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Support local culture and arts

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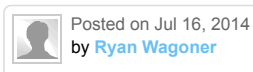
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Posted: Wednesday, July 16, 2014 12:00 am

Ryan Wagoner The Shorthorn editor-in-chief | 0 comments



Posted on Jul 16, 2014 by Ryan Wagoner

When some people who live in Texas think of an “arts district” or “cultural district,” they may first think of the Dallas Arts District which features such sites as the Winspear Opera House, The Perot Museum of Nature and Science or the hub of activity that is Klyde Warren Park. Others might think of the Fort Worth Cultural District, which features venues like Casa Mañana, the Scott Theatre or the Amon Carter Museum of American Art. As far as hubs of culture are concerned, Arlington does not rank high on the list of places to immerse one’s self in arts. One group is looking to change that.

In June, the Downtown Arlington Management Corporation worked with various nonprofit and forprofit cultural arts groups to submit an official application to the Texas Commission on the Arts to establish downtown Arlington as a Cultural Arts District. Cultural districts are special zones that use cultural resources to stimulate development and community revitalization, according to the Texas Commission on the Arts.

We at The Shorthorn applaud the efforts of the Downtown Arlington Management Corporation and collaborating cultural organizations for seeking to establish downtown Arlington as an official Cultural Arts District. This classification for downtown could provide a number of benefits necessary to see the area grow into a center for arts and entertainment, not just for students, but the city as a whole.

The most tangible benefit of this certification for downtown would be access to special tax-based incentives specific for cultural districts. Some of these incentives can include amusement or admission tax waivers for organizations or events in the district, sales tax credits or exemptions for works of art produced or sold in the district or income tax credit or exemptions for artists living in the area.

These benefits could also speed up the bigger picture for downtown already being put in place by Arlington City Council, including their plans for demolishing and moving the George W. Hawkes Central Library to build a mixed-use development, expanding pedestrian walkways and accessibility on Abram Street and adding a new multifamily apartment complex for Arlington residents in the area.

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With such a close proximity to downtown, UTA would be a significant contributor to the success of a possible cultural district, as we are home to various art and architecture galleries, theatrical performance halls and creative student works. One of the many success factors needed to sustain a cultural district is strong community support for the district overall, and impact on an audience or participants in the district is one criterion that is evaluated by the Texas Commission on the Arts during the application process.

We won't hear if the application was a success until later this fall, but The Shorthorn urges students to show their support for art and culture in downtown by visiting venues like Theatre Arlington, the Arlington Museum of Art or the Levitt Pavilion. Showing support now could mean a more fun, interesting and engaging Arlington for future UTA students to enjoy.



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