



What is a Cultural District?

A geographic area designated by a government agency, private development group, or planning authority for the purpose of community revitalization by using art and cultural activities and facilities.

Cultural Districts are less than 100 blocks and many are located in downtown “brownfield” sites – areas with unused, abandoned and decaying buildings and spaces that diminish the vitality and economic development of a city. Cultural Districts are usually located by “consumption compounds” - tourism/visitor’s centers, convention centers, tourist attractions, and universities.

Successful Cultural Districts are mixed-use areas that incorporate high technology centers, sports complexes, education facilities, government offices, housing, historic districts, tourists sites, and specialized restaurants and retail; all of which are anchored by cultural facilities (such as art centers, museums, galleries, theaters) and cultural activities such as (festivals, performing art events, arts classes and education, and public art).

Goals of the Cultural District

Cultural Districts spur economic activity. In redevelopment efforts, a Cultural District can:

- Expand the tax base
- Enhance property values,
- Provide employment,
- Attract and retain well-educated employees
- Attract residents and tourists to the city,
- Complement adjacent businesses,
- Offer evening activities, extending hours during which the area is in use
- Beautify and animate cities, and
- Contribute to a creative, innovative, and safe environment.

Examples of successful Cultural Districts that make a difference!

Tucson, Arizona Arts District – (city population of 451,500)

The Tucson Arts District was founded in 1984 by artists concerned about the loss of art facilities in the central areas of major cities. The mission of the Arts District was to “revitalize the downtown and to provide a focused arena for Tucson’s rich artistic and cultural heritage so as to re-establish the area as the heart of our community.”



Cultural facilities within the Tucson Arts District include El Centro Cultural de las Americas; Temple of Music and Art; Tucson Center for the Performing Arts, Tucson Children’s Museum, Tucson Convention Center Music Hall and Lee Rich Theater, Tucson Museum of Art, Tucson Public Library. Other facilities in this same area: City Hall, Historic Pima County Court House, Tucson Convention Center, St. Augustine Cathedral.

Cultural programming for the Arts District includes innovative ideas such as the “Phantom Art Galleries” which places temporary exhibitions by local artists in empty storefronts throughout the arts district, creating a visual interest in spaces and providing bridge between vacancies and active tenants.

Within four years of its establishment, the Tucson Arts District is credited with:

- **26 new businesses**
- **54% increase in sales**
- **50% decline in retail vacancies**
- **11.7% increase in city sales tax revenues (compared with a 7.4% citywide increase)**

Denison, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, and Marfa, Texas are all examples of in-state Cultural District that have created economic development in their community.

Can Lubbock have a successful Cultural District?

Yes! Lubbock has a wealth of wonderful art and culture facilities and activities already in place. As far as facilities, to the north is the Louise Hopkins Underwood Center for the Arts and Lubbock Memorial Convention Center; to the east the American Windpower Center; to the south the Buddy Holly Center and Depot District; to the west is Texas Tech University with its Museum, Ranching Heritage Center, public art collection, and galleries and the Lubbock Auditorium and Coliseum.

Cultural activities include the Lubbock Arts Festival, the National Cowboy Symposium and Celebration, First Friday Art Trail, Flatland Film Festival, performances by the Lubbock Symphony Orchestra and Ballet Lubbock, 4th on Broadway, Celebrity Attractions Broadway Series, Lubbock Music Festival, Fiestas del Llano, concerts at the United Spirit Arena, and the Local Artist Color Studio Tour. Lubbock has over twenty-five art organizations and over 250 individuals that identify themselves as full – time working artists including world famous visual artist such as James Watkins, Jim Eppler, Eddie Dixon, and Renee Simpson.