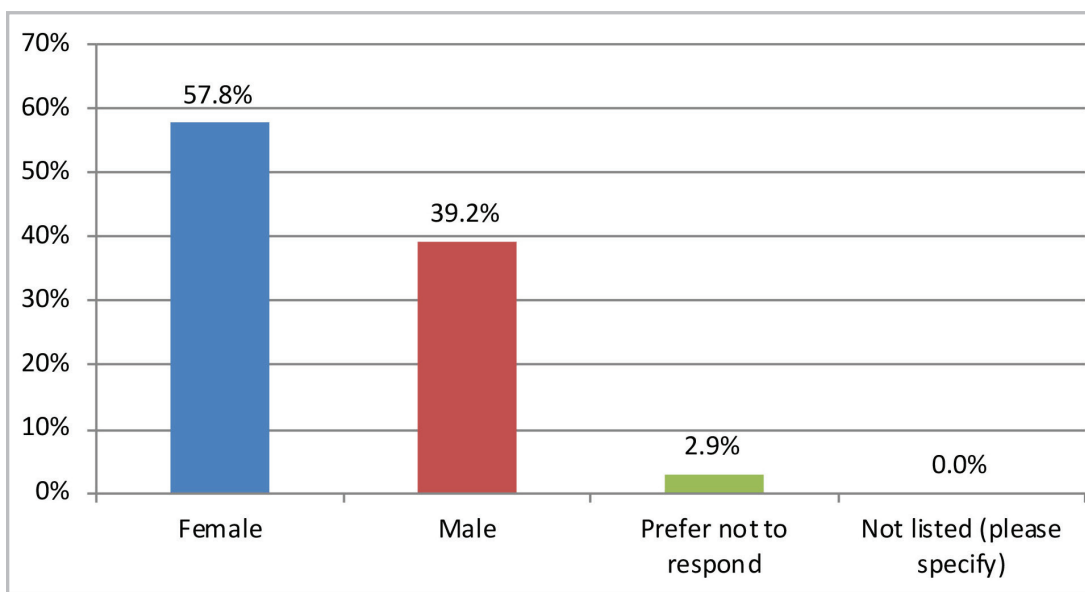
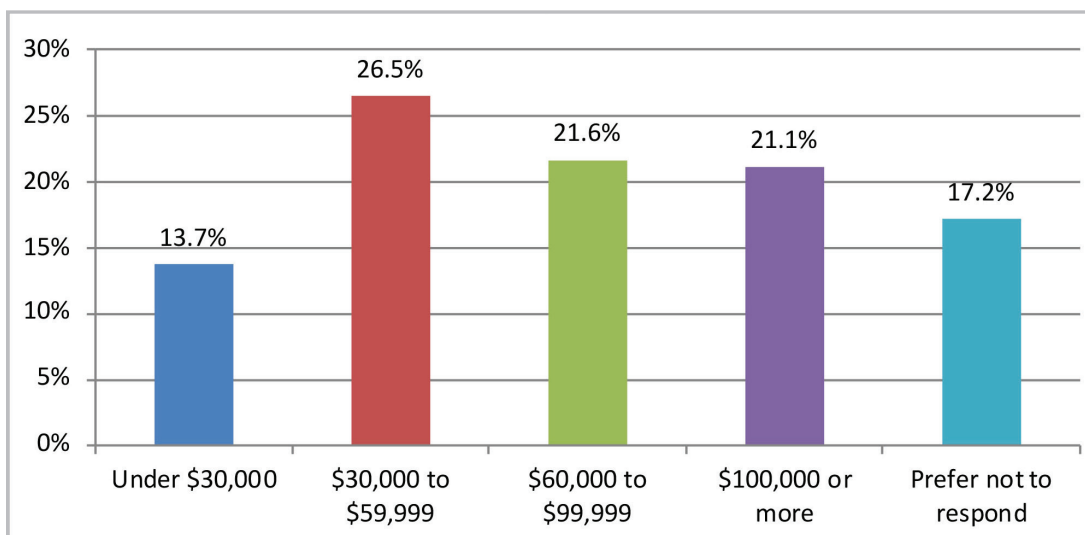
### Q28. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?



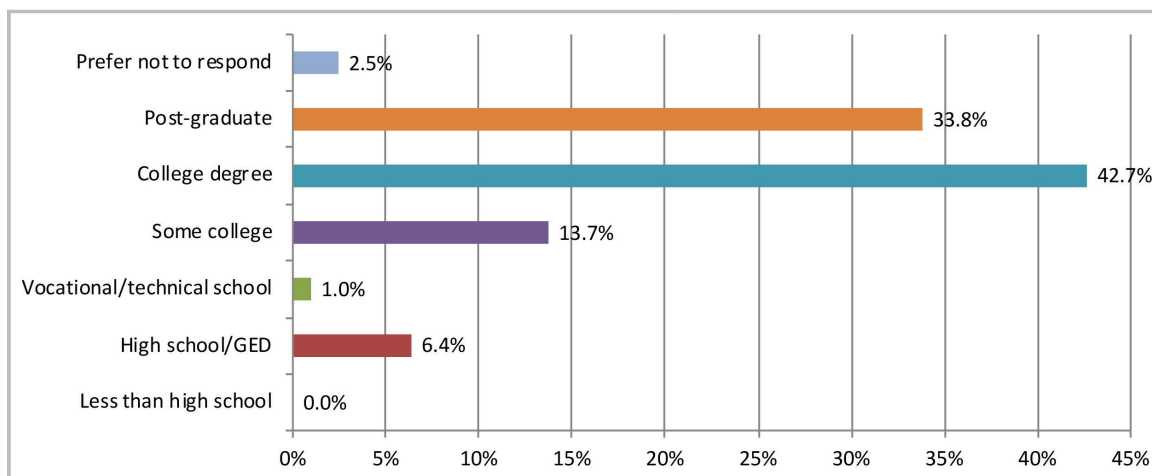
### Q29. Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity?



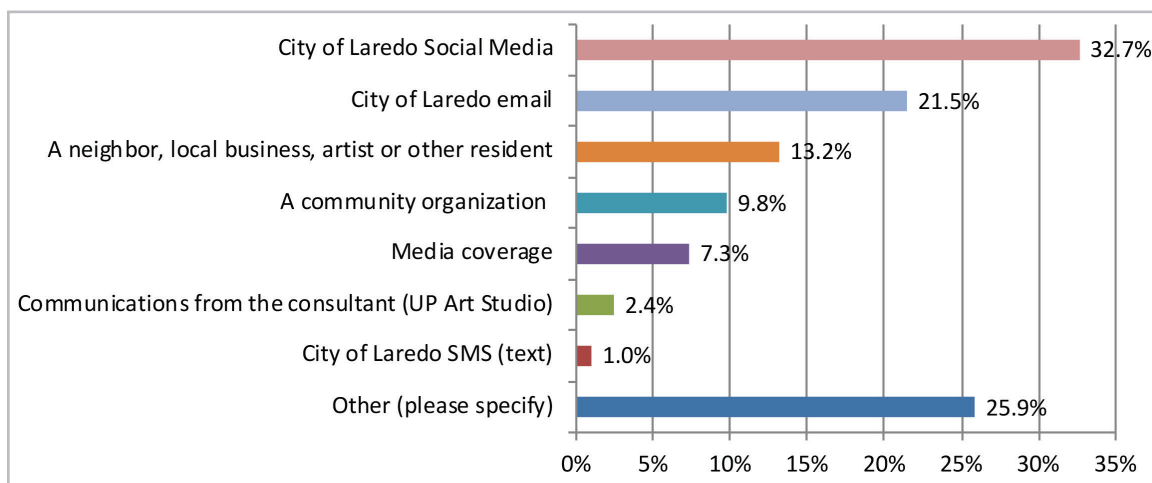


**Q30. Sex****Q31. Would you say your total household income is....**

### Q32. Grade Level Completed



### Q33. How did you hear about this survey?



#### Other (please specify)

- A friend shared link on Facebook (multiple)
- Alyssa Cigarroa Facebook post (multiple)
- Border Clay
- Church
- City Employee
- Cultivarte (multiple)
- Cultural district page
- Facebook (multiple)
- Fellow coworker art educator
- Friend (multiple)
- I received an e-mail from the COL Planning Department
- Instagram
- Involvement in community organizations
- Julio Mendez
- Laredo Center for the Arts
- Laredo Cultural District (multiple)
- Laredo Film Society
- My professor (multiple)
- School
- St Augustine High School
- TAMIU
- Work

## Appendix B. Public Art and Percent for Art Ordinance, City of Laredo City (Ordinance 2019-O-177)

### ORDINANCE NO. 2019-O-177

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF LAREDO, TEXAS, PROVIDING FOR THE LAREDO PUBLIC ART PROGRAM AND DELINEATING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SAME; AUTHORIZING THE ALLOCATION OF TWO PERCENT (2%) OF THE CONSTRUCTION COSTS OF ELIGIBLE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS FOR ART; ESTABLISHING CRITERIA FOR REVIEW OF SUITABLE CAPITAL PROJECTS AND ESTABLISHING A METHOD FOR CALCULATING ART APPROPRIATIONS FOR CAPITAL PROJECTS; PROVIDING FOR QUALIFICATIONS, TERM LIMITS, AND ADDITIONAL DUTIES FOR THE FINE ARTS AND CULTURE COMMISSION; PROVIDING THAT THIS ORDINANCE SHALL BE CUMULATIVE; PROVIDING A SEVERABILITY CLAUSE; AND DECLARING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

**WHEREAS**, the City of Laredo is a municipal corporation organized under the Constitution and the laws of the State of Texas and exercises the powers granted by the City's Charter and the provisions of Article XI, Section 5 of the Texas Constitution; and

**WHEREAS**, on April 11, 2017, the Laredo City Council moved to create the Fine Arts and Culture Commission; and

**WHEREAS**, the Laredo City Council recognizes public art can promote economic development by increasing tourism, business and tax revenues, and property values; and

**WHEREAS**, the Laredo City Council recognizes public art aids the beautification of the City and promotes community pride; and

**WHEREAS**, the Laredo City Council also recognizes that the inclusion of public art in appropriate capital improvement projects will promote the cultural heritage and artistic development of the city, enhance the city's character and identity, and expand the experience and participation of citizens with visual arts; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council recognizes that once art is placed throughout the City, it is necessary to provide for the ongoing maintenance of the City's art collection; and

**WHEREAS**, the Laredo City Council desires to establish a public art program, as well as provide funding for both acquisition and conservation of public art in the City of Laredo.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LAREDO, TEXAS THAT:**

**Section 1.** The City of Laredo Code of Ordinances, Chapter 17, Library, Article II, Administration, is hereby amended by adding a new Division 4 entitled "Public Art Program" to hereafter read as follows:

#### DIVISION 4. – Public Art Program

##### 17-41. – Purpose.

The intent of this division is to promote and encourage private and public programs to further the development and public awareness of, and interest in, the fine arts and cultural properties, to increase employment opportunities in the arts, to develop a tourism economy, to encourage the integration of art into the architecture of municipal structures for the City, and to provide for the citizens of the City high quality, publicly accessible works of art, which contribute to the urban landscape and symbolize the City's sense of place.

##### 17-42. - Definitions.

For this division, the following definitions apply:

- (a) "Capital Improvement Project" means any permanent public improvement project paid wholly or in part by monies appropriated by the city to construct, improve, or renovate a building, including its appurtenant facilities, a decorative or commemorative structure, a park, a street, a sidewalk, a parking facility, a utility, or any portion thereof, within the city limits or under the jurisdiction of the city.
- (b) "Conservation" or "Conservation Project" means the treatment of deteriorated or damaged artwork to approximate as nearly as possible its original form, design, color, and function with minimal further sacrifice of aesthetic and historic integrity.
- (c) "Conservation Plan" means that portion of the Public Art Program related to Conservation, including a prioritized list of Conservation Projects and a budget prepared and recommended by the Fine Arts and Culture Commission and the affected departments, and presented for the City Council for approval, describing all Conservation Projects to be started during a respective fiscal year, subject to available Public Art Program appropriations.
- (d) "Construction Cost" means the total City-funded portion of a Capital Improvement Project less Demolition Costs, Equipment Costs, Normal Major Maintenance Costs, and Real Property Acquisition Costs.
- (e) "Demolition Costs" means payments for any work needed for the removal of a building or other existing structure from city property.
- (f) "Equipment Costs" means payment for any rolling stock, equipment, or furnishing that is portable and of standard manufacture or that is installed as part of normal major maintenance, whether portable or affixed. The term does not include an item, whether portable or affixed, that is custom designed or specially fabricated for a facility.
- (g) "Maintenance" means actions taken by each city department to retard or prevent deterioration or damage to that portion of the public art collection under its control by controlling the environment and/or treating the structure to maintain such portion of the public art collection in as unchanging state as possible.
- (h) "Normal Major Maintenance Costs" means payments for any work needed to maintain and preserve city property in a safe and functional condition, including, but not limited to, the cleaning, replacement, and repair of floors, ceilings, roofs, landscaping, and plumbing, mechanical, and electrical systems.



- (i) “Public Art Account” means a separate account established within each capital improvement project fund by the city to receive monies appropriated to the public art program; provided that:
  - 1. City bond proceeds to be used for the public art program must be maintained in the respective bond funds established in accordance with the city ordinance authorizing the issuance of the bonds; and
  - 2. Monies from non-bond sources that are appropriated from a city fund to be used for the public art program must be maintained in a separate account within that fund.
- (j) “Public Art Administration Fund” means an annual appropriation from each public art account for administration of the public art program.
- (k) “Public Art Collection” means all city-owned works of art that are not under the care and control of nonprofit institutions operating under management agreements with the city.
- (l) “Public Art Master Plan” means a plan that reflects the City’s commitment to the public engagement process to develop policy that will enhance public spaces with art that reflects the culture of the community.
- (m) “Public Art Plan” means an annual prioritized list, to be recommended by the Fine Arts and Culture Commission and be approved by the City Council, of public art projects, including budgets, location, artist selection process and recommended design approaches, developed in consultation with city departments anticipating capital improvement projects.
- (n) “Public Art Program” means the process for administration, selection, approval, funding, acquisition, or commissioning of public works of art under this division.
- (o) “Real Property Acquisition Costs” means payment made for the purchase of parcels of land, and any existing building, structures, or improvements on the land, and costs incurred by the city for appraisals or negotiations in connection with the purchase.
- (p) “Work of Art” or “Artwork” means any public art project that is a work of visual art, including but not limited to, a drawing, painting, mural, fresco, sculpture, mosaic, photograph, work of calligraphy, work of graphic art (including an etching), works in clay, textile, fiber, wood, metal, plastic, glass, stone, concrete, and like materials, or mixed media (including a collage, assemblage, or any combination of the foregoing art media). For projects that involve no structure, a work of art may include a combination of landscaping and landscape design (including some natural and manufactured materials such as rocks, fountains, reflecting pools, sculptures, screens, benches, and other types of streetscapes). A work of art may include an artist participating in master planning, conceptual development, design development, construction drawings, or construction oversight for any municipal project. Except as provided herein, the term “work of art” or “artwork” excludes the performing arts of dance, music, theatre, or the literary arts, unless expressed in or combined with a work of visual art or design.

#### 17-43. - Funding

- (a) Capital Improvement Projects shall include an amount for works of art equal to two percent (2%) of the construction costs available for the project whether funded by general obligation bonds, revenue bonds or certificates of obligation, but shall not include capital acquisitions; provided, however, that if the bond election ordinance, the bond ordinance authorizing the revenue bonds, other appropriate laws or regulations, or an official interpretation by the State

Attorney General regarding allowable uses of funds which it is providing for the project precludes art as an expenditure of funds, the amount of funds so restricted shall be excluded from the total funding available in calculating the amount to be committed to works of art.

- (b) Method of Calculation: The amount to be appropriated for artists' services and artworks is equal to the total capital improvement project construction costs multiplied by 0.02; provided that amounts budgeted for financing costs, costs paid for from the contingency reserve fund, capital reserve funds, or interest earnings on city bond proceeds, costs of any below-grade water, wastewater or stormwater improvements, and costs of resurfacing or repair of existing streets, sidewalks, and appurtenant drainage improvements are not subject to the calculation.
- (c) The appropriation for the public art program will be calculated only on the original appropriation for design and construction services, excluding any subsequent amounts appropriated for amendments and change orders.
- (d) In order to ensure that works of art have sufficient public visibility and impact, funds generated from the various Capital Improvements Projects, if allowed by law, may be pooled or aggregated together and utilized for one or more large works of art as recommended by the Fine Arts and Culture Commission and upon approval by the City Council.
- (e) If not otherwise prohibited by law, monies appropriated as part of one project, but not deemed necessary by the City Council in total or in part for the project, may be expended on other projects approved under the public art plan; provided that proceeds from bonds issued and authorized for a particular use or purpose shall not be used or diverted for a different use or purpose.
- (f) Funds generated pursuant to this Section shall be budgeted as part of the Capital Improvements Program budget. Additional private or public contributions for works of art may be added to these funds and shall be budgeted in a similar manner. Such contributions may be earmarked for particular projects. A fund or funds will be established within the Library Department for the Public Arts Program. Funds will be administered by the Director of the Library Department.
- (g) The City Manager, or his/her designee, shall establish appropriate accounting procedures for the public art program and shall report to the City Council periodically regarding the amounts appropriated, encumbered and expended under the program.

#### 17-44. - Use of Monies in Public Arts Accounts

- (a) Monies appropriated under this Division may be used for artists' design concepts and for the selection, acquisition, purchase, commissioning, placement, installation, exhibition, and display of works of art. Funds shall not be used for professional graphics, mass produced work or work not produced by an approved artist.
- (b) Monies appropriated under this Division may also be used for costs and expenses of a conservation project included in the conservation plan. Such costs and expenses may include, but are not limited to fees, costs and/or expenses for: assessment of condition and conservation needed for a work of art included in the public art collection; conservation of a work of art, including conservation fees and expenses; and preparation of a condition report and method of treatment.
- (c) An artist or artist team will be contracted for the commissioning or purchase of art. Progress payments may be made to the artist for works of art that have been recommended by the Fine



Arts and Culture Commission and approved by the City Council. Such payments may reimburse the artist for the cost of materials. The City may negotiate a final payment to the artist or artist team that will be withheld until the completion of the work. The final payment shall be no less than fifteen percent (15%). If feasible, and if the law allows, the City may negotiate a payment of up to twenty percent (20%) of the total project cost to the artist once the contract is signed for the purchase of material, design work, or labor.

- (d) To the extent practical, artist selection should be concurrent with selection of the architect or designer to ensure integration of the work of art into the project architecture.
- (e) No more than fifteen percent (15%) of the total annual public art appropriation may be expended for the administrative costs of the Public Art Program. Examples of administrative costs include, but are not limited to, project administration, artist-selection related costs, architect's fees where collaboration is involved, design, drawing, and maquette costs, community education, insurance, curatorial services, identifying plaques, documentation, publicity, and such other purposes as may be deemed appropriate by the City Council for the administration of the public art program.

#### 17-45. - Administration

- (a) The City hereby designates the Director of the Library Department to administer the Public Art Program including appropriate staffing and administrative support of the program, subject to budget appropriations approved by the City Council.
- (b) In alignment with the Public Arts Master Plan, its goals and policies, implementation guidelines, and any of its updates, the Fine Arts and Culture Commission, acting in cooperation with the Library Director, shall have the following duties and responsibilities associated with the administration of the public art program:
  1. Submit an annual Public Art Plan in alignment with the Public Arts Master Plan to the City Council for approval. The public art plan shall include new projects to be initiated in the following fiscal year, and shall describe the planned location, proposed budget, timetable and artist selection process for each project; as well as updates on public art projects in progress.
  2. Recommend written regulations as are necessary to carry out the purpose of this Division. The regulations shall include, but not be limited to, criteria for the selection of artists and works of art.
  3. Make recommendations regarding the establishment of program policies and guidelines and the budget of the public art program.
  4. Develop an annual report to be presented the City Council setting forth the prior year's Public Art Program activities, including a detailed accounting of expenditures of the Public Art Program and administrative expenses related thereto.
  5. Make recommendations regarding the commission of works of art, the review of the design, placement of the works of art, and the removal of works of art from the public art collection.
  6. Make recommendations regarding the designation of sites for the implementation of the public art program, the determination of the scope of public art projects, and the oversight of the artist selection process.

7. Review of a survey of the condition of the public art collection. The survey must include a report on the condition of each artwork, prioritized recommendations for the restoration, repair, and maintenance of the artwork, and estimated costs.
8. Make recommendations on an annual designation of funds for repair and maintenance of the public art collection.
9. Make recommendations on additional sources of public funds for the public art program; provided, however, that any such public funding shall be subject to approval by the City Council and to the City's financial review and control.
10. Examine all works of art or designs or models of same that are proposed for permanent or long-term placement on City property or that are to become the property of the City by purchase, gift or otherwise (other than those works to be placed in a museum or gallery), and make recommendations to the Mayor and City Council for the proposed location and suitability of such works of art.
11. Recommend policies and guidelines to ensure the long-term collection of works of art by the city represents a broad range of artistic schools, styles, tastes and media, without giving exclusive support to any particular one.
12. Make recommendations for programs and activities to educate the community on the public art program and further the development and public awareness of art in public places.

Section 17-46. – Selection Process.

- (a) The Fine Arts and Culture Commission may assemble Artist Selection Panels to review proposals and recommend artists to the Fine Arts and Culture Commission. The Fine Arts and Culture Commission will review the recommendations and create the annual public art plan to be presented to the City Council for review and approval.
- (b) For works of art that are commissioned and are listed in the annual public art plan, Artists will be selected by the approved artist selection process stated in the annual public art plan in accordance with the written regulations for the criteria for selection of artists and works of art.
- (c) For all works of art, the Fine Arts and Culture Commission shall consult with the department that oversees the site where the work of art will be located and involve them in the artist and art selection process in the manner that appears most feasible.

Section 17-47. - Selected Works of Art.

- (a) The work of art shall be an integral part of the project or be placed in, at, or near the project or other city property.
- (b) Any work of art that is chosen must comply with the following standards in addition to any regulation, guidelines, and timetables recommended by the Fine Arts and Culture Commission and approved by the City Council for the public art program:
  - a. Works of art funded by general obligation bonds, revenue bonds, or certificates of obligation shall have a permanence of at least comparable to the lifetime of the project and shall be likely to remain a thing of value for this time period. Works of art funded from other sources may be permanent or temporary.



- b. The work of art must be located in a public place with visibility and impact.
- c. The work of art shall enhance the environment of the City of Laredo.

Section 17-48.- Ownership and maintenance of works of art.

- (a) The City shall have absolute, unrestricted rights incidental to its full ownership of the final artistic work to alter, change, modify, destroy, remove, move, replace, transport, or transfer in whole or in part, the final artistic work when the City deems necessary within its discretion in order to exercise the City's powers and responsibilities in regard to public works and improvements, in furtherance of the City's operations or for any other good cause. The artist may retain copyright and other intellectual property rights in and to the final design and the final artistic work itself. The Artist shall grant to the City a perpetual, irrevocable license to graphically depict or display the final artistic work for any non-commercial purpose whatsoever.
- (b) Maintenance of works of art shall be the responsibility of the City department having jurisdiction over the work of art included in the city collection; provided, however, that such maintenance activities shall not include Conservation of the Public Art Collection. Such maintenance shall comply with any contractual obligations, if any, which may have been entered into upon the acquisition of the work of art.
- (c) The City may request as part of the contract process that the artist or artist team include maintenance provisions that includes repairs. The artist, or artist team, will also be required to provide a maintenance manual.

Secs. 17-49 – 17.50. – Reserved.

**Section 2.** The City of Laredo Code of Ordinances, Chapter 2, Administration, Article V, Boards, Commissions, Councils, etc., Division V, is hereby amended to hereafter read as follows:

Sec. 2-240. – Created; composition, qualifications, and term limits.

- (a) The Fine Arts and Culture Commission is hereby created.
- (b) The Fine Arts and Culture Commission shall be comprised of nine (9) voting members who shall reside in the city, and who shall be appointed by the mayor and city council.
- (c) Each member shall be appointed based upon their professional competence and experience in the arts and culture and may include concerned members of the public.
- (d) At least two-thirds of the members appointed by the city council will be required to demonstrate an expertise, or experience in the following areas and professional fields: performing arts, visual arts, media or literary arts, arts education, architecture or landscape architecture, visitor industry, galleries and arts businesses, marketing and public relations and organizational or strategic planning. At least three of these persons shall demonstrate experience, education, or expertise in art history. Such persons shall submit a written statement to the city manager or designee detailing the requisite knowledge or experience.
- (e) Individuals appointed pursuant to this section may be artists, business owners, professional consultants, architects, design professionals and other professionals.
- (f) To avoid possible conflicts of interest in administering the mission of the Fine Arts and Culture

Commission and the distribution of funds by or through the City of Laredo, a nominee for appointment to the Fine Arts and Culture Commission shall not be an officer or board member of any local organization that is receiving or applying for city funding.

- (g) The members of the Fine Arts and Culture Commission will serve staggered terms that will coincide with the term of the appointing member of the City Council. The Fine Arts and Culture Commission members may not serve more than two consecutive terms.
- (h) The initial terms of the members nominated by the Mayor and Councilmembers 1, 2, 3, and 6 shall run through October 31, 2018. The initial terms of the members nominated by Councilmembers 4, 5, 7, and 8 shall run through October 31, 2020. Thereafter, all terms shall be four years, except for appointments made to fill vacancies occurring during any term, which shall be for the remainder of the unexpired term.

Sec. 2-241. – Duties and Powers

- (a) The Fine Arts and Culture Commission will make recommendations to city council for the expenditure of city hotel occupancy funds for the promotion of the arts, including instrumental and vocal music, dance, drama, folk art, creative writing, architecture, design and allied fields, painting, sculpture, photography, graphic and craft arts, motion pictures, radio, television, tape and sound recording, and other arts related to the presentation, performance, execution, and exhibition of these major art forms.
- (b) The Fine Arts and Culture Commission shall advise the City Council on matters pertaining to, but not limited to, the arts funding program and public art programming in accordance with Section 17-45 of the Code of Ordinances.
- (c) [(b)] The Fine Arts and Culture Commission is expressly authorized to:
  - 1) actively solicit interest in the submission of applications from qualified individuals, groups and companies for funding for permanent display art. “Permanent display art” includes sculpture, painting, or similar art work that is intended for permanent display for a period of more than one year;
  - 2) make recommendations to the city council for fine arts and culture programs to be offered at city recreation centers and city events;
  - 3) develop guidelines and curriculums for fine arts and culture programs to be offered at city recreation centers and city events;
  - 4) develop and adopt procedural guidelines for evaluating funding applications; and
  - 5) make recommendations to city council for permanent display art, including recommendations made independently of funding applications.
  - 6) Establish standing and special committees, including artist selection panels, as needed to support the Commission’s activities.
- (d) [(e)] With respect to applications for funding for permanent display art, the Fine Arts and Culture Commission will make recommendations to city council for awards of funding and proposed locations. The city council will make the final decision on funding and locations for permanent display art.

**Section 3.** This ordinance shall be cumulative of all provisions of ordinances of the City of


Laredo Texas, except where the provisions of this ordinance are in direct conflict with the provisions of such ordinances, in which event the conflicting provisions of such ordinances are hereby repealed.

**Section 4.** It is hereby declared to be the intention of the City Council that the phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs and sections of this ordinance are severable, and if any phrase, clause, sentence, paragraph or section of this ordinance shall be declared unconstitutional by the valid judgment or decree of any court of competent jurisdiction, such unconstitutionality shall not affect any of the remaining phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs and sections of this ordinance, since the same would have been enacted by the City Council without the incorporation in this ordinance of any such unconstitutional phrase, clause, sentence, paragraph or section.


**Section 5.** The publishers of the City Code of Laredo, Texas are authorized to amend said code to reflect the changes adopted herein and to correct typographical errors and to index, format and number paragraphs to conform to the existing code.

**Section 6.** This Ordinance shall become effective immediately upon passage.

PASSED BY THE CITY COUNCIL AND APPROVED BY THE MAYOR ON THIS  
21 DAY OF October 2019.

  
 PETE SAENZ  
 MAYOR

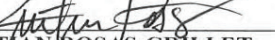
ATTESTED:

  
 JOSE A. VALDEZ, JR.  
 CITY SECRETARY



APPROVED AS TO FORM:

KRISTINA K. LAUREL HALE  
 CITY ATTORNEY

BY:   
 CRISTIAN ROSAS-GRILLET  
 ASSISTANT CITY ATTORNEY







## Appendix C. City Departments: Engagement Process and Survey Results

Throughout the master planning and community engagement process, discussions were had with city staff across departments, including Airport, Community Development, Convention & Visitors Bureau, Engineering, Environmental Services, Parks & Recreation, and Finance.

1. City Department:	Community Dev.	Convention & Visitor Bureau	El Metro Transit	Engineering
2. Individual completing survey (Name and title):	Tina Martinez, Director	Aileen Ramos	Claudia San Miguel- General Manager	Ramon E. Chavez, P.E., City Engineer
3. What is your department's level of interest in seeing the City of Laredo develop a citywide public art collection?	Medium	High	Medium	High
4. Does the mission of your department include placemaking – that is, the creation of thoughtfully designed public spaces that make Laredo more attractive, walkable, and welcoming to all people?	No	Yes	No	Yes
5. How often does your department staff consult the goals and policies of the city's comprehensive plan, Viva Laredo, in planning and implementing its CIP projects and other programs?	Continuously	Occasionally	Continuously	Continuously
6. In the past 5 years, has your department had any role or involvement in public art projects?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

Additionally, the Master Plan consultant sent a survey to a representative for each involved city department. The chart below includes the departmental information collected through the survey. All City Departments were repeatedly requested and reminded to complete and return the survey; those not shown were non-responsive by the deadline provided.

<b>Environmental &amp; Solid Waste Services</b>	<b>Human Resources</b>	<b>Laredo International Airport</b>	<b>Library</b>	<b>Police</b>	<b>Public Works Dept.</b>	<b>Utilities</b>
John Porter	Melina Bermudez, HR Director	Ashley Garcia	Maria G. Soliz	Manuel J Maciel, Asst. Chief	John E. Orfila, Jr.	Arturo Garcia, Jr., P.E., Director
High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	High
Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Continuously	Rarely	Occasionally	Rarely	Occasionally	Continuously	Continuously
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

If Yes to the question above, please answer questions 7 - 12. If no, please go to question 13.

City Department:	7. Please describe the project(s), including artwork type, location, associated infrastructure or city land, and year, etc.	8. How was your department involved?
Community Development	Our department included a Mural as part of the rehabilitation work on a city building that added elderly affordable housing.	The Rehabilitation work was funded with our CDBG grant and we assisted with the selection of the mural and artist.
Convention & Visitor Bureau	We consistently promote the different artwork around the city to our potential visitors.	Advertising and promotion
Engineering	1. Mural located on Bartlett Avenue near Saunders Avenue 2. Abrazo mural located on the Rialto Hotel 3. Mural located on the Martha Narvaez apartments on 820 Convent Avenue	Permit and contract
Environmental & Solid Waste Services	Public art in Storm Water Detention facilities such as NCP, Zacate Creek, and Independence Hills Park	Funded and managed through Keep Laredo Beautiful
Human Resources	HR specifically Risk handles the insurance and liability portion of the art projects. We do not handle scope, selection or implementation.	Please see above.
Laredo International Airport	Military Dedication Mural, Airport Terminal, 2020	The mural is located in the passenger terminal 2nd floor with seating area for departure flights.
Library	Library Department has served as liaison for the Fine Arts & Culture Commission since 2018. Administered the Mural Arts Grant Program 2018-2019: 1) Mural by Gilberto Rocha, 2121 Travis (private property) 2) Mural by Mauro Martinez, 1600 Water St. Laredo, Texas 78040 (private property)	Coordinated the process: call for artist/ request for proposals, artist selection by Commission, recommendation to City Council, worked with other city departments (e.g. purchasing for request for proposals, requisitions, etc., attorney for artist contracts, accounts payable for artist payments, engineering for verification of project completion, PIO for artist press event after murals were done)
Public Works Dept.	Birds Of Paradise	Preparing for artist.
Utilities	Art work and murals at Parks.	Paid for the art work.

NOTE: El Metro and Police skipped questions 7 - 12.

9. What worked well in the process?	10. What issues or questions did you encounter? Is there anything you would change about the process or approach?	11. Was your department satisfied with the final installation?	12. What maintenance issues, or unintended consequences, are after the artwork was installed?
it worked well to include this as part of the rehabilitation/ construction contract	The process was a little hard for a new artist to understand.	yes mural came out great	we have not experienced maintenance issues yet; but we do expect there to be additional cost to maintain this artwork and at that time the feasibility will be measured.
Having more artwork creates different options for attractions	Sometimes we don't know of the projects until the ribbon cutting or don't have all the info	N/A	N/A
There was an established agreement	Issues included not guidelines provide. Create an art committee to approve art.	Yes	None so far
Public participation and interest.	No issues.	Yes	None.
The process for waivers, liability and insurances must be improved as Risk is usually the last to know about these issues.		HR/Risk is happy to support in any way possible.	From a Risk perspective, there are sometimes claims filed against the City when appropriate safety measures are not taken.
	Airport worked with the Laredo Public Library and its historical archives to showcase images of the Laredo Air Force Base.	Yes, Airport was very satisfied with final look.	
This was a learning process as it was the first time for the City.	Although the whole City Council approved the art and artists selected, one City Council member was not happy with the mural that went up in his district. Perhaps advice the Council member about the artist and art work selected before it goes before the whole Council.	Yes.	None to date.
Coordination	No	Yes	None
Communication of the proposed art work.	Developing a realistic budget.	Yes	Aging of the art work.



City Department:	Convention & Visitor Bureau	Environmental & Solid Waste Services	Laredo International Airport	Police
13. Does the department have staff members who are knowledgeable and experienced in issues related to creating and maintaining a municipal public art collection?	No	No	No	No
14. What level of training and support will your department staff need, in order to successfully incorporate public art into its Capital Improvement Program? (select all that apply)				
Training about public art and the goals of the Laredo Public Art Master Plan	X	X	X	X
Continuing Professional Development (e.g. for Project Managers and Program Managers)	X		X	
Training in artwork maintenance standards, practices, and procedures	X			
Project coordination and administration (e.g. from Public Art Program staff)	X	X		
Consultant with expertise in public art projects	X		X	
15. Is it likely that your department can provide some dedicated funding from its annual budget for public artworks, beyond the 2% Percent for Art applicable to the CIP program?	Yes potentially to fund the person in charge of the program	Yes, but funding is likely to be no more than \$10,000/ year	Unsure	No
16. Is your department willing and able to provide staff expertise and services for the installation of municipal public artworks? For example, cross-departmental assistance may be required with planning, permitting, traffic control, public safety, etc.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
17. City departments typically are responsible for the ongoing maintenance and conservation of their projects, including the artworks incorporated into their facilities and capital improvements. Is your department currently resourced to take on its ongoing public art maintenance responsibility?	No	No	Unsure	No
18. Would your department staff be available, upon request, to advise private developers who are seeking to incorporate public artwork into development project requiring city approvals?	Yes	Yes	Unsure	Yes
19. Is it likely that your department would embrace a leadership role in creating a signature work of public art, on a city site, facility, or new building within the next five years?	Yes	Yes	Unsure	Unsure

Library	Community Development	Utilities	Human Resources	Public Works Dept.	Engineering Department	El Metro Transit
No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
	X	X	X	X	X	X
	X		X		X	
X	X		X		X	
X	X		X		X	X
	X		X		X	
No	No	Unsure	No	No	Yes	No
Unsure	Unsure	Unsure	Unsure	Yes	Yes	Yes
No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Unsure	No	Unsure	No	No	Unsure	Unsure
Unsure	Unsure	Unsure	Yes	Unsure	No	Yes

**20. Which of the following eligible Project Types are included in your departmental CIP plan and program? (Check all that apply.)**

City Department (NOTE: Only the departments that responded to this section are shown.)	Environmental & Solid Waste Services	Laredo International Airport
Transportation: Airport		X
Transportation: Streets		
Transportation: Traffic		
Transportation: Transit		
Transportation: TxDOT		
Utility Improvements: Water (Buildings and other above-ground facilities only)		
Utility Improvements: Wastewater (Buildings and other above-ground facilities only)		
Cultural and Recreation: Library		
Cultural and Recreation: Parks		
Public Works: Environmental Services	X	
Public Works: Solid Waste	X	
Public Works: Streets		
Community Development (CDBG): Sidewalks		
Community Development (CDBG): Park Improvements		
Community Development (CDBG): Bike Lanes		
Community Development (CDBG): Other		

NOTE: CVB, El Metro, Police, and Human Resources skipped question 20.

... My vision for public art in Laredo is work that still has its historic roots as a tex-mex city AND is simultaneously contemporary, modern, and/or perhaps abstract.

— Anonymous Survey Respondent

Library	Community Development	Utilities	Public Works Dept.	Engineering
				X
			X	X
			X	X
				X
				X
		X		X
		X		X
X				
				X
			X	X
			X	X
			X	X
	X		X	X
	X		X	X
			X	X
	X		X	X





**21. CIP Project Information: High-Potential for Public Art**

For projects included in the City's current 5-year CIP Plan, for which you are the department of record, please identify specific projects that have strong potential to be enhanced with public art.

In making this determination, please refer to the evaluation criteria below. Evaluation criteria:

- Public visibility of site
- Site in/near Downtown, or historic district
- Significant building, that can contribute to civic pride
- Improves a public space that people use daily
- Improves a major street, streetscape, or park
- Project includes landscaping and/or potential public gathering space
- Site/building can have positive impact on economic development or tourism
- Project contributes to advancing equity across Districts
- Site has special significance/meaning to the community and visitors

City Department (NOTE: Only the departments that responded to this section are shown.)	Environmental & Solid Waste Services
Project 1 Name	Riverbend Ecosystem visitors center
Project 1 Site	Riverbend
Project 1 Construction Budget	~\$500,000
Project 2 Name	
Project 2 Site	
Project 2 Construction Budget	

**22. Existing City Facilities: Strong Public Art Potential. We are also seeking to identify high-priority sites not included in the department's CIP program.** By ordinance, city funds also may be used for civic artwork sited in visible and significant places around Laredo. Referencing the eligibility criteria above, please list 8-10 other city-owned buildings, facilities, or land parcels that offer strong potential as public art sites.

Facility 1 Name	Environmental Services Department Green Wall
Facility 1 Site/Location	619 Reynolds
Facility 1 Comments	out for bids
Facility 2 Name	
Facility 2 Site/Location	
Facility 2 Comments	
Facility 3 Name	
Facility 3 Site/Location	
Facility 3 Comments	
<b>23. FY 2023</b>	
Project 1 Name	
Project 1 Site	
Project 1 Construction Budget	
<b>24. FY 2024</b>	
Project 1 Name	
<b>25. FY 2025</b>	
Project 1 Name	

Library	Engineering
San Isidro Branch Library	Clark Boulevard Beautification Project
District 6	Clark Boulevard from Seymour Avenue to Arkansas Avenue
3,855,000 (City Council Request, Unfunded)	\$250,000
	Canseco House Site Improvements
	1415 Chihuahua Street
	\$275,000

McKendrick Ochoa Salinas Branch Library	Convention & Visitor Bureau
1920 Palo Blanco (Council District 2)	101 Salinas Avenue
	Building & Planning Department
	1413 Houston Street
	El Metro Transit Center
	1301 Farragut Street

	Sports Complex Venue
	Cuatro Vientos Road and Lomas del Sur Boulevard
	\$32,000,000

	Manadas WWTP Expansion
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	Transit Operations & Maintenance Facility
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## Appendix D. Annual Report 2020, Public Art Program

(incorporating Mid-Year Report, 2021)

### Public Art Program

City of Laredo, Texas

Presented to the Fine Arts and Culture Commission  
By Maria Soliz, Library Director  
June 16, 2021

***Approved by Commission Vote***

### I. Public Art Program Activities

#### Fine Arts and Culture Commission

Biannual Reports for January-June 2020 and July-December 2020 containing agendas and minutes of each meeting were provided to City Council on July 2020 and January 2021 respectively. Below are summaries of Key Activities for the year as well as a Mid-Year update for 2021.

#### Key Activities: January 2020 to June 2020

The Commission called three (3) meetings in total during this time. Meetings were suspended in March, April, and May due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The June meeting was a hybrid, with some Commission members joining the meeting in person and some via WebEx.

During these meetings, the Commission received a copy of the Semi-Annual Committee Report to the Mayor and City Council (July 2019 –December 2019).

The Commission also received regular status reports on the various ongoing city murals

(the Martha C. Narvaez City Hall Apartment's mural, the North Central Park Mural and the Zacate Creek Mural), as well as on the Yo-Yo Ma Day of Action art tiles and the City of Laredo Poet Laureate Program. At their June meeting, the Commission voted to extend the deadline for Poet Laureate applications to October 31, 2020.

The following presentations were made to the Commission:

- City Attorney Ricardo Benavides on the Fine Arts Ordinance.
- Shelley Laurent and Celina Vallarta on the Canseco Mosaic Mural
- Melissa Cigarroa, Eddie Garza and Trisha Cortez from RGISC on the Deconstructing Walls Mural
- Roxanne Pena of LearnThink Media on their past summer film camp and film festival
- Blasita Lopez of Keep Laredo Beautiful on the Public Art Installation at North Central Park/Manadas Creek. Two FA&CC members were selected to review and score the artist applications along with KLB Board members.

At their February meeting the Commission formed a sub-group of four (4) Commission members to meet to discuss ideas and gather information for the Public Arts Master Plan (no meetings were held as all in person meetings were canceled). The Commission was informed at their June meeting that the City Council had voted to equally divide the funds

from the Public Arts Ordinance among the Council districts and that Council Members Dr. Marte Martinez and George Altgelt would like their share to be used to develop a Public Arts Master Plan.

## Key Activities: July 2020 to December 2020

Six (6) meetings were conducted via WebEx due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Only one (1) meeting did not meet quorum. Ms. Angie Moore submitted her resignation on October 14, 2020. She was Council Member District VI, Dr. Marte Martinez's appointment.

During these regular meetings the Commission received a copy of the Semi-Annual Committee Report to the Mayor and City Council (January 2020 –June 2020).

Two of the Commission members, Mrs. Gayle Aker Rodriguez and Mr. Julio Mendez, served on the selection committee for three Keep Laredo Beautiful public art installations at the North Central Park/Manadas Creek. The artists selected were Ms. Elizabeth Hinojosa, Ms. Victoria Marquez and Mr. Francisco "Poncho" Farias. Rodriguez also served on the Public Arts Master Plan selection committee. Three proposals were evaluated and the top three consultants were interviewed via WebEx. UP Art Studio LLC, Houston, Texas was selected.

The Commission received information on various ongoing art projects:

- Celebrating 100 years of Women's Rights Virtual Art Contest - Sponsored by the City of Laredo and Council Member Nelly Vielma. Commission Members Mrs. Gayle Aker Rodriguez and Mr. Julio Mendez served on the selection committee for this contest.
- The Domestic Violence Awareness Month Virtual Art Contest - Sponsored by the Webb County Domestic Violence Coalition and Council Member Nelly Vielma. The Commission was asked to help get the word out about this contest.
- The Clark Boulevard Mural Project - Council Member Alberto Torres, District IV used his share (2%) of the funds from the Public Arts Ordinance and selected artist Ms. Sandra Gonzalez.

The Commission had a presentation from Carmen Garcia Arevalo from the Laredo Regional Food Bank to consider a possible mural project on its building. The Commission agreed to reach out to Council Member Roberto Balli, District VIII regarding possible funding for this mural. The Commission also finalized the process on the City of Laredo Poet Laureate Program and selected Mrs. Rosa Maria C. De Llano as the City of Laredo Poet Laureate.

## Mid-Year 2021 Update

New appointments to the Fine Arts and Cultural Commission:

- Council Member, Ruben Gutierrez Jr., District V, appointed Rosario (Rosie) Santos
- Council Member, Dr. Marte Martinez, District VI, appointed Gayle Aker Rodriguez
- Council Member, Vanessa Perez, District VII, appointed Carlos Abraham Flores
- Council Member, Mercurio Martinez, III, District VIII, appointed Armando Lopez
- Council Member, Alyssa Cigarroa, District VIII, is pending an appointment
- Mayor Pete Saenz is pending an appointment to replace Yolanda Gutierrez Garcia who forfeited her appointment.

The Commission has elected new officers. Mr. Armando Lopez as the new Chair and Ms. Rosie Santos is the new Co-Chair.



**The Commission received the following presentations and information on ongoing city projects:**

New murals painted on the Main Library's tower walls. This project was initiated by Council Member Nelly Vielma before the City of Laredo Art in Public Places Policy was approved. The Art in Public Places Policy was approved on December 7, 2020. The murals were painted by local artist, Abel Gonzalez and depict portraits of Hispanic authors: Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, Miguel de Cervantes, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Isabel Allende, Sandra Cisneros, and Rodolfo Anaya on each side of the tower walls.

Keep Laredo Beautiful Central Park Mural "Waves" by Victoria Marquez was completed. This was one of three art projects at North Central Park.

The Commission received a presentation by Cultivarte Laredo on V-Air, a virtual at-home artist in-residence program. Ms. Maritz Bautista, Director of Programs and Regina Portillo, Co-Founder of Cultivarte presented the information.

Blasita Lopez and Lucia Macias, TAMIU student intern with Keep Laredo Beautiful (KLB) informed the Commission that they recently applied for a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts under the Grants for Arts Project category – Local Arts Agencies. The grant was submitted under the City of Laredo as the umbrella application and the Fine Arts and Culture Commission was named as the local arts agency. The grant was for \$20,000 from the NEA with an equal match from the City of Laredo Environmental Services Department KLB and the Parks and Recreation Department. KLB already has a commission in place at Manadas Creek at North Central Park with Artist Ms. Elizabeth Hinojosa. Ms. Hinojosa is currently working on a sculpture, Lady of the Water, an environmentally conscious regal commanding figure feeding water and giving life to the community; inspiring the public to take care of our waterways. The idea is to continue working with Ms. Hinojosa to create other sculptures that can be placed throughout the park to create a sculpture garden.

The Commission was informed of the scheduled activities for the Laredo Poet Laureate, Rosa Maria C. De Llano. Mrs. De Llano has started offering virtual workshops and has schedule one workshop per month with the theme corresponding to each month's holiday or celebration.

The Commission was given an update on the second of the three KLB murals at North Central Park. This mural by artist Francisco Farias has been completed and is located at the Chimayo Section of the Park.

The Commission was informed of two new upcoming art projects: 1) Carlos Ramirez, Jr. dba Sketch 83 media for \$9,900 for a mural at the Sisters of Mercy Water Park. Funds were available in the 2019 CO Bond from the Public Arts Allocation for District II and 2) Artist Antonio Briones, III was commissioned to do mural at the City of Laredo Inner City Pool. The mural will be a tribute to the Carrizo Comecrudo Native Americans that once lived on these lands.

UP Art Studio, consultant, has provided monthly presentations to the Commission on the ongoing progress to finalize the Public Arts Master Plan.

## II. Accounting of Expenditures

In June 2020, City Council voted on the use of the \$336,000 “2% for Art” allocation from the Certificates of Obligation bond program for FY2021. Attached is an accounting of the use of the funds provided by the Finance Department, as of June 3, 2021.

City Council voted to establish the following budget and process for spending the monies:

- \$10,000 to Rio Grande International Studies Center (matching grant funds)
- The remainder was split equally among the districts, for public art projects in each district, to be directed by the Council Office.
- No funding was allocated for Program Administration or Public Art Project Administration by the City Council. Therefore, it was not spent on administration.
- Council Member Dr. Marte Martinez and Council Member George Altgelt collectively allocated \$60,000 from their districts’ portion of the funding to be used to hire a consultant to create a Public Arts Master Plan. The consultant, UP Art Studio, was hired and is now actively working under contract.

### Public Art Program, Library Department

The primary program activity of the Library Director was serving as staff liaison to the Commission. City Staff is currently actively working with the consultant, UP Art Studio, developing the Public Art Master Plan. It is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2021, with final delivery no later than Feb. 2022.

An Annual Public Art Plan for FY2022 is in active development.

City staff has also begun work on compiling an inventory of the city’s Public Art Collection. A draft is included in Appendix E.

## Appendix E. 2021 Inventory of Civic Art Collection, City of Laredo

*Note: Chart contains all information received from City staff as of 12/17/21. Final inventory needs to be completed in full by City staff.*

Artwork Information							
No.	City Property	Title of Artwork	Artist	Date Completed	Dimensions	Type of Artwork	Media
1	Y	<b>Sisters of Mercy</b>	Carlos Ramirez, Jr. dba Sketch 83 media	In Progress		Mural	Paint
2	Y	<b>unknown</b>					
3	Y	<b>Nuestro Laredo Mural (Gaucamayaz/ Macaws)</b>	Sandra Gonzalez with Malachy McKinney & Eugene Soliz	22-Apr-21		Mural	Paint
4	Y	<b>unknown</b>		unknown			
5	Y	<b>Various installations</b>	Vicky Garcia & Cigarroa Middle School Art Class	unknown		Mural	Paint
6	Y	<b>Hispanic Authors</b>	Abel Gonzalez	January 2021		Mural	Paint
7	Y	<b>Waves</b>	Victoria Marquez	6-May-21		Mural	Paint
8	Y	<b>Manadas Creek: Lifeblood of North Central Park</b>	Francisco "Pancho" Farias	unknown		Mural	Paint
9	Y	<b>Carrizo Comecrudo Native Americans</b>	Antonio "Tony" Briones, III	In Progress		Mural	Paint
10	Y	<b>A World of Wonder</b>	The Ghost (aka Gustavo Estrada)	Sept. 2020		Mural	Paint
11	Y	<b>Protect Our River</b>	Cultivarte Laredo	Feb. 2020		Mural	Paint
12	Y	<b>Various installations</b>	various artists	unknown		Mural	Paint
13	N	<b>El Abrazo</b>	Sandra Gonzalez	July 2019		Mural	Paint
14	Y	<b>Plight of the Monarch</b>	Antonio "Tony" Briones, III	October 2020		Mural	Paint
15	Y	<b>unknown</b>	Laura Holden	September 2021		Mural	Mosaic
16	Y	<b>Fire Dept memorial</b>	unknown	unknown		Mural	Paint
17	Y	<b>Mi Rio Grande</b>	Antonio "Tony" Briones, III	unknown		Mural	Paint
18	Y	<b>unknown</b>		In Progress		Mural	Paint
19	Y	<b>unknown</b>		In Progress		Mural	Paint
20	Y	<b>Gen. Ignacio Zaragoza</b>	Don Joaquin Guitierrez Guerra and Agustin Guerra	1980		Statue. Monument. Fountain.	Bronze
21	Y	<b>San Augustine</b>	unknown	1969		Statue. Monument. Fountain.	

Site Name/ Location	Physical Address	Location Description	Council District
Sisters of Mercy Water Park	2201 Zacatecas St		2
Canseco House	1415 Chihuahua St		3
Retaining wall	1000 Clark Blvd	Clark Boulevard between Tilden Ave. And McClelland Ave.; mural is installed across a large section of concrete retaining wall stretching two city blocks, up a drainage rock incline; wooden shapes of macaws pop up throughout this rocky terrain. Best seen from across the street	4
Jovita Park	5911 Thomas Ave		5
Jovita Park	5911 Thomas Ave	"inside Jovita Idar's El Progreso Park (formerly Bartlett Soccer Complex)"	
Laredo Public Library - Main Branch	1120 E. Calton	Corner of McPherson & Calton on the Library Tower	5
North Central Park	10202 International Blvd.	Reverend Deacon Leonel & Irma San Miguel Pool Building	
North Central Park	10202 International Blvd.		
Inner City Pool	220 W. Plum		
North Central Park	10202 International Blvd.	Inside North Central Park; access trails through John Valls Park, entrance at the intersection of International Blvd. and Woodridge Drive.	
Zacate Creek	intersection of 3900 E. San Francisco Avenue and 400 Olive Street	inside Zacate Creek, drainage chute	
North Central Park	10202 International Blvd.	North Central Park, along trails	
Rialto Hotel	1219 Matamoros Street	located on the south side of the Historic Sames Moore Building	
Zacate Creek Trail	319 W. Lyon Street	Visible and accessible from Dr. Cecilia Moreno Park; cross the pedestrian bridge	
Laredo Fire Department Admin. Center	616 E. Del Mar	art is on the front of the building, closest to the main entrance doors	
	900 Houston	parking lot is public, municipal offices for traffic enforcement	
Inner City Pool	202 W. Plum	Inner City Pool	
	1920 Palo Blanco	McKendrick Ochoa Salinas Branch Library	
	1920 Palo Blanco	McKendrick Ochoa Salinas Branch Library	
San Augustin Plaza	1012 Grant St	<a href="https://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WMPFHK_Gen_Ignacio_Zaragoza_San_Agustin_Plaza_Laredo_TX">https://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WMPFHK_Gen_Ignacio_Zaragoza_San_Agustin_Plaza_Laredo_TX</a>	
San Augustin Plaza	1012 Grant St		



Artwork Information		
No.	Description of Artwork	Cultural or Historical Relevance
1		
2		
3	macaws populate the retaining walls, the cascading rocks, and playfully interact in this art work; local flowers and vegetation, family values.	Incorporated the parrots that were part of the original artwork
4		
5		
6	Recognizes 6 Hispanic writers: Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, Miguel de Cervantes, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Isabel Allende, Sandra Cisneros, Rudolfo Anaya	Depiction of portraits of Hispanic authors: Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, Miguel de Cervantes, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Isabel Allende, Sandra Cisneros, and Rodolfo Anaya on each side of the tower walls.
7	Artist depiction of water/waves	
8		
9	Carrizo Comecrudo Native Americans that once lived on these lands	The mural will be a tribute to the Carrizo Comecrudo Native Americans that once lived on these lands.
10	A World of Wonder, transports the audience to a colorful aquatic fantasy realm ripe with centurions, warriors, pirates and its lovely lady keeper of the realm.	
11	An effort to bring awareness to the importance of the Rio Grande and the waste that gets washed down our city's creeks, the words "Protect Our River" are stamped across a colorful depiction of a body of water	
12	Mural art abounds throughout this park; it can be seen on walls along the walking trails and in the creek on the storm drainage infrastructure.	
13	Depicts the moment of an embrace between two cities during the Washington Birthday Celebration and displays two children embracing while holding American and Mexican flags. Immortalizes the moment that our international bridge becomes a meeting place instead of a crossing site or a dividing line. In that moment of embracing, we become one.	
14	"The mural is also part of a community space for a pollinator garden, and was made possible through the Union Pacific Foundation, Rio Grande International Study Center and the City of Laredo."	
15	An angel comforting a firefighter.	
16		
17		
18	Butterfly Garden	
19	Butterfly Garden	
20	Statue of General Ignacio Zaragoza Seguin	
21	Statue of Saint Augustine, patron saint of Laredo	

Condition and Maintenance Needs	Source of funding or acquisition	Year funded/ acquired	Other project credits	Parking on Site	Photos (Y or N)
	Percent for Art, District 2	2020			
	Percent for Art, District 3	2020			
	Percent for Art, District 4	2020		N	
	Percent for Art, District 5	2020			
				Y	
	Percent for Art, District 5	2020		Y	
	Keep Laredo Beautiful	2020			
	Keep Laredo Beautiful	2020			
				Y	
				Y	
				Y	
				Y	
				Y	
				Y	
				Y	
				Y	
				Y	
	Gift from the Mexican federal government	1980		Y	
	Public contributions			Y	

## Appendix F. Civic Artwork Documentation Form — Laredo Civic Art Collection

**Description of Artwork:**

**Cultural or Historical Relevance:**

**Condition and Maintenance Needs:**

**Source of funding or acquisition:**

**Year funded/acquired:**

**Other project credits:**

*Please attach quality photographs of artwork and its site, if available.*

**Parking on Site:**

**Photos (Y or N):**

[Project Management Information](#)

*To be completed by City Staff*

**Funding Source:**

**City of Laredo Project Manager:**

Contact Information:

**Associated CIP Project:**

*e.g. Source of 2% for Art Funds*

**Date Artist Selected:**

**Date Artist under Contract:**

**Commission Fee to Artist:**

**Project Schedule:**

**Status:**      Complete      In Progress

*If in progress, provide anticipated completion date:*

**Condition:**

**Maintenance Responsibility:**

**Additional Comments:**

**Description of Artwork:****Cultural or Historical Relevance:****Condition and Maintenance Needs:****Source of funding or acquisition:****Year funded/acquired:****Other project credits:**

*Please attach quality photographs of artwork and its site, if available.*

**Parking on Site:****Photos (Y or N):**

[Project Management Information](#)

*To be completed by City Staff*

**Funding Source:****City of Laredo Project Manager:**

Contact Information:

**Associated CIP Project:**

*e.g. Source of 2% for Art Funds*

**Date Artist Selected:****Date Artist under Contract:****Commission Fee to Artist:****Project Schedule:**

**Status:**      Complete      In Progress

*If in progress, provide anticipated completion date:*

**Condition:****Maintenance Responsibility:****Additional Comments:**



## Appendix G. Peer Cities: Public Art Master Plans

Below is a list of peer city plans reviewed in creating the Laredo Public Art Master Plan.

### Major U.S. and Texas Cities

Austin, TX

Airport Public Art Master Plan (2018)

[https://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/EGRSO/ABIA\\_PublicArtMasterPlan\\_Final.pdf](https://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/EGRSO/ABIA_PublicArtMasterPlan_Final.pdf)

Atlanta, GA (2001)

<https://www.ocaatlanta.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Atlantas-Public-Art-Master-Plan.pdf>

Washington, D.C. (2009)

[https://dcarts.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dcarts/publication/attachments/Public%20Art%20Master%20Plan\\_0.pdf](https://dcarts.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dcarts/publication/attachments/Public%20Art%20Master%20Plan_0.pdf)

Fort Worth, TX (2017)

<https://fwpublicart.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Forth-Worth-Master-Plan-update-2017.pdf>

Houston, TX (2015)

[https://www.houstontx.gov/culturalaffairs/Houston\\_Culture\\_Plan\\_2015.pdf](https://www.houstontx.gov/culturalaffairs/Houston_Culture_Plan_2015.pdf)

San Diego, CA (2004)

<https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/arts-culture/pdf/pubartmasterplan.pdf>

### Populations under 200,000

Arlington, VA (2004)

<https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/public-art/documents/2004-public-art-master-plan.pdf>

Fort Wayne, IN (2019)

[https://issuu.com/designing\\_local/docs/2019\\_1125\\_-\\_fort\\_wayne\\_plan](https://issuu.com/designing_local/docs/2019_1125_-_fort_wayne_plan)

Pinellas County, FL (2007)

[https://www.pinellascounty.org/pdf/Public\\_Art\\_Master\\_Plan.pdf](https://www.pinellascounty.org/pdf/Public_Art_Master_Plan.pdf)

Salem, MA (2013)

<https://www.salem.com/sites/g/files/vyhlf3756/f/uploads/artmasterplan.pdf>

Commerce City, CO (2013)

<https://www.c3gov.com/home/showpublisheddocument/738/636289757297630000>

Coronado, CA (2021)

[https://coronadoarts.com/static/media/uploads/2020%20Public%20Art/pamp\\_2021\\_final\\_8.18.21\\_reduced\\_size.pdf](https://coronadoarts.com/static/media/uploads/2020%20Public%20Art/pamp_2021_final_8.18.21_reduced_size.pdf)

Fargo, ND (2017)

[https://download.fargond.gov/1/fargo\\_public\\_art\\_master\\_plan\\_use\\_v8.pdf](https://download.fargond.gov/1/fargo_public_art_master_plan_use_v8.pdf)

Frisco, TX (2017)

<https://www.friscotexas.gov/DocumentCenter/View/16551/Frisco-Public-Art-Master-Plan-updated-2018>

Providence, RI (2018)

[https://artculturetourism.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/2018.09.21\\_Art-in-City-Life-Plan\\_Final2.pdf](https://artculturetourism.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/2018.09.21_Art-in-City-Life-Plan_Final2.pdf)

Richardson, TX (2015)

<https://www.cor.net/home/showpublisheddocument/21014/636548905717330000>

Sugar Land, TX (2016)

[https://sugarlandtx.gov/DocumentCenter/View/13223/SL-Public-Art-Plan\\_Full-Doc?bidId=](https://sugarlandtx.gov/DocumentCenter/View/13223/SL-Public-Art-Plan_Full-Doc?bidId=)

## High Latino Populations (over 50,000)

El Paso, TX (2014)

<https://epmcad.org/assets/documents/public-art/El-Paso-Public-Art-Master-Plan.pdf>

Odessa, TX (2020)

<https://odessaarts.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/full-odessa-pamp-draft-v2-1.pdf>

Pasadena, CA (2014)

<https://www.cityofpasadena.net/planning/wp-content/uploads/sites/30/Public-Art-Master-Plan-Publication.pdf?v=1637216296202>

Santa Ana, CA (2016)

<https://www.santa-ana.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Exhibit1-SAMasterPlan.pdf>





# Credits & Acknowledgments



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## Elected officials

Mayor, Pete Saenz

Council Member Rudy Gonzalez – District 1

Council Member Vidal Rodriguez – Mayor Pro  
Tempore & District 2

Council Member Mercurio Martinez, III – District 3

Council Member Alberto Torres, Jr. – District 4

Council Member Ruben Gutierrez, Jr. –  
District 5

Council Member Dr. Marte A. Martinez – District 6

Council Member Vanessa Perez – District 7

Council Member Alyssa Cigarroa – District 8

## Fine Arts and Culture Commissioners

Jesse Shaw – Mayor

Roberto Lopez – District 1

Dr. Colin Campbell – District 2

Armando Lopez – District 3

Dr. Martha E. Villarreal – District 4

Rosario (Rosie) Santos – District 5

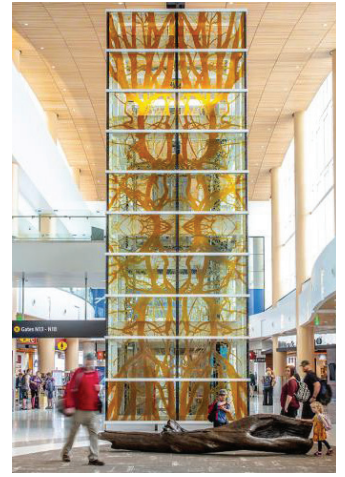
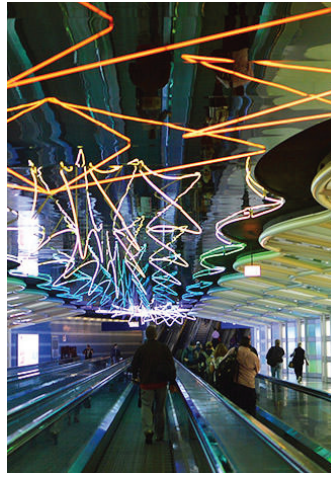
Gayle Rodriguez – District 6

Carlos Abraham Flores – District 7

Julio Mendes – District 8







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