



June 12, 2023

Dr. Gary Gibbs  
Executive Director  
Texas Commission on the Arts  
PO Box 13406  
Austin, TX 78711-3406

Dear Dr. Gibbs,

On behalf of the Garland Cultural Arts Commission, Inc., I am thrilled to express my support for Garland's Bankhead Cultural Arts District.

Since 1987, GCAC, Inc. has invested over \$2 million in arts programs and initiatives in Garland. Last year, we funded 17 arts agencies in Garland, and our groups attract audiences from across North Texas and beyond for live theatre, music and dance.

The arts organizations and programs that we fund play a critical role in the overall Garland's economic development. Surveys demonstrate that audiences attending our programs also spend money in our businesses. Patrons visit our restaurants and stores prior to or following a show – glass of wine before a play or ice cream after a dance recital. Garland's arts programs have helped support downtown Garland as a destination for locally-owned businesses for years.

Over time, GCAC has increased support for arts groups to include public art projects.

In 2017, we commissioned internationally-renowned sculptor Barvo to create the 'Vision of the Arts,' \$300,000 20' tall bronze to serve as hallmark of downtown Garland's renaissance. 'Vision of the Arts' is an expression of a diverse community in celebration of dance, music and theater, and pays tribute to the arts in Garland.

This installation has helped paved the way for other numerous public installations in our district. From temporary installations like The Color Condition to permanent works by Meow Wolf artist, Ricardo Paniagua in 506 Art, the Bankhead Cultural Arts District continues to attract visitors for its vibrant arts scene.

This fall, we invite you to our Grand Opening on Saturday, October 14 featuring a full day of festivities culminating in a performance by LeAnn Rimes and drone show. Can you imagine how incredible it would be to officially launch our TCA Cultural District Designation at our Grand Opening celebration?

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

DeAnne Driver  
Chair, Garland Cultural Arts Commission, Inc.

Texas Commission on the Arts  
Post Office Box 13406  
Austin, Texas 78711-3406  
(512) 463-5535



RE: City of Garland-Texas Cultural District Designation

I am delighted to endorse the City of Garland's efforts to achieve designation as a Cultural District by the Texas Commission on the Arts. I have worked directly with the City of Garland on several projects over the last few years, serving on the 2017 Texas Downtown Assessment Team and helping Visit Garland create a Destination Vision Plan in 2020-2021. Both planning documents recognized and outlined the importance of Garland as a cultural destination for locals and visitors.

Without a doubt the unique cultural assets that Garland has make the community worthy of a Cultural District designation. From downtown property owners who have personally invested in public art and placemaking initiatives to longstanding institutions like the Garland Symphony Orchestra and the Plaza Theater, Garland has artfully demonstrated the importance of elevating its cultural assets to stakeholders and beyond. Garland's cultural makeup is diverse and local leaders recognize and embrace that diversity through events such as the inaugural Asian American Heritage Festival. A community rich in history, the Garland Landmark Museum has made great strides in recent years to become a more inclusive local cultural asset by extending their hours and expanding their partnership base. With the downtown square placemaking project nearing completion, it remains evident that the City of Garland, local stakeholders, and countless partner organizations remain committed to Garland's cultural district. From prioritizing engagement and funding for Garland's Cultural Arts Plan to the City's commitment to adequately staffing its cultural resources, Garland has the local expertise and framework in place to capitalize on a Cultural District designation.

As a native of DFW I regularly make trips to downtown Garland to enjoy two of my favorite retail establishments in the state, listen to some live music and explore the culinary delights of this culturally rich district. It's hard to miss the significant artistic and cultural contributions that have helped Garland make its mark on the community, the metroplex and the State of Texas as whole. I hope that the Texas Commission on the Arts does not miss their opportunity to recognize Garland as an official Texas Cultural District,

Best,

*Sarah E. O'Brien*

Sarah E. O'Brien

Sarah "Main Street" O'Brien (210)-760-9384 [sarah@sarahmainstreet.com](mailto:sarah@sarahmainstreet.com)



May 30, 2023

Dr. Gary Gibbs  
Executive Director  
Texas Commission on the Arts  
PO Box 13406  
Austin, Texas 78711-3406

Subject: Garland's Bankhead Cultural Arts District

Dear Dr. Gibbs,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Garland Chamber of Commerce, it is a special privilege to support the City of Garland, in partnership with the Garland Cultural Arts Commission, Inc., in pursuing a Cultural District Designation from the Texas Commission on the Arts to create **Garland's Bankhead Cultural Arts District**.

The Chamber has long recognized the impact of the arts on the overall success of business. This is especially true in Garland where our culture and history are a vital factor in creating a sense of community. It is the "authentic community" that is attractive to business coming to Garland and in particular Downtown Garland. The arts are a tremendous means of expressing what it means to be a part of this City.

We look forward to your thoughtful consideration and support of our proposal.

Sincerely,

Paul Mayer  
CEO  
Garland Chamber of Commerce

June 12, 2023

Dr. Gary Gibbs  
Executive Director  
Texas Commission on the Arts  
PO Box 13406  
Austin, TX 78711-3406

Subject: Garland as Cultural District Designation

Dear Dr. Gibbs,

I am writing this letter in regards to downtown Garland's application for the Texas Commission on the Arts for Cultural District designation. Garland ISD, the Garland Cultural Arts Commission, and the City of Garland have worked together in a partnership for several years through fine arts and community events including Big Art Day, Día de los Muertos, Wheels of Hope, as well as several art exhibitions to create a vibrant arts community in downtown Garland. The proposed district would also include our Academy of Fine Arts, Garland High School.

What separates Garland ISD from other neighboring districts is the level of community involvement by both our students and staff in these downtown events. Downtown Garland has given our students opportunities to perform at venues such as the Plaza Theater, the Granville Theater, and its many outdoor spaces. Additionally, the proposed district is full of art created by our community in the public spaces and on gallery walls. These showcases represent the best that GISD offers in the visual and performing arts and celebrate our creative and diverse community.

The partnership with Garland Cultural Arts Commission has led to visiting artists leading sessions on our campuses, art scholarships for our seniors, and has given our students "real-world" experience to work production for the city's summer musical programs. The effort to achieve the Cultural District designation reflects hundreds of hours of work by city staff, stakeholders, the GISD community, and the public in thinking about the future of arts and culture. Having this designation will only increase these opportunities for our vibrant community.

Thank you for your consideration and please consider this letter as a symbol of Garland ISD's full support for downtown Garland receiving the Cultural District designation.

Sincerely,



Ricardo Lopez (Jun 15, 2023 16:27 CDT)

Ricardo López, Ed.D.



CHAIR, COUNTY AFFAIRS

**VICTORIA NEAVE CRIADO**  
TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

BUSINESS & INDUSTRY

Via Email to [arosenthal@garlandtx.gov](mailto:arosenthal@garlandtx.gov)

June 12, 2023

Texas Commission on the Arts

Re: Support for City of Garland Bankhead Cultural District Designation

Dear Sir or Madam,

As State Representative for House District 107, I am honored to write in support of the City of Garland's request to designate Garland's Bankhead Cultural Arts District as a Texas Cultural District. I am honored to represent the City of Garland, and appreciate our community's work to highlight the beauty of this historic area.

A Cultural Designation will enhance the vibrancy of the City of Garland by attracting cultural tourists, offer unique branding opportunities for the district, and will help highlight Garland's cultural amenities. Garland has exhibited its commitment to the arts by hosting more than 500 cultural events annually with numerous organizations. The City of Garland's 2021 \$30 million investment in Downtown Garland helped to revitalize the Downtown square, and bring opportunities for cultural exploration, education, and commemoration. The City of Garland has a vibrant and diverse population of residents, businesses, and organizations. A Texas Cultural Designation will help stimulate economic development in the City of Garland, assist in downtown revitalization efforts, and help preserve cultural and historical assets.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please contact me at [District107.Neave@House.Texas.Gov](mailto:District107.Neave@House.Texas.Gov) and 972-288-9438.

Sincerely,

*Victoria Neave Criado*

Victoria Neave Criado  
State Representative  
House District 107

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DISTRICT: 317 S. GALLOWAY, SUITE B • MESQUITE, TEXAS 75149

[district107.neave@house.texas.gov](mailto:district107.neave@house.texas.gov)



# ANA-MARIA RAMOS



STATE REPRESENTATIVE • DISTRICT 102

June 5, 2023

Texas Commission on the Arts  
E. O. Thompson Office Building  
920 Colorado, Suite 501  
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Texas Commission on the Arts,

I am writing in support of the Cultural District Designation application being submitted by the City of Garland for their "Bankhead Cultural Arts District."

Garland is a distinguished candidate for this designation with a rich, diverse history and a legacy of investment into local arts. Recent investments prove Garland's commitment to cultivate a rich body of local artists and creators, and to blossom the culture of the area. Redevelopment of the Downtown Garland Square is already underway as a destination attraction to showcase live performances. We are investing in authentic assets including the Granville Arts Center, Landmark Museum, and Plaza Theatre; alongside growing spaces for artists like JCS Clayworks and the 9th Street Gallery. The Garland Cultural Arts Commission has allocated over two million dollars to arts groups since its founding in 1987. These investments are already paying off; each year, cultural activities alone attract 100,000 attendees and visitors.

I urge you to approve Garland's bid for recognition of their Bankhead Cultural Arts District to forever improve the quality of life for these North Texas residents. This designation would continue Garland's growth in attracting cultural tourists, and would provide irreplaceable funding opportunities to further collaborate with local artists and organizations.

Your favorable consideration is greatly appreciated.

Democratically yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ana-Maria Ramos".

Ana-Maria Ramos  
Texas State Representative-  
House District 102  
[ana-maria.ramos@house.texas.gov](mailto:ana-maria.ramos@house.texas.gov)





# RHETTA ANDREWS BOWERS

★  
TEXAS STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Dr. Gary Gibbs  
Executive Director  
Texas Commission on the Arts  
PO Box 13406  
Austin, TX 78711-3406

RE: Garland's Bankhead Cultural Arts District

Dear Dr. Gibbs,

Garland's Bankhead Cultural Arts District, located in Central Garland, is applying to the Texas Commission on the Arts for Cultural District designation. This vibrant, thriving area welcomes residents and visitors to celebrate arts, history and diversity.

This area includes numerous culturally significant destinations including – the Granville Arts Center, The Atrium, The Plaza Theatre, Garland Central Library, Garland Landmark Museum, Historic Garland High School, Magic 11th Street, and the Resistol Hatco Outlet.

The effort to achieve Cultural District designation reflects substantial investment from artists, arts agencies, city staff, and community stakeholders. This designation helps unify the arts groups, increase collaborations, and deepen community pride. Cultural District designation also support economic initiatives, attracts tourists and adds to quality of life.

Garland's Bankhead Cultural Arts District has a distinct authenticity that makes it a valuable addition to other districts in the region. Through this official state Cultural District designation, this area can be recognized for the amenities and assets we already know and enjoy.

Thank you for your consideration, and please consider this letter as a symbol of full support for Garland's Bankhead Cultural Arts District.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rhetta A. Bowers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Rhetta Andrews Bowers  
State Representative – HD 113

# ANGIE CHEN BUTTON



## The State of Texas House of Representatives

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P.O. BOX 2910  
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512-463-0486  
512-463-0793 (fax)

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RICHARDSON, TEXAS 75081  
972-234-8980  
972-470-0789 (fax)

June 1, 2023

### Letter of Support – Garland’s Bankhead Cultural Arts District

Dear Texas Commission on the Arts,

Please accept this letter expressing my full support of the City of Garland’s Bankhead Cultural Arts District application for the Texas Commission on the Arts’ Cultural Districts Designation Program. Bankhead Highway, America’s first all-weather transcontinental highway joining Washington D.C. to San Diego, runs right through the City of Garland’s historic downtown, providing a lasting cultural impact.

As you assesses Garland’s Cultural District Designation application, please consider Garland’s century long relationship with the arts. From the Lyric Theater’s opening in 1914, where the building still stands today, to the many groups and troupes who formed and performed in Garland throughout the years. Assets such as the Granville Arts Center and the Plaza Theatre allow the arts to grow and expand in our community. Garland also invests heavily in the continued success of the arts. In 2021, a \$30 million investment was used to redevelop the Downtown square to provide residents and guests with a variety of cultural experiences.

In conclusion, I fully support the City of Garland’s Bankhead Cultural Arts District application, with its signature arts assets, long legacy of arts investments, and growing spaces for expansion. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Angie Chen Button".

State Representative Angie Chen Button  
House District 112





To whom it may concern:

I am writing to enthusiastically recommend the City of Garland for Cultural District Designation from the Texas Commission on the Arts. As the general manager for the Garland Symphony Orchestra, an organization that has greatly benefitted from the city's support and dedication, I have witnessed firsthand the remarkable commitment of the City of Garland to nurturing and promoting a vibrant arts and cultural community.

Since my time with the symphony, I have seen the city foster an environment that views art as vital to the lifeblood of the community. Cultural Arts Director Amy Rosenthal especially has been a driving force behind pushing Garland into the future, playing an active, encouraging role for every performance.

Granting the City of Garland Cultural District Designation would not only validate the City's significant contributions but also serve as a catalyst for future growth and development in the arts and cultural sector. Garland's dedication to promoting cultural diversity, artistic excellence, and community engagement is exemplary and deserving of this prestigious recognition. I am confident that the city will only continue to grow as a vibrant cultural hub, enriching the lives of its residents and visitor alike.

Sincerely,



Matthew Myers

General Manager, Garland Symphony Orchestra