

# Arts and Culture Plan

## Ann and Roy Butler Hike-and-Bike Trail

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## Part One

## Introduction

This plan starts with a place, the Ann and Roy Butler Hike-and-Bike Trail (the “Trail”), a ten-mile loop around Lady Bird Lake (the “Lake”) in the heart of downtown Austin, Texas.

The Trail, along with the landscape it passes through and the lake it surrounds, was of born of civic imagination more than a half-century ago and has become one of Austin’s most cherished public spaces. People value the experience of nature and enjoy the opportunities it offers for outdoor activities like jogging and biking, as well as watching and being on the water. There are nearly five million visits each year.

However, the Trail and the Lake comprise multiple and sometimes contested narratives. Just as the Trail threads between nature and the city it also transects Austin’s economic, social, racial and environmental dynamics. It connects East and West Austin, long differentiated through land use policy and environmental and infrastructure investments. It passes by areas that were once devoted to industry and infrastructure but are now highly desirable for market-rate residential or corporate development, resulting in the displacement of communities for whom easy access to the Lake and the Trail has been a vital part of life. The adjacent areas along the Trail are evolving from a focus on city-sustaining infrastructure such as flood control, highways and power plants to restorative and regenerative efforts that recognize and repair the impact that past practices have had on the underlying ecosystem.<sup>1</sup> Even the names of the Lake and the Trail tell only part of the story, recognizing the contributions of established leaders while the contributions of those who occupied this land before the city was ever imagined, and of those who led communities beset by structural inequities, are acknowledged in less visible ways, if at all.<sup>2</sup>

The Trail is both an evolving place, moving forward steadily over the past half century towards its vision, and a stabilizing presence in the dynamic city that surrounds it. The Trail’s context will continue to change over the next decade: Austin’s regional trail network is expanding, with the Trail at the core. A major east side Lake crossing, the new bridge at Longhorn Dam, will soon be underway. Major cultural institutions, such as the Dougherty Arts Center (DAC) and the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center (MACC), are expanding in locations adjacent to the Trail. The decommissioned Holly Street Power Plant and Seaholm Waterfront sites are being converted to public use. Zilker Metropolitan Park is undergoing a re-visioning and planning process that will result in new long-term direction, and light rail service will soon arrive at the Trail’s doorstep.

This arts and culture plan – commissioned by The Trail Conservancy (TTC) to guide its work as it expands its role in managing, improving and programming the Trail – offers the first comprehensive strategy for integrating arts and culture activities into the life of the Trail. It envisions arts and culture activities to be an integral part of the reconnection, regeneration and healing that are occurring along the Trail; an essential component to the process of engaging the complex past, present and future of this place; and an opportunity to explore collaborations with the full range of Austin’s creative spirit.

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<sup>1</sup> The history of the city, the efforts to manage the Colorado River, and of development of the Lake and the Trail as public amenities have been amply documented. Refer to previous plans by The Trail Foundation (TTC’s predecessor), as well as Andrew M. Busch, *City in Garden: Environmental Transformations and Racial Justice in Twentieth-Century Austin, Texas* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017)

<sup>2</sup> An *Austin American-Statesman* article in 1962 reported that a committee studying the civic improvement of the Lake proposed naming it Lake Tonkawah, after the Native American tribe that once lived along its riverbanks, but that the idea was dismissed by the Mayor and Council. Cited in Shelby Murphy, “A History of Austin’s Famous Hike and Bike Trail, Which Wasn’t Always Green,” <https://austin.towers.net/a-history-of-austins-famous-hike-and-bike-trail-which-wasnt-always-green/>

## Glossary

AIPP – Austin Art in Public Places

CAD – Austin Cultural Affairs Division

DAC – Dougherty Arts Center

DRC – Departmental Review Committee

MACC – Emma S. Barrientos Mexican-American Cultural Center

PARD – Austin Parks and Recreation Department

POMA – Park Operations and Maintenance Agreement

RFP – Request for Proposals

RFQ – Request for Qualifications

TAG – Technical Advisory Group

TTC – The Trail Conservancy

WPD – Austin Watershed Protection Department

## Why This Plan?

This arts and culture plan for the Trail, nearly a decade in the making, is being undertaken at what is arguably one of the most important moments in the history of the Trail, the Lake that it surrounds, and the parks it passes through.

This is the first comprehensive public art plan for the Trail and addresses the contentious question of what artworks, if any, should be located along the Trail. In 2014, as a result of a controversy over a proposed public art installation, Austin City Council imposed a moratorium on newly commissioned or donated public artworks in the Trail area until a comprehensive public art plan could be completed. The City did not immediately have the wherewithal to undertake such a plan, and while the moratorium was ultimately lifted, it has been followed informally since then.

Now, this arts and culture plan explores evolving institutional and community relationships. Twenty years ago, the Town Lake Trail Foundation was established to build on the efforts of prior citizens' organizations to develop public space along the lakeshore. During that time, it completed plans for landscape management and for safety and mobility improvements. Last year the organization (since rebranded as "The Trail Conservancy" or "TTC") and the City of Austin (the "City") entered into a formal agreement for TTC to assume hands-on responsibility for maintaining, operating and improving the Trail and areas adjacent to it.<sup>3</sup> An Urban Land Institute study in 2019 provided a framework for this new relationship, and one of the many actions that study recommended was the creation of a public art plan.

This plan is also seen as an opportunity to address newly urgent questions. The COVID-19 pandemic reminded people of the value of open space in a civil and healthy society. The increasingly visible impacts of climate change have forced a re-evaluation of how urban landscapes and ecosystems can be managed to be more resilient. And the racial justice protests that spread across the country in 2020 opened up fresh dialogue about historical inequities, including access to resources such as parks and trails.

All of these dialogues have led to questioning of received ideas about what "arts" and "culture" mean in the context of public space, why arts and culture activities are important for the Trail and who would benefit from them. They all connect back to fundamental reasons why people value the Trail, as well as the dynamics that TTC must manage to engage new communities and for the Trail to thrive in the future.

## Underlying Questions

TTC commissioned this plan to provide answers to fundamental questions about an arts and culture program for the Trail:

- What is the best approach to an arts and culture program in a public space like the Trail, where the overlapping needs and goals of many user populations must be considered?
- How can an arts and culture program support TTC's overall vision for the Trail, as well as its equity mission?

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<sup>3</sup> In June 2022 TTC finalized negotiations and signed a Park Operations and Maintenance Agreement (POMA) with the City of Austin. This agreement outlines terms for the expanded partnership between TTC and PARD, including land management, programming and liability. TTC's responsibilities will expand over three to ten years to allow for organizational capacity and funding to grow.

- How can an arts and culture program complement the activities that already occur on the Trail, while being a resource that attracts new users?
- How can an arts and culture program complement the projects that TTC already is undertaking along the Trail?
- How can an arts and culture program reflect the Trail’s multi-dimensional cultural, environmental and historical context?
- How can an arts and culture program provide equitable access and experience for all trail users and communities, especially understanding the diverse needs, priorities, histories and power structures that these communities are impacted by?

### **What This Plan Includes**

This plan includes five major components.

- Part One provides background. It outlines why an arts and culture program is important to the Trail and to TTC, describes the process used to develop the plan and discusses a variety of contexts that set the stage for an arts and culture program.
- Part Two presents a framework for an arts and culture program along the Trail. It defines a vision and values for the program, outlines a range of arts and culture project and activity types that TTC should focus on, and provides guidance on locations for arts and culture activities. Each type of project is described, with criteria for evaluating project opportunities. Maps indicate where the best opportunities for each type of project would be.
- Part Three is the Arts and Culture Three-Year Workplan that details specific projects that TTC can take on over the next three years. The plan regards the first three years as a period to test the project ideas and process recommendations in this plan, and as a time to build capacity and networks. This section is summarized in a three-year workplan.
- Part Four provides a framework for how TTC will implement an arts and culture program, particularly outlining the roles and responsibilities of key players.
- Part Five is a Collection Management Policy that details protocols and processes for how TTC will make decisions about arts and culture projects, and about how TTC would be involved in arts processes managed by Austin Art in Public Places (AIPP) and the City’s Parks and Recreation Department (PARC). This section is organized as a “Collection Management Policy,” which the City’s donations policies require as a prerequisite to delegating public art decision-making authority to other City agencies.

## History

The Ann and Roy Butler Hike Bike Trail, the parks it connects and the Lake it surrounds are arguably the heart of Austin – not only as important public resources that people enjoy today, but also in terms of the legacy of environmental policy, infrastructure and public space in Austin.

Embedded in the Trail's history are key dichotomies that are part of the context for this arts and culture plan – dichotomies between viewing the river as a natural corridor and as a system of urban infrastructure; between the providing for quiet individual enjoyment of natural space, recreational activity and planned events; between uses that support neighborhoods, serve the city at large and attract visitors from beyond. It is a complex place, comprising multiple narratives and aspirations.

The modern history of the Lake and Trail reaches back nearly two hundred years, when the stretch of the Colorado River between Shoal Creek and Waller Creek was identified as a desirable location for the capitol of the Republic of Texas. However, as the city grew, it was beset by endemic flooding that resulted from upstream rainstorms; it was not until 1940, after a half dozen failed attempts, that the river was successfully dammed with the opening of the Tom Miller Dam west of downtown.

The completion of the Miller Dam enabled the City to embark on two major infrastructure projects: the Seaholm Power Plant, just west of Shoal Creek (1951) and the Holly Street Power Plant in East Austin (1960), both of which were gas-fired plants that generated electricity for the city. Also in 1960, the City completed the Longhorn Dam, which submerged what had been a wooded flood plain in order to provide cooling water for the Holly Plant. These structures impounded the five-mile stretch of river stretch that is now known as Lady Bird Lake.<sup>4</sup>

With this major infrastructure in place, the Lake and the land along it were far from what they are today: “Back in the 1960s, the shores of the recently-formed Town Lake were barren and brown. Anything green had been stripped away by decades of flooding along the Colorado River, helped along by misguided efforts to remove the trees along the river’s banks to abate future flood damage.”<sup>5</sup> Nearby pesticide plants dumped chemicals into storm drains, triggering a vast fish kill in the lake and for miles downstream in 1961, an incident chronicled in Rachel Carlson’s *Silent Spring*.<sup>6</sup>

Civic plans to improve the lakeshore began shortly after the Lake was created; in 1961 the City created a “study committee” to recommend plans for developing public land along the lakeshore. The first accomplishment was the completion of the Town Lake gazebo at Auditorium Shores (1969). Mayor Roy Butler created the Town Lake Beautification Project in 1971 in hopes of creating a legacy project for the Bicentennial; Lady Bird Johnson was the project’s chair and actively organized and raised funds. City funding, private contributions and volunteer efforts combined to create landscaped hiking trails and scenic walking areas.

The initial vision for the Trail was for it to be a peaceful gathering space and a rural oasis inspired by the Thames Path that connects London to its countryside – perhaps in contrast to the major, citywide events and festivals that were already occurring nearby, in Auditorium Shores, Festival Beach and Zilker Park

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<sup>4</sup> The state built Interstate 35, which bisects the Trail, between 1946 and 1962, creating a physical and perceptual barrier between East and West Austin. The MoPac freeway was built between 1969 and 1975; the MoPac bridge across the Lake includes a Trail connection underneath its highway decks.

<sup>5</sup> Shelby Murphy, “A History of Austin’s Famous Hike and Bike Trail, Which Wasn’t Always Green,” <https://austin.towers.net/a-history-of-austins-famous-hike-and-bike-trail-which-wasnt-always-green/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.statesman.com/story/news/environment/2019/05/31/our-own-silent-spring-east-austin-plant-source-of-devastating-1961-fish-kill/4945099007/>



and on the Lake itself.<sup>7</sup> Over the years, trail planners expanded the focus to include active recreation, such as jogging and biking along the Trail and access to the Lake for kayaking.

Stewardship of the Trail was placed in the hands of PARD. Twenty years ago, a new civic-community non-profit organization, the Town Lake Trail Foundation (later “The Trail Foundation,” or TTF), was created to supplement PARD’s efforts. TTF’s efforts began with strategic infrastructure projects (such as restrooms, trailheads and a mile-long boardwalk extension), and has continued with landscape and habitat restoration projects as well as modest programming, such as pop-up musical events and yoga classes. TTF has evolved into The Trail Conservancy (TTC), and in 2022 entered into a formal arrangement with PARD under which TTC will assume more responsibility for maintaining and managing the Trail.

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<sup>7</sup> One of these festivals, the annual Aqua Fest, was launched at Festival Beach in 1962 shortly after the Lake was created. Over the years it grew to include parades, a grand prix race on city streets and motorboat races on the Lake. After years of protest from the East Austin community the festival was relocated to Auditorium Shores, and then reorganized as a music festival before it folded in 1998. Not long afterwards, the Austin City Limits Festival was launched in Zilker Park, and is now the major annual event along the Trail.

## How This Plan Was Created

TTC created this Arts and Culture Plan in partnership with PARD, which is responsible for the City's parklands, and AIPP, which is responsible for the City's public art program. The City's Watershed Protection Department, which manages Lady Bird Lake, has also been an ongoing partner to this process.

This plan was undertaken over the course of two years, from spring 2021 through winter 2023. TTC selected the consulting team, led by public art planner Todd Bressi, after a thorough national search. The team also included Stacy Levy, an environmental artist, Ellen Ryan, an expert in developing arts and culture programs in non-profit parks partnership organizations, and Public City, an Austin-based curatorial and public engagement group.

The plan has been advised by three groups of people. At the outset of the process, TTC created an Arts and Culture Committee, consisting of a TTC board member and Austin arts leaders, that advised on broad directions for the plan. TTC also created a smaller Technical Advisory Group (TAG) (consisting of TTC, AIPP, PARD, Watershed staff and local arts professionals) that vetted the detailed recommendations in the plan. Once the process was underway, TTC created a Community Braintrust to guide community engagement from a grassroots perspective.

The process involved a thoughtful and community-driven approach to soliciting feedback from the public and specific community leaders, with the view that the plan reflect the experiences, hopes and concerns of not only Trail users but also residents of the communities along the Trail, whether they actively use the Trail or not.

## Common Waters

Shortly after the project began, the Arts and Culture Committee urged TTC to expand the consulting team to include more local and more diverse representation. That led to the creation of the Community Braintrust, and with the Braintrust's help, TTC identified three Austin artists (Rejina Thomas, Ruben Esquivel and Taylor Davis) to join the team. Davis, Esquivel and Thomas worked with Levy to develop a temporary artwork, *Common Waters*, that served as a demonstration of the type of artworks TTC could create in the future as well as of an equitable process for creating public art.<sup>8</sup> The project was a temporary sculptural nest that sat on a floating wetland installed on Lady Bird Lake in May, 2022. See the Appendix for more information on Common Waters.

## Background Research

The consulting team developed extensive background research on how organizations situated similarly to TTC organized arts and culture programs, exploring how each organization perceived arts and culture programming to be essential to its mission and explored different program models.<sup>9</sup>

The team also reviewed plans for the Trail area, including TTC plans and studies (vision plan, economic impact study, Urban Forestry Plan, *Butler Trail Safety and Mobility Study*), TTC and PARD studies (ULI study), and past art plans (Town Lake Park and Holly Shores Vision Plan).

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<sup>8</sup> The Trail Conservancy has documented the project here: <https://thetrailconservancy.org/projects/common-waters/#:~:text=The%20Common%20Waters%20project%20highlights,wetland%20on%20Lady%20Bird%20Lake>.

<sup>9</sup> The organizations researched included: The High Line (New York), The Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy (Boston), The Atlanta BeltLine, The Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy (San Francisco), Bartram's Garden (Philadelphia), Freshkills Park Alliance (New York), Buffalo Bayou Partnership (Houston), The 606 (Chicago), San Pedro Creek (San Antonio), Fairmount Park Conservancy (Philadelphia), The Los Angeles River Public Art Project, The City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs.

The team reviewed historical documentation about the development of Lady Bird Lake and the Trail, and created an inventory of public art that has already been created in the area.

## Community Engagement

At the outset of the planning process, TTC and the consultants identified the following goals for community engagement:

- Learn about how people value, imagine and use the Trail and associated parkland
- Learn about how people think arts and culture can enhance their use and enjoyment of the Trail
- Understand the cultural resources in the community, and how they could intersect with the park
- Understand how arts and culture initiatives along the trail and associated parkland can:
  - Broadly serve Trail users and the surrounding communities
  - Increase the diversity of Trail users, expanding on who uses the Trail and who feels welcomed
  - Enhance the experience of Trail users
  - Support the experiences of natural resources along the Trail
  - Value and strengthen surrounding communities
- Understand what historically marginalized communities surrounding the Trail and in Austin would like to see in regard to arts and cultural strategies

To achieve these goals, TTC and the consultants established a multifaceted community engagement strategy. Though most of the project occurred during a time when public gathering was constrained because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the team was able to conduct numerous in-person activities. (The findings from these processes described below are outlined in the next section.)

- The consultants and TTC created an in-depth online “storymap” survey in English and Spanish. The survey was posted on the TTC web site and made available via QR codes on signs posted around the Trail. The survey gathered 250 responses.
- After evaluating the responses to the survey, the consulting team sent field researchers (fluent in speaking English and Spanish) to conduct intercept interviews with Trail users. The intercept interviewers were specifically tasked with interviewing people from groups that were under-represented in the survey responses. More than 100 interviews were conducted.
- The consulting team conducted numerous interviews with community leaders, particularly in East Austin, to gather insights beyond those that could be captured in the survey, such as the history of relationships between communities and public agencies and organizations such as TTC.
- During the planning of the Common Waters project, TTC and the consulting team facilitated a public workshop about the intersection of public art, cultural identity, environment and history.
- At the recommendations phase of the project, TTC organized a physical open house at International Shores, a virtual open house online, and an online survey to test the key recommendations in the plan. More than 100 people responded.

Also, to gather specific information about programming, the consultants circulated a questionnaire to Music on the Trail artists, which gathered 18 responses.

## Plan Drafting

The plan was drafted through a workshop process with the Arts and Culture Committee (the “Committee”) and the TAG. During this process, which lasted from July through December 2022, the consulting team led the TTC staff, Committee and TAG through structured topical conversations to work out recommendations about project types, locations and processes. Those conversations led to draft recommendations, presented to the public in October, 2022, then revisions that led to this draft of the plan.

## What We Heard

As noted above, the consulting team engaged Trail users and the general public through a variety of approaches, throughout most of 2022. Though outreach occurred during much of the year and through a variety of approaches, the findings were relatively consistent.

### Why is the Trail Important to People?

Nature, recreational activities and the experience of other people are the aspects of the Trail that people value most. People said the Trail gives them a sense of refuge while not being isolated, and a sense of connection to bigger things – community, city, watershed, ecosystem.

People's perceptions of nature are remarkably varied. Respondents described nature at the most grand and most intimate scales, from seeing the skyline as a backdrop to the tree-lined Lake to seeing lizards and turtles; from seeing subtly dappled light under trees to seeing majestic sunrises and sunsets. Several responses referred how their perceptions of nature change over the course of a day, or throughout the seasons of the year.

In addition to observing the basic natural qualities of the Trail, many respondents noted that what is special about the trail is the contrast with its urban surroundings. The experience of being able to drop into the natural area right from the city, and the presence of view of the city beyond, are unique. Indeed, numerous respondents said there were other places in the city where they felt the presence of nature more strongly.

The Trail is also a place of memory. For many people, the Trail is a place where they have accumulated many small memories over time, rather than one specific memory.

### What Interests People about Arts and Culture Activities?

Many respondents felt that arts and culture activities could add new, different and deeper experiences for current trail users, giving them more reasons to use the Trail.

Respondents suggested that arts and culture features could encourage more inclusive participation in the Trail. They felt that arts and culture experiences could make people feel more welcome, particularly those that have no interest in the Trail. They could see arts and culture experiences as giving them reasons to bring friends and families with them.

Respondents also suggested that arts and culture activities could provide more awareness of the environment, history and cultures along the Trail.

### What Concerns Do People Have About Arts and Culture Programming?

There was a small but vocal set of concerns related to adding arts and culture activities: The Trail should not be turned into something that it isn't. Some people felt that the Trail's purpose is not to present art displays, which could interfere with their experience of nature in the place. Some expressed concerns that art projects could add congestion or interfere with Trail use, overburden the Trail with additional maintenance needs, or lead to unwarranted commercialization.

A similarly-sized group of respondents, who shared these concerns, said they would be open to arts and culture programming if it were carefully managed, particularly with small, temporary and less-intrusive activities. They suggested that the program needs to be curated well, that arts projects need to happen in areas that do not conflict with natural settings or other Trail uses and that social projects or projects that are controversial or stressful should be avoided.

## What Types of Projects Would People Like to See?

The preferred types of arts and culture programming, according to the responses, are visual arts and music, though there is a preference to avoid new festivals, installations or programs that interfere with people's everyday enjoyment of the Trail.

When asked about five different types of possible arts and culture activities – permanent artworks, temporary artworks, performance artworks, artist residencies, and arts and culture programming – each category received a positive response from more than two-thirds of the respondents. The strongest preference was for temporary artworks, and there was also a support for the idea of expanding “Music on the Trail” to more locations and to include other types of performances, such as dance, spoken word or small theatrical performances. In regard to permanent artworks, there was a strong interest in functional artworks.<sup>10</sup>

Many responses reflected an understanding of the complexity of placing public art along the Trail. They urged careful, professional processes and clear guidelines for where artworks were located.

The preferred areas for arts and culture programming were large open spaces, such as Zilker Park, Auditorium Shores, Lakeshore Park and Festival Beach. Larger open areas, gateways and trailheads were mentioned. Locations on both sides of the Lake were mentioned, but more on the west side.

## Observations

There are several overarching takeaways:

- The majority of respondents said they felt they would benefit from arts and culture programming along the trail. Although there are concerns, they seem to be manageable.
- Respondents' support for arts and culture programming often depended on the type of activation there might be. There was a strong concern that anything should be a value-added project, not anything that deters from the current functionality of the trail or congests it too much.

The responses gathered during these engagement processes reflect several underlying conflicts:

- There is much unfinished business – upgrades, maintenance and restoration of facilities, infrastructure and landscape. TTC is working on these improvements quite vigorously, but this work may not have seized the public's acknowledgement yet, and they may perceive arts and culture to be secondary to these priorities.
- The Trail has a strong and established constituency for keeping it the way it is now, and doing that as well as possible. There is a less vocal but broad constituency that is advocating a vision that involves people who may feel left out of the Trail as it operates now or who never have imagined the Trail as being any other kind of place than it is now.
- The idea of introducing art into a natural space creates tension because it is not always easy to imagine what that means; showing examples, such as Common Waters, can be an effective way of showing the positive interplay between arts and culture and the Trail.

Altogether, these comments indicate ways in which TTC can begin to implement arts and culture activities, through a series of iterative steps, into this cherished place. The first few years of arts and culture program will be a process of not only creative exploration and testing of systems, but also helping Trail users to see how arts and culture programming can be a positive addition.

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<sup>10</sup> A “functional artwork” is a public artwork that serves a utilitarian purpose, such as a bench, water fountain or wayfinding feature.

## Context

### Who is Responsible for the Trail?

One of the key contexts for the Trail is the overlapping jurisdictions of decision-making in the spaces it passes through. The Trail is a public space, built and owned by the City of Austin and managed for the benefit of its people. City jurisdiction over the Trail is led by PARD, jurisdiction over the Lake and the surrounding flood plain is led by the Watershed Protection Department, and jurisdiction over public art is led by AIPP (with oversight from the Art in Public Places Panel and the Arts Commission). All three agencies collaborated on the TAG that supported this planning process as well as the *Common Waters* project.

The Trail Conservancy (TTC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting, enhancing and connecting the Butler Trail for the benefit of all. In 2022, TTC and the City of Austin entered into a “park operations and maintenance agreement,” through which TTC will ultimately become the Trail’s primary steward, responsible for operations and maintenance of the Trail and approximately 300 acres of parkland through which it passes. Each year TTC submits to the City a plan for its activities in the coming year.

### Who is Responsible for Public Art?

There are several key public art policies that are applicable to the area where the Trail is located.

One is the *City of Austin Donation and Loan Policy*, last updated in 2018. This policy sets out the processes by which permanent and temporary public art can be placed on public property when it is proposed by entities other than City government. The process is managed by AIPP on behalf of partner city agencies and the City Manager’s office.

For projects developed under the City’s formal public art program, the *Art in Public Places Ordinance Guidelines* (2021) are followed.

For projects on land managed by PARD (whether donations, loans, AIPP projects or projects initiated by PARD), additional policies and procedures apply. These are outlined in the policy document “AIPP Projects, Donations, Commissions and Temporary Exhibitions of Outdoor Visual Art Work on Austin Parks and Recreation Property” (2016).

The City’s Donation and Loan Policy also provides for agencies to manage public art on their own if they develop a “Collection Management Policy” that is approved by the AIPP program. Early in this planning process, the TAG determined that TTC could develop a Collection Management Policy for temporary artworks. However, permanent public art developed by TTC would need to follow the standard approval process for donations, as outlined in the city’s Donation and Loan Policy and in PARD’s public art policy.

## TTC's Vision and Plans for the Trail

TTC's management of the Trail is guided by its vision plan, its strategic plan and two functional plans, *Urban Forestry and Natural Management Guidelines* (2015) and the *Butler Trail Safety and Mobility Study* (2021), which this plan will complement. A study prepared by the Urban Land Institute Advisory Services Panel (2019) on behalf of TTC and PARD also provides useful context and guidance.

TTC's most recent strategic plan (2020) provides a description of the essential qualities of the Trail that are at the core of TTC's vision for the future:

- a **natural sanctuary** that hugs the shores of Lady Bird Lake in the heart of downtown
- a **healing place**, where people go to clear their minds, commune with nature, gather for fun, or stretch their boundaries
- a **well-loved place**, where people can splash in the Lake, push a stroller, spot a heron, hear live music, grab a beer, catch up with friends, ride a bike, run for miles, or just be
- a place to **experience Austin in all its diversity** at every stage of our lives
- a place that **connects people to nature, and to one another**, for generations to come

The strategic plan sets forth the following commitments:

- The Trail will always be public parkland and will always belong to the people.
- To serve our city in all its diversity and strengthen our social fabric, the Trail must be a welcoming and engaging place for all. TTC will improve, maintain and operate the Trail such that it will provide enhanced and more inclusive user experiences.
- TTC will develop and implement community programming that serves everyone, especially attuned to those who have been historically underserved. Programming will be multifaceted — educational (in terms of arts, culture, history, the environment, health and well-being), health-oriented and fun to enhance people's health and the overall quality of life of people throughout the community.

Together, these plans and studies identify several key overarching considerations for all aspects of Trail management:

- Trail managers must balance sustaining the qualities of the Trail that people enjoy now, while upgrading the Trail and expanding access so more Austin residents can use it.
- The Trail is highly impacted by public investment, private development and events that occur in adjacent areas and relies on the Trail as essential infrastructure, without having much influence on these projects or deriving significant resources from them.
- There is lack of trust between some communities, the City and organizations like TTC, often as a result of past injustices.
- The Trail is highly interconnected with other City trails and resources, but may not be physically or culturally connected to the communities that are physically adjacent to it.

## TTC Equity Statement

At The Trail Conservancy, we believe free, equitable and inclusive access to the Trail is vital to the health and wellbeing of our community. Input from our Trail users, donors, volunteers, advocates, and team members is necessary for the Trail to be a welcoming space and to represent the communities we serve. We commit to the following principles and beliefs in our effort to protect, enhance and connect the Butler Trail for the benefit of all.



- We embrace diversity, equity and inclusion at the center of our daily work and nurture a sense of ownership and belonging for the Trail.
- We advance programs and services that create opportunities for all people to flourish and promote a deeper understanding of our differences.
- We foster an experience where everyone feels they can bring their unique perspective – visible and invisible – to the Trail so that they can be their true selves.
- We listen, remain curious, try new things, speak openly and act boldly.
- We believe these ideals are best promoted by leadership of diverse backgrounds, experiences, and identities.

## Environmental Context

In ecological terms, the Trail is an “ecotone,” a thin band of space where two ecosystems, the river and the city, overlap and co-exist. The history of this space, since Austin was settled, has been that of constant adaptation between city and nature, which continues to set an important context for how arts and culture can be integrated with the Trail.

In a practical sense, The Trail Conservancy is going about a series of ecological repair projects that should be protected from the incursion of public art and art viewers. These include riverbank stabilization, stormwater mitigation efforts and restorations of wildflower meadows and stands of trees. Yet these ecological processes are ripe for artistic exploration and interpretation; sensitive art projects that are developed in collaboration with ecologists could result in new levels of public understanding of and engagement with topics such as native habitat, stormwater management and water quality, and stewardship with the Trail overall.

## Functional Context

In functional terms, the ten-mile loop of the Butler Trail is the hub of an expanding system of urban trails in Austin. Several trails extend like spokes from the Trail deep into the city, primarily running along riparian corridors that feed the Lake (Barton Springs, Johnson Creek, Shoal Creek, Waller Creek). Others extend through adjacent parks (Roy G. Guerrero) or along streets (East Link Trail). Ultimately, the Trail will extend further eastward and westward along the river.

As the network expands, the Trail is likely to become an even more popular destination, a busier commuter route and a connector for people biking across the city. It is also possible that a more robust and interconnected citywide trail network, particularly extensions further along the river, could relieve pressure on the central area of the Trail.

## Arts Context

The Trail is situated in the center of a city with one of the most dynamic creative cultures in the nation, known best perhaps for the internationally renowned South by Southwest film, media and music festival and the Austin City Limits music festival. Most of the arts resources and many of the arts events in the Trail area have a citywide or regional focus.

## Public Art Context

Austin's public art program (Art in Public Places, or AIPP), is one of the most vigorous in the country, with a base requirement that two percent of City expenditures on capital projects to be spent on public art. Major current and future initiatives include several corridor projects and airport convention center projects. Public art is also planned for the new bridge at the Longhorn Dam.

### Existing Collection

There are approximately twenty AIPP artworks within the area TTC manages, including the iconic Stevie Ray Vaughan statue at Auditorium Shores, three "Trail of Tejano Legends" installations honoring Tejano musicians and traditions, and several iconic gazebos. In the near vicinity of the Trail (both in nearby parks and in areas adjacent to the Trail) there are approximately another thirty artworks, including a small collection at the Seaholm District.

### Approaches to Public Art for Town Lake Park (2003)

Over the years the City has commissioned two public art strategies for areas along the Trail, both as part of larger planning efforts.

*Approaches to Public Art for Town Lake Park* (2003) was commissioned by AIPP following the vision plan that PARD organized for Town Lake Park (now known as Butler Metropolitan Park and Auditorium Shores) in 1999. *Approaches to Public Art* outlined how public art could be incorporated into the four phases and five distinct areas of park development that were proposed in the park master plan. It also outlined a temporary public art program.

### Public Art Action Plan for the Holly Shores Master Plan Area (2013)

*The Public Art Action Plan for the Holly Shores Master Plan Area* (2013), was commissioned by AIPP to complement a larger planning effort that PARD organized for Edward Rendon Sr. Park at Festival Beach, Fiesta Gardens and the Holly Power Plant Site Park. AIPP wanted to ensure that public art connected to future park improvements would serve a vital role within the community, to "both honor the existing features of the site, and provide opportunities for creating community-centered contemporary art."

The plan's key finding was that "the communities that surround the park have a long tradition of the arts being integrated into their everyday life. From front yard shrines to expressive murals to original music, the surrounding neighborhoods hold their collective identity in large part through creative expression."

The plan sought strategies to carry that idea through public art related to park construction in the study area. It identified five key goals for public art:

- Tell the Story of the Neighborhood
- Create Opportunities for Neighborhood Involvement
- Continue the Legacy of a Vibrant Neighborhood Arts Culture
- Honor Youth Culture and the Elders of the Community
- Create Spaces of Delight for All

The plan identified a range of opportunities for iconic, integrated, functional, environmental and social practice artworks. It characterized three zones – “highly programmed landscapes,” “connective landscapes” and “natural landscapes” – where different types of artworks would be appropriate.

The plan also recommended that seven historic murals on the walls of the former plant (five in the AIPP collection) be decommissioned, finding that five murals (on the plant’s western wall) had deteriorated beyond repair and that two murals (on the plant’s northern walls) were in good shape but on walls slated for demolition. The plan encouraged thorough documentation of the murals before they were removed and recommended the creation of a new artwork to honor the historic murals.

Since then, however, AIPP has now developed a plan to restore the murals and artists have been retained to begin work.

While the plan largely envisioned public art projects being carried out by AIPP through its standard processes, it did recommend modifications to those process, largely to expand community involvement in decision-making.

### **Arts and Culture Resources**

There are several arts and culture resources along the Trail (or in close proximity to it) that are potential partners for TTC’s arts and culture programming.

#### [The Emma S. Barrientos Mexican-American Cultural Center \(MACC\)](#)

The Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center (MACC), located between Waller Creek and the Rainey Trailhead, is dedicated to the preservation, creation, presentation and promotion of the cultural arts of Mexican Americans and Latino cultures. MACC offers extensive programming (classes, events, exhibitions). Its facility, which overlooks the Trail and connects to it via an artist-designed pathway<sup>11</sup>, is currently being renovated and expanded.

#### [The Dougherty Arts Center](#)

The Dougherty Arts Center (DAC) is located along Barton Springs Road at the edge of Butler Metropolitan Park, a short walk from the Trail. It is a community arts center that features a theatre, gallery, arts school with youth and adult arts classes, and resource center / workspace for artists. The Center is being relocated to new and expanded facilities in Butler Shores Park.

#### [Lorraine "Grandma" Camacho Activity Center](#)

The Lorraine “Grandma” Camacho Activity Center, located at the east end of Edward Rendon Sr. Park at Festival Beach, offers outdoor recreation, nature-based education and cultural art programs to youth, teens, and adults, including programs in filmmaking. The Camacho Activity Center generally draws from East Austin neighborhoods within walking or biking distance. TTC has collaborated with the Camacho Center on small youth-art projects related to a recently-installed rain garden.

#### [Other Cultural Resources](#)

In addition to the MACC, PARD also supports facilities dedicated to Asian-American and African-American communities of Austin. These are located outside the Trail area but could be resources for artists working on cultural projects.

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<sup>11</sup> Benito Huerta, *Snake Path*, 2007.

The Carver Museum, Cultural and Genealogical Center focuses on the preserving and exhibiting African-American material culture, history and aesthetic expression, telling stories about the local community and connecting them to larger narratives about Blackness.

The Asian American Resource Center's mission is to create a space of belonging and healing through community collaborations and partnerships; providing rental space; organizing cultural, educational and health wellness programs; and curating art and historical exhibitions.

#### Performance and Festival Venues

Many of the parks adjacent to the Trail have long been viewed as regional resources, appropriate for facilities and events that serve the city and the region. Most of these are in the southwest quadrant of the Trail area.

Butler Metro Park, between First Street and Lamar Boulevard, includes the Long Center for the Performing Arts and the Palmer Events Center.

Butler Shores Park, west of Lamar Boulevard, includes the Zach Theatre and will soon be home to the relocated Dougherty Arts Center.

Zilker Metropolitan Park, between Barton Creek and the MoPac expressway is the location of major festivals, most notably the Austin City Limits Festival, which occurs each year over two weekends in October.

Festival Beach, which is in East Austin (the northeast quadrant of the park), is regarded as a space for events that are more community oriented. Typical events include Cinco de Mayo Austin and Austin PRIDE, as well as food-oriented events such as Hot Sauce Fest and the Texas Craft Brewers Festival. In years past, the citywide Aqua Fest was based here, but neighbors objected to the crowds and noise from some of the events.

## Changes on the Horizon

If there is any constant in Austin, it is change; since 1990 the city's population has nearly doubled to almost a million people, and the metropolitan area is growing at an even faster rate. This growth has resulted in private development and public infrastructure projects that have impacted areas adjacent to the Trail. These are some of the key projects that are likely to impact the Trail in the coming years.

### Public Infrastructure Projects

- Improvements to the Waterloo Greenway and the East Link Trail, which will improve connectivity between the Butler Trail and citywide trail networks
- Repurposing of the two shuttered power plants along the Lake, Seaholm and Holly Shores
- Expansion of key cultural facilities near the Trail, the Dougherty Arts Center and the Mexican-American Cultural Center
- Creating a new vision and long-term plan for Zilker Metropolitan Park
- Construction of the Orange Line and Blue Line light rail lines, involving a bridge across and a tunnel beneath the Lake, and potential stations at Rainey/MACC and the south waterfront
- Modernizing and expansion of I-35 through downtown Austin

### Private Development Projects

Significant private development is expected in areas adjacent to the trail, particularly impacting the segments east of Congress Avenue:

- Redevelopment of the South Central Waterfront (the former Austin American-Statesman site) into a new mixed-use district
- Continued redevelopment in the Rainey Street area
- Continued expansion of the Oracle campus
- Continued infill redevelopment in East Austin

### The Trail Conservancy Projects

The Trail Conservancy is spearheading multi-faceted efforts to stabilize and enhance the infrastructure of the trail. These include:

- Investments in connectivity, through the construction of the new bridge at Longhorn Dam (joining Holly Shores and International Shores) and the study of east and west trail extensions
- Investments in ecosystem through upland and aquatic habitat restoration and stormwater management projects
- Investments in system infrastructure through improved wayfinding, lighting upgrades in appropriate area, and erosion control
- Investments in placemaking, through new trailheads at Rainey Street, Holly Shores and Lakeshore; recreation areas near Butler Shores and Holly Shores; and community spaces at Seaholm Waterfront.

## **Part Two: Project and Place Types**

## What is “Arts and Culture”?

When The Trail Conservancy refers to “arts and culture,” what does it mean?

The definitions of “arts” and “culture” in formal Western traditions have evolved greatly over the past century. These terms have long been used to distinguish how arts and culture are different from each other, and from other kinds of professional endeavors, knowledge and human experiences. More recently, these terms have been discussed in the context of the cultural values, preferences and realities of residents and other stakeholders in a given community.

Typically, “**art**” has referred to individually or collectively created products of value, the expression or application of creative skill and imagination in the various formalized branches of creative activity such as painting, sculpture, music, dance, theatre, films, graphic arts, etc. More specifically, the term “fine arts” typically refers more narrowly to drawing, painting, sculpture, ceramics, graphic arts and sometimes architecture.

On the other hand, “**culture**” has typically referred to the set of knowledge, customs and behaviors acquired and transmitted socially, or the shared resources, beliefs and practices that build the defining character of a community.<sup>12</sup> Culture has been understood not only to include the formal arts described above, but also extends beyond to include informal interactions that define the nature and customs of everyday life. Culture is an inclusive celebration of what a community is, where it has come from, and where it is going – its memory and identity.

Arts and culture are expressions of all people. For many under-represented communities, these expressions may or may not be validated or adequately represented in what are considered to be mainstream cultural institutions, educational institutions or professional industries. This insight opens the way to considering a continuum of activities – institutional, non-institutional, those that happen in arts-specific and non-arts-specific places – that are valued by all community residents.

In Austin, as in any city, there are many cultures that overlap and intersect. Some aspects of Austin culture that seem ubiquitous are embraced and expressed by different communities in different ways – think of the prevalence of outdoor life or music. Other aspects of Austin’s culture are experienced differently, or perhaps not at all, depending on the community you are in – consider access to open space, nature, respite and recreational life, or participation in the tech economy.

For the Butler Trail Arts and Culture Plan, it makes sense to think of art as not just an expression of beauty and a source of enjoyment, but also as an investigation, a conversation, a questioning, a learning, an encounter with new experiences and horizons in otherwise familiar places. It makes sense to think of culture as an expression of one’s self and one’s community, of a means of being recognized, as a process of continuity between past, present and future generations.

Arts and culture are not as much delineations of practice; rather, they are ways of being in the world. Culture holds our communities together, nourishing and sustaining us. Arts allows us to see beyond our horizons, challenging us to question the world around us and see it anew. The Butler Trail Arts and Culture Plan aspires to embrace both.

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<sup>12</sup> Another description of culture is “the accumulation of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving.”



## Where We are Headed: Vision, Goals, Values

### A Vision for Arts and Culture Along the Trail

We seek for the Trail to be radically welcoming — to embody the voices, presence and power of many groups, to embrace acts of “placekeeping” in ways that are meaningful to people.

We seek for the Trail to be a place where people’s perceptions about art, environment, culture and history are engaged, heightened and challenged by artists in support of this vision.

We are insistent on recognizing the histories of this place that have not been fully acknowledged, as well embracing the culture of the surrounding community.

We encourage the thoughtful re-imagining of the Trail in response to the changes that are occurring around it.

We recognize that all of the above are essential for creating a diverse constituency for the long-term protection and stewardship of the Trail.

### Goals for Arts and Culture Along the Trail

TTC will organize arts and culture projects that will achieve the following **artistic outcomes**:

- Cultivate a process that allows selection and placement of **site-specific art** that challenges artists and offers Trail users fresh experiences— environmental, historical, cultural
- Create a sense of place through the cultivation of **environmental awareness** and the expression of environmental consciousness
- Embrace the **connection of the Trail to the world around it** — community, city, watershed, ecosystem

TTC will organize arts and culture projects that will achieve the following **community outcomes**:

- Acknowledge **historical and ongoing inequities** (Asian, Black, Latino, Native communities) that have shaped access to and ideas about public space, open space and sustainability in Austin
- Promote **healing relationships** – for communities, individuals and the land
- Create new meanings for users and **expand Austin’s collective memory** about the Trail
- Expand people’s connection to the Trail; **broaden and deepen the constituency** that uses the Trail and sustains it.

### Values

In its work every day, TTC’s arts and culture program will:

- Represent all Trail users as well as people in surrounding communities
- Represent the evolving character and diversity of Austin
- Protect the Trail by ensuring it is welcoming and inclusive, vibrant and creative — open to everyone
- Be open to new ideas and evolution — “rethinking” the Trail when appropriate — while respecting the Trail’s essential qualities and ensuring that people have different perspectives on change
- Connect artists to the Trail and its resources; connect the Trail to communities and their resources

- Challenge everyone – artists, participants, viewers – to push the boundaries of their creativity and understanding of the place
- Operate in ways that are *relational* rather than *transactional*: develop long-term, trusting relationships; involve people in shaping processes that affect them; provide clear expectations about what TTC can and cannot offer; be transparent about processes and outcomes.
- Avoid conflicts with existing uses, do not overburden maintenance and operations.

## Arts and Culture Plan Framework

The possibilities for arts and culture activities in a place as varied, vibrant and vital as the Trail are virtually unlimited, especially when considered through the lens of an artist's imagination.

The potential for arts and culture activities to create new experiences for Trail users as well as increased awareness and new connections between the Trail and Austin's communities is similarly expansive, especially considering the possibilities of embracing the diverse creative and cultural traditions and practices that can be found in Austin.

The Trail Conservancy's challenge will be to embrace this inspiration and these ambitions while charting a course that is:

- strategic in the use of TTC's resources,
- considerate of the many factors involved in managing the Trail,
- aspirational in its artistic and community outcomes, and
- grounded in a relational, collaborative and equitable approach, rather than a transactional approach, to working with artists and communities.

This plan organizes recommendations for TTC's arts and culture activities in three categories.

The first set of recommendations, **Arts and Culture Project Types**, outlines a toolkit of approaches that TTC can follow to implement arts and culture projects.

The second set of recommendations, **Arts and Culture Place Types**, explores locational considerations for arts and culture activities. It describes several typical types of landscapes and places along the Trail, considerations for locating arts and culture activities in those spaces, and themes that would be most appropriate in those spaces.

The third set of recommendations, **Arts and Culture Projects**, outlines specific projects that TTC can launch over the next three years to test an arts and culture program in practice. These recommendations are just a starting point; new projects can be added each year, as opportunities arise, through processes outlined later in this plan.

The toolkit emphasizes a variety of flexible tools, and the three-year plan outlines an experimental, iterative process. The first years of the arts and culture program will be characterized by learning through doing, by strengthening capacity and expanding relationships, and by laying the groundwork for future ambitions.

### Arts and Culture Project Types

For planning purposes, TTC will organize its thinking around six types of projects:

- Permanent Artworks
- Temporary Artworks
- Performance Artworks
- Artist Residences
- Artists in Community Engagement, Planning and Design Projects
- Arts and Culture Programming and Events

The following section of this plan outlines each of these categories of projects and general considerations for implementing them.

## Permanent Artworks

### What

Permanent Artworks are created in a variety of formats, primarily visual arts such as sculpture or murals. As such, they are created in durable media with the intention of remaining in place for a very long time. Integrated and functional artworks are discussed in the section, “Artists in Community Engagement, Planning and Design Projects.”

### Why

Permanent Artworks can become longstanding legacies, features of the landscape that are experienced over the course of many years by generations of users. At any particular moment, they can provide insight into the history, culture, and environment; can offer surprise, whimsy and delight; and otherwise enhance the physical infrastructure of the Trail. Over the long term, they become embedded in people’s perceptions of a place, creating a deep imprint on individual and cultural memories, and creating reference points for generations to come.

### Where, When

The Trail Conservancy should consider commissioning Permanent Artworks along the Trail using the following criteria.

- Permanent Artworks are encouraged in locations that provide transitions between the Trail environment and the city, such as trailheads and junctions with other trails, and the Seaholm Waterfront facility.
- Permanent artworks should be considered in conjunction with TTC capital plans and improvements, subject to the constraints described below.
- Permanent Artworks could be considered in areas of cultural and historical significance, especially where there is a possibility of exploring an untold story about the history of the Trail or an area it passes through.

Permanent Artworks require additional considerations and may be prohibited in the following areas:

- Areas designated as floodplain and other types of critical locations<sup>13</sup>, where arts and culture activities must be considered in light of floodplain and other restrictions.
- Areas planned for ecological restoration, such as meadow restoration or reforestation, where arts and culture activities must be reviewed in light of their impact on those processes.
- Areas where it is known that there are capital investments planned.
- Areas constrained by underground or above-ground utilities, or easements.
- Areas that are congested and where a permanent artwork would provide an obstruction or a hazard to everyday Trail use.
- Areas where the safety of the artwork would be jeopardized by a known temporary use, such as a recurring festival.

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<sup>13</sup> Floodplain information can be found at <https://www.austintexas.gov/page/floodpro>. TTC’s *Urban Forestry and Natural Area Management Guidelines* documents features designated as “Critical Environmental Features” in Title 25, section 8 of the City of Austin Code of Ordinances.

#### Who, How

- For the first three years of the implementation of this plan, The Trail Conservancy should refrain from directly commissioning or entertaining proposals for Permanent Artworks. Instead, TTC should focus on other project types outlined in this plan.
- The City of Austin will incorporate public art into the facilities it builds in the Trail area, as per the city's AIPP ordinance and policies.
- Permanent Artworks proposed by others would be reviewed through the City's donations policy, but should be discouraged for the first three years of the implementation of this plan.

#### Special Considerations for Permanent Artworks

- Permanent Artworks will require careful consideration in their planning and commissioning to ensure that they are consistent with City requirements, TTC operations and future plans and that they will be an addition that is welcomed by stakeholders. Criteria are listed below.
- Areas being considered for a permanent artwork should be tested first, if possible, with a temporary artwork, as a way of identifying issues that might emerge with a permanent artwork.
- Permanent Artworks must be commissioned and approved through the City's existing public art policies and processes (AIPP, PARD).
  - Permanent Artworks commissioned by AIPP would become a long-term obligation of AIPP, in regard to maintenance, conservation, and potential relocation or deaccessioning.
  - Permanent Artworks commissioned by others, including TTC, would be considered donated artworks and would be reviewed through City of Austin donation policies. As the agency designed by the City with operational and maintenance responsibility for the Trail, TTC would be a key stakeholder in the review. The criteria above should be used in evaluating the locations for such proposals.

## Temporary Artworks

### What

Temporary Artworks are meant to be on display for a limited amount of time, generally less than a year.

Temporary Artworks can be new commissions or loaned artworks. Commissioned Temporary Artworks should be site-specific, have a short lifespan and use low-cost materials. They can be created in almost any medium, from sculpture and murals to photographic, sound, light or video installations. (Original site-specific performative artworks (such as music, dance and performances) are discussed in the next section, “Performance Artworks.”) Loaned Temporary Artworks should be sited because of their resonance with a location, and should be made of durable materials that can withstand installation, deinstallation and public exposure.

### Why

Temporary Artworks are much more flexible than Permanent Artworks. They can offer opportunities to a wider variety of artists, allow for more exploration with ideas, be located more flexibly and cost less than permanent artworks. They can take advantage of seasonal or time of day variations and offer subtle engagements depending on their scale and placement. They can allow for artworks to be placed in a space without impacting the permanent function of the space. Sometimes, they are experiments to test the feasibility of potential permanent projects.

### Where, When

Depending on their nature, scale and intended duration, Temporary Artworks could be installed in many locations along the Trail. In order to balance arts and culture activities with other considerations, TTC will focus on the following approaches for commissioning Temporary Artworks.

#### TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS

TTC will designate specific areas as particularly desirable for “Temporary Exhibitions,” which involve the display of one or more artworks for several months at a time. The starting point for an exhibition might be a theme, such as artworks that relate to a type of natural phenomena (for example, how light and sound present themselves in nature) or to the history and culture of an area.

Temporary exhibitions can be organized through a variety of entities, and can include new commissions or loaned artworks. An example is Fortlandia,<sup>14</sup> which TTC has presented in collaboration with the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center each year for several years.

#### CREATIVE ACTIVATIONS

TTC will designate unique locations for displays of “Creative Activations,” or temporary, site-specific artworks or installations that activate unusual spaces, such as under the Drake Bridge. A “Creative Activation” project could involve a variety of approaches, including sculpture, mural, video, sound, light and mixed-media. They could be designed by artists, designers or interdisciplinary teams.

#### LOANED ARTWORKS

In addition to commissioning Temporary Exhibitions and Creative Activations, TTC will consider Loaned Artworks through a structured application and review process overseen by TTC. The Collection Management Plan will include guidelines for this process.

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<sup>14</sup> Each year, the Trail Conservancy collaborates with the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center to install an original, temporary sculptural artwork along the trail, as part of Fortlandia, a larger exhibition that is staged at the center

#### GENERAL CRITERIA

TTC should follow these general criteria for locating Temporary Artworks:

- Temporary Artworks should be located in areas that allow for adequate opportunity for Trail users to access and enjoy the artworks.
- Temporary Artworks generally should not be located in areas that result in create a direct obstruction or hazard to users of the Trail or adjacent recreational facilities, such as ballfields.
  - As an exception, Creative Activation projects can be located in areas, such as under the Drake Bridge, where movement along the Trail might be slowed but not blocked. In these circumstances, the duration of the project should be limited and precautions should be taken to warn Trail users approaching the area.
- Temporary Artworks can be located in flood zones only if they have structural certification and are approved by WPD
- Temporary Artworks can be located near Critical Environmental Features or in ecological restoration areas only if they do not disturb those areas, or if the disturbance is reversible.
- Temporary Artworks should be located in areas, and in such a manner, that minimize any damage to the environment (such as damaged created by installation, de-installation or viewership) is reversible.

#### Who, How

**Temporary Exhibitions** could be organized by a variety of entities:

- TTC can intentionally curate temporary exhibitions.
- TTC can identify a temporary exhibition theme and/or location and seek arts organizations or curators to to produce the exhibition.
- TTC can invite proposals from arts organizations or curators for temporary exhibitions.
- Generally, artists for Temporary Exhibitions should be identified and selected through the Open Entry / Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process described in TTC's Collections Management Policy, though alternative methods can be proposedd by arts organizations or curators.

**Creative Activations** should be organized by TTC:

- TTC will identify a Creative Activation Zone from the possibilities outlined in this plan.
- Generally, artists and teams for Creative Activations should be identified and selected through the Open Entry / Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process described in TTC's Collections Management Policy.

Proposals for individual **Loaned Artworks** would be reviewed according to the process in the Collection Management Policy.

#### Special Considerations

- TTC will commission Temporary Artworks following the processes outlined in its Collection Management Plan, including guidelines for reviewing and approving temporary artworks.
- Temporary Artworks should be thoroughly documented, as the documentation will be the only permanent record of the project.

## Performance Artworks

### What

Performance Artworks are original, site-specific artworks created in musical, dance, literary, performative, or similar media; in that sense they are a special type of “temporary” artwork. Performance Artworks are created to be performed in a particular place at a particular time; they can be presented once or as a series as long as they are performed at the site for which they were created (if repeated over time, they may be recategorized as events, as described below).

### Why

- Performance Artworks expand the range of artists who can explore the Trail as a basis of their work.
- Performance Artworks can expand the range of interpretations of the culture, environment and history of the Trail.
- Performance Artworks provide a way for communities whose culture is expressed in forms other than visual art to connect to the Trail, thus supporting the goal of attracting people who don’t normally use the Trail or come to the parks.
- Performance Artworks can provide new ways for people to engage with the Trail, through artistic experiences that engage other senses than our sight.
- Performance Artworks can provide TTC with a creative way to commemorate important milestones, such as anniversaries or ribbon-cuttings.

### Where, When

TTC should consider these general opportunities for locating Performance Artworks:

- Performance Artworks should be considered in places that have special resonance and inspiration for artists.
- Performance Artworks can be mobile, such as processions or sequential projects.
- Performance Artworks can be commissioned to help celebrate major Trail milestones, such as openings of new facilities.

TTC should consider these general criteria for locating Performance Artworks:

- Performance Artworks should be prioritized for easily accessible areas, at times of day and days of the week that would be accessible to larger audiences (early evenings, weekends).
- Performance Artworks should minimize obstructions or blockage of movement along the Trail, in terms of the amount of space the performance occupies and the duration of the performance. Performances should be organized so that Trail users can be given adequate warning.
- Performance Artworks should be located in areas that provide easy access for artists and equipment, and the storage of equipment, with minimal disruption to Trail operations.
- Performance Artworks should minimize the amount of sound, light and power necessary for the presentation of the artwork.

### Who, How

TTC will develop Performance Artworks in several ways:

- TTC can intentionally commission Performance Artworks, independently or as part of a larger project. Generally, these should be solicited through an application process such as the Open Entry



process described in TTCs Collection Management Policy, which is a separate document that accompanies this plan.

- TTC can collaborate with arts organizations or curators to produce Performance Artworks, independently or as part of a larger project.
- TCC can consider proposals by others to create and stage Performance Artworks, through a Call for Proposals process. Generally, these should be solicited through an application process such as the Open Entry process described in TTCs Collection Management Policy. Proposals should be reviewed early enough in a given year so that the presenters have time to prepare a performance for the subsequent year.

#### Special Considerations

- TTC will commission Performance Artworks following the processes outlined in its Collection Management Plan, including guidelines for reviewing and approving temporary public art.
- Performance Artworks proposed by others would be through a structured application and review process overseen by TTC, as outlined in its Collection Management Plan.
- Performance Artworks should be thoroughly documented, as the documentation will be the only permanent record of the project.
- Performance Artworks should be low-cost or free of charge to attendees.

## Artist Residencies

### What

In the broadest sense, an Artist Residency provides an artist with time, space and resources to work on the research and development of their practice or a project.

In a public art context, an Artist Residency is based on the concept of “mutual assistance,” whereby both an artist and a host organization contribute resources and benefit from the other’s involvement, rather than a transactional process in which the artist is producing work that is commissioned or acquired.

For TTC, an Artist Residency is a program model in which it works with artists through an open-ended process to help advance its mission and achieve its goals, while also providing artists with opportunities to develop their artistic practices.

### Why

TTC should consider organizing artist residencies for the following reasons:

- An Artist Residency can explore issues and build community connections in ways that traditional permanent or temporary public art projects cannot.
- An Artist Residency allows artists and the public to explore relationships between arts, culture, environment and history in engaging, educational ways that are sensitive to the impact that projects can have on the Trail.
- An Artist Residency can provide a stepping stone for artists to gain experience in public art or civic practice.
- An Artist Residency is a flexible model that can be shaped to the needs of TTC and the artist, resulting in unique and impactful outcomes.
- An Artist Residency focuses as much on processes as it does artistic outcomes or products, thereby having a transformational impact on all involved.

An Artist Residency could be organized around a variety of approaches, such as:

- a particular theme — such as environmental justice (decommissioned Holly power plant), habitat restoration, water systems or urban food systems (Festival Beach Community Garden)
- a specific area (or type of place) along the Trail
- a particular aspect of the Trail experience, such as natural process, color, light or the social interactions that occur along the Trail
- a community-based theme, such as community histories or enhancing volunteer participation

### Where, When

An Artist Residency would be established for a fixed period of time, usually a minimum of one year. (The overall planning, residency and evaluation process could take the better part of two years.) The artist could be assigned to work within a TTC program or within an organization that is in a community connected to the Trail and which with TTC would like to expand its collaborative relationship.

An Artist Residency should be based in a particular location that provides work space and meeting space for the artist. This could be a location in a facility along the Trail (such as the DAC) or in a nearby community, as long as the location provides a base of operations for a Trail-related project.

#### Who, How

- TTC could sponsor an Artist Residency directly, or collaborate with a city agency or non-governmental agency, or host a residency managed by another entity.
- An Artist Residency should be facilitated by an experienced public art professional, who would support the artist in all aspects of the project. TTC should dedicate adequate time for planning, conducting and evaluating each residency it sponsors; an entire residency cycle could take two years.

#### Outcomes

Outcomes could take a variety of forms, including:

- permanent, temporary or performance art projects in any media
- demonstration projects and prototypes (related to TTC programs) that could later be expanded
- research, documentation, exhibits, educational material and public events

## Artists in Community Engagement, Planning and Design Projects

### What

Involve artists in the planning processes and the design of future Trail improvements (such as environmental features, public facilities and infrastructure) that are being led by TTC. Artists could play a variety of roles, including:

- helping organize public engagement processes that TTC is leading
- advising on opportunities for incorporating public art in future physical improvements that TTC is planning
- collaborating on the design of built features such as landscapes, buildings and functional elements that TTC is building
- creating site-specific decorative features for park infrastructure (such as retaining walls or shade structures) that TTC is building

### Why

**Community Engagement Processes:** Artists can provide insight into all aspects of a community engagement process, including helping to articulate the overall goals, designing how engagement will work, and facilitating and documenting interaction with the public. In addition, artists from the community can build on trusted relationships and cultural practices to give community members confidence about participating in a planning process led by an organization they may not know so well.

**Planning Processes:** Artists can bring insight into what opportunities will be most rewarding as well as most feasible for artists to work on. Involving artists early in a planning project is a form of power-sharing, it sets the stage for collaboration and empowering artists to have a role throughout the project.

**Design Processes:** Artists can collaborate with architects, landscape architects and other designers to incorporate artistic vision into the design of buildings, landscapes and functional objects. Involving artists can broaden the conceptual and aesthetic considerations for a project, and can also be a way of providing artists with opportunities to learn about design and construction processes.

**Artist-Designed Aesthetic Features:** Artists can enhance the visual appearance of everyday infrastructure, incorporating narratives, ideas, materials and colors that add place specificity, and/or reflect community voices.

### Where, When

These approaches can be considered in any situation where TTC is undertaking a community engagement, planning or design process. In regard to planning, artists should be engaged at the earliest stage of planning, in the programming or concept development phases, so that recommendations can be included in the schematic design.

### Who, How

Artists could work directly with TTC or could be contracted with its planning and design consultants.

### Special Considerations

Artists and consultants (planners and designers) working collaboratively on projects should have clear scopes that delineates each entity's roles and responsibilities as well as support the collaborative efforts of the team

TTC should play a strong role in the approval of an artist that is being selected by a consultant, to ensure there has been a fair and open process and that the proper artist qualifications are being considered.

Artists who are working on design teams should be contracted with as design professionals. The aesthetic contributions of an artist who is collaborating on a design project should not be considered public art, in the context of City public policies or copyright and moral rights provisions that pertain to artworks.

Artists who are asked to create aesthetic features should be selected through processes outlined in the Collection Management Policy and contracted with as design professionals. The aesthetic contributions of an artist who is collaborating on a design feature should not be considered public art, in the context of City public art policies, though the artist should retain copyright and morals rights to the work they create.

## Arts and Culture Programming and Events

### What

“Arts and Culture Programming and Events” is an umbrella term for several general types of planned activities, including but not limited to:

**Arts Events** are artistic presentations in a variety of disciplines (such as music, dance and theatre) that are not original commissions or site-specific artworks, but are performed along the Trail for the benefit of the public. The “Music on the Trail” series presented by TTC is an example.

**Arts Programming** means organized activities that provide enriched experiences of arts and culture projects. Examples could include artist talks and art walks.

**Exhibitions** are curated displays of art, usually presented in an interior space. An example would be a photo exhibition presented in an indoor gallery or in an outdoor viewing area.

**Cultural Programs** means events, programming and exhibitions that feature the cultural traditions and expressions of communities in Austin, as well as explorations of how different communities value and use the Trail.

**Trail Stories** means the ongoing program of collecting people’s individual stories about their connection to the Trail. Stories could be collected in a variety of formats (such as writing, audio or video) as long as they can be exhibited and archived. “Trail Stories” can be crowd-sourced or collected through an intentional, curated process.

### Why

- Arts and Culture Programming and Events can invite people’s involvement with the Trail, in ways other than visiting for recreation or leisure purposes.
- Arts and Culture Programming and Events can deepen people’s appreciation and engagement with the arts and culture resources along the Trail.
- Arts Events can provide opportunity for artists to present their creative work along the Trail, even if they are not creating original commissions.
- Cultural Programs can create a sense of belonging for all communities, including those who have in the past felt the Trail was not for them; a broader understanding of the cultural traditions of communities along the Trail; and new ways of understanding how different groups of people would use and value the Trail.

### Where, When

- Arts Programming and Events could occur in a variety of locations.
  - Most of these locations would be along the Trail, in places that appropriate to the topic, or places that provide a connection to a neighborhood adjacent to a park
  - Occasionally a program (such as an artist talk or cultural program) could occur in a nearby neighborhood as a way of connecting better with people in that neighborhood.
- TTC should both identify and cultivate regular locations for Arts Programming and Events, while also being open to proposals for “pop-up” events in unusual locations.
- TTC should identify and cultivate regular locations for Arts Programming, Exhibitions and Cultural Programming. These generally would be in existing TTC and City facilities, such as the Seaholm Waterfront and the Lorraine “Grandma” Camacho Activity Center.

## Who, How

- Generally, TTC should plan and organize Arts and Culture Programming and Events. Major programs and events would be identified through the Annual Work Plan process, but there should also be flexibility to initiate smaller programs and events on an ad hoc basis.
- TTC should accept proposals from others for Arts and Culture Programming and Events and review them on a regular basis.

## Special Considerations

- TTC should develop overall guidelines for Arts and Culture Programming and Events, including preferred locations, time of day, size and allowable equipment.
- Arts and Culture Programming and Events should be free for attendees.
- For Arts Events, TTC should experiment with different locations along the Trail, and different times of day and week, to see what locations and to see what works and doesn't work. Locational considerations should include:
  - Ease of access from nearby Trail entrances or trailheads
  - Accessibility / visibility without leaving the Trail
  - Ease of accommodations for people with disabilities
  - Does not interfere with Trail use, operations or environmental management
  - Appropriateness of site to the nature of the performance

For example, Music on the Trail locations might be on heavily travelled, easily accessible Trail segments. Site specific performances, such as a dance or a play, might be in less travelled locations, but relevant to the subject of the performance.

- For Arts Events, TTC should experiment different with approaches to amplification to improve audience experience without disturbing the area where the event is located.

## Arts and Culture Place Types

Decisions about where arts and culture projects and activities should be located along the Trail will require thoughtful consideration of many factors — among them environmental, operational and community contexts. Each of these factors provide guidance for areas where projects could be encouraged, considerations to be addressed for projects located in those areas, and areas where projects should be discouraged.

The approximately 300 acres The Trail Conservancy is responsible have a diverse range of characteristics and cannot be comprehensively classified. But there are several general characteristics of places that should be considered when evaluating sites for proposed projects. The following section describes several general place types, operational considerations for arts and culture activities in those places, and what the thematic possibilities in those places might be.

### Environmentally Sensitive Landscapes

Environmentally-sensitive landscapes are those that have been designated as areas of critical environmental concern, designated for environmental remediation projects, or understood by users to have the environmental qualities that they strongly associate with the Trail.

#### Floodplains and Critical Environmental Features

The areas of highest environmental sensitivity are floodplain areas,<sup>15</sup> Critical Water Quality Zones<sup>16</sup> and Critical Environmental Features.<sup>17</sup> There are stringent requirements on what can be located in these areas (critical water zones and environmental features require buffers, for example) and how to install artworks in these areas (floodplains have special structural foundation requirements). Some types of projects may not be allowed at all. The Watershed Protection Department and the Department of Environmental Protection manage these reviews.

#### Ecological Restoration Areas

Another group of environmentally sensitive areas is places that are identified for environmental remediation projects. These include areas designated as “Grow Zones,” which are riparian areas designated by WPD and PARD to be converted from mowed lawn to woodland. These also include areas designated in TTC’s *Urban Forestry Guidelines* for woodland restoration, woodland expansion, savannah restoration and aquatic restoration.

Most of the area under TTC’s jurisdiction is considered to be within one or more of these environmental remediation zones. In these areas, the impact of the art should be evaluated against the plans for the area, and the artwork should be planned to have as little impact as possible on the remediation process.

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<sup>15</sup> Most of the area under TTCs jurisdiction are within the floodplain, except the Rainey St. Trailhead, International Shores, Lakeshore Park, and locations within Zilker Park, the Seaholm Intake area, the Auditorium Shores dog park, Festival Beach (small sections further from the Trail) and Holly Lakefront Trail (at the decommissioned Holly power plant). For more information, visit <https://www.austintexas.gov/page/floodpro>.

<sup>16</sup> The Critical Water Quality Zone (CWQZ) is addressed in the two primary codes for City of Austin development: the [Land Development Code \(LDC\)](#) and the [Environmental Criteria Manual \(ECM\)](#).

<sup>17</sup> Critical Environmental Features are defined in Title 25, Section 8 of the City of Austin Code of Ordinances. Several were documented in TTC’s *Urban Forestry Guidelines*.



Consideration should be given not only to the installation of the artwork, but also how the public would access the artwork.

The sensitivity of these areas notwithstanding, they offer rich opportunities for artistic projects that explore ecological processes, particularly long-term processes of ecological restoration and succession. An artwork might be planned, for example, so that the way it is seen changes as the way that the landscape around it evolves. Artists can work with ephemeral (and less intrusive media) such as light, wind and sound.

### **Areas With a Strong Natural Aesthetic**

The areas that people associate most strongly with the Trail and value the most are those that have a strong natural aesthetic. This is a subjective categorization of space, as it depends on the ways that people perceive and value places along the Trail, but based on survey responses it is possible to generalize what this means. More than anything, people appreciate wooded areas and places where they can see and connect to the water. People also appreciate areas where the landscape foregrounds views of the city's skyline, and they appreciate areas where they can intimately experience natural phenomena, such as gradations of light and color and the sounds of nature.

Just as it is hard to concretely define this type of space, it is hard to comprehensively map where these spaces are located. As with restoration areas, proposals for arts and culture projects should be evaluated against how they impact the sensed quality of the place where they are located. There should be more openness to temporary projects than permanent ones, in places where there would be an impact on beloved experiential qualities of the Trail.

These places also offer potent opportunities for projects that explore all manner of the experiential qualities of the place – light, color, sound, wind, texture, the forms of natural features. They offer opportunities how the traditions of different cultural groups are related to the natural environment. Artworks that minimize their physical footprint, while maximizing the ways in which they engage viewers sensory perceptions, would be most appropriate. These are also areas where artists can be asked to create design features for infrastructure and functional elements that are being created through Trail improvement projects.

### **The Trail**

The Trail serves many users, from walkers and joggers to recreational bicyclists and commuters. It also serves people who want to access the Lake for fishing, for putting in a boat or simply for watching what is happening on the water. In addition, the Trail provides access to community recreation facilities and special events, and it serves a small number of concessionaires, particularly those that provide boat rentals.

### **Trail Path**

The Trail Path consists of the main, ten-mile-long path that encircles the Lake, as well as the side paths that connect to the City, Lake overlooks and other features.

Almost all of the Trail Path is a packed dirt surface, with short segments of poured concrete and a few areas of concrete brick pavers. (There are also several boardwalk segments, described below.) New segments are being constructed of poured concrete to meet accessibility standards.

The Trail varies in width, but even at its narrowest it allows for two people (pedestrians, bicyclists) to pass each other comfortably. The path crosses several bridges (most significantly, a pedestrian walkway cantilevered beneath the Mopac bridge) and crosses Longhorn Dam as a sidewalk to Pleasant Valley Rd.

In some areas there is congestion and conflict due to the volume of use and capacity of the Trail. TTC's recent *Butler Trail Safety and Mobility Study* inventoried numerous areas along the Trail that users identified as hazardous because of factors such as narrow Trail widths, mode conflicts, or other types of conflicts. Public input during the arts and culture planning process expressed concern that art projects could make matters worse by physically impinging on the use of the Trail.

Arts and culture projects should avoid creating obstructions that block the use of the Trail and situations that increase conflicts between different users. Arts and culture projects should especially avoid the hazardous locations identified in the *Butler Trail Safety and Mobility Study*, and should be careful to not interfere with the operations of community recreation facilities and concessionaires.

### **Boardwalk**

The Boardwalk is one of the most unique features of the Trail. It consists of four segments, on the south side of the Lake, that are built as a path over the water to make connections around private property and physical obstructions on the shoreline. The Boardwalk, which was constructed as a pre-cast concrete deck built on pilings in the lake, comprises 1.3 miles of the Trail and includes seven overlooks. It was completed in 2014.

The Boardwalk offers stunning views of the Austin skyline, as well as up-close views of the water and the shoreline. Because most of the Boardwalk is built directly over the Lake, it lacks the shade that the rest of the Trail does and can be breezier. This is one of the busier segments of the Trail, and because the path is constrained in width, there is more potential for conflicts.

While the Boardwalk offers interesting opportunities for Temporary Artworks that work with light, wind, sound and color, or for Performance Artworks, the location and scope of projects must take into account user safety.

### **Shoreline Connections and Access Points**

Shoreline connections are short side paths or spur routes that provide connections to the shoreline. Shoreline connections are numerous, and range in scale from the spurs that lead to Peace Point and to the North Shore and Longhorn Point Overlooks. (Side paths that provide upland connections are discussed in the following section.)

Shoreline access points are generally spaces apart from and sometimes secluded from the bustle of the Trail. They range from boat launches to gazebos, broad overlooks to secluded seating areas, and informal viewing points. All of these places provide opportunities for visitors to appreciate the light, sights and sounds of nature as well as activities on the Lake.

Artworks located near shoreline connections and access points should be carefully considered in terms of how those spaces function and how they are experienced.

In these areas, the best opportunity will be to ask artists can to create design features for infrastructure and functional elements that are being created through Trail improvement projects.

If temporary artworks are being considered in these places, artworks that heighten people's engagement with the experiential qualities of the place – light, color, sound, wind, texture, the forms of natural features – are most appropriate.

## Programmable Spaces

Programmable Spaces are places where planned activities occur. These activities can include large civic festivals, neighborhood events, organized sports, or smaller-scale pop-up programming.

### Civic Spaces

Many of the parks along Lady Bird Lake have long been regarded as areas for programming of city or regional significance, particularly Auditorium Shores, Butler Park and Zilker Park. Festival Beach has a tradition of being a location for events like these, but they generally have more of a community than a commercial focus, are less frequent and are of smaller scale. These spaces are characterized by access and infrastructure, such as parking and transit, that can support larger crowds.

Civic spaces are potential locations for permanent artworks or more ambitious temporary installations, particularly artworks that are more iconic. Artworks in these areas must be considered in the context of plans that have been developed for these parks and the needs of the institutions that are located within some of them. The themes of these artwork can refer to a specific aspect of a site, such as its history, or broader civic narratives.

### Neighborhood Spaces

Neighborhood spaces are parks along the Trail that primarily serve one or more surrounding neighborhoods. These include Festival Beach, Lakeshore and International Shores. Some of them, such as Festival Beach, have rich histories and traditions that require consideration whenever new arts and culture activities are planned. Also, these areas have less infrastructure for supporting large crowds, therefore, activities that attract large crowds have a and a greater potential for conflict with adjacent neighborhoods.

Neighborhood spaces are generally appropriate for temporary artworks, such as planned exhibitions like Fortlandia. They could potentially serve as the location of permanent artworks that are related to themes of important to the adjacent communities.

### Recreational Spaces

Recreational spaces generally include recreation facilities managed by PARD, recreation facilities built along the trail by TTC, and recreation-oriented businesses operated by concessionaires. They also include boat ramps.

TTC constructed a recreation area at International Shores and is building a new recreation area at Butler Shores. The primary recreation spaces along the Trail are the ballfields in the area of Austin High School, Butler Park and the Camacho Activity Center. The primary concessionaires are the Austin Rowing Club, the Expedition School, the Texas Rowing Center, Capital Cruises and Lone Star Riverboat.

Artworks in these areas, or on Trail segments near these areas, should be considered in the context of the activities that can occur in these locations, particularly uses that have peak times. Artworks should avoid conflicts with these activities and operations.

### Pauses

“Pauses” are places along the Trail that provide space for people to step off the Trail and gather, rest or view the scenery. Some of these places have been intentionally *designed* with pop-up activities in mind, and some of these places have been *adapted* for such use.

Examples of places *designed* for pop-up events include Brent Grulke Plaza, Brazos Bluff and an outdoor seating area performance near the International Shores terminus of the boardwalk. Examples of places

that are sometimes *adapted* for pop-up activities include the spiral ramp that leads to the Pfluger Bridge and the passage under the Drake Bridge (north side). Examples of places that could also be considered for future activations are the passage under I-35 (South Side), the area near the future Holly Trailhead, the Holly Shore Trail Overlook, the Johnson Creek restoration area (under Mopac) and the entry feature where the Trail connects to Eilers Trail to Deep Eddy.

“Pauses” are generally appropriate for temporary artworks, including creative site-specific installations, and for arts and culture programming and events.

## **Gateway Locations / Trailheads**

Gateway Locations / Trailheads are key locations where the Trail connects to the City or to the regional trail network. They are places of orientation, transition meeting and welcome, sometimes accompanied by services such as bike stations, water fountains, restrooms and information kiosks; they are often places that become associated with the identity of the community they serve. Trailheads are always a strong candidate for public art installations.

Gateway Locations / Trailheads offer important opportunities for public art to mark places where the Trail connects to the broader world, and to help address the need for more wayfinding that was identified in the *Butler Trail Safety and Mobility Study*. While the artworks at these locations could have an element of site-specificity, they can also be conceived of as a collection of artworks that have a connected language even though they are built out over many years.

## **City Connections**

The Trail generally connects with the city at trailhead locations. The Rainey Street Trailhead has been the focus of improvements recently, and the Holly Trailhead and Lakeshore Trailhead are projects under future consideration.

The Trail also has numerous connections with paths that lead to bridges that cross the Lake – I-35, Congress Avenue, First Street, Lamar Boulevard, Mopac. In most of these areas, there is a potential location for an artwork that marks the passage from Trail to City. Because of the nature of these locations, there is usually little conflict with the Trail function or the environmentally sensitive features described above.

Permanent artworks at trailheads can speak to the place that they are connecting to, by exploring the history, the people or the future vision of a place. They can also draw on historic and cultural ideas of crossing thresholds, elevating the experience of transporting oneself from the urban realm to the natural environment of the Trail.

## **Regional Trail Connections**

The Trail is a hub that intersects with a number of other trails that act as spokes that connect far into the city. On the north side, these include the Johnson Creek Greenbelt, Shoal Creek, Waller Creek, and the East Link Trail. On the south side, these include the Barton Creek Greenbelt Trail and future connections to the West Bouldin Creek Greenbelt and Blunn Creek Greenbelt. To the west, there will be a connection past Deep Eddy, and on the east side there is a connection to Roy G. Guerrero Colorado River Metro Park.

These are major connections in the City’s growing trail system and should be identified as such. Permanent artworks at these junctions can help reinforce the idea of these trails’ connectivity throughout Austin, and communicate a sense of the identity of the places these trails are connecting to.

## **Part Three: Three-Year Work Plan**

## Arts and Culture Three-Year Workplan

This section of the plan sets out a framework of projects for TTC to implement over the next three years. It identifies key project opportunities, outlining goals for the projects, processes for undertaking them, and other considerations.

The projects listed here cover a full range of approaches for the Arts and Culture Program, so that after three years TTC will be able to evaluate the pros and cons of different type of projects. The projects here do not cover projects that will be managed by Art in Public Places and for which TTC will be a stakeholder.

The Trail Conservancy should consider the first few years of its Arts and Culture Program as a time for exploring and testing the tools and processes set out in this plan, as well as for extending its relationships, particularly with both nearby communities and with Austin’ arts and culture community in general.

These are the highlights of the three-year framework:

- Opportunities to incorporate artists in two physical projects in the TTC pipeline: the upcoming Holly Trailhead and the enhancement of the Seaholm Waterfront project.
- Two approaches to temporary artworks: a signature “creative activation” project and a multi-artist exhibition of temporary works.
- A performance artwork that would celebrate the opening of the Holly Project.
- A pilot artist residency.
- The continuation and expansion of ongoing initiatives — the popular Music on the Trail series, the Trail Stories project and the Fortlandia partnership with the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center.

Each project is discussed in the following section. The projects are summarized in the table below.

## Proposed Three-Year Arts and Culture Workplan

This is a proposed list of projects that is dependent on funding and timing.

	2023	2024	2025
<b>Permanent Artwork</b>			
Holly Project		See Temporary “Project Celebration”	
Seaholm Waterfront			PLANNING Identify opportunities for public art during planning and design phases
<b>Temporary Artwork</b>			
Project Celebration		PLANNING / IMPLEMENTATION Art activation for dedication of Holly Project	
Temporary Projects RFQ	PLANNING / IMPLEMENTATION Establish a curatorial theme, consider locational focus	PLANNING / IMPLEMENTATION Establish a curatorial theme, consider locational focus	PLANNING / IMPLEMENTATION Establish a curatorial theme, consider locational focus
Creative Activation Zone RFQ/RFP	PLANNING / IMPLEMENTATION Identify a location, seek proposals	PLANNING / IMPLEMENTATION Identify a location, seek proposals	PLANNING / IMPLEMENTATION Identify a location, seek proposals
Partnerships	IMPLEMENTATION Fortlandia	IMPLEMENTATION Fortlandia	IMPLEMENTATION Fortlandia

<b>Artist Residency</b>			
Artist Residency		<b>PLANNING</b> Plan first residency: Theme, partner, outputs, outcomes, funding Implement residency	<b>IMPLEMENTATION</b> Implement residency <b>PLANNING</b> Evaluate residency and prepare for next residency
<b>Artists in Community Engagement / Planning / Design</b>			
Holly Area Projects: Play Area, Trailhead, Trail Enhancements	<b>PLANNING</b> Organize artist advisory group	<b>IMPLEMENTATION</b> Artist group advises engagement and planning processes	<b>IMPLEMENTATION</b> Artist group advises engagement and planning processes
Holly Murals	<b>PLANNING / IMPLEMENTATION</b> Collaborate with PARD on documentation and restoration	<b>PLANNING / IMPLEMENTATION</b> Collaborate with PARD on documentation and restoration	<b>PLANNING / IMPLEMENTATION</b> Collaborate with PARD on documentation and restoration
<b>Programming / Events</b>			
Music on the Trail	<b>PLANNING / IMPLEMENTATION</b> Explore additional locations and formats	<b>PLANNING / IMPLEMENTATION</b> Explore additional locations and formats	<b>PLANNING / IMPLEMENTATION</b> Explore additional locations and formats
Trail Stories	<b>PLANNING / IMPLEMENTATION</b> Continue, expand collection and presentation	<b>PLANNING / IMPLEMENTATION</b> Continue, expand collection and presentation	<b>PLANNING / IMPLEMENTATION</b> Continue, expand collection and presentation



## Holly Project

### Type

Temporary Artwork: Project Celebration

### What

TTC is completing a project that will provide seating, water access to the Lake and ecological restoration along the newly-opened Trail segment along the shoreline at the decommissioned Holly power point. TTC should commission artists to create an original performance (musical, dance, theatrical performance, procession, celebratory work or similar format) to celebrate the opening.

### Why

Celebrate the opening of this public space.

Provide an opportunity for East Austin artists to share stories about their community and their culture.

### Where, When

Fishing pier on the newly-opened trail segment that bypasses the Holly Power Plant.

Spring, 2024.

### Who, How

TTC should commission an original musical, dance, theatrical or cultural performance to accompany the opening of the fishing pier. TTC should commission artists in East Austin to create and perform the work.

### Outcomes

- An original expression of what this place means to the community it will serve, through the lens of that community's unique history and traditions.
- A stronger sense of welcome and belonging, and lay the foundation for lasting memories, for the community this project will serve.

### Special Considerations

TTC should document the performance through audio and video, as well as through interviews with performers and audience members, which will serve as a permanent record for the project. The documentation of the performance should be archived on the TTC arts and culture web site.

## Holly Area Projects: Play Area, Trailhead, Trail Enhancements

### Type

Artists in Community Engagement, Planning and Design Projects

### What

TTC is planning to construct a new trailhead at the northeast corner of the former Holly Power Plant, where a new lakeside trail segment has been opened. The trailhead will be funded by TTC and will be one of its major projects over the next few years. TTC is also planning for a new play area adjacent to this location, and for landscape enhancements to the recently constructed trail segment.

### Why

In addition to the general significance of trailheads, the Holly trailhead has particular significance to the adjacent community, which has not had the formal connection to the Trail or the other benefits that a trailhead offers. It is an opportunity to offer warmth and welcome from East Austin and to present the community's stories and history to Trail users. This trailhead also offers unique design opportunities, including the power plant perimeter walls that have been preserved.

The new play area will be one of several along the Trail and will be an important resource for the nearby community. Play areas are common locations for playful, artist-designed features.

### Where, When

TTC's planned trailhead will be located at the junction of its recently completed Holy Power Plant bypass segment, and the trail segment in Holly Shores. The trailhead will be accessible to Metz Park and Holly Street, and the neighborhoods beyond. The play area will be in the general vicinity of this trailhead, and the landscape improvements will be long the newly constructed Trail segment to the south.

The project is in the early stages of planning and neighborhood engagement, and should be completed in several years.

### Who, How

TTC should lead the process of incorporating artists in the planning and design of these improvements. Rather than assigning different artists to different components of the improvements in this area, TTC should commission a small group of artists from the community to serve as a "cultural think tank" to assist TTC's Projects Committee in its community engagement process and in identifying opportunities for artists to work on all three of these projects.

### Outcomes

The community engagement process for the trailhead should include features planned, created and/or led by artists.

The planning process should lead to recommendations for how artists can be involved in the design of the trailhead area, and what public art features are appropriate. There is an opportunity in the area for a signature public artwork, depending on the community's preferences.

### Special Considerations

The artists in the "cultural think tank" should be regarded as co-creators of the process they will be involved in. They should be involved in the process of establishing how they will work – what their goals, scope, process, deliverables and outcomes will be.

Artists should come from a variety of disciplines, such as visual arts, performing and musical arts, literary arts, or textile arts, or could come from other types of creative or cultural practices.

## Seaholm Waterfront Phase 2

### Type

Permanent Artwork

### What

The Seaholm Waterfront will one day be one of the premier, publicly accessible facilities along the Trail that is operated by TTC. After recent renovations, the building is emerging as a hub for public programming such as fitness classes, volunteer events and historical tours. A future phase of renovations will turn it into a community gathering space, with exhibition space, meeting space and a café, as well as enhanced landscaping.

The intake building at the Seaholm Waterfront is an iconic Art Deco building that once was the pump house for the Seaholm Power Plant, which operated until 1989. In 1996, Austin City Council authorized the decommissioning of the plant and all the associated buildings. TTC and PARC are collaborating on the preparation of the buildings for public use.

As of September 2022, Phase 1 has been completed. The scope of this phase included a new floor and roof, exterior cleaning and graffiti removal, noise abatement with the installation of new acoustic ceiling tiles, new interior and exterior lighting, and accessibility improvements. An accessory building was also updated, providing event restrooms and event staging.

### Why

Seaholm Waterfront will be a premier public facility along the Trail operated by TTC. Arts and culture projects in this location will therefore reinforce the importance of arts and culture programming to TTC and to the Trail.

Seaholm is located in one of the most urban areas of the trail; arts and culture investments can occur here without interfering with people's enjoyment of nature.

### Where, When

Seaholm Waterfront is located on West Cesar Chavez Avenue just west of Shoal Beach. Art projects could take place inside or outside the building.

TTC is beginning a capital campaign for Phase 2 and will begin construction when the funding is raised. Planning for a public art component should occur now.

### Who, How

Permanent Artworks must be commissioned and approved through the City's existing public art policies and processes (AIPP, PARD).

### Outcomes

- A Permanent Artwork should be incorporated into the building or landscape renovations.
- This is one of the few locations that could be an opportunity for a signature artwork.
- There is potential for features to support arts and culture programming, such as performances and exhibitions.

## Curated Temporary Exhibition

### Type

Temporary Artwork (annual temporary exhibition)

### What

Each year for the first three years, TTC should develop or host an exhibition of Temporary Artwork along the Trail.

Over the first few years, it will be important to explore a variety of formats partnerships, themes and locational strategies. However, each exhibition should be built around a theme drawn from this plan and focus on pre-identified locations (general or specific), starting with those identified in this plan.

### Why

A curated exhibition of Temporary Artworks can provide a focus that ensures:

- Artists are challenged to engage authentically with the environment, culture and/or history of the Trail
- Artworks that are in dialogue with the Trail and its users

A curated exhibition of Temporary Artworks can offer artistic experiences without adding permanent features to the Trail.

### Where

TTC should pre-identify general or specific locations for Temporary Exhibitions. These locations should be places that:

- Are accessible / visible without leaving the Trail
- Do not interfere with Trail use, operations or environmental management
- Offer opportunities for engaging with environmental, cultural or historical themes

In different years, exhibitions could experiment with clustering artworks for easy access versus dispersing them along the entire Trail to create a dialogue among different contexts and communities.

### When

Preferably, a Temporary Exhibition should be able to be experienced over a period of time, from several weeks to several months. The exhibition should be presented at a time of year that does not conflict with other major events.

The artist selection should occur in the fall of the year before the project is to be installed, to allow ample time for design, fabrication and installation of the Temporary Exhibition and public access to it.

### Who, How

TTC should experiment with the management of the Temporary Exhibitions. TTC could self-manage exhibitions by itself, or it could work in partnership with arts organizations, whereby the arts organizations provide curatorial services and TTC provides logistical support. Arts organizations can be especially valuable partners in their ability to tap into diverse creative and cultural practices that might not be engaged with traditional public art processes.

### Outcomes

An exhibition of Temporary Artwork along the Trail can:

- support the Arts and Culture program’s mission of deepening people’s experience of the Trail environment, and connecting more people to the Trail,
- provide artists with opportunities to expand their practices by creating new work in this unique environment, and
- evolve into one of Austin’s unique public art experiences.

#### Special Considerations

Specific technical considerations for each particular site would need to be considered before the opportunity was announced, so that proper guidance can be given to artists. TTC’s operations team should be involved in the technical aspects of identifying the Temporary Exhibition site and planning the installation.

TTC should document its temporary installations through photography and other appropriate media. Documentation should include artist statements. Documentation should be archived on the TTC arts and culture web site.

TTC should evaluate each exhibition, particularly in terms of its locational strategy. Evaluation should consider the breadth of audience reached, and impact on the physical and operational Trail environment.

## Creative Activation Zone

### Type

Temporary Artwork

### What

A “Creative Activation Zone” is a unique location for which artists and designers are invited to create a temporary place activation project. The main criteria for the project is that it should be site-specific, but it could be in any media – a physical installation, sound, video, performative – depending on the nature of the location.

TTC should plan for a “Creative Activation Zone” project each year. Over time, the concept could evolve into a highly-anticipated annual art and design commission, like the Waterfront Park commission (Alexandria, Va.), the Flatiron Public Plaza Design Competition (New York) or the Boston Accelerator (Boston).

### Why

A “Creative Activation Zone” project can:

- support the Arts and Culture Program’s mission of deepening people’s experience of the Trail environment, and connecting more people to the Trail
- stimulate innovative creative collaborations between designers, artists, and cultural practitioners of all disciplines.
- expand TTC’s collaborations with art and design networks
- highlight areas of the Trail where future design improvements should be considered

### Where

There are several potential existing locations for a “Creative Activation Zone.” These include under the Drake Bridge, under the I-35 bridge (north and south sides), the pedestrian tunnel to Roy G. Guerrero Park, the Seaholm Waterfront, the Pfluger Circle (north side), the Johnson Creek Trailhead and the future Holly Trailhead area.

Other locations could be considered, using the following criteria:

- Is a unique urban, infrastructure or landscape setting
- Allows for interpretation through a variety of art forms (installation, performance)
- Is accessible / visible without leaving the Trail, with preference for location near a trailhead (due to potential high visitation rates)
- Does not interfere with Trail use, operations or environmental management

TTC staff and the Arts and Culture Committee should review these options, as well as others that might be suggested, before selecting a new location.

### When

TTC should commission one “Creative Activation Zone” project at per year. Preferably, the project should be able to be experienced over a period of time, from several weeks to several months. It should be presented at a time of year that does not conflict with other major events.

The artist selection should occur in the fall of the year before the project is to be installed, to allow ample time for design, fabrication, installation and public access to the “creative activation” project.

#### Who, How

TTC should lead the planning and implementation of “Creative Activation Zone” projects. Potential collaborators can include arts and design organizations.

TTC should organize the artist selection as an RFQ that is open to artists and designers of any discipline. A Task Force would review submissions and short list teams, who would be compensated to present design proposals through a competition format.

#### Outcomes

- A temporary installation, located in an underimagined space along the Trail, that attracts and engages the public.
- A prototype for a process that can evolve into one of Austin’s unique and anticipated public art experiences, for both the creative community and the public at large.

#### Special Considerations

Specific technical considerations for each particular “creative activation zone” site would need to be considered before the opportunity was announced, so that proper guidance can be given to artists. TTC’s operations team should be involved in the technical aspects of identifying the Creative Activation site and planning the installation.

Creative Activations should be documented through photography and other appropriate media. Documentation should include artist statements. Documentation should be archived on the TTC arts and culture web site.

TTC should evaluate each Creative Activation, particularly in terms of its locational and impact. Evaluation should consider the breadth of audience reached, and impact on the physical and operational Trail environment.

## Fortlandia

### Type

Temporary installation

### What

Each year, TTC collaborates with the University of Texas Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center to install an original, temporary sculptural artwork along the Trail, as part of Fortlandia, a larger exhibition that is staged at the center. This year's project, *Phoenix Trail*, by Agustina Rodriguez, is the third in a series installed along the Trail.

### Why

The collaboration with the Wildflower Center is a good example of a collaboration that can bring additional arts and culture resources to the Trail.

Fortlandia sculptures have generally provided engaging, playful, interactive experiences that supplement the other experiences that Trail users can have.

Fortlandia sculptures along the Trail help highlight the work of local artists and designers to a large public audience.

### Where, When

Fortlandia installations have typically been located along International Shores because there is ample space there, easy access and minimal conflicts with other Trail activities. Fortlandia's playful, interactive approach to public art could resonate with other communities, as well. For example, TTC should consult with the East Austin community about a potential location, such as Festival Beach.

### Who, How

Continue collaborating with the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center.

Seek collaborations with other communities along the Trail, in terms of identifying new sites.

### Outcomes

Fortlandia should continue, but should be staged in a variety of locations to serve more communities.

### Special Considerations

TTC's operations team should be involved in the technical aspects of new Fortlandia sites.



## Music on the Trail

### Type

Performance

### What

Music on the Trail is an ongoing program of presenting live musical performances at key locations along the Trail.

### Why

Music on the Trail should continue because it is a popular amenity for Trail users and because it is a flexible platform for showcasing the diverse cultural practices of Austin's communities.

### Where, When

Music on the Trail is a flexible model, presented at various locations and times. Some events are organized as part of a published program, and other events are organized as pop-up performances that are staged in conjunction with other TTC events.

TTC should continue presenting Music on the Trail, building on its flexibility.

The current model of programmed series should continue, occurring in the fall, winter and spring (when the weather is best). The current model of pop-up events should continue as well.

TTC should experiment with a variety of locations and days/times for programmed and pop-up events, to learn more about what is most popular with the public.

TTC should also experiment with the type of presentations that occur. For example, music could be combined with dances or performances.

TTC should experiment with low-volume amplification of performances, which performers have requested.

Each time an experiment is tried, TTC should be certain to collect data that will help it evaluate its success, both in terms of audience engagement and the value of the event to artists. While it may be hard to evaluate the success of any one particular event, by collecting information about numerous projects, TTC will develop comparative data about different approaches.

### Who, How

Music on the Trail is typically produced by TTC. Sometimes TTC collaborates with different community groups, depending on the timing and location of music presentations. TTC should continue seek curatorial collaborations, particularly with community-based and culturally-specific arts organizations.

### Outcomes

- A continuation of the Music on the Trail event series
- An expansion of the model to include other types of performative artistic disciplines, such as dance or theatre
- An expansion of the model to other types of locations along the Trail

## Special Considerations

TTC should evaluate each Music on the Trail event, particularly in terms of its locational and impact. Evaluation should consider the breadth of audience reached, and impact on the physical and operational Trail environment.

## Artist Residency

### Type

Residency

### What

TTC should organize one artist residency over the next three years. The residency, which would either be created within TTC or based in a nearby community.

### Why

A residency is a mutually supportive process that enables an artist to explore their own artistic practice, drawing on the resources of TTC or the community, while helping to bringing an artistic vision to work being done along the Trail and adjacent communities.

### Where, When

The physical location of the residency would depend on whether the artist is embedded in the TTC team or elsewhere in the community, and the location of the artist's work would depend on the project that the artist undertakes.

Planning for the residency should begin in the **second year** of the Arts and Culture Program; tasks would include identifying topics and partners, goals and outcomes; developing an RFQ and identifying an artist; and establishing a budget and workplan. The residency should occur during the second year, and the third year should be spent evaluating the first residency and refining the model for future years.

### Who, How

TTC should either create the residency within the organization, or work with a community partner to host the residency.

For example, if the residency were established within TTC itself, the artist could be embedded in the team that is working on ecological restoration projects and could explore topics like helping people understand habitat and vegetation zones, the aesthetics of stormwater improvements or meadow restorations, or similar topics.

If the residency were established within the community, the artist could explore a topic of importance to the community, such as community histories or environmental justice, that could help inform the work that the Trail Conservancy does.

### Outcomes

The residency should result in a creative output, such as a temporary public art project, performance or exhibition. Alternatively, it could result in prototype designs, community engagement tools, or other material that TTC can use to further its work.

## Trail Stories

### Type

#### Programming

### What

As part of the Arts and Culture Plan, TTC started a “trail stories” project, which encouraged people to share stories of why the Trail was important to them, such as how it related to their well-being, or to important moments in their lives.

### Why

Trail Stories is an easy way for people to connect to the Trail in a personal way, and to exercise their own creative voice.

One goal for Trail Stories is to make the Trail a more welcoming place by helping people see how it is valued by people just like them, through stories that people tell in their own voices and with their unique cultural perspectives. This helps build a connected, diverse community of trail users.

Another goal is for “Trail Stories” can create a counterpoint to the official histories of the Trail, supplementing the stories civic actors and official actions with a history that reflects the lived experience of the Trail. This is an important perspective for the TTC to consider in its planning, programming and operational work.

### Where, When

Trail Stories should continue under the auspices of the Arts and Culture Program.

### Who, How

TTC should continue to lead this work.

It can expand its reach by collaborating with artists curators, public historians and others who can add to its expertise in collecting stories from the public.

It can also expand its reach by collaborating with artists from diverse disciplines (photography, videography, spoken word) who can organize workshops and other ways that people can contribute to Trail Stories.

### Outcomes

Trail Stories will result in a growing archive (written, photographic, video, audio) of stories that document people’s relationship to the Trail.

## **Part Four: Implementing the Arts and Culture Plan**

# Implementing the Arts and Culture Plan

## Arts and Culture Planning Tools

### Annual Arts and Culture Work Plan

Each year, as part of its budget planning process, The Trail Conservancy should prepare a work plan for the Arts and Culture Program, outlining the projects it will undertake. For each project, the work plan should indicate:

- project type (such as temporary artwork),
- proposed goals and location,
- proposed budget and timeframe, and
- coordination and project management needs.

The Annual Arts and Culture Work Plan should also look ahead at least two additional years to identify potential upcoming projects, focusing on anticipated funding, project management and coordination needs.

The Annual Plan should be developed by TTC staff, reviewed and recommended by the Arts and Culture Committee, and approved by the TTC board as part of the annual budget process. Annual Plan priorities should be coordinated with capital projects, restoration projects and events being planned by TTC.

### Project Plan

For most arts and culture projects, TTC should develop a Project Plan. These plans would be created for Permanent Artworks, Temporary Artworks (Creative Activations, Temporary Exhibitions), Artist Residencies, and other projects of similar complexity. This is particularly important for projects that involve collaborations with design consultants or other organizations.

The Project Plan should provide a reference and road map for TTC's internal team (project management, operations, communications, development) as well as external partners (City agencies, collaborating arts or community organizations, other partners).

The Project Plan can be more or less detailed, based on the nature of the project. It should be drafted early on, and updated as more information becomes available. It should be advised by the Arts and Culture Committee, but as an internal working document needs no formal approval.

A Project Plan could include the following types of information:

- project type (such as Temporary Artwork),
- project goals
- project location
- project partners (internal, city, community)
- artist selection process
- community engagement process
  - consider applicable parts of PARD community engagement checklist
- budget and timeframe

- coordination and project management needs
  - roles and responsibilities of artist, TTC, collaborators
  - installation, de-installation

## Arts and Culture Program Management Tools

TTC will establish processes for managing the basic aspects of its Arts and Culture Program. While these are laid out more fully in the Collection Management Policy, they are briefly described below.

### Artist Recruitment and Selection Protocols for Commissioned Work

TTC will use a variety of processes to recruit and select artists for commissioning artists to undertake Permanent, Temporary and Performance artworks, as well as for Residencies and Community Engagement, Planning and Design Projects. These processes are detailed in the TTC Collection Management Policy.

TTC will look to involve local as well as national and international artists in its arts and culture program, as appropriate to each project.

TTC highly values involving local artists as they can offer their unique knowledge, and direct experience of Austin and authentic connections to our communities. TTC recognizes the importance of sharing its resources in a way that supports Austin’s artists and communities – providing artists with new opportunities and challenges right at home, and in doing so building stronger and more trustful relationships with communities.

TTC also recognizes the value of working with artists from beyond Austin; artistic dialogues transcend city boundaries, and artists. National and international artists can broaden our views of our city and the world and give our artists an opportunity to learn from others.<sup>18</sup>

By inviting artists from elsewhere to work alongside local artists, we also seed relationships that help Austin artists who aspire to create and show their work throughout the country.

### Open Proposal Processes for Arts Events

TTC should welcome Austin artists to present their work – music, dance, theatre, even spoken word – in “pop-up” performances along the Trail.

These presentations (defined as “Arts Events” elsewhere in this Plan) can channel Austin’s iconic creative energy and outdoor lifestyle in a place that is accessible to the broadest public and surrounded by inspiring city and nature views. However, Arts Events must be carefully planned, at times and in locations that are appropriate for people’s enjoyment while not impacting the general use of the Trail.

In order to manage Arts Events for the benefits of artists and Trail users, TTC will initiate an open submissions program to recruit and invite proposals for a diverse mix of arts presentations, in terms of the artistic genre, location and time of year.

### Application Process

The application process should follow these basic guidelines:

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<sup>18</sup> The arts and culture planning team included Pennsylvania-based environmental artist, Stacy Levy, who was able to foster dialogue about how public art and natural environments can co-exist. She collaborated with our Austin-based team of artists and creatives on our Common Waters pilot temporary project.

- The application process should operate on an annual cycle to provide predictability both for TTC and for artists.
- Applications can be made by artists or non-profit arts organizations based in Austin.
- The application can be hosted on a web-based platform such as Google Forms or Submittable.
- Applicants should briefly describe the work they would like to present, their preferred location (if any) and their preferred time of year (if any).
- Applicants should submit general work samples, or samples of the specific work to be performed (photographs, audio, video).
- Applicants must hold the rights to the work they perform, or have permission to perform it.

Performances should be free of charge to attendees

- Applicants must pay a modest application fee (such as \$25).
- Applications will be screened for basic eligibility and then evaluated by a review panel which includes TTC staff, artists, and community partners. The review panel should represent a diversity of artistic disciplines and perspectives, as well as people from diverse backgrounds, to ensure that the applications that are selected are reflective of Austin overall.
- TTC can limit the number, location and mix of Arts Events that it selects, as well as the scheduling and location of events, in consideration of TTC's overall capacity to manage Arts Events and to avoid conflicts with normal Trail operations, construction and maintenance projects, and other planned events.
- Overall, Arts Events should provide experiences for visitors of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.
- Successful applications should be compensated with a basic honorarium.
- Applicants should be able to opt in to receiving announcements about future rounds of Arts Events applications.

### **Donations and Loan Protocols**

For the next three years, TTC should discourage the acceptance of third-party donations of permanent artworks and third-party proposals for temporary installations along the Trail. This will enable TTC to focus on developing its Arts and Culture Committee and decision-making processes that will guide its Arts and Culture Program.

Processes for managing donations and loans are detailed in the TTC Collection Management Policy.

### **Proposal Processes**

TTC will use standard processes to invite and review proposals for Temporary Artworks, Performance Artworks and other arts and events.

These processes are detailed in the TTC Collection Management Policy.

### **Documentation Processes**

TTC recognizes three goals for the documentation of the work that its Arts and Culture Program does:

- Provide easy access for the public to see the work that has been presented, particularly Temporary and Performance artworks, and Arts Events. This is especially important in that many artworks created by TTC will be only be on view for a limited period of time.

- Provide material that enhances people’s understanding of the artworks. This can include documentation of the processes of creating artworks, the collection of supporting information such as artist interviews, and documentation of public reaction to the artworks.
- Provide records that constitute an archive of the work that has been presented. This includes information about artists, concepts, budgets and important threshold dates; documentation of materials and equipment used; records of permissions and design documentation; and other pertinent material for the project record.

TTC should establish its web site as a hub for public access to general documentation of its past projects.



## Arts and Culture Roles and Responsibilities

### The Trail Conservancy (TTC)

The Trail Conservancy will create a formal Arts and Culture Program, which will undertake the following activities:

- Lead program and project planning
- Lead Arts and Culture Committee, Technical Advisory Group, and Task Forces as necessary
- Lead and implement projects
  - Follow the guidance of this plan, an AIPP-approved Collection Management Plan, the POMA, and relevant AIPP and PARD policies
- Create partnerships to facilitate the implementation of projects
- Review external proposals for arts and culture projects
- Maintain ongoing engagement with arts and community stakeholders related to arts and culture planning, project development and programming
- Document arts and culture activities and make documentation available to the public
- Evaluate arts and culture activities
- Manage maintenance and conservation
- Secure funding for arts and culture operations, projects and programming.

### The Trail Conservancy Staff (Arts and Culture Manager)

The Trail Conservancy's Arts and Culture Program will be managed by an Arts and Culture Manager. The manager can be a member of The Trail Conservancy staff and/or a contractor retained on an ongoing basis for this purpose.

#### Qualifications

The Arts and Culture Manager shall have a professional background as an artist, arts educator, arts administrator, curator or design professional, as well as specific and demonstrated experience in public art management.

The Manager shall have the cultural competency necessary to work with the Trail's diverse community stakeholders.

A staff member shall have management of the Arts and Culture Program as a specific job responsibility; a contractor shall have management of the Program as a specific scope of work element.

The Manager, whether staff or contractor, shall have no professional or personal conflicts of interest that could influence program development or management, or artist identification and selection.

#### Duties

The duties of the Manager shall include:

- Serve as key liaison to and facilitator of TTC's Arts and Culture TAG and Arts and Culture Committee
- Serving as The Trail Conservancy's Person of Contact for public art processes related to AIPP and PARD policies, and the City's donation and loan policy.

- Leading general engagement with arts and community stakeholders, and serve as liaison to artist, community, and arts and culture organizations
- Developing arts and culture programs initiated by TTC independently or in collaboration with other public agencies, arts organizations or community organizations.
- Lead the development of Annual Arts and Culture Plan
- Lead the development of Project Plans
- Managing all aspects of public art commissions (Permanent, Temporary or Performance), including
  - Identifying opportunities and locations for projects
  - Managing artist recruitment and selection processes
  - Selecting and convening Task Forces
  - Artist contracting
  - Coordinating design approval and permitting processes
  - Working with artists to ensure that all City approvals and permits have been acquired
  - Coordinating and possibly managing artwork fabrication, installation and de-installation
  - Acting as a liaison between artists and other City Departments involved with completion of projects
- Collaborating with TTC communications staff on the documentation and publication of arts and culture activities
- Developing public programming and interpretation of arts and culture projects
- Establishing and maintaining appropriate records and documentation on each project
- Maintaining an inventory of public art owned or maintained by TTC
- Developing and implementing a maintenance and conservation plan for artworks owned or maintained by TTC
- Leading evaluative processes; develop and implement data collection and analysis protocols
- Coordinating the review of external proposals for arts and culture projects
- Identifying and contracting with arts professionals such as curators, project managers, arts educators and conservators as necessary to implement the Arts and Culture Program

## **The Trail Conservancy Arts and Culture Committee**

The Trail Conservancy will create a standing Arts and Culture Committee. The key role of the Committee shall be to provide creative direction and oversight of TTC's Arts and Culture Program.

### **Composition**

The Arts and Culture Committee shall consist of at least seven members approved by the TTC Board. A majority of the members shall be arts professionals, from a cross section of arts disciplines. Other members of the Committee will be design professionals, leaders of partnering organizations, and other civic or community leaders. At least one member shall be recommended by AIPP and one by PARD. The chair of the Committee shall be a member of TTC's Board.

### **Duties**

The Committee's role will be to:

- Support the Arts and Culture Manager in the conceptualization and development of arts and culture projects and programs.
- Advise on the development of an Annual Arts and Culture Plan and recommend to the TTC Board.
- Review and recommend proposals made by the Arts and Culture Manager for projects and programs, including Individual Project Plans (goals, project approaches, artist selection approaches, artist selection panels, themes, outreach) and budgets. Recommendations shall be made to The Trail Conservancy CEO for approval.
- Support TTC outreach to Austin's arts and culture community
- Advise on the appointment of Task Forces
  - Individual Arts and Culture Committee members will be appointed to Task Forces
  - Participate in the evaluation of completed projects
  - Advise on evaluation framework
- Recommend approval of artist selections and artist concepts
  - Recommendation would be made to TTC CEO.

#### Meetings

The Arts and Culture Committee should meet quarterly, with an extra meeting at the time the Annual Plan is being developed.

#### Arts and Culture Technical Advisory Group (TAG)

The Trail Conservancy will establish a standing Arts and Culture Technical Advisory Group to provide technical guidance on the Arts and Culture Program.

The core members of the TAG will be The Trail Conservancy's Arts and Culture Manager and representatives from AIPP, PARD and the Watershed Protection Department. Other participants can include, as necessitated by the meeting agenda, the chair of the Arts and Culture Committee; Trail Conservancy executive, operations and communication staff; and specific project managers from AIPP, PARD and Watershed Protection.

The TAG's role will be to:

- Provide ongoing coordination among City agencies
- Advise on implementation of the Arts and Culture Program, including but not limited to:
  - Community engagement
  - Interagency coordination, permissions
  - In-kind support from City agencies
- Advise on Arts and Culture Annual Work Plan, in regard to identification and scheduling of future projects
- Participate in the evaluation of completed projects
  - Advise on evaluation framework
  - Provide insight from agency perspective

### Meetings

The TAG shall meet periodically to coordinate, at an administrative level, projects in the TTC's area of responsibility that fall under the jurisdiction of the above policies.

## Task Forces

When appropriate, the Arts and Culture Manager will create a Task Force to provide overall guidance for a specific TTC arts and culture project. A Task Force operates as an Artist Selection Panel and also has additional authority.

### Composition

A Task Force should typically consist of between five and seven members, including:

- arts professionals knowledgeable with regards to the artistic practices being sought in the RFQ, and willing to participate effectively in a panel process without conflict of interest, and
- stakeholders specific to the project, including representatives of community organizations or other public agencies that have relationship to the project.
- The composition, role and duration of each Task Force will be different, depending on the nature of the project. A Task Force shall include people representing arts, community, culture and design perspectives, and its members will be recruited and recommended by TTC staff and approved by the Arts and Culture Committee.

### Duties

A Task Force's role shall be to:

- Assist the Manager in developing an Individual Project Plan for a project
- Review artist submissions, conduct interviews if necessary, and recommend selections to the Arts and Culture Committee
- Review artist concepts and make recommendations to the Arts and Culture Committee
- Support community engagement processes
- Provide feedback to the Arts and Culture Committee on artist selection process

### Meetings

Task Forces are meant to be project-specific and not ongoing entities; generally, each Task Force will be tasked with a specific number of meetings, over a limited time frame. Task Forces will be managed by the Arts and Culture Program Manager.

## Artist Selection Panels

When appropriate, the Arts and Culture Manager shall create an Artist Selection Panel to select artists for TTC arts and culture projects.

### Composition

A Selection Panel should typically consist of between five and seven members, including:

- arts professionals knowledgeable with regards to the artistic practices being sought in the RFQ, and willing to participate effectively in a panel process without conflict of interest, and
- stakeholders specific to the project, including representatives of community organizations or other public agencies that have relationship to the project.

## **The Trail Conservancy Thought Partners**

The Trail Conservancy will establish a group of Thought Partners that will serve as a general sounding board for the work that TTC is doing. The Thought Partners will consist of organizational representatives and stakeholders from communities that are served by the Trail, particularly cultural communities that have historically or are currently under-represented in decision-making entities and processes. Thought Partners will be appointed by the TTC CEO, upon recommendation of the Thought Partners membership.

The Thought Partner's role will be:

- Advise TTC on approaches to community outreach.
- Actively support TTC outreach efforts.
- Provide TTC with insight into community priorities and dynamics that will assist the Conservancy in its broader community outreach.
- Provide TTC with specific guidance on connecting with arts and culture resources the communities that they are familiar with.

## **AIPP**

Art in Public Places (AIPP) is a City of Austin program that collaborates with local and nationally-known artists to include the history and values of our community into cultural landmarks that have become cornerstones of Austin's identity. It manages the implementation of the City's Art in Public Places Ordinance and is located within the Economic Development Department.

AIPP's role will be:

- Participate in the Arts and Culture Technical Advisory Group.
- Lead permanent public art commissions in the Trail area
- Manage proposals for donations of public art proposed for the Trail area
- Support TTC temporary art commissions

## **Parks and Recreation Department (PARD)**

The Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) is the steward of the City of Austin's public lands, protecting and maintaining parkland and our urban forest. PARD preserves trails, and offers a variety of sports, recreation, educational enrichment, arts programs, cultural opportunities, nature and aquatic activities. PARD is the City agency with oversight over the Trail and the lands alongside it, and lead agency partner in the TTC's Park Operations and Maintenance Agreement with the City.

PARD's role will be:

- Participate in the Arts and Culture Technical Advisory Group.
- Key stakeholder for permanent public art commissions in the Trail area
- Key stakeholder in proposals for donations of public art proposed for the Trail area
- Provide technical review of TTC temporary art commissions

## **Watershed Protection Department (WPD)**

Austin's Watershed Protection Department protects lives, property and the environment of the community by reducing the impact of flood, erosion and water pollution. It is directly responsible for managing Lady Bird Lake and related flood, erosion and water pollution issues.

WPD's role will be:

- Participate in the Arts and Culture Technical Advisory Group.
- Provide technical review of TTC temporary art commissions in areas under its purview

## Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Community and stakeholder engagement will be an important component of TTC's arts and culture program. TTC recognizes that it is important to ensure that people have the ability to influence decisions that impact the places they experience and value, that arts and culture activities are welcomed and seen as a positive addition to the Trail, and that communities can see themselves reflected in the work that we do.

### TTC's Community and Stakeholder Engagement Framework

TTC's arts and culture planning framework provides several opportunities for community and stakeholder input.

- TTC's **Thought Partners**, who will be drawn from community and civic leadership, will serve as an ongoing sounding board for the organization. The Thought Partners can inform and provide feedback on Arts and Culture priorities at the broadest level.
- TTC's **Arts and Culture Committee**, which will include leaders from Austin's arts, culture and design fields, as well a broader civic and community representation, will provide hands-on direction for the program. The Committee will advise on program priorities, project opportunities, and the development of specific projects.
- **Project Task Forces**, which will be set up for most TTC Arts and Culture projects, provide space for direct community stakeholders to be involved in the planning and critical decisionmaking about each project, including recommendations for project-specific community engagement.

### Basic Principles of Community and Stakeholder Engagement

When TTC organizes community and stakeholder engagement for a specific arts and culture project, it should keep these principles in mind:

- The best approach depends on the nature of the project and the artist; there is no single approach that is right for every circumstance.
- The artist should play a key role in developing and implementing the community and stakeholder engagement strategy. It is important to incorporate the artist's experience, practice and ideas for the project.
- Manage expectations; make it clear from the outset what the community's role in the project will be, as well as what the boundaries are.

### Community and Stakeholder Engagement in Specific Projects

This section provides an overview of how to incorporate community and stakeholder engagement strategies and goals into the overall planning of a project. Additional information can be found in the PARD "Community Engagement Plan Outline Tool."

#### Developing a Project Strategy for Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Every TTC arts and culture project should consider its community and stakeholder engagement strategy at the outset. The strategy should:

- Identify goals for community engagement,
- Identify key stakeholders, what would encourage and prevent them from participating, what their role would be, and what they would gain from participating,

- Identify key milestones for community engagement,
- Identify target audiences and appropriate vehicles for community engagement,
- Set expectations for the artist's approach to community engagement, and
- Include a component for assessing the success of the community engagement process.

Once the artist is selected, the plan should be reviewed and updated to include specific processes that will be followed.

### **Articulating Project Goals for Community and Stakeholder Engagement**

Community and stakeholder engagement goals should take stock of the project's overall goals and the impact the artwork will have on the community. These are some common engagement goals (they do not apply to every project):

- Support the artist in creating an artwork that conveys the community's vision and voice
- Support the artist in creating an artwork that fits into the context of its surroundings
- Inform the content and/or themes of the artwork
- Empower people in the community through their participation in an art project
- Strengthen community social networks
- Provide a platform for community voice
- Connect people with community resources
- Obtain buy-in for the larger project that includes the artwork



## Implementing Artist Residencies

An Artist Residency embeds an artist within TTC for a fixed period of time. The residency provides the artist with time and space to immerse themselves in TTC's operations and the Trail environment. Through collaborative research and engagement, the artist can develop and execute a project that is driven by both the artist's practice and TTC's mission. A residency is often organized in partnership with another organization, such as a City agency, an arts organization or a community-based organization.

### Initiation and Preliminary Planning

Opportunities for residencies can be suggested by TTC staff, TAG or Committee members, potential partnering organizations or artists themselves. The first step is to assess the viability of a residency for the purposes of including it in an Annual Public Art Work Plan.

All key stakeholders – TTC, partnering organizations and the artist – must benefit from their participation, and carefully consider the resources that will be necessary. In the early planning phases, TTC (and any potential partnering organizations) should set out broad goals for what the residency should accomplish. They should also consider what a realistic budget, time-frame and organizational commitment will be. The partnering organization should designate a key point of contact / project manager for the residency.

This information should be considered by the Committee when creating the Annual Work Plan, and will be revised when the Project Plan is created and when the artist is on board.

### The Project Plan

The Project Plan is an important tool for an artist residency, especially if there are multiple entities involved. After a residency is added to the Work Plan, TTC staff, the partnering organization's point of contact and the Committee should develop a Project Plan.

The Project Plan should outline financial requirements of the residency, as well as any resources TTC and partners (if any) can commit, including:

- direct residency expenses including artist fees and the cost of any projects the artist creates
- direct or indirect costs for space for the artist to work,
- direct or indirect costs for artist advisors, if needed
- staff time working with the artist, including acclimating them to the residency, supporting their research and supporting project development,
- staff time managing the project, including facilitation of the partnership, documentation and communications, and management of contracts and other administrative details, and
- overhead costs for partnering organizations, if not City agencies.

TTC and partners (if any) will determine the roles and responsibilities for various phases of the project, including:

- artist recruitment, selection and contracting,
- managing the artist's research, engagement and project development process,
- managing the design, creation and presentation of the artist's project, and
- public communications and documentation of the residency.

The Project Plan will include a schedule for the residency that considers:

- the amount of time an artist can be expected to commit to the residency while carrying on other aspects of their practice

When an artist is selected, the Project Plan can be amended to include updated information and additional information about community engagement.

## **The Memorandum of Understanding**

For residencies that involve a partnership with another organization, TTC and the partnering organization should enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU). The MOU should endorse the Project Plan as the guide for the residency, and also discuss contingencies about budget and time overruns and circumstances in which the partnership, or the residency, should be ended.

## **The Project Task Force**

A residency can benefit from a Project Task Force that serves as an ongoing sounding board for the project. The Task Force should include stakeholders, community members and subject matter experts that are related to the topic of the residency.

## **Selecting an Artist**

Artists should be selected by any of the artist selection methods outlined in the Collection Management Policy that is appropriate to the nature of the residency.

As artist residencies require a significant commitment of time over a long period of time, residencies should be planned far enough in advance to allow for the most possible artists to accommodate them in their schedules. Depending on their practice, an artist may need up to six months of lead time (or more) before entering into a residency commitment. If a residency were organized on a periodic basis, with enough application lead time, artists could anticipate the opportunity better and have an easier time factoring the residency into their schedules.

## **Managing the Residency**

TTC's Arts and Culture Manager should be directly responsible for managing the residency. If there is a partnering organization, that organization should also designate a point of contact / project manager. In some circumstances, TTC might want to involve an artistic advisor who can support the artist in the development of their work.

## **Artist Contract and Payments**

The artist contract should anticipate a long period of research and engagement before a project is identified. Generally, the contract should compensate the artist for a fixed monthly fee, commensurate with the time that the artist is expected to devote to the residency. The scope of work and the fee can be revised when the artist's final project is agreed to.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Definitions

### Arts and Culture Program Project Types

**ARTIST RESIDENCY** – A program model in which TTC works with artists through an open-ended process to help advance its mission and achieve its goals, while also providing an artist with an opportunity to develop their artistic practices.

**ARTS AND CULTURE PROGRAMMING AND EVENTS** – An umbrella term for several general types of planned activities, including arts events, arts programming, exhibitions and cultural programs, whose general purpose is to deepen people’s appreciation and engagement with the arts and culture resources along the Trail

**CREATIVE ACTIVATION** – A type of Temporary Artwork that is commissioned through a competitive process specifically for a unique site along the Trail, with the goal of activating the site.

**PERFORMANCE ARTWORK** – An original, site-specific artwork that is created in a performance-based art genre, including music, dance, theatre and spoken word, and which is meant to be presented by an artist or artists on site through a performance.

**PERMANENT ARTWORK** — An artwork that is intended to be displayed for an open-ended timeframe, or for a duration of more than five years that is established at the time of the commission or acquisition. A Permanent Artwork can be an original, site-specific creation or an acquired artwork that is chosen because of its appropriateness for a site. A Permanent Artwork can be created in a variety of media that are suitable, in terms of durability, for the location and duration of display.

**TEMPORARY ARTWORK** – An artwork that is intended to be displayed for a short period of time, from several days to five years, which is established at the time of the commission or loan. A Temporary Artwork can be an original, site-specific creation or a loaned artwork that is chosen because of its appropriateness for a site. A Temporary Artwork can be created in a variety of media, including sculpture, murals and sound and video presentations.

**TEMPORARY EXHIBITION** – A presentation of multiple Temporary Artworks following a locational and thematic strategy.

### Artist Selection Definitions

**ARTIST DATABASE** – A record of all artists who respond to RFQs issued by TTC for arts and culture projects, including all materials that the artists provide for their submission, such as letters of interest, work samples, and references.

**LIMITED ENTRY COMPETITION** – An artist selection process in which artists are pre-identified through a curatorial process and are invited to submit their qualifications to be considered for a project.

**OPEN ENTRY** – An artist selection process in which any artist may submit their qualifications, subject to the requirements established in a Call to Artists or Request for Qualifications.

**PRE-SELECTED ARTIST POOL** – A open pool or roster representing artists who are interested in being considered for commissions through various TTC programs. The pool is established and maintained by the Arts and Culture Manager. Applications by artists wishing to be entered into the pre-selected artist pool shall be reviewed and accepted or denied by Task Force or Artist Selection Panel.

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)** –A call to artists that asks for the submission of both an artist’s credentials and a conceptual proposal for an artwork, both of which are the basis for selecting an artist.

**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ)** –A call to artists that asks for the submission of an artist’s credentials, which is the basis of selecting an artist.

**TASK FORCE** – An-ad hoc panel organized to provide guidance on specific Arts and Culture initiatives, including making recommendations on artist selection and concept approval. The composition, role and duration of each Task Force will be different, depending on the nature of the project, but will generally consist of arts professionals and community stakeholder representatives. Task Force members will be recruited and recommended by TTC staff and the Arts and Culture Committee.

## **Administrative Definitions**

**ANN AND ROY BUTLER HIKE-AND-BIKE TRAIL (BUTLER TRAIL, TRAIL)** – The 10-mile trail encircling Lady Bird Lake intended for non-motorized traffic. For the purposes of this policy, the Trail shall comprise the approximately 300 acres managed by TTC under its Park Operations and Maintenance Agreement with the City of Austin.

**ARTIST** – A practitioner in the visual, performing or interdisciplinary arts whose work is recognized to demonstrate serious intent and ability who has made art creation a focus of their practice, and who is not a member of the firm that has employed for design, planning or engineering services.

**ARTWORK (or WORK OF ART)** – Original art in various mediums, including but not limited to any portable or permanently fixed sculpture, mural, painting, drawing, earthwork, mixed media work, or time-based work (moving images or sound-based art), created by a professional artist, artists, or collaborative team. The artwork or identifying plaque cannot contain advertising or promotional content relating to living persons or to organizations, institutions, or businesses currently operating.

**COLLECTION MANAGEMENT POLICY** – A policy to establish procedures governing selection, commission, acquisition, design, fabrication, installation/de-installation, accession, maintenance, repair, long-term care and deaccession of the temporary artworks commissioned by TTC.

**DEACCESSION** – The formal removal of accessioned artwork from Austin’s permanent AIPP collection.

**DEPARTMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE (DRC)** –A committee of relevant City department staff and/or external stakeholders identified by the Department Director or his/her designee who manages the City property upon which the artwork is proposed to be sited. This committee evaluates proposals of donations and loans based upon stated criteria, including Site, Installation, Maintenance, Financial, Liability, Timeliness, and Special Conditions.

**DONATION** – An artwork or a series of artworks gifted to the City for long-term public display with intent to transfer title of ownership to the City.

**LOAN** – An artwork of which ownership is retained by the donor during period of display on City property. The maximum loan period of accepted artwork is five years. The loan agreement for accepted artwork may be extended at the end loan period by mutual agreement between the City and the Lender.

**MAINTENANCE** – Regular routine inspection and care of an artwork, including the removal of graffiti or tagging.

**PARK OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT (POMA)** – An agreement between The Trail Conservancy and the City of Austin that assigns TTC certain responsibility for the management, operation and maintenance of the Butler Trail and approximately 300 acres of parkland adjacent to the Trail.

PROGRAM MANAGER – The Trail Conservancy staff member or consultant who is responsible for the day-to-day management of TTC’s Arts and Culture program.

PROMINENT LOCATION – An exterior location that is accessible to the public, enjoys high visibility, and is used or visited by a large number of visitors and/or community members.

USER DEPARTMENT – The department within the City of Austin deemed responsible for long-term care and maintenance of artworks that are sited within its physical boundaries or determined by operations/business use. For projects within the POMA area, The Trail Conservancy shall be considered a User Department.

## Appendix 2: Acknowledgments

### Arts and Culture Technical Advisory Group

The TAG was a group set up to include key City staff and TTC members, to provide guidance for the planning process. Midway through the planning process it was expanded to include artists and members from arts organizations.

Mary G. Yancy (Chair), *TTC Board*

Heidi Anderson *TTC*

Charlotte Tonsor *TTC*

Christine Chute Canul *PARD*

Reynaldo Hernandez *PARD*

Constance White *AIPP*

Marjorie Flanagan *former AIPP, current Texas State University System*

Sue Lambe *Former AIPP*

Jaime Castillo *former Arts Commission, current City of Austin Development Services Department, Artist*

Jessica Wilson *WPD*

Sharon Maidenberg *The Contemporary Austin*

Taylor Davis *TBG Partners / Common Waters Artist*

### TTC Arts and Culture Committee

The Arts and Culture Committee was established by the TTC Board to provide the staff and consultants with overall direction for the plan and its recommendations.

Barbara Attwell *Artist*

Ilse Frank *Studio Balcones*

Laura Esparza *PARD, Museums and Cultural Programs*

Rocio Villalobos *COA Equity Office*

Sandra Gonzalez *TTC Board*

Shea Little *Big Medium*

Ann S. Graham *Texans for the Arts*

Carre Adams *PARD, Carver Museum and Cultural Center*

Michelle Rojas *PARD, MACC*

Nick Campbell *Campbell Art Advisory*

Andree Bober *University of Texas*

The Arts and Culture Committee also included members of the TAG.

## Community Brain Trust

This group was an advising group independent of TTC.

The Trail Conservancy convened a Community Brain Trust to advise the Art and Culture Plan. This group, created just for this process, worked alongside standing TTF committees that guide arts and culture activities, ecological planning, and project planning.

The Brain Trust was created to reflect various interests of Austinites, a committed mix of neighbors, Trail users, equity advocates, cultural anchors, business and community leaders from districts along the Trail and beyond.

The Brain Trust was charged to with helping to shape the engagement strategy in a way that resonates with the Trail's communities, and to provide insight into Trail's cultural, social, and environmental context from a diversity of perspectives. The Brain Trust provided a sounding board with which the consulting team could explore its ideas. Brain Trust members, as ambassadors, were critical to informing the plan and championing its success.

The Community Brain Trust was convened twice during the planning process. The consulting team also held one-on-one and small group conversations with many of the members.

Members:

Steve Genovesi

Renelle Bedell

Acia M Gray

Reji Thomas

Emlyn Lee

Mueni Rudd

Christina Green-Martinez

Jacob Villanueva

Lysander Lim

Deirdre Strand

Jaime Castillo

Amy Wong Mock

Alicia Evans

David Goujon

Linda Guerrero

Melissa Barry

Paige Kelly

Raasin McIntosh

### **The Trail Conservancy Staff**

Heidi Anderson, Chief Executive Officer

Hanna Cofer, Chief Operating Officer

Charlotte Tonsor, Capital Projects Director

Nick Blok, Capital Projects Manager

Grady Reed, Park Operations Director

### **Special Thanks**

Lynn Osgood, Civic Arts

Ben Martin, Civic Arts



## Appendix 3: Common Waters

### A Demonstration Project for the Butler Trail Arts and Culture Plan

The Common Waters Demonstration Project was a collaborative, temporary art installation that informed TTC's Arts and Culture Plan. The installation, and the process of developing it, celebrated Lady Bird Lake by exploring the intersection of art, activism, environment and community, and it highlighted the beauty and importance of Lady Bird Lake, the heart and common connector behind the Austin community. The project also tested practical tools, such as collaborative processes for commissioning projects and installing them, that informed recommendations in the plan.

Local Austin artists Rejina Thomas, Ruben Esquivel and Taylor Davis were selected through a competitive and inclusive process. These artists have a profound understanding of the history and culture of the minority communities in Austin and have a shared goal of honoring those communities. Together they designed, fabricated and installed a 10-foot by 15-foot floating wetland and nest sculpture on Lady Bird Lake. TTC, environmental artist Stacy Levy and Austin-based curator Public City joined together with them to make the project a reality.

The project began with a request from TTC's Arts and Culture Committee and community partners to diversify the Arts and Culture Plan consultant team. That led to the creation of the Community Brain Trust, which in turn suggested that TTC add to the team by recruiting Austin artists/creatives to create an artwork as part of the planning process. Further conversations with the Levy, the consulting team's artist-in-residence, along with the TAG and Arts and Culture Committee, led to the idea of a floating wetland

TTC and Public City issued a Call for Creatives in January, 2022. TTC stated that it was looking for artists, designers and other creatives who were interested in writing a new chapter for public art along the Butler Hike-and-Bike Trail. Three creatives would be selected and paid to collaborate on the project, with the support of TTC, Levy and Public City. The call stated that TTC was seeking applications from artists, designers and creatives who live in Austin or have lived experience in the city, and that TTC was specifically seeking participation from people who identify as people of color (Black, Chicano, Hispanic, Latino, Asian-American, Indigenous). A selection panel was formed from the Community Brain Trust and Arts and Culture Committee members and scored thirty-seven submissions, held interviews and made the final selections.

The project took place during the spring, kicking off with a public workshop on art, environmentalism and culture. The artists worked for almost two months on the piece while TTC addressed permitting and installation issues.

The finished artwork was comprised of two components — the floating wetland and a natural sculpture, that takes the shape of a nest, that was built upon it. The artists described the project their statement:

*Nests are symbols of safety, home, and protection. This nest served as the ephemeral shelter for a floating wetland of native plants that were designed to filter and clean toxins from the lake. In conjunction, when we protect the minority communities of Austin, who have been the backbone of cultural creation for generations, we can also begin to clean the toxins of our city's ancestral trauma. The main material of the sculpture, dried invasive bamboo, symbolizes the rapidly spreading change that the city faces today and how it is our responsibility to be the change for the future. Common Waters serves as a reminder that Lady Bird Lake is an essential part of our city's identity and how we can come together as a community to protect it and each other for future generations.*

The nest was launched during a day of celebration on May 14, 2022. The day started with a community build with artists that was held at the Waller Beach boat launch, on the north shore of the lake just west of

Interstate 35. Volunteers joined to help install the plants on the wetland and then assisted in installing the artistic “nest” in its place. A’lante Flamenco provided music and dancing for those in attendance on this special day.

At noon, a team from WPD launched a boat, with the floating wetland, into the Lake to make its journey to its installation location a few miles away. Local musician Ephraim Owens provided a serenade for those driving the boat; the TTC team, volunteers and onlookers who escorted the wetland in kayaks and on paddle boards; and people on the Trail.

The wetland was met at Lakeshore on the south shore near Pleasant Valley by a cheering crowd. The artist team and TTC worked to pull the wetland off the barge and attach it onto previously set anchors in the Lake. Future Front X Sustain the Mag was talking to people about inclusivity on the Trail and Art Spark by Body Shift and provided an original dance performance. Daniel Llanes offered a blessing and the artist team spoke about their beautiful creation. TTC, Austin Art in Public Places (AIPP), Austin Parks and Recreation Dept. (PARC), and Austin Watershed Protection Dept. (WPD) all spoke and shared their thanks and appreciation for the collaboration.

The project was a collaboration with WPD’s Shoreline Stewardship Program, PARC, AIPP, The Bill Wood Foundation, Susan Vaughan Foundation, Still Water Foundation, Urban Land Institute and Mary and Howard Yancy. TTC is grateful to the event sponsors: Walter P. Moore, Lorraine “Grandma” Camacho Activity Center, Art Spark/Body Shift, Future Front Martin Ecosystems, JuiceLand, Weird Tea & Beverages, Siete, and Eischen General Contracting.

## Appendix 4: Community Engagement Summary

Following is a list of community engagement activities organized as part of the planning process.

Artists/Creatives Outreach Event – Nov. 20, 2019; 24 attendees

Community Brain Trust Meeting –Jul. 26, 2021; 3 attendees

Community Brain Trust Mtg – July 28, 2021; 14 attendees

Community Brain Trust Mtg – Oct. 25, 2021; 10 attendees

Share your Butler Trail and Lady Bird Lake Stories – Nov. 22, 2021 to present

Pop-up @ Brave Fest (community event) – Nov. 13, 2021; engaged with approximately 20 people

Pop-up @ new Holly Trail Groundbreaking event (community event) – Dec 4, 2021; engaged w/ approx. 15 attendees

Call for Artists, Designers and Creatives – Jan. 2022 thru Feb.2022; 38 respondents

Online Survey – Feb. 3 through June 1, 2022; 259 full and partial respondents

Trail/Community Intercept Surveys – Spring/Summer 2022; 105 respondents

Community Workshop – March 6, 2022; 11 attendees

Arts+Culture Community Celebration (Common Waters installation) – May 14, 2022; approximately 100 attendees

MACC Advisory Board Briefing – Oct. 5, 2022

Arts+Culture Community Pop-up @ Fortlandia Opening – Oct. 8, 2022; approximately 30 attendees

Virtual Community Meeting – Oct. 11, 2022; 4 attendees

East Town Lake Citizens Neighborhood Association (ETLCNA) – Fall Meeting was canceled

East Cesar Chavez Neighborhood C. T. (ECCNA) Meeting Presentation – Oct. 19, 2022

Online Survey – Oct. 12 through Nov. 15, 2022; 116 respondents

For more information, visit the Trail Conservancy's web page:

<https://thetrailconservancy.org/arts-culture-on-the-trail/>