

City of Seattle
Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs



Cultural Space Seattle

Findings and Recommended Next Steps

May 3, 2012

Overview

Accessible, affordable, dedicated space for artists, organizations, and cultural groups of all types and sizes has been a concern in Seattle and a topic of conversation for decades. The long term vision is of a cultural ecosystem with an affordable, mixed variety of space (e.g., small, medium, large, temporary, and long-term) where individual artists and arts groups may work, live, meet, practice, and present arts and culture. Toward that end, the Seattle Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs (OACA) and the Seattle Arts Commission produced Cultural Space Seattle. This two-day event included a public forum and a day of working sessions, providing the community and key stakeholders an opportunity to discuss issues and ideas related to defining and advancing an agenda for cultural space development initiatives needed to support the continued growth of arts, culture and creativity in Seattle.

OACA and the arts commission, in partnership with 4Culture, invited a broad cross section of people—elected officials, artists, business leaders, community leaders, residents, and public and nonprofit leaders—to come together to examine the issues in our community and identify possible next steps for cultural space development in Seattle moving forward.

Nearly 150 people attended the public forum at Town Hall on Dec. 6, 2011 where artist and cultural planner Theaster Gates delivered the keynote address about his museum installations as well as his commitment to restoring poor neighborhoods by converting abandoned buildings into cultural spaces that allow not only new cultural moments to happen in unexpected places, but also raising a city's expectations of where "placemaking" happens. Following his presentation, Mr. Gates was joined by a panel that included a national researcher of neighborhood cultural spaces, a Vancouver, B.C. cultural space administrator, and a national developer of public/nonprofit arts spaces. This group participated in a moderated discussion of both local and broader North American examples of effective cultural spaces and programs. . . . A recording of the public forum may be found here: <http://www.seattlechannel.org/videos/video.asp?ID=5211168>

Two working sessions on Dec. 7 engaged more than 90 participants, including artists, arts and cultural organizations, community leaders, city staff, arts administrators, investors, real estate developers and architects to build on themes from the forum and their collective community experience and offer insights as to how to advance the work around cultural space in a meaningful way.

What we learned

Projects: A review of more than a dozen successful cultural space projects indicated that they are the result of collaboration between agencies, communities, and the business sector.

Funding: Evidence suggests that funders are interested in: a) funding capitalization projects that ensure grantees are able to remain stable in place; b) targeting funding toward engagement in the arts to support potential earned income; and c) taking art to where people live and work.

Programs: Best practice indicates that cultural space strengthens neighborhoods by looking for existing opportunities, flowing resources into neighborhoods, responding to local conditions, and bringing technical support without impacting existing neighborhood qualities.

Policy: Specific policies, from incentive zoning to a priority of activating unused space, further preservation and creation of cultural space.

Recommendations

Comments and stakeholder feedback highlighted possible targets to prioritize for change:

- **Projects:** Convene across sectors in order to build stronger arguments and more affordable, sustainable cultural space projects.
- **Funding:** Prioritize neighborhood-based projects, identifying additional sources of funding for cultural space development and preservation. Create a clear and transparent capital funding model at the city level. Increase engagement across multiple sectors to help leverage and expand the pool of resources for cultural space.
- **Programs:** More capacity building and technical assistance regarding the development of affordable cultural space, and a staffed city program to lead this effort. Create a clearinghouse of information about available space as well as establish a steward/ombudsman who could broker space and information as well as trouble-shoot problems across city departments.
- **Policy:** Reform land use codes to support adaptive reuse as well as more flexibility and variance to zoning designations. Prioritize using surplus public buildings and public space for arts and cultural uses. Encourage new public buildings to explore cultural space partnerships.

Possible Next Steps

Create a Cultural Space Seattle multi-sector working group. Foster a concerted collaboration between the arts, community, business, and public stakeholders. Build a long-term strategy to sustain, cultivate, and grow Seattle's locally cherished and world-renown arts and culture ecology. This must be achieved through concerted collaboration between the arts, community, business, private and public stakeholders.

Make a plan. Seattle needs to seize the moment now so that the arts and culture in Seattle not only survive the next upswing of the economy but can play a significant role in helping to shape that recovery. Identifying resources and forming a cross-sector working group to initiate a substantive planning process that will result in a 10- to 15-year cultural space development and preservation plan. The group and plan should create flexible systems that allow programs and projects to emerge from the community or neighborhood level while also recognizing Seattle's role as a global cultural leader.

Look in many directions. The City of Seattle could take a leadership role in initiating a planning process. Stakeholders indicated that collaboration among City departments, with the county, and across sectors (e.g. non-profits, community, business, government) is essential as the City is not capable of accomplishing this work alone, nor should it be. To sustain and expand cultural space in Seattle, all of these sectors must be engaged.

Look within. A review of policies and regulations within City government and other collaborating governmental agencies is needed to help answer several questions. Do policies help or hinder creative placemaking? Are policies geared toward new construction of affordable space? Do they exclude artist-led neighborhood projects?

Share information. The creation of a clearing-house of information to be used by artists, arts and cultural organizations, developers, property owners and managers, and brokers to identify opportunities and resources was a key recommendation.

Guiding Principles: SPACE- How to do the work

Scan: Monitor the changing landscape of affordable cultural space to be prepared to adapt and recommend policies and programs as needed.

Partner: Collaborate with key stakeholders across business, community, and governmental sectors to leverage each other's strengths and assets.

Act: Work with artists, community leaders, developers, and government entities, to draft and implement a plan for preserving and expanding affordable cultural space.

Convene: Gather together so that we may listen, learn, and hold each other accountable.

Educate: Communicate with artists, residents, and stakeholders about affordable cultural space so that our whole community is informed and involved in cultivating space for arts and culture in Seattle.

Appendix: What we heard: Cultural Space Seattle Meetings Comments Summary

1. Morning Working Session

The 93 participants broke into discussion groups and were asked to answer the following questions: What is the current situation in Seattle? What are options, new ideas? What should we be doing as a region to develop and preserve cultural space?

The following priorities emerged:

- Social equity
- Emphasis on neighborhood-based assessment and resources. “Bottom-up” planning, shift away from the large institutional model.
- Database of potential partnerships and space opportunities.
- Inventory of cultural/community assets, including multi-use and spaces and others. “Every space is a potential cultural space.”
- A cultural space broker to help navigate departments, policies, code, opportunities.
- More networking and convenings for dialogue and exchange. Bring sectors together. Finance, Developers, Chambers - how do we get them all thinking about the arts?
- Melding of policy for public and for-profit spaces.
- Change public policy to reflect the importance of arts and culture.
- Put culture on an even plane with other factors in development.
- Flexibility – no one model fits all.
- Rigorous and well-invested engagement process for a comprehensive plan.
- Take a stand on arts and culture. “The City should have the guts to promote itself as a city of the arts.” Leadership and advocacy.
- Examine policies and regulations for easy wins, e.g., support hybrid public-private business models at all levels.
- Maintenance funding.
- Collaboration across sectors and scales – large and small organizations, public and private efforts.

2. Afternoon Working Session

The afternoon session included 40 individuals invited to offer their perspectives in specific focus areas: Projects, Programs, Policy and Funding. The group, which included members of several City departments as well as leaders in funding, non-profit, and real estate development, was asked not only to imagine the “what” but also, where possible, the “how” and the “who.”

Breakout groups identified the following actions as priorities.

Projects

- Stewardship was the overall theme.
- Designated Cultural Improvement Districts, similar to a Business Improvement District.
- Combine arts with mixed-use.
- Cross-sector convening to further planning.

Funding

- Provide technical assistance, assessment and training for people and groups that need space before and while they seek funding.
- In all funding strategies, make the case for meaningful engagement with the larger community.
- Educate funders about the field rather than waiting for funders to shape the field.
- Catalog and reveal alternate sources of funding to arts groups, such as tax credits which are more likely to be used and known by for-profit developers.
- Increase funding overall. Don't let this fall off the table.

Program

- Technical assistance position that may or may not live within City government but that will certainly partner with City.
- Capacity building for artists and arts groups of all sizes.
- Advocacy – Create a league of Cultural Voters.
- Mentorship program, organizations helping each other, developers helping each other.

Policy

- Incentive zoning.
- Incentives to activate/fill unused spaces. Pay artists to do this work.
- Adopt a doctrine of highest and best use.
- Designated, long-term use of specific land or percentage of public land for the arts.

Afternoon Working Session Close

These ideas were highlighted:

- Get started and stay started. Don't let this conversation lose momentum as others have done in the past.
- Bring everyone to the table. Cross-sector collaboration and education is key.
- Get connected and stay connected. Continue engagement at all levels.
- Plan and prioritize. Keep the long view while making things happen in the short term.
- Gather and reflect resources. Create a clearinghouse with staff support that can manage data as well as serve educational and brokerage functions.
- Artists and arts groups can be central to the new economy.

Cultural Space Seattle Sponsors

The Seattle Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs

Seattle Arts Commission

4Culture

JP Morgan Chase

Town Hall Seattle

Arcade Magazine

Seattle Art Museum

University of Washington College of the Built Environment

Seattle Arts Commission Facilities and Economic Development Committee

Michael Seiwerath, Chair, Executive Director of Capitol Hill Housing Foundation and Seattle Arts Commissioner

David Sabee, musician and Seattle Arts Commissioner

Joaquín Herranz, Jr. Associate Professor of Public Affairs, Evans School of Public Affairs, University of Washington and Seattle Arts Commissioner

Randy Engstrom, Cultural Development Consultant/Owner at Reflex Strategies, and Chair of the Seattle Arts Commission (2011)

Andy Fife, Executive Director, Shunpike

Cassie Chinn, Deputy Executive Director, Wing Luke Museum

Kristian Kofoed, Urban Planner, City of Seattle

Sam Farrazaino, Equinox Development Unlimited LLC

Vincent E. Kitch, Director, Seattle Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs

Lori Patrick, Public Relations Manager, Seattle Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs

Crispin Speath, Cultural Space Seattle coordinator

Speakers

Cultural Space Seattle Public Forum

Keynote Speaker: **Theaster Gates**, artist and cultural planner

Panelists/Presenters:

Jacqueline Gijssen, Senior Cultural Planner, city of Vancouver, B.C

Cathryn Vandenbrink, Regional Director, Artspace

Susan Seifert, Director of the Social Impact of the Arts Project, University of Pennsylvania.

Panel moderator:

Randy Engstrom, Cultural Development Consultant

Cultural Space Seattle Working Sessions

Speakers:

Michael Seiwerath, Executive Director, Capitol Hill Housing Foundation

Jim McDonald, Senior Program Officer, Paul G. Allen Family Foundation;

Andy Fife, Executive Director, Shunpike;

Cultural Space Seattle Registrants

Brett	Allen	SVP	iad Development
Kathleen	Allen	Director of Education	Seattle Youth Symphony
Royal	Alley-Barnes	Executive Director	Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center
Matt	Anderson	Principal	Heartland LLC
James	Baker	Executive Director	Pilchuck Glass School
Cody	Bednar	Director of Admissions	Local 619
Nilki	Benitez	Poet	Work Writers Alliance~Seattle
Patsy	Bonincontri	Principal	By Design
Jennifer	Borges Foster	Chief Editor	Filter Literary Journal
Craig	Bradshaw	Artistic Director	A Theatre Under the Influence
Kathleen	Brooker	Executive Director	Historic Seattle
Patricia	Brown	Artist	
Susan	Brown	Artist	still in development
Mary Pat	Byrne	Arts Specialist	City of Bellevue
Kevin	Carl	Architect/Developer/Planner	UIG/4Culture
Susan	Cary	Interim Director, Real Estate Development	Capitol Hill Housing
John	Chaney	President	AKCHO
Liza	Comtois	Associate Partner	Freehold Theatre Lab/Studio
Ellen	Cooper	Office Manager	Northwest Justice Project

Joseph	Crnko	Music Director	Northwest Choirs, Seattle Symphony Orchestras
Carina	del Rosario	Founding Member	IDEA Odyssey Gallery
Maddison	Doberan	Secretary	Local 619
Cheryl	dos Remedios		
Deanna	Duff	Freelance Writer	Crosscut.com
Liz	Dunn	Executive Director	Preservation Green Lab
Greg	Eastman		Gage Academy of Art
Sara	Edwards	Communications	4Culture
AJ	Epstein	Artistic Director	Ethereal Mutt Limited/West of Lenin
Jerry	Everard	C.G.F.	Teralani Enterprises
Lorri	Falterman	Board President	Gage Academy of Art
Marshall	Foster	City Planner	Seattle Department of Planning and Development
Willow	Fox	Public Art Staff	4Culture
Eric	Fredericksen	Director	Western Bridge
K. Wyking	Garrett	Director	UmojaFest PEACE Center
Brian	Gerich	Board Member	architects without borders seattle
John	Gilbreath	Executive Director	Earshot Jazz
Tony	Gomez	Community Outreach Coordinator	KCTS 9 Television
Felicia	Gonzalez	Consultant	Arts Consultant
Daren	Goulding	Treasurer	Local 619
Miguel	Guillen	Co-founder	La Sala
Alexa	Heidrich	Planning Intern	City of Federal Way
Joshua	Heim	Arts Administrator	City of Redmond
Joaquin	Herranz Jr	Associate Professor	Evans School of Public Affairs, University of Washington
Aaron	Hill	Executive Director	Center for the Study of Family History
Jeffrey	Hirsch	Deputy Director, Communications	Frye Art Museum
Craig	Howard	Owner	first creek partners
Peter	Jabin	Deputy Director	Gay City Health Project
Heidi	Jackson		Hidmo
Sandra	Jackson-Dumont	Deputy Director for Education	Seattle Art Museum
Susan	Jensen	President	Whidbey Island Visual Artists
Jim	Kelly	Executive Director	4Culture
Kurt	Kiefer	Project Manager	Meta Arte LLC
Pearl	Klein	Eloquence Expert	Words at Work
Darren	Lay	Artistic Director	Young Shakespeare Workshop
Alison	Loerke	Director	ALIA Prod
Leticia	Lopez	Freelance	independent
Hugo	Ludena		Latino Cultural Magazine
Greg	Lundgren	Curator	Vital 5 Productions
Perri	Lynch	Captain	velocity made good
Amanda	Manitach	Artist	
Nathan	Marion	Executive Director	Fremont Abbey Arts Center / Lonely Buildings
Kristi	Matsuda		Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center
Jim	McDonald	Senior Program Officer	Paul G. Allen Family Foundation
Cathy	Nanda		
Lucia	Neare	Artistic Director	Lucia Neare's Theatrical Wonders
Linda	Norlen	Public Programs Director	Seattle Design Festival

Deborah	Person	Managing Director	Seattle International Film Festival
Brian	Peterson	Artistic Producer	New Queer on the Block
Dan	Peterson	Executive Director	Seattle Youth Symphony Orchestras
Jerri	Plumridge	Arts Director	SEED
Criss	Poteat	Program Director	Union Cultural Center
Stephanie	Pure	External Relations Director	AIA Seattle
Susie	Purves	Executive Director	Spectrum Dance Theater
Rico	Quiridongo	Principal / Architect	DKA Architecture
Sam	Read	Deputy Director	Theatre Puget Sound
Jane	Richlovsky		'57 Biscayne
Sabrina	Roach	Radio/New Media Doer	Brown Paper Tickets
Chris	Rogers		Point32
Julianna	Ross		Sand Point Arts and Cultural Exchange
Michelle	Scoleri	Senior Policy Advisor	Office of Mayor Mike McGinn
Ron	Sevart	President & CEO	Space Needle LLC.
Elizabeth	Sheets	Independent Artist	
David	Shulman	Director	Seattle Film Institute
Elaine	Simons	Executive Director	Peace for the Streets by Kids from the Streets
Diane	Sugimura	Director	Seattle Department of Planning and Development
Caitlin	Sullivan	Artistic Director/Programs Coordinator	The Satori Group/Shunpike
Ann	Suter	Principle	Prizma Services
Kristina	Sutherland	Artistic Director	Macha Monkey Productions
Beth	Takekawa	Executive Director	Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience
Debra	Twersky	Funding Programs	4Culture
Jess	Van Nostrand	Founder/Curator	The Project Room
Frank	Video		Office of Councilmember Nick Licata
Angielena	Vitale	Director	Georgetown Arts and Cultural Center
Steven	Vroom	Executive Director	911 Media Arts Center
Trevina	Wang		Seattle Department of Transportation
Debra	Webb	Public Art Intern	4Culture
Paige	Weinheimer	Artist/arts administrator	
Patti	West		Theater Off Jackson
Tracey	Wickersham	Director of Cultural Tourism	Seattle's Convention & Visitors Bureau
Erin	Williamson	Owner	Burien Press
Maiko	Winkler-Chin		Chinatown-International District Preservation and Development Authority
David	Yeaworth		Office of Councilmember Sally Clack
Michael	Yee	Director of Community Development	Chinatown International District Preservation and Development Authority