

Community Cultural Assessment

To assess cultural needs—to put all other community development needs and strengths within the larger framework of cultural development—is a relatively new concept. It translates into a belief that culture, different in each community, is the sum total of everything that shapes the way of life in that town. By looking at local culture, by assessing the local cultural strengths and resources and by taking a hard look at the cultural gaps and needs, we can begin the process of planning for better, more vibrant communities.

Once discovered, a community's cultural resources become building blocks for every aspect of city development – from schools to main street

Once discovered, a community's cultural resources become building blocks for every aspect of city development, from schools to main street redevelopment, from community social services to tourism. Likewise, cultural needs that are pinpointed can lead to a transformation and revitalization of programs and organizations throughout the community.

The cultural needs assessment process is not band-aid treatment for surface cultural problems. Rather it pushes us to look behind the surface problems. For example: Low

attendance at a local concert series might be the surface problem, but only an indicator of a larger cultural issue that could be anything from the series' appeal to only a small segment of the population, to a lack of music education programs in the schools and a lack of adult arts enrichment programs.

Perhaps the facility the orchestra plays in is located in a downtown that is considered unappealing or unsafe at night. Or maybe the idea of attending live performances of music, dance or theatre has been lost over a period of many years during which time the community residents turned to other leisure activities as their culture.

In digging for these clues, the real picture of the community's cultural identity and needs emerges. Only then can the development of a community cultural strategic plan be effective. Finding a community's cultural identity should include:

- A look at the association of the community's cultural offerings with tourism and with attracting new business and residents to the area
- An examination of the link between cultural activities, cultural identity and offerings with downtown and neighborhood redevelopment, restoration, and building
- An identification of the leadership roles that can be played by civic, social, and cultural agencies, schools, religious organizations, business, and individuals in shaping the cultural development of the community.

A community cultural needs assessment works best when supported by broad based community leadership. At the very least, it requires people with time and dedication. Ideally, it is supported by unbiased, questioning cultural champions.

A needs assessment is best done in a concentrated period of time—perhaps three to six months. Whereas planning work generally requires "down" time between meetings for people to reflect on different strategies, assessment work needs to be paced only so slow as to allow for the gathering of data. The smaller the community, the less time the project should take. However, the more that a project includes public meetings and open forums, the more time that will be required.

The various steps in a community cultural needs assessment are:

- **Assessment Step One: Initial Information Sweep.** The first step in each of the assessment is a general community information sweep. This general gathering of information gives those involved with the project a solid foundation of data within which to place the catalyst concepts from the pre-assessment work, and within which to proceed with more detailed fact finding or group process work. This is "doing homework" in a basic but thorough way.
- **Assessment Step Two: Community Summary Profile.** The information gathered in the initial information sweep is synthesized into a summary profile that lists what has been found and what is not known. The profile is a straightforward, concise working paper for internal use only.
- **Assessment Step Three: Selecting the Model for the Remainder of the Assessment.** If the pre-assessment catalyst statements and the summary profile point to the same observations, if the issues and needs are not unduly complex, and if there is general community consensus concerning the findings, the project should continue using a streamlined and simple fact finding approach for the remainder of the assessment. If, on the other hand, there is a diversity of issues and catalyst ideas, if the data collected show a variety of needs and competing priorities, and if there are great changes in the community's population groups and economic outlook, the group should proceed with a more detailed group process assessment.
- **Assessment Step Four: Evaluating the Assessment Information.** Those involved in the project review the information and opinions gathered and make recommendations for short- and long-term attention. Based on the requirements of and needs addressed by each recommendation, those conducting the assessment also suggest options for addressing the recommendations ranging from development of new programs or community awareness building to the development of a comprehensive community cultural strategic plan.



Texas
Commission
on the Arts

CULTURAL DISTRICT DESIGNATION APPLICATION

Name of cultural district

Submitted By

Date

CULTURAL DISTRICT APPLICATION CHECKLIST

1. **Cover Sheet**
2. **Maps**
 - City map
 - Cultural district map
3. **Narrative**
 - A. **Level of Community Support**
 - Benefits of cultural district
 - Evidence of public input into the planning process for the cultural district
 - Copy of signed resolutions from city and/or county
 - Copy of signed resolution of support by nonprofit organization(s)
 - B. **Management Structure**
 - Leadership/management team (*see application instructions*)
 - Organizational chart
 - C. **Presence of cultural Assets**
 - Description of cultural district
 - List of existing cultural, arts and tourism enterprises and those planned with a timeline for completion
 - D. **Incentives and Collaborations**
 - Describe incentives (*local, state, federal or private*)
 - Describe local, regional, state, federal and private collaboration efforts in support of the cultural district
 - E. **Plan for Developing and Sustaining the cultural district**
 - Overall goals and objectives
 - Program and activity plan
4. **Attachments**
 - Photographs (*no more than fifteen*) reflecting components of the written narrative
 - Letters of support and commitment for the cultural district
 - Board of directors with annotation for lead organization
 - Audited financial statement and/or Form 990
 - Copy of 501(c)(3) nonprofit status letter from the Internal Revenue Service
 - Cultural plan with sections on cultural tourism, marketing and economic development
 - Description of affordable housing and studio space for artists (*if applicable*)
 - Cultural district budget
 - Transportation/walking plan
 - Americans with Disabilities Act (*ADA*) features

1. COVER PAGE

Name of cultural district

Name of city

Name of nonprofit applicant

Texas Legislative District(s)

Congressional Legislative District(s)

PRIMARY CONTACT

Name: _____

Title: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: TX Zip Code: _____ County: _____

Daytime Telephone Number: (_____) _____ Ext. _____ Fax Number: (_____) _____

Email Address: _____

Website URL: _____

PROJECT DIRECTOR *(if different than above)*

Name: _____

Title: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: TX Zip Code: _____ County: _____

Daytime Telephone Number: (_____) _____ Ext. _____ Fax Number: (_____) _____

Email Address: _____

CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIAL CITY

(Mayor's signature certifying accuracy of application)

(Date)

(Name and title)

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: TX Zip Code: _____ County: _____

Daytime Telephone Number: (_____) _____ Ext. _____ Fax Number: (_____) _____

Email Address: _____ Website URL: _____

CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIAL COUNTY

(County Judge's signature certifying accuracy of application)

(Date)

(Name and title)

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: TX Zip Code: _____ County: _____

Daytime Telephone Number: (_____) _____ Ext. _____ Fax Number: (_____) _____

Email Address: _____ Website URL: _____

CHAIR OF COLLABORATING COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

(Signature certifying accuracy of application)

(Date)

(Print name and title)

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: TX Zip Code: _____ County: _____

Daytime Telephone Number: (_____) _____ Ext. _____ Fax Number: (_____) _____

Email Address: _____ Website URL: _____

2. MAPS

Note: Maps can be either black and white or color copies and no larger than 11_ x 17_. Include a legend and indicate North on each map. All parts of map must be legible, clearly marked and reflect the same information in the narrative (especially for the description of the cultural district boundary).

City/County Vicinity Map: Indicate salient features (*i.e. district boundary; transportation corridors and facilities; cultural, arts, entertainment and tourist facilities; as well as proposed capitol improvement projects that affect the cultural district*).

Cultural district Map: Identify standing structures; existing or proposed historic district(s); properties within the cultural district and their use (*a list of properties is encouraged*); on the property list indicate occupied or vacant; indicate general condition as good, fair or poor; survey current building use; zoning designations; identify housing resources; accessibility features; identify the primary pedestrian corridors and additional information pertinent to cultural district.

3. NARRATIVE

A. Level of Community Support

In one page or less describe how a cultural district designation will benefit the community and the surrounding area; provide evidence and certification that the concept for the cultural district has been discussed in a public hearing (*with adequate notice and publicity*) and any vote or action taken as a result of public meeting(s). On separate pages, include a copy of the public notice and/or minutes from the hearing. Include the applicable resolution from the governing body and collaborating organization(s).

B. Management Structure of cultural district Steering Committee

In one page or less explain the proposed structure of your local cultural district leadership/management team, marketing plan, and voluntary registration procedure.

Note: Identify key staff and personnel to lead and manage the cultural district. Explain their expertise and ability to manage the cultural district. Note their anticipated roles and responsibilities and chain of command. Identify which entity (city, county or local community organization) has ultimate responsibility for the cultural district.

C. Cultural Assets

In one page or less provide a detailed description of the cultural district boundary (*including street names and directions, side streets, blocks, etc. that adequately describe exactly which properties are included in the district*). List cultural, arts, tourism, and heritage enterprises in the area (*include those in the cultural district, the immediate area or those planned for the cultural district*).

D. Incentives and Collaborations

In one page or less, describe incentives and/or collaborations that the county, city, or local nonprofit or for-profit organization will offer to cultural, arts, tourism, and heritage enterprises as well as the workforce and residents (*if any*) of the cultural district.

Note: Please be as specific as possible and describe incentives offered such as special signage, publicity, local grants, property tax abatement, Municipal Improvement District, Tax Increment Districts (TIF), rent buy-downs, low interest loans, zoning to encourage live/work space for artists, other state or federal programs such as federal historic tax credits, Main Street Revitalization Loan Program, etc.

E. Developing and sustaining the cultural district

In two pages or less, describe how the community will coordinate economic development and initiatives with other programs (*i.e. Main Street, Certified Local Government, Historic Commission, Chamber of Commerce, local development corporation, etc.*); identify potential for affordable housing (*rental or purchase*), studio and performance space; list proposed activities and time frames; explain proposed budget for cultural district – describe funding sources; explain goals and objectives and their expected outcomes. Include proposed transportation/walking routes for the cultural district (*may include signage, parking, shuttle buses, walking maps, etc.*); identify Americans with Disabilities Act (*ADA*) accessibility features of the district (*individual enterprises as well as transportation and common areas*).

4. ATTACHMENTS

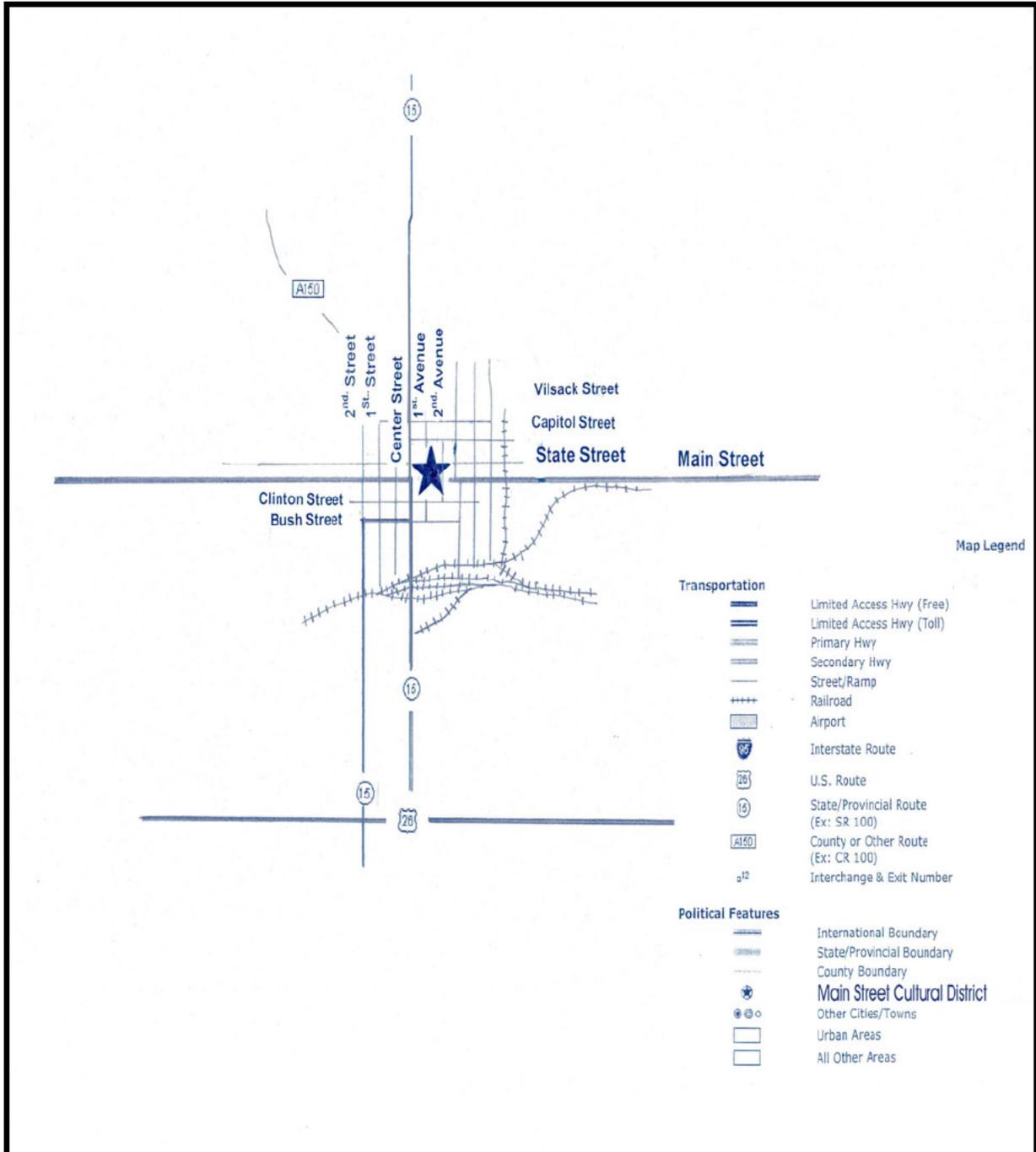
- Program and activity plan
- Cultural plan with sections on cultural tourism, marketing and economic development
- Description of affordable housing and/or studio space for artists (*if applicable*)
- Budget
- Transportation/walk plans
- ADA features of cultural district

Note: The [TCA Tools for Results Tool-kit](#) was developed as a resource for non-profit arts and cultural organizations in Texas and beyond. This resource will be helpful in developing many of the attachments listed above.

EXAMPLES

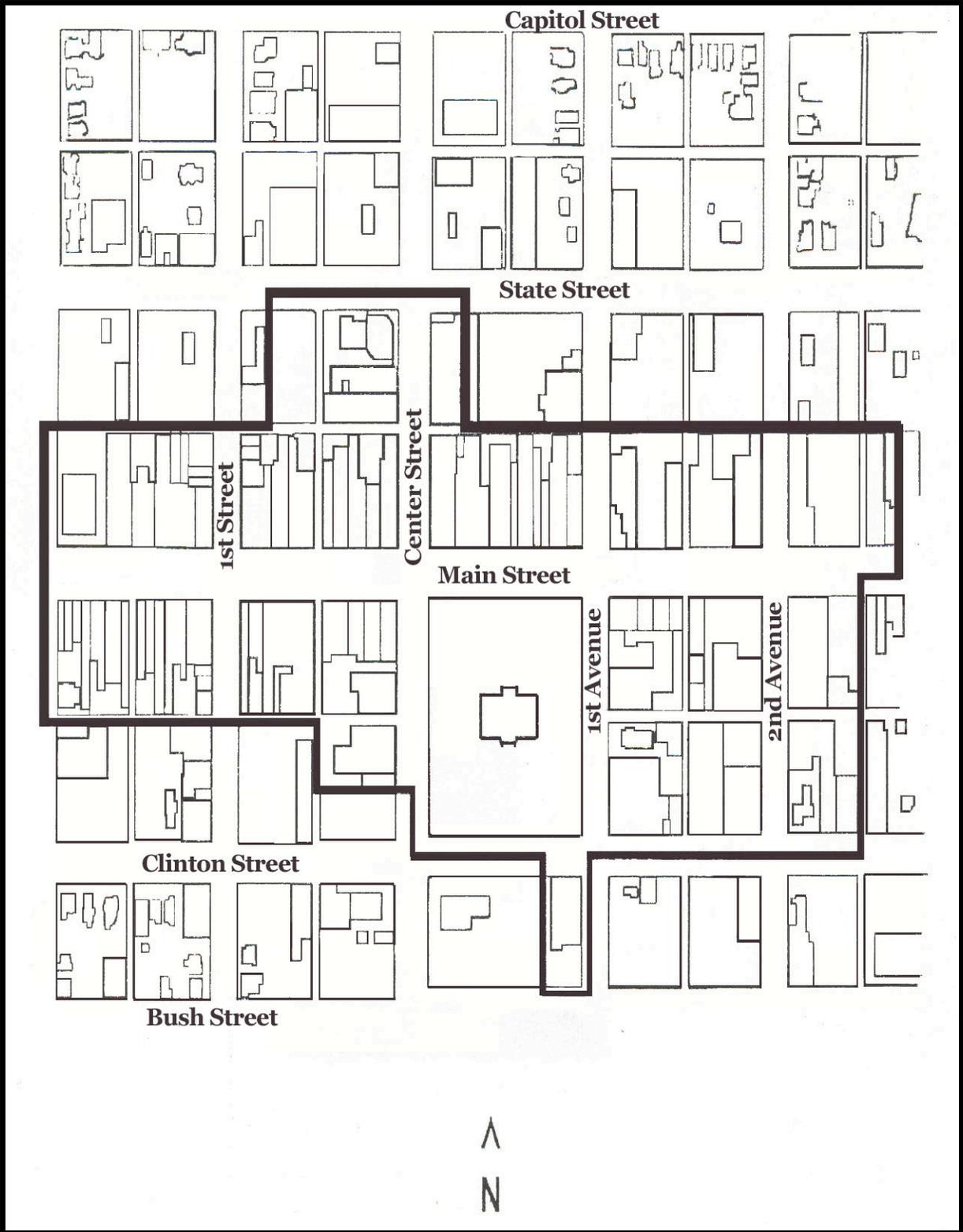
- City/County Vicinity Map
- Cultural district Map
- Sample Resolutions:
 - City Council
 - County Commission
 - Board of Directors of Community Organization
- Sample cultural district organizational chart
- Proposed budget for cultural district

City/County Vicinity Map



Cultural district Map

Anytown
Center & Main cultural district



Sample Resolution for City Council

A resolution authorizing certification of a cultural district for at least ten (10) years to be named:

_____.

Whereas a cultural district has been designated to assist the district and community to develop a public-private partnership to support said district and,

Whereas _____ has signed a resolution of support for said cultural district and,

Whereas the Texas Commission on the Arts will be petitioned to designate said cultural district and,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF

_____ that the city:

Article 1. Endorses the submission of this application and agrees to participate in the development and financial support of said cultural district.

Article 2. Endorses the goal of economic development of said cultural district within the context of preservation and rehabilitation of our historic buildings.

Article 3. Endorses the goal of tourism development of said cultural district within the context of contributing to the overall visitor development goals of the city.

Article 4. Will appoint a city official to represent the city on the governing board of said cultural district.

Article 5. By this action, directs city staff to actively support and cooperate with governing board to develop and maintain said cultural district.

Article 6. By this action, requests all residents of city/county and especially those citizens who own property or businesses within said cultural district to support, promote and help maintain activities and events in said district.

Article 7. Directs the Mayor to sign and submit such resolution on creation of said cultural district.

ADOPTED ON THIS DAY _____ OF _____.

Mayor's signature

Date signed

Print Mayor's name

ATTEST

Sample Resolution for County Commission

A resolution authorizing certification of a cultural district for at least ten (10) years to be named:

_____.

Whereas a cultural district has been designated to assist the district and county to develop a public-private partnership to support said district and,

Whereas _____ has signed a resolution of support for said cultural district and,

Whereas the Texas Commission on the Arts will petitioned to designate said cultural district and,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNTY COMMISSION OF

_____ that the county:

Article 1. Endorses the submission of this application and agrees to participate in the development and financial support of said cultural district.

Article 2. Endorses the goal of economic development of said cultural district within the context of preservation and rehabilitation of our historic buildings.

Article 3. Endorses the goal of tourism development of said cultural district within the context of contributing to the overall visitor development goals of the county.

Article 4. Will appoint a county official to represent the county on the governing board of said cultural district.

Article 5. By this action, directs county staff to actively support and cooperate with governing board to develop and maintain said cultural district.

Article 6. By this action, requests all residents of county and especially those citizens who own property or businesses within said cultural district to support, promote and help maintain activities and events in said district.

Article 7. Directs the County Judge to sign and submit such resolution on creation of said cultural district.

ADOPTED ON THIS DAY _____ OF _____.

County Judge's signature

Date signed

Print County Judge's name

ATTEST

Sample Resolution for Nonprofit Boards of Directors

A resolution authorizing support and participation in the governance of a cultural district for at least three (3) years to be named: _____

Whereas a cultural district has been designated to assist the county and community to develop a public-private partnership to support said district and,

Whereas _____ has signed a resolutions of support for said cultural district and,

Whereas the Texas Commission on the Arts will be petitioned to designate said cultural district and,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF

_____ *that we:*

Article 1. Endorses the submission of this application and agrees to participate in the development and financial support of said cultural district.

Article 2. Endorses the goal of economic development of said cultural district within the context of preservation and rehabilitation of our historic buildings.

Article 3. Endorses the goal of tourism development of said cultural district within the context of contributing to the overall visitor development goals of the city and county.

Article 4. Will appoint a member of the board of directors to represent the organization on the governing board of said cultural district.

Article 5. By this action, directs staff to actively support and cooperate with governing board to develop and maintain said cultural district.

Article 6. By this action, requests all members of the organization to actively support, promote and help maintain activities and events in said district.

Article 7. Directs the Chair to sign and submit such resolution on creation of said cultural district.

ADOPTED ON THIS DAY _____ OF _____.

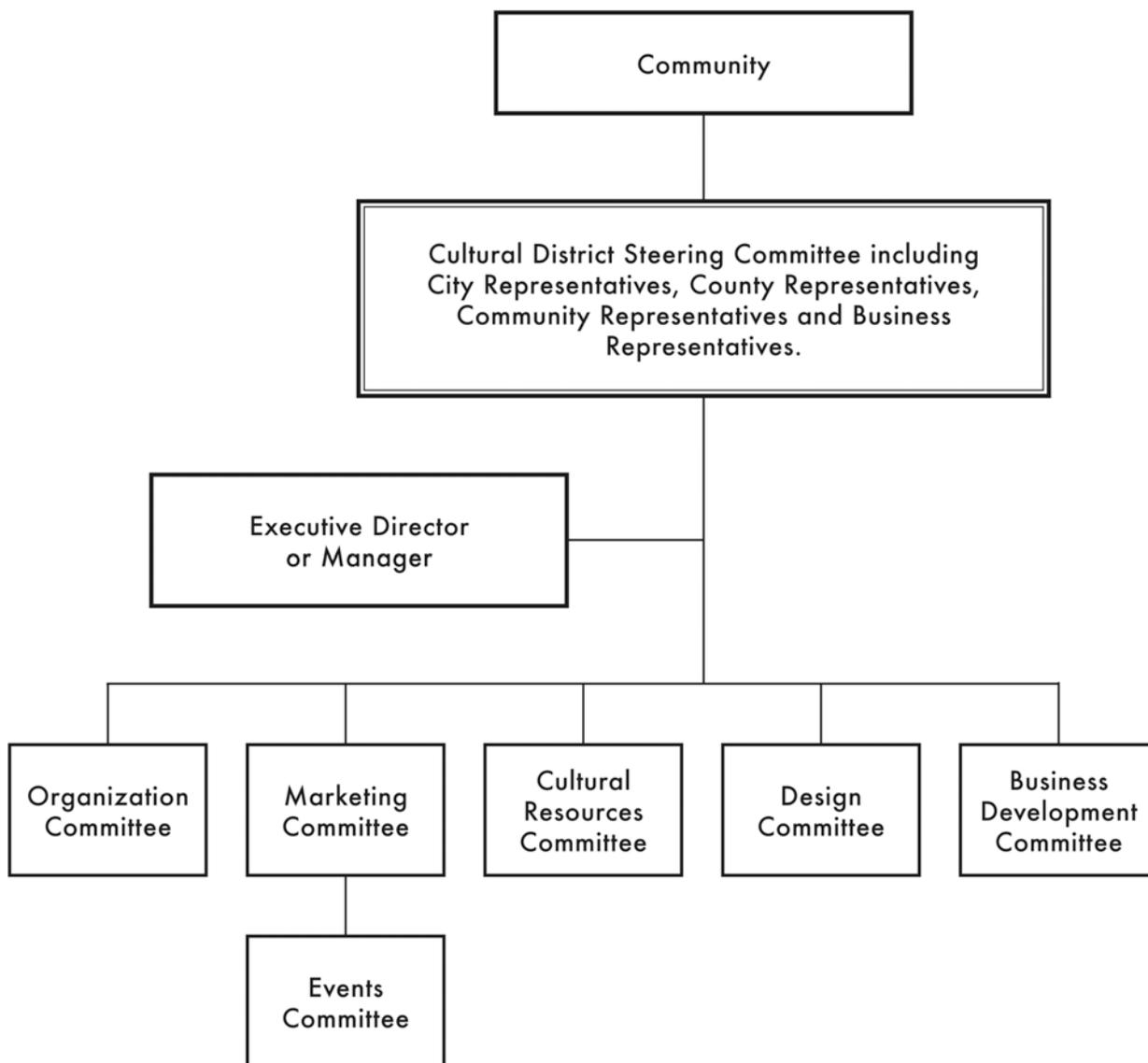
Chair's signature

Date signed

Print Chair's name

ATTEST

Sample Cultural District Steering Committee Organizational Chart



Proposed Budget (1-3 years) for cultural district

Note: Consider only these key areas for inclusion in budget.

EXPENDITURES	1 st Year	2 nd Year	3 rd Year	Combined Total:
STAFF COSTS				
Director/Manager Salary				
Director/Manager Benefits				
Support Staff Salary				
Travel Expenses				
OPERATING COSTS				
Rent				
Utilities				
Telephone/Communications				
Office Supplies				
Office Equipment				
Postage				
Printing/Photocopying				
Photography Supplies				
CONTRACT COSTS				
Advertising/Public Relations				
Professional Service Fees				
Misc.				
PROGRAM COSTS				
Cultural Resources Committee				
Business Development Committee				
Marketing/Promotion Committee				
Organization Committee				
Design Committee				
Other				
Contingency				
TOTAL EXPENDITURES:				

SOURCES OF INCOME

Note: source and type of funding (e.g. cash, in-kind, grant, loans). Include same three years as above budget and reflect sources of income by categories:

PRIVATE CONTRIBUTIONS	1 st Year	2 nd Year	3 rd Year	Combined Total
Government				
Partnerships				
Grants				
Loans				
In-Kind Contributions				

Other ()				
Other ()				
TOTAL INCOME				

STATEMENT OF RECOGNITION

The following statement must be included as a credit line on all written material promoting the cultural district and associated events or activities:

“Cultural district designated by the Texas Commission on the Arts.”

APPLICATION DEADLINE: JUNE 1

Mail the original signed application to:

Cultural district Certification Program
Attention: Jim Bob McMillan, Deputy Director
Texas Commission on the Arts
PO Box 13406
Austin, TX 78711-3406
512/936-6572
JimBob.McMillan@arts.state.tx.us

