



ARTS & CULTURE QUESTIONNAIRE

2021 DALLAS CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES

Thank you being a candidate and for your willingness to serve! And thank you in advance for answering the DACAC Arts & Culture Questionnaire for candidates for Dallas City Council in the upcoming 2021 election. You can fill this out online at [this LINK](#). The responses can go below and the form saved as a pdf and emailed to dacac@artsdallas.org.

1. NAME: John Botefuhr

2. COUNCIL DISTRICT: Dallas City Council District 9

3. YOU AND THE ARTS

Give us a sense about your relationship with the arts

(Some ideas to consider)

- *What art form or cultural organization do you particularly enjoy?*
- *Are your family members involved in the arts?*
- *Share favorite cultural experience in the last two years?*
- *What virtual arts programs have you and your family enjoyed during the pandemic?*

Whether it be music, painting, sculpture, or design, the artist mind has been instilled in me since I can remember. My father played jazz piano and I grew up listening to Oscar Peterson, Ray Charles, Thelonious Monk, and others. His mother sang Opera in New York with Marie Callas in the 40's and later went on to teach music at SMU. His sister, Patricia Vestal is a renowned local artist in Tulsa Oklahoma and often has showings at Philbrook and Gilcrease museums. Often as a child, I would spend time learning to paint from my and the smell of oil paint, to this day, brings back memories of spending time in her studio. My sister graduated from arts magnet/Booker T and has gone on to work in the film industry and is now an accomplished set decorator in Hollywood, currently working on an FX show called "Snowfall". I myself am an amateur painter having initially started my undergraduate degree at the University of Oklahoma in graphic design and often paint with watercolor and/or gouache. I believe it is important to view the world from an artistic and symbolic standpoint at times, as it brings a fresh perspective and may highlight an important, unseen detail in a typical situation, whether that be business, relationships, or even city issues.

I enjoy many of our city museums, whether that be the Dallas Museum of Art, the Nasher, or even the only cultural center in my district, the White Rock Bathhouse , which has been recently renovated.

4. **ADVOCACY**

The support of our elected City leaders is important to ensuring arts and culture remain a priority at City Hall and part of the civic dialogue.

QUESTION: How have you advocated for the arts community and/or how will you do that going forward?

I suppose my most recent advocacy for the arts for the city was my position on the City of Dallas Deep Ellum reinvestment zone board where Hines development, who applied for TIFF funds provided a mural opportunity for downtown, and it was my insistence that we highlight the culture of Deep Ellum, preferably with a local artist, or at least have it reflect the influence of what the area has done in terms of our arts and culture. I was pleased to see that they selected an artist that really captured the creative spirit of our city in a mural done by Tristan Eaton.

5. **SUPPORT & RECOVERY**

Prior to COVID, the Dallas creative economy was on track to have an economic impact surpassing \$1B a year, a vital business sector. The pandemic derailed that momentum. Arts facilities were the first to close and will be among the last to reopen at full capacity. The city's nonprofit arts and cultural community has lost more than \$95M and over 1,000 jobs and cultural tourism has virtually stopped. City support has been critical to keeping these institutions alive. Even in a tough budget year, this need remains.

QUESTION: Will you work to see that City support continues and how will you ensure arts and culture play a key role in the Dallas economic recovery?

Aside from the aesthetic character and cultural identity that arts brings to our wonderful city, it also brings upwards of \$1.5 billion to the economy. North Texas is the third largest arts economy next to Washington and Philadelphia and may surpass those as our population is increasing with more diversity and job growth. As we recover from the pandemic and our winter storms, more people will seek to congregate around our cultural centers. I will ensure that the city provide what stimulus it can, as well as state and federal funding if available, to keep our arts district, our parks, our museums, and cultural centers funded to attract our residents and guests to interact and enjoy what our our city displays with its diverse artistic culture.

6. **EQUITY AND NEIGHBORHOODS**

The top pillar of the Dallas Cultural Plan is Equity, with a goal of ensuring arts and culture are accessible in communities that have been historically underserved. And we know when arts are purposefully imbedded in the community, they can fight urban blight and create vibrant neighborhoods.

QUESTION: How will you keep the focus on equitable access to the arts; and specifically where and how would you like to see art used to address challenges in your City Council District.

(Some applications to consider)

- *Murals*

- *Underpass transformation*
- *More opportunities for ALAANA artists in underserved communities*
- *Popup cultural centers*
- *Neighborhood performances*
- *Economic incentives for developers to create affordable galleries, workshop spaces and artists housing*

Art tells the story of our cultural identity. It is imperative the city continue to work through the OAC to support our local artists. It's diverse and vibrant arts community, particularly in East Dallas, is an important asset to my district. White Rock Lakes spawns so much creativity for our natural artists whether they be painters, photographers, or even sculptors. I would love to see support for more public art in our public parks. Many of our parks can serve as a canvas for local creativity As former president of friends of Santa Fe Trail, we were often looking to find artists to paint murals along the trail, particularly under Grand Avenue, and Brookside Bridge. The friends group finally accomplish that this year, and it is a wonderful visualization as you utilize our important trail system.

Much of artistic creativity stems from the struggle of life and the channeling of that energy to canvas, clay, or chord. Our underserved communities have a deep, rich voice that may not have the resources for the rest of the city to hear their imaginative genius. I am a firm believer in providing equitable assistance for our artists from diverse cultures and differing socioeconomic backgrounds as art, in itself, is the great equalizer for community voice.

The city has requirements that a percentage of development go towards affordable housing when applying for reinvestment money. I would like to see some requirements towards cultural space as well. Reinvesting into our city should also mean reinvesting into Dallas city culture.

7. **PARTICIPATION**

The Dallas arts and cultural community is diverse and growing and contains a range of genres, ethnicities, locations and more. Every group, especially those serving your district, is honored when elected officials attend a program, visit our organizations, or even stop by a monthly DACAC meeting to say hello.

QUESTION: Will you commit to attending local programs (performances, exhibitions, classes) or meeting with a Dallas arts organization on a regular basis? What would that look like?

Absolutely! I would certainly enjoy going to many local programs, performances, exhibitions, on a regular basis. Even now I endeavor to take more classes and check the schedule of the Dallas creative arts Center, for painting, sketching, welding and sculpture as the artistic process is a continually learning process. The creative process must be practiced and honed and is an important outlet for the mind.

While DACAC does not endorse candidates, these responses do guide consideration for support by individuals such as arts patrons and advocates, artists, board members, and more. Your responses will be publicly shared on our website to review. www.DallasNeedstheArts.com.