

Annual Report for Center City of Amarillo 2020-2021

Vision: Amarillo's Center City will be a destination neighborhood that bridges the historic past and the future.

Mission:

Center City of Amarillo, Inc. brings people to historic downtown Amarillo to live, work, play, learn, invest and worship.

Our Milestones:

Center City of Amarillo is proud to organize and implement successful downtown projects and events.

In 2020-2021, Center City has achieved several milestones in cooperation with the City of Amarillo, Center City members, volunteers, downtown stakeholders and community partners.

With leadership from our volunteer Board of Directors, Center City of Amarillo has:

After canceling the 2020 season for High Noon on the Square due to the pandemic, Center City was proud to return this tradition to downtown Amarillo. Center City hosted nine free noontime concerts on the historic Potter Country Courthouse Square every Wednesday in June and July. Crowds averaged between 500 and 600 a week.

Center City's Amarillo Community Market began its sixth season. The Market returned to its home at Center City headquarters at 1000 S. Polk St. after a pandemic season at the Santa Fe Depot. The Market continues to have success with major initiatives:

- Helping entrepreneurs build businesses as they start with a market booth. The Amarillo Community Market averaged 45 to 50 vendors each week. Everything sold at Market must be made, created, baked or produced within 150 miles of Amarillo.
- Encouraging economic development as customers buy and support local businesses.
- Providing the community with family friendly Saturday mornings with live entertainment and special events.
- Making locally grown produce, cottage-baked foods and locally produced meat accessible to our community.

Center City received a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts for the Amarillo Cultural District to develop signage for the historic downtown area. Through a partnership with the Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone, the signs will help drivers and pedestrians find landmarks downtown. In addition, each sign will have photos and information about tourist attractions ranging from the Cadillac Ranch to the Big Texan Steak Ranch and everything in between! The signs will be installed in 2022.

Center City awarded \$70,000 in the Façade Grant program. Since 1996, Center city has awarded more than \$1.3 million in Façade Grants. Because these are matching grants, the total investment in historic downtown Amarillo is more than \$3 million.

2020-2021 Façade Grants included:

- The Pergola Shop – a historic building that is now a showroom and workspace for The Pergola Shop.
- West Texas A&M University Harrington Academic Hall – a parking plaza to accommodate the new WTAMU Nursing School located in a historic department store in downtown Amarillo
- Wilson Haag – new signage for a longtime accounting firm in a historic building on Polk Street
- The Marizon Building – a new façade and signage for a historic building that houses a restaurant and a downtown events venue.
- The BOC – Bank of Commerce – new signage for a bank on Polk Street
- The Barfield – signage for a new luxury hotel on Polk Street in a 1928 office building.

Center City also assisted building owners and developers with questions about incentives including facade grants, TIRZ funding, and state and federal historic tax credits.

As part of Texas Main street, Center City is part of the DowntownTX initiative listing downtown properties on a new website with Texas Main Street with help from the city of Amarillo Planning Department. Center City hosted the DowntownTX Imagine the Possibilities Tour for downtown properties in May as part of the Imagine the Possibilities for National Historic Preservation Month.

Center City assisted community groups in the application process to host downtown events ranging from mural development and public art to parties and fund-raising events.

Center City hosted one of seven statewide regional meetings for the Texas Historical Commission as part of the development of a statewide 10-year Historic Preservation Plan for Texas. More than 100 people participated in this event.

The Pergola Shop was a finalist in the Presidential Awards for Design through the Texas Downtown Association awards program for architects and restorations. The shop was honored as a finalist for Best Commercial Interior.

Executive Director Beth Duke represented Center City on the Convention & Visitor Bureau, the Convention & Tourism Committee, and the Art in Public Places and Beautification Committee.

Center City continues to grow as we strive to make downtown “everybody’s neighborhood.”

Beth Duke, Executive Director