

Lee Kaplan

1. Do you have an Arts & Culture policy plan or policy statement?

If so, please send a copy.

I don't have a specific plan, but I have long been a supporter of the arts and that would continue as Mayor.

2. How do you personally participate in the arts and culture both in Houston and when traveling?

My wife Diana and I have been season ticketholders to the Ballet since we first arrived in Houston after law school. Diana has been Chair of the Board of the Lawndale Art Center and we have frequently donated to other arts-related groups. Through my longtime association with Troop 212 in Third Ward, I have encouraged and participated in multiple Eagle projects, as for example the recent painting of a mural by Scouts on a building at the Pilgrim Congregational United Church of Christ. Finally, I am an amateur painter and have several pieces hanging in my firm's offices.

3. What specific strategies would your administration undertake to ensure the growth and stability of the creative sector?

Making our city safer and cleaner will ensure the growth and stability of every part of our city, including the creative community. Beyond that, I publicly support the creative community and will use my public voice to promote key artistic projects.

4. What opportunities exist for Houston's artists and creative community to work more closely with city departments?

I will continue to support Houston's Civic Art Program. Beyond that, I believe that everyone's contributions will be necessary to make Houston the best it can be. Therefore, I will seek input from the creative community for solutions to issues throughout our government.

5. The amount of public funding for the arts through grants is currently limited to HOT funds. Would you consider any additional funding mechanisms and if so, please explain?

I believe that Houston must take care of basic city services first. They are tackling crime, picking up the trash in every neighborhood, and addressing our critical infrastructure needs and preventing major flooding. These steps will help every aspect of our community. Once these needs are properly addressed, I would consider more funding for the arts.

6. Which recommendations would you prioritize from the FY22 Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs (MOCA) Equity Review?

I would prioritize the recommendation to publicly release an annual Equity Review report and present findings to cultural organizations locally and nationally to encourage the implementation of best practices around inclusion of everyone in the artistic community in public art collections.