

# Pearland Cultural Arts Master Plan





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# LEADERSHIP

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## INTRODUCTION

The City of Pearland, as the Community of Choice in the Houston region, is distinguished by its highly diverse and growing population of 129,000 and its innovative approach to business support and economic development. The City has experienced sustained and significant growth in its business, industry, housing and city infrastructure, becoming an exurban center for the nearby areas of Brazoria, Fort Bend and Harris Counties.

*Visit Pearland* takes an active leadership role in arts and culture. The City recognizes and embraces the benefits of arts and culture in the life of the community, expressing the creativity of its residents, enhancing quality of life, connecting the community, supporting healthy youth development, and elevating Pearland as a desirable place and destination. Pearland's Convention and Visitors Bureau, which markets under the brand of *Visit Pearland*, oversees the City's primary investments in the arts, funded by its Hotel Occupancy Tax revenues.

In line with state regulations, Pearland's arts spending supports tourism. *Visit Pearland* produces and sponsors culturally diverse events, awards grants to nonprofits arts and cultural organizations, and oversees public art including the Pear-Scape Trail. More recently, *Visit Pearland* spearheaded a pilot program of artwork on traffic signal boxes. Arts and cultural events are part of *Visit Pearland's* portfolio, with The City's Parks and Recreation Department as a partner in events located in Independence Park, and various community partners and venues throughout the city. Parks and Recreation provides arts classes and camps through its recreation program.

*Visit Pearland* commissioned this inaugural Cultural Arts Master Plan to guide its continued arts and culture development. This plan assesses the state of arts and culture in Pearland to understand residents' vision and priorities for the cultural life of the community and to support growth in tourism. Other objectives are to foster placemaking in the city, align with economic development and the business community, and articulate an appropriate role for *Visit Pearland* to play in cultural development in relation to its limited resources for arts and culture. It is also an homage to late Mayor Tom Reid, who was a passionate arts supporter and championed arts and cultural growth in Pearland.

The Cultural Arts Master Plan aligns with and reinforces the 2024 Pearland Prosperity plan, especially its recommendations regarding Cultural Arts, Places to Gather and Old Town Revitalization.



*Developing  
Cultural Life,  
Tourism and  
Placemaking*

## CITY OF PEARLAND ARTS AND CULTURE PROGRAMS

The City's direct involvement in arts and culture is broad and impactful, although the financial investment is modest. City arts and culture programs include involvement in events, the Pear-Scape Trail public art program, and a grants program.

### ARTS AND CULTURAL EVENTS: ATTRACT = IMPACT

In line with its mission to promote tourism and hotel stays, *Visit Pearland* is involved in a range of events serving visitors and residents. *Visit Pearland* produces select events with a strong attraction for overnight visitors, including the longstanding annual Tony Booth Day event and the new King Music Fest, a multiday event led by a Pearland resident who is an Elvis-tribute artist, along with other tribute artists. This approach parallels *Visit Pearland's* successful efforts in youth sports that have demonstrated impact on hotel stays.

Other events supported by *Visit Pearland* include the annual Puranava Indian Art & Culture Fest, a free community event, and other events focusing more on day trippers from the region, residents of Pearland, and drawing fewer overnight visitors. Pearland Parks and Recreation produces or provides rentals for events in park locations, such as the Holiday Lights Display, Spring Festival, Juneteenth, Celebration of Freedom, Tejano Super Jam, and other concerts and celebrations.

### PROMOTING CULTURAL ARTS: GRANTS AND SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

With funding from the Hotel Occupancy Tax, the grants program and sponsorships promote convention and hotel industry activity through financial support of arts programs and events. Nonprofit organizations located in Pearland are eligible to apply and priority is afforded to programs or projects that focus on the development of cultural arts and fine arts in the community. The total annual amount allocated for the cultural arts grant program is \$40,000. The maximum amount awarded by the grants program to nonprofit arts organizations is \$6,000. Alternatively, the sponsorship program offers amounts determined by the merit of the event marketing, attendance projections, and hotel room night potential.

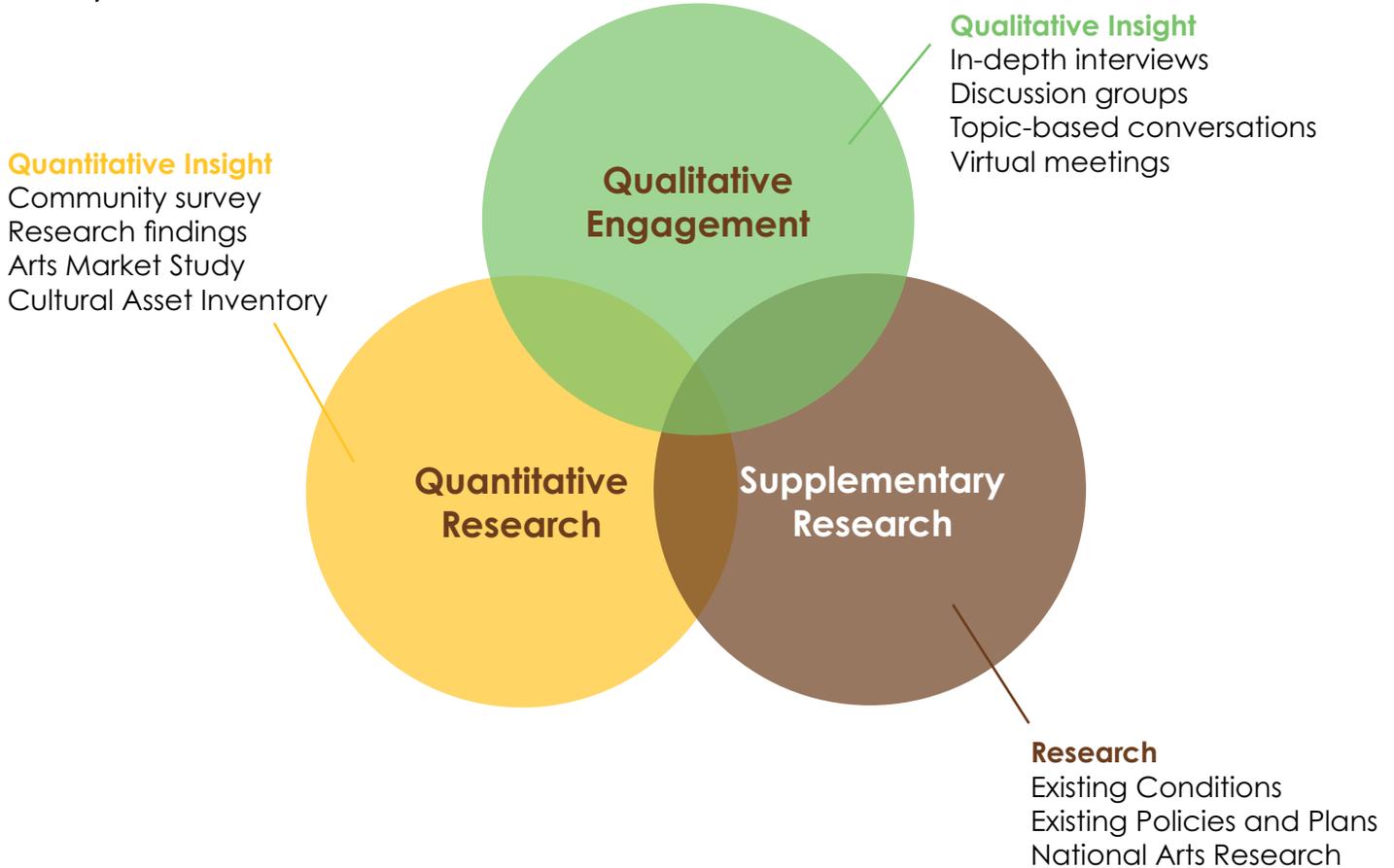
### PEAR-SCAPE TRAIL

Beginning in 2016, Pearland commissioned colorful, artist-designed pear sculptures to be placed in locations frequented by visitors throughout the city. Twenty-three pears are now beloved and instantly recognizable emblems of Pearland. *Visit Pearland* developed the collection of pears into a sculpture trail accompanied by a map and supporting promotional materials. Seeking to broaden the type of public art available to the community, *Visit Pearland* developed a pilot initiative to install artist-designed mini-murals on utility boxes in the Pearland Parkway corridor. In addition to City-initiated public art, the community created murals on privately owned buildings in Pearland.



# THE PLANNING PROCESS

Necessary insight to guide the cultural plan was obtained through a series of community engagement opportunities. Insights were gathered and applied to ensure resident, business and visitor constituents lend a voice to the future life and growth of Pearland's arts and culture and tourism economy.



## ENGAGEMENT METHODOLOGY

City of Pearland leadership and staff, stakeholders, residents, and community leaders shaped the goals of this plan. The planning process began in Summer 2023 with stakeholder and community input gathered through interviews, discussion groups and virtual meetings. The CVB convened a steering committee to assist in guiding the planning process and plan goals.

The public participation process included a variety of opportunities for people to participate in planning including an online survey, community meetings, and a community pop-up site at the West Library. The City successfully distributed a community survey receiving more than 1,700 responses.

Topic questions asked throughout the planning process focused on:

*What is the current state of arts, culture and creativity for Pearland?*

*Where are the opportunities for Pearland to advance public art?*

*Where are the opportunities to grow visitorship?*



## Engagement Activities

Following is a summary of the engagement activities conducted during the planning process.

Group	Engagement Activity	Description
Steering Committee	Met four times during the planning process and plan development	Provided expert guidance for plan engagement and content
City of Pearland City Council	Discussions with City Council members	Explored the Council's goals and alignment with the cultural arts master plan
City of Pearland Departmental Staff	City departments participated in interviews or mini-group discussions	Identified opportunities for public art, arts programming, and potential departmental intersections with art projects
Community Stakeholder Engagement and Discussion Groups	Individual interviews and group discussions were conducted with community arts organizations, individual artists, higher education leaders, hoteliers, youth, chambers of commerce, and more	Met with community leaders, organizations, and artists to understand potential collaborations and opportunities for the cultural arts master plan
Community Survey	1,700 plus participants completed the cultural arts master plan survey	Provided information and opinions about their vision for the arts in Pearland including priorities for public art and the plan

## WHAT WE LEARNED

Highlights from the engagement and survey are provided below. The priorities for the plan identified by all the participating groups provide a foundation for the plan recommendations.



### *Pearland Today: Community of Choice*

#### WHAT ARE WE BUILDING ON?

- A Spirit of Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Community Diversity
- Strong Brand Identity for Public Art and Economic Development
- Diversity of Artists, Creative Businesses and Organizations
- Arts and Business Community Willingness to Collaborate
- Well-used Park System
- Well-recognized Public Art Program

#### WHERE ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES?

- Focus on Unique Cultural Tourism
- Develop Old Town District into a Cultural District
- Connect East and West with Activations
- Expand the Public Art Program
- Create Next Generation for Pear-Scape Program
- Activation of Parks with Public Art and Events
- Increase Arts Events and Arts Learning Opportunities
- Create a Large, Signature Event
- Build Resources for Marketing and Awareness
- Consider a Community Art Center
- Increase Gathering Places for Youth and Young Adults
- Address Access Issues (permits, insurance, police, etc.)
- Review New Grants and Funding Opportunities
- Support Independent Restaurants and Local Culinary Scene
- Build and Leverage Community Partnerships

#### WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

- Alignment with City Priorities
- Significant Increase in Visitors and Business
- A Unique Suburban Place with Plentiful Cultural Amenities
- A Distinct City Brand as a Cultural Destination
- A Vibrant, Centralized Cultural District
- Increased Number and Variety of Arts and Cultural Events
- Venues for Community Arts
- More Gathering Spaces, Including Intergenerational and Kid-Friendly Spaces



### *Pearland Tomorrow: A Cultural Destination*

# COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

**73%**

Provide more arts and cultural events/ activities in Pearland

**58%**

Create a more vibrant downtown Pearland

**51%**

Provide more opportunities for children and youth to participate in the arts

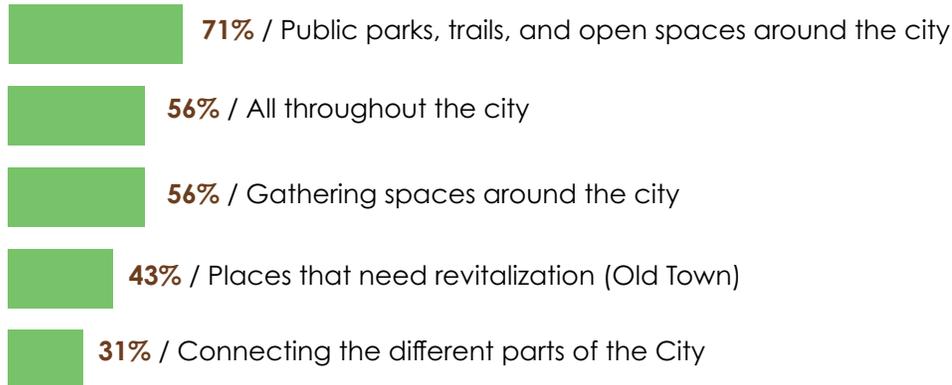
**52%**

Develop a community arts and cultural center in Pearland

## TYPE OF PUBLIC ART



## PLACES FOR PUBLIC ART



## IMPACT OF PUBLIC ART: I WANT PUBLIC ART TO . . .



## PEARLAND'S ARTS MARKET POTENTIAL

The market study provides a portrait of the strength, character and location of arts activity among the population in the City of Pearland and the surrounding region, generally defined as a 30-minute drive from the center of the City. Data is compiled into indexes for different types of arts activity: 1) the types of activities people attend or visit, and 2) the types of personal creative activities people may do on their own. Indexes measure how much the population engages in a particular arts activity compared to the national average.

Interest in the arts is strong in the city and the region. The largest portion of the regional population (209,570 people) live in high-arts-indexing areas. Moderate-indexing areas carry a population of 193,188 also within the city, but mainly in the region. This analysis suggests that the majority of city residents are eager to participate in arts and cultural activity and that arts and cultural providers can draw participants from both the city population and the

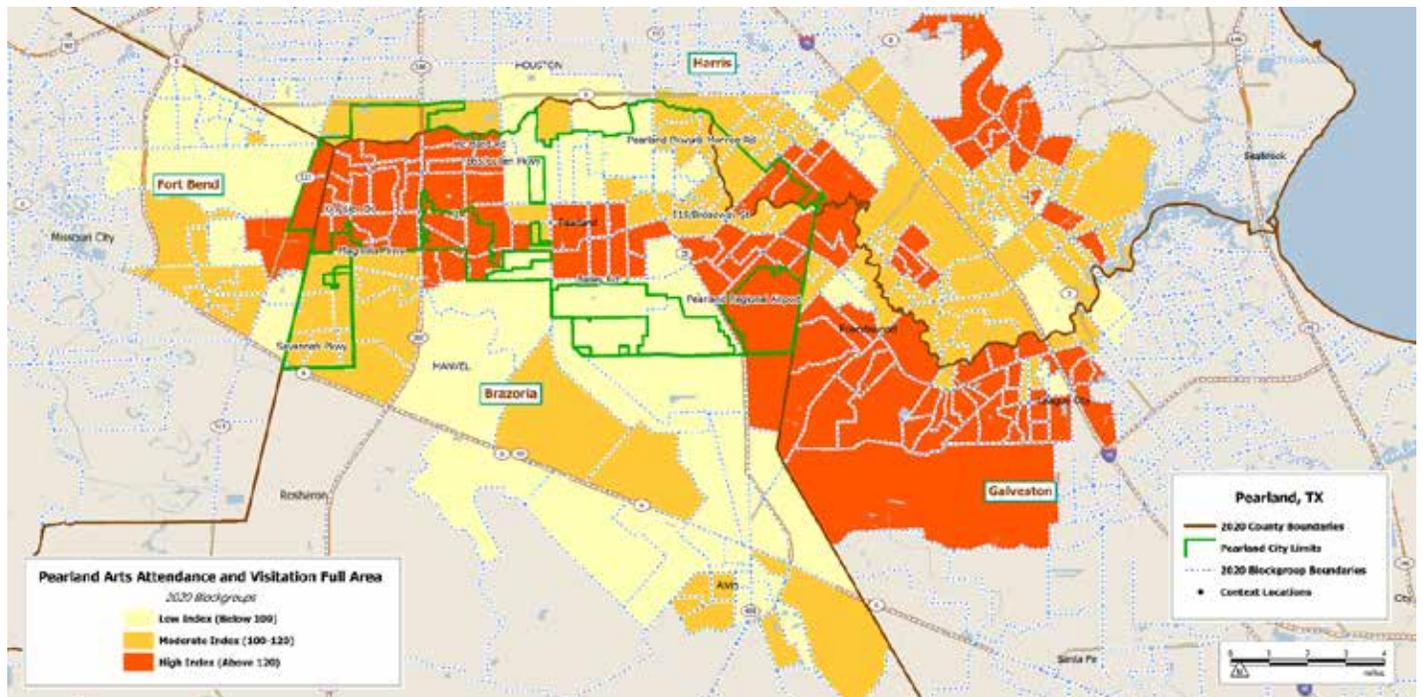
immediate region. These results align with and reinforce key messages in community engagement and the survey.

Across all areas of the City appear abundant opportunities to connect the arts with youth. Regardless of the arts index, all areas show 45% of households with persons under the age of 18.

The population of the full study area (city and region) is 519,029 people and 183,663 households. The largest percentage of the population (40%) is concentrated in areas with a significantly higher-than-average index for arts attendance and visitation (above 120); 37% is in moderate-indexing areas; 22% is in low-indexing areas.

The highest indexes for the city's population include attending live country music concerts, live theatre, and live rock music concerts. Interest for live arts such as classical music and dance as well as visiting museums and art galleries is also above average within the city limits.

### Full Area Arts Attendance & Visitation Map<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> The Pearland City limits appear as a green line in the map. This analysis is produced at the block group level of geography which does not align exactly with city boundaries, so in some cases a block group may extend slightly over the city boundary, therefore demographic counts and reporting may be slightly higher than what the City of Pearland reports.



Participation in the personal creative activities studied in this report hovers close to the national average of 100, with the highest index reported among the city’s resident population for playing a musical instrument.

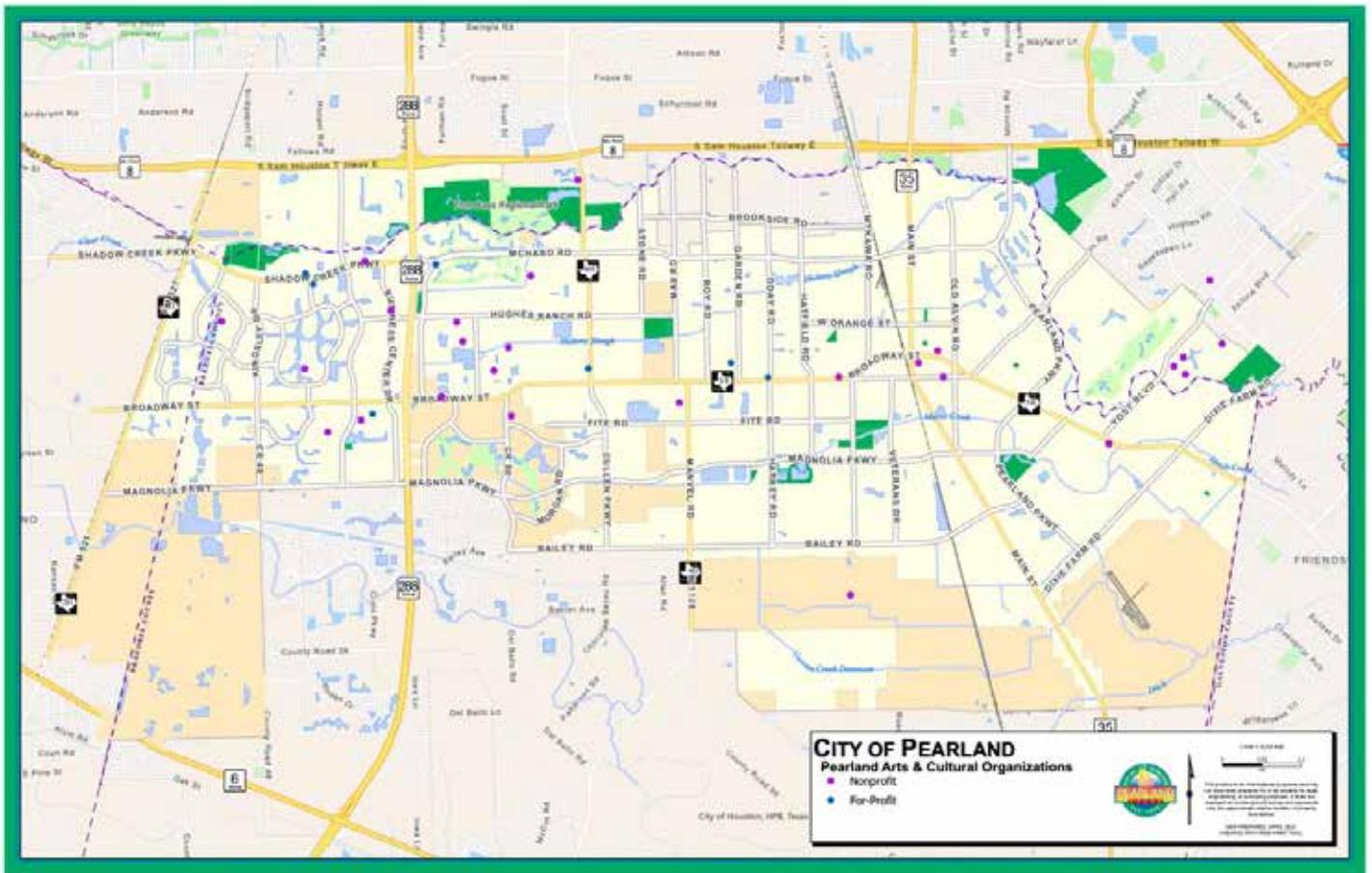
The indexes reflect long-known socioeconomic barriers and other inequities to arts access. Education and income levels historically predict adult arts attendance and visitation, and this is true for Pearland and the region. Higher indexing areas hold higher levels of education and income.

The city and the region forecast a modest measure of transience and growth, with slightly more growth in the low-arts-indexing areas of the city and region.

*Pearland is  
Poised to Engage  
More Visitors and  
Residents with  
The Arts*

## **PEARLAND’S CULTURAL ASSETS**

Pearland is home to a community of 26 nonprofit arts and cultural organizations and a minimum of seven commercial dance and music studios. There are additional arts-related businesses and individual artists, not identified in this inventory, located in the community and contributing to the cultural vitality of the city.



The nonprofits encompass a broad range of artistic disciplines including festivals, music, theater and youth arts. Reflecting Pearland’s diversity, the largest category is cultural heritage. Almost all are small-budget organizations (annual budgets less than \$1 million) which suggests that many are operated with scarce resources and few paid or non-paid staff.

The community-based nature of the nonprofit organizations illustrates the need for additional resources and tools to build and sustain these groups. Arts communities require supportive policy to progress to a higher level of capacity, and greater capacity is what enables them to better serve the community.

Pearland offers a collection of small-scale venues for the performing arts. Small theaters include the Sri Meenakshi Temple auditorium (500 seats), recently refurbished Horizon

Montessori School auditorium in Old Town (385 seats), West Pearland Library Auditorium (100 seats), Pearland Theater, and Silambam studio theater. The Hilton Garden Inn can be adapted for smaller concerts.

The high schools contain excellent auditoriums/theaters, but they are generally used year-round by the school district and are not available for community use. Similarly, there are few gallery spaces for the visual arts. The West Pearland Library boasts a new, well-equipped Makerspace, a communal workshop with shared equipment for personal creative projects.

There are larger outdoor venues for the arts, including the Pearland Town Center Pavilion and the Independence Park Stage. The strong interest for the arts in Pearland stand in contrast to the limited inventory of venues and the community’s desire for larger cultural facilities.

## Pearland Arts and Cultural Organizations and Businesses

### 26 Nonprofits

3D Productionz  
Arberia Inc.  
Beyond Generosity Inc.  
Czech Heritage Society of Texas, Harris County Chapter  
Friends of Pearland Malayalee Community  
Kannappan Art Museum  
Kemetyu Global Economic Development Corporation  
Khai Tri Vietnamese Language and Culture Academy  
Kids' Backporch Productions (Make It Up As We Go Productions Inc.)  
Loka Dharma Seva Foundation of America  
M I S T (Masks Issues Stages)  
National Black Film Festival  
Peace for Pearland  
Pearland Arts League  
Pearland Band Booster Club  
Pearland Chamber Symphony  
Pearland Chinese Association  
Pearland Community Band  
Pearland Foundation for the Performing and Visual Arts  
Pearland Theater (Pearland Theatre Guild)  
Shadow Creek Choir Booster Club  
Silambam Houston  
Sri Meenakshi Hindu Temple  
Texas Toot Inc.  
Young Artistic Performers Inc.  
Yunnan Association of Houston

### 7 Businesses

Allegro Academy of Music  
Coomer Ballet Conservatory  
Dance Visions Studios  
Divine Dance Arts  
Foundation for Creative Leadership  
Latin Dance Factory  
Xtreme Level Dance & Fitness Studio



## VISION AND PRIORITIES CITY OF PEARLAND

### VISION FOR CULTURAL LIFE

A connected and inclusive creative community celebrating Pearland's cultural and geographic diversity with residents and visitors.

### STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Trusted Government
- Connected Community
- Resilient Finances
- Safe Community
- Strong Economy
- Sustainable Infrastructure

*"Pear Blossoms"*  
MARTIN C.  
Pearland Historical Society  
2017

# PLAN GOALS

Informed by City and community leaders, artists, business owners, and residents, the plan goals elevate Pearland's cultural offerings to fulfill the aspirations of its diverse population, attract new and returning visitors, and to heighten the level and variety of quality arts and cultural experiences in the City of Pearland.

## GOAL 1

### **BUILD GREATER CAPACITY, LEADERSHIP AND CONNECTION FOR PEARLAND'S ARTS AND CULTURE.**

**Lead:** Pearland Convention and Visitors Bureau (markets *Visit Pearland* brand)

**Timeframe:** 1-3 years

**Staff Resources:** 1 FTE Arts Administration/Staff or Contract Position + Part Time Public Art Program Manager

**Financial Resources:** HOT (hotel occupancy tax) Funds

#### **I. Create staff positions for an arts administrator and a part-time contracted public art manager.**

- Focus arts administrator on broader cultural tourism programming, marketing, expanded metrics, arts grants and sponsorships.
- Focus public art manager on expansion of Pear-Scape trail and forming structure for public art program. (See Goal 2)

#### **II. Build the capacity of *Visit Pearland* to lead the City's arts and cultural investments.**

- Designate *Visit Pearland* as the City's local arts agency and leadership body for the local arts and cultural community.
- Identify ongoing professional development opportunities to enhance staff capacities related to arts and culture.
- Participate in local and regional arts, cultural and creative economy networking and conferences.

#### **III. Advance the arts grants program and sponsorships to create more impact.**

- Continue the focus of nonprofit grants on projects that provide publicly accessible arts events and activities in Pearland.
- Expand eligibility to creative businesses with qualifications in arts and cultural programming such as individual artists, event producers and promoters.

- Increase grant and sponsorship amounts commensurate with the projects.
- Consider marketing grants that support arts and cultural organizations' campaigns targeting regional visitors.

#### **IV. Develop ongoing relationships and guidelines for interdepartmental collaboration for cultural events, public art and economic development initiatives.**

- Identify one or more liaisons in each City department interfacing with arts and culture.
- Conduct periodic meetings of the departmental liaisons to stay informed on plans and activities relevant to the arts and culture program.
- Develop guidelines to facilitate and improve interdepartmental collaboration as needed.

#### **V. Expand current marketing initiatives to include more cross-promotion for cultural tourism.**

- Continue work with the arts and cultural, creative, business, culinary and other sectors to develop promotions with local businesses, nonprofits and arts organizations. These may include:
  - Delores Fenwick Nature Center and artist collaborations. Example: <https://www.nps.gov/ever/learn/news/wild-observations-art-exhibit.htm>
  - Brewery and restaurant cross promotions with theatres and arts organizations and artists (live painting events, history tours, etc.)
- Continue to select and curate arts and cultural offerings promoting Pearland's history, cultural diversity, and evolving contemporary culture.
  - Identify, connect and package distinctive Pearland places, events, cultures and heritage as an ongoing theme in visitor marketing.
  - Consider an annual season of themed promotions.
- Work with the Community of Choice brand to integrate and further differentiate Pearland's cultural brand in the regional marketplace. Example: <https://www.visitportland.com/visit/things-to-do/activities/arts-entertainment>
  - Develop a brand guide based on the Prosperity brand that ensures individual marketing efforts support the Pearland cultural brand.
- Prioritize artistic excellence in programming and investments.

## VI. Build on current *Visit Pearland* marketing content to locally promote the arts and cultural experience.

- Consider multiple marketing channels to align with how people access arts and culture information and provide appropriate messages and engagement.
- Change community perceptions and habits to favor attending arts and culture in Pearland.
- Identify and remove barriers that cultural organizations and artists face in contributing to the events calendar
- Consider developing a community arts advocates program that amplifies marketing through additional means of influencers, marketing partners, word of mouth, and list sharing.
- Work with *Visit Pearland* to integrate the necessary tools and tracking for successful marketing and audience development.

### GOAL 2

## BUILD A SUSTAINABLE AND DIVERSE PUBLIC ART PROGRAM.

**Lead:** Pearland Convention and Visitors Bureau

**Timeframe:** 1-3 years

**Staff Resources:** Contract Position – Part Time Public Art Program Manager (See Goal 1)

**Financial Resources:** HOT funds, partnership funds, potential percent for art funds

### I. Formalize City of Pearland public art program.

- Create public art program policies and guidelines based on national best practices. (See examples.)
- Convene public art selection panels for specific artworks or public art initiatives. Choose individuals from Pearland and the region who hold high qualifications in relation to the project(s).
- Develop long-term collections management and maintenance plans.
  - Document the existing collection in a management software platform.
  - Contract with a qualified professional or firm to conduct a comprehensive maintenance and conservation review of the public art collection and develop a future maintenance program. Update the review and plan every five years.
  - Include the cost of public art maintenance and conservation in annual City arts and culture budgets.

### II. Expand and evolve the signature Pear-Scape program.

- Conduct a new round of commissioned Pear-Scape installations.
- Expand the accessibility of the current Pear-Scape program to include corporate, public and private sponsors with an emphasis on:
  - Funding through sponsorships and HOT funds.
  - Encouraging the expansion of the Program without limitations on the number of pears.
  - Celebrating and encouraging community participation and expression through the program.
- Commission a team of local artists to develop an evolution of the Pear-Scape concept.
  - Incorporate flexibility to utilize a stock design or custom design.
  - Incorporate and advance the basic elements of the current program to reflect Pearland's innovation and demonstrate creative approaches to the City's pear identity.
  - Link the evolution of the Pear-Scape concept to the Community of Choice brand and Connected Community strategic priority.
- Implement the new, evolved Pear-Scape concept with artworks and events over time.

### III. Evolve the current public art program.

- Utilize public art to connect Pearland's communities and neighborhoods.
  - Expand the utility box program citywide. Examples: Dublin Utility Box Art Program, Sugar Land Traffic Box Wrap Art.
  - Ensure geographic equity of public art locations and installations.
  - Celebrate local talent with a focus on local and regional artists.
  - Consider other small-scale public artworks including benches, crosswalks, and other functional art.
- Diversify the program through art and artists.
  - Create a City mural program. Example: Sugar Land murals, Beaumont CVB.
    - Widely promote selection opportunities to ensure a diverse pool of artists.
    - Develop mural guidelines for the program (see examples).
    - Expand temporary installations throughout the city. Example: Solana Beach temporary art program.

- Link installations to City celebrations and events.
- Install at locations where activation is needed throughout the community.
- Identify opportunities with the Parks Department and other City departments to develop artistic and placemaking projects.
- Provide public art mentorships and internships.

**IV. Develop voluntary opportunities for City and private development to include public art.**

- Identify current and future city planning projects where public art will enhance the project, including park development and City capital projects.
- Consider voluntary allocations of funding for public art in city capital improvement projects to expand the availability of artworks to the public.
- Consider incentives to encourage the inclusion of public art in private real estate development.

**GOAL 3**

**EXPAND AND DIVERSIFY VISITORSHIP THROUGH CULTURAL TOURISM.**

**Lead:** Pearland Convention and Visitors Bureau

**Timeframe:** 3-5 years

**Staff Resources:** Arts Administrator (See Goal 1)

**Financial Resources:** HOT funds and other City and partnership funds

**I. Expand specific arts and cultural events to drive visitorship and increase hotel occupancy revenues.**

- Expand programming partnerships with local and regional producing organizations for arts and cultural events. Identify, produce and promote destination events, building on the experience of pilot events such as the King Music Fest.
- Develop a signature cultural event for Pearland. Areas of focus may include a multicultural festival, mural festival, or public art festival or build on existing regional festivals.





- Invest as needed in contracts for services with partners to bring in needed expertise and manage the workload of production.

## II. Expand activation efforts in public spaces and parks throughout Pearland.

- Enhance existing venues and gathering places with additional arts and cultural events and activities. Concentrate programming in existing venues and places such as Independence Park, Pearland Town Center, University of Houston – Clear Lake, existing theaters and auditoriums, and potentially, Lower Kirby.
- Increase regularity in the availability of arts and cultural programming to expand audiences through greater continuity.
- Align and coordinate efforts with the Parks Master Plan, especially Goal 2, regarding recreational programs and community events in the cultural arts.

## III. Enhance current *Visit Pearland* data collection to capture specific data related to visitation of arts and cultural places throughout the City.

- Institute a city-wide visitor survey or other data collection effort in collaboration with arts and cultural organizations to establish a benchmark for visitor party characteristics and impacts on which to track progress every two to three years (e.g., demographics, location, visitation drivers, marketing channels, and hotel stays).

## IV. Support the organizational development of local arts and cultural nonprofits and creative businesses to better serve community interests.

- Create regular networking and collaboration opportunities for creatives, businesses, and nonprofit arts and cultural organizations. Work to engender a sense of community connection and pride among Pearland’s community of creatives and arts and cultural organizations.
- Provide professional development programming (e.g., workshop training) to build the capacity of local arts and cultural organizations to improve their brand and messaging.
- Provide arts and cultural organizations with a brand guide that ensures individual marketing efforts support the Pearland Community of Choice brand.

## GOAL 4 INFUSE CREATIVITY THROUGHOUT PEARLAND THROUGH PLACEMAKING.

**Lead:** City of Pearland Community Development, Economic Development Corporation, Pearland Convention and Visitors Bureau

**Timeframe:** 5-7 years

**Staff Resources:** Collaborations between City Departments and EDC

**Financial Resources:** General funds and economic development capital funds

### I. Explore development of a cultural district in Old Town.

- Build on and coordinate with City efforts to revitalize and activate Old Town as a walkable cultural and historic

hub. Coordinate with Old Town revitalization plan (currently underway).

- Identify and promote opportunities for arts and cultural events and festivals to locate or be programmed in Old Town. Incentivize event producers, arts organizations, artists, developers and others to encourage their participation.
- Promote and incentivize new or expanded arts and culinary spaces in Old Town, such as performance venues, art galleries, event spaces, arts-related businesses, and restaurants.
  - Promote and facilitate development of artists' live-work spaces. Consider partnering with a nonprofit developer, such as ArtSpace, or a developer that specializes in live-work developments.
  - Expand the presence of independent restaurants in Old Town through incubators or incentives for culinary entrepreneurship.
- Develop a cultural district strategic plan. The process and plan should include these and additional elements to strengthen development of the district as a successful and sustainable entity:
  - community and stakeholder input
  - identification of geographic boundaries
  - district partnerships
  - goals and strategies
  - brand and identity
  - an asset inventory
  - a program plan and management plan
  - funding model
  - marketing plan
- Explore future designation of Old Town as a Texas Cultural District through the Texas Commission on the Arts. Begin with Commission assistance as a resource for planning and development of the cultural district.

## II. Create and enhance vibrant arts and cultural hubs throughout Pearland.

- Focus arts and cultural programming on existing or emerging gathering places in Pearland to reinforce their attraction for the community. (See Goal 3.II, activation of public spaces)
- Identify and facilitate opportunities to purchase, renovate and incentivize small space and venue development for live arts and community arts learning spaces.
- Encourage and support arts spaces and amenities in the main hubs throughout the city.

- Explore the viability of building a new visitor center for the Convention and Visitors Bureau in Old Town to improve visitorship throughout the city and boost marketing efforts to both residents and visitors.
- Explore long-term development of cultural facilities with a community partner, such as a cultural center or performing arts center. This can include exploring a partnership for development of the top floor of the University of Houston – Clear Lake at Pearland's new STEM and classroom building.

## GOAL 5

### EXPAND ARTS AND CULTURAL OFFERINGS FOR RESIDENTS.

**Lead:** Pearland Convention and Visitors Bureau Marketing and City of Pearland Parks and Recreation Programming

**Timeframe:** 3-5 years

**Staff Resources:** Collaborations between City Departments

**Financial Resources:** HOT funds and other City and partnership funds

#### I. Develop arts and cultural programming reflecting the aspirations of residents identified in the planning process.

- Based on the research results, expand arts and cultural programming at existing venues and parks, intended and designed more specifically for the interests of residents and not constrained by a primary focus on tourism.
  - Provide and facilitate arts and cultural programming for families and residents of all ages.
  - Offer small-scale, informal arts and cultural activities that enhance the experience of visitors and quality of life for residents, such as music events, art galleries and exhibits, arts markets, public art events, etc.
- Establish cooperative success of programming efforts with the Parks Department as the distinct lead for planning and producing programming and *Visit Pearland* as the distinct lead for marketing available programs.
- Utilize community partnerships in developing arts and cultural programs, such as University of Houston – Clear Lake at Pearland, businesses, chambers of commerce, libraries, event producers, the culinary sector, artists and arts organizations, and others.

## FUNDING

The City of Pearland currently funds arts and culture primarily through its hotel occupancy tax (HOT). By state statute, HOT revenues must be used to promote tourism and the convention and hotel industry; 15% of HOT revenues can be used broadly for arts and cultural purposes, except for capital projects. These requirements interpret that arts and cultural activities funded with HOT revenues must be accessible to the visitor but not necessarily focused on the visitor and tourism.

In Pearland, HOT arts funding has been used for project grants to local arts and cultural organizations where the project has a relationship to tourism, including the Pear-Scape public art pieces, which are in places frequented by visitors. The Pearland Convention and Visitors Bureau (*Visit Pearland*) also maintains an events calendar that includes many arts and cultural events and activities available to both resident and visitor.

*Visit Pearland's* current annual budget projects a total of \$1.7 million in HOT revenues. This suggests that \$255,000, or 15%, can be available in 2024 for permissible arts uses. *Visit Pearland* currently maintains an accumulated reserve of approximately \$7 million in HOT revenues. A portion, in accordance with the 15% cap, could be allocated for permissible arts uses in implementing this Cultural Arts Master Plan or other eligible arts expenses.

The City of Pearland also faces significant ongoing demands on its General Funds, with leadership expressing that revenue use for arts and culture would be a low priority. The City prioritizes General Fund uses for public safety and infrastructure needs.

Pearland's Economic Development Corporation (EDC) holds authority to fund public infrastructure (capital) projects within certain restrictions. There is potential for use of EDC funds for public capital infrastructure uses related to the arts, such as cultural facilities and capital improvements related to a cultural district, assuming compliance with EDC technical funding restrictions.

Given the constraints on public arts revenues in the City, this plan focuses on ways to meet identified needs that can be funded with HOT dollars, both annually and in use of the accumulated HOT surplus.

### Funding recommendations:

- Allocate a full 15% of HOT annual revenues to permissible arts uses, including grants, arts and cultural events, marketing the arts, public art, salaries, and administration.
- Consider allocation of a portion of the accumulated \$7 million HOT reserve funds to implementation of this plan.
- Consider one-time or ongoing allocations of General Funds to meet high priority arts and cultural needs that do not fit within the HOT restrictions.
- Consider allocation of eligible economic development funds for capital purposes related to arts and culture, such as arts venues, a community cultural center, and build-out of arts spaces within existing facilities. Note that EDC funds are restricted to public projects and entities.
- Apply for public and private grants, such as the Texas Commission on the Arts, for annual operating support, project funding, and potential designation as a Texas Cultural District.
- Seek project funding through collaborations with arts and cultural organizations in the community.
- Create a new grants category of general operating support for nonprofit arts and cultural organizations and small creative businesses. Create the guidelines in partnership with potential grantees.
- Consider creation of a nonprofit foundation to raise funds for arts and culture, including public art, on behalf of the community. Alternatively, create a fund at the City of Pearland to receive donations, contributions, and sponsorships designated for arts and cultural purposes, including public art.

VENUE

ROOM L





Visit Pearland  
Texas

