

Arts and Culture (New Goal)

A strong, visible presence of arts and culture within the City organization

Assessment:

- Houston is one of the few American cities that does not have a robust Office or Department of Cultural Affairs.
- Houston's current **small office** structure does not **maximize** the City Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs to have a strong voice in policy development or the development of new programmatic initiatives that are responsive to community needs.
- The current process for allocation **and reporting** of City grant funding through the Hotel Occupancy Tax does not provide the City with a strong mechanism to monitor accountability, **assess economic impact** or to promote City policy objectives.
- Cross-departmental programs like the Civic Arts Program are **less efficient and less effective** when they are outsourced to an outside agency, **i.e., Houston Arts Alliance**.

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Assessment (continued):

- There are many City Departments ,Divisions, Offices and partners investing in and deploying arts and cultural services and programs including Dept. of Neighborhoods, Economic Development Office, Library Dept., Planning and Development Dept., etc., but not overarching organizing organizational structure.
- No single agency is charged with assuring public engagement and participation in the City's cultural development strategies.
- The City's re-granting contracts utilizing HOT revenues have few performance benchmarks and the varied reporting methods used by the contractors do not provide the City with clear data on the impact of the City's arts and cultural investments.

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Strategies:

- Create a cabinet-level Department of Cultural Affairs within the City organizational structure.
- Assess all City cultural and arts support programs within and outside the City to consider **the best way to aggregate** those programs within the new Department of Cultural Affairs.
- **Evaluate moving** the administration of the Civic Arts Program **or portions of it** into the Department of Cultural Affairs.
- Evaluate moving the grants review and allocation process to the new Department, although grant administration **of certain programs** might continue to be outsourced to outside partners.
- Continue to partner with the Houston Arts Alliance for programs such as capacity-building and special projects.