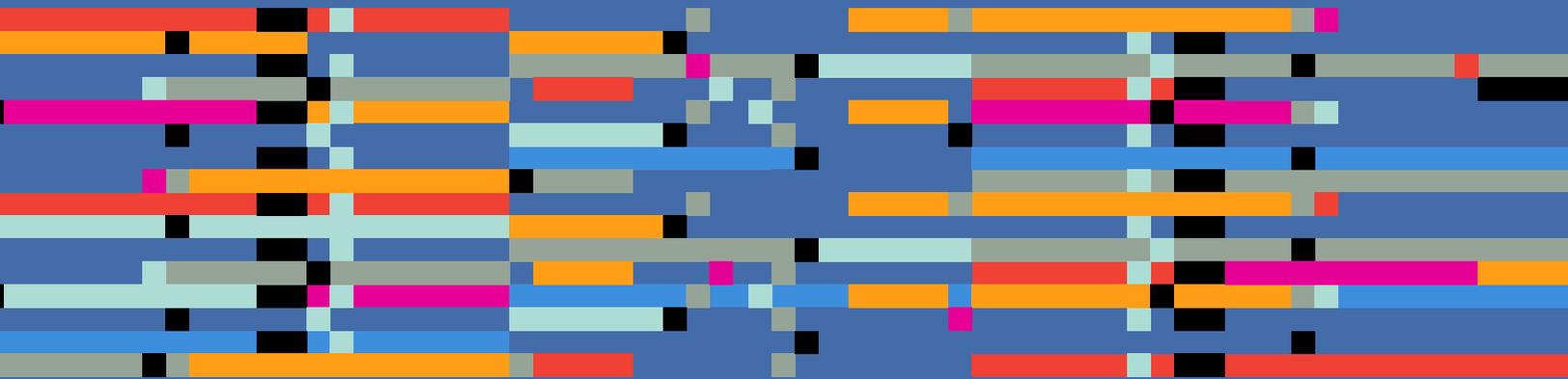




City of Houston Arts & Cultural Plan





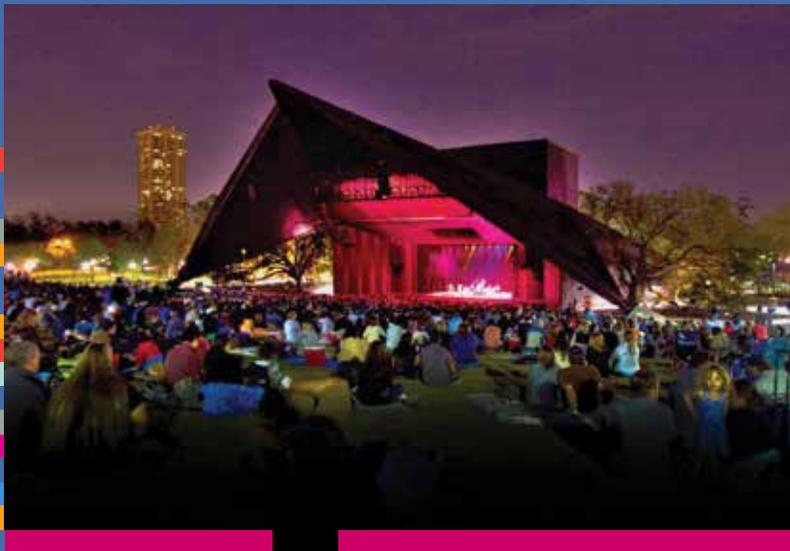


Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs

Arts & Cultural Plan



OCTOBER 2015



Miller Outdoor Theatre. Photo by: Leroy-Gibbins



CITY OF HOUSTON

Annise D. Parker

Mayor

P.O. Box 1562
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Greetings!

I am pleased to present the City of Houston's Arts and Cultural Plan. This document represents a community driven consensus plan. It is meant to serve as a basis for further discussion – a roadmap of sorts for future administrations and City Councils to consult as they work to find the best ways for nurturing, expanding and enhancing the City's arts and cultural offerings.

Our City is world renowned for its cultural offerings including major companies in all the performing arts, vibrant Museum and Theater Districts, five Cultural Districts, the world's largest rodeo, a large active artist community, small and mid-size organizations with a myriad of artistic expressions and a wealth of diverse ethnic communities that impart their cultural traditions. Arts and cultural offerings help define a city's character and quality of life. They are paramount to attracting and retaining a great workforce and essential for growing convention business and tourism.

This Plan was never meant to be solely about the funding and who gets it. However, one clear theme that emerged from the process is the inadequacy of the existing public funding stream for the arts. The 19.3% allocation of the City's portion of Hotel Occupancy Tax revenues dedicated to the arts – the limit allowed by Texas state law – is insufficient to support the myriad organizations and cultural initiatives of our community. It is unfortunate that despite our world renowned reputation for performing and visual arts and diverse cultural offerings, Houston ranks at the bottom of the list of most major metropolitan areas when it comes to public funding for the arts.

Government can help guide the process for change, but achieving a more robust revenue stream is a major undertaking that will, ultimately, have to be driven by the very arts groups that depend on the dollars. Houston's arts community – including both the big and small organizations – worked side-by-side to craft this document. My hope is that this newfound level of cooperation and understanding continues as we move forward. It is essential if the goals and recommendations identified within this document are to become reality.

A very special thanks to all who worked to create this Plan.

Sincerely,

Annise D. Parker
Mayor

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Arts and Cultural Plan was made possible by the leadership and support of Mayor Annise D. Parker, Houston's City Council and the Community Advisory Committee, led by two superb Co-Chairs, Philamena Baird and Rick Lowe. Their commitment and efforts, with the dedication of the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs staff, have laid the foundation for Houston's next stage of cultural development.

Significant thanks to the University of Houston Master of Arts in Arts Leadership Program for providing three exceptional students to the project and to the organizers of the Artist Town Hall: Fresh Arts, Art League Houston, Project Row Houses, DiverseWorks Artspace, Dance Source Houston, Southwest Alternate Media Project, Nameless Sound, Houston Palestine Film Festival and Voices Breaking Boundaries.

Additional thanks to Dr. Stephen L. Klineberg, Founding Director, Kinder Institute for Urban Research at Rice University, for his advice and personal dedication to the project and to the valuable work of the Kinder Institute and the Center for Houston's Future in examining Houston and the arts sector with publications that greatly informed much of this Plan.

Appreciation to the Ensemble Theatre, Houston Arts Alliance, the Mayor's Office of Special Events and the Planning and Development Department for assisting with the Plan Kickoff event. Thanks to Rice University, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and the Houston Public Library System's Julia Ideson Library and the African American Library at Gregory School for providing meeting space. Thanks also to the public meeting site facilitators of Charlton Community Center, Fifth Ward Multi-Service Center, Metropolitan Multi-Service Center, Sharpstown Community Center, Sunnyside Multi-Service Center, Third Ward Multi-Service Center and White Oak Conference Center.

Special thanks to all the citizens of Houston and beyond that participated in interviews, focus groups and town hall meetings and gave of their time, expertise and thoughts online and offline to help inform the plan and its results.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Mayor's Letter	3
Acknowledgments	4
Community Advisory Committee	7
Executive Summary	9
Introduction	16
Houston: The Place	17
Prosperity Opportunity & Their Limits	19
Rushing Into The Future	20
Hunger For Connection	21
Houston Is Real	22
Houston Is A True World City	23
Conclusion	23
Community Engagement Findings	25
Success of Houston's Legacy Organizations	26
Top Priorities	26
Key Themes from Community Engagement	27
Town Hall Summary	28
Existing Strategies	31
Arts and Cultural Investments	32
Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) Dedicated to the Arts	33
Civic Art Program	33
Additional City Arts and Cultural Support	36
Public Funding for the Arts	37
National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965	37
Local Government Structure for Cultural Programming	38
Funding Models for the Future	39
Priorities and Recommendations	41
Appendix	68
Participants	68
Major Grant Programs	74
Indicators	76
Public Meetings and Presentations	79



Families enjoy an evening of food, crafts, and activities at Asia Society's Night Market.
Photo by: Jeff Fantich

Mayor of Houston

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Synchronicity of Color (Red) by Margo Sawyer. Discovery Green, 2008.
Photo by: Jim LaCombe

Community Advisory Committee

Thank you to Co-Chairs **Philamena Baird** and **Rick Lowe** for leading the Community Advisory Committee and to all of the volunteer members of the committee for their time and many contributions to the Arts and Cultural Plan. Thanks, too, to the hundreds of participants (listed on page 68) that gave input to the Plan and the thousands more who accessed the project online.

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Art Car Parade, Orange Show Center for Visionary Art.
Photo by: David Sheard

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Fifth Ward Jam, Dan Havel and Dean Ruck, Lyons Avenue.
Photo by: Debra Ham

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The vision for the City of Houston Arts and Cultural Plan is to foster an environment in which art and culture flourish for the sharing and benefit of all residents and visitors.

Houston has tremendous artistic and cultural assets, and each year the City of Houston makes important investments in these resources for the benefit of its 2.2 million residents and nearly 15 million annual visitors. With the city expected to grow by more than one million people over the next 20 years, the City's Arts and Cultural Plan identifies community concerns, sets a vision for the future and recommends actions to achieve the City's long-term priorities. The Plan was developed by looking at local data and relevant research as well as by listening to community residents, artists, arts and cultural groups, an Advisory Committee, City (City of Houston) staff, elected officials, leaders and experts. Over just six months, hundreds of individuals contributed to the Plan through meetings, interviews and events, and thousands more accessed the project online.

PLAN VISION

THE VISION FOR THE CITY OF HOUSTON ARTS AND CULTURAL PLAN IS TO FOSTER AN ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH ART AND CULTURE FLOURISH FOR THE SHARING AND BENEFIT OF ALL RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.

This vision is based on Houston's many past accomplishments in expanding its cultural life and on its leading position as the single most ethnically diverse major metropolitan area in the country. The vision embraces change and reflects the evolving role of culture in the community.

A WORLD CITY

Houston's strengths are abundant—it is a dynamic, open, welcoming city, rediscovering urban life and discovering the importance of its public realm, soon to have the nation's largest system of recreational trails, rich and diverse in its food and cultures, plentiful and excellent in its arts, and a global economic center racing into the future. But Houston has emerged as something more—a true world city, linked by both commerce and culture to countless places around the world.



"Preservons la Creation" AKA "The Biggest Mural in Houston," Artist: Sebastien "Mr. D" Boileau, Project Manager: UP Art Studio.
Photo by: Aisha Kahn

Houston already has brand strength in energy, space, medicine and petrochemicals. It is one of the best places in the world for the arts and its cultural assets represent a strategic opportunity for Houston's civic identity.

Houston has abundant success in arts and culture on which to build. Houston's internationally-renowned cultural institutions drive a growing creative economy. The city is home to the first and largest art car parade in the world, the largest rodeo in the world and one of the world's largest and most respected international photographic events, FotoFest. Houston is anchored by leading museums and performing arts organizations. It has the highest-attended youth museum for its size in the country, the largest "always free" proscenium outdoor theatre program in country and the most Cultural Districts in the state—five – designated by the Texas Commission on the Arts. The First Ward has the highest concentration of artist studios in Texas—second in the nation after Hollywood.

The city's magnificent skyline is made up of award-winning architecture, landmarks and historic buildings. Houston has originated groundbreaking faith, place-based and literature organizations that fuse art with human rights, community development and education. Locally created exhibitions and productions tour the country routinely, shining a spotlight on the city's artistic excellence. Houston is one of a few U.S. cities with resident companies in symphony, opera, drama and ballet, and more than 500 organizations are devoted to the arts, science and history in the Houston area. Each year these groups have more than 9 million visits by adults and children.

In the city and county, nonprofit arts and culture are a significant industry, annually offering thousands of programs, projects and activities to residents and visitors. The nonprofit arts and culture sector generates \$977.7 million in total economic activity. This spending—\$414.6 million by nonprofit arts and culture organizations and an additional \$563.1 million in event-related spending by their audiences—supports 29,118 full-time equivalent jobs, generates \$702.9 million in household

income to local residents, and delivers \$130.4 million in local and state government revenue.¹

A 2015 update to the "Creative Economy of Houston" study has shown that Houston has a total demand of \$25.6 billion from the local Creative Industry (10-county region) of which \$10.5 billion is produced and sold locally. This data reflects a total employment of about 114,000 workers in Creative Industries. The demand for more investment in the Creative Industry Economy has increased by over \$5 billion in the past 4 years since this study was first conducted.²

Many local arts and cultural organizations of all disciplines and sizes are responding to Houston's growth and its transforming community. From the commissioning of new works about the immigrant experience to featuring non-Anglo artists and those cultivated from folk and spiritual traditions, all residents can increasingly find themselves in the creative products of Houston's arts and culture sector. Much is being done in the way of affordability, and on any given day, there are multiple opportunities to take in excellent free, discounted and pay-what-you-can activities.

BUILDING ON A STRONG FOUNDATION

Cultural vitality is among the four pillars³ of sustainability, as are economic prosperity, social equity and environmental

¹ Americans for the Arts, Arts & Economic Prosperity IV, 2012, <http://houstonartsalliance.com/research/aepsiv/>

² Houston Arts Alliance, University of Houston, Greater Houston Partnership & EMSI, and funded in part by the City of Houston, The Creative Economy of Houston 2, 2015, <http://houstonartsalliance.com/research/creativeeconomy/>.

³ Broadly defined, sustainable development is a systems approach to growth and development and to manage natural, produced, and social capital for the welfare of their own and future generations. The three-pillar model of economic, environmental and social equity has been expanded by some authors to include a fourth pillar of culture. James, Paul; with Magee, Liam; Scerri, Andy; Steger, Manfred B. (2015). *Urban Sustainability in Theory and Practice: Circles of Sustainability*. London: Routledge.



Art Recycling Trucks, *Green Dream*, Pablo Gimenez-Zapiolo.
Photo by: Marc Newsome

responsibility. As such, cultural planning inevitably draws out issues and concerns that intersect with these areas. Barbara Jordan, the great Texas legislator and orator, best expressed the transformative persuasion of the arts in public policy—*The arts, instead of quaking along the periphery of our policy concerns, must push boldly into the core of policy. The arts are a response to our individuality and our nature and help to shape our identity. The arts are not a frill and should not be treated as such. They have the potential to become the driving force for healing division and divisiveness.*

Houston has seen amazing growth in the rich and varied cultural communities of the world making the city their home. However, isolation of ethnic groups exists in Houston, as it does in other growing multiculturally rich cities, and leadership and decision-making is not yet as inclusive as it will need to become. A well-established body of research has shown that cultural participation correlates positively with civic participation and in developing social capital. Places found to have higher levels of community attachment were also found to have higher levels of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth.

Houston falls short—as large American cities tend to do—of achieving deep equality of opportunity. A decreasing middle class means fewer citizens being able to afford participation in typical forms of cultural enrichment such as ticketed performances, tuition-based enrichment and arts education programs as well as opportunities requiring transportation that may prove too expensive.

In the cultural sector, revenue is highly concentrated among Houston’s largest institutions, with median revenue among nonprofit organizations in the local sector far below what is found in comparable regions. Houston also has a lower density of artists than comparable regions and is underserved by local creative businesses (residents import more than half of the creative goods they use).⁴ Like a growing number of Houstonians, housing availability and affordability is a principal concern for artists and creative workers, as is work space

for creative businesses. **Equity was raised in every meeting about the Plan, from a need for more fairness in how the City allocates its cultural investments, to residents’ ability to access Houston’s cultural sector.**

Another important aspect is the indisputable role that arts education plays on student achievement, college entry, talent development, cultural understanding, compassion and civic participation. There are currently 18 independent school districts serving the city limits. Recent data collection from the area’s largest school district, Houston ISD (HISD), found tremendous gaps in quality, consistency and access related to arts education and that seven percent of schools serving grades K – 8 reported that their students received a single field trip in third grade.⁵ **The need for systemic increased arts education is paramount.** While Houston’s cultural landscape includes strong institutions dedicated to improving arts education in the schools and organizations are working to expand programming including a new arts access pilot with HISD, far too many students are being left out.

Arts and culture is central to enhancing both quality of life and quality of place, and cultural vitality flourishes where there is opportunity and broad participation. Creative, vibrant and strong cities are attractive to investors in industry, business and tourism, and in turn, generate employment opportunities, expand the tax-base and generally add to the real wealth of the community.

⁴ Houston Arts Alliance, University of Houston, Greater Houston Partnership & EMSI, *The Creative Economy of Houston*, 2015, <http://houstonartsalliance.com/research/creativeeconomy/>

⁵ Fine Arts Education in HISD, October 16, 2014, Daniel Gohl, Chief Academic Officer, Houston Independent School District, Arts Access Initiative 2014 – Young Audiences of Houston. [https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CCUQFjAAa-hUKEwiTspXO3OrHAhXLOYAKHZmKA3o&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.houstonisd.org%2Fsite%2Fhandlers%2Ffiledownload.ashx%3Fmoduleinstanceid%3D109240%26dataid%3D122497%26FileName%](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CCUQFjAAa-hUKEwiTspXO3OrHAhXLOYAKHZmKA3o&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.houstonisd.org%2Fsite%2Fhandlers%2Ffiledownload.ashx%3Fmoduleinstanceid%3D109240%26dataid%3D122497%26FileName%26)



En Masse, University of Houston Spirit of Houston Cougar Marching Band.
Photo by: David Brown

OPPORTUNITY AND IDENTITY

Houstonians love their city, its rich history, its belief in what's possible and its desire to reach for more. It is this grand sense of optimism that has fueled its growth and put Houston on the map in multiple arenas including science, medicine, industry and the arts. The Plan's community engagement process revealed a shared identity of Houston being a land of opportunity, new ideas and a "town of big chances".

There is reason to be cautious about how this identity, as a city overflowing with opportunity, is contributing to "attention blindness" to the reality of inequality—which can lead to community division, and too many residents disconnected from the opportunity to thrive. Houstonians understand the importance of arts and cultural resources for themselves, their children, their communities and their heritage. People are asking for more affordable cultural experiences, opportunities to participate in the arts where they live and more arts education in the schools. Strong cultural policies ensure fair treatment in allocating public resources and integrate arts and culture across all facets of government planning and decision making.

If Houston can push past its attention blindness to inequality and begin to create new opportunities for its most neglected citizens, it will set a new standard. It is not an accident that many of the immigrants and people who moved for the money but stayed for the place all agreed that they saw themselves as Houstonians first. **Among the wide variety of people engaged in the planning process, a sentiment surfaced that the city holds up more promise than Texas and even the nation.**

THE PLAN

The Arts and Cultural Plan leverages the City's unique position in the local cultural ecosystem to respond to current circumstances with 27 recommendations that represent the

City's long-term priorities. To advance Houston as a worldwide cultural destination and opportunity center, the Plan suggests strategies to promote Houston's exceptional collection of globally significant museums, performing arts institutions and creative talent, as well as the cultural organizations that comprise Houston's "world" communities. The Plan is part of an integrated, place-based approach in building a vision and strategy to realize the value and potential of local cultural assets. The recommendations are organized under three priorities:

■ PROMOTE ENGAGEMENT IN QUALITY ARTS AND CULTURAL PROGRAMMING

■ ENHANCE THE SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR THE CITY'S DEEP CULTURAL ASSETS

■ ADVANCE STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN THE LOCAL CREATIVE ECONOMY

MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE ARTS AND CULTURAL PLAN IS DESIGNED SO MORE RESIDENTS AND VISITORS CAN FULLY BENEFIT FROM HOUSTON'S ARTS AND CULTURAL VITALITY.

KEY POINTS ABOUT THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Plan recommends ensuring a fair and equitable process for arts and culture grant applicants.

It proposes that arts and culture become a central theme in the City's destination marketing, as well as promotion of Houston's cultural assets to residents.

The Plan builds on partnerships and aligns resources linking the City with its community partners.

It identifies opportunities to strengthen relationships with anchor cultural institutions, increase sustainability in the sector and it identifies a pathway to build support for new revenue.



ART/LIFE Bert Long, Looscan Neighborhood Library.
Photo by: Beryl Striewski

It affirms the importance of quality arts education in public schools and neighborhoods and offers tools to expand the Civic Art Program to more communities.

It calls for elevating the standing of arts and culture within the City organization, greater oversight of public investments and for ongoing public input in City arts and culture goals.

The City's leadership can ensure that visitors have every opportunity to enjoy Houston's cultural vitality and that every resident has an opportunity to lead a creative and expressive life.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

The Arts and Cultural Plan process had broad community input from residents, stakeholders, community leaders, City department directors and City office leaders through: **two** Town Hall meetings, **three** Quality of Life Committee meetings, **six** public meetings, **six** focus groups, **nine** Community Advisory Committee meetings, **25** presentations, **100** interviews, **429** intercept surveys and more than **7,000** unique visitors to ByYouCity.org.

Public meetings were held throughout the city at: Charlton Park Community Center, the Ensemble Theatre, Fifth Ward Multi-Service Center, Sharpstown Community Center, Sunnyside Multi-Service Center, Third Ward Multi-Service Center, Metropolitan Multi-Service Center, White Oak Conference Center. A complete public engagement report and participant list are available in the Plan's Appendix.

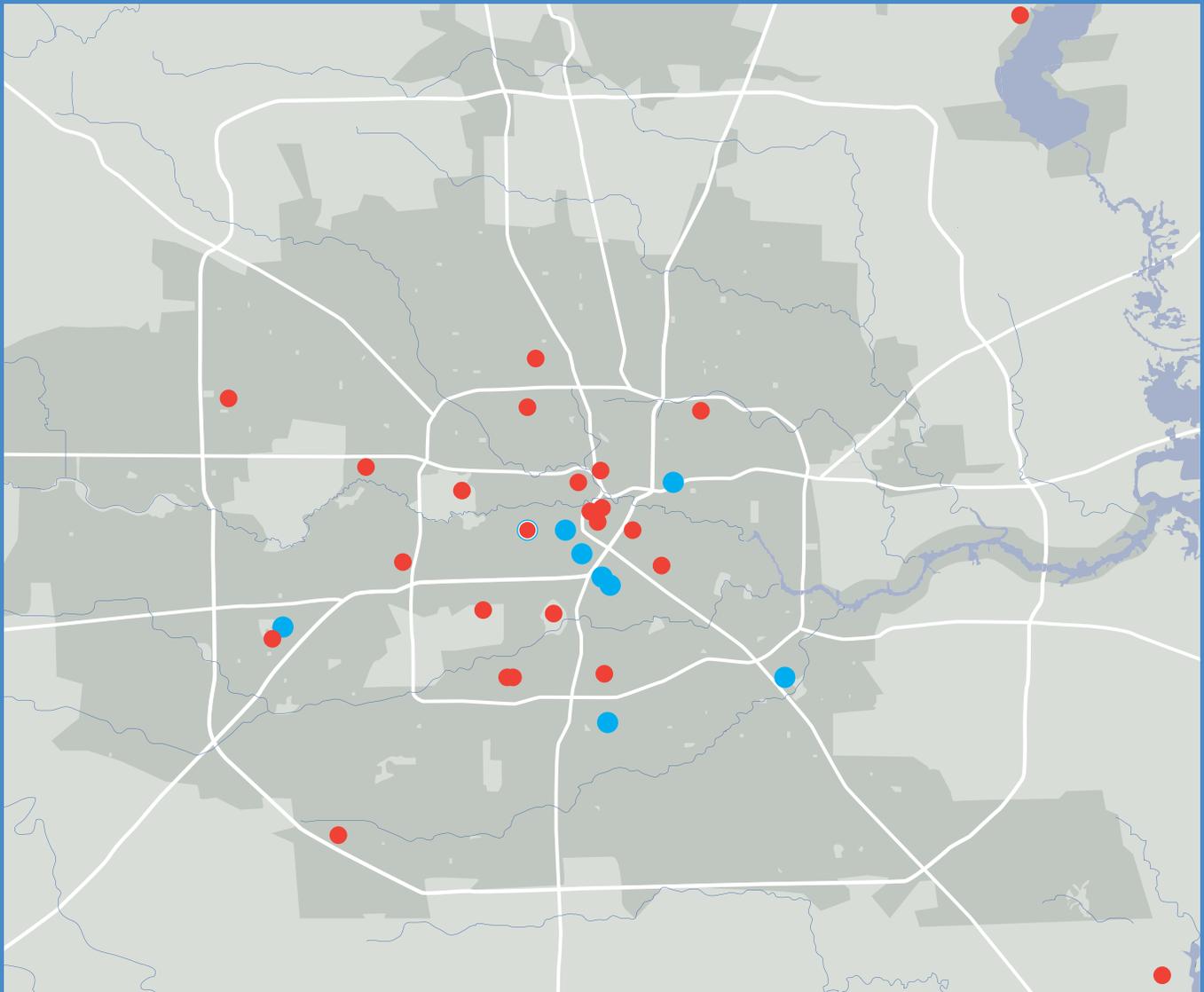
The Arts and Cultural Plan has been developed concurrently with the creation of the City's first General Plan. **The General Plan identifies culture as a principal area of the City's policy focus.** It identifies core strategies to achieve community goals in alignment with the Arts and Cultural Plan.



AFA Symphony Orchestra performs at Jones Hall for the Houston Symphony Day of Music. Photo by: David Dehoyos.

PUBLIC MEETINGS AND PRESENTATIONS

- PUBLIC MEETING LOCATIONS
- EVENTS WHERE PLAN INFORMATION WAS PRESENTED



DETAILED INFORMATION LOCATED IN APPENDIX, PAGE 79

CITY OF HOUSTON ARTS AND CULTURAL PLAN PRIORITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PROMOTE	ENHANCE	ADVANCE
ENGAGEMENT IN QUALITY ARTS AND CULTURAL PROGRAMMING.	THE SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR THE CITY'S DEEP CULTURAL ASSETS.	STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN THE LOCAL CREATIVE ECONOMY.
Develop strategies to deliver arts and culture programs, arts education and public art into neighborhoods.	Elevate arts and culture as a priority in the City structure and ensure the efficient and effective use of City resources.	Nurture the development of artists and creative talent.
Update the Civic Art ordinance and include some aspects of horizontal construction to include more areas of the City for Civic Art.	Join efforts to augment Hotel Occupancy Tax funding for arts and culture with a new dedicated revenue source.	Support and strengthen relationships with anchor arts and cultural institutions as key economic and community drivers.
Leverage Houston's "world city" image, international arts venues and diverse cultural offerings in destination marketing with the Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau and other partners.	Seek federal, state and other grants and funding opportunities available to municipalities.	Highlight and develop cultural arts initiatives that celebrate Houston's diverse artists, cultures and communities.
Develop a program of neighborhood-based cultural tourism with the Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau and other partners.	Centralize Civic Art oversight in the Office of Cultural Affairs.	Advocate for systemic access to quality arts and culture education in Houston's public schools.
Implement a comprehensive City Arts and Cultural Policy to provide guidance for City initiatives and departments.	Provide increased oversight, transparency and accountability in the allocation of City arts and culture grants.	Encourage and partner with area universities, corporations, businesses and institutions to elevate and enhance arts and culture.
Assess options to expand awareness of cultural offerings via smart phones and by enhancing/replacing ArtsHound.com.	Set goals for City arts and culture grants utilizing Hotel Occupancy Tax funds and ensure a fair and equitable process for applicants.	Advance efforts for regional arts and cultural planning.
Monitor Plan indicators, evaluate contract performance and review local research surveys and reports.	Create a common process for application and reporting for all City arts and culture grants in consultation with stakeholders.	Research creating a purchasing cooperative for goods and services needed by local artists and nonprofits.
Continue to convene the arts and cultural constituencies and other stakeholders around critical cultural policy issues.	Increase the funding available for small, emerging, culturally focused and ethnic organizations and artists.	Support State funding for area Cultural Districts designated by the Texas Commission on the Arts.
	Augment capacity building programs for Houston's arts and cultural organizations to reinforce sustainability.	Develop a public art master plan to guide the future development of the Civic Art Program.

The Arts and Cultural Plan process had broad community input from residents, stakeholders, community leaders, City department directors and City office leaders through: two Town Hall meetings, three Quality of Life Committee meetings, six public meetings, six focus groups, nine Community Advisory Committee meetings, 25 presentations, 100 interviews, 429 intercept surveys and more than 7,000 unique visitors to ByYouCity.org participated in online topics.

Utilize Economic Development partnerships to implement existing and new tools for artists and creative consumers.

Arts and Cultural Plan co-chairs:
Philamena Baird and Rick Lowe



Inprint's Finnigan Park Senior Memoir Workshop Reading at Ensemble Theatre.
Photo by: RM Photography

INTRODUCTION

Most cities have a fairly stable but vague consensus about their “character of place.” They sort of know themselves to be slow or fast, affluent or impoverished, adventurous or timid, innovative or reluctant to change. Mostly people coast along day-to-day without worrying too much about what makes their place distinctive. There are exceptions, of course—places that are unusually narcissistic or have developed a reputation for being different and perhaps more colorful than other places. And from time to time cities get nervous about whether they are attractive enough, lovable enough, to get along in a competitive world. They may set out to prove, to themselves and others, that they have what it takes to attract business, or workers, or tourists, or retirees.

Houston is going through significant changes right now and is trying to manage those processes. In 2015, the City is developing a General Plan, and along with it this Arts and Cultural Plan, and as part of that process is developing a “statement of place,” an assessment of the sense of place in Houston. In part, this allows the City’s plans to proceed with confidence that they are right for Houston and not cookie-cutter plans from some other place. This is the result of that work.

There are different meanings for the terms “arts” and “culture” and their meanings often change depending on the contexts. The Houston Arts and Cultural Plan adopts an expansive, inclusive definition of arts and culture. It includes a range of cultural sectors: high or fine arts and literary arts, as well as ethnic, film and commercial arts and historic preservation; a range of visual and performing artists, craftspeople, designers, arts educators and cultural practitioners; and a range of cultural events: performances, exhibitions, festivals and celebrations.

“**Culture**” is most often defined in anthropological terms.⁶ It is a broad definition of culture, and is defined as any form of human expression. Culture is also defined as traditions, historical resources, community heritage, and practices and forms of expression that are valued, practiced, and preserved by a community. Culture comes alive through creativity, whether participating as an audience member, maker, creator, patron or consumer. **And, importantly, culture is vibrant when public spaces are vibrant and full of the life of a community. Culture shapes how we view the world and is integrated into all aspects of daily life.**

Arts and culture are among a community’s most powerful assets. They distinguish each community and allow residents to better understand and celebrate the uniqueness of their lives. As the “Smart Cities”⁷ movement illustrates, arts and culture are a competitive tool, strengthening many elements of civic life, including the economy, workforce development, education, youth development, neighborhood development, redevelopment projects, sustainability and cultural equity. An increasing body of research documents how thoughtful cultural policy is essential to civic health. Cultural planning is a primary tool for organizing the best use of this critical asset.

⁶ A standard textbook definition is: The system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviours, and artifacts that the members of society use to cope with their world and with one another, and that are transmitted from generation to generation through learning. (Bates and Plog, “Cultural Anthropology,” McGraw Hill, 1990)

⁷ On April 7, 2015 the Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN) released an in-depth guide “Getting Smart About Smart Cities” for North American cities. The report begins by recognizing that there is currently no universally accepted definition of a smart city; approaches vary as widely as the culture, priorities and cities themselves.” That report includes seven different definitions collected from around the world, including one from the Smart Cities Council that states, “A smart city uses information and communications technology (ICT) to enhance its livability, workability and sustainability.” (Smart City Readiness Guide, 2013).



Funnel Tunnel, Patrick Renner.
Photo by: Pablo Gimenez-Zapiola

HOUSTON: THE PLACE

"We shall not cease from exploration,
And the end of all our exploring,
Will be to arrive where we started,
And know the place for the first time."

— T.S. Eliot, Poet

When an attempt is made to describe, somewhat extensively, the distinctive qualities of a place, assuming the attempt is at least somewhat successful, a further question immediately arises: "Yes, but so what?" In this sort of an inquiry it would be surprising if big hidden truths were discovered. There may be a few surprises. But the big question is, when you understand the character of a place, what difference does it make? Is it useful? Is it valuable? There are at least two important answers to those questions, one rather lofty and theoretical and the other more common and familiar.

"Place" can be examined using sociologist Manuel Castells' Space of Flows and Space of Places metrics.⁸ The Space of Flows describes the informational inputs and outputs (financial transactions, digital connectivity, economic data, demographics etc.). The Space of Places includes the characteristics of a city, town or other similarly designated area that create its cultural and social identity. These characteristics are often influenced by the Flows. As is true for all cities, understanding the context for cultural planning in Houston requires an understanding of this landscape of Flows and Places - the first are the facts and the second are the feelings. Both make up the context of a city and inform the work of cultural planning.

The theoretical answer to what difference character of place makes: it anchors identity, and confers unique value. The more familiar and common answer is that people come to love places, and character of place is what they fall in love with. Character of place consists of the qualities of a place that make it distinctive, and form the basis for people's "feelingful" relationship with the place. People form bonds of affection with a place, and develop lasting attachments to it, based on those qualities. To succeed, places need financial capital, access to money. They need human capital, especially young,

⁸ Castells, Manuel. "Space of Flows, Space of Places: Materials for a Theory of Urbanism in the Information Age". In: *New Urbanism and Beyond: Designing Cities for the Future*. Tigran Haas (ed.). New York, NY: Rizzoli, 2008. pp. 314-321.



Gilbert and Sullivan Society of Houston.
Photo by: Monica Kressman

educated people. And they need social capital, the value (economic and social) of people’s interactions. Additionally, shared love of place is perhaps the strongest form of social capital. It is the glue that holds a place together. People who share love of a place will invest their time, energy, and resources in that place.

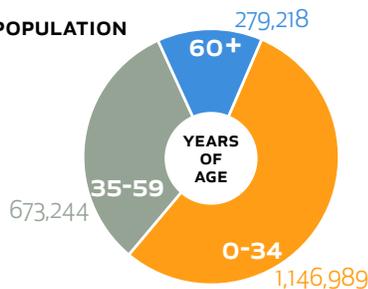
Character of place affects every aspect of civic life and every enterprise. A business well suited to one city might fail immediately in another—for lack of a supply chain, or a marketplace, or because of deep-seated attitudes that undermine

its mission. The Knight Foundation did several projects in cities under the rubric of “the soul of the community.” The Soul of the Community Study, a project of Gallup and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, explored how residents feel about their communities. The three-year study in 26 communities focused on the emotional side of the connection between residents and their communities, examining factors correlated with loyalty to and passionate feelings about a place. They found a positive correlation between residents’ attachment to a community and

POPULATION AND ETHNICITY

People of Hispanic origin may be of any race. "Asian/Others" includes American Indians, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander categories.

POPULATION



ETHNICITY



New data released in January 2015 from the Migration Policy Institute finds the undocumented immigrant population in Texas is not growing or declining. The population has remained stable in recent years and more than half of the state’s undocumented immigrants have lived in Texas for more than ten years. Harris County has an estimated 24 percent of Texas’s undocumented population or about 400,000 people.⁹ The large population of immigrants and new Americans as well as the broad range of ages and accompanying generational differences all have significant implications for cultural planning particularly as it relates to the role and types of nonprofit arts and culture organizations, individual artists, and cultural services that reflect and support the multi-ethnic communities that reside there.

More than 100 languages are spoken in the city. It has one of the youngest populations in the nation partly due to an influx of immigrants into Texas. Of the estimated 2.239 million people residing in Houston, the majority are under the age of 60 and of that majority, the majority are under the age of 35.

⁹ Migration Policy Institute, MPI Releases Detailed Data Profiles of Unauthorized Immigrants and Estimates of Deferred Action Populations for Top U.S. Counties, January 15, 2015, <http://migrationpolicy.org/news/mpi-releases-detailed-county-profiles-unauthorized-immigrants-and-estimates-deferred-action>. The tool, with profiles at the national, state and county level, can be accessed at: www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/unauthorized-immigrant-population-profiles.



Houston Metropolitan Dance Company.
Photo by: Ben Doyle, Runaway Productions, LLC

economic health. In cities as in relationships between people, character becomes a more urgent concern when stressed by change. What is transient and what is fundamental? What will be gained or lost in any given change?

Cities are highly competitive and in this age, the competition is for people; as employees, visitors, retirees, and residents. The stronger the sense of identity, the stronger the distinctiveness of place, and the stronger the development of enhancements, which are linked to identity, the more desirable a place will be. **Right now, in a time of rapid change, Houston is in a virtual frenzy of self-discovery and self-development. That's what this work is about, and why it matters.**

PROSPERITY OPPORTUNITY & THEIR LIMITS

Cities compete to attract people, and for a long time the competition was mostly about jobs. People went where there was a thriving economy, because that was where the work was. For Houston, work opportunity has lasted longer than it did for most other cities. For most of its history, Houston grew like a weed, fed by prosperity. There were usually plenty of jobs, and the barriers to entry for businesses were low. Seemingly endless land made affordable housing possible, and there was room for every kind of neighborhood. If developers can solve a problem by expanding onto new land, they will, and the city kept spreading, sprawling. Novelist (and well-known Houston creative writing teacher) George Williams described Houston post World War II:

“Houston, that fabulous city, growing explosively—with skyscrapers shooting up like rockets, industrial areas rolling out from it like smoke, wide patches of ugly residential sections dropping like shattered fragments all about its perimeter, great mansions glowing within like flameflowers, and people, people hurling themselves through it.”

Many people came to Houston because there were jobs and opportunity, intending, as some wryly remarked, to make their first million and move on, but the city captured them.

Houston, with a census-estimated 2014 population of 2.239 million people is the most populous city in Texas, and the fourth most populous city in the United States. Houston is the largest city in the southern United States (675 square miles), the seat of Harris County, and fifth-most populated metropolitan area in the United States. **Over the last 30 years, Houston has become the single most ethnically diverse major metropolitan area in the entire country.**

The legacy of sprawl in Houston means that the various ethnic communities remain fairly isolated in geographical enclaves, with restaurants and other food experiences offering the principal form of cultural connection. The cultural diversity and richness, however, is astonishing.

One of the most often remarked signs of opportunity in Houston, reported during planning focus groups, is that “you can easily get to influential people. You can have a cup of coffee and a conversation with just about anyone. In Houston there are not six degrees of separation, there are two, at most.”

Houston makes things happen, without limit. The latest Houston slogan, for business attraction, is “The City With No Limits.” One focus group participant demurred, “*I disagree*,” he said. “*I hear constantly that ‘you can’t do that in Houston.’*” He was working on public sector issues, and referring to public initiatives. Houston’s confident “*we can do it*” swagger is very much about private initiatives. Like most prosperous places, Houston has indulged in conspicuous consumption, but Houston has also exhibited conspicuous philanthropy. Thus, Houston became famous for its iconic skyscrapers, but also for its world-class arts institutions. Government action and spending are not so enthusiastically embraced, which means that Houston does not see as clearly nor perform as well around issues that are usually carried out by government.

Prosperity and opportunity are more than accidental qualities to Houston; they are matters of self-image, of identity. Some young artists, playing off Austin’s playful slogan, “*Keep Austin Weird*,” suggested that Houston adopt “*Keep Houston Rich*.”



Houston SLAB Parade + Family Festival.
Photo by: Marc Newsome

Prosperity is rarely or never uniformly shared, and Houston's immigrant communities do not consist only of affluent people. Houston enjoys low unemployment—5.5%—but some neighborhoods have 30% unemployment and underemployment, as well. Houston has famously been called a “classless” city, but the truth is Houston is developing what could become a permanent underclass; its poverty somewhat ameliorated by social programs, but without real opportunity.

When a self-perception (such as Houston's self-image of prosperity and opportunity) is sufficiently strong, it can be accompanied by what neuroscientists call attention blindness, an actual brain process in which beliefs and focus make other things hard to see. Issues of equity and fairness will continue to be important and neglected until Houston overcomes attention blindness concerning this issue.

RUSHING INTO THE FUTURE

In Houston during this process of exploring qualities of place, one statement kept recurring: “Houston is the fourth-largest city in the United States, and will soon be the second-largest.” What happened to third place? ‘Don’t you have to be third before you can be second?’

After Los Angeles overtook Chicago in 1990 to become the second-largest American city, Los Angeles continued to grow modestly and Chicago lost population. Meanwhile, Houston grew an astonishing 32% in the same 20 years, between the census of 1990 and that of 2010. If those trends continue it can be projected that Houston will pass Chicago in population and even overtake Los Angeles. So the jump from fourth-largest to second-largest is a rational projection, even though it brushes

WAGES AND INCOME AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

Data from the Center for Houston's Future's Community Indicators reports show that there is vast disparity in income whether examined in terms of class (low, middle, upper) gender or race. Some of Houston's economic realities, particularly as they relate to income shifts from one class to the next, reflect national trends in that there are growing extremes between low income and upper income households, both in terms of increasing numbers. In addition, the middle class is decreasing in size nationally as well as in Houston.

When taken together 74% of Houston's households with annual incomes more than \$100k are White or Asian. While 54% of the city's Hispanic and African-American households have incomes under \$25k annually.

Houston also showed lower than average wages when compared across the country's major metropolitan areas, which the report noted was balanced by a comparatively lower cost of living. However, costs are rising in Houston, and the average housing plus transportation cost

for a typical household is now 46 percent of income.”¹⁰ **Over time, as young multicultural artists and arts supporters reach adulthood they will want to develop an arts and cultural community that reflects their cultural influences and values.** Creating the space for this growth to occur beyond and beside the traditional cultural institutions will enable better responsiveness to Houston's general population.

Furthermore, the even larger portion of the city's population under the age of 35 means a need for programs that encourage young audiences, speak to the creative and cultural needs of young people and support K-12 arts education.

Houston has above average economic mobility (ability to move out of lower income brackets), which indicates there are more opportunities for communities to become less segregated and for better income equality. Both of these factors can lead to a better-educated population, an increase in social capital (e.g. civic participation) and more stable families. However, any potential for greater social capital for Houston families at lower income levels will require an increase in per capita spending on education.

¹⁰ The statistic is modeled for the Regional Typical Household. Income: \$57,712 Commuters: 1.29 Household Size: 2.90 (Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX). Source: The Center for Neighborhood Technology's Housing and Transportation (H+T®) Affordability Index, <http://htaindex.cnt.org/>



River Oaks Chamber Orchestra's *Gitcha Groove On*.
Photo by: dabfoto creative / Paul R. Davis.



METdance Company.
Photo by: Ben Doyle

Chicago aside as irrelevant. The leap of imagination is a sign of Houston's cockiness, its can-do attitude. But it is also a sign of Houston's impatient rush into the future. Once the trend is clear, Houston makes the leap and embraces the future.

A relentless future orientation has always marked Houston's attitude. Little time has been spent looking back, and nostalgia—very important in many cities—is strikingly absent in Houston. In an era when cities are discovering the need for sustainability, Houston continues to subsidize sprawl (with ever larger loops of freeways, and suburban infrastructure) and to gobble up land.

As David Crossley of *Houston Tomorrow* summed it up, "In any struggle between the past and the future, the future wins!"

Houston is dynamic: long-established elements of its character are in process, in tension with counterforces. The city that worships individualism has one of the largest artists' collectives in the country, with some 250 artists in renovated warehouse spaces elegantly named Winter Street, Spring Street, Silver Street and Summer Street, which in 2014 was designated, by the Texas Commission on the Arts, as the Washington Avenue Arts District. This area of the First Ward is expecting to grow to 400 artist spaces in the near future.

The city that embraced the automobile completely originated the first and world's largest "art car" parade, full of what Lisa Gray, columnist, *Houston Chronicle*, describes as "barely recognizable" as cars, so decorated are they. Function gives way to art, the unique replacing the universal. The concrete jungle is restoring its long-neglected bayous, with bike paths and walking paths that bring a new connective tissue to the city. The spread-out city is evidencing an appetite for connection.

HUNGER FOR CONNECTION

In a networked society, connection provides value, and in any community, connection provides social capital. Before the oil price crash of 1986, Houston did not have to market itself the way most cities do. Basically, the market for oil and gas, and

SPRAWL BY THE NUMBERS:

- > The geographic area of the City of Houston is larger than all of these cities combined: Miami, Cleveland, Denver, St. Louis, Boston, Baltimore, San Francisco, Pittsburgh, Washington, DC.
- > Houston has enough streets laid end-to-end to make 18 trips across Texas on I-10 (16,000 lane miles)-This number does not include Federal or State highways or toll roads. It also has enough bikeways and sidewalks miles to run the Houston Marathon more than 25 times (1,200 miles).
- > Houston maintains more lane miles of city streets than there are lane-miles of Interstate Highway in the entire State of Texas.
- > The City produces and distributes enough water to fill more than 100 Astrodomes each month (more than 146 billion gallons).
- > Add up all the lane-miles, drainage systems, water lines and wastewater lines that need to be maintained by the City and you have a distance that will take you nearly 1/6th of the way to the moon.

the amount of federal money flowing into military technology and space exploration, drove a healthy job market, and the jobs attracted the people a growing city needs. Then, all of a sudden, it was time for a hard reckoning.

Quality of life (and thus attractiveness to talent) became a critical issue. That was the first sign of the changes that are now reshaping the city—and its attitude.

If an outsider knows one thing about Houston, it is probably that it is the city with no zoning—and chances are they think that means no rules, no constraints on building. But actually Houston has plenty of rules, mostly embedded in the building codes, and far from creating a "do-what-you-wanna" environment many feel the codes stack the deck in favor of suburban styles of development. And now that the western edge of



Houston Youth Symphony.
Photo by: David A. Brown

growth has moved past the city boundaries, it is Harris County rules (or the rules of jurisdictions within Harris County) that govern new development out there—and those rules, again, favor sprawl and hinder urban development patterns. Which is why it is so significant that against the odds, counterforces are developing in Houston.

The adaptive use of existing buildings, dramatically energized by the conversion of the old Rice Hotel into residences, runs counter to Houston's reputation for neglect of the past. A revised Historic Preservation Ordinance has led to the local designation of 22 historic districts and several hundred "Landmarks" and "Protected Landmarks".

For many years Houston had little investment in the public realm, the spaces where people mingle and share amenities, but that too is changing. On the balance, the weight is still on the side of spread and sprawl, and many of those centrifugal forces have been codified and institutionalized through the political process as well as by shared values. There is still little investment in the public realm—in many neighborhoods there are not even sidewalks but counterforces are developing, and they will grow stronger with time.

A lot of Millennials and some Baby Boomers are choosing a more urban lifestyle—in walkable neighborhoods with third places (neither work nor home) like coffee shops and casual restaurants as close as possible to food stores and drug stores. That change in preference is so well-known and so important that out at the suburban edge, developments are being built that have some of the qualities of urbanity.

Nevertheless there is a return to downtown and to urbanized neighborhoods. A city is a theater of competing interests, and right now in the process of change the attitudes of the public are outpacing the political process that could bring them to realization.

The Kinder Institute for Urban Research at Rice University, its current work largely shaped by researcher Stephen Klineberg, is putting a factual foundation on the conversation

about Houston's present and future. In the next two decades the county is expected to grow by one million and the region by nearly three million. In a recent interview on *NPR's Here and Now* program, Klineberg said, "It's still an Anglo world. But everybody knows that there's an absolute inevitability to this gestation. I tell people no force in the world is going to stop Houston or Texas or America from becoming more Latino, more African-American, more Asian, and less Anglo. Nothing in the world can stop that. So the only question our generation has been given is how do we make this work, how do we ensure that this ethnic diversity becomes the tremendous asset it can be."

Some think the exposure of Enron as a fraudulent scheme changed Houston deeply. If all that money, and the magnificent Cesar Pelli high rise it had created, was just an illusion—if money was not real—what was real? Whether that, in fact, contributed to Houston's new zeal for research, the fact is few academic demographers have ever enjoyed the close connection to an audience, and the influence, that Klineberg has attained. And in a businesslike focus on this research, Houston is finding the commonalities to create an even stronger future. Houston is in a virtual frenzy of self-discovery.

HOUSTON IS REAL

Houston is real in this specific sense: Houstonians, on the whole, have an honest awareness of their city's qualities, including the ones everyone dislikes—and they have little patience with attempts to gloss over those faults. And yet despite those considerable faults, they are enthusiastic in their love of Houston.

The chamber-of-commerce-sunny-days attitude that manages to hold sway in many cities gets little traction among citizens in Houston. A few years ago a creative local agency, ttweak, developed on its own initiative a campaign themed "Houston is worth it." The campaign described various "afflictions" which bedevil Houston, including its summer heat and humidity, and affirmed that living in Houston had so many rewards



Houston, *Can You Hear Me*, Hana Hillerova, Hobby Airport.
Photo: Courtesy of the Houston Arts Alliance



Mercury, *The Orchestra Redefined*.
Photo by: Simon Gentry

that those problems did not really matter—they were facts; they were there, but so what? The campaign made Houstonians directly involved in promoting the city very nervous, and it was never adopted by any official agency, but even many of those people privately found it funny and compelling, and it led to a book which has since been revised and republished. It is not so unusual for a parody of a city's character to catch on for a while and get some notoriety, but the ttweak campaign was not a parody; it was a whole-hearted affirmation of Houston's value, delivered with refreshing honesty and humor. Creating it was an expression of genuine love for Houston.

Houstonians care about their city—almost obsessively so. Every focus group in this process turned into a real social encounter, with people passionately talking about Houston. In every case, when the session ended, people stayed around for at least half an hour, exchanging business cards and continuing the conversation. Houston has a hunger to understand Houston and make it better.

HOUSTON IS A TRUE WORLD CITY

An international city, is a city where a major part of commerce, and perhaps culture, comes from other countries. Miami and Los Angeles are international cities, and Houston has long been in that category. Global cities do business with so many other countries that "international" is an understatement. Houston is clearly a global city, the world capital of oil and gas extraction, whose port is a point of connection with just about anywhere. Most ports are accidents of geography; Houston's port was created by Houston—there is no good reason why it would have happened naturally. So, too, for airport connections like the direct flights (e.g. from Houston to Lagos which took a considerable effort to secure). It was not luck nor was it a fortunate location that made Houston a global city: it was Houston.

A quick visit to New Chinatown, Indiatown (also called the Mahatma Gandhi District) and Koreatown will establish Houston's credentials as a world city. Houston has the largest

population of Nigerians in the US. There are chapels, mosques, temples and at least one Buddhist center. There is a health clinic on Bellaire Drive that services more than 100 language communities. The director of the clinic says the first 50 languages are the hard part; after that the needs and resources tend to find you. Partly because its sprawling expansion gives them plenty of room, national and ethnic groups tend to congregate in Houston, and to retain their cultural identity. It is a near certainty that there are a multitude of artists in Houston's ethnic communities, but there was little evidence in the focus groups that they are seen as a potential source of energy and connection to the larger community.

In the mid-to-late 1980's, when Houston's economy was in the tank, local Chinese businessmen spread the word in China that there were bargains to be had in land and buildings in Houston. The resulting investment put a floor under the real estate market, and since then the importance of Chinese investment in Houston has only grown. Wiu Li, a prominent businessman in the International District (part of New Chinatown) publishes Chinese language newspapers in eight US cities; his headquarters are in Houston. There are five Chinese community banks in Houston, and Wiu Li organized one of them.

CONCLUSION

Houston falls short—as American cities tend to do—of achieving deep equality of opportunity. But if, as Houston overcomes attention blindness to inequality and begins to create new opportunities for its most neglected citizens, it will set a new standard. It is not an accident that many of the immigrants and people who "moved for the money but stayed for the place" all agreed that they saw themselves as Houstonians first. Houston, potentially more than any other city in the country, has the necessary wherewithal to address inequality, and it is hard to imagine an accomplishment greater and more worthy of a great city.

Houston and its can-do attitude can begin to model the kinds of opportunities which will help the city become a true



Grand Opening of the "Heart and Seoul: Growing Up in Korea" exhibit at the Children's Museum of Houston. Photo: Courtesy of the Children's Museum of Houston

- Among US seaports, the Port of Houston has ranked first in foreign tonnage for 16 consecutive years as of 2011, first in import tonnage for 21 consecutive years, and second in total tonnage for 20 consecutive years.
- In 2011, the Houston/Galveston customs district ranked as the third largest district by dollar value with more than \$268.0 billion in imports and exports, behind New York City and Los Angeles and ahead of Detroit.

But Houston has emerged as something more—a true world city, a place linked by both commerce and culture to a whole lot of other places around the world—including financial capitals.

- Houston has 18 sister-city relationships promoting business opportunities across five continents: Africa (1), Asia (7), Australia (1), Europe (7), and the Americas (2).
- Foreign governments have established more than 90 consular offices in metropolitan Houston, ranking Houston third behind NYC & LA.
- The Houston-Galveston Customs District handled \$268.0 billion trade in 2011, ranking it as the third busiest district behind NYC (\$388.2 billion) and LA (\$387.2 billion).
- Houston Intercontinental Airport is ranked as the seventh largest US mainland gateway airport for international passengers and for total passenger traffic.
- A center for international finance, Houston leads the Southwest with 20 foreign banks from 10 nations. The Houston operations of these banks account for 12 of Texas' 15 foreign bank representative offices, and seven of Texas' nine foreign bank agencies.

classless society: health and mental health programs, collaborative work initiatives that give people what they need, business structures and opportunities that can provide living wages, and more. Houston can truly become a model for what a world city can be, adding economic justice to its advantages at just the moment when income inequality is becoming the major issue of our time. Houston became a powerhouse through business enterprises, which moved fast, developed markets, grew financial capacity, recruited good people. In the world of business, however, the processes of joint ventures, collaborative problem solving, breaking down silos, virtual corporations and venture capital are all models for how to make the corporate structures more nimble, quicker, and, therefore, more competitive. These are the same new skills Houston needs to employ in the development of the place.

Houston is a dynamic, open, welcoming city, rediscovering urban life and discovering the importance of its public realm, soon to have the nation's largest system of recreational trails, rich and diverse in its food and cultures, plentiful and excellent in its arts, and a global economic center racing into the future we all will share eventually.

Perhaps the most important lesson learned through this series of community and online engagement conversations was that Houstonians want more – their passion, vision and inspiration is parallel only to the diversity of possibilities that can be realized when the arts and audiences come together.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

Across cultural and economic lines, survey and community conversations indicated that Houstonians appreciate the city's robust programmatic offerings – from the large anchor cultural institutions to celebrations in local neighborhood festivals.

A significant component of the Houston Arts and Cultural Plan is effective public engagement. The engagement process informs the development of the Plan, and ongoing public engagement will help refine the core themes of the Plan to develop strategies that represent Houston's community needs and aspirations. The discovery process in Houston includes the following initiatives:

- > Stakeholder¹¹ Interviews
- > Focus Groups
- > Town hall discussion forums
- > City Council District Community meetings
- > Community intercept surveys
- > Online sharing of Information with interactive discussion
- > City Council and Advisory Committee updates and input
- > Other community outreach and research

Public participation in the arts is as critical for the continuation of cultural institutions as it is for continuing the community's cultural traditions. Inquiry to gain a better understanding of the level and frequency of attendance in arts and cultural activities indicated that despite perceptions of income being the major barrier to arts participation, this is not, in fact, always the determining factor in Houston. A full range of variables affect audience participation levels, and high on that list for Houston residents is personal interest and motivation. **Across cultural and economic lines, survey and community conversations indicated that Houstonians appreciate the city's robust programmatic offerings – from the large anchor cultural institutions to celebrations in local neighborhood festivals.**

¹¹ Stakeholders are individuals who represent the community as a result of their position, involvement, interest, or identity in the community. The stakeholders of a community generally represent a cross section of the community.



Media Archaeology Texas, Luke Savisky, Aurora Picture Show.
Photo by: Camilo Gonzalez

SUCCESS OF HOUSTON'S LEGACY ORGANIZATIONS

This inquiry also revealed the success and commitment of a number of the larger organizations' focused efforts to broaden their reach in serving the Houston community which has been visible and thoughtfully implemented. Conversations with educators, individual artists, neighborhood residents and youth service organizations pointed to long-standing partnerships between cultural institutions, community which has been visible service providers, schools and culturally specific arts organizations. These collaborations have built useful model program initiatives that are valued by participants and are making positive and meaningful contributions to children and their families throughout the city. For example, the Houston Grand Opera's *HGOco* has a far-reaching plan that has helped identify new talent, develop innovative programming, and established opera as an accessible art form relating to the ethnically diverse population of Houston.

Likewise, within the museum community, the Children's Museum of Houston has established aggressive efforts that serve a high volume of children and their families from neighborhoods and communities across the city. The institution has mastered the art of "outreach" – in fact, it is fair to say that their audiences represent the demographics of the city well, in both age and economic status. Their role as a partner in the classroom is equally as effective as the experiences created for visitors to the museum.

These programs, like the spectrum of educational and outreach programs offered by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH), are effective because they encourage inquiry and stimulate curiosity. Evidence of the MFAH's continued expansion of family programming over the past decade is not only visible in its visitor numbers, but in the education department's programs that respond to in-school learning and to the engaging activities that can be accessed in its Learning Center. Of particular note and importance are the professional learning programs that allow practicing artists and aspiring curators to be in residence at the Museum and the Glassell School of Art

as interns or fellows. These career building opportunities allow not only the Museum's collections to be used as a research hub, but go a long way toward bringing new voices and perspectives to artists and to the field of museum operations.

These examples are only a few of the many ways that the city's legacy institutions are able to leverage funding to help grow and stabilize the cultural system. Relevant programming, connecting with new audiences, and participating as a viable partner with the academic community were found to be important and recognize the shared values of leaders and staff within the larger institutions. Their role in stimulating pathways for children, their families and an emerging corps of artists voices are just as valuable as the animated stages of the Miller Outdoor Theatre, and the cultural memories that are protected and presented at the Buffalo Soldiers Museum, the Asia Society Texas Center, the Holocaust Museum Houston and the many other cultural institutions that Houston has developed and now shares with the world.

How, why and where people choose to engage in the arts in Houston were central areas of discovery in this planning process. **Perhaps the most important lesson learned through this series of community and online engagement conversations was that Houstonians want more – their passion, vision and inspiration is parallel only to the diversity of possibilities that can be realized when the arts and audiences come together.**

TOPLINE PRIORITIES

The topline priorities defined throughout the community engagement process are summarized as:

- > Houston arts should respect and reflect the diversity of the community
- > Connecting cultures and communities through the arts
- > Public funding and program equity for arts organizations and artists in the Houston community
- > Increased public programs/funding options



Mildred's Umbrella Theatre Company.
Photo by: VP Arizpe

- > Increased arts education programming
- > Expanded arts opportunities for youth
- > Arts and cultural opportunities available in neighborhoods and communities throughout Houston
- > An emphasis on the connection between arts, culture and community development
- > Walkable/bike-able/attractive/accessible communities with great public art
- > Affordable work/live space for artists and cultural groups
- > Protecting the heritage of Houston (historic preservation)
- > Initiatives promoting awareness of arts and cultural activities locally and globally

KEY THEMES FROM COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Making Houston a better place

- > Desire for more public art in open/green spaces in neighborhoods.
- > Desire for more arts programs and services in the neighborhoods. While citizens expressed appreciation for the downtown/inner city cultural institutions, many asked for programming closer to where they live.
- > Advancement of the city's international status toward recognition as a global cultural destination.
- > Arts education is a priority. For Houston to continue to thrive, it must find a way to provide children with equal access to the arts.

Celebrating diversity of peoples; and increasing support for artists

- > Houstonians maintain active memory of family and cultural traditions unique to their ethnic, heritage and religious communities. Celebrating those traditions re-

mains an important aspect of civic life and plays a role in engaging in arts and cultural activities. Folk art traditions are cited as being highly important.

- > Strong desire for an increase in spaces where "art happens". [Examples: art in parks and open public spaces; planned neighborhood spaces; churches and schools; pop-up galleries, formal museums and theater venues; and reclaimed historic spaces adapted for contemporary uses].
- > Organizations representing culturally specific populations should receive increased recognition and support from the city.
- > Community interest in promoting the work of local artists and for the development of targeted jobs to promote cultural tourism.
- > Legacy cultural institutions are important assets to the greater Houston area and are appreciated for the status they bring to the city and the leveraging power they have for all cultural programs and organizations.

Review funding systems

- > Desire to see an increase in public funding for programs that appeal to and reflect the residents and diversity of the Houston community.
- > Existing perception that the HOT tax distribution system is designed to exclude artists and organizations that contribute to the appeal of Houston to a robust and diverse tourism industry.
- > Significant lack of public dollars to fund neighborhood-based arts activities.
- > Need for increasing opportunities and awareness of opportunities for artists to sustain reasonable livelihoods.
- > Desire for more funding for increased arts programs across the city, specifically for children and young people (both during in-school and out-of-school time).



Over Houston, Gordon Huether, Hobby Airport.
Photo by: Misha Bruk



Art Recycling Trucks, *Patterns of Consumption*, CORE Design Studio.
Photo by: Marc Newsome

Access to information about how decisions are made

- > People want better and multiple ways to access information about arts and cultural activities in Houston and in their neighborhoods.
- > Transportation and admission costs are considerations (for some families).
- > Proximity and/or transportation access to cultural facilities and programs is a critical factor in determining participation.
- > The large geography of Houston is a barrier for many in accessing arts opportunities.

TOWN HALL SUMMARY

The work to gather input from a series of community meetings and individual stakeholder conversations was a critical first step in community engagement. Bringing that input back to the broader group of community stakeholders for feedback was seen as essential to crafting legitimate and effective recommendations for the plan. Two well-attended Town Hall meetings were held during this process, the first gathering had only one goal; allow the community at large to respond to the set of themes that emerged from the five regional meetings; individual interviews and lines of inquiry that were set forth by the Advisory Committee.

More than 250 residents actively participated in this conversation, organized to share information openly and readily engaged people in meaningful interaction, ultimately, framing recommendations in the final plan. The planning team presented the themes and central ideas that emerged from the community meetings which included: artists, leaders, arts organizations, arts patrons, members of the media, elected officials and, of course, residents who were interested in making sure that their community's perspectives were heard.

The six central findings were:

- > Equity in the distribution of City arts funding support
- > Sustainability of Houston's mid-tier organizations
- > Enhancing arts programs and services in neighborhoods
- > Development of cultural facilities
- > Enhancing the Civic Arts Program
- > Restructuring of Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs

Presenting the findings was only one part of this dynamic conversation. The conversation was facilitated in a manner that allowed a range of interests and perspectives to work together in randomly assembled groups. The group's participants were able to discuss the themes from their own perspective while building group consensus on the views brought forth from previous interviews and public meetings.

At the end of a lively discussion – the groups heard from each other, finding limited disagreement around the larger ideas, and strong opinions for addressing each of the points. Some of the questions raised included:

- > Could a system really exist that would guarantee equity?
- > How would an Office of Cultural Affairs that is lodged within government avoid more bureaucracy and be more effective?
- > What is the proper balance of support among legacy institutions, individual artists and small/mid-size organizations?

Other points raised by the assembly focused on how to tackle issues of power and trust, and how outcome-related goals would level the playing field for all arts service providers— large and small.

The results of the highly participatory Town Hall meeting challenged the consultant team and the Arts and Cultural Plan Advisory Committee to consider the diversity of participant needs, ideas and concerns in further conceptualizing responses.



Navigation Esplanade.
Photo by: Laurie Perez

PREVIOUS COMMUNITY CULTURAL PLANNING EFFORTS

1993 Arts Plan: *Artworks: A Cultural Arts Plan for the Houston/ Harris County Region*

Houston's previous cultural arts plan was a community planning effort that was initiated by the local arts agency, then known as the Cultural Arts Council of Houston, in 1990. The plan was developed over more than two-years with hundreds of task force members and thousands of hours of community meetings. The effort culminated in the 1993 *Artworks* plan and *Artworks, Volume II*—a 500-page supporting document containing research and findings and the reports of nine task force committees.

Excerpt from the *Artworks* introduction... "In 1991, Houston's mayor and Harris County's judge recognized the potential value of the region's arts infrastructure and the challenges facing the arts. Joining with the Cultural Arts Council of Houston (CACH), the non-profit agency charged with encouraging the arts and entrusted with allocating public funds to artists and arts organizations, they launched a community-driven, long-range planning process designed to create "a shared vision of the cultural future of Houston and Harris County."

Artworks included some 21 recommendations in seven policy areas with 63 proposed actions ranging from the very broad—"Improve safety around arts events" to more specific "legislate 1.75% addition to City/County capital improvement funds for public art." Without baseline data or success measures, the broad nature of many of the actions makes it impossible to definitively say if they were achieved or not, however, many of the themes expressed in the recommendations also arose in community meetings for this plan, which might suggest there is still be work to be done in some areas.

Excerpts from the Artworks recommendations:

- "Increase appreciation of the arts and participation in them by young audiences and their families through arts experiences in schools and other settings."
- "Preserve historically significant places and structures through public policy, appropriate legislation and concerted action."
- "Stimulate cultural activity at the neighborhood level, to involve artists in neighborhood projects and to facilitate cultural exchange among different areas and constituencies."
- "Stimulate development of multicultural/minority arts, artists and organizations so that they reach their potential as major artistic forces and as partners with mainstream institutions."
- "Develop city, county, state and federal funding for the arts and culture of Houston/Harris County to a level commensurate with that of other major cities in the United States."

A significant accomplishment of the plan was to advance a regional perspective with the addition of Harris County to form the Cultural Arts Council of Houston/ Harris County. As a result, Harris County began investing \$75,000 annually in the agency for arts and cultural programs outside of the City of Houston. This investment continued until 2007.

In 1999 the City of Houston adopted the Civic Art Ordinance, dedicating 1.75% of Capital Improvement Programs (CIP) design and construction projects to art. The Cultural Arts Council of Houston/Harris County was contracted to assist with administration of program under multiple professional services contracts.

In 2006, the Cultural Arts Council of Houston/Harris County reorganized and was renamed Houston Arts Alliance to continue as the city's local arts agency. To help reduce duplication of effort in the City's arts and culture transactions, functions previously conducted by the Municipal Arts Commission, the Cultural Arts Council of Houston/Harris County and the Conservation Committee were transferred to new contracts with the Houston Arts Alliance. The majority of Houston Arts Alliance funding is derived through contracts with the City of Houston, with the intent to leverage the public investment with private funds to expand the impact of the agency on behalf of the city.



Pachikadi and His Flying Friends, Elaine Bradford.
Photo by: Debra Ham



UP Art Studio Mini Mural by artist Mr. D located at Holly Hall and Knight.
Photo by: Morris Malakoff

IDEA GENERATION SUMMARY

ISSUE #1

Equity in the distribution of City arts support

- > Increase and identify new additional revenue streams
- > Call for equitable distribution of funds to all eligible arts organizations
- > Improved review and reporting process
- > Education about process and transparency
- > Differing views about HAA performance and role in the grantmaking process

ISSUE #2

Sustainability of Houston's mid-tier organizations

- > Improve board development programs
- > How are the organizational tiers defined?
- > Support for use of media enhancements, partnerships, and collaborations
- > Marketing and technical assistance programs (with improved delivery and access)
- > Financial records education and assistance
- > A full analysis of organizations, crossovers, redundancies and possible merger recommendations

ISSUE #3

Enhancing arts programs and services in the neighborhoods

- > Engage management districts, school districts and parks to support arts programs and services
- > A celebration of neighborhoods is important to Houston
- > Utilize City libraries, parks, community centers and neighborhood organizations to leverage arts education programs and initiatives

- > Programs that include art mobiles/free options for kids
- > Artshound.com is not as well-known as it could be. A comprehensive app is needed
- > Create funding program/opportunities for smaller community-based organizations

ISSUE #4

Development of cultural facilities

- > Need for live/work spaces for artists
- > Increased need for shared space for artists and organizations
- > Adaptive reuse of empty facilities
- > Review of economic development tools to enhance development of live/work/organization spaces

ISSUE #5

Enhancing the Civic Arts Program

- > More public knowledge about the Civic Arts Program is needed
- > Include private development for potential civic art set aside funds
- > Divided views of it being transferred to one City agency, mostly due to lack of understanding about the program

ISSUE #6

Restructuring the Office of Cultural Affairs (OCA)

- > Enhance coordination across City departments
- > Good support for a OCA with suggestions for developing a grassroots campaign for support
- > Will require political will to implement
- > Elevate the importance of OCA within City government



Geometric Mouse, Scale X, Claes Oldenburg, Houston Central Library.
Photo by: Radu Barbuceanu

EXISTING STRATEGIES

ARTS AND CULTURAL INVESTMENTS

The City has a number of resources and tools it currently uses to invest in arts and culture. These tools range from use of Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) revenue to economic development incentives like Chapter 380 agreements under the Texas local government code. Tools also include maintenance and stewardship of some of Houston's performing arts spaces such as Wortham Center, Jones Hall, Talento Bilingue de Houston and Miller Outdoor Theatre. The City commissions public art through the 1.75 percent Capital Improvement Program (CIP) set-aside in City vertical construction. It supports community festivals in both services and financial support.

There are a number of community concerns, which these strategies need to address.

- > Availability, awareness, and access to the arts (including affordability)
- > Integrating the arts into all aspects of Houston culture
- > Civic art programming and public art
- > Retaining artists and professionals in the community
- > Connecting with and including all groups in the City's arts and cultural life
- > Building codes refinement allow for more live/work/organization space
- > Funding structures for arts organizations
- > Support systems – for artists, live, work, socialize, collaborate
- > Historic preservation
- > Need for comprehensive cultural asset map
- > Incentives for place making and development
- > More opportunities for arts education in and outside of the schools
- > Enhanced collaboration among the arts organizations and institutions
- > Global and local marketing and promotions/media coverage of arts and culture

CITY OF HOUSTON ARTS AND CULTURAL INVESTMENTS AND FUNDING SOURCES

CITY DEPARTMENT, DIVISION, OFFICE OR RELATED LOCAL GOVERNMENT CORPORATION		Hotel Occupancy Tax (Arts)	Hotel Occupancy Tax (Other)	Civic Art Ordinance	Special Revenue/Enterprise	Economic Development Prog. ¹	General Fund	State/Federal Grant	Sponsorships/ Private	
PROGRAMS	Finance Department/Mayors Office of Cultural Affairs									
	Houston Arts Alliance - grants	•								
	Miller Theatre Advisory Board, Inc - grants	•								
	Theater District Improvement, Inc - grants	•								
	Museum District Association - grants	•								
	Library Department - exhibitions, lectures, events						•			
	Parks & Recreation Department - HCDE/after school							•		
	Department of Neighborhoods - Mayor's arts scholarships							•		
	Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs - cultural contracts and policy, community programs	•							•	
	Mayor's Office of Special Events - civic celebrations	•		•					•	
PUBLIC ART	General Services Department									
	Combined Utility (water and sewer)			•						
	Fire Department			•						
	Health & Human Services Department			•						
	Library Department			•						
	Parks & Recreation Department			•						
	Parking Management				•					
	Police			•						
	Public Works & Engineering			•						
	Economic Development Division									
	Midtown					•				
	Main Street Corridor					•				
	Greater Third Ward Neighborhood Project					•				
	Sawyer Park					•				
	Market Square Park/Downtown					•				
	Upper Kirby					•				
	Palm Center					•				
	Mayor's Office partnership with SPARK Program							•	•	
	Houston Airport System			•						
	Houston First Corporation			•						
	FACILITIES	Houston First Corporation								
		Talento Bilingue de Houston		•						
		Wortham Theater Center		•						
		Jones Hall		•						
		Sunset Coffee Building		•						
		Miller Outdoor Theatre		•						
Hobby Center			•							
Public Spaces			•							
Economic Development Division										
Asia Society Texas Center						•				
Buffalo Soldiers National Museum						•		•		
Deluxe Theater						•				
Jones Plaza						•				
Midtown Arts and Theater Center (MATCH)			•			•				
Houston Museum of African American Culture						•				
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston - street abandonment						•				
Midtown Baldwin Park - performance stage						•				
Jones Plaza- concept/design						•				
Emancipation Park - community center/park renovation						•				
Fourth Ward- Freedman's Town						•				
Old Sixth Ward Historic District						•				
Historic Facade Grants, i.e. Alley Theatre, Julia Ideson Library Bldg.						•				
Historic Site Tax Exemption						•				
Parks & Recreation Dept. numerous historic structures								•		
Houston First Corporation/Greater Houston Convention & Visitors Bureau			•							

¹ Economic Development Programs Include: Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZs), Chapter 380 Agreements, Enterprise Zones, Historic Site Tax Exemption, Street Abandonment, Utility Agreements.



Radiant Fountains, Dennis Oppenheim, Bush Intercontinental Airport.
Photo by: Thomas Behrman

HOTEL OCCUPANCY TAX (HOT) DEDICATED TO THE ARTS

The City channels the bulk of its HOT financial support for arts and culture through a series of nonprofit organizations under contract. The contractors are the Houston Arts Alliance, the Museum District Association, Theater District Improvement, and Miller Theatre Advisory Board. Those contracts are currently five-year, calendar year, agreements and are in the second year of that duration (2015).

Each municipality electing to utilize hotel tax revenue determines its own preferences within the allowable uses established in the statute. The statute allows for a broad range of arts activities as one of several allowable uses to promote tourism and the convention industry. There is no statutory formula for determining the level of impact an event must have to satisfy the requirement to directly promote tourism and hotel and convention activity. It is the responsibility of the municipality to decide if an activity is eligible under the statute.

The contracted HOT funds dedicated to the arts amounted to \$15.7 Million (calendar year 2014) and are administered by the Finance Department with assistance from the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs. In 2014, the funds were distributed as follows:

- > Houston Arts Alliance (39.5%)
- > City Initiatives (2.5%) *Administered through Houston Arts Alliance with final approval by the Mayor*
- > The Museum District (18%)
- > The Theatre District (24%)
- > Miller Theatre Advisory Board (16%)

Other Uses:

- > Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs
- > Mayor's Office of Special Events (permits, parades, festivals, civic celebrations)

CIVIC ART PROGRAM

City Council established the Houston Civic Art Program in December 1999. The City's Civic Art Ordinance allocates 1.75 percent of design and construction costs on qualifying City Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) projects. The Capital Improvement Plan is a five-year plan, updated annually, addressing the infrastructure needs of the City of Houston. The Civic Art Ordinance allocation applies to capital projects that are vertical construction and have budgets in excess of \$500,000. It excludes paving projects, street resurfacing, runways, parking lots, signal and traffic control, underground projects, demolition projects, environmental assessment or remediation projects, projects for the rehabilitation or replacement of a single-building system (e.g. roofing only). Civic Art funds are highly regulated. Funds appropriated for Civic Art purposes are for distinct portions of the CIP, including Public Improvements (Fire, Library, Parks, Police, Health and General Government), Houston Airport System, and Water and Sewer Department. Any amount appropriated from bonds, debt issuance or other legally restricted funding sources must be kept separate and spent in accordance with the applicable legal restrictions related to the funding source and/or City Department.

The current level of Civic Art activity is:

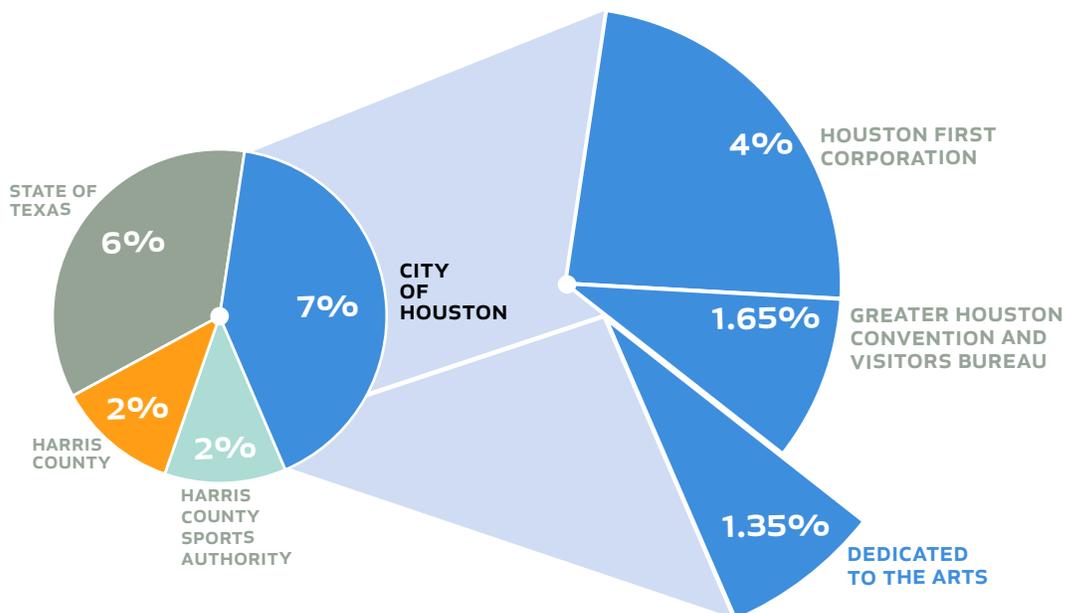
- > Civic Art Funds from all departments and enterprise funds such as Houston Airport System have a balance as of June 2015 of approximately \$5 M for future civic art commissions, conservation works and projects.
- > Current civic art, conservation works and projects underway and managed by the Houston Arts Alliance by contracts with the City number about 20 for all departments and enterprise funds and total approximately \$3 M. This total does not include artworks commissioned by private entities and managed by Houston Arts Alliance such as Southwest Airlines for their concourse at Hobby Airport or commissions by LGCs such as Houston First.



Afro Brazilian Dance Performance at Discovery Green hosted by Brazilian Arts Foundation. Photo by: Jonathan Jindra

HOUSTON HOTEL OCCUPANCY TAX

Local Tax Rate 17%



Civic Art Projects include paintings, murals, prints, drawings, photographs, videos, films, decorations, stained glass, statues, sculptures, monuments, fountains, arches, or other structures of permanent character located on City property. Civic Art funds may also be used to restore existing art. Civic Art projects are generated through the Capital Improvement Plan by nearly every City department, typically as part of the construction of new facilities and major expansion. The Houston Airport System (HAS) maintains internal staff for its Civic Art projects. General Services Department (GSD) also has staff in

administration of the Civic Arts Program on behalf of numerous City Departments. There are currently multiple contracts with Houston Arts Alliance for services to administer the Civic Art Program with Houston Airport System (HAS), General Services Dept. (GSD) and Houston First, LGC. The Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs provides significant coordination with City departments, the Finance Department and Houston Arts Alliance.



Opening of Main Street Theater's production of *Goodnight Moon* at the MATCH.
Photo by: Pin Lim/Forest Photography



MFAH Mixed Media attendees browse *For a New World to Come: Experiments in Japanese Art and Photography, 1968-1979*. Photo: Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

The allowable uses of the HOT tax proceeds are governed by the State of Texas Tax Code, Title 3 Local Taxation Subtitle D, Local Hotel Occupancy Taxes Chapter 351, Municipal Hotel Occupancy Taxes. It provides:

SEC. 351.101. USE OF TAX REVENUE

(a) Revenue from the municipal hotel occupancy tax may be used only to promote tourism and the convention and hotel industry, and that use is limited to the following:

- (1) the acquisition of sites for and the construction, improvement, enlarging, equipping, repairing, operation, and maintenance of convention center facilities or visitor information centers, or both;
- (2) the furnishing of facilities, personnel, and materials for the registration of convention delegates or registrants;
- (3) advertising and conducting solicitations and promotional programs to attract tourists and convention delegates or registrants to the municipality or its vicinity;
- (4) the encouragement, promotion, improvement, and application of the arts, including instrumental and vocal music, dance, drama, folk art, creative writing, architecture, design and allied fields, painting, sculpture, photography, graphic and craft arts, motion pictures, radio, television, tape and sound recording, and other arts related to the presentation, performance, execution, and exhibition of these major art forms;
- (5) historical restoration and preservation projects or activities or advertising and conducting solicitations and promotional programs to encourage tourists and convention delegates to visit preserved historic sites or museums:
 - (A) at or in the immediate vicinity of convention center facilities or visitor information centers; or
 - (B) located elsewhere in the municipality or its vicinity that would be frequented by tourists and convention delegates.



A school group learns about Baron Gérard's painting *Portrait of Louise-Antoinette-Scholastique Guéhéneuc, Madame la Maréchale Lannes, Duchesse de Montebello, with Her Children*. Photo: Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston



Monks from Drepung Losing Monastery in India create a sand mandala at Asia Society Texas Center. Photo by: Joel Luks

ADDITIONAL CITY ARTS AND CULTURE SUPPORT

Venue Management (under contract to Houston First, LGC)

- > Administered by interlocal agreement including: Jones Hall, Wortham Center, Talento Bilingue de Houston, Miller Outdoor Theatre, Theater District Parking, Sunset Coffee Building, Hilton Americas, George R. Brown Convention Center and numerous open spaces including Jones Plaza and Baker Green.

Historic Preservation Ordinance

- > Administered through the Planning and Development Department and the Houston Archaeological & Historical Commission, a volunteer body appointed by the Mayor and Council.
- > The ordinance was updated in 2010 to create permanent protections for historic structures in designated districts and to establish a new process for creating an historic district. Additional ordinance updates were made in 2015.

Economic Development

- > Administered through the Mayor's Office of Economic Development.
- > Includes: Chapter 380 Agreements, Enterprise Zones, Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZs) and Historic Site Tax Exemption.

School Park Program (SPARK)

- > Administered by SPARK (nonprofit) out of the Mayor's Office.
- > The City provides office space and staff support and the nonprofit partners with school districts for use of federal grants for design and equipment and raises private funds for art enhancements in school playgrounds.

Mayor's Office of Special Events (MOSE)

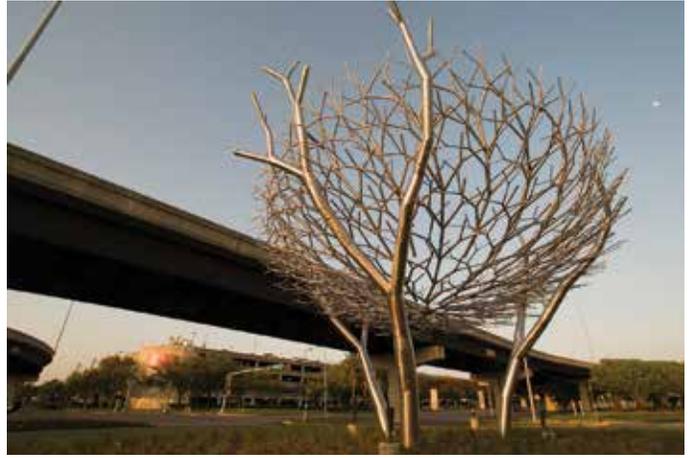
- > Permits festivals, parades, marathons and other civic celebrations.
- > Organizes major cultural events including July 4th Freedom Fest and Thanksgiving Day Parade.
- > Provides set up and staging for City Press announcements and events.

Community-Generated Initiatives, nominated by the Mayor

- > National Endowment for the Arts "Our Town" grants, the Bloomberg Philanthropies Public Art Challenge and nominations for Cultural District Designations to the Texas Commission on the Arts (Houston currently has 5 Cultural Districts).

Houston Public Library

- > Extensive collection of art, documents and artifacts. Develops public programs and curates exhibitions. Manages Houston Metropolitan Research Center (HMRC), one of the largest archival repositories in the state and Clayton Genealogical Library, one of the largest in the country.
- > Oversees Houston's African American Library at the Gregory School and the historic Julia Ideson Library building, Houston's oldest (1926) existing library housing the HMRC and that was fully restored and expanded in a public/private partnership by the Julia Ideson Preservation Partners, a non-profit.



Take Off, Paul Kittelson & Carter Ernst, Hobby Airport.
Photo by: Beryl Striewski

PUBLIC FUNDING FOR THE ARTS

NATIONAL FOUNDATION ON THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES ACT OF 1965

“THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES BELONG TO ALL THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES”

The 1965 National Foundation for Arts and Humanities Act represents the consummate statement regarding the important role of government (federal, local and regional) in supporting access to the arts for every American. It is perhaps the most important “passion-filled” bureaucratic document ever adopted by Congress; yet, it is porous enough for both the public and private sectors to collaboratively realize this national aspiration. In the 50 years since the passing of this Act, the country has seen the development of a wealth of traditions and institutions that together create a national cultural system dependent on thoughtful policy making, philanthropy, government supported infrastructure and local agencies created within the unique contexts of local, county or state administration.

Two highly important sections of the Act that call upon federal support are mandates for local governance structures. They are powerful reminders as we constantly review and establish public policies for supporting arts and culture.

“The arts and the humanities reflect the high place accorded by the American people to the nation’s rich cultural heritage and to the fostering of mutual respect for the diverse beliefs and values of all persons and groups.”

“The practice of art and the study of the humanities require constant dedication and devotion. While no government can call a great artist or scholar into existence, it is necessary and appropriate for the federal imagination, and inquiry but also the material conditions facilitating the release of this creative talent.”

These transformational themes do not specify how governmental systems might facilitate support for arts and cultural experiences for the public, but rather suggests that the arts



The Catastrophic Theatre.
Photo: Courtesy of The Catastrophic Theatre



Bruce Munro's Field of Light against the *Synchronicity of Color (Red)* by Margo Sawyer.
Discovery Green, 2014. Photo by: Katya Horner

and creativity form an integral part of our daily lives and present a fascinating juxtaposition of tradition and contemporary cultural expression.

Houston is almost two decades shy of celebrating its bicentennial anniversary. Having been shaped by its entrepreneurial history, its current roster of arts and cultural resources underscore the inevitability that social and cultural change are key agents for fostering the city's vibrancy and growth. **In so many examples, it is clear that Houston has seen that arts and commerce as being inextricably linked – as citizen and corporate leaders continue to highlight the city's cultural assets in developing an integrated vision for the future.**

"Everywhere you look in Houston, you see fingerprints of business. This includes downtown, the Medical Center, the universities and colleges, NASA, the Galleria, Greenway Plaza, entertainment and sports facilities, airports, churches and schools. As business and industry were challenged to perform at their highest, the entire community has benefited exponentially. In the minds of innovators and those who have followed, we care, we achieve and we look for ways to get better at what we do." Hank Moore: *Houston Legends: History and Heritage of Dynamic Global Capitol* (2015)

Aligned with the rapid changes in cultural industries across the country, Houston's diverse cultural and creative communities contribute greatly to the city's economic and social development. **Over the next 10 years, the integration of culture and technology will see the emergence of new cultural products to fill the gaps within the already strong cultural organizations and institutions of the 20th century.** Houston's desire to maintain and grow as a global cultural marketplace will require increased public and private sector investment to strengthen the existing infrastructure that undergirds the city's cultural resources, to stabilize institutions that reflect the city's diverse cultural expression and to build new platforms for stimulating participation in the arts and creativity.

Professional artists thrive in enabling environments.

Young people see the arts and creativity as fertile soil for making their expression visible, and cultural institutions benefit from having engaged audiences that support new and traditional art forms. **Cultural participation is a basic civic right, and a foundational ingredient in building and supporting prosperous cultural industries.**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE FOR CULTURAL PROGRAMMING

How do the City of Houston and the private sector capitalize on the city's legacy of "growing and collaborating" to protect and nurture its creative communities? What does public/private balance in funding look like for the 21st century Houston?

The two most commonly endorsed models of supporting the arts among the largest US cities are:

1) A traditional structure of providing arts and cultural services is through a department of cultural affairs within City government. The leadership of such a department typically reports to the Mayor and City Council with the advice of an appointed commission or arts committee. This model is designed to provide arts and cultural experiences focusing on excellence and access, as well as launching and maintaining initiatives that respond to civic goals and community needs.

This model has a centralized approach and is funded almost exclusively by public dollars, allowing for citizen participation in the oversight of funds distribution, facility planning, policy review and special initiatives that often respond to the emergence of new voices and new arts organizations. Staffed by City employees, this model focuses on systems that lend themselves to broad public and community engagement. Often viewed as contractors, arts and cultural organizations are held to high standards of accountability and are not considered grantees, but rather contractors providing a specific set of services to the public. This system's structure tends to lessen the potential for favoritism, elitism or entitlement.



Trail Riders, Southwestern Trail Ride Association, Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Kickoff. Photo by: Pin Lim

2) The second most common model, the facilitator model, is realized when the local government contracts with a single external entity to distribute public dollars and solicit private sector contributions to provide arts and cultural programs to the general public. Staffed by professional arts administrators, other areas of expertise are often included such as professional fundraisers, event planners and marketing teams. The governance structure for this model is typically a nonprofit structure as determined by the IRS, with a private board of directors acting as guardians of the public trust.

Houston's current model is most closely aligned with the facilitator model. Houston Arts Alliance provides the functional services of a local arts agency and the City also contracts with the Houston Museum District Association, Miller Theatre Advisory Board, Inc. and Theater District Improvement, Inc. Houston First Corporation, a local government corporation, manages City-owned cultural facilities.

FUNDING MODELS FOR THE FUTURE

Inclusive cultural planning processes conducted within the past 10 years are revealing a new wave of creator or "maker-based" organizations that feature more entrepreneurial methods of working, calling for both the previously described models of providing support to artists and a range of emerging governance structures that go beyond the traditional charitable organization, 501(c)(3) model. Arts councils and alliances are expanding their capacities to more effectively serve the interests of changing populations. Arts funding agencies are also being asked to consider the shifting disciplinary boundaries for new artist practices being created for new audiences who use technology to make decisions and choices about participating in an artistic experience.

Attention to these new audiences requires greater stability for existing organizations as they look to keep pace with a new generation of donors and patrons. Responding to these new audiences, both the systems model and the facilitator

model of arts support agencies will mean bringing artists and communities together with new patrons, academic institutions schools, health and wellness providers and with the sciences as collaborators in creativity.

Considerations for Houston Model

Considerations for Houston in determining the most assertive and responsive funding model should be based on the following recent input:

- > Changes within the arts community and the community as a whole
- > Public attitudes about current funding structures
- > Changes in how arts organizations are held accountable for use of public dollars
- > Houston residents who feel isolated from significant City arts and cultural resources
- > Limitations in current funding source(s)

While the scope and variety of services and programs that nonprofit local arts agencies provide in a seemingly nimble way, they are often more narrow in scope than the agency embedded within local government. A contract agency is not in a position to speak for the City (by providing municipal leadership or endorsement for a national grant application of a city-wide initiative), to respond to needs for services that are not in the contract, or to represent the needs of the community at the policy and decision making level of the City. On many parallel tracks, the agencies seem to be very similar in scope, but there are several additional responsibilities that a City has:

Within City government, directors of Cultural Affairs Offices collaborate with and leverage City resources outside of arts funding to address citywide goals, i.e., public safety, recreation, health and human services, literacy, elderly and youth services and facility management to provide more efficiencies in delivering public services.

City Cultural Affairs Offices partner with City Council



Capoeira Luanda Houston group performance at Lee & Joe Jamail Skate Park for the Skate Brazil Demo. Photo by: Trever Scales

district leadership to design specific and inclusive services that respond to urgent and long-term community development strategies. Delivery of these services is based on City ordinances and policies that identify specific measures of intent for public benefit

City Cultural Affairs Offices have a mandate to actively promote citizen engagement in the arts and have as their central goal to increase awareness of and participation in cultural events and relevant activities.

City Cultural Affairs Offices provide centralized personnel, capacity-building and management assistance initiatives as

measures for protecting the public's investment in cultural services. They provide grants or contracted services to artists and cultural organizations with a high level of transparency and accountability, ensuring that integrity in the awarding of cultural contracts is maintained.

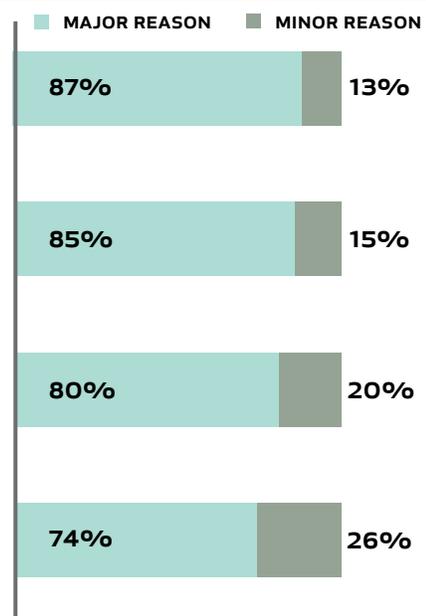
Please indicate for each of the following statement whether it is a major reason, a minor reason or not a reason at all for why cities should encourage participation in arts and cultural activities?

Connecting people of different cultures helps to overcome stereotypes and prejudices.

Participation in the arts improves individual skills, creativity, school performance, self expression and enjoyment.

Community identity is enhanced by highlighting the richness and diversity of local artists, organizations and cultural assets.

Arts tourism and its associated sales and employment provide important economic benefits.





Transported + Renewed, Silos I.
Photo by: Forest Photo, Pin Lim

PRIORITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PROMOTE

ENGAGEMENT IN
QUALITY ARTS AND CULTURAL
PROGRAMMING.

Recommendation 1

Develop strategies to deliver arts and culture programs, arts education and public art into neighborhoods.

Assessment:

One of the consistent themes that emerged from the community meetings in the City Council districts was the desire for more arts programs and services in neighborhoods. While residents expressed appreciation for the downtown/inner city cultural institutions, many asked for programming closer to where they live. They cited various barriers – economic, geographic and cultural – that made it difficult for them to attend programs in the downtown institutions. They want programs that are affordable and nearby, and that relate to their cultural backgrounds and experience. They are asking for free or low cost, family-oriented programs in proximity to where they live.

There are a variety of ways in which a Neighborhood Arts Program can be implemented. Houston Grand Opera, the Folklife & Traditional Arts Program at Houston Arts Alliance and the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo have been cited by many as having a major commitment to connecting with Houston's neighborhoods on a grass roots level. Programs through organization such as Multicultural Education and Counseling through the Arts, Project Row Houses and Voices Breaking Boundaries could be used as examples for replication in more neighborhoods. The City's Department of Neighborhoods (DON), Parks Department and Houston Public Library could also be helpful



MATCH Thank you party.
Photo by: Cristina Amaro

in this effort. The following are the types of neighborhood arts strategies that have been implemented in other cities:

- In San Francisco, the City supports and funds community murals and small-scale artistic interventions in neighborhoods.
- In Dallas, the City developed a “catalog” of performing, literary and visual artists and arts groups available for activities in neighborhoods. Community groups can select a program for their neighborhood, often supplying matching funds.
- In San Jose, CA the Office of Cultural Affairs provides both funding and support services for small neighborhood and ethnic celebrations.
- In Salt Lake City, they developed a program of temporary public art projects for various locations around the city.

It will be important to address the need to support organizations and initiatives that can provide low/no cost arts and culture opportunities where people live (in neighborhoods that may be outside the downtown/inner city cultural hub) and that families can participate in together.

Recommendation 2

Update the Civic Art Ordinance and include some aspects of horizontal construction to include more areas of the City for Civic Art.

Assessment:

The authorizing Civic Art Ordinance applies to qualifying vertical CIP construction projects. Horizontal improvements like roads and runways do not qualify for the allocation. Current bonding requirements mean that the Civic Art monies generat-

ed must only be spent on property administered by the department generating the art allocation. Civic Art funds from various departments cannot be aggregated. Further, there is obsolete language in the ordinance and a need for clarification about the application of the allocation. It would be an advantage for the community if the Civic Art funds could be consolidated or “pooled” and spent where the art would have the highest impact. In addition, many City capital projects are administered through external entities, such as management districts, TIRZs and LGCs, which also do not in the current Civic Art Ordinance qualify for a Civic Art allocation. Making some horizontal construction projects like major roadways eligible for a Civic Art allocation would give many more areas of the city opportunities for public art. The Parks and Recreation Department needs funding to help defray conservation costs of its dozens of outdoor artworks. In addition, if a “pooling” provision were enacted, there would be even greater flexibility in delivering much sought after public art projects in more communities.

Recommendation 3

Leverage Houston’s “world city” image, international arts venues and diverse cultural offerings in destination marketing with the Greater Houston Convention and Visitor’s Bureau (GHCVB) and other partners.

Assessment:

Houston has an amazing collection of national and international legacy cultural organizations that, coupled with the unique collection of world cultures and traditions, has great potential to become attractive to cultural tourists. However, these treasures are not fully capitalized on. These cultural assets should



Black Panther Party Power by Artist Phillip Pyle.
Photo by: Ariel Jones

Is each of these a major reason, a minor reason or not a reason at all that would encourage you to participate in more arts and cultural activities than you do now?

More awareness of art programs as a result of better marketing, online calendars or apps.

Programs that are unconventional, innovative and challenging.

Destinations that have arts, shopping and restaurants in close proximity to each other.

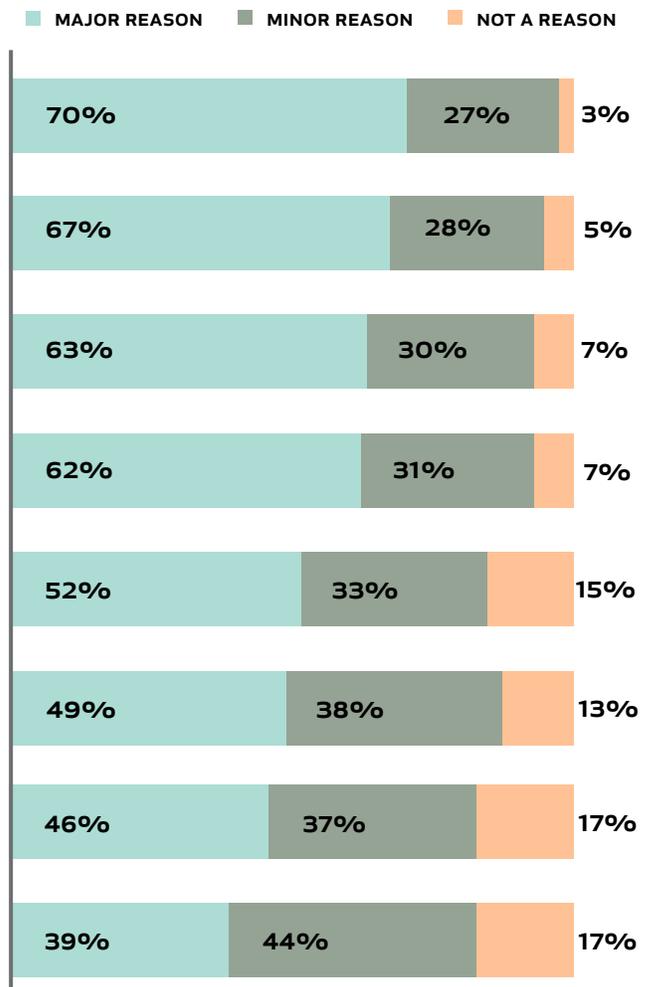
Programs that are free.

Programs that my whole family will enjoy.

Programs where I can also purchase tickets for special receptions with the artists or arts experts.

One-stop ticketing websites for many different kinds of programs.

Programs to which I can walk or bike.





Jason Moran's Fat's Waller Dance Party for Da Camera JAM at Discovery Green celebrating Jazz Appreciation Month. Photo: Courtesy of Discovery Green



Over Houston, Gordon Huether, Hobby Airport. Photo by: Misha Bruk

become major elements in the destination marketing of the city.

There might be a temptation for those actively involved in promoting Houston to go straight to the task of branding and marketing the city, and in fact understanding character of place can contribute to those efforts. Usually, effective marketing (when it is conducted through advertising in paid media) must necessarily simplify somewhat the appeal of a place to a handful of its best qualities.

Most branding also simplifies things down to a slogan focused on a few leading qualities. (There is an exception, when a place abandons trying to describe itself in a slogan and instead creates what we call an “empty vessel.” The brand says little in itself, but can be connected to an endless series of particulars when it is used. The famously effective “Pure Michigan” campaign is the best example. The words “Pure Michigan” have little meaning alone, but can be filled with meaning by association with particular places and their qualities. A study by Michigan State verified that for most of the state the *Pure Michigan* campaign was effective not only for tourism but for economic development and social capital, but in Detroit, where there were entrenched negative opinions, it was not as effective.)

A good way to dispel entrenched negative opinions is to collect stories, rich in verisimilitude and use them in digital media of all kinds within and outside the market. This will be most successful when the images and narratives are linked so that over time they convey a new understanding. The richer and more existential the picture these materials communicate, the more they leverage the city's assets and harness them to present a living sense of the city's personality. By layering internal and external communications, rich in detail and character of place, it becomes possible to face and acknowledge problems without an overall negative result. In that way, fully communicating character of place can overcome attention blindness (focusing on one thing not seeing others), and enable Houston—or any city—to address its problems.

A subtler, but very powerful, effect of communicating

about a place in richly detailed stories which do not simplify character is that it allows the audience to perceive patterns for themselves, to experience the “aha moment” of insight, which is the most exciting brain function. The human brain is a pattern recognition system, and is deeply gratified when it sees large patterns and how they are replicated in small details.

Recommendation 4

Develop a program of neighborhood-based cultural tourism with the GHCVB and other partners.

Assessment:

Houston's cultural diversity adds tremendous vibrancy to the city. It is replete with neighborhoods rich in every kind of food, celebration, language and creative tradition; however, the character and multitude of Houston's neighborhoods is not widely known outside of the city. Now that travel industry websites are providing more localized data, there are new opportunities to shine a light on the city's cultural assets and connect visitors with Houston in new ways, and at the same time build connection among residents.

A full 28 percent of Houston's residents are foreign born. Los Angeles is higher, but its population is not as diverse in national origins. The United States has 13 percent of its residents foreign-born, a number that has not been seen since the 1920's. That's why Houstonians describe their city as representing the future of the American city: other places will, as time passes, get more like Houston. In the meantime, Houston, always on the move has become a true world city.

An opportunity offers itself for Houston to more fully integrate its ethnic communities into both its economy and its culture by engaging cultural centers like the Chinese Community Center, the Arab American Cultural & Community Center and the India Cultural Center.



Ars Lyrica Houston, Becky Baxter, Harp History 2013 at Travis Elementary .
Photo: Courtesy of Ars Lyrica Houston

Convening cultural destination and districts' leaders can generate innovative marketing opportunities and collaborative promotions. A successful neighborhood-based cultural program will require coordination and effective joint marketing to organize the packaging of destinations, events and programs in order to create satisfying and complete visitor experiences. The City, working with the GHCVB, should assist local neighborhood groups to develop in promoting their programs and activities. This assistance can take the form of financial support as well as technical advisement and assistance.

Recommendation 5

Implement a comprehensive City Arts and Cultural policy to provide guidance for City initiatives and departments.

Another strategy to advance strong support for arts and culture within the city organization as a priority would be for the City to develop a citywide Arts and Cultural policy that articulates the role of the arts across all City functions and programs. Cultural policies are most often made by governments, from school boards to Congress and the White House, but also by many other institutions in the private sector, from corporations to community organizations. Policies provide guideposts for those making decisions and taking actions which affect cultural life. Public policy making is a continuous process that has many feedback loops. Verification and evaluation are essential to the functioning of this system.¹²

In the United States, local governments have implemented cultural policies, integrating them into the overall policy-making process. Dallas created such a policy more than 30 years ago and it continues to provide direction for arts and cultural

development. Accordingly, it has been updated periodically as conditions change, and continues to be instrumental in guiding the growth of the arts there.

Integrating "Culture" into the City's first General Plan is a good first step.

Recommendation 6

Assess options to expand awareness of cultural offerings via smart phones and by updating/replacing ArtsHound.com.

Assessment:

Very few cities have been successful in creating a comprehensive vehicle for disseminating information about arts events, activities and programs, despite repeated attempts to do so. While ArtsHound.com, overseen by the Houston Arts Alliance, has many of the elements of such an arts information source, survey responses suggest there is low awareness of the site. Development of an app or apps would help intensify marking cultural initiatives. Rebranding might also help attract more users.

Artshound.com uses the Artsopolis platform, a comprehensive arts and event marketing website that is used in many cities. Good examples are the "Philly Fun Guide" (www.phillyfunguide.com), and the CNY Arts Calendar (<http://gotocnyarts.org>). Partnerships are formed with the existing arts calendars; these websites become the primary "backbone" of information in their regions. Some serve as the event database for local/regional newspapers for instance, as well as tourism and visitors bureaus. Also, these platforms extend far beyond advertising ticketed arts events. They take a broad view of "arts and culture," extending to commercial, community, educational, amateur and even sports activities. They can also provide listings for space rentals.

¹² Thei, Geurts; Be Informed (2010). "Public Policy: The 21st Century Perspective"



Transported + Renewed, East End Ramble.
Photo by: Lorian Espinel

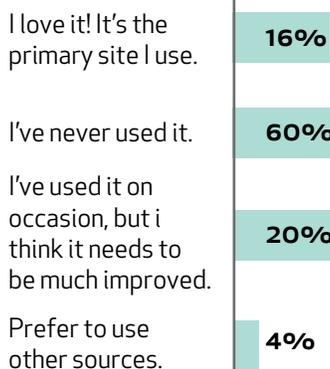
Recommendation 7

Monitor Plan indicators, evaluate contract performance and review local research surveys and reports.

Assessment:

Indicators are critical to assessing progress toward established goals. An indicator is a sign that shows the existence, state or condition of something. It is a specific, observable and measurable characteristic that can be used to monitor change over time. Sets of indicators, such as economic indicators (like inflation, GDP, employment), group statistical values that, taken together, give an indication of the health of the economy. Indicators represent the key values of a program or operation.

Artshound.com offers the largest database for arts and cultural events in the greater Houston area, along with additional listings of classes and workshops, jobs, auditions, organizations, venues, public art, and individual artists. Which of these best describes your experience with Artshound.com?



Adages like “you get what you measure,” and “we measure what we treasure,” emphasize the importance of selecting the right indicators for a given endeavor. Effectively selected, integrated and monitored, indicators are a powerful tool for leaders and decision makers to set priorities, understand and communicate performance and, when needed, can help present a rationale for course correction. The initial indicators presented for the City’s Arts and Cultural Plan were identified as best aligned with the Plan’s recommendations. Some or all will be utilized as implementation of the Plan progresses. As study and research of the field and economies continues at the local and national level, new and different indicators will likely be identified as important to monitor, as well.

Recommendation 8

Continue to convene the arts and cultural constituencies and other stakeholders around critical cultural policy issues.

Assessment:

Throughout the community engagement process, it was remarked by a large number of residents and stakeholders, that being invited to convene around important cultural issues was a highly rewarding experience. In addition, one of the most important roles the City can play in the local cultural ecosystem is to use its convening power to bring together arts and cultural stakeholders, other cultural constituencies, educational institutions, regional partners and the residents of Houston to have conversations about issues critical to the arts and cultural development of the city and the region. Strategy, programs, tools and relationships can all be improved when community input is sought and understanding is fostered. Periodically reviewing community priorities, sharing progress toward City goals and refining practices is an important cycle for a continuous improvement process.



Performance of *No Matter How Hard I Try I Can't Look the Same as I Did*.
Photo by: Sarah Schellenberg

ENHANCE

THE SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR THE CITY'S DEEP CULTURAL ASSETS.

Recommendation 9

Elevate arts and culture as a priority in the City structure and ensure the efficient and effective use of City Resources.

Assessment:

Houston is almost unique among the largest cities in the nation in the absence of a full scale Department or Office of Cultural Affairs. Of the 10 largest cities by population, only Houston and Philadelphia do not manage city arts grants, programs, and services within an Office or Department of Cultural Affairs.

This has been attributed to the historically strong private sector support of the arts and perhaps local views about the role of City government. In a recent example, to guide conversations about possible budget cuts for the current fiscal year, Houston's City Council drafted a (nonbinding) definition of the city's core services as "public safety, water and wastewater, streets and drainage and solid waste management." This excludes significant areas, including parks, libraries, the arts and cultural services, as well as environmental and economic sustainability.

Up to this point, the City of Houston's cultural role has largely been identified by its funding through the Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) dedicated to the arts and the Civic Art Program. Many areas of cultural development – community and neighborhood arts, technical assistance, arts education and life-long arts learning, arts in social services and public safety, economic development, among others – have received little or

not enough attention from the City's arts program. The City has a strong track record executing big events. Several focus group participants observed Houston does "big" really well and wanted the City to work on "going small" to offer more activities throughout the community. Houston has a great opportunity to augment an existing big event with a city-wide arts and cultural component or creating a new iconic city-wide event that focuses on communities.

The City of Houston has traditionally outsourced its transactional arts functions – grants and Civic Art – to local nonprofit agencies. This cost-effective approach can be more effective with improved oversight by an Office of Cultural Affairs elevated in the City structure as a priority. The current structure makes it difficult for the arts to have an effective voice within City government. It has also kept the City from fully capitalizing on the many ways arts and cultural activities are embedded within the City organization or adding value to major City initiatives and priorities.

At a very minimum, the following City entities are involved in arts and culture:

- > Department of Neighborhoods – arts scholarships
- > Economic Development Division – 380 Agreements, Right-of-way abandonment, historic tax exemptions, other development agreements
- > General Services Department – civic art for several departments (Police, Fire, Library, etc.)
- > Houston Airport System – civic art
- > Houston First/GHCVB – destination marketing and cultural facilities management, civic art
- > Library Department – exhibits, civic art, cultural programs, arts education programs
- > Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs – oversees, among other duties, with Finance Department contracts with Houston Arts Alliance, Houston's Museum and Theater districts and Miller Theatre Advisory Board



Students and the public attend the opening reception for the exhibition *World Press Photo – Soviet Award Winners 1956-1991* during the FotoFest 2012 Biennial. Photo by: Vladimir Sergienko and FotoFest International

- > Office of Special Events – neighborhood festivals, parades and other cultural events
- > Parking Management Division – civic art
- > Parks and Recreation Department – civic art, arts education programs
- > Planning and Development Department – historic preservation
- > Public Works Department – civic art
- > Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones (TIRZ) – programming, facilities, public art

The current structure of contracting with nonprofit agencies presents certain limitations. The contract for services approach defines and establishes the range of arts programs, services and activities undertaken by the contractors. While contract amendment is technically possible, it is not the most nimble or responsive tool to employ when a new opportunity or

Every year, on June 21, more than 700 cities around the world participate in the *Fête de la Musique* -- a decentralized live music celebration of free concerts for everyone throughout the city, in all kinds of places, even the most unusual ones (streets, public parks, bars, restaurants, museums, hospitals, etc). Amateur and professional musicians are encouraged to perform in the streets, under the slogan "Faites de la musique" ("make music", a homophone of *Fête de la Musique*). Those public and private organizers show through this joint event their desire to foster the visibility of the current artistic realities of their countries and to enhance cultural exchanges.

need may arise. There is limited opportunity with the current position of the Office of Cultural Affairs to develop new programs that respond to community need.

There are several ways the City's organizational structure could be adjusted with existing administrative resources to elevate arts and culture as a main concern of the City and better leverage the impact of the City's arts and cultural investments

Successfully implementing the recommendations of the Plan will be significantly enhanced with a strengthened Office of Cultural Affairs. In particular, the Office should provide greater oversight of the City's arts and cultural investments and **provide more support to departments undertaking arts and culture projects**. For example, a number of capital projects are funded through the city's many management districts and TIRZs and public work by these entities has been increasing. The Office of Cultural Affairs can help City staff and agency representatives understand how best to realize an artwork or program as part of their project.

Another recommendation is to give the top executive position a title commensurate with the responsibilities and what is typically seen in the field. The top executive of the Office of Cultural Affairs is the City's primary lead on cultural policy and advises the Mayor and other high level City officials. Houston uses a title of "Mayor's Assistant for Cultural Affairs." While this has been effective working within the City structure, it creates confusion outside the City, particularly with people outside the region and foreign peers and dignitaries, but also with the local community. The customary title in the United States is Director of Cultural Affairs. An equivalent within the City of Houston structure could also be Chief Cultural Affairs Officer.



Musicians Anthony Parce (viola) and David Connor (bass) teach third graders at Crespo Elementary School bringing orchestral music to the lives of its students. Photo by: Priscilla Dickson



A school group learns about J. M. W. Turner's painting, *Sheerness as Seen from the Nore*. Photo: Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

Recommendation 10

Join efforts to augment Hotel Occupancy Tax funding for arts and culture with a new dedicated revenue source.

Assessment:

The availability and method of allocation of Houston's HOT grants for the arts has been the focus of considerable discussion during this planning effort. Some organizations contend that the distribution of HOT funds is allocating too much money to the 18 legacy organizations and too little to the 200+ other mostly smaller and mid-sized organizations. This, they say, is coupled with the other organizations having considerably less capacity to garner private underwriting. The legacy organizations counter that their need is just as great, that they serve considerably more residents and that they attract visitors to Houston, as the HOT tax legislation mandates.

These arguments overlook a central point. It is not that one group or the other gets too much or too little of the available funds. The issue is that the available arts funding is inadequate to support the very large and active arts ecosystem in Houston. The benchmarking survey comparing Houston to other cities arts funding and programming clearly indicates that Houston is low in its per capita grants spending on artists and cultural organizations. The cohort of nine cities, including Houston, range from a high of \$36.34 per capita (Denver) to a low of \$7.27 per capita (Houston). The average of the eight study cities is \$20.72 per capita.

Before an effort to identify a new dedicated revenue source can gain support, understanding about the impact of current investments and confidence in the fund allocation processes must be established. The current allocation system has been criticized for a number of reasons, primarily based on the exemption of select nonprofit organizations from the competitive grants application process and the variables set by each

of the City's contractors in distributing HOT funds. While those variables are effective in meeting the goals, scope of services agreed to between the contractor and the City, and greatly enhance audience participation levels, multiple grant-making and reporting structures make it difficult to aggregate data related to public benefit.

A key element in advocating for increasing arts funding is the ability to make data driven arguments that indicate public response and public benefit. In fact, this lack of consistent data collection becomes an obstacle and raises unsettling questions by policy makers that could be more easily answered when fund distribution among a group of grantees is transparent, consistent and based on a uniform set of deliverables.

The Center for Houston's Future "Arts and Cultural Heritage Community Indicators Report: 2014" notes a finding from the organization *Grantmakers in the Arts* that the total public funding for the arts by federal, state, and local governments has increased by 15.6 percent over the past 21 years. While this trend has generally been reflected in the funding for state and local organizations, the flows "[correspond] to the economic recessions of the early 2000s and the more recent, longer and deeper recession." Thus, in the case of Houston, the funding for arts and cultural organizations has remained rather steady in comparison to its competitor regions, displaying an increasingly influential and supported sector of the region's economy.¹³ Despite the impressive gains made by the Houston region's arts and cultural organizations, the future of public funding of the arts remains unpredictable. As *Grantmakers in the Arts* asserts, "Lower funding by the NEA and federal cuts may lead to a more challenging fiscal climate for many services, including the arts. Establishing steady sources of funding and support for the arts may influence the opportunities for the growth

¹³ Ryan Stubbs, "Public Funding for the Arts: 2013 Update," *Grantmakers in the Arts: Supporting a Creative America*, 2013, <http://www.giarts.org/article/public-funding-arts-2013-update>



Trojan Bear, Jim Love.
Photo by: Beryl Striewski

COMPARISON OF CITY GRANT FUNDING TO ARTISTS AND ORGANIZATIONS (DOES NOT INCLUDE CIP ART)
PREPARED BY The Cultural Planning Group

CITY	PER CAPITA FUNDING	HOTEL OCCUPANCY TAX (HOT)	GENERAL FUND	VOTER APPROVED FUNDING	DEDICATED CORPORATE FUNDING
Denver	\$ 36.34			•	
Seattle/King County	\$ 34.05			•	
St. Louis	\$ 27.30			•	
Charlotte	\$ 19.46		•		•
San Francisco	\$ 16.57	•	•		
Dallas	\$ 11.27		•		
Austin	\$ 11.11	•			
San Antonio	\$ 9.66	•	•		
Houston	\$ 7.27	•			
Average (of cohort)	\$ 19.77				

The per capita funding comparison reflects the investment, in the form of grants and service contracts, by each city/region. The City of Houston and the other cities listed provide additional funding in the form of cultural facilities development and operation, civic/public art, marketing, etc. The per capita funding amount does not include these additional investments.

and success of Houston’s nonprofit arts organizations and the numerous artists who depend on them.”

The path to achieving a new dedicated revenue stream to support arts and culture will not be an easy one. It will require effective advocacy on the part of a unified arts community, speaking with one voice. Whatever approach is taken, it will be necessary to convince the elected leadership of the City, the Council and the Mayor or other municipalities, that

this is necessary and important. Depending upon the source of the new revenues, it may require authorization from the state legislature. Depending upon what they may authorize, the issue may need to be submitted to the voters. In the cities where this has happened, a campaign often lasting several years has been mounted. Usually, these campaigns are led, by necessity, by the major cultural institutions that have the leadership and resources to mount the campaign.



Living Room Art, audience members for Voices Breaking Boundaries, Homes and Histories, Third Ward residence of Rick Lowe. Photo by: Burnell McCray

Examples of cities that have implemented a new dedicated tax-based revenue stream to support arts and cultural development include Denver, St. Louis, Salt Lake City and Cleveland. Denver first instituted a 7-county Cultural and Scientific Funding District in the late 1980s. It is funded by a 1/10th of one-cent addition to the sales tax. When the state legislature authorized the local municipalities to submit it to the voters, it passed by a narrow plurality. When the tax was reauthorized by the voters ten years later, it passed by a more than 2/3rds majority. It currently raised \$44 million annually. Salt Lake City adopted a similar sales tax called the ZAP (Zoo Arts Parks) that raises \$13 million annually. When it was reauthorized by the voters, more than 77% of the voters approved. St. Louis City and St. Louis County adopted its Zoo and Museum District tax in 1972. It raises \$70 million annually through a small augmentation of property taxes. Since its inception, it has generated more than \$1.6 billion in support for the museum institutions. Cleveland adopted a 30 cents per pack cigarette tax to support the arts. It currently generates \$15 to \$20 Million to fund arts and cultural organizations and programs in Cleveland and Cuyahoga County.

Recommendation 11

Seek federal, state and other grants and funding opportunities available to municipalities.

Whenever possible, the City should actively pursue resource development intended for municipalities to support cultural activities, particularly, when local cultural organizations themselves are not eligible to receive such funding, when the City can serve as an umbrella for a number of organizations, or when City participation can enhance the chances of receiving such support.

Recommendation 12

Centralize Civic Art oversight in the Office of Cultural Affairs.

Assessment:

The structure of the City's Civic Art Program has been successful in placing art in certain areas of the city. However, it has also been limited in several ways. The management of the program is diffused among multiple City departments and vendor contracts with Houston Arts Alliance. City department practices and approaches to contracting and program management are inconsistent, necessitating significant coordination time. Department directors also have the unusual responsibility of making the final approval for acceptance of new work of art. Most cities charge arts and cultural experts with this duty and do not require department heads to validate an artwork in this manner.

The current structure of the Civic Art Program has also limited the number of times artists have been engaged at the beginning of a project. One of the best ways to maximize an art budget in a capital project is to bring the artist into the project at the beginning, during program development and schematic design. When an artist has sufficient time to learn about the project and the people that will be using the facility, they are best able to develop ideas most meaningful to the project context. It also means that artwork can be integrated into the underlying capital project more cost effectively. Many artists are contracted for the City's program well into the project design process, often making it either costly or impossible to integrate their best ideas into the project.

The nature of administering a public art program is that it is a program that cuts across many departmental lines and in Houston this means external agencies as well. Centralizing program oversight within the Office of Cultural Affairs would



Vector HH, by artist Luca Buvoli, at William P. Hobby Airport.
Photo by: Luca Buvoli



Vaquero by Luis Jiménez.
Photo by: Beryl Striewski

better support the many entities involved to realize successful projects.

A centralized final approval process in the Office of Cultural Affairs for all civic art projects should be implemented and would be a first step.

Recommendation 13

Provide increased oversight, transparency and accountability in the allocation of City arts and culture grants.

Assessment:

The City's arts and culture grants are currently funded through a portion of the Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) dedicated to the arts. Perceptions about a lack of fairness and equity in the City's current allocation process have and fostered an oppositional relationship between the (mostly large) legacy institutions and the small and mid-sized organizations and artists. The City's multiparty vendor contract to redistribute HOT funds has some inconsistency in program administration practices among the different contractors and few impact reporting metrics.

There is no current standard for aggregate reporting of the City's annual investment in arts and culture grants.

Providing direct funding support to artists and arts and cultural organizations is one of the quintessential functions of any City cultural affairs program. It is the strongest manifestation of a city's commitment to the arts. Public funding of the arts is not merely about granting money to arts groups. It is about providing quality of life programs and services to its residents and visitors. It is advantageous that artists and arts groups receive support along the way, but the ultimate beneficiaries are the city's residents and visitors.

Before the City, working with arts stakeholders, can proceed with an effort to create a new dedicated revenue source

for arts and cultural development, it must be able to clearly and effectively communicate the impact of current funding. Increased oversight of the City's arts grants and other activities is essential to advance policies that are well-informed and best suited to local community goals.

Recommendation 14

Set goals for City arts and culture grants utilizing Hotel Occupancy Tax funds and ensure a fair and equitable process for applicants.

Assessment:

The allowable uses of the HOT tax proceeds are governed by the State of Texas Tax Code. The City sets the policy and program objectives that supports its goals. Because each municipality electing to utilize hotel tax revenue determines its own preferences within the allowable uses established in the statute, guidelines vary from city to city, and there is some confusion about how the funds can be used locally.

Representatives of many small and mid-sized cultural organizations feel that funds are not equitably distributed because a select number of organizations do not have to apply to receive funding. Eighteen, mostly large, organizations receive, by line item, 42 percent of the contracted HOT funding, while approximately 220 smaller organizations must apply and compete for City HOT grants administered through the Houston Arts Alliance.

The smaller groups also argue that the organizations with the least capacity of access private funding should get a greater share. The larger institutions argue that they need the HOT dollars even though they represent a smaller portion of their budgets. They also note that they can also demonstrate that they actually drive tourist visitorship to the city as called



Workshop on Writing a Great Grant at Fresh Arts.
Photo by: Ariel Jones

for by the HOT statute. By examining Houston's current funding of the arts through state and county reports, the public, and private philanthropy, a view of each source's roles in developing Houston's nationally acclaimed arts-and-culture scene begins to emerge, as well as where more attention is needed.

It is true that there is an imbalance in the success of small and mid-sized organizations in competing for private contributions. According to the 2014 "Arts and Cultural Heritage Community Indicators Report" by the Center for Houston's Future: "Although Houston's cultural nonprofits experienced substantial growth in program revenues, contributions, and expenditures from 2000- 2010, the data presented here demonstrate how those increases have been concentrated in the hands of only a few organizations. Nearly 88 percent of the increased revenue from contributions went to just 27 organizations in the Houston region (5 percent of the total 532 cultural organizations in 2010). The only other region considered with a higher level of concentration in this measure is Dallas." This can also be seen in the median revenue of Houston's nonprofit arts and cultural organizations—it is among the lowest of comparable cities.

The HOT statute allows for a broad range of arts activities as one of several allowable uses to promote tourism and the convention industry. There is no statutory formula for determining the level of impact an event must have to satisfy the requirement to directly promote tourism and hotel and convention activity. It is the responsibility of the municipality to decide if an activity is eligible under the statute. By clarifying its goals for the community through its HOT grants, the City can correct a good deal of misunderstanding surrounding the funds and the related programs.

Recommendation 15

Create a common process for application and reporting for all City arts and culture grants in consultation with stakeholders.

Assessment:

The current application and allocation process creates silos with differing standards and duplication of effort. Set funding percentages allocated to four nonprofit contractors have not been evaluated in almost 20 years. The original rationale for the percentages was not discovered in the planning process and has no basis related to the current context. A big point of contention in the cultural community is the fact that a select few organizations (some large and some smaller) do not apply or go through any sort of review process to receive City arts funding. The City's reliance on a funding formula and the way it is administered has likely disadvantaged a number of organizations over the years and has certainly exacerbated perceptions of inequity.

The nuances of large institutions versus smaller organizations, museums versus performing arts facilities, etc., all have distinct management and programming structures that can be articulated in setting the context of the organization's role as a part of the grant-seeking pool. The adherence to a template that asks a set of "common" monetary and non-monetary benefits and services requires the individual grantee and the cultural sector organization to consistently document and evaluate programming, levels of public participation and leveraged resources, and leads to an avoidance of doubt regarding the effective use of arts funding.

There is another important reason for considering an alternative approach to allocating or distributing public dollars.



What Time Is It? Jo Ann Fleischhauer.
Photo by: Tommy Gregory

Anthony Shumate and Mayor Parker
pose with his Wind Blown Meters.
Photo by: Marc Newsome

All grant-making systems, public and private, at some point must consider the political contexts of perception and compliance. Responding to an expanding set of grantees requires tough decisions that allow for new voices, changes in perspectives and diverse interests to utilize public funding to advance the development of emerging voices and small and mid-size institutions. This line of thinking also allows for funding to be designated that can address foundation-building efforts. For example, leadership development, support for the creation of new organizations, commissioning of new work and initiatives that increase audiences. In all cases, compliance and uniform reporting systems informs the public of the return on its investment in arts and cultural activities.

The current grant review process focuses primarily on the needs and aspirations of the cultural institutions themselves. Perhaps, better criteria for determining grant allocations would be the needs and aspirations of the residents of Houston. While it is important and beneficial that Houston's arts groups are supported by the City, any allocation of public dollars should recognize that the residents are, and should be, the ultimate beneficiaries.

These possibilities are critical responses that can address and eliminate perceptions of exclusivity, and lead to a civic stance where inclusion is the larger goal and diversity is a normalized outcome. The cultural field has evolved in the intervening years and research and tools that did not exist when the City initiated its arts grants, are now available to inform policy development and decision-making. A first step to greater equity and transparency is for the City to update its arts granting process to clearly articulate funding purpose and program goals, and implement an application and reporting process for all of its arts grants. The City should undertake, in a thoughtful and deliberate way, implementation of a new grants process that is based on a clear and defined rationale and is able to respond to changing conditions in the community.

Recommendation 16

Increase the funding available for small, emerging, culturally focused and ethnic organizations and artists.

Assessment:

Houston is fortunate to have a rich ecosystem of large, mid-sized and small cultural organizations. This ecosystem has seen considerable growth in recent years, particularly small and emerging organizations. According to the "Arts and Cultural Heritage Community Indicators Report 2014" published by the Center for Houston's Future: "The Houston region offers fertile ground for ambitious innovators. **More than 40 percent of the arts and cultural organizations here did not exist before the year 2000.** These new organizations struggle with funding, particularly compared to other parts of the nation. Nationally, close to a third of cultural organizations are new (founded since 2000), and bring in less than one fifth of the revenue. In the Houston region, these new outfits account for 40 percent of our arts and cultural institutions, yet account for only 10 percent of the region's total revenue accrued within the sector." The Office of Cultural Affairs can help align these programs and resources in partnership with the GHCVB and/or the Mayor's Office of Special Events.

The City of Houston should establish a service-oriented response to ensuring the advancement of small, emerging neighborhood-based organizations and honor their purpose, goals and non-traditional governance structures. Many organizations in this category present successful projects once or twice a year. Their key needs are related to logistics, accommodating audiences and event planning. (i.e. festivals, neighborhood celebrations and cultural expositions etc.). Other organizations fitting these descriptions might operate year round, have public service at the center of their mission statements, and



City Ballet of Houston, Daniella.
Photo by: Whitney Moseley

also provide programs that respond to a community's desire to preserve cultural traditions.

Many of these organizations don't consider themselves "arts" organizations, yet they contribute greatly to the multilingual, and multinational profile of Houston. These organizations would benefit from an umbrella agency or program that had the flexibility to secure funding, award small grants, and also facilitate compliance requirements for use of public spaces. Such an umbrella organization or program could also: allocate funding for projects, develop a festival guide for use in audience building or simply providing access to a roster of artists to support exhibition design and installation, sound equipment and engineers, etc. (<http://www.culturela.org/events/Festivals/festivalguides/festivals15/2015-Festival-Guide-web.pdf>).

Houstonians often tout the fact that the city is a "world city" – one of the most diverse cities in America. More than 100 languages are spoken in Houston and there are enclaves scattered throughout the city with concentrations of persons with scores of nationalities. These immigrants from around the world bring with them the arts and cultural traditions from their home countries. In many instances, they are forming nonprofit entities to promote their culture and traditions. Again, according to the "Arts and Cultural Heritage Community Indicator Report, 2014": "In 2011, IRS filings show 556 arts and cultural nonprofit organizations in Houston (region). Performing arts groups and "arts and culture" organizations (dealing with cultural and ethnic awareness, folk arts, arts education, arts and humanities councils, and community celebrations) comprise the two largest subsets of this sum, accounting for 34 percent and 19 percent, respectively, of the total figure. The region has witnessed relatively sustained increases in its number of nonprofit arts and cultural organizations. From 2000 to 2011, the quantity of these organizations increased by 68 percent overall and outpaced the rate of population growth (28 percent) over the same period. Together, this amounts to a 27.8 percent level of growth in the per capita number of cultural organizations. In relation to

the population, the region advanced from having 7.00 arts and cultural organizations per 100,000 residents in 2000 to 8.94 arts and cultural organizations per 100,000 by 2010."

Many major and established arts organizations in the region have a substantial commitment to ethnic diversity in offerings and outreach, and these populations represent a large share of arts and cultural audiences in the region. The graph on page 58 shows the growing number of arts establishments classified as "Cultural and Ethnic Awareness Organizations" in the Houston region, as well as their accessibility to certain populations. For a city that is both growing and diversifying rapidly, an increase in the number of cultural organizations serving the population would provide a solid base for fostering a more robust arts and culture scene. On the other hand, with a higher number of organizations, constraints on development, such as insufficient and/or fragmented funding, can occur. This could result in a lack of sustainability in projects and programs, as well as a potential lack of coordination among organizations.

These cultural groups struggle financially and organizationally. In some communities, the cultural affairs agency has recognized the needs of these organizations and have set up special programs that set aside special funding to nurture them. Dallas and San Francisco are two cities that have programs focused on nurturing traditional and culturally focused organizations.

Recommendation 17

Augment capacity building programs for Houston's arts and cultural organizations to reinforce sustainability.

Assessment:

Arts and cultural organizations need more than financial assistance to be sustained and grow. They need to be able to develop their organizational capacities on an ongoing basis.



Round 42, guest curator Sally Frater (left) in Nicole Miller's installation *Death of a School*, at Project Row Houses. Photo by: Bridget Fernandes

COMMENTS REGARDING THE RECOGNITION OF THE ISLAMIC COMMUNITY IN THE HOUSTON METROPOLITAN AREA

Meeting with Dr. Khawaja and Sama Azimuddin dispelled several commonly held assumptions about the immigrant community in Houston and confirmed that impactful cultural preservation activities, like the Islamic Festival, are being successfully organized and presented locally. The Islamic Festival held in 2014 attracted more than 4,000 participants – artists, young people, curious patrons and members of several Islamic communities from the Houston metropolitan area.

The venue for the event was a local high school auditorium; marketing was managed by a modest volunteer team relying mostly on word of mouth; funding to organize the logistics of preparing the exhibitions was primarily provided by the organizers with some support offered by members of the umbrella group; and high school students played the critical role of docents and interpreters.

The Islamic Festival embodies the true meaning of the word “festival” – a celebration. The event organizers worked through a long list of enabling constraints to produce an event that by any measure was a success:

- > High attendance despite no public or foundation funding-in fact, no clear understanding of eligibility to submit funding requests to any organized government agency or private arts funding agency;
- > Audience diversity was achieved by a very organic process that indicated that people are attracted to an event that exhibits high quality work, is open and inviting and where they feel welcome;
- > Financial patronage is certainly important to the typical nonprofit arts organization, but equally valuable this case is the work ethic and commitment of volunteers to sharing the unique heritage and expression of a community;

- > Despite assumptions that might exist around a community, faith or traditions that is less understood by the larger community, people are persistently proud to share their culture;
- > New arts engagement in the Houston metropolitan region that can be captured, promoted and recognized as a cultural tourism asset.

Houston ranks in the top 10 cities in the country with the highest Islamic population. Often overlooked, this community represents a successful community of professionals active in the medical, real estate, scientific and technology industries. This community of “immigrants” perhaps represents an important growing base of philanthropists that are also patrons of the larger arts community, have an interest in public education and civic life.

This event is only one of the many, many community organized activities in Houston that fall outside of the “traditional” roster of arts events. Yet, these festivals cumulatively attract as many or more residents and visitors as other more widely recognized cultural organizations. Likewise, they fall outside of the typical list of grant seekers who regularly receive funding from local arts funding structures.

The one important take away from this interview is that the Islamic Arts Festival organizers are committed to developing the festival. The resources they require are more informational and collaborative than funding.

The interview identified several areas that would be helpful:¹⁴

- > Support for logistical assistance
- > Support with Exhibition design
- > Assistance in promoting the event to larger Houston resident and visitor audiences
- > Understanding of how to access city services related to event planning; and
- > Steps that might be taken to ultimately relocate their event into a more visible venue in the city.

¹⁴ Currently, the City does not provide these functions directly or indirectly through its Arts Contractors. Dr. Azimuddin is a highly regarded Houston physician with a passion for advancing cultural expression. The event is organized solely by a volunteer committee. The Islamic Society of Greater Houston serves as an umbrella 501(c) 3. See the link below to further highlight the structure of the Festival. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5KMRHfBgygA&authuser=0>



Houston Art on the Plaza.
Photo: Courtesy of Houston Public Library

Technical assistance in the forms of marketing and audience development, private sector fundraising, financial management, board recruitment and leadership development, artistic advancement, and staff professional development are urgently needed by many small and mid-sized cultural groups, if they are to survive and even thrive. There are some such technical development programs already available through the Houston Arts Alliance, the Mid-America Arts Alliance and Fresh Arts.

The City must be willing to invest in the long-term sustainability of emerging and culturally specific organizations. A cursory review of current programs suggest a need to augment staffing with skills and specialization in working with non-traditional community based and culturally specific organizations, and dedicated resources such as an operating support fund (not attached to programming) to allow organizations to focus on recruitment, attraction and retention of professional staff.

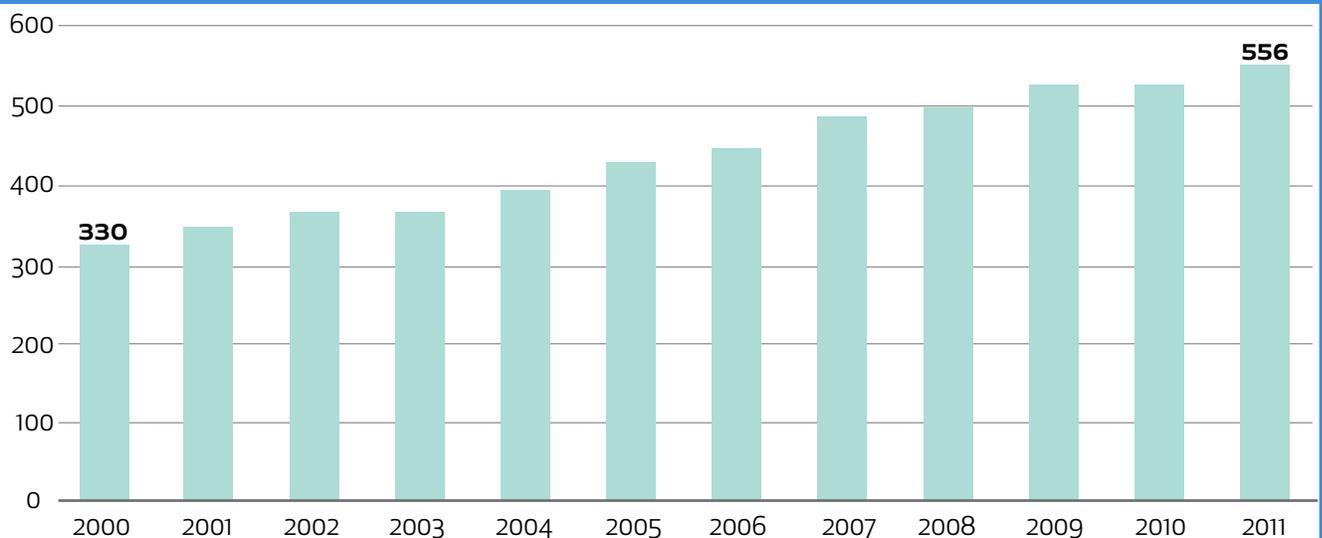
Two effective models may be:

An Arts Management Institute, similar to the Arts Incubator Program Houston Arts Alliance has, that is both a learning lab and a funding stream for a cohort of organizations that work/learn together for a three-year period to strengthen specific advancement goals. During this three-year period, the organizations are allowed to continue to apply for program support grants, and can access sustainability funding. This funding increases each year based on a matching fund challenge approach in building their budget to support the addition of new personnel and structural operations. The Institute takes on a new cohort of organizations every two years.

An Enhanced Arts Incubator Program – (similar to Dallas’ Sammons Center for the Arts), operated in a repurposed City building. A number of small arts organizations share all the back office resources, rehearsal and performance spaces,

GROWTH IN THE NUMBER OF ARTS AND CULTURE ORGANIZATIONS IN THE HOUSTON REGION

Source: Center for Houston’s Future, Arts and Cultural Heritage Community Indicators Report (2014)





UH Creative Writing Program Inprint Award Winners Reading.
Photo by: RM Photography

meeting rooms, and participate in scheduled management training courses facilitated by experts from larger cultural organizations. The Center is funded partially by the City and its nonprofit board of directors secures additional funding to augment the City's contribution. Groups are selected with an understanding that they will eventually relocate to a more permanent space over a designated period of time. This is an area where the City can collaborate with the Houston Arts Alliance.

One important, but often overlooked, area of technical assistance is programs that assist struggling organizations to reorganize, merge, transition leadership, or even gracefully go out of business. These should be elements in any technical assistance program. **Likewise, the program should also allow for shared facilities and services.** Not every small arts group needs its own high-speed copier, receptionist or financial manager. Co-located office spaces and facilities can also be a powerful incentive to collaboration among small and mid-sized cultural groups. The City is already assisting with Midtown Arts

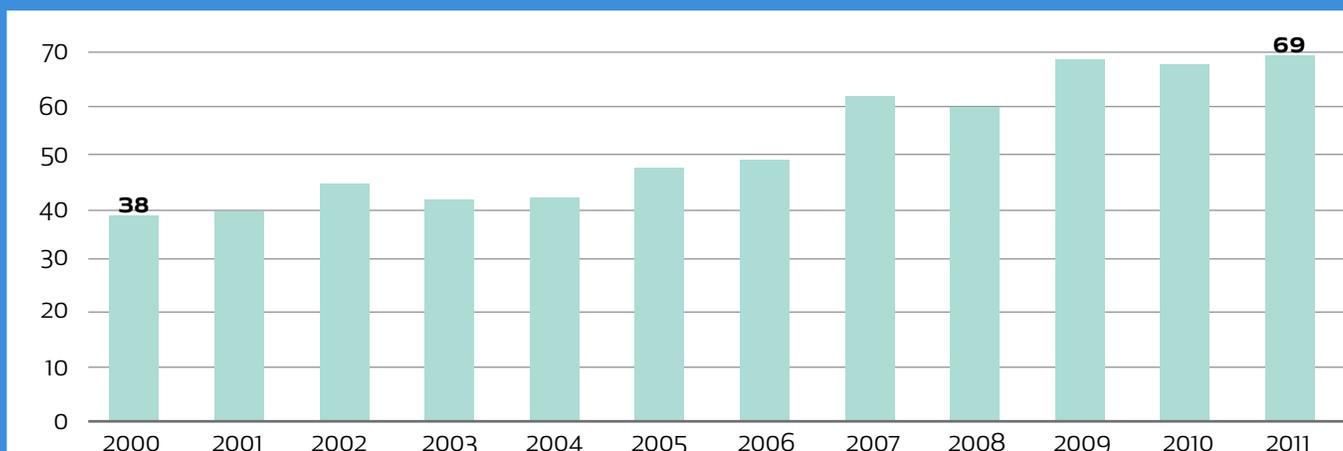
and Theater Centers Houston (MATCH) and Deluxe Theater to be operated by Texas Southern University and Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment Corporation.

Technical assistance and capacity-building programs could best be administered under service contracts with the Houston Arts Alliance (to augment its existing technical assistance and incubator programs) and other partners who can more easily manage small grants and projects.

Houston has a tier of about 15 to 20 mid-sized arts and cultural organizations. These organizations are generally of long standing in the community. These groups tend to operate close to the margin and are struggling - organizationally and financially. They lack the capacities, staff and funding to sustain themselves, but do not have significant access to private sector funding. Attempts have been made to enhance their capacities through technical assistance without great success since the resources have not been available to enable the organizations to take full advantage of the technical assistance

GROWTH IN CULTURALLY FOCUSED NONPROFITS IN THE HOUSTON REGION

Source: Center for Houston's Future, Arts and Cultural Heritage Community Indicators Report (2014)





UP Art Studio Mini Mural by artist 2:12 located at Stella Link and Latma.
Photo by: Morris Malakoff

they have been provided. A program to sustain these legacy organizations (for those groups that choose to participate) should have three elements: 1) a deep assessment of organizational capacities and needs; 2) direct, individualized technical assistance to bolster their capacities in specific areas of need; and 3) augmented funding for a reasonable period of time for the organizations to establish those new capacities into their operations. This is the best means of helping these legacy organizations to survive.

The City should establish an organization initiative that creates an environment where its 15-20 mid-sized arts organizations not only survive, but also thrive. In concert with institutions and partners like the University of Houston's MA in Arts Leadership program, United Way of Greater Houston, Houston Arts Alliance and Mid-America Arts Alliance, the City could leverage its own resources by launching an initiative that works with leaders of specific organizations to: strengthen their core "business" model, invest staff development and design strategies for increasing their potential for earned revenue as a sustainability strategy. Many of these organizations represent the same ethnically specific or discipline specific organizations that have hit a ceiling in terms of their abilities to attract new donors, trustees, staff and expertise. This kind of initiative can stimulate new investments, attract new donors and continue to strengthen the programs and services offered by target organizations to tourists and residents, and scores of young people who aspire to develop careers within the multi-disciplinary fields of arts and culture. A specific fund would be established to provide a full range of leadership and organizational building necessary to secure this initiative.

ADVANCE

STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN THE LOCAL CREATIVE ECONOMY.

Recommendation 18

Nurture the development of artists and creative talent.

Assessment:

A large, community-organized Town Hall meeting of artists was held during the planning process. Among the many issues discussed at the forum, affordable housing/ live-work space rose to the top of local artists' concerns. At one time in the not-too-distant past, Houston was an affordable city – artists and cultural organizations could find reasonably priced spaces to work, perform, rehearse and exhibit. The rising cost of real estate and rental has begun to change in ways that make workspaces and venues unaffordable. Houston has a remarkable number of working artists in need of live-work and studio space. It also has a large collection of performing and exhibiting organizations in need of venues, both presenting and rehearsal spaces. Action is needed if artists and small and mid-sized arts organizations are going to be able to stay in Houston. These artists and cultural groups contribute substantially to the vibrancy of Houston's life.

Houston, perhaps even more than most cities, has an employee/employer economy. Artists, designers and craftsmen are more likely to belong to the subset of the creative class who regard themselves as independent workers, self-employed and building their own future. That's important because one of the great freedoms accorded by the digital economy is the ability to choose where you live and work independently of



Your Loyal Mighties at HPD's Service animal Facility, 2010, by artist Sharon Engelstein.
Photo by: Sharon Engelstein

where a particular employer is located. As Houston's reputation for enabling and supporting such independent work grows, it will become more attractive to creative workers—because even those who come to a city for a particular job want the option of going independent if they choose. **A study of cultural facilities and space needs for organizations and artists in Houston would provide a strategic tool to inform local economic development priorities.**

Many artists and creative workers, and in particular, Millennials, are attracted to urbanity. They like the kind of active, amenity-rich neighborhoods that tend to cluster nearer to the center of cities, and they like the bike paths and green connective spaces that are being created in Houston. Many young artists are already enthusiastic evangelists for those changes, but their energy is not being used most effectively because no one is engaging with them in relation to those causes and values. It is a huge missed opportunity. Urbanity needs the public realm. It needs amenities such as live/work spaces, and third places: all the physical and social components, which aid connections. If Houston can deploy more affordable live-work studio spaces, a program to make artist communities models for what can be done immediately to foster connection and maximize sustainability, it would go a long way to retaining and attracting artists and creative workers.

Recommendation 19

Support and strengthen relationships with anchor arts and cultural institutions as key economic and community drivers.

Assessment:

Anchor institutions are nonprofit institutions that once established tend not to move location. These may be performing or visual arts, universities, hospitals, sports facilities, and other

cultural facilities or churches. Anchor institutions are economic engines for cities and regions. They typically have significant real estate holdings, are large employers, purchasers of significant goods, magnets for complementary businesses and developers of human capital. The place-based nature of anchor institutions makes them important partners in city building. *"Anchor institutions are enterprises, typically nonprofits, that are firmly rooted in their locales. Because they are 'sticky capital' (unlike for-profit companies that may relocate for a variety of reasons), anchors have, at least in principle, an economic self-interest in helping ensure that the communities in which they are based are safe, vibrant, and healthy."*¹⁵ Strengthening these institutions is important to ensuring successful urban strategies.

For an institution to survive, it must adapt to its environment and in Houston, where the community is growing and changing rapidly, the City can help its cultural institutions not only adapt, but respond to these changes in ways that sustain the organizations and make Houston a better place. The City's economic development tools offer one set of strategies. It can utilize the City's real estate holdings and right-of-way authority to facilitate the expansion and development of cultural facilities.

On a programmatic level, cities have worked strategically with anchor institutions to expand awareness and access to institutions through common branding, use of "culture cards" and coordinated programs. The Seattle Office of Cultural Affairs organized an art exhibition and forum about mental illness, bringing together city, county, nonprofit and business groups in dialog about an important issue facing their community. The Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department received a grant from

¹⁵ Tedd Howard, "How Communities can make the most of their Anchor Initiations," *Governing the States and Localities*, January 9, 2014, <http://www.governing.com/gov-institute/voices/col-communities-local-government-anchor-institutions-democracy-collaborative-dashboard.html>



A calligraphy artist demonstrates his technique to visitors during the Children's Museum of Houston's annual Mid-Autumn Fest. Photo: Courtesy of the Children's Museum of Houston

the National Endowment for the Arts to partner arts groups with homeless housing shelters and social service groups to provide quality arts programming. The New York City Office of Cultural Affairs used the City's new municipal ID card to offer a one-year free membership to major cultural institutions. These are just a few examples of how the City can strengthen its relationship with Houston's anchor cultural institutions much beyond the current arts and culture grants.

Recommendation 20

Highlight and develop cultural arts initiatives that celebrate Houston's diverse artists, cultures and communities.

Houston has many enclaves of historic assets and cultures from around the world that have great potential to support visitorship by both tourists and local residents. Targeted tourism development can support the City's efforts to redevelop neighborhoods and support the creation of lively arts and cultural districts. Holistic city planning inclusive of policy-making neighborhood development, and tourism development can achieve these goals. Partnering with the Planning & Development Department and the Department of Neighborhoods (DON) could be a focus.

The role of artists of the Millennial generation—those born between roughly the early 1980's and the early two thousands, could be richer and more impactful than it is. The city and its arts programs engage with artists chiefly as grant applicants, but conversations with young artists found a deep alignment of their values with trends that the city is pursuing and encouraging, including historic preservation. Young artists tend to be idealistic. They are willing to invest their time in behalf of causes they believe in. They could be the field troops for historic preservation—and the values they commit to now

will be with most of them for the rest of their lives. Millennial artists could lead a generational shift in attitude toward respecting and preserving Houston's past. The artists from focus groups and meetings said they never talk to anyone else. There is little visible outreach from the historic preservation community to young artists, but they are a huge potential source of support—particularly since their influence will only grow with time.

Millennials also represent the most ethnically varied cohort in American history and engage across racial and ethnic boundaries more than any other generation. Artists say no one talks to them except about the next grant cycle. Engaging young artists in a dialogue to develop new socially relevant grant programs and programs to identify and promote the city's cultural depth would likely bring about much more interest in grants and opportunities for artists. The key is that in a city as large as Houston, there needs to be more cross-pollination, more conscious cultivation of connections among people, more shared interest, and that will bring more success.

Recommendation 21

Advocate for systemic access to quality arts and culture education in Houston's public schools.

Assessment:

Texas requires public elementary and middle schools to provide instruction in art, music and theater at each grade level, covering curriculum standards called the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. High Schools must cover two of the four areas: art, music, theater and dance. Districts can decide how to meet the mandates. A general third-grade teacher, for example, could cover the fine arts standards.

Many of the area's large districts guarantee that every ele-



Ars Lyrica Houston, Crumhorn Collective, Renaissance Rock at the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, May 2015. Photo by: Mathias Reed

mentary school has one art teacher and one music teacher and that every secondary school offers an array of fine arts classes. The Houston Independent School District (HISD), the state's largest district, where most children come from lower income families, makes no such promises. Young Audiences of Houston surveyed HISD elementary and middle schools and found that about 30 percent did not have at least one full-time certified fine arts teacher last school year.

In an Edutopia article, author Fran Smith summarized the importance of arts education.

"Art does not solve problems, but makes us aware of their existence," sculptor Magdalena Abakanowicz has said. Arts education, on the other hand, does solve problems. Years of research show that it's closely linked to almost everything that we as a nation say we want for our children and demand from our schools: academic achievement, social and emotional development, civic engagement, and equitable opportunity.

Involvement in the arts is associated with gains in math, reading, cognitive ability, critical thinking, and verbal skill. Arts learning can also improve motivation, concentration, confidence, and teamwork. A 2005 report by the Rand Corporation about the visual arts argues that the intrinsic pleasures and stimulation of the art experience do more than sweeten an individual's life. According to the report, they "can connect people more deeply to the world and open them to new ways of seeing," creating the foundation to forge social bonds and community cohesion. And strong arts programming in schools helps close a gap that has left many a child behind. From Mozart for Babies and tutus for toddlers to family trips to the museum, the children of affluent, aspiring parents generally get exposed to the arts whether or not public schools provide them. Low-income children, however, often do not." Smith adds the compelling words from Eric Cooper, president

and founder of the Nation Urban Alliance for Effective Education "Arts education enables those children from a financially challenged background to have a more level playing field with children who have had those enrichment experiences."

Today's school children represent the audiences of the future. If Houston's arts and cultural institutions are to enjoy robust citizen participation and attendance in the future, it is essential that Houston's children are exposed to the arts as children. According to the Kinder Institute for Urban Research "The Houston Arts Survey: Participation, Perceptions and Prospects" report, "Having been involved with the arts as a child is an important predictor of arts participation in later life. This relationship has been emphasized in several national studies, and it is fully corroborated by the results of the Houston research. Attending live performances in the arts, listening to music or watching cultural videos at home, and personal involvement with the arts through performing, writing or creating – all were strongly correlated with childhood exposure."

While arts education is not a primary responsibility of the City of Houston, the City can play a significant role in advocating for a strong emphasis on the arts as part of the basic education of Houston's school children and by supporting the important work of nonprofits like Young Audiences of Houston. **Art education programs can also be geographically dispersed by utilizing City facilities such as parks, libraries and community multi-service centers.** The City can also highlight successful arts education activities of its major cultural institutions, most of which do outreach to schoolchildren.¹⁶

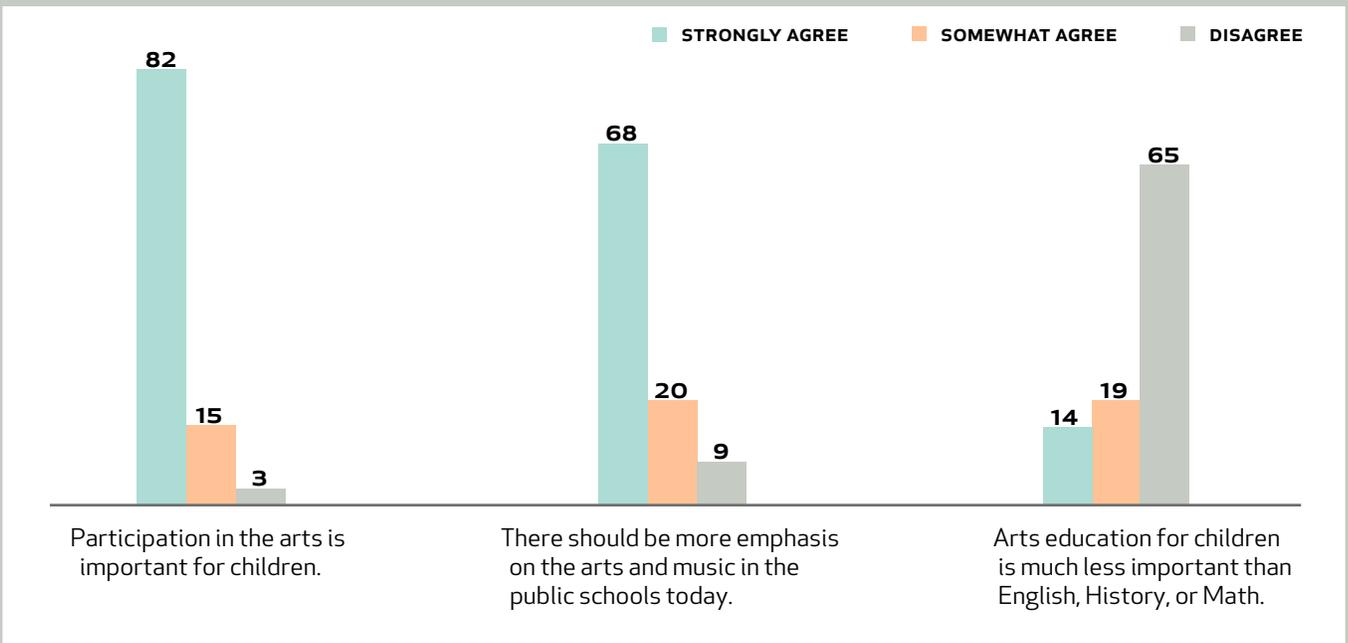
¹⁶ <http://www.edutopia.org/arts-music-curriculum-child-development>



Houston Police Officer's Memorial by artist Jesús Moroles.
Photo. Courtesy of Houston Arts Alliance

IMPORTANCE OF ARTS EDUCATION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Source: Kinder Institute for Urban Research, The Houston Arts Survey: Participation, Perceptions and Prospects (2012)



Recommendation 22

Encourage and partner with area universities, corporations, businesses and institutions to elevate and enhance arts and culture.

Urban universities, medical centers and other anchor institutions are important because they make strong contributions to the economic bases of their host communities and beyond. Their knowledge “products” take many forms: education, research, and commercial applications. They provide their cities

with tangible benefits, such as high employment, improved landholdings, and capital attraction and expenditure. They offer intangible advantages through participation in civic affairs, as well as the prestige lent by their location in a given city. They also tend to be highly multicultural in their staffing and customers. Houston’s universities and the Medical Center offer tremendous opportunity to engage many more people in the arts and culture and enhance Houston’s identity. Already universities and hospitals have invested in rich cultural programming and most are in the process of expanding. The center for Performing Arts Medicine at Houston Methodist Hospital has become a model for arts and wellness including concerts, arts and music therapy.



Clear Lake Area Chamber of Commerce's Epicurean Evening 2015.
Photo by: Lauren Laake

Texas Medical Center is the world's largest life sciences destination. With 106,000 employees, 50,000 life science students, and thousands of volunteers and patient visits, more than 160,000 people from all over the world visit Texas Medical Center each day.

Businesses and corporations represent an important partnership opportunity for arts and cultural development. A recent study by the Strategic Counsel examined the motivations for business investment in various charitable categories. The study concluded that “[f]or businesses, the public's extensive engagement with the arts and the various forms this takes provides a series of opportunities to reach consumers in new and different ways.” The study found a high amount of business contributions to health, social service and educational efforts and suggests an approach for the arts to consider in developing effective appeals to the business sector, “The implication here is that there is an opportunity to develop a set of SROI [social return on investment] measures and that these measures could include a number of the areas that have been found to be important to both the public and to businesses as reasons for supporting the arts. This list would include: the benefits the arts provide in enhancing well-being and health; the contribution art makes to creating vibrant communities; the potential of art to assist disadvantaged youth; and, finally, the role of art in enhancing the emotional and intellectual development of children.”¹⁷

Local leaders increasingly understand the critical importance of anchor institutions within their own cities' economic development strategies. In some instances, a mutually beneficial dynamic evolves between an anchor institution and its community, creating economically sustainable commercial corridors, vibrant streets, and dense, diverse neighborhoods. Plenty of great college towns across America showcase this productive interplay. But in many other cases, especially in underserved urban areas, institutional and civic leadership must be more entrepreneurial, actively championing projects, programs, and policies to achieve these outcomes.

Recommendation 23

Advance efforts for regional arts and cultural planning.

Assessment:

This planning effort has been most directly involved with examining and defining the role of Houston's City government in arts and cultural development. In that sense, it is a CITY cultural plan. With a large and growing number of residents outside the City boundary, a regional community planning effort is needed. The City has a pivotal role to play in such an effort and can begin laying the groundwork with its peer municipalities in the surrounding region. The City has also gained experience from its planning process and built a base of engaged residents concerned with arts and cultural life, which it can use to help support a much deeper engagement with the residents, workers and visitors of the Houston region. Typically, such a planning effort involves many partner agencies and municipalities and for a region the size of Houston, it would take at least 24 months to complete.

In a city as large as Houston, with its myriad arts and cultural resources, just keeping track of them can be a challenge. Several cities, including Philadelphia, New Orleans and Washington DC, have developed an inventory and resource map to give a full picture of the arts and cultural assets of their city. These tools vary in their scope and complexity – they can range from simple tools that locate arts resources geographically to complex GIS systems that allow multiple overlays that allow for correlating data. For instance, in Washington DC, it is possible to overlay the Metro transit map onto the locations of the city's

¹⁷ Building the Case for Business Support of the Arts: A Study Commissioned by Business for the Arts, February 2015, The Strategic Counsel, <http://www.businessforthearts.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Business-Support-for-the-Arts-%E2%80%93-Making-the-Case.pdf>



Houston SLAB Parade + Family Festival.
Photo by: Marc Newsome



Lone Star Flight Museum at Ellington Airport, Fall 2014 Press Event.
Photo by: Evan Austin

monuments. Or, a user can correlate the city's artist live-work spaces with the City's economic investment zones.

The kinds of information that is typically included on these art resource maps include:

- > Arts and cultural institutions
- > Historic sites
- > Public art and monuments
- > Artist live-work and maker spaces
- > Locations of major festivals, special events and celebration
- > Locations of City-funded arts and cultural events and programs
- > Arts and cultural venues
- > City transportation system
- > City Council districts
- > Economic investment zones
- > Creative economy businesses
- > Arts, cultural and historic districts
- > City growth areas

These tools become extremely useful for a variety of users: for the local arts agencies to determine the distribution of its grants into target neighborhoods, for City planners to locate artist concentrations with an eye to developing cultural districts, for university researchers, for non-arts institutions trying to find creative resources nearby, for visitors trying to locate arts and cultural attractions, for parents to find arts opportunities for their children, and so on. Houston's General Plan (Plan Houston) is developing a tool along these lines and including cultural assets would help build awareness of local resources among a wide range of potential users.

An additional recommendation is for the GHCVB to build a digital library of content about Houston, in audio, video, photog-

raphy and print, with stories and images. Every file should identify its origin, who owns it and how it can be used, and it should be tagged for subjects. This will be, over time, invaluable and would provide significant content for the resource inventory and map.

Recommendation 24

Research creating a purchasing cooperative for goods and services needed by local artists and arts nonprofits.

Assessment:

It has been proposed that the City form a purchasing collective to acquire bulk goods and services on behalf of local artist and cultural organizations. Cooperative procurement has been proven to reduce administrative and product costs, increase efficiencies and stretch shrinking budgets during difficult times. Cooperative procurement aggregates the purchasing power of multiple entities in order to entice the vendor community to offer deeper discounts on goods and services. If it can be established, it could provide real benefits to hundreds of local nonprofits, with minimal outlay on the part of the City. It would require some staffing and storage facilities, but these could be contracted out and even paid through membership fees of collective members.

Recommendation 25

Support State funding for area Cultural Districts designated by the Texas Commission on the Arts.

Assessment:

Another tool for engaging audiences and aligning Houston's



Creative Writing Camp by Writers in the Schools.
Photo by: Alyssa Stephens

identity with arts and culture is the State’s Cultural District program. As authorized by H.B. 2208 of the 79th Legislature, the Texas Commission on the Arts (TCA) can designate cultural districts in cities across Texas. Cultural districts are special zones that harness the power of cultural resources to stimulate economic development and community revitalization. These districts can become focal points for generating businesses, attracting tourists, stimulating cultural development and fostering civic pride. The TCA, Texas Cultural Trust and Texans for the Arts collaborated to create tools and indicators to measure the success of cultural districts. Now that funding is becoming available to complement the designations, Houston’s districts will want to monitor their performance and the City can help districts track key metrics and be more competitive for grant funding opportunities.

Recommendation 26

Develop a public art master plan to guide the future development of the Civic Art Program.

Assessment:

The Civic Art Program was created 16 years ago. Changing conditions, the potential of an updated Civic Art Ordinance and the benefit of lengthy experience managing this program suggest that a fresh overall look at the program would be beneficial. A useful tool employed in many cities is development of a public art master plan. The Houston Arts Alliance has begun such an analysis, with the General Services Department, for multiple City departments. Areas that are typically considered in the creation of a public art master plan include:

- > Incentives for public art in private development
- > Geographic distribution of public art around the city
- > Creation of a temporary public art program

- > Creation of an “on-call” artist program to work with various City departments
- > Strategies to develop sufficient funding to commission major iconic artworks
- > Professional development for artists wishing to participate in public art
- > Reexamination of program policies and guidelines
- > Assessment of the existing collection, for condition and appropriateness of siting and retention in the collection
- > Other issues that might arise in the planning process

Recommendation 27

Utilize economic development partnerships to implement existing and new tools for artists and creative businesses.

Assessment:

The City’s Economic Development Division can utilize the City’s real estate holdings and right-of-way authority to facilitate the expansion and development of cultural facilities and affordable live / work spaces for artists. The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, for example, recently benefited from a right-of-way abandonment by the City for expansion of the Museum Campus. Valued in excess of \$1,000,000, the City provided key support for the growth of the region’s largest museum. The City can also facilitate cultural facility development through what are commonly called 380 Agreements – a reference to chapter 380 of the Texas Local Government Code. This chapter authorizes Texas municipalities to provide assistance for promotion and encouragement of economic development. In these types of agreements a developer commits to investing money to construct and operate a business that will create jobs and economic activity and as an example, the City can support the



The Houston Symphony presents its annual Star-Spangled Salute concert at Miller Outdoor Theatre. Photo by: Jeff Fitlow



NASA Shuttle Carrier Aircraft Move to Space Center Houston for Independence Plaza Exhibit. Photo by: Lauren Laake

project by reimbursing the developer with a portion of City's sales and/or mixed beverage tax revenue over some number of years. The City partnered with the pending Midtown Arts and Theater Center Houston (MATCH) with such an agreement.

The City has other tools at its disposal including real estate holdings in the form of land and facilities and additional incentives it can employ to help attract more artists to the city and grow the number of creative businesses based in Houston. The City can also foster partnerships to advance economic development of the creative industries.

CONCLUSION

The 27 recommendations in the Arts and Cultural Plan were developed by identifying what matters to people and communities through a public engagement process and by examining existing public input gathered from recent surveys, reports, and a wealth of existing research. The recommendations support the City's vision and priorities for arts and cultural development by leveraging the City's unique position in the local cultural ecosystem. The Arts and Cultural Plan aims to make the arts and cultural vitality synonymous with Houston's identity.

Many of the recommendations will be implemented by the City and the Office of Cultural Affairs. There are also recommendations that require further dialogue and consensus building before implementation can begin. One specific recommendation calls for ongoing convening of the community around important cultural policy issues. **The intention is for the Arts and Cultural Plan to be the beginning of conversations and not the end.**

APPENDIX



AFA faculty member Andres Gonzalez coaches chamber music as part of the AFA 2015 Summer Music Conservatory. Photo by: David Dehoyos

PARTICIPANTS

No effort as big as this is undertaken without contributions from a lot of people. It is with tremendous gratitude we thank the hundreds of participants who contributed time, advice, opinions, guidance and expertise during the planning process. The challenge with assembling a list like this is that some people will be inadvertently left off, and for that we apologize. Thank you as well to the thousands more who contributed through social media or by extending a planning conversation to your organization or event.

Tyler A
Nadia AbdulGhani
Carol Adams
Mary Adams
Rose Adams
David Adicks
Pia Agrawal
Jagdip Ahluwalia
Juan Alanis
Mike Alexander
Ernesto Alfaro
Obi Alfred
Bruce Allen
Rebecca Allison
Willie Alston
Cynthia Alvarado
Michelle Alvarez
Lori Amador
Tina Ameblue
Anisha Anand
Brenda Anderson
John Anderson
Pamela Andino
Christopher Andrews
Andrew Angel
Daniel Anguilu
D Ann
Karen Aptekar
Diane Aquila
Deborah Archie
Rebecca Ardoin
Mario Ariza
Katrina Arnim
Bill Arning
Tha Artist
Courtney Ashby
Vena Ashley
Jorunn Asker
Katy Atkiss
Tom Atwell
Rommel Austria
Wendy Ayala

Khawaja Azimuddin MD
Stephanie B
Hashim Badat
Lawrence Bagwill
Arthur Baird
Philamena Baird
Brittany Baize
Laura Baker
Lindsey Ball
Rabea Ballin
Diane Barber
Radu Barbuceanu
Stephanie Bardwil
Alesia Barnes
Sarah Barnett
David Barnham
Tyson Bartlett
Jackie Bassat
Julie Bata
Eryn Bauer
Dexter Bayack
Michelle Beale
Kimber Becker
Alexis Baffer
Jaclyn Bell
Tomaro Bell
Chuy Benitez
Eli Bensky
Matthew Benton
Jay Berckley
Holly Beretto
Sandra Bernhard
Betsy Berther
Anirban Bhaumik
Rusty Bienvenue
James Blackburn
Angela Blanchard
Jennifer Matthieu Blessington
Michael Bloome
Michael Bludworth
Robin Blut
Susan Bobrick



Living Room Art, by Sehba Sarwar and Voices Breaking Boundaries, Homes and Histories, African American Library at the Gregory School, Freedmen's Town. Photo by: Burnell McCray

Lise Bohn
 Jessica Bola-os
 Hannah Bonner
 Mayra Bontemps
 Jon Boone
 Kate Booth
 Leo Boucher
 Cindy Bourne
 Jenni Bowman
 Sean Boyd
 Susan Bradford
 Tony Brandt
 Karen Brasier Young
 Bridget Bray
 Daniel Brents
 Frank Briones
 Anne Brith
 Liam Brod
 Marisa Brodie
 Colin Brokaw
 Becky Brown
 Christian Brown
 Jessica Brown
 Sara Brown
 Tenecia Brown
 Ed Browne
 Madison Bruner
 Robert Bryant
 Cameron Buckner
 Kathryn Bumbaugh
 Regina Buono
 Keelin Burrinous
 Renia Butler
 Sean Cafferky
 Levi Calderon
 Lauren Camacho
 Judy Camerena
 Shar-day Campbell
 Rudy Zanzibar Campos
 Baltazar Canales
 Laura Canning
 Andrea Caracostis, MD

Gian Cardenas
 Angela Carranza
 Jonah Cars
 Philett Carter
 Valerie Cassel Oliver
 Jimmy Castillo
 Anjelica Cazares
 Penny Cerling
 Emily Chadwick
 David Chambers
 Stephen Chao
 Paul Charles
 Miguel Chavez
 Stephanie Chen
 Matt Chisari
 June Christensen
 Bonnie Christiansen
 Jason Cisneroz
 Ann Clark
 Miyani Clark
 Kenneth Clayborne
 Ashley Clemmer Hoffman
 Sarah Coale
 Lizette Cobb
 Barry Coffing
 Joseph Cohen
 Mitch Cohen
 Thomas Colbert
 Albert Coleman
 Eric Coleman
 Alice Collette
 Elisandra Colon
 Sarah Cominsky
 Barry Conner
 J Conrad
 Conrado Contreras
 Charles Cook
 Rachel Cook
 Gene Cope
 Marie Cortes
 Stephen Costello
 Jessica Craft

John Cramer
 Brian Crimmins
 Brian Crockett
 Jay Crossley
 Kelly Cryer
 Mark Cuerva
 Tia Culbreth
 Chris Cusack
 Dean Daderko
 Madeline Dames
 Monica Danna-Garcia
 Chloe Dao
 Devon Britt Darby
 Sushmita Dasgupta
 Jennifer Davenport
 Carl David Evans
 Robin Davidson
 Bonnie Davis
 Carolyn Davis
 Jillian Davis
 Marcus Davis
 Patrick Davis
 Tracey Dean
 Michael DeLeGarza
 Tyler Dennis
 Amanda DeRosario
 Gira Desai
 Rachel Deskin
 Matthew Detrick
 Marta DF
 Jose Diaz
 Tony Diaz
 Jason Dibley
 Emily Dietle
 Anthony Dinh
 Joel Dinkin
 Terri DiRaddo
 Jim Dobberstine
 Ned Dodington
 Tom Dombusch
 Nathaniel Donnett
 Janis Doty

Dawson Dowdy
 Marlana Doyle
 Sarah Dropek
 Helen Drummond
 Brittany Duncan
 Catelin Dunn
 Judson Dunn
 James Dunne
 Donna Durbin
 Truman Edminster
 Eileen Edmonds
 Noah Edmondson
 Ursula Edwards
 Ellen Efsic
 Farès el-Dahdah
 Michael Elizabeth
 Clare Elliott
 Susan Elmore
 Elizabeth England
 Bradford Epley
 Jay Ernst
 Nick Espinosa
 Rebecca Estrada
 Janice Evans
 Raissa Evans
 Summer F
 Jess Faerman
 Karen Farber
 Jeremy Faulk
 Erika Fawcett
 Gwendolyn Fedrick
 Carlos Fernandez
 Sandra Fernandez
 Falayn Ferrell
 Jose Figueroa
 Mojan Filsoofi
 Roswitha Firth
 Kathy Flanagan Peyton
 Randall Flinn
 Amanda Flores
 Jack Flowers
 Wendy Fok



We are in the Business of Changing the World, SS at HPDs South Gessner Station, 2015, by artist Tara Conley. Photo by: Tara Conley

Eileen Ford
 Juliana Forero
 Shawna Forney
 Linda Foss
 Susan Fowler
 Wayne Fox
 Nelly M. Fraga
 Kenneth Franco
 Kam Franklin
 Jorge Franz
 April M Frazier
 Todd Frazier
 Megan Freemantle
 Kenny Friedman
 Jason Fuller
 Ben G
 Sarah Gabbart
 Marlene Gafrick
 Michael Galbreth
 Rachel Galton
 Johnny Gant
 David Garcia
 Roland Garcia
 Jenn Gardner
 Andrew Garrett
 Pete Ed Garrett
 Jennifer Garza
 Sonia Garza-Monarchi
 Greg Gatlin
 Eimile Gavagan
 Harry Gee, Jr.
 Keith Gehbauer
 Elisah Gelladuga
 Elliot Gershenson
 Amy Gibbs
 Sarah Gibson
 Donna Giles
 Dawn Gillespie
 Cecilia Gimenez-Zapiola
 Roopa Gir
 Sarah Gish
 Dean Gladden

Carrie Glassman Shoemake
 Thomas Glenn
 Gary Goerner
 Gwen Goffe
 Amira Gongora
 Elisa Gonzales
 Andy Gonzalez
 Angie Gonzalez
 Catherine Gonzalez
 Fernando Gonzalez
 Chon Goode
 Anthony Gorrity
 Richard Graber
 Mandy Graessle
 Mary Grace Gray
 Essence Green
 Suzanne Greene
 Will Greer
 Tommy Gregory
 David Greiss
 C Grey
 Lauren Griffith
 Taylor Grobelny
 David Grueve
 John Guess
 Gay Ann Gustafson
 Harrison Guy
 Megan Hageney
 Guy Hagstette
 Joanie Haley
 Nadia Halim
 Gibson Hall
 Matlon Hall
 Elizabeth Hamilton
 John Hampson
 MaryJane Hancock
 Jeanne Haner
 Mark Hanson
 Michael Hardy
 Janice Harris
 Vivian Harris
 Jeffrey Hartford

Bob Harvey
 Pete Hasbrook
 Joyce Hatch
 Dan Havel
 Paula Hawkins
 Lana Hayes
 Stephanie Haynes
 James Hays
 Philip Hays
 Rock Head
 George Heathco
 Kathryn Hemour
 Deahlan Hendershot
 Karen Hendricks
 Kathryn Herman
 Clemencia Hernandez
 Kim Hester
 Josh Higgins
 Melissa Hill
 Yvette Hines
 Patrice Hinson
 Paul Hobby
 Monica Hoffman
 J. Nathaniel Holland
 Kellee Hollis
 Stacey Holzer
 Wei Hong
 Lonnie Hoogeboom
 Billy Hopkins
 Doug Horn
 Claudia Horwitz
 Kim Howard
 Tom Howard
 Yuru Huang
 Calvin Hudson
 Bobby Huegel
 Brians Hues
 Cathy Hurst
 Emily Hynds
 Soha Irani
 Stan Irish
 Alexandra Irvine

Marie Jacinto
 Jade Jackson
 Nina Jackson
 Tarsha Jackson
 Rory Jagdeo
 Krystal Jainga
 Pat Jasper
 Sarah Jawda
 Carolyn Jenkins
 Susan Jimenez
 Jim Johnson
 Julie Johnson
 Natasha Johnson
 Michael Johnston
 Cynthia Jones
 Jessica Jones
 Stephanie Ann Jones
 Sarah Joseph
 Nancy Julian
 Tammie Kahn
 Toby Kamps
 James Kanuth
 Jeff Kaplan
 Steven Karpas
 Barbara Kauffman
 Jeremy Keas
 Darra Keeton
 Sara Kellner
 Sharda Kelly
 Aidan Kennedy
 Yani Rose Keo
 Daniel Kerschen
 Sal Khatri
 Kelly Kielsmeier
 Lynn Killam
 Jim Kilpatrick
 Kelly Kindred
 Carey Kirkpatrick
 Katy Kleinhans
 Jacob Klennentich
 Stephen L. Klineberg, Ph.D
 Jennifer Knesek



Houston Public Library's Children's Book Festival 2015 on the Plaza.
Photo: Courtesy of Houston Public Library



Art Parking Meters, *Urban-Over-Growth-Summer* Troy Stanley. Photo by: Marc Newsome

Susi Knight
 Rainey Knudson
 Valerie Koehler
 Loli Kolber
 Rex Koontz
 Sharon Kopriva
 Brooke Kotrla
 Loreta Kovacic-Parani
 Skye Krienitz
 Sheng Kuan Chung
 Rathna Kumar
 Richard Kutner
 Dillon Kyle
 Karen L
 Norma L. Bradley
 Kevin Lacobie
 Karee Laing
 David Lake
 Mia Lamanuzzi
 Amy Lampi
 Tanara Landor
 Angela Lane
 Lynn Lane
 A. Langley
 Michele LaNoue
 Monte Large
 Mike Laster
 Doug Lawing
 Mary Lawler
 Rhea Lawson
 Alecia Lawyer
 Ryan Leach
 Michelle LeBlanc
 Candice Lee
 Marilyn Lee
 Perryn Leech
 Eric Lehinsky
 Maura Leon-Barber
 Will Leonard
 Misha Lesley
 Nancy Letcher
 Brad Levy

Kenneth Li
 Lisa Lin
 Darryl Linden
 Dave Lippert
 Jafang Liu
 Aimee Llerena
 Katy Lopez
 Sandra Lord
 Allison Lot
 Kathryn Lott
 Elizabeth Love
 Rick Lowe
 Joel Luks
 Bruce Lumpkin
 Monica Luna
 Kim Lykins
 Robert Lynn
 J Ma
 Brenden Macaluso
 Vanessa Maciel
 Prince Maduekwe
 Stephen Maislin
 Ryan Makhani
 Theresa Mallett
 Joseph Mandola
 Helen Mann
 Randy Manser
 Sophie Margolin
 Debbie Markey
 Marlene Marlowe
 Marcus Maroney
 Elizabeth Lizz Martin
 Michele Martin
 Angela Martinez
 Gabriel Martinez
 Matthew Martinez
 Steve Martinez
 Vick Martinez
 Jack Massing
 Shelli Matthew
 Hadia Mawlawi
 Ashlei Mayadia

John Mayfield
 Ivory Mayhorn
 Josette McAdams
 Cheryl McCallum
 Kevin McCarthy
 Heather McClesky
 Michelle McCormick
 Gretchen McDaniel
 Paul McEntire
 Darci McFerran
 Carl McGowan
 Mark McGowen
 Joe McKee
 Melvanean McLemore
 Mark McMillien
 Kevin McNally
 Denise McNeil
 Akia McPhaul
 Robert Meaney
 Christopher Medina
 Renae Medlock
 Alanna Melchor
 Jose Mendoza
 Peter Merwin
 Mary Curry Mettenbrink
 Lauren Meyers
 Sofia Michaelides
 Morgan Mikes
 Gina Miller
 Ray Miller
 Jim Mills
 William Minter
 Ren Mitchell
 Fernando Mladineo
 Azin Mohajerin
 Catalina Molnari
 Vivian Montejano
 Judy Mood
 Audrey Moore
 Raven Moore
 Rosev Moore
 Eduardo Moram

Phillip Morello
 JC Morgan
 Sara Morgan
 Eileen Morris
 Yuri Morse
 Curtis Moshay Jr.
 Malcom Mpinduzi-Mott
 P A Mueller
 Juan Muir Lockhaz
 Diana Mumford
 B.N. Murali
 Mandy McGowen
 Alicia Murray
 Vance Muse
 Oday N
 Tommy Napier
 Amir Nayebpour
 Carole Nelson
 Jim Nelson
 Wayne Nelson
 W.O. Neuhaus III
 Clark Newman
 Wesley Newman
 Adam Newton
 Paula Newton
 Kay Nguyen
 Minh Nguyen
 Tengah Nguyen
 Kyle Nielsen
 Tanara Nikole
 Dan Nip
 James Nolan
 Bob Nowak
 Matthew Nuss
 Tom O'Dell
 June O'Neil
 Doug Oakley
 Dennis Obukowicz
 Tolu Oduba
 Lindy Oliva
 Kermit Oliver
 Pam Olson



Art Car Parade, Orange Show Center for Visionary Art.
Photo by: David Sheard

Mohammed Omar
Evan O'Neil
Andres Orozco-Estrada
Esteban Ortiz
Humberto Ortiz Pompa
Mark Osborne
Susan Osterberg
Kate Ostrow-Yadan
Judson Ozenne
Gary Packwood
Barbara Paige
Roxanne Paiva
Doriana Pappacena-Rossi
Loreta Kovacic Parani
Annise Parker
Cheryl Parker
Steve Parker
Arturo Parra
Doug Parrish
James Partsch-Galvan
Katharine Patrick
Larry Payne
Carlos Paz
Brad Pearl
Madeline Pena
James Pendleton
Michael Peranteau
Fernando Perez
R Perez
Jayson Peters
Kristi Pewthers
Sandy Pham
Kathleen Philbrick
Tamra Pierce
Sara Pierre
Antoine Plante
Sharon Plummer
Maura Polansky
Don Poole
Eduardo Portillo
Heidi Powell
Rachel Powers

Heidi Prera
Greg Preston
Damon Price
Katie Prichard
Bobby Qasim
Barbara Quattro
Angel Quesada
Elia Quiles
Theresa Quintanilla
Tiffany Rachann
Jeffrey Ragsdale
David Rainey
Clinton Raley
M.A. Ramji
Jennifer Ramos
Venu Rao
Juanita Rasmus
Alan Ratliff
Gayla Rawlinson-Maynard
Bucky Rea
Kelly Rector
Jeff Reichman
Michael Remson
Todd Reppert
Rebecca Reyna
Diandra Rhodes
Ragan Rhodes
Andy Rich
Adam Richardson
Bobby Riggins
Cati Rines
Brian Ritter
Sonia Rivera
Robert Robbins
John Roberts
Cathy Robertson
Jamie Robertson
Dan Robicheaux
Deon Robinson
James Robinson
Robert Robleto
Shay Rodgers

Baldemar Rodriguez
Grace Rodriguez
Rebecca Rodriguez
Preston Roe
Jonathan Rogers
Ana Roman
Regina Romano
Anat Ronen
Jamey Rootes
Vicki Rosborough
Effie Rosene
Jeff Ross
Dante Rossi
Marina Rossow
Serge Rouhana
Lori Rubin
Dean Ruck
Michael Rupe
Danny Russo
David Saha
Jacky Salinas
Joey Sanchez
Fran Sanders
Courtney Sandifer
Stan Sarman
Clint Saunders
Leslie Scates
Louise Schlachter
Martin Schleuse
Susan Schmaeling
Josef Schmid
Carrie Schneider
Jennifer Schoppe
Tiffany Schrepferman
Karen Schulte
Barbara Schuster
James Scofield
JC Scott
Melanie Scruggs
Scott Seaman
Angela Seaworth
Cassie Segall Davis

Ab Sengupta
Robert Sennhauser
Emily Senturia
David Shannon
Aledia Shealy
Mandy Shefman
Adrian Shelley
Emily Sherman
Myokei Caine-Barrett Shonin
Anthony Thompson Shumate
Jesse Sifuentes
Maxine Silberstein
Gumaro Armando Silva
Dannika Simpson
Libby Sims
Anton Sinkewich
Jo Layne Skillman
Janet Slay
Adam Smith
Candis Smith
Kade Smith
Lamar Smith
Leslie Smith
Michelle Smith
Phillip Smith
Angela Smith-Anderson
Adam Socki
José Solís
Patrick Song
Tuba Sozudogru
Brian Speck
June Spencer
Mark Spradling
Chelsea St Louis
Sharif Stallworth
Brenda Stardig
Candi StClair
Tom Stell
S M Stephanou
Tracy Stephens
Kimberly Sterling
Christine Stevens



Da Camera Young Artists perform a family friendly concert as part of the series Stop, Look and Listen! at the Menil Collection. Photo by: Craig Hauschildt

Jehn Stevenson
 Charles Stewart
 Lisa Stewart
 Chuck Still
 Bob Stokes
 Doreen Stoller
 J. Michael Stovall
 Sabrina Strawn
 John Stuart
 Gina Sullivan
 Anne Sung
 AriAnna Swaab
 Tyler Swanner
 Linda Sylan
 Anna Tahinci
 J. Tate
 Caleb Taylor
 David Taylor
 Matt Taylor
 Ann-Marie Tcholakian
 Lauren Tennes
 Susanne Theis
 Matt Thibodeaux
 Alvin Thomas
 Dave Thompson
 Rachael Thorburn
 Charles Thornburg
 Susan Thraen
 Suzanne Tidwell
 Amber Timmermeyer
 Kayte Tipton
 Kim Tobin-Lehl
 Jeremy Tolbert
 Fernando Toro
 Pilar Torres
 Jennifer Touchet
 Rebecca Trahan
 Lynda Transier
 Simone Trevas
 Annie Trinh
 Mark Truett
 Priscila Trummer

Alex Tu
 Ethan Tullos
 David Turner
 Lia Tusanotte
 Randy Twaddle
 Dawn Ullrich
 Louise Upshaw-McClenny
 Alice Valdez
 Juan Valdez
 Ivan Valverde
 Birgitt Van Wijk
 Belinda Vasquez
 Ric Vazquez
 Roslynn Velasquez
 Edgar Veliz
 Katherine Veneman
 Ana Villaronga-Roman
 Monica Villarreal
 John Virden
 Christine Vuu
 Melodie Wade
 Sixto Wagan
 Paulette Wagner
 Scott Waldheim
 Geoffrey Walker
 Pat Walker
 Jackie Wallace
 Margaret Wallace-Brown
 Elizabeth Walters
 Benjamin Walton
 April Ward
 Barry Ward
 Alvia Wardlaw
 Daisha Warren
 Ray Washington
 Judy Waters
 Merinda Watkins-Martin
 Pat Weeks
 Megan Weinel
 Elizabeth Weiss
 Fabene Welch
 Steve Wenig

Christine West
 Heather Westendarp
 Lee Whatley
 Marcy Whilliams
 Elena White
 Timothy White
 Sandra Wicoff
 Jennifer Wijangco
 Gail Wilkins
 Sharon Willcutts
 Debra Williams
 James Williams
 Sharon Williams
 Graham Williamson
 Gail Williford
 Tyrone Willis
 Brian Wilson
 Joseph Wilson
 Russell Windham
 Dennis Wittry
 Stephanie Todd Wong
 Nathan Wood
 Aimee Woodall
 Jason Woods
 Laura Woods
 George Worthington
 Victoria Wren
 Denise Wright
 Katherine Wyrick
 Tomoko Yamaguchi
 Devaron Yates
 Peter Yenne
 Kyle Young
 Nicole Young
 BJ Younger
 Sharon J.L. Zachary
 Kate Zane
 Luis Zarazua
 Matthew Zeve
 Tina Zulu
 Outspoken Bean

CITY OF HOUSTON MAJOR GRANT PROGRAMS

SERVICES FOR USE OF HOTEL OCCUPANCY TAX (HOT) DEDICATED TO THE ARTS		Process	Organizations funded (2013)	Organizations funded (2012)	Organizations funded (2011)																																								
CONTRACTED AGENCY	Houston Arts Alliance ¹	■	126	147	166																																								
	Miller Theatre Advisory Board, Inc	■	31	29	27																																								
	Museum District Association	●	11	11	11																																								
	Theater District Improvement, Inc	●	7	7	7																																								
HOUSTON ARTS ALLIANCE	Grants made to organizations in all disciplines. Selection by peer panel using four criteria areas. Recipients are posted on website and annual report																																												
MILLER THEATRE ADVISORY BOARD, INC.	Grants made to performing arts organizations. Selection by board committee using four criteria areas, as developed by HAA. Recipients are selected to present performances at Miller.																																												
MUSEUM DISTRICT ASSOCIATION	<p>Grants made to 11 organizations from Museum District Association membership.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td><i>Museum District Member Organization</i></td> <td><i>Funded Through</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Children's Museum of Houston</td> <td>Museum District</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Contemporary Arts Museum Houston</td> <td>Museum District</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The Health Museum</td> <td>Museum District</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Holocaust Museum Houston</td> <td>Museum District</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Houston Museum of Natural Science</td> <td>Museum District</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Houston Zoo</td> <td>Museum District</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The Jung Center of Houston</td> <td>Museum District</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lawndale Art Center</td> <td>Museum District</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The Menil Collection</td> <td>Museum District</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Museum of Fine Arts, Houston</td> <td>Museum District</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rice University Art Gallery</td> <td>Museum District</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Asia Society</td> <td>HAA Grants Program</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Buffalo Soldiers National Museum</td> <td>HAA Grants Program</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Czech Center Museum Houston</td> <td>HAA Grants Program</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Houston Center for Contemporary Craft</td> <td>HAA Grants Program</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Houston Center for Photography</td> <td>HAA Grants Program</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Houston Museum of African American Culture</td> <td>HAA Grants Program</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The John C. Freeman Weather Museum</td> <td>HAA Grants Program</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rothko Chapel</td> <td>HAA Grants Program</td> </tr> </table>					<i>Museum District Member Organization</i>	<i>Funded Through</i>	Children's Museum of Houston	Museum District	Contemporary Arts Museum Houston	Museum District	The Health Museum	Museum District	Holocaust Museum Houston	Museum District	Houston Museum of Natural Science	Museum District	Houston Zoo	Museum District	The Jung Center of Houston	Museum District	Lawndale Art Center	Museum District	The Menil Collection	Museum District	Museum of Fine Arts, Houston	Museum District	Rice University Art Gallery	Museum District	Asia Society	HAA Grants Program	Buffalo Soldiers National Museum	HAA Grants Program	Czech Center Museum Houston	HAA Grants Program	Houston Center for Contemporary Craft	HAA Grants Program	Houston Center for Photography	HAA Grants Program	Houston Museum of African American Culture	HAA Grants Program	The John C. Freeman Weather Museum	HAA Grants Program	Rothko Chapel	HAA Grants Program
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The John C. Freeman Weather Museum	HAA Grants Program																																												
Rothko Chapel	HAA Grants Program																																												
THEATRE DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT	Grants made to seven organizations from Theatre District Improvement, Inc.																																												
AS OF 2013																																													

¹ For two major grant programs: General Operating Support and Arts Project. Does not include approximately 25 Individual Artist grants, City Initiative, capacity building or special projects.

■ Open application process ● Line item funding

HOUSTON'S IDENTITY MATRIX

DEVELOPED WITH FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

PROSPERITY / OPPORTUNITY / THEIR LIMITS

HOUSTON = PROSPERITY,
KNOWN FOR OPPORTUNITY

PEOPLE CAME FOR A JOB

HISTORICALLY AFFORDABLE HOUSING

LOW BARRIER FOR ENTRY INTO BUSINESS

OPEN SOCIETY, CAN HAVE COFFEE WITH ANYONE

2 DEGREES OF SEPARATION

AFFLUENT NEW IMMIGRANTS

SUCCESSFUL IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

UNDER SUPPORTED MULTI-GENERATIONAL
AFRICAN AMERICAN AND LATINO COMMUNITIES

PLENTY OF JOBS, 5.5% UNEMPLOYMENT,
30% UNEMPLOYMENT IN SOME
AFRICAN AMERICAN NEIGHBORHOODS

LOW TAXES, NO ZONING

VIBRANCY, SELF-RELIANCE, ENTREPRENEURSHIP

BLUE COLLAR, WHITE COLLAR TOWN

"KEEP HOUSTON RICH"

WEALTH AND PHILANTHROPY

ALL OF US WANT TO GIVE BACK

IMMIGRANTS EMBRACE NEW IMMIGRANTS AND
REFUGEE POPULATIONS

QUALITY EDUCATION NEEDED TO BRING
HOUSTON'S CHILDREN INTO
PROSPEROUS FUTURE

THE MENIL COLLECTION, THE DE MENIL
INFLUENCE

CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION, CONSPICUOUS
PHILANTHROPY

CAN DO SPIRIT

LAND, LAND, LAND

GREAT BUILDINGS: ICONIC SKYSCRAPERS,
RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE AMONG THE MIX

"HOUSTON IS PURE POTENTIAL"

RUSHING INTO THE FUTURE

EXPAND, EXPAND, EXPAND

INSIDE THE LOOP, OUTSIDE THE LOOP, BELTWAY,
ALL THE WAY AROUND THE RING

"HOUSTON IS THE FOURTH-LARGEST CITY,
SOON TO BE SECOND LARGEST

"IN THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE PAST AND
THE FUTURE, THE FUTURE WINS."

LITTLE PROTECTION FOR HISTORIC PLACES,
BULLDOZE THE PAST

CHOKING ON ITS OWN GROWTH, SUBSIDIZED
SPRAWL, CARS AND UGLY EVERYWHERE, IT HURTS

UNSUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

GENTRIFICATION

COUNTERFORCE: THE ROLE OF THE ARTIST
AS COMMENTATOR

COUNTERFORCE: THE SPEED OF CHANGE CREATES
NOSTALGIA FOR STABILITY AND SLOWER PACE

HUNGER FOR CONNECTION

IN A NETWORKED SOCIETY,
CONNECTION PROVIDES VALUE

HOUSTON IS ALL SPREAD OUT,
DESIRE FOR MORE CONNECTION

NEW ATTITUDES IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS;
CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION INVERSION

HOUSTONIANS DESIRE CHANGE,
PUBLIC POLICY LAGS

TURNING POINTS: MINUTE MAID PARK, BAYOU
GREENWAY, DISCOVERY GREEN

KINDER INSTITUTE

STEPHEN KLINEBERG RESEARCH PERMITS
DATA-GROUNDED EXCHANGES

"WE CAN'T FLY BY THE SEAT
OF OUR PANTS ANYMORE."

REPLANTING MEMORIAL PARK,
THE GARDEN AT HERMANN PARK

GROWING DEMAND FOR CONNECTIONS TO THE
PAST, RENOVATE EMANCIPATION PARK

BOOMERS AND MILLENNIALS
WANT URBAN LIFESTYLE

HOUSTON IS REAL

HOUSTON NEVER HAD TO DISPLAY ITSELF;
SERVED REAL MARKETS

IN THE 80'S QUALITY OF LIFE BECAME
A BUSINESS ISSUE: ATTRACT YOUNG TALENT

LACKING POSITIVE SPACE, PUBLIC REALM

TUNNEL SYSTEM ERODES PUBLIC REALM,
BUT PRACTICAL

HOUSTONIANS HAVE A REALISTIC
SENSE OF THE CITY

PEOPLE IN HOUSTON WALK ON THE GROUND

LOVE OF THE CITY IS NOT BASED ON PIETIES

THE TTWEAK CAMPAIGN "HOUSTON IS WORTH IT"

PROUD DEFIANCE

FU HOUSTON'S AWESOM

PRACTICAL. HAS RESOURCES.
VISION CAN BE REALIZED

HOUSTONIANS LOVE HOUSTON (SOCIAL CAPITAL)

A TRUE WORLD CITY

"HOUSTON" THE FIRST WORD
SPOKEN ON THE MOON

IMMIGRANTS QUICKLY BECOME HOUSTONIANS

PORT—WORLDWIDE CONNECTIONS

THE LARGEST MEDICAL COMPLEX IN THE WORLD

OVER 100 LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES, NEW
CHINATOWN, KOREATOWN, MAHATMA GHANDI
DISTRICT, ETC.

NEW YORK AND TORONTO,
EXAMPLES OF WORLD CITIES

GLOBAL CITY = BUSINESS ONLY, WORLD CITY =
CULTURE AND BUSINESS

INTERNATIONAL CLASS ARTS INSTITUTIONS

CHAPELS, MOSQUES, TEMPLES,
BUDDHIST CENTER, ETC.

NASA, NEW SPACE PORT

OIL AND GAS WORLD CAPITOL

28% FOREIGN BORN

NOT A "MELTING POT"

GLOBAL BUSINESS REACH

FIVE SUCCESSFUL CHINESE BANKS
WITH A COMMUNITY FOCUS

ORGANIC MIXING OF CULTURES, SLOW, SOME
DEMAND FOR FASTER PROCESS

MAJOR UNIVERSITIES, RESEARCH FACILITIES



FotoFest Executive Director and Curator Steven Evans leads a public tour of the I Am A Camera exhibition at Silver Street Studios. Photo: Courtesy of Osman Galindo and FotoFest International.

ARTS AND CULTURAL PLAN POTENTIAL INDICATORS

An indicator is a sign that shows the existence, state or condition of something. It is a specific, observable and measurable characteristic that can be used to monitor change over time. Sets of indicators, such as economic indicators (like inflation, GDP, employment), group statistical values that, taken together, give an indication of the health of the economy. Indicators are critical to assessing progress toward established goals. Indicators also represent the key values of a program or operation. Effectively selected, integrated and monitored, indicators are a powerful tool for leaders and decision makers to set priorities, understand and communicate performance and, when needed, can help present a rationale for course correction. Many cultural indicators have been identified and routinely tracked by Americans for the Arts, the Cultural Data Project and the National Center for Arts Research and are relatively low cost to monitor. Other indicators may take more effort and cost to develop and collect. It will be important to consider the cost-benefit of data collection and monitoring going forward. The following is a sampling of potential indicators identified for the Arts and Cultural Plan.

Access to cultural destinations: This indicator provides a measure of vibrant activity/urban centers and access to arts and culture. The indicator identifies the percentage of dwelling units within a convenient distance of a cultural destination, measured for the City of Houston.

Arts and cultural events participation: This indicator provides a measure of cultural and entertainment opportunities. The indicator identifies the total number of attendees participating in indoor and outdoor arts, cultural and recreational events such as festivals, concerts, theater performances and fitness or athletic events. This indicator is measured for the greater Houston area.



Studio Art Classes Art League Houston.
Photo by: Lucinda Cobley

Attendance at arts and cultural programs by out-of-town visitors: this indicator will show the extent of cultural tourism generated or supported by local cultural organizations.

Average amount of grants to cultural organizations: This indicator measures the sufficiency of City support for cultural organizations. Calculations should be made separately for small, mid-sized and large institutions.

Average attendance per square foot of visual arts exhibition space: This indicator will provide a common measure of the patronage of museums and other visual arts institutions. The City should be prepared to provide a counting system for these organizations.

Change in the number of cultural nonprofits: This indicator provides a measure of the number and financial health of nonprofits. This can be reported as the change in the number of nonprofit establishments by sector, shown as a percentage gain or loss. This measure can include new nonprofits and additional locations of current nonprofits.

Consumer spending on the arts: This indicator provides a measure of consumer spending on the arts. The indicator identifies the dollar amounts spent on arts and cultural events such as museum tickets, theater, ballet and symphony tickets purchased per capita, measured for the greater Houston area.

Density of cultural amenities: This indicator provides a measure of cultural districts within urban centers and throughout the city and access to cultural educational and amenities. While the definition of cultural amenities is flexible, examples of cultural amenities and organizations could include cultural and ethnic awareness organizations, performing arts, museums, fairs, arts, culture, and theater, multidisciplinary and other venues.

Geographic distribution of public art projects: This indicator measures the access of Houston residents to public art projects within their neighborhoods.

Growth in employment in City's cultural grantees: This indicator also is suggestive of the organizational health of the sector and a function of sustainability.

Median expenditures of cultural organizations: This indicator measures the outflow of capital in the community.

Median net cash flow of cultural organizations: This indicator measures liquid assets and the ability to pay debts, reinvest in the organization and pay expenses and solvency.

Median revenue of cultural organizations: This indicator measures the disbursement of capital among cultural organizations.

Number of arts-related business: This indicator uses standard industrial classification codes to measure the density of creative industries businesses.

Number of arts-related jobs: This indicator uses standard industrial classification codes to measure the density of creative industries employment by nonprofit and for-profit businesses.

Number of cultural grants awarded: This indicator measures the access of Houston arts and cultural organizations to City funding support and the ratio of applications to grants.

Number of cultural volunteers: this indicator shows another dimension of community involvement in the cultural sector and the donated time and talent leveraged to benefit the community.



Apollo Chamber Players Concert at the MATCH.
Photo by: Ben Doyle, Runaway Productions

Number of local and regional artists receiving Civic Art commissions: This indicator will measure the degree to which the Civic Art program is serving artists in the region.

Number of members and subscribers: This indicator shows the level of repeat attendees to visual and performing organizations.

Number of OCA convenings around cultural issues: This measure will indicate the degree to which OCA is providing policy leadership in the cultural sector.

Number of staff at the Office of Cultural Affairs: This indicator shows the growth in the agency staff to serve the arts and cultural sector.

Number of technical assistance and capacity-building services available to cultural organizations: This indicator measures the availability of services that can provide organizational and financial stability for cultural grantees.

On-site versus off-site attendance of cultural organizations programs: This indicator will measure the degree to which cultural organizations are providing services in the community away from their main facility.

Overall level of City funding available to artists and cultural organizations: This indicator will assess whether City cultural funding is keeping pace with the needs of cultural organizations and artists.

Percent of capacity in performing arts organizations that is paid attendance: This indicator will measure the degree to which performing arts groups are able to generate earned income. This can also be viewed as a percent of subscribers and season ticket holders.

Public, corporate and philanthropic expenditures on art: This indicator provides a measure of investment in arts and culture. The indicator identifies the annual amount of funds spent on art. Arts and culture are seen as essential assets to local economic development, as many businesses and residents look to these amenities when making location decisions.

Ratio of earned to contributed revenues in cultural grantees: This indicator will show the degree to which cultural organizations are able to generate private contributions. This measure should be segmented among small, mid-sized and large institutions.

Resident satisfaction with the quality and availability of cultural programs: This indicator should measure overall satisfaction, as well as satisfaction with services available in their community or neighborhood.

Satisfaction of culturally diverse residents with the quality and availability of programs relevant to their cultural backgrounds: This indicator will determine the degree to which arts and cultural programs are available to meet the needs of all of the city's diverse residents.

Satisfaction with the sources and quality of information about local cultural offerings: This indicator will indicate the degree to which residents and visitors are receiving timely information on arts and cultural programs.

Utilization by the public of free admission to cultural organizations and free performances: This indicator will demonstrate the degree to which arts groups are providing services to the community.

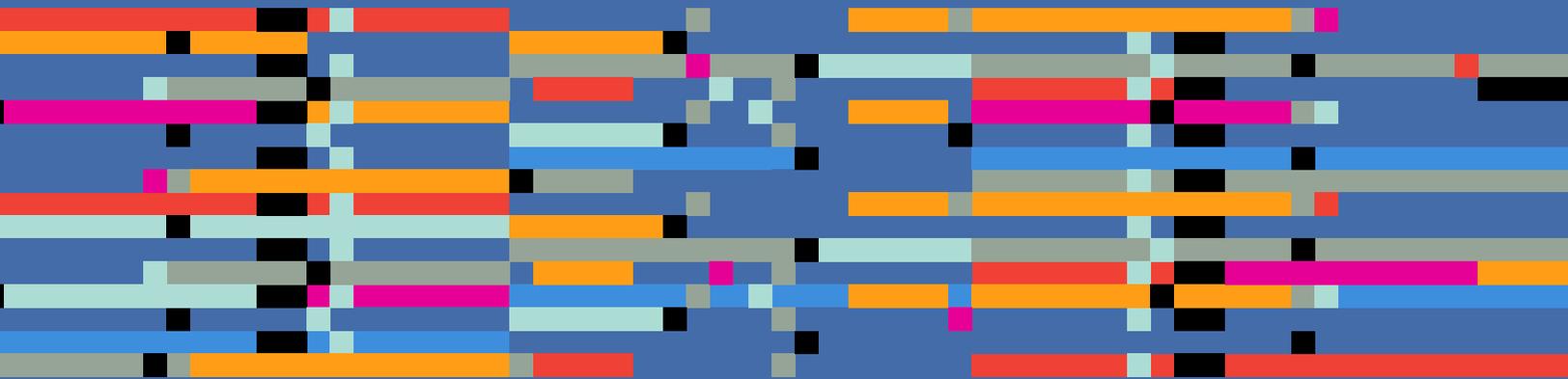
Visits by school children to arts and culture venues: This indicator measures the degree to which cultural organizations are being accessed by school children.



Houston Police Officers and Chief of Police in front of *We Are in the Business of Changing the World, SS* by artist Tara Conley. Photo by: Marc Newsome

PUBLIC MEETINGS AND PRESENTATIONS

	DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
PUBLIC MEETINGS LOCATIONS	11/10/14	Kick Off Event	The Ensemble Theatre
	1/20/15	Focus Groups	The Gregory School
	2/9/15	Community Conversation	Fifth Ward Multi Service Center
	2/10/15	Community Conversation	Sunnyside Multi-Service Center,
	2/17/15	Community Conversation	Charlton Community Center
	2/18/15	Community Conversation	White Oak Conference Center
	2/19/15	Community Conversation	Sharpstown Community Center
	3/25/15	Town Hall	Metropolitan Multi-Service Center
	3/24/15	Artist Town Hall	Third Ward Multi Service Center
	5/2/15	Artist Organized Town Hall	El Dorado Ballroom
	2/11/15	District D CIP	Cullen Middle School
	2/16/15	District A CIP	Spring Woods High School
	EVENTS WHERE PLAN INFORMATION WAS PRESENTED	2/18/15	District G CIP
2/19/15		District E CIP	Kingwood Community Center
2/23/15		District B CIP	Kashmere Multi-Service Center
2/24/15		District H CIP	Booker T. Washington High School
2/25/15		District J CIP	6600 Harbor Town Dr. Houston, TX 77036
2/26/15		District I CIP	The E.B. Cape Center
3/2/15		District F CIP	Hastings Night Grade Center
3/3/15		District E CIP	University of Houston- Clear Lake
3/4/15		District C CIP	The Metropolitan Multi-Service Center
3/5/15		District K CIP	Fountain of Praise Church
3/6/15		Houston Texas Tattoo Extravaganza	Hyatt Regency Houston
3/7/15		Annual Crawfish Festival in the Heights	
3/11/15		City Hall Farmer's Market	City Hall
3/13/15		11th Annual Texas Salsa Congress	Westin Oaks Hotel
3/15/15		Houston Livestock Show + Rodeo	NRG Park
3/22/15		Houston Livestock Show + Rodeo	NRG Park
3/29/15		Houston Children's Festival	Downtown Houston
3/29/15		Hermann Park Kite Festival	Hermann Park
3/29/15		Bayou City Art Festiva	Memorial Park
3/31/15		Houston Press' 13th Annual Menu of Menus Extravaganza	Silver Street Station
4/11/15		Sabor del Northside Festival	Castillo Park
4/11/15		Houston Dynamo Game	BBVA Compass Stadium
4/12/15		Rice Village Flea	Rice Village





Tolerance, Jaume Plensa, 2011, Stainless Steel, City of Houston Art Collection, Buffalo Bayou Park.
Photo by: Debra Ham

