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Sugar Land approves Public Art Plan

First project installed at Sugar Land Regional Airport

By **Amelia Brust** | Posted Jan. 16, 2017 at 4:36 pm



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Arts are getting a boost in Sugar Land with a recently approved, multiyear Public Art Plan, with the first piece of art installed at the entrance to the Sugar Land Regional Airport.

Two other projects are budgeted and planned, and a committee of community members finalized the plan's five-year framework.

The plan, approved by Sugar Land City Council on Dec. 20, describes immediate and long-term opportunities for Sugar Land to bring more public art into the city as a way of attracting visitors.

The airport's sculpture is a series of seven rotating wind-powered structures measuring 10 to 29 feet tall that will be illuminated at night, as well, she said. It was installed earlier this month.

Artist Lyman Whitaker and Whitaker Studio of Utah created the copper and steel piece. Davis told City Council in December a committee of city stakeholders and people with backgrounds in art selected it because it is low maintenance, any oxidation will enhance the appearance, and the artist has experience with installing public art works.

“I think it’s a really cool structure, it’s interesting,” Council Member Amy Mitchell said. “It’s clear that the group worked very hard to find something that would achieve all the goals.”



According to the plan, \$100,000 was budgeted for the cost of the airport sculpture. Another artistic installation will be located in the plaza at the Smart Financial Centre at a cost of \$50,000, while \$100,000 is budgeted for a piece of art for the festival site overlook in Brazos River Park.

The art projects at the airport and Smart Financial Centre are funded from the Sugar Land 4B Corporation, while the festival site overlook’s project will be funded with a combination of SL4B funds and hotel occupancy tax revenue, according to City Council meeting documents.

“There’s this colonnade, so we’re looking for a mosaic type of artwork that’s very durable for that site,” Lindsay Davis, Sugar Land Cultural Arts manager, said regarding the festival site overlook project.

The 5-year plan includes creating a flexible pool of funding for art, including permanent capital projects and temporary exhibitions. Davis listed sales and hotel tax revenues as ideal sources, however the plan also states that businesses eligible for tax reductions should be able to obtain additional reductions for commissioning public art projects.

“Part of the plan is that we will go to City Council every year with a plan of the next projects for their approval and recommendations,” Davis said.

Sugar Land began work on the Public Art Plan in the fall 2015. It is part of the city’s 10-year Cultural Arts Strategic Plan and Implementation Guide, which was finalized in 2014.