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Ten years of
public art in
Blue Springs

2000-2010

Blue Springs Public Art Commission STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE – 2010





About Blue Springs

Blue Springs is located approximately 20 miles east of Kansas City and is easily accessed from Interstate 70 with corridors at Woods Chapel Road, Highway 7 and Adams Dairy Parkway.

The community of Blue Springs was organized as part of Jackson County in 1827, serving as a stopover for settlers migrating on their westward journey. In September 1880, Jackson County Court granted the incorporation of Blue Springs, making the City the fourth settlement in the County.

Blue Springs remained a relatively small town until the 1970's when population growth greatly increased due to abundant housing, more amenities, and better highway connections.

Today, Blue Springs has a current population of over 52,000 residents and enjoys the benefits of nationally recognized schools, quality and affordable housing, numerous outdoor recreation opportunities, hiking trails and parks, and a central location.

About the Public Art Commission

Blue Springs was the first City in eastern Jackson County to establish a public art program. On September 6, 2000, the City Council passed an ordinance creating the Public Art Commission (PAC) with the mandate to enhance the aesthetic appearance of the community which would contribute to its positive identity and image, and make Blue Springs a more desirable place to live, work, and locate a business.

The work of the Commission is carried out by a seven member volunteer advisory board named by the Mayor and City Council. The Commission selects art for public display, develops promotional materials, and works cooperatively with art partners in special events in order to further the interest of all forms of art in the community. The Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation is the City's representative on the Commission and is responsible for conducting official business with artists and the public. Personnel of the Parks and Recreation Department assist in installation of art displays and art maintenance.

Public art is generally defined as any art in the public or private realm that is accessible without prior permission or arrangement. Public art is available to view at any time without paying a fee. Public artworks include sculpture, murals, fountains, structural details to a building, or art displays in a specific locale. Residents of this thriving community have been very supportive of cultural activities within the school and community. As evidence, the 2010 Citizens Survey for Blue Springs indicated half of respondents were satisfied with public art programming.



Goals of the Public Art Commission

- To promote the appreciation and integration of high-quality accessible art in Blue Springs
- To heighten public awareness of the importance of art in enriching the quality of life for our citizens
- To build partnerships with other public and private entities to further interest in the arts
- To increase opportunities for residents and visitors to experience and participate in a range of artistic endeavors
- To enhance the positive identity and image of our City through a coordinated public art program
- To establish public and private policies that incorporate public art within a well-designed environment reflecting imagination and a strong sense of place
- To provide the resources to support the public art program
- To support the viability of professional artists

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Major Public Art Commission Accomplishments Since 2000

- A total of 36 public artworks displayed throughout the city for residents to contemplate and enjoy, which include commissioned artworks, artworks purchased from temporary exhibits, artworks in private development and murals
- Completion of two significant public art commissions and dedications of artworks
- Recipient of Missouri Arts Council Artist in Residence grant whereby art students from Valley View High School in the Blue Springs School District designed and created a permanent artwork displayed at Rotary Park
- Held six Temporary Public Art Exhibitions, with a minimum of four artworks at each exhibit.
- Production of DVDs and publicity brochures for each of the temporary exhibitions
- Permanent display of 18 artworks purchased from temporary exhibits by art partners and sponsors and gifted to the City
- Established art-enhanced Chimney Swift Towers project, resulting in six such towers
- Established procedures for gifting to Public Art Commission
- Established procedures and contracts for placement of art in public sites
- Established procedures for art maintenance and created a maintenance fund
- Received national recognition by Americans for the Arts for excellence of design for *BlueSprings.Net* in June 2003
- Publication of Annual Report in 2007
- Continuing public relations efforts, including world wide web presence on City website, feature articles in Blue Springs magazines, feature article in Missouri Parks and Recreation magazine, specialized bulletin board for PAC in City Hall foyer, and informational brochures about Public Art Commission and Chimney Swift Towers
- Arranged for art partners for various projects, including Blue Springs Parks and Recreation Department, Blue Springs Art League, Blue Springs School District, Blue Springs Chamber of Commerce, Blue Springs Rotary Club, St. Mary's Medical Center, RED Development Corporation, and a coalition of local citizens who purchased and donated three artworks
- Received annual grants from Hallmark Cards Foundation and State Farm Insurance Foundation for support of Public Art Commission
- Received major grants from Walmart, Wrisinger-King Franchise Group, and RED Development Corporation for purchase and permanent display of artworks
- Provided leadership as Event Partner for The Wall That Heals exhibition
- Member of and involvement with Public Art Consortium of Metropolitan Kansas City, Missouri Association of Community Arts Agencies and Cultural Arts Coalition of Eastern Jackson County

Strategic Planning by the Public Art Commission

At the first strategic planning session conducted in March 2001, the mission and goals that continue to direct the public art program were identified. Suggested strategies and action steps provided guidance for the initial years work and impetus for several public art projects. In 2004, the strategic plan was reviewed and updated, challenging the Commission to build on its visionary plan, create a greater presence within the community, and formulate ways to market the program.

With the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Public Art Commission approaching, it was decided to implement a targeted strategic planning process that would review accomplishments, review the status of the program, identify specific goals and objectives for carrying out the mission, and to address the need for new initiatives so that the public art program would be seen as integral to a community concerned with creating and maintaining a quality life environment.

The process was facilitated by Jeanie Lauer, owner of The Management Edge, and a specialist in strategic planning. In addition, Ms. Lauer was a member of the Blue Springs City Council and a liaison to the Commission. Her extensive experience in City government was extremely helpful in identifying issues that could affect a viable public art program.

For the 2010 strategic plan, PAC members responded to a survey to obtain their perspective of three key performance areas: Funding, Programs, and Branding. Responses to this survey were listed and ranked for



prioritization and the degree to which member felt the items were being achieved. This environmental scan was the basis of discussion by a community group representing various community organizations, community leaders, and public art supporters assembled to provide input and guidance about the public art program.

The community group analyzed the issues identified with each area of concern, suggested possible strategies, and made recommendations for additional focused review and analysis. Based on the discussion, four task forces composed of community and PAC members were established to further refine the ideas and recommendations. The task teams were: (1) Branding (2) Outreach; (3) Programming/Events and (4) Funding/Grants.

The task teams' work resulted in a limited and targeted strategic plan for focused work in the defined areas. While not every strategy or action can be implemented, there was broad consensus on several issues which should be seriously considered. It was recommended that additional review be taken in the future to address other areas that affect the mission of the Public Art Commission.

Strategic Planning Update - 2010

Strategic Planning Update – 2010 will provide guidance to the Public Art Commission (PAC) for the next several years. The broad support given to public art challenges the Commission to better inform the public about the unique asset that art provides the community. Increasingly, dynamic cities recognize that the arts serve as cultural and economic drivers for welcoming families, businesses, and visitors to a community. PAC will continue to work with local schools and other art organizations in creating and supporting cultural experiences for all ages. Through collaborative partnerships, the Commission hopes to implement a model art infrastructure for the residents of Blue Springs and the surrounding area.

For each key area, there is an identified goal, the strategies to reach that goal and the action steps to be taken to implement the strategy. A summary of short range and long range recommendations will be used to guide activities and to check progress in strategic planning.

Key Areas for Strategic Analysis in 2010

Branding

Goal

To define a brand for the Public Art Commission in order to improve identity, clarity of purpose, and affiliation.

Strategies and Actions Steps

Marketing and Awareness

- Create a logo that better identifies the Blue Springs Public Art Commission and use in all publications and marketing ventures
- Develop a marketing plan specific to PAC

Communication and Publicity

- Utilize various forms of media to publicize and clarify the role of PAC
- Develop a brochure that describes the work of PAC and other specialized brochures about individual artworks

Partnership and Sponsorship

- Participate in other art or City-wide related events which provide the opportunity to explain the role of PAC
- Join Chamber of Commerce as a non-profit organization in order to get greater visibility and access to the business community
- Develop closer partnerships with community art related groups

Community Involvement and Public Relations

- Create a database of local and regional artists and art organizations to inform and update regarding PAC activities

Outreach

Goal

To create a greater awareness of the role of the Public Art Commission and the public artworks in Blue Springs.

Strategies and Actions Steps

Marketing and Awareness

- Use website to provide a virtual tour of public art, showing photos of artworks, information about artists, and locations of artworks
- Set up a kiosk at City Market that showcases PAC and distributes PAC information
- Volunteer to be a speaker at various community or business groups to discuss PAC
- Participate in Public Art Consortium to share and gain information about public art activities in the Kansas City metropolitan region

Communication and Publicity

- Create a publication which features a map of all public art and make available for distribution at Chamber of Commerce, City Hall, Vesper Hall, and various businesses
- Maintain a current listing of artists and art supporters with emails, phones, and addresses for use when needed

Partnership and Sponsorship

- Seek to establish a community wide group of all the arts, with members from Blue Springs Art League, Blue Springs Parks and Recreation, Blue Springs Community Theater; Mid-Continent Libraries, Blue Springs School District and other interested private arts groups or organizations
- Seek new art partners to sponsor art exhibits, purchase art, or assist with funding art
- Sponsor art seminars with invited guests and speakers in collaboration with other community groups

Community Involvement and Public Relations

- Identify ways we can assist other groups in art display
- Request Missouri Association of Community Arts Agencies to hold annual meeting in Blue Springs in order to highlight PAC
- Start a convention about public art in the Kansas City region
- Contact American Automobile Association (AAA) to include public art as part of paragraph about Blue Springs



Programming & Events

Goal

To identify and publicize programs and events related to public art in general and especially PAC sponsored activities.

Strategies and Actions Steps

Marketing and Awareness

- Plan a public Art Crawl to take participants to various sites, including a reception during tour
- Use City Hall Bulletin Board to increase awareness of PAC activities
- Show art exhibits on local public television
- Develop a self guided tour package which has information about artworks, locations, artist information, with audio if available

Communication and Publicity

- Develop a brochure or booklet which has photos of artworks, artists, and locations of art to be distributed at fairs, exhibitions, art shows, and community events
- Develop a community arts calendar which provides information about all art related events and encourage all arts groups to participate in publicizing the "Arts in Blue Springs"

Partnership and Sponsorship

- Sponsor children's art workshops or exhibits and seek spaces for exhibitions of artworks
- Partner with other groups who provide cultural events and distribute PAC literature at such events
- Ask Parks and Recreation to have a "sculpture park"
- Consider contests to attract artists in unique ways
- Partner with Blue Springs School District to display student developed sculpture

Community Involvement and Public Relations

- Arrange for local artists to have workshops or seminar
- Work with public and private schools to assist with art projects or as a guest speaker about public art
- Ask Chamber of Commerce to include public art tour in their leadership activities
- Ask Chamber of Commerce to provide information about public art in their publications

Funding/Grants

Goal

To identify main areas of funding public art to seek increased monetary support for our program.

Strategies and Actions Steps

Marketing and Awareness

- Search to find out more about art funding opportunities, writing for grants, and companies supporting the arts
- Better utilize the Missouri Arts Council and Missouri Association of Community Arts Agencies to determine funding opportunities, grant writing and requesting assistance in art projects
- Join Americans for the Arts and other arts groups and utilize their information for funding opportunities

Communication and Publicity

- Initiate a variety of methods to inform the community, City Council members and art supporters about why the public art program is beneficial to the community
- Write a position paper on the major ways public art is funded and present findings to City Council to provide evidence of how other communities are funding public art
- Emphasize 2010 Citizens Survey which indicates satisfaction with Public Art in all marketing and funding ventures

Partnership and Sponsorship

- Look for options to attract donors (identify dedicated art donors in local Foundations)
- Inquire ways that a City-wide grant writer may be employed (part or full time) or if it feasible to share a grant writer with local school districts

Community Involvement and Public Relations

- Provide donor recognitions via letters, certificates or receptions
- Create a campaign to attract art partners and donors to fund certain art projects



Summary and Recommendations

Common themes emerged from the various task forces and their imaginative plans of action. These themes will be the focus of the Public Art Commission in the next several years as it addresses its mission of serving as a catalyst for enhancing the aesthetic appearance of the community and making Blue Springs an even more desirable place to live, shop, and locate a business.

Short Range Goals and Recommendations

- Continued cooperation with art partners in exhibiting art, arranging for art purchase, and placing permanent art throughout the community
- Seek additional relationships with other community groups in order to provide cultural experiences for all ages
- Create a marketing and publicity plan to provide information to the public and with area artists
- Utilize print and web media to showcase artworks and artists and to better inform the public of the work of the Commission
- Arrange for tours and events that will take the public to the artworks and vice versa
- Seek additional funding sources through partnerships, donor requests, sale of promotional items, and fund raising benefit activities
- Reach out to other arts organizations to find new and innovative ways to incorporate art in community life



Long Range Recommendations

- Invite interested parties to meet and implement a City-wide Cultural Arts Plan that brings together all the various arts in the community (public art, visual arts, photographic art, performing arts, and movement arts) to form **Blue Springs Arts**. Together, this group would envision ways to create overall arts programming that presents a visual picture of the arts in the community, including ideas for funding projects
- Seek the feasibility of **Blue Springs Arts** employing an arts coordinator who would be responsible for creating and maintaining programming, seeking funding and grants to support the various art forms, and overseeing the organization.
- In partnership with other groups, see about the founding of a **Blue Springs Arts Community Center**, available for all the Blue Springs Arts parties to exhibit or perform, as well as have rental space to other groups or artists. This might also be a site for recreational and leisure activities and crafts, small businesses such as a tearoom or gift shop, and meeting room space for organizations.