

Legislation Text

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Subject:

Discussion of a potential Arts and Culture Commission

Prepared By: Tim Nimz, Director of Library and Museum Services
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PURPOSE:

Does city council support creation of an Arts and Culture Commission to advise council on policy matters related to art, culture, and tourism?

PRESENTATIONS:

Staff Presenter(s): Tim Nimz, Director of Library & Museum Services

SUMMARY:

City council provided direction to staff to develop a charter and action plan for a commission to provide policy advice on the issues of art, culture, and tourism; encourage and support the growth and expansion of culture and arts in the community; and foster a vibrant, collaborative, and creative Littleton where arts and culture are defining features of the community's identity and unique character. Staff, in consultation with the Denver firm DJC & Associates, developed a charter outlining the role, vision, goals and objectives, and structure of the new commission. The charter includes the following mission:

The Littleton Arts & Culture Commission was established to foster a community where all residents may engage with the arts and where creativity thrives and is valued. The mission of the LACC is drawn from Littleton's core values, guiding principles, shared priorities, and concerns embodied in the Envision Littleton Comprehensive Plan.

Through public support of the arts, the City of Littleton enhances the quality of life, drives economic development, encourages citizen participation, fosters cultural awareness, promotes tourism, and supports the vibrancy of the community.

The LACC works to celebrate and nurture Littleton's cultural and artistic diversity, ensuring that Littleton is a place where arts and culture thrive and all community members and visitors can engage in and experience the arts and culture in all its forms. The LACC nurtures creative expression, celebrates diversity, builds creative public spaces, and showcases Littleton as a thriving destination for arts and culture.

The commission will serve as a conduit for public engagement on issues relating to arts, culture, and tourism.

PRIOR ACTIONS OR DISCUSSIONS:

6/25/2019 - Council Study Session - Included in discussion of potential ballot issues.

7/23/2019 - Council Study Session - Included in discussion of potential ballot issues.

ANALYSIS:

Staff Analysis

Arts and culture, which include historic and architectural preservation, are a strategic community resource and economic development tool.

According to the Colorado Business Committee for the Arts, 2017 saw \$1.9 billion in economic activity in the Denver Metro area from arts and culture. Total economic impact, defined as new money to the region, hit \$573 million, including a record-breaking \$400 million economic impact from cultural tourists.

With the support of an Arts and Culture Commission, Littleton has what it takes to both attract and retain thriving businesses and talented people while maintaining its authenticity.

Creative place making naturally aids economic development efforts. Arts and culture-friendly policies encourage the development of areas where people can and want to live, work, visit, and congregate. Creative place making animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates and repurposes historic structures and streetscapes, and improves local business vitality. Quality of life assets such as arts and cultural amenities provide a valuable advantage to attracting and retaining businesses and bolstering their efforts to attract talented employees.

The value of arts and culture extends beyond direct economic impact. A three-year study by the Knight Foundation asked the question, “What attaches people to their communities?” The study found that key reasons residents love their cities were entertainment and social offerings, the welcoming nature of their city, and its aesthetics and authenticity (historic preservation), in other words, the arts and culture.

Littleton’s community attachment to arts and culture is readily evident. In four resident surveys conducted by the city between 2012 and 2018, over 88% of respondents rated the quality of Littleton’s art and cultural institutions as excellent or good. Over 60% of respondents stated these quality of life services were essential or very important.

The City of Littleton should try to enhance the role of arts and culture by creating the Littleton Arts and Culture Commission as the city's lead agency to address all things related to arts and culture (and in partnership with historic tourism.)

The commission will be charged with encouraging and supporting the growth and expansion of culture and the arts in the community in areas including visual arts, public art, theater, film, music, dance, history, literary arts, humanities, and creative industries. It will promote, publicize, and advocate for activities that support awareness and creativity in Littleton. It will actively leverage the economic and social power of the arts to enhance the community’s fiscal strength and regional reputation. The commission should include members of the arts and cultural community, business leaders, and the public, reflecting the diversity of Littleton.

The commission may also be charged with helping direct funding to various arts and cultural institutions.

The commission should initially develop a holistic Arts and Culture Plan for Littleton, laying out a community vision; addressing cultural and programming gaps; analyzing all areas of funding; creating a public art plan; and recommending a strategic pathway forward. The city staff and consultant can assist the newly created commission in immersing itself in its duties by preparing an informational curriculum for new commission members; developing a six-month roadmap for the new commission to establish a pathway for new revenue; and creating a strategic plan to include recommendations for policies that facilitate the goals of the commission and the community, and provide clarity on the roles of its partners.

YEAR 1 ACTION PLAN

NOV 2019

- Nov 19 - Resolution creating Littleton Arts and Culture Commission (LACC)

DEC 2019

- Dec 2 - Begin contacting prospective commission members
- Dec 17 - City council appointment of members

Q1 2020

- Introductory reception and organizational meeting with city staff liaisons
 - SWOT analysis, benefits of participation
- Monthly commission meetings
 - Group/relationship building activities/tour
 - Education
 - On arts/culture in Littleton
 - On finances
 - Connections to/direction from the Comprehensive Plan
 - Best practices/models
 - Strategic planning - start work plan
 - Opportunities and challenges
 - Financial opportunities

Q2 2020

- Monthly meetings
 - Establish guiding principles - finish work plan
 - Mechanics of potential new funding
 - Identify comparable models
 - Goals and objectives of funding
 - City budget programs to be funded with potential new funding
- Stakeholder engagement
 - Hotel operators/tourism community
 - Arts community
 - South metro connections
 - Business community
- APRIL - Check in with council - work plan, confirmation on direction

Q3 2020

- Monthly meetings
 - Training on advocacy
 - Establish method to prioritize projects
- Ongoing stakeholder engagement
- SEPTEMBER - Check in with council - potential placeholder in budget if necessary

AREAS FOR FUTURE POLICY DEVELOPMENT

- Funding/grant-making
 - % of matching funds

Community partnerships

- Public Art Master Plan - process, locations
 - Deaccession policy
 - Donation policy
- Live/work zoning recommendation
- Preservation benefits package for arts space repurposing of historic buildings (property tax, TIF)
- Special events policy review

- Tourism marketing program

Council Goal, Objective, and/or Guiding Principle

Council Goal 1 - Envision Littleton - Comprehensive Plan - Heritage, Arts, Recreation, and Tourism section - HART Goals 2, 4, 5.

It is the policy of the City of Littleton that vibrant, active, and financially viable arts and culture are critical to the future success of the community. Arts and culture enhance the lives of residents, improve the physical environment, support and protect the architectural heritage, and spur economic development. Per the Envision Littleton Comprehensive Plan, Littleton has a unique history, active arts scene, and many community events year-round. These all enhance the livability and quality of life of residents.

Fiscal Impacts

Direct costs to support the commission will be included in the museum budget with primary staff support provided by the museum and library.

Alternatives

Create an Arts and Culture Commission to improve communication and partnerships, enhance advocacy, and develop a pathway for new and increased funding for arts and culture.

Do not create an Arts and Culture Commission and maintain the current independent and uncoordinated method of planning and implementing arts and culture programming and strategy.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the city council approve the creation of an Arts and Culture Commission.