
ROUND ROCK CREATES

APRIL 2023



ROUND ROCK CREATES

CITY LEADERSHIP AND STEERING COMMITTEE

Round Rock City Council

Craig Morgan, Mayor
Michelle Ly, Place 1
Rene Flores, Place 2, Mayor Pro Tem
Matthew Baker, Place 3
Frank Ortega, Place 4
Kristin Stevens, Place 5
Hilda Montgomery, Place 6

City of Round Rock Administration

Laurie Hadley, City Manager
Brooks Bennett, Assistant City Manager
Bryan Williams, Assistant City Manager

City of Round Rock Communications and Marketing

Sara Bustilloz, Director, Communications and Marketing
Courtney Ainsworth, Public Information Specialist
Jesse Davis, Digital Designer
Austin Ellington, Assistant Director, Communications and Marketing
Rell Holt-Rugely, Public Information Specialist
Ethan Lankford, Multi Media Specialist
Reagan Osborn, Senior Administrative Assistant

City of Round Rock Arts and Culture

Scot S. Wilkinson, Arts and Culture Director
Christina Rudofsky, Arts and Culture Associate

Consulting Team

Martin Cohen, Partner, The Cultural Planning Group
Lunda Flynn, Ph.D., Partner, The Cultural Planning Group
Linda Cheu, AECOM
Sean Tapia, AECOM

Round Rock Creates Steering Committee

Jeff Barnett, Attorney at Barnett & Leuty, PC

David Carter, Purchasing Manager, City of Round Rock

Bradley Dushkin, Assistant Director of Planning & Development Services, City of Round Rock

Diana A Gonzalez, The Ruby Hotel & Bar, General Manager

Geeta Halley, Assistant Director, Round Rock Public Library, City of Round Rock

John Honning, General Manager, Star of Texas events

John Howell, Founder/Artist, Cordovan Art School

Carol Lee, Owner and Artist of Mi Tierra Pottery

Tim Lowke, Director of Fine Arts - Visual Arts, Round Rock Independent School District

Jager Loyde, Director of Fine Arts – Music, Round Rock ISD and Music Director, Central Texas Philharmonic Youth Orchestra

Trina Martin, Founder of Parents for Arts Education

Jean Mason, Artist

Susan L. Morgan, CPA, Chief Financial Officer, City of Round Rock

Julio Palacios, Theater Director and co-owner of Papi's Pies Art Gallery

Jose Parra, Stained glass artist and co-owner of Papi's Pies Art Gallery

Richard Parson, Founder Round Rock Pride

Carlie Pearson, Mixed Media Artist and Installer

Richard Phillips, Owner/Designer Interactive Entertainment Systems

Nick Ramos, Creative Director, Graphismo

Jordan Robinson, President & CEO, Round Rock Chamber

Scott Smith, Director of Entertainment, Kalahari Resorts & Conventions, Round Rock, Texas

Gordon Stehr, Co-Owner Image360 Round Rock

Makiko Stehr, Co-Owner Image360 Round Rock

Marinda Stewart, Artist, Author, Arts Advocate

Susan Tait, Watercolor Artist

Ricky Thompson, Retired

Alex Vallejo, Director of Operations, School of Rock – Round Rock/Southwest Austin

Rick White, Musician, Arts Ambassador, Realtor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Round Rock Creates

<i>City Leadership and Steering Committee</i>	2
<i>Executive Summary</i>	5
<i>What Is Round Rock Creates?</i>	5
<i>Why This, Why Now?</i>	6
<i>About Round Rock Arts and Culture</i>	6
<i>The Voice of the Community</i>	8
<i>Context and History</i>	9
<i>Mission and Vision</i>	10
<i>Mission</i>	10
<i>Vision</i>	10
<i>Core Values</i>	10
<i>The Plan</i>	10
<i>Strategies and Actions</i>	11
<i>Strategy 1: Strengthen and expand the arts, culture, and creative community in Round Rock</i>	11
<i>Actions</i>	12
<i>Strategy 2: Enhance and support the environment for personal creative expression and participation</i>	14
<i>Actions</i>	14
<i>Strategy 3: Expand the capacity of the Office of Arts and Culture</i>	16
<i>Actions</i>	16
<i>Strategy 4: Increase Awareness and Visibility of Arts, Culture, and Creativity</i>	18
<i>Actions</i>	18
<i>Conclusion</i>	19

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHAT IS *ROUND ROCK CREATES*?

[Round Rock Creates](#) is the planning initiative to expand arts, culture, and creativity in Round Rock. The planning process was led by a community-based task force, staff of Round Rock Arts and Culture (RRAC), and a consulting team from [AECOM](#) and [Cultural Planning Group](#).

The planning process sought to address several key questions in understanding the current environment, context, and issues for arts and culture and to identify strategies to inform priorities for the next five to seven years. Key questions included:

- What is the current state of arts, culture, and the creative economy in Round Rock? What are the strengths and opportunities? What are programmatic areas that are either lacking or require additional resources?
- How do market factors, such as population growth and demographic changes, affect demand and needs for cultural and arts programming and facilities?
- What is the current environment for arts, culture, and the creative economy in Round Rock? What are the community factors—resources, leadership, priorities, community challenges, economic development goals, etc.—that affect their support, growth, and sustainability? What do these factors mean for strategies for their development?
- What are Round Rock’s competitive advantages with respect to attracting creative individuals and industries? What strategies will be most effective in building on Round Rock’s greatest assets and strengths?
- How do we compare to other cities with similar characteristics? What cities should Round Rock be compared to, and what can be learned from the efforts of others? What differentiates Round Rock from these other places and what are the implications of that differentiation in developing strategies?
- Who are key private sector partners to the City in implementing arts and cultural goals and priorities?
- What additional cultural facilities are needed, and what are the strengths and challenges of site opportunities such as the repurposing of the Griffith Building?
- How can this plan support Round Rock Arts and Culture to ensure programs are accessible and welcoming to all residents of Round Rock?

WHY THIS, WHY NOW?

The City of Round Rock has a growing and active arts and culture community that has been supported through the 2011 City Arts and Culture Strategic Master Plan. *Round Rock Creates* builds on the many successes and milestones in arts and culture that grew out of that plan, while recognizing the need for a new direction that is relevant to current needs of the arts community, changing demographics and population growth, and emerging trends in arts and culture.

The City of Round Rock is home to more than 2,000 jobs in creative industries with annual earnings of nearly \$24M.¹ Arts and cultural nonprofits in Round Rock collectively have revenues of nearly \$2.5M.

Round Rock Creates is intended to guide the priorities and programs of RRAC for the next five to seven years. This plan reflects the aspirations and desires that emerged through the public engagement process with Round Rock residents, the arts and culture community, and civic and municipal leadership. *Round Rock Creates* reflects the priorities of Round Rock's 2030 plan, for which residents stated the growth and development of arts and culture is their highest priority when considering community quality of life. As Round Rock continues to experience significant growth in population, its residents want the City to foster the growth, support, and options for arts, culture, and creativity. The growth of the arts is also a vital component in keeping Round Rock competitive from an economic perspective.

ABOUT ROUND ROCK ARTS AND CULTURE

The reach and impact of RRAC across Round Rock has far exceeded the original recommendations of the 2011 plan. What began as an effort to organize a few events each year to bolster downtown Round Rock and to coordinate activities with Round Rock Arts has grown into a robust office, reaching an audience of more than 200,000 annually.² A review of the growing roster of programs and events initiated, organized, managed, and facilitated by RRAC suggests two distinct functions for the office.

The first function of RRAC is serving as the local arts agency for the City, fostering the growth and development of a broad, inclusive arts, culture, and creative community. This function includes the following activities:

¹ Based on creative economy data for zip codes 78664 and 78665 through the Creative Vitality Suite and data through Economic Modeling Specialists International, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, National Center for Charitable Statistics. A full Snapshot Report of the Creative Economy is included in the Appendix.

² Throughout the planning process there was often confusion between Round Rock Arts and Culture—the City office—and Round Rock Arts. The Round Rock Area Arts Council (www.roundrockarts.org) was originally created as an arts council to help organize and foster the arts groups in Round Rock. It is a 501(c)(3) organization formed in 2009 as the Round Rock Area Arts Council dba Round Rock Arts. Since then, the mission of Round Rock Arts has evolved, and now includes working closely with the City of Round Rock in sharing oversight and curation of the Downtowner Art Gallery.

- The creation and management of the Downtowner Gallery;
- An annual grants program that supports a range of cultural organizations providing direct programming in Round Rock;
- Facilitation of technical assistance for individual artists, creative entrepreneurs, and nonprofit arts organizations;
- Creation and expansion of the public art program;
- Development of numerous partnerships with cultural and community organizations, city agencies, businesses, and individual artists throughout the City; and
- Provision of resources for nonprofits, businesses, educational institutions, and others serving arts and culture in the City.

90%+ of survey respondents consider arts and culture to be important to their community, their own lives, and families.

The second function of the office is to serve as a curator, programmer, and presenter of entertainment, particularly in downtown Round Rock, organizing an extensive roster of events including Music on Main, Hometown Holidays, Lunchtime Parklet Series, PopUp Art Shows, Beaujolais Nights, Chalk Walk, and more. During fiscal year 2013, RRAC presented three events and managed a budget of \$25,000. Today that budget is more than \$465,000; in 2022 alone, RRAC planned, organized, and presented over 115 events reaching an estimated audience of 200,000. In 2023 there are 148 events scheduled, expected to reach an audience of 250,000 or more.

RRAC programs are built on the principle of creating a welcoming environment for all Round Rock residents. This is reflected in the office's efforts to make events and activities accessible to all residents.

- Nearly all programs and events are free and open to the public, and programming represents a broad range of music styles and interests, experiences, and taste.
- Performers are diverse in age, gender, and culturally specific communities of the City, and performances are presented across a range of days and times to accommodate different audiences.
- The application process for City grants to arts organizations has been simplified and streamlined in recent years, and the staff are readily available and accessible to all interested organizations.³

³ Notable throughout public engagement and interviews with artists, creative entrepreneurs, and representatives of the arts and culture organizations is the extent to which they respect the role of the RRAC and look to the department staff for leadership in arts development.

- The doors of the Downtowner Gallery are open and accessible to all, including opportunities for emerging and professional artists.

The RRAC reflects the depth and breadth of the community through its events programming and its support of a range of activity such as the Diwali Festival, Día de los Muertos Festival, Round Rock Pride Festival, El Amistad Club, and more.

THE VOICE OF THE COMMUNITY

Round Rock Creates represents the vision articulated by a wide range of residents, artists, performers, business partners, City offices, and corporate and education partners.

Based on the growth and success of RRAC programs, the Round Rock community values the increasing breadth and scale of arts, culture, and entertainment programming. This plan synthesizes input from extensive community and stakeholder engagement in the spring and summer of 2022.

Over 2,500 individuals participated in a series of community meetings, discussion groups, and interviews, sharing their vision for arts, culture, and creativity in Round Rock. This included 2,205 residents (representing as many as 5% of households) who completed an online survey aimed to understand how residents participate in and connect with arts, culture, and creative activities; to learn what is important to residents; to identify barriers to participation; and to understand community aspirations for Round Rock’s creative future.

60% of survey respondents rate their involvement in arts and culture as frequent or occasional.

It is notable that through the community survey, nearly 86% of participants responded that the City of Round Rock should either fully support or play a major role in expanding arts and culture opportunities.

63% of survey respondents rate either adapting or building new facilities for arts and culture as high or extremely high priority.

The highest priority expressed by residents was a desire for opportunities to personally participate in arts, culture, and creative endeavors. Specifically, residents cited the lack of facilities and spaces to create, present, and experience arts activities. While shareholders and survey participants noted the need for performing arts facilities, they expressed a clear desire for a broader range of facilities is needed. Those needs and desires include facilities for both visual and performing arts (galleries, performance spaces, classrooms, studios, entertainment spaces, rehearsal spaces, etc.) as well as maker spaces and multi-purpose rooms for community use.

It should be noted that the plan below addresses this priority through recommending the City pursue development of a community arts center. The first opportunity to explore the functions of a community art center is through the redevelopment of the Griffith Building (the former Round Rock Public Library). It is recommended that this redevelopment be viewed as the first step, a proof of concept, for development of a comprehensive community arts center.

Other themes that emerged as important to residents include:

- Continuing efforts for downtown development;
- Expanding citywide opportunities for participation;
- More public art throughout the City;
- More interdepartmental collaboration in the City of Round Rock;
- Exploring partnerships with local agencies, businesses, and corporations;
- Strengthening the capacity of RRAC to build their focus beyond events planning; and
- Increasing funding and support for the nonprofit arts sector and the creative economy.

Implementation of this plan presents the opportunity to move the role of RRAC to a higher level in the quality of life of the community, consistent with the maturation of the City and the changing needs and desires of its residents.

CONTEXT AND HISTORY

Located in the central region of Texas, Round Rock is part of the Greater Austin metropolitan area and has an estimated population above 128,000 people as of January 2023. It continues to be one of the fastest-growing municipalities in the United States. This represents extraordinary growth since 1990, when the estimated population was just under 31,000 (greater than a four-fold increase in just 30 years). By 2040, the population of the City is expected to exceed 194,000. Round Rock residents cite a high quality of life that is grounded in access to exemplary schools, excellent medical facilities, an incredible array of parks, sports, and recreational amenities, a vibrant and continually emerging downtown, terrific shopping and dining opportunities, an AAA baseball team playing in one of America's premier minor league stadiums, and a culturally rich arts community with outstanding performing and visual arts programs.

Since 2011, when Round Rock Arts and Culture was launched as a vital part of City service, the office has been essential in fostering a supportive environment for arts and culture and the extraordinary growth and expansion of arts, culture, and creativity in the life of residents and visitors.

MISSION AND VISION

MISSION

To enrich the lives of those who live, work, visit, and create in Round Rock through programs, events, exhibitions, and public art that build community and contribute to the economic and cultural vibrancy of our community.

VISION

Arts, culture, and creativity are essential to the quality of life and economic well-being of Round Rock and fostered through a robust and comprehensive range of programs, services, facilities, activities, and resources. Round Rock Arts and Culture seeks to:

- Engage, educate, and empower people of all ages by expanding access to a variety of arts and cultural opportunities in community settings.
- Contribute to the growth of tourism and overall economic vibrancy of Round Rock.
- Enrich the built environment by integrating public art throughout Round Rock.
- Create a Round Rock Community Arts Center to serve as a central hub for arts, culture, and creativity.

CORE VALUES

Round Rock Arts and Culture programs and activities are created and delivered to the community infused with the following core values:

- Programming that embraces a wide range of activities in live performing arts, visual arts, community celebration, personal participation, and opportunities for both familiar and new experiences and entertainment.
- A range of programs and opportunities that are participatory and collaborative.
- Programs and activities to be inclusive, accessible, and welcoming to all residents, and reflective of all forms of diversity of the Round Rock community.
- Creativity and innovation in our civic life.
- Programs rooted in sustainability, accountability, and transparency in all operations, and which validate the City's role as careful steward of public resources.

THE PLAN

Round Rock Creates is built on a set of recommended strategies and actions reflecting the issues and priorities articulated through interviews, discussion groups, and a community survey where nearly 2,500 residents of Round Rock shared their vision for the creative and cultural life of the City. The plan includes four overarching strategies, each elucidated through a set of tactical approaches referred to in this plan as “actions.”

There were several considerations when shaping and articulating the four strategies and related actions, including relating to the key findings and reflecting stakeholder input; the overall impact of and history of programs, services, and activities of RRAC; and, ultimately, the vision for change and growth.

The four key strategies that emerged from the planning process and community input are:

- Strengthen and expand the arts, culture, and creativity community in Round Rock.
- Enhance and support the environment for personal creative expression and participation.
- Expand the capacity of the Office of Round Rock Arts and Culture.
- Increase Awareness and Visibility of the Arts.

IMPLEMENTATION

The objective of this plan is to provide a framework to guide the priorities and operations of RRAC. It is intended to be aspirational, practical, and achievable. Collective and collaborative actions by the City of Round Rock, multiple departments and agencies, organizations, businesses, and philanthropy will be key to achieving the most ambitious actions. The *Round Rock Creates* Steering Committee can serve as advocates and as a sounding board for the plan's success. An implementation section is included in the Appendix outlining strategies and actions. It will serve as a "checklist" to monitor and manage plan implementation.

FUNDING AND RESOURCE OPPORTUNITIES

Plan implementation will require developing annual priorities for each of the plan strategy areas.

It will require an investment of resources to expand RRAC, including adding staff and resources. Currently, resources from the Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) collected in Round Rock is the primary source of funding for RRAC. It is recommended that the percentage of HOT funds be increased and used to its fullest advantage.

In addition, numerous opportunities exist to seek grants through state, regional and federal agencies, and other developmental processes.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

STRATEGY 1: STRENGTHEN AND EXPAND THE ARTS, CULTURE, AND CREATIVE COMMUNITY IN ROUND ROCK

Through the community survey, nearly 86% of participants responded that the City of Round Rock should either fully support or play a major role in expanding arts and culture opportunities in Round Rock. This mirrors the input from engagement meetings, where residents called for the City to play a greater role in facilitating and nurturing the growth of the arts and culture community.

This support can manifest in numerous ways. Strategy 1 focuses on the arts and culture community of nonprofits, artists, and creative entrepreneurs who produce and present programs and activities, educational programs and supporting arts education, and cultural experiences across the community.

RRAC has been an important partner in building the arts, culture, and creative community in the City through its support for nonprofit cultural organizations, artists, and creative entrepreneurs. This support includes a range of programs, technical assistance, and financial support. Nonprofit organizations are supported annually through the arts grants program. Individual visual and performing artists are supported by a variety of partnerships and professional opportunities.

Priorities expressed by constituents include increasing the pool of funds to support professional, community-based, and volunteer-led organizations; growing the commitment of resources to support programs and events ensuring the sustainability and continuation of these organizations; increasing institutional support for professional organizations that are community assets; developing a broader, more diversified pool of funding to invest in professional development; and expanding creative innovation in programs and operations.

“The grants program from the City is very accessible and not overly burdensome. The funds provide stability for our organization and the annual support bolsters a sense of confidence.”
~Arts Leader

It is recommended the annual support for organizations be reframed, increasing the current level of allocation for annual grants and establishing new opportunities for significant investment. The restructuring is based on three tiers to accomplish these recommendations.

- Tier One would represent a continuation of the current programmatic and operating support while immediately raising the top annual grant.
- Tier Two would provide opportunities to invest in strengthening the arts and culture sector through building organizational capacity and supporting professional development.
- Tier Three would be an annual competitive grant to encourage and incentivize exceptional and innovative programming to serve the residents of Round Rock, created in response to the desire of constituents for a broader and more contemporary range of programs, performances, and opportunities for personal participation in arts and culture.

ACTIONS

1.1 Reframe the Arts Grants Program to increase annual program support, strengthen and expand organizational capacity, and incentivize innovative programming.

Increase the total pool of funds available annually for program grants and increase the top grant from the current maximum of \$5,000 to at least \$25,000 to support organizational growth and the increased costs of producing and presenting programs. Build annual increases into the program to adjust for annual cost escalation. Include opportunities for supporting arts education through in- and after-school programs.

1.2 Support capacity building and technical assistance for nonprofit organizations, artists, and creative entrepreneurs.

Create a funding initiative aimed at investing in management and programmatic capacities of nonprofits arts organizations and individual artists through an annual competitive grant that is separate from the annual program support. The focus should be on special project grants awarded through a competitive program aimed at strengthening the resilience, sustainability, and organizational capacities of organizations and individual artists so that they can thrive and provide residents with a broader range of arts and cultural opportunities across the community. The recommended capacity-building grants should range of \$5,000–\$25,000 for specific investments in building infrastructure and organizational capacity.

In addition, allocate an annual pool of funds to support professional development scholarships through a low-barrier, responsive process for both professional staff of nonprofit organizations and creative entrepreneurs; these funds should also subsidize opportunities for community members (for example, providing free access passes).

1.3 Create a Special Opportunities and Innovations Fund

Establish an award of \$50,000 (at the minimum) to invest in special opportunities for one-time or extraordinary programs produced and/or presented by Round Rock-based arts and culture organizations. This would be a competitive grant to one organization each year to incentivize entrepreneurial activity and develop innovative programs to serve the residents of Round Rock with new opportunities to experience and/or participate in a range of arts and culture experiences.

1.4 Expand collaboration and partnerships with educational institutions to strengthen and support arts education.

Serve as a convener and connector for teaching artists, arts organizations, and artists with educational institutions. This function may include developing a directory and referral resource for arts educators. Additionally, seek opportunities to include student work in exhibitions, performances, and community events to help students connect their work with the general public.

1.5 Enhance and expand the role of RRAC to foster stronger connections between individual artists, creative entrepreneurs, and arts organizations through networking opportunities, professional development, and resources.

RRAC has been serving informally as the convener and organizer for the arts and culture community since its inception through creating, joining, and developing. This action calls for formalizing that role as a function of the office, enhancing and expanding the role that has emerged in recent years. The office is recognized as a neutral center promoting the growth and development for arts and culture. Enhanced activities may include establishing a Creative Circles program to facilitate learning, support professional development, and strengthen professional practices. The participants would include the nonprofit arts community, individual artists, and creative entrepreneurs. Programming could include hosting networking activities, and other targeted topic-related creative development.

STRATEGY 2: ENHANCE AND SUPPORT THE ENVIRONMENT FOR PERSONAL CREATIVE EXPRESSION AND PARTICIPATION

Round Rock residents want expanded opportunities to participate in arts, cultural, and creative activities. Round Rock is a community that provides a range of amenities in support of the quality of life of its residents. As the City has grown, residents are seeking a broader range of services and support that includes arts, culture, and creative expression. This support can manifest in numerous ways.

Strategy 2 focuses on opportunities for residents to be directly engaged in creative programming—as participants, as artists and creators, as audience—and on places to facilitate that creative programming and activity.

Facilities used for creative activities was a prevalent theme of public input. The range of facility needs cited included spaces (a) for both performing and visual arts, (b) for classes and educational opportunities, and (c) that would accommodate creative expression and personal participation.

The actions below provide pathways to expand permanent and temporary spaces for arts and creative activities. As a first step, there is opportunity to utilize the renovation and repurposing of the Griffith Building. This will serve as a community arts center. Uses should include a mix of gallery space, offices and storage, classrooms and art studios, flexible space for community gatherings, and a multi-purpose theatre space.

While community input emphasized the idea of a new, purpose-built space, the conversion of the Griffith Building provides an important opportunity to begin addressing the community-wide challenge of a lack of arts and culture facilities. This conversion is a baseline for launching a more expansive approach to arts facilities.

ACTIONS

- 2.1 Create an arts and cultural space within the repurposed Griffith Building that can serve as the starting point in establishing a community arts center in Round Rock.

Utilize the Griffith Building remodel and repurposing to include gallery space, classes, and event space to accommodate arts programming by the City and local arts and cultural organizations. The space, while modest in size, can serve as a platform to cultivate

organizational and staff capacity and arts programming that can help to establish a proof of concept and build support and momentum for the creation of a larger community arts center.

- 2.2** Initiate a development process for a community arts center that can function as a central hub for artistic and creative expression for the Round Rock community.

Explore potential locations that would be suitable for a community arts center, assess funding options, evaluate governance and operating models, and formulate a comprehensive plan for establishing a community arts center in Round Rock.

- 2.3** Establish and launch a Neighborhood Arts Program.

Develop a range of programming that may include micro- or neighborhood-level events, support for community-organized programming, and temporary and/or public art projects initiated by neighborhoods. This action presents an opportunity to collaborate with other City of Round Rock departments.

- 2.4** Create a community space activation and placemaking program and seek to strengthen and foster growth of creative and cultural hubs across the City.

Seek potential uses for spaces such as the Town Green, use of other spaces across the community for temporary programs and develop partnerships with existing natural spaces for activation to serve Round Rock residents. Examples include private partnerships with existing and potential creative hubs. This could include collaborations with Round Rock Chamber of Commerce investors and the Round Rock Convention and Visitors Bureau in sharing the renovated Griffith Building.

- 2.5** Collaborate with City departments and agencies to expand arts programming and the integration of arts and creativity into municipal functions.

Expand opportunities to integrate arts, culture, and creativity into a range of municipal functions to foster creative solutions and problem-solving.⁴ This expands upon both 2.2 and 2.3 above and is related to action 3.3, establishing a Creative Laureate position. Examples include exploring opportunities with the multi-departmental Round Rock Crisis Response Team, public safety departments, and Parks and Recreation.

⁴ Artist-in-residence programs and collaborations with creative entrepreneurs have grown across the country. The Appendix includes a section with numerous examples of embedding artists into municipal agencies.

STRATEGY 3: EXPAND THE CAPACITY OF THE OFFICE OF ARTS AND CULTURE

The growth of RRAC has been fueled by the increase of arts programs, including special events, to serve residents, artists, and the creative economy.

Strategy 3 includes renaming the office to reflect the nature of the activity as well as the expanding role of the office outlined in this plan. Increasing staff with at least one position dedicated to live entertainment events and more, plus the increase of labor for setup and takedown of events is essential. Additional personnel may be required over time as the programs and activities of the office are expanded.

ACTIONS

3.1 Rename Round Rock Arts and Culture (RRAC)

The functions of RRAC include oversight of a wide range of programs including the annual grant program, the public art program, operations of the Downtowner Gallery, and more than 145 performances and community programs annually, including a regular roster of live entertainment. It is recommended the office be renamed to reflect its broad role and functions, which include fostering creative entrepreneurs and businesses, arts and culture functions (e.g., grants, public art, gallery), and entertainment and events (Music on Main, Chalk Walk, and more), all of which have a significant economic impact on the community. Additionally, it is necessary to create a clear and distinct identity that is not confused with Round Rock Arts. One potential option for a renamed office includes the *Office of Arts, Culture & Creative Economy*. This suggestion is consistent with national trends in naming and identifying municipal arts and culture offices and departments.

3.2 Increase staffing to facilitate expanded functions of RRAC.

It is recommended establishing a full-time staff position to serve as an Events Manager to facilitate the continued growth and quality of the entertainment events organized and presented by RRAC. Additionally, the events roster requires additional staff for on-site event setup, monitoring and breakdown. Additional staffing will be required with the opening of the Griffith Building's arts center. New staff positions will allow RRAC staff to focus on implementation of all the additional strategies and actions in the portfolio of the Office.

3.3 Establish a Creative Laureate program.

Establish a Creative Laureate position, which will serve an ambassadorial function in the community for arts, culture, and creativity. This position could focus not only on honoring and promoting the creative work of local artists, and the City's creative community as an

important aspect of the Round Rock’s cultural and economic landscape. The specific role and responsibilities of a Creative Laureate can vary but may include advocacy; advising departments and agencies (e.g., neighborhood services, public safety); providing pathways to integrate arts, culture, and creativity into a range of municipal and agency functions; fostering creativity and innovation; and, overall, to celebrate and promote creative talent within the City. A Creative Laureate position should draw from a range of artistic and creative disciplines—performing and visual arts, literary arts, design, and more.

3.4 Expand investments in public art across the community to augment the existing program and develop a revised Public Art Master Plan to accommodate and guide program growth.

Managing the public art program for Round Rock is a growing function for RRAC. Expand investments in public art across the City to augment existing programs and create methods for agencies and municipalities to increase public art. This includes managing both permanent and temporary works of public art. This role includes curatorial and interpretive duties, oversight of commissions when appropriate, and maintenance and conservation. There is a growing body of best practices and policies nationally to inform a review of the existing public art program and the adoption of a revised set of formal policies and procedures for all aspects of the public art program.

STRATEGY 4: INCREASE AWARENESS AND VISIBILITY OF ARTS, CULTURE, AND CREATIVITY

RRAC is a vital resource for the growth and development of arts and culture in Round Rock. The office is recognized as the central hub of information and resources, a community connector, and a well-respected promoter of the full range of arts, culture, and creative endeavors in Round Rock. A preeminent theme that emerged from community input was the need for strengthening the presence of arts, culture, and creativity as a fundamental element in the quality of life of the community.

ACTIONS

- 4.1** Explore the Texas Cultural Districts Program to establish an arts and entertainment district in downtown Round Rock.

A natural arts and entertainment district has emerged in downtown Round Rock, enhanced by the numerous business activities and arts and culture events. These events add to the growing mix—restaurants, galleries, library, festivals, music venues, creative businesses, etc.—located in downtown Round Rock. The renovation and repurposing of the Griffith Building and creating a Paseo between Main Street and the new Round Rock Public Library add significant anchors to downtown Round Rock.

- 4.2** Collaborate with business and community development agencies to attract artists and creative businesses to Round Rock.

Seek collaboration with the Round Rock Chamber of Commerce to establish a Creative Economy Task Force to elevate the creative economy as a vital element in the mix of businesses in Round Rock.

- 4.3** Expand and strengthen existing events and programs' listing capacities.

Seek ways to enhance the functionality of the events and programs listing on the RRAC website (e.g., ability to sort by interest, date range, type/discipline) and seek partnerships and collaborations to expand the listing as a community resource. Potential partnerships include collaborating with tourism agencies and local media to utilize the listing as a primary tool to promote arts and culture in Round Rock.

4.4 Strengthen awareness of RRAC and its role.

A lack of knowledge or understanding of the City's role in arts, culture, and creativity and, specifically, the role of RRAC in producing and presenting programs such as Music on Main, Chalk Walk, etc., was often evident throughout the planning process. It is recommended that RRAC invest in a branding and messaging plan and implementation of that plan to build awareness of RRAC and the role of the City of Round Rock in supporting arts, culture, and creativity.

CONCLUSION

Arts, culture, and creativity have been integral to the quality of life of the Round Rock community. RRAC has grown steadily and now serves approximately 200,000 people annually across the City. Round Rock is poised for an opportunity to fully embrace its role in fostering arts, culture, and creativity as a fundamental element in the life of the community.

Round Rock Creates is ambitious, responding to the changes in arts, culture, creativity, and resident priorities. The community has prioritized the development of community arts and culture facilities. The *Round Rock Creates* plan highlights the support of facilities for direct participation in creative pursuits—as learners, as artists, as audience.

Implementation requires investments in expanding staff and financial resources with the intention of building capacity of arts producers, presenters, and creators, as well as the overall creative economy. Innovation and willingness to embrace risk will be required.

To fully realize the potential of this plan, new and expanded programming in specific areas such as the creative economy, facilitating convenings, and investing in arts infrastructure, along with a commitment to professional development and strengthening the capacities of existing staff.

Investing in developing a brand strategy and awareness initiative is necessary to build visibility of the arts, culture, and creative economy and strengthen its impact on the quality of life of Round Rock residents.

Round Rock Creates is a city-wide strategy that embraces creativity as a core function of our community. It's a celebration of the arts, a tribute to the boundless imagination of our residents, and an invitation to every member of our community to participate and express themselves creatively. *Round Rock Creates* reflects our city's vibrant spirit and a symbol of our commitment to promoting cultural diversity, fostering innovation, and nurturing the next generation of artists and creative thinkers. *Round Rock Creates* is an invitation to share the journey of artistic exploration and create a city that truly celebrates creativity in all its forms!