
Scenic Texas

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Celebrating 36 Years of Advocacy, Education, and Impact

*We plant trees and wildflowers,
instead of billboards, to make
scenic roads and improve public
spaces.*



WHERE WE ARE NOW

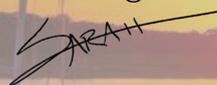
A monumental year in our 36 years of advocating for a more scenic Texas

When we embarked upon this year's Texas Legislative Session we had an industrious agenda: establish a State Scenic Byways Program for Texas to finally be placed on the National Scenic Byways map and ensure that every community in Texas can pursue Dark Sky designation. The Texas Scenic Byways Bill (SB 941), a bi-partisan bill authored by Senator Dawn Buckingham (R) and Representative Eddie Morales (D), was signed into law on May 30 by Governor Abbott. Texas is no longer the only state to not have a Scenic Byways program, because of the work of our Scenic family. Meanwhile, SB 1090 ensured that communities can pass ordinances and plans needed to become IDA (International Dark Sky Association) certified and/or pursue dark sky lighting standards. Not only did we successfully advocate for the passage of these two important scenic bills, we defeated legislation that would have established digital billboards in the public rights-of-way along highways or abolished municipal oversight on ETJ signage standards.

Our staff doubled this year to include Kendra Ralston as the program coordinator overseeing the Scenic City Certification Program and the 1 Million Trees Across Texas initiative. We have continued to elevate the Scenic City program by partnering with the University of Texas School of Architecture to create a Best Practices Resource Guide, introducing a new website and marketing initiatives, and preparing to launch a Leadership Network with the support of a private foundation.

By planting 1,500 trees and 750 bluebonnet seed packets along roads and highways we are living our mission and making a scenic impact. Organizationally, Scenic Texas is now on the path for a sustainable future and I am thrilled at our progress in realizing Lady Bird Johnson's dream: Texas the Beautiful.

With gratitude,



Sarah Tober
Scenic Texas President

MEASURING OUR IMPACT

2021 Benchmarks

2 BILLS PASSED

TEXAS 87TH REGULAR LEGISLATIVE
SESSION

We helped craft and pass legislation that establishes the State Scenic Byways Program and another helps communities to pursue Dark Sky designation, while killing 3 bad bills one of which would have allowed digital billboards along our highways



750

BLUEBONNET SEED PACKETS

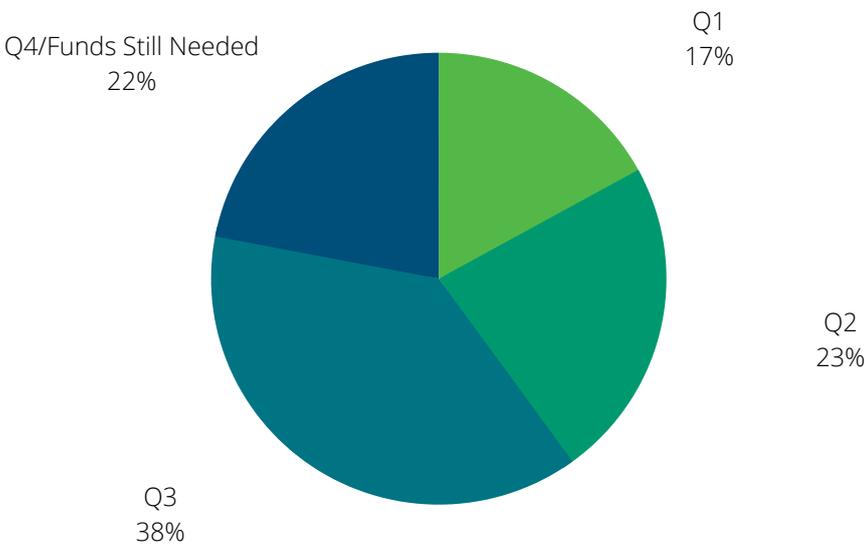
Distributed to be planted along roads, highways, and public green spaces



1,500

TREES PLANTED IN TEXAS

Along roads, highways, and public green spaces, the IM Trees Across Texas is gaining momentum



Funds Raised Towards Annual \$300,000 Budget

ADVOCACY

Scenic Texas helped establish Texas Scenic Byways Program and more Dark Skies

We are still celebrating the passage of the State Scenic Byways Program bill and the Dark Sky bill because of our advocacy efforts. These bills represent proactive scenic policies that will further Texans' understanding of the importance of our visual environment. Scenic Texas President Sarah Tober gave testimony at the Capitol five times in support of good scenic policy making during regular session in the Senate and the House.

Our advocacy team tracked more than 40 bills of the 7,000 filed this session and locked up bad bills like HB 1885/SB1922 (that allows for the deregulation of outdoor signage and billboards in the ETJ -- Local Government Code, Chapter 216) and SB 826/HB 3486 (that allows for private digital billboards to be erected in the public

The advocacy team worked to fix House Bill 2439 (from last session) with Senate Bill 1090, authored by Senator Dawn Buckingham (R-Lakeway) and Representative Andrew Murr (R-Kerrville). The legislation allows for communities to take the necessary steps in order to protect their night skies. Not only did this work further our Capitol coalition and organization alliances, but it furthered our mission because stars are a natural scenic resource.

The State Scenic Byways Program in Texas was signed into law by Governor Greg Abbott. Senate Bill 941 by Sen. Dawn Buckingham (R-Lakeway) and sponsored by Rep. Eddie Morales (D-Eagle Pass), made Texas the last state in the nation to join this federal program to preserve and acknowledge dozens of scenic roads across the state.

As most of you know, our advocacy efforts do not stop at the Capitol. We are committed to good scenic policy at the county and city levels as well as in the courts. In case you missed it, Scenic Texas Board Member Cooke Kelsey wrote an eloquent amicus brief for the City of Austin SCOTUS case. In the past year, we have submitted three amicus briefs because of Cooke's leadership and efforts. Please thank him for his incredible work on scenic legal issues when you get the chance.

ADVOCACY

A legacy continued

We worked with Representative Vikki Goodwin's office on House Bill 3056 that would make it illegal to erect billboards in cemeteries. While it was left pending in committee, we believe this is an issue that gained the Texas Legislature interest and that we will continue to pursue.

After the regular Texas Legislative Session we worked with Senator John Cornyn and Scenic America on the National Scenic Byways Program. This resulted in the co-sponsored Padilla/Cornyn Amendment 2315 for funding the National Scenic Byways Program. We are currently working closely with TxDOT on the implementation of the State Scenic Byways Program. I am so proud to report that this will enable our state to have access to funds to get this program up and running in the Lone Star State.

In August, we celebrated our 36-year anniversary with the launch of the Legacy of Carroll Shaddock and Sustainability Fund. Shaddock was a founding member of our organization. By creating this Fund, we honor his legacy and the history of our organization, further delineate our lobbying/advocacy activities by ensuring our core competency stays in place, and fiscally demonstrate that as a nonprofit we will work below the acceptable IRS threshold. Our goal is to raise \$50,000 every year for the Fund -- a goal we already have met this year thanks to the Friends of Carroll Shaddock Founding Circle!

Our work is truly bi-partisan and focuses on the space that brings us together as Texans. We are proud to be a voice for our more than 2,200 Scenic Texas members.



We helped Scenic Fort Worth prepare a one pager on Digital Billboards as they proactively planned to approach new city council members about this issue. We are committed to providing our chapters with tools for grassroots advocacy within their community. Scenic Texas is also committed to fighting the Digital Billboard blight by taking a leading role in the Scenic Amicus Brief that is going before SCOTUS this fall.

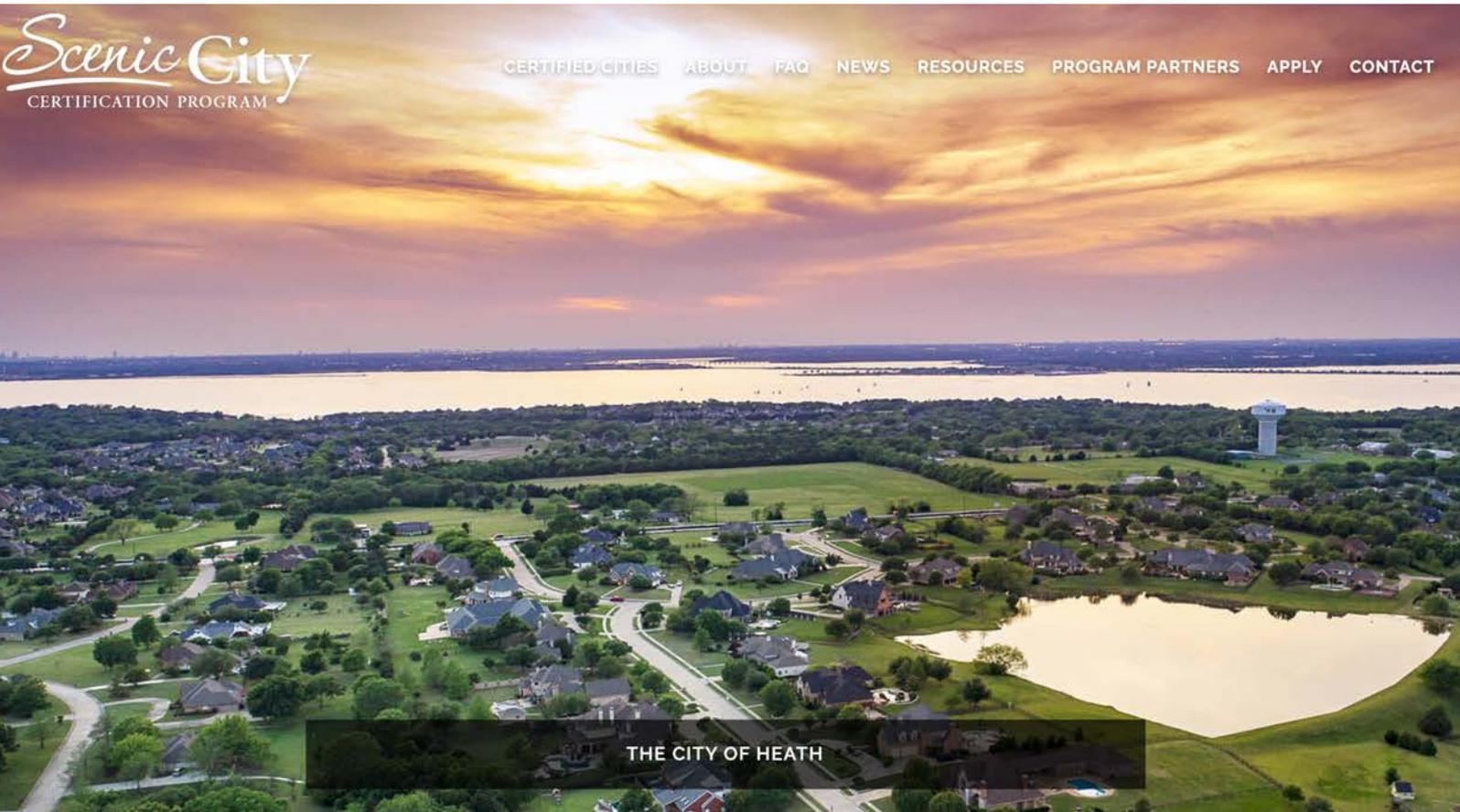
SCENIC CITIES

Congratulations to our 22 Designated Scenic Cities!

The Scenic City Certification Program had a number of highlights this year, including Kendra's work as a Program Coordinator that resulted in a class of 23 cities this year. We are proud that during the transition of this program to Scenic Texas fully we maintained the program's integrity and growth. The launch of the new website, map, and refined application process made it easier for municipalities to navigate the program and provided more resources and tools for ordinance and city planning. A private foundation and Kent Butler Internship supported the creation of a best practices resource guide based on the ten visual environment tenets of our program. This will be a tool for community leaders and planners that will further define each tenet from multiple perspectives including academic, ordinance language, plan implementation, quality of life, and visual representation.



[CERTIFIED CITIES](#) [ABOUT](#) [FAQ](#) [NEWS](#) [RESOURCES](#) [PROGRAM PARTNERS](#) [APPLY](#) [CONTACT](#)



THE CITY OF HEATH

VISUAL ENVIRONMENT STANDARDS

- Streetscape enhancement
- Parks, trails & open spaces
- Lighting standards
- Design integrity
- Landscaping & screening
- Sign control
- Litter & graffiti prohibition
- Utility & cable line programs
- Unique municipal features
- Special programs

Scenic City
CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

PARTNERS

BACKGROUND

The Scenic City Certification Program (SCCP), administered by Scenic Texas, recognizes municipalities that implement high quality scenic standards for public roadways and public spaces. Cities with strong scenic standards reflect civic pride, benefit from a solid sense of community character and are well-positioned for economic growth.



Planting mini-forests along roads and highways,
makes our drives more scenic and cleaner.

1 MILLION TREES ACROSS TEXAS



The 1 Million Trees Across Texas initiative is receiving wide support from a number of partners and potential partners. This fall we will launch a scalable blueprint for planting one million trees across the state that includes timeline, re-forestation plans, partners, eco-region based native species, and associated fundraising goals. This is the first time a statewide initiative has been made to plant trees along roads, highways, overpasses, and public spaces through collective impact that brings together tree-centric organizations and cities.

IMPACT

Bringing together partners and scenic chapters for a more scenic Texas

In 2021, we became partners with Texan by Nature, Texas Conservation Alliance, and Texas Children in Nature Network. These partnerships were in addition to our partnerships with Austin Outside, the Hill Country Conservation Network, Friends of the Dark Skies groups, and our 17 Scenic City program partners. We are now building partnerships for collective impact around the 1 Million Trees Across Texas initiative. By leveraging our network we are able to reduce costs and expand our mission reach.

In addition to the five testimonies given at the Capitol during Legislative Session, Sarah presented at the University of Texas School of

Architecture, Texas Native Plant Society Hill Country chapter, Texas Tech Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, and the Scenic City 12th Annual Awards at the Texas Municipal League Conference. Scenic Texas supporters are the bedrock of our organization. Our donors, members, partners, and supporters play a crucial role in supporting our efforts to preserve and enhance the visual character of Texas. We are the only state nonprofit that helps citizens safeguard the scenic qualities of Texas roadways, countryside, and communities.

I hope that, at all levels of government, our planners and builders will remember that highway beautification is more than a matter of planting trees and setting aside scenic areas. The roads themselves must reflect, in location and design, increased respect for the natural and social integrity and unity of the landscape and communities through which they pass. -- President Lyndon B. Johnson

In his February 8, 1965, call for the White House Conference on Natural Beauty

IMPACT

Inaugural Ride for Scenic Texas off to a great start

Aaron Chamberlain

Our scenic ride featured lead rider Aaron Chamberlain, Texas Monthly freelance writer and co-founder of the Austin Beer Guide. Last year, Chamberlain was the first person to circumnavigate the state of Texas — more than 3,000 miles — on a bicycle.

21-Mile Bike Loop

This first-ever “Ride for Scenic Texas,” a 21-mile loop bike ride and fundraiser helped to build awareness about the nonprofit’s work to designate Texas roads as official state scenic byways and to protect the Lone Star State’s visual environment.

The ride took place on April 10, in conjunction with the Driftwood Historical Conservation Society event to dedicate a stretch of road as the Travis Heritage Trail under state law. The event was co-hosted with locally owned Vista Brewing; the Driftwood brewery sits on the stretch of FM 150 that was dedicated.



2022 HERE WE COME

Looking forward to a new year.

We have a big year ahead of us, with exciting new focus on the Scenic City Leadership Network, a goal of planting 5,000 trees across Texas and along roads, and a central role in establishing the State Scenic Byways Program for the first time in the Lone Star State.

Organizationally, we have created a nimble three year strategic plan and are focused on restrengthening our chapters in Austin, Dallas, the Hill Country, and San Antonio in 2022 while building on last year's immense successes.

Scenic Texas will have an annual Ride for Scenic Texas in April and fall tree plantings. We also plan to host an educational forum and webinar around the Scenic City Best Practices Resource Guide.

We couldn't execute our mission and achieve our vision without the generosity of supporters, donors, board members, foundations, and Scenic Texas members. Thank you for your ongoing support or consideration of the Scenic Texas mission.

Scenic Texas and Scenic Houston are volunteer-driven nonprofit organizations whose mission is to preserve and enhance the visual environment. Scenic Texas engages in statewide programming and advocacy and Scenic Houston engages in city and county-wide programming and advocacy. In addition, from time-to-time, Scenic Houston, as a chapter of Scenic Texas, has led capital improvement projects within the City of Houston. In light of these capital improvement activities, the respective Scenic Texas and Scenic Houston boards of directors believed their organizational missions would be best achieved by establishing separate nonprofit operations instead of their historically combined operations. The boards of directors voted unanimously to transfer the Scenic Houston chapter assets and liabilities from Scenic Texas to the 2021 newly created nonprofit, Scenic Houston. **While Scenic Texas and Scenic Houston are now separate entities and nonprofits, we remain collectively committed to a more Scenic Texas.**



Scenic Texas

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