

**Houston Arts and Cultural Plan
Advisory Committee Meeting 02/11/2015**

**Presentation by Dr. Stephen L. Klineberg, Co-Director, Kinder Institute for Urban Research at Rice University
about the *The Houston Art Survey: Participation, Perceptions and Prospects***

- Three central themes for Houston's future
 - The new economy – arts and education are critical to the new economy.
 - The demographic revolution – arts are critical at traversing the demographic divide.
 - Quality of place – Houston has to become a destination of choice and the arts are critical in this attractiveness.
- Houston is where the four ethnic communities meet – more so than any other U.S. city.
- Houston today looks like the rest of the U.S. is predicted to look in 2050. This is where the American future is looked at.
- The Houston Arts Survey
 - Began with open-ended questions
 - 10.3% said the arts (attending, performing, or creating) were their favorite free-time activity.
 - Within that, 42% said they attended a live performing arts event in the preceding years. This is higher than the national average.
 - No relationship in ethnicity regarding participation in the arts
 - Major barriers to attending the arts –cost, traffic / transportation, poor communication about events / programs
 - Arts education: overwhelmingly clear – participation in the arts is important for children (82% strongly agree)
 - Conclusions – more widespread support of the arts in Houston than expected. Arts are a central pillar in planning Houston's future.

Question & Answer Comments

- There are many more questions that can be asked. It has been four years since the last survey; please suggest questions or areas of concern about what should be asked (such as digging deeper into visual arts in the future rather than the performing arts).
- Free vs. paid – the younger generations are often with less education (i.e. – less disposable income). Free events are important to enhance the “welcoming feeling.”
- As time goes on, there will be a shift towards reaching out to cell phone numbers, rather than landlines to talk with participants of the survey.
- Disconnect between survey and civic discourse. There is a big difference between public opinions and those that are politically active (older Anglos).
- There is much more to the arts in Houston than the big four. There needs to be more emphasis on the outlying, smaller arts organization.
- There is a large need to reach out to kids, the next generation of arts supporters.
- The arts can tie to the refugee communities – this is a large population in Houston. Marketing should target diverse communities. Miller Outdoor Theater is a great example of a diverse audience – no cost barrier.
- Curious to see statistics from the major institutions in Houston – what does diversity look like at each of these institutions?
- Participants, when doing the survey, did not initially know it was focused on the arts, so the first open-ended question about favorite free-time activities (Arts 10.3%) is unbiased.
- It is clear that this study needs to be done again in the near future.
- The arts are often experienced collectively (family or a social event).

- All interviews were done in English or Spanish.

Discussion Question *Given how the city is changing, what are the factors that have implications for the well-being of the arts and cultural sector and how might the plan address this?*

- Cultural resource management – this is OUR community. For this conversation, there should be no distinction between art genre (dance, music, visual, etc.) or, small neighborhood arts organizations vs. major institutions.
- In Houston, it is apparent there is a desire to increase participation in the arts and to bringing broader audiences in to experience the visual and performing arts.
- There is a disconnect however, with individual artists; and too few programs for young people. How are we nurturing the next generation of arts leadership in Houston?
- This conversation MUST acknowledge a new definition of cultural relevance. Systems and mentality must shift around how funding is allocated, where arts experiences occur and who has access?
- We must/ ask ourselves how can we invest in institutions that provide the broadest definitions of “art” and “culture”?
- If the city has changed (demographics, etc.), what are the factors that we have to consider toward the idea of democratization of culture and guarantee equitable access to resources that support art making and cultural expression? If Houston is a global destination, how might this plan address this need for intentional shifts in the current methods of funding and governance to grow Houston’s cultural system.
- If the arts are so important to us, why is arts learning marginalized and not available to ALL children?
- Breakout topics: Stewardship, Workforce, Impacts, Advocacy

Comments on Discussion Question

Stewardship group – How do we take care of our resources?

- Leadership organizations messages on the importance of how we take care of arts and culture in Houston (Hear our Houston, P & B)
- What we have is good and we have to take care of it. Everyone leaves Houston to study art. Taking care of what we have and see what we need and making sure some budgets. Start at lower levels and budgeting. More opportunities in arts education.
- Inventory of what we have. Neighborhoods: need to know what’s out there and what to protect
- Don’t know what’s in corporate or private collections
- Great art is about spontaneity
- Flexibility to support underground things
- Need to invest in underground music scene
- Needs to be led by artists
- Give framework and resources to care for the moment
- Forum and creative room/space - if we need help, we need to know where to go
- Built in opportunity exchange process – community and artists to respond
- How to build support and recognition
- No marketing and connecting to small organizations
- Sustain with money and support
- Balancing growth
- Diversity:
 - Stewardship
 - Introduction of cultures
 - MECA

- Islands that don't respond
- Don't appreciate
- Interaction of cultures
- Partnerships and collaborations to nurture and support
- Not doing well of archiving artistic works; need collecting of local works
- Creating opportunity for people to come and stay
- Policies and regulations to support creative work mechanisms
- Protecting and keeping conservation important
- Community and arts groups (Talento Bilingue)
- Focus group with Almeda → Third Ward Community Cloth (Sam Denkin)

Workforce group

- Personally concerned with the opportunities available and artist compensations
- Center For Houston's Future report showed that Phoenix was tracking higher in art compensation
- An argument was made the cost of living evened out, but I don't know if that's the way the City of Houston
- Met an artist that moved from Connecticut and was surprised at the cost for a house he wanted
- We don't have as large of a create class as other large metros. I think there are a number of factors. Education level. Industries that have typically attracted makers and artist minds aren't here.
- Is it because the lack of money given to arts in the classroom?
- Also not enough work opportunities
- When I was at TUTS they sourced out more talent from in town
- UH Arts School and Center in a transitional moment and could use more unity
- Dragging interns off street. There aren't enough people in the arts – we need bodies.
- There is an issue with the awareness among children as to what opportunities are available
- Lacking someone in the community that non-profits are able to reach out to
- We have parents who don't want kids to be in after school programs related to art because they want them to focus on college/education
- Let's step back from education. What about city design? You don't get to walk down the street and see people and find those like you. It's hard to find fellow artists and culture leaders. 20-30 years ago it was easier to get around, less dense. The creative sector has lost each other.
- We need to provide more creative spaces for people to meet and you don't feel the buzz and creativity
- Maybe we need to rethink having too many centers and design them for the need rather than just placing them
- Are we marketing ourselves effectively? To others than conventioners?
- I would argue that taking care of our current creative class would be all the marketing we need!

Impacts group

- Emphasize the impact on individual lives
- Young people to excel
- Sports have resonance – role models. Artists could play that same role
- Texas way of thinking might resonant
- Distant view
 - Engagement is community building if communities see their own cultural notes in what is presented
- Well educated are involved
- Arts Education

- Encourage kids to appreciate and engage
- Small groups in community engaging HISD → heavily fund that; would you deduct space/time?
- Arts partners have done survey
 - Barriers are with principals
- Political piece
 - HISD: \$1.6 billion budget exceeds resources of philanthropy. Other foundations coming together to give support – not enough private money to fill the gaps.
- Big disconnect. Appears to be a lack of public political will – “tone deaf”
 - Not that there isn’t enough money, but how we spend it
- Local level has a better chance
 - Message to public – politicians respond
 - Have to figure out ways to communicate across those cultures
- Role of Higher Education?
 - What messages?
 - Have to respond with the work force
 - Creative thought data
 - Critical public need for young people/highlight individual role model similar to sports
 - Arts and culture engagement is good for individual and society
 - It is a tool that connects communities
- How do we measure?
 - Economy
 - SNAAP
 - Americans for the Arts
 - Volunteerism
 - Rice
- Connect social data
- Engagement will create art no matter what
- Sharing is key
 - Develops respect
- Impacts around Success
 - Work force
 - Student’s success
 - Impact of communities
- We have this data, we need to show through the data that the arts are a critical part of building rich, engaged communities. The data needs to be clear, synthesized - to create buy-in to energize people to demand of political and economic leaders that the arts are crucial.

Advocacy group

- How do we manage, maintain, and sustain the resources in the city? This includes all of the resources within the city! City government, philanthropy, etc. are all threads in this.
- What are the support systems to manage ALL cultural resources (open spaces, parks, the lady in the park teaching dance classes – big and small)? How do we create advocacy that addresses ALL of Houston (all inclusive)?
 - More collaboration between the groups with the education of knowing what each other are doing. Also, educating the media in promoting events - they are reaching an audience that might not typically attend the arts.

- Comprehensive communication system, such as a central calendar. How do you know where to go? This must be accessible for EVERYONE.
- We are asking this question against the demographic shift in the city. New traditions exist and we must respond to that. How is our form of communication going to change? How is whom we are communicating to going to change? How does the arts and cultural sector keep up with this?
 - We must be able to communicate in each community's language, style, etc. We must break these barriers. This is not just the various ethnic communities, it includes the aging community, the next generation, etc.
 - In Los Angeles, every council had an arts deputy that represented their constituents.
 - In Spring Branch, there was a partnership between 8th graders and the theater district regarding *Romeo and Juliet* – multiple institutions working together. Thinking about this example, what are the bigger bridges that we can build to bring the community together? With reaching out to the students, this also entails the parents and families.
 - How do you make sure resources are available to everyone? In HISD, arts funding was de-centralized to the detriment to the younger generation.
 - Framing conversations that fit neighborhoods and communities is going to be important.
 - Perhaps we need more arts and culture “muscle” as part of the City.
 - In addition to school and city government, whom would we want to ask to leverage their resources? The media.
 - Perhaps we need an advocacy structure that is similar to the government structure. Perhaps someone is appointed in each district to priorities what we are all fighting for. Maybe it is important to emulate the city structure to make priorities rather than all shifting in different directions.
 - It is also important to reach out to and communicate with religious groups. Why can't we establish something similar to 3-1-1 for the city but for the arts? Something where there is a main database where people can get instant access – i.e. - an arts hotline.
 - Closure – the National Foundation for the Arts in its founding included - all the arts belong to all the people in the United States. We are trying to figure this out, but in our case for Houston. How do we bring ALL people to the table and participate? This is a HUGE challenge.
- Advocacy could equal activism.
- Perhaps there could be arts advocacy day – but Houston-specific not in Austin at the capital for all of Texas.

Houston Identity Matrix

- Prosperity opportunities their limits –
 - Houston has accelerated rapidly within the past five years.
 - People are coming to Houston for jobs only wanting to stay for a couple of years, they end up staying for many years and falling in love.
 - Houstonians want to make a contribution to Houston – time, creativity, energy, etc.
 - Education was typically top of mind.
 - “Houston is pure potential.”
- An emerging world city
 - Houston has business and cultural connections to the entire world.
 - There is potential between the medical community and the arts.
- Rushing into the future
 - Expand, expand, expand.
- Seeking connection
 - Houston is starting to have a hunger for connection. Everything is extremely spread out.
 - There is a significant centripetal force that is pushing people together.
 - The bayou greenway is one example of how people are becoming connected in the city.

- Houston is real
 - Houston is genuine, real.
 - The people are authentic.
 - Houston: It's Worth It (HIWI) was referenced in the focus groups.

Identity Matrix Comments

- This is terrific
- I don't feel like it has properly addressed the individual initiative, the spirit to make things happen
- How are we making the transition from Suite 8F to another way of making decisions
- Where are the places you can use a lever to make change
- Alignment between preservation, environmental and arts and culture