

CULTURAL PLANNING WORKSHOP SUMMARY

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American Planning Association, Inland Empire Section
under the auspices of Art VULUPS (art as a vehicle to understand land use planning and sustainability)

For the Benefit of Arts Connection, The San Bernardino Arts Council

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APA
CA Inland Empire Section

ArtVULUPS

ART AS A VEHICLE TO UNDERSTAND LAND USE PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT

Background



Arts Connection of San Bernardino has sparked an important dialogue about the power that the arts and culture can exert to improve quality of life in the cities and unincorporated communities of San Bernardino County.

More specifically, the idea of developing the first regional cultural plan for San

Bernardino County driven by “placemaking,” certainly is a promising innovative strategy that is now being explored.

On September 26, 2016, arts and culture advocates from San Bernardino County and beyond, congregated at the Victoria Gardens Cultural Center in Rancho Cucamonga to participate in a

creative placemaking conference. In addition to various panel presentations, the program included a keynote address by Dr. Maria Rosario Jackson who is a nationally-recognized expert on arts and urban policy and their impact on community development. San Bernardino Generation Now (a youth-driven organization with the goal of “evol[ving] into a Movement of Action and Enlightenment that will bring the younger generation together to help shape and change the politics and culture of this city for the better”) was an important highlight in the program. This group in particular, represents the kind of energy needed to ensure that the cultural plan is prepared and successfully implemented.

The last part of the program included breakout sessions. Award-winning planner James Rojas, who combines planning and art to engage audiences, lead one of the sessions. His Place It! method allowed participants to interact with one another through a model-building exercise and story-telling. People had a few minutes to build their childhood memory with toys and trinkets on a piece of construction paper. Once each design was completed everyone had an opportunity to share the meaning of their creation. The most frequent theme people described alluded to parks an open space as the places where their favorite memories took place as kids.





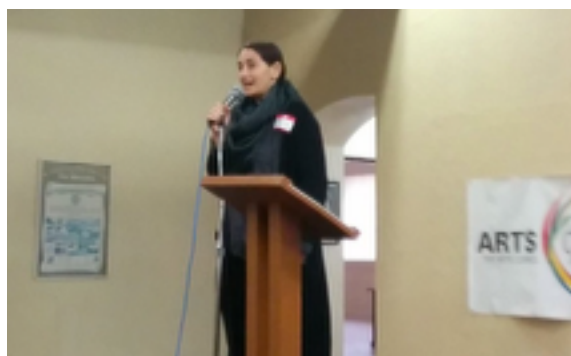
As a result of the great energy created after the Place It! workshop, some of the participants expressed a strong desire to continue to explore the idea of placemaking in more tangible ways and continue with the dialogue. Danielle Giudici Wallis, head of Arts Connection, organized the Cultural Planning Workshop in collaboration with the American Planning Association, Inland Empire Section (APA/IES). The event featured APA/IES Board Member Miguel A. Vazquez, AICP who for the past few years has lead art+planning activities under the Art as a Vehicle to Understand Land Use Planning and Sustainability (Art VULUPS) project.

The fast-paced workshop was designed introduce participants to basic land use planning concepts and to provide for an opportunity to build a tangible project at the end of the session. The General Plan and Tactical Urbanism were selected as the main topics to carry the conversation forward. The General Plan conveys the basic components of planning processes at city hall or county offices and Tactical Urbanism offers an unorthodox approach for grass-roots community development.

On January 23, 2016 about 30 people representing a diverse range of backgrounds and perspectives convened at the Garcia Center for the Arts in the City of San Bernardino.

The program included the following components:

- Introduction and Ice Breaker
- Dialogue: What it culture?
- Planning 101
- Neighborhood exploration
- Long term cultural planning
- Short term cultural planning
- Tactical Urbanism demonstration



Danielle Giudici Wallis kicks off the workshop.

I. Introduction/Ice Breaker & Dialogue About the Meaning of Culture

The tone of the day was set by creating a bit of a chaos. Participants were divided into two groups. Once the groups were established, everyone had to reach to someone new from the crowd. Each team had two minutes to share their name, their affiliation and something interesting about themselves. Once the task was completed, each pair then introduced their "new friend." This exercise allowed everyone to begin to connect and find a common thread of understanding. Through this exercise, it was discovered that the audience was comprised of artists, planners, appointed commissioners, students, community organizers, new-comers to San Bernardino and even a former boxer. The common threads found during the introductions were **creativity** and **thirst for action**.

What is culture? This question was designed to have the workshops participants express their concept of culture and how the arts play an important role of cultural expression capable of transforming environments and places. Everyone's definition of culture enriched the conversation. Their ideas helped arrived to the conclusion that, given San Bernardino's richness in diverse cultures, the opportunities to capitalized on the intersection of art and culture are significant.



II. Planning 101

Planning fundamentals were introduced with the goal of providing the participants with a basic framework for understanding municipal policies shaping the built environment. The General Plan, which can be explained as the constitution for development in a city or county, requires seven elements:

1. Land Use
2. Housing
3. Circulation
4. Conservation
5. Open Space
6. Noise
7. Safety

Cities and Counties, however, have the discretion to incorporate other elements or chapters that can help them achieve their economic and community development goals. This means that the County and the City of San Bernardino have an opportunity to include a chapter (plan) on arts and culture.

Chapter 1. Introduction

HOW THE GENERAL PLAN SERVES SAN BERNARDINO

State law requires every city in California to adopt a comprehensive, long-term General Plan. The general plan represents the community's view of its future and can be thought of as the blueprint for a city's growth and development. City councils, planning commissions, and boards use the goals and policies of the general plan as a basis on which to make their land use, circulation, safety, and environmental decisions.

The general plan is considered "comprehensive" since it covers the territory within the boundaries of the city and any areas outside of its boundaries that relate to its planning activities (sphere of influence). It is also comprehensive in that it addresses a wide variety of issues that characterize a city. These issues range from the physical development of the jurisdiction, such as general locations, timing, and extent of land uses and supporting infrastructure, to social concerns such as those identified in the housing element regarding housing affordability.

The general plan is considered "long-term" since it looks 20 years into the future. The general plan projects conditions and needs into the future as a basis for determining long-term objectives and policies for day-to-day decision-making.

The City of San Bernardino's General Plan is guided by a Vision Statement and Key Strategies, which describe the basic direction of the policies contained in this Plan and represent the community's view of its future. The Vision and Key Strategies also act as a yardstick against which initiatives and proposals can be measured to determine if they are or are not in concert with the future direction of the City.

III. Neighborhood Exploration

This portion of the program was designed to provide an opportunity for the attendees to experience on-foot the built environment around the Garcia Center for the Arts while identifying challenges and opportunities.

Some observations and ideas expressed after the tour included:

- Potential in vacant buildings, empty lots that could be used for art installations or alternative art spaces
- Ruin/blight
- Local businesses that are still intact—potential for support and collaboration
- Community garden potential
- Easy access—San Bernardino Rapid Transit and 215
- Sidewalks are being improved
- Baseline needs restaurants, coffee shops, etc. to bring and retain people
- McDonalds Museum draws visitors

While this list reflect a small fraction of ideas, perceptions and possibilities, they do represent areas in which action can be taken to improve quality of life.



IV. Cultural Planning Opportunities: Long Term/ Short Term

The following synthesis of ideas generated during the workshop provide immediate and long range opportunities for action toward the development of an integrated cultural plan.

Short Term:

- Start process to amend the general plan and include an arts and culture element
- Volunteer at the Garcia Center
- Create an arts Vision
- Use existing resources (arts connection calendar)
- Develop a communication Strategy to connect providers and users of art-oriented services
- Identify quick and easy opportunities for public art installations
- Approach community businesses as funders
- Identify and secure a reputable fiscal agent (perhaps, Arts Connection?)
- Communicate with decision makers (city council, chambers, and County) about this movement
- Schedule best practices of cultural planning workshop
- Develop a parking day/public space annual event?
- Figure out how to work in a restrictive environment in which accountability and transparency help build community trust

Long Term Vision:

- Include Arts and Culture in the language of the General Plan
- Support an IEMA location in the city of San Bernardino
- Help the Garcia Center to thrive in the long run
- Develop a pre-qualified public arts list
- Focus efforts on the City of San Bernardino
- Develop community-based art programs
- Involve the schools and after school programs the include the arts
- Increase access to arts workshops for families and children of all walks of life
- Develop cultural awareness: celebrate diversity of existing cultures in the city, pride in culture and city (like Mosaico festival) through more cultural event programming
- Work with existing arts anchors, both formal and informal such as CSUSB, Sturgis Center, SBVCC, Boys and Girls Clubs
- Develop a central place for info on cultural events
- Develop organic cultural experiences
 1. Planned system
 2. Collaboration planning
 3. Develop partnerships with Riverside Arts and Culture organizations
- Develop an Arts and Culture ecosystem
- Identify funding sources

Two part Process: City and County Level

- Influencing decision makers
- Get involved in arts policy making
- Hold public officials accountable
- Provide training in arts and culture policy making

V. Tactical Urbanism Demonstration Project

During the event's last half an hour, everyone who attended had an opportunity to collaborate on building a public space. Individuals who signed up for the workshop were asked to bring random objects of little value found around their home that could be used to create a public space—objects like an empty bucket that could be used as a stool or a drum, or a small plant in a pot, etc. After explaining the purpose and rules of engagement, the collective had 15 minutes to build a public space on two parking spaces right outside the meeting place. There were no specific directions and no one was assigned as a leader or designer. The activity unfolded organically. Everyone found a location that, in their own judgement, was the right fit for the space. Participants helped each other to rearrange the objects from time to time ensuring consensus. At the end of the exercise, the participants experienced not only their own collective potential, but also their collective creativity and how through collaboration they transformed a small and unnoticed space into a simple outdoor living room that only existed for less than 15 minutes.



VI. Recommendations

Based on the conversations, synergy and current planning trends, but above all, the desire expressed during the workshop to make contributions to the City and County of San Bernardino through and arts and culture approach, the following recommendations are provided for consideration:

1. Create a San Bernardino Arts and Culture Coalition. This collective would be organized and coordinated by the San Bernardino arts community.
2. Identify champions of a San Bernardino Cultural Plan (SBCP) at city hall and county government that includes elected officials, appointed commissioners and staff. In addition, identify individuals considered as San Bernardino's' cultural treasures who can participate as spokespersons during the preparation of the SBCP.
3. Attract talented individuals from within and outside the project area who would be willing to assist in developing the SBCP.
4. Reach out to existing coalitions and collaboratives having similar goals related to improving quality of life, such as the Healthy San Bernardino Coalition.
5. Reach out to the pro-bono planning and training assistance provided by the American Planning Association, the American Institute of Architects, the Urban Land Institute and the Congress for the New Urbanism, to seek professional advise on furnishing a high quality SBCP.
6. Identify neighborhoods of great need , but where social capital is high to begin transformation. Equity principles should be a SBCP core value.
7. Contact foundations such as The California Endowment, the James Irvine Foundation, the Community Foundation, etc. to solicit support towards furnishing a short term and a long term SBCP for the city and county of San Bernardino.
8. Provide capacity building opportunities that foster creative and strategic thinking in collaboration with local universities and public agencies such as the Public Health Department.
9. Develop a strategy for small low-cost, temporary placemaking interventions to spark community engagement at the block level.
10. Create a communications campaign the highlights the positive conversations, interactions and outcomes resulting from the development of a community-driven SBCP.



RESOURCES:

PLACEMAKING

http://www.pps.org/reference/what_is_placemaking/

CITY OF SAN BERNARDINO GENERAL PLAN

<http://www.sbcity.org/pdf/DevSvcs/General%20Plan%20Document.pdf>

TACTICAL URBANISM

https://issuu.com/streetplanscollaborative/docs/tactical_urbanism_vol_2_final?e=4528751/2585800

For inquires about this document please contact:

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Disclaimer: The observations, opinions and recommendations expressed in this report do not necessarily represent those of the American Planning Association Inland Empire Section nor of Art Connection, San Bernardino Arts Council.

