



creativecity  
SAN DIEGO

City of San Diego  
**Cultural Plan**

November 2024

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# Acknowledgments

Creative City would not have been possible without the significant contributions of the nearly 1,800 San Diegans who shared their time, energy, and thought to inform the development of this plan.

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*We also acknowledge and thank all past staff for their foundational work in preparation for the cultural planning process.*

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## SUPPORT

The cultural planning process was funded by the City of San Diego with additional support provided by the San Diego Foundation.

# Mayor's Forward

My fellow San Diegans,

I am pleased to present “Creative City,” San Diego’s first-ever cultural plan!

The seeds of this effort were planted in 2021 at a meeting held in my office with local arts leaders who pointed out that San Diego has been, up until now, the last major city in America without a comprehensive cultural strategy. That touched a nerve with me, as I never want San Diego to be behind the curve.

Under the leadership of the Department of Cultural Affairs and with the expertise of Cultural Planning Group, Creative City is the culmination of 18 months of dedicated effort. This comprehensive plan was shaped by input collected at 70 public meetings with over 1,800 individual stakeholders, and with additional funding generously provided by the San Diego Foundation.

A hallmark of my administration has been a focus on equity and inclusivity. This plan is intended to be a transformative document that will reshape San Diego’s approach to the arts, ensuring every San Diegan in every neighborhood has the chance to access cultural experiences.

While the City of San Diego has been the region’s largest annual funder of the arts, Creative City makes clear that there is so much more we can do to foster opportunities for the growth of this sector. The plan establishes guiding principles for our investments in arts and culture, and provides a roadmap to strategically prioritize these investments and quantify their results.

I have frequently said that San Diego should not settle for being labeled “America’s Finest City.” We are a truly great City that is ready to embrace the potential of creativity and harness the power of arts and culture to positively reshape our city to benefit every San Diegan.

I look forward to supporting the Department of Cultural Affairs, and their partners across the arts and cultural spectrum, as they begin to implement the strategies detailed in Creative City.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Todd Gloria". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Todd" and "Gloria" being significantly larger and more stylized than the rest of the letters.

**TODD GLORIA**

Mayor, City of San Diego

# Director's Introduction

Welcome to Creative City, the City of San Diego's first comprehensive cultural plan. Creative City is unique among municipal cultural plans. Two foundational objectives have informed the entirety of the process.

The first is that Creative City is a policy document designed to respond to and align with the City's Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan adopted by City Council in January 2022 prioritizes five focus areas: housing, neighborhoods, mobility, sustainability, and regional prosperity. Some recommendations tie to one or more focus areas, such as expanding free arts and culture programming at parks, recreation centers, and libraries across the city to enhance neighborhoods, reduce mobility needs, and create workforce development pipelines for creative industries jobs for San Diego youth. Others are less obvious but considered when developing the recommendations – such as embedding artists and creatives in City departments to expand community engagement around sustainability practices.

The second objective is that the planning process and subsequent recommendations are grounded in the City's commitment to equity. Working with Cultural Planning Group, a robust engagement strategy was implemented, with more than 70 workshops and events spanning the city as well as Baja California.

Ultimately, the goal for Creative City is to provide a policy framework that centers arts, culture, and creativity at the heart of the City's work. Creative City policy and programmatic recommendations can leverage creative talent in achieving the City's goals and guide City investments in the overall arts and cultural ecosystem.

The adoption of Creative City marks the beginning of an implementation process. San Diegans played a crucial role in shaping Creative City through more than a year of planning. Its implementation will be a collective effort guided by policymakers, City staff, partner agencies, and, most importantly, the community.



**Jonathon Glus**

Director, Department of Cultural Affairs

# Chair's Introduction

On behalf of the Commission for Arts and Culture, we celebrate the completion of the City of San Diego's first cultural plan, Creative City. The planning process, which has been comprehensive and inclusive, engaged a broad cross-section of San Diegans at over 70+ events. It's important to note San Diegans, who care deeply about the future of arts and culture in our city, played a vital role, from artists and creatives to youth, seniors, and community members across all nine City Council Districts, shaping the plan with their invaluable input.

Creative City outlines a vision with goals, strategies, and actions that are comprehensive, flexible, and adaptable to the City's future. This adaptability ensures the plan remains relevant and effective in ever-evolving times. It will help guide our collective efforts and resources dedicated to arts and culture more strategically and with a greater understanding of equity and inclusion for all.

Now more than ever, we recognize arts and culture add meaning to life and communities and have proven to be essential elements of healthy neighborhoods and ecosystems that work for all. Arts and culture provide San Diegans with a sense of purpose, enjoyment, leisure

time, entertainment, and expression making life dynamic and exciting and improving our overall mental/physical health. In short, arts and culture are doing much more than simply providing an economic impact in San Diego. This plan is a testament to the aspirations and contributions of San Diegans, who spent time thinking, reading, talking, and sharing to better our collective future in San Diego.

Realizing Creative City's potential requires investments in each goal and strategy; the plan outlines key recommendations to diversify necessary resources to fund its implementation. We must tackle the challenges identified, explore new resources, celebrate our city's strengths, nurture them, and support their implementation. In doing so, we will advance San Diego's arts, culture, and creativity for the health and well-being of all San Diegans.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who participated and contributed to Creative City. Your efforts have been instrumental in shaping the future of San Diego. We are deeply grateful for your time, energy, and commitment. For those of you who are eager to get involved and be a part of San Diego's creative vibrancy, we welcome you with open arms! Please join us on this exciting journey.



**Ann Evons Bossler**

Chair, Commission for Arts and Culture

# Land Acknowledgment

We respectfully acknowledge that the Kumeyaay Nation are the original inhabitants of the unceded land now known as San Diego. Despite enduring the horrors of genocide and colonization, the Kumeyaay spirit remains unbroken. We honor the resilience of their ancestors who fought to protect their culture and land. Today, they carry their legacy forward, ensuring that their traditions continue to thrive in gratitude and strength. We stand with the Kumeyaay Nation, connected to our past and committed to a thriving future.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> San Diego City Council Kumeyaay Land Acknowledgment, Resolution Number-315591.



# EXECUTIVE **SUMMARY**





**C**reative City is the City of San Diego's (City) first comprehensive cultural plan, providing a long-term framework to advance arts, culture and creativity for the benefit of San Diegans as well as the greater transborder region. Developed through extensive and inclusive public engagement involving nearly 1,800 people, the plan sets forth a shared vision and actionable strategies to sustain and grow San Diego's vibrant creative ecosystems, where arts and culture advance dialogue, development, and diversity, defining San Diego as a global creative center.

In 2022 Mayor Gloria and City Council adopted the City's Strategic Plan, which provides overarching guidance for how all elements of city government should focus their work to a common purpose. Creative City was intentionally designed to align with and respond to the City's Strategic Plan, to ensure that arts, culture, and creativity are "part of the solution" by leveraging arts and culture to achieve the City's ambitious goals. While the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) is the agency primarily responsible for stewardship of Creative City, this plan identifies many cross-department priorities and identifies partnerships with other departments and agencies to amplify the impact of their collective efforts.

**Equity and inclusion are guiding principles for the City's Strategic Plan. The Creative City plan reflects that commitment to equity.**

**City of San Diego Equity Commitment**

*Equity is an achievable outcome when disparities are eliminated in systems, and when everyone has access to inclusive City services and resources essential to reaching opportunities and thriving in San Diego.*

*To do this successfully, we need to honestly and directly address persistent issues connected to neighborhood inequity and systemic racism in the City of San Diego. Creating equitable outcomes requires an intentional approach that includes and empowers our communities experiencing structural exclusion through ensuring disparities are eliminated in systems. We recognize the strength, worth, and promise of each person in San Diego, and will work towards creating a better future...for all of us.*

Arts and culture are in San Diego's DNA. They bring people together and highlight the many traditions, ecologies, and practices of a highly diverse population. San Diegans participate in arts and culture at high levels, attending festivals, concerts, museums, and galleries, as well as expressing their personal creativity personally or in community. The creative workforce itself is high-achieving and diverse. For example, San Diego theaters continue to regularly send productions to Broadway. The city was awarded the 2024 World Design Capital designation in partnership with Tijuana. And there are six vital cultural districts with unique community characteristics, including the Balboa Park Cultural District, Barrio Logan Cultural District, Black Arts and Culture District, Convoy Pan-Asian Cultural and Business Innovation District, Arts District Liberty Station, and the anticipated Downtown Arts District.

However, Creative City arrives at a critical moment for San Diego and is a call to action. The creative and cultural sectors face mounting challenges that threaten their sustainability. The rising costs of living and doing business, the lack of affordable spaces, ongoing inequities in access to resources, and changes in consumer and participatory behaviors – these difficulties make it imperative to have a solutions-oriented plan. Additional problems arose during Creative City discussions, such as the lack of work and sales opportunities for artists and creatives, and “arts deserts” in certain areas of the city. For San Diego to maintain its vibrancy and compete in a global marketplace for creative talent and ideas, action is now required.



**Additional findings of Creative City are:**

- San Diego’s creative economy is large and growing, generating \$10.8 billion in economic impact and nearly 170,000 jobs.
- There is significant potential to expand creative tourism and position San Diego as a global cultural destination.
- The City has among the largest number of city-owned cultural facilities in the U.S. The more than 60 varied buildings – 36 in Balboa Park and an additional 24 located downtown and elsewhere in the city – offer opportunities to leverage these public assets for greater community benefit and to assure their maintenance and conservation.
- With nearly 1.4 million inhabitants, San Diego is the eighth largest and one of the most diverse cities in the nation. There are more than 100 languages spoken by people who have come from all parts of the world to live here. The city’s population is growing, diversifying, and aging. Demographics suggest the need to plan for increased demand for cultural opportunities and resources, to overcome access barriers, and provide increasingly diverse cultural experiences.
- Situated adjacent to the busiest land border crossing in the Western Hemisphere with over 150,000 pedestrians and passage vehicles crossing daily between the U.S. and Mexico, San Diego and Tijuana together anchor a transborder region that is both an economic zone and a highly interconnected cultural community. Transborder culture and artistry are unique and defining elements of San Diego to be celebrated and supported.

**The plan outlines four main goals, each with specific strategies and actions:**

- **Centering Artists, Creatives and Spaces:** Support artists and cultural organizations through affordable spaces, expanded funding, and capacity building.
- **Arts in Community:** Increase access to arts and culture throughout the city, with a focus on historically less-resourced areas.
- **Creative Entrepreneurship:** Foster growth of the creative economy through business support, workforce development, and industry partnerships.
- **Global Creative City:** Elevate San Diego’s profile as an international hub for arts, culture and creativity.

Implementation of Creative City will require new ways of thinking about existing arts and culture assets and resources as well as new investments in programs, strategies, staffing, and overall capacity. The plan recommends a range of new funding options, including dedicated revenue sources, public-private partnerships, an arts and culture foundation, and implementation of the “Penny for the Arts” policy.

With sustained commitment and resources, Creative City positions San Diego to fully realize a future with creativity at its center, fostering a more equitable place of inspiration and prosperity for all San Diegans.





# INTRODUCTION TO **CREATIVE CITY**

## Why Creative City?

Welcome to Creative City – the City of San Diego’s first cultural plan. Creative City is a comprehensive, long-term framework to advance arts, culture, and creativity for the benefit of residents of San Diego and the transborder region. It is grounded in extensive public dialogue, setting forth a shared vision for the creative life of all San Diegans.

Arts and culture are in San Diego’s DNA. They bring San Diegans together and highlight the many cultures of a highly diverse population. They express the highest aspirations of artistry and engage in everyday moments with a creative spark. They help keep people healthy and encourage wellbeing. San Diegans participate in arts and culture at high levels, attending festivals,



Asian Cultural and Business Innovation District, Arts District Liberty Station, and the anticipated Downtown Arts District.

# ARTS AND CULTURE ARE IN SAN DIEGO’S DNA.

concerts, museums, and galleries, as well as pursuing their personal creativity. The creative workforce itself is high-achieving and diverse. For example, San Diego theaters continue to regularly send productions to Broadway. The city was awarded the 2024 World Design Capital designation, in partnership with Tijuana. And there are six vital cultural districts, several rooted in communities of color, including the Balboa Park Cultural District, Barrio Logan Cultural District, Black Arts and Culture District, Convoy Pan-

However, Creative City arrives at a critical moment for San Diego and is a call to action. The creative and cultural sectors face mounting challenges that threaten their sustainability. The rising costs of living and doing business, the lack of affordable spaces, ongoing inequities in access to resources, and changes in audience and participant behaviors – these difficulties make it imperative to have a solutions-oriented plan. Many other cities face similar issues affecting arts, culture, and creative businesses, but these economic

**THE ECOSYSTEMS OF ARTS AND CULTURE HAVE EVOLVED IN RECENT YEARS**

and day-to-day challenges have reached a critical juncture in San Diego. Artists are being priced out of the city, access to affordable space is at the breaking point for many nonprofit and for-profit organizations alike, and organizational budgets are more-than-ever strained by increased operating costs. Additional problems arose during Creative City discussions, such as the lack of sustainable work and sales opportunities for artists and creatives, and “arts deserts” in certain areas of the city. For San Diego to maintain its vibrancy and compete in a global marketplace for creative talent and ideas, City action is now required.

There are additional reasons for a cultural plan. A cultural plan is timely now to identify future directions for the City and to assure alignment with its strategic priorities. The City has historically made and continues today to make significant annual investments in arts and culture. It is notable that the City stewards perhaps the largest collection of city-owned cultural facilities in the nation. Historically, the City has not recognized these assets as a core component of its support of and investment in the arts and culture sector.

**Key questions arising out of Creative City include:** How can these resources best serve the community’s vision? How can they generate greater access and equity for all San Diegans? How can cross-department efforts make arts and culture more accessible for San Diegans? How can new partnerships with outside agencies leverage the talents of the creative workforce to address the city’s most pressing concerns and expand a more equitable economy? In short, what would greater resources for arts and culture make possible?

The ecosystems of arts and culture have evolved in recent years and require change in organization and approach. The creative and cultural industries are now a mixture of nonprofit and for-profit enterprises, and sometimes both. Individual artists are small businesses. Many individuals and groups rooted in cultural traditions and artistic practices exist outside the nonprofit system. There are new ways to support creative San Diegans. Creative City includes new thinking to meet the city’s moment of both solving problems and embracing opportunity.



# Goals of Planning

## **Creative City set out to:**

- Assess the state of San Diego’s arts and cultural, and creative economy, environment.
- Learn and represent San Diegans’ vision for their creative life.
- Advance cultural equity for all San Diegans.
- Be inclusive in the planning process and listen to communities and individuals.
- Align City investments in arts and culture with City strategic goals.
- Address specific challenges such as affordable creative spaces, rising costs, ongoing inequities, and ongoing changes in consumer and participants behaviors.
- Enhance San Diego as a transborder region.
- Set a City strategic framework to guide and strengthen San Diego’s arts and cultural sectors.
- Explore a future role for the City’s arts and culture.
- Identify funding options for the sustainability and growth of arts and culture.

The City has operated with multiple arts and culture strategic and program plans, including its Public Art Master Plan that set a framework for the current public art program. Creative City is the first comprehensive, citywide engagement with the general public about the City’s role in systems of delivery of arts and culture. It offered San Diegans of all ages and backgrounds in communities and neighborhoods across the city the opportunity to voice their desires and priorities.



## Aligning with City Strategic Priorities

In 2022 the Mayor and City Council adopted *A Future for All of Us*, the City's Strategic Plan. The plan provides overarching guidance for all planning documents and the annual budget development process. The five priority areas of the City's Strategic Plan demonstrate how all elements of City government should focus their work to a common purpose.



## Relationship to the City's Strategic Plan

The City's Strategic Plan identifies the City's vision, mission, operating principles, and priority areas of focus for 2022 and beyond. The plan also outlines key outcomes, strategies, and performance measures. It organizes them according to the following five priority areas of focus: Create Homes for All of Us, Protect and Enrich Every Neighborhood, Advance Mobility and Infrastructure, Champion Sustainability, and Foster Regional Prosperity. Overall, the Strategic Plan guides the work of City leaders and employees in delivering what San Diego and its people need to thrive. The goals and strategies of Creative City were developed to align with these priorities and identify partnerships with other departments and agencies to amplify the impact of their collective efforts.

## Equity Commitment

Equity and inclusion are guiding principles for the City's Strategic Plan and Creative City adopts the City's equity commitment as its own.

### City of San Diego Equity Commitment

*Equity is an achievable outcome when disparities are eliminated in systems, and when everyone has access to inclusive City services and resources essential to reaching opportunities and thriving in San Diego.*

*To do this successfully, we need to honestly and directly address persistent issues connected to neighborhood inequity and systemic racism in the City of San Diego. Creating equitable outcomes requires an intentional approach that includes and empowers our communities experiencing structural exclusion through ensuring disparities are eliminated in systems. We recognize the strength, worth, and promise of each person in San Diego, and will work towards creating a better future...for all of us.*

Creative City strove to fulfill this commitment first through intentional inclusiveness in the planning process. While equity is a foundational principal in preparing Creative City, specific goals and strategies in the plan are called out as key opportunities to address historic and systemic inequities.



# Relationship with Other Citywide Efforts

In addition to the Strategic Plan, the City's progress relies on varied citywide efforts to strengthen its livability, sustainability, prosperity, and accessibility. The plans and strategies outlined below are just a few citywide efforts that serve as a springboard for Creative City to align with, build from, and expand on into the future.

The City's General Plan is its constitution for development. It is a comprehensive document, comprised of ten elements or chapters that provide a slate of citywide policies and further the City of Villages' smart growth strategy for development. Creative City can serve as a vital tool in effectively implementing growth and development, aligning with General Plan elements from Housing and Urban Design to Mobility and Economic Prosperity and related community plans.

In addition to the General Plan, Creative City aligns with other recent citywide plans. For example, the *Parks Master Plan – Parks for All of Us*, adopted in 2021, has a goal area for arts and culture, and calls for increased collaboration with the City's Department of Cultural Affairs to enhance programming in parks. That plan also calls for



development of a cultural plan. The *Public Library Master Plan*, adopted in 2023, incorporates arts and culture throughout its programming and facility recommendations. In fact, San Diego's libraries are already the city's largest single provider of cultural programming to the public. And the *Climate Action Plan – Our Climate, Our Future*, adopted in 2022, recognizes creativity as an essential tool for the City in generating innovative climate action and environmental engagement, while supporting efforts around cultural planning, social cohesion, health, and inclusive economic growth.

The San Diego Tourism Authority is developing its *Stewardship Plan*, which aims to drive long-term strategic investments and innovate tourism in San Diego. Arts and culture are identified as a key area for growth in visitation.





WHERE WE ARE  
**STARTING**

**Creative City is based in part on current conditions and key characteristics of San Diego. They define context, starting points, opportunities, and problems addressed through this plan.**

## Critical Challenges to the Creative Sector

As described above, San Diegans are highly involved in arts and culture in all forms and opportunities to participate in and share one's cultural interests are important to people throughout the city. The creative sector and arts and cultural ecosystems themselves are vital and diverse, yet face a critical juncture. Certain challenges have reached a point where it is imperative to understand and address problems on a systemic basis. The need for affordable space for cultural participation and creative production, for example, was the greatest and most critical need expressed during Creative City discussions, echoing the larger crisis in affordable housing and other real estate throughout the city.

## Economic Impact \$10.8 Billion

**↑ 87,000**  
Indirect Creative  
Economy Jobs

**↑ 82,467**  
Direct Creative  
Economy Jobs

## Large and Growing Creative Economy

The City has recently conducted two studies that illustrate for the first time the magnitude and growth of San Diego's countywide creative economy.<sup>2</sup> This new understanding is a key starting point for Creative City and highlights opportunities for both economic and creative growth.

The creative economy is defined as firms and individuals that produce cultural, artistic, and design goods or services, and intellectual property. Their economic value is based on imaginative qualities rather than the traditional resources of land, labor, and capital.

San Diego's regional creative economy generated total economic impact of \$10.8 billion and nearly 170,000 jobs in 2022. The vast majority of those jobs are in the city of San Diego. This represents 3.7% of the region's overall economy. The total number of jobs is growing, compared to the previous 2018 study, although total economic impact is slightly lower, reflecting the sector's early-stage recovery from the pandemic. Looking back ten years, both jobs and economic impact grew significantly. Top industry sectors are digital media, publishing and printing, entertainment, and events. Top occupations are:

- 1** Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media
- 2** Computer
- 3** Managers
- 4** Architecture & Engineering

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<sup>2</sup> Creative Economy in the San Diego Region (2023), <https://www.sdrpic.org/creative-economy>

It is noteworthy that the top occupations overlap with the region’s Innovation Economy, underscoring its interconnection with the creative economy.

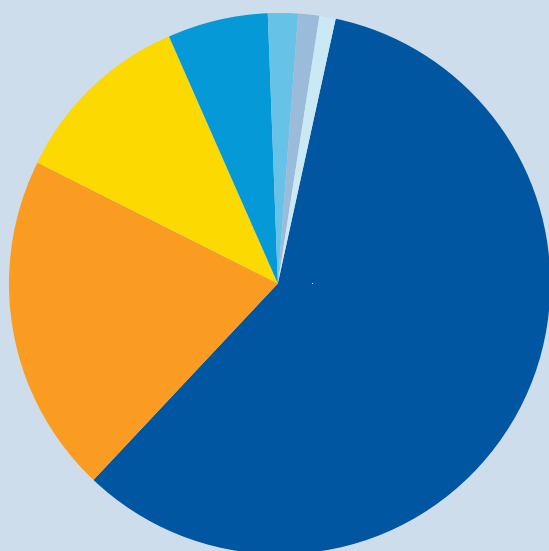
This portrait of San Diego’s creative economy underscores the scale of creative industries and their contribution to the overall economy. It also highlights the diversity of creative business activity. The creative industries include the nonprofit arts and culture sector as well as thousands of for-profit creative businesses. It also includes the universe of individual artists and creatives who are “gig workers,” freelancing in their industry as sole proprietors in many different creative fields. An expansive approach

to creative economy in San Diego acknowledges and embraces creatives working across the broad creative spectrum, from what we traditionally consider “arts and culture” to the design sector in San Diego and the innovation sector, including technologies, such as digital media, augmented/virtual reality (AR/VR) and the region’s rapidly growing medial research sector.

Despite its scale and growth, San Diego’s creative economy is largely unplanned. It has not, until recently, been a focal point of strategic planning for economic development. Creative City can begin a new chapter of recognizing and planning for growth in key areas of the creative economy.

## Employment in the Creative Economy Compared to San Diego Overall

	2012 Jobs	2022 Jobs	Change
San Diego	1,846,180	2,148,392	302,212 (16%)
SD Creative Economy	72,078	82,467	10,389 (14%)
LA Creative Economy	577,442	628,467	51,025 (9%)
SF Creative Economy	68,312	84,322	16,010 (23%)
Riverside Creative Economy	23,202	29,208	6,006 (26%)



## Creative Economy Employment by Race & Ethnicity in 2022

- 58.4% White
- 20.4% Hispanic or Latino
- 11.2% Asian
- 4.9% Black or African American
- 4.61% Mixed Race
- 0.22% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- 0.14% American Indian or Alaskan Native

## San Diego's Demographics

Who are we becoming? Who will Creative City serve?

**San Diego's population is growing, diversifying and aging.**

- We will grow from **1.38 million** residents to **1.57 million** by 2050.
- Latinx Americans will become **one-third** of all San Diegans and Asian-Americans will become **one-quarter**.
- People aged **65 and older** will increase to nearly one-quarter of the population.
- The percentage of children and young people (under age 18) will decrease.
- More than **100 languages** are spoken by San Diegans and one quarter of inhabitants are foreign-born.
- We have relatively high levels of education and median income.
- However, **11.9% of residents** live in poverty and **9.1% of households** lack access to a vehicle.

## Demographics and Trends

San Diego's demographics are important context for Creative City – they are the people the plan intends to serve. In the coming 25 years, San Diego's population will increase and become more diverse and older, consistent with national demographic trends.<sup>3</sup>

San Diego is the eighth largest and one of the most diverse cities in the nation. It will grow from 1.38 million to 1.57 million by 2050, with growth concentrated in areas of urban infill and Otay Mesa. Diversity of the population is significant and increasing. The population of Latinx Americans will become one-third of all San Diegans and Asian-Americans will become one-quarter. People aged 65 and older will increase to nearly one-quarter of the population. The percentage of children and young people (under age 18) will decrease, although certain neighborhoods located in the south, east and north will continue to have higher shares of school age children. There are more than 100 languages spoken by people who have come from all parts of the world to live

in the city, and one quarter of inhabitants are foreign-born.

San Diego has relatively high levels of education and median income. However, 11.9% of people live in poverty and 9.1% of households lack access to a vehicle. There is a longstanding military population in the area that has helped define the San Diego region since the early 20th century. Currently, veterans are 6.3% of the city's population, with additional numbers of active-duty and defense industry employees.

This portrait of current and future demographics highlights the need for Creative City to anticipate and plan for change. As the population grows and diversifies, there will be increased demand for creative and cultural opportunities and resources as well as increasingly diverse arts experiences. There will be continuing needs to overcome access barriers such as cost, cultural relevance, transportation, language, and age-relevance.

<sup>3</sup> Sources: US Census 2021 estimates and SANDAG's Series 14 Regional Growth Forecast for the City of San Diego.

## Transborder Culture and Artistry

San Diego and sister city Tijuana anchor a large ecologically, culturally, and economically diverse transborder region that is at once an economic zone and an interconnected community, living with and through an international border. San Diego and Tijuana have for centuries been neighboring cities separated only in more recent history by increasing border controls. The population is cross-cultural and many live, work, and attend school on both sides of the border. San Diego's economy is based substantially on cross-border companies and trade, and vice versa. The entire Baja and San Diego region is in fact the ancestral home of the Kumeyaay people, who still view the entire geography as a connected nation. Their view of the region is perhaps the most accurate and holistic, reflecting interconnections, art and culture, and history.



## **SAN DIEGO AND TIJUANA WERE JOINTLY DESIGNATED THE WORLD DESIGN CAPITAL 2024**

Recognizing the importance and vitality of the transborder region as an evolving global player in innovation and creative industries, San Diego and Tijuana were jointly designated the World Design Capital 2024. This is the first time two cities as one binational region have shared this prestigious award by Montreal-based World Design Organization.

For Creative City, the San Diego-Tijuana region's shared identity means recognizing transborder culture and artistry, and identifying ways to promote and enhance opportunities for artists and creatives on both sides of the border to continue and expand their evolution, alongside efforts aimed at San Diego's creative industries.

# Expanding Focus of San Diego Tourism

The role of San Diego’s arts and culture in tourism is expanding. For years, tourism marketing has emphasized the natural attributes of great weather, beautiful beaches, outdoor recreation, and tourism attractions, such as Balboa Park, the San Diego Zoo, and Seaworld. Arts and culture have been viewed as an important but ancillary draw for the visitor, promoted but not primary. Recent research for the San Diego Tourism Authority’s new strategic plan, the Stewardship Plan, identified arts and culture as a key opportunity area for growth in visitation. Tourism stakeholders are well aware of this opportunity and participated in Creative City

as one way to elevate arts and culture as an intrinsic part of the brand and a way to position San Diego in the future as a global cultural destination.

This shift is all the more important because the City’s investments in arts and culture have since the 1980s been financed primarily with revenues paid by visitors through the hotel tax (Tourist Occupancy Tax). Driving increased visitation and overnight stays increases arts funding in a direct manner. Beyond heads-in-beds, increasing visitor participation in arts and culture also brings in related revenue through visitor spending, and helps sustain the region’s overall economy as well as the arts and culture sector.



**DRIVING INCREASED VISITATION AND OVERNIGHT STAYS INCREASES ARTS FUNDING IN A DIRECT MANNER**

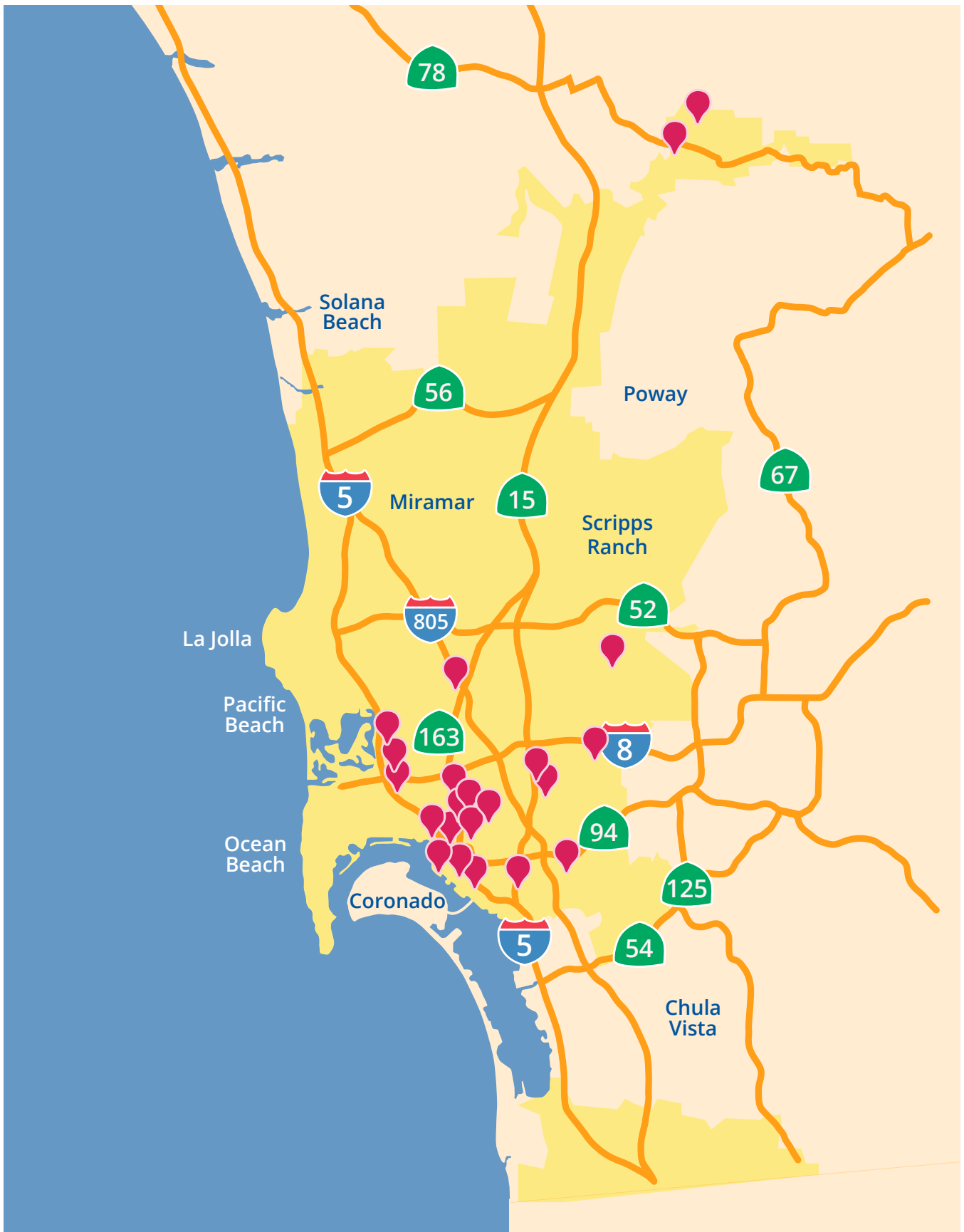
## City-Owned Cultural Facilities

As research for this plan, the City commissioned a first-ever inventory of its City-owned cultural facilities. The City owns 60 cultural facilities – among the highest number of any U.S. city. This includes 36 in Balboa Park plus 24 buildings outside the park, like the San Diego Civic, Balboa and Lyceum Theatres; several small arts venues in park and library facilities; and historic buildings. Many are operated by nonprofit partners whose programming serves San Diego’s people and visitors and that leverage their tenancy to raise substantial amounts of private support for the facilities. The inventory identified not only the number and listings of cultural facilities but also the diversity of locations, types, and uses. They illustrate the opportunity to manage this collection of public assets for even greater community benefit and to help assure their proper maintenance and conservation.

**THE CITY  
COMMISSIONED  
A FIRST-EVER  
INVENTORY OF  
ITS CITY-OWNED  
CULTURAL FACILITIES**







 **City-owned cultural facilities are indicated with a red pin.**



## Current City's Arts and Culture Programs

The Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) is the City's local arts agency, overseeing investments in arts and culture. In FY24, the agency managed approximately \$31 million in activity including Transient Occupancy Tax arts and culture funding, agency administration, administration of Lyceum Theatre, public art project funds, and external grant and partner program monies. This does not include the City's annual investments in its cultural facilities. Of the approximately \$31 million in activity, the agency's annual budget (grants and operations) was approximately \$17.7 million in fiscal year 2024. The majority of those monies were distributed as financial assistance, awarded through a competitive application process to nonprofit organizations working in arts and culture. Funding categories include the Organizational Support Program, which provides general operating support, and Creative Communities San Diego, which provides

support for projects in city neighborhoods that engage diverse communities in arts, culture, and creativity, spanning small neighborhood festivals to iconic regional events such as the annual Pride festival and Big Bay Boom, the city's Fourth of July celebration. A new funding category, Impact, is designed to shift focus periodically in order to contribute to City priorities. In its current iteration, Impact supports artists and nonprofit organizations in San Diego Communities of Concern and the San Diego Promise Zone to deliver innovative, change-making projects within these communities. Total grant funding in fiscal year 2024 totaled approximately \$12.7 million of the City's arts and culture budget.

As part of the City's commitment to supporting artistic development, DCA has a robust public art program. The program aims to integrate art into public places, make art accessible to San Diegans, and foster artistic growth and development. DCA manages the Civic Art Collection, oversees the integration of public art into the City's eligible capital improvement projects, and ensures the inclusion of art or space for cultural use in certain private developments. In recent years, DCA has spearheaded innovative public art initiatives such as Park Social, a summer program of temporary art installations in San Diego parks, and *here comes the neighborhood*, which programs artworks to activate neighborhoods while increasing engagement with art.

**THE PROGRAM AIMS TO INTEGRATE ART INTO PUBLIC PLACES, MAKE ART ACCESSIBLE TO SAN DIEGANS, AND FOSTER ARTISTIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

The City, through DCA, has a Poet Laureate program, launched in 2020, and a new Exposure Photography Fellowship appointment, launched in 2023.

It also led a pilot program for the creative workforce, Far South/Border North, funded by the California Arts Council with additional support from Prebys Foundation. In partnership with Catalyst of San Diego & Imperial Counties and San Diego ART Matters, the initiative supported artists and cultural practitioners in collaboration with community service agencies. They developed artistic content that increases local awareness of public health, civic engagement, climate, and social justice. Other DCA activities include expanded technical assistance and capacity-building initiatives for artists and nonprofit organizations and several additional collaborative programs, such as the Individual Artist Fellowship Program. While they are pilot programs without sustained funding, these programs have engaged San Diego artists in an unprecedented way. As demonstration projects, they have signaled a new level of engagement with artists and organizations.

DCA manages the City's annual agreement with Horton Plaza Theatres Foundation, the operator of the City-owned Lyceum Theatres. The agency works closely with Lyceum leadership to ensure greater community access to this city asset, including annual subsidies for smaller nonprofit producers to rent the space.

DCA has operated with multiple strategic and program plans, including its Public Arts Master Plan that set an ongoing framework for the current program. It also conducted a diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) assessment in 2020 to examine existing policies procedures, and practices with an equity lens. The assessment process included DEI training for staff and commissioners. The DEI assessment produced a 2021 report

and recommendations regarding its programs. Many, but not all, changes were implemented by 2023.

Creative City is distinguished from past planning efforts by the agency in part because it is the first comprehensive and citywide engagement with the public about the City's role in arts and culture. It offered residents of all ages and backgrounds and neighborhoods the opportunity to voice their desires and priorities.

Compared to peer city arts agencies across North America, DCA operates with a significantly leaner staffing level. Still, staff has plans for new and expanded programs that would better meet identified community needs. However, it has few funds for operations and programmatic innovation. As a result, valuable new ideas may be tried but cannot be sustained absent new resources.



The great majority of City resources for arts and culture have been focused on financial assistance to nonprofit organizations which deliver arts and cultural activities to the public. Through these funds, the City continues to be the largest single annual funder of the nonprofit arts and culture sector in San Diego and the region and is critical to the overall financial stability of the sector. This funding has become more effective in promoting equity through implementation of the DEI recommendations; however, there is more work that can be done.

**THE CITY  
CONTINUES TO  
BE THE LARGEST  
SINGLE ANNUAL  
FUNDER OF THE  
NONPROFIT ARTS  
AND CULTURE  
SECTOR**

In addition to financial assistance to nonprofits, Creative City identified other critical needs receiving much lower support or no support at all from the City or the larger philanthropic network. For example, funding and support for individual artists remains low throughout San Diego as well as across the region. There are few sources of strategic support of growth in the for-profit side of the creative economy. And the need for affordable creative spaces only continues to grow. These and other needs represent opportunities for the City to exercise leadership and invest in a broader range of strategies to sustain San Diego's creative and cultural ecosystems, and better realize their potential contribution to city goals.



# Vision

San Diego is a dynamic creative and cultural hub that celebrates self-expression, empowering individuals to explore their artistic passions and forge the creative life of their choosing.

Artists and creatives can flourish in their careers and are supported for their essential roles in the economy and their communities.

Cultural expression fosters a sense of belonging, inclusion, visibility and pride. Shared cultural expression encourages communication, learning, and empathy. As a border city, San Diego embraces a shared and deeply interconnected community, culture, and economics with Tijuana and the transborder region.

Arts, culture and creativity are essential to the health and well-being of the city. They are leveraged by other sectors in meeting multiple needs of people and communities.

The arts and culture ecosystems are sustained and invested in for their economic power. San Diego is globally renowned for its diverse and innovative artistic communities and the creative sector becomes a core element of the city's identity.



# LISTEN AND **ENGAGE PHASE**

In June 2023, Creative City initiated a comprehensive public engagement process to inform the cultural plan, concluding in October 2023 with the completion of a citywide online survey and final artist engagement activities.

# Creative City Engagement Guiding Principles

1. Community-centric approach: Leverage local planning partners to establish trust with community leaders and key stakeholders.
2. Meaningful and intentional engagement: Prioritize active listening to inform an equitable plan.
3. Inclusive delivery: Commit to addressing the diverse needs of all San Diego communities.

# Engagement Methodology

The process employed a mixed-method research approach, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. This strategy ensured robust and intentional engagement with a diverse cross-section of community members and stakeholders across San Diego, with the following objectives:

1. Listening to multiple perspectives.
2. Fostering collective ownership of the cultural plan.
3. Identifying community-specific creative assets.
4. Developing new partnerships and collaborative opportunities.
5. Generating broad awareness and momentum for the Creative City initiative.



**WE ARE ALL CREATIVES,  
EXPRESSING THE VITALITY  
OF OUR CITY IN UNIQUE  
ART, IDEAS AND INDUSTRY**

# Engagement Implementation

The engagement implementation offered multiple participation touchpoints including:

- Artist-led workshops and events
- Community conversations facilitated by volunteers
- Council District community meetings
- Creative City public forums
- Industry/sector-specific discussion groups
- Online engagement (Padlet)
- Online public survey available in over 130 languages
- Spanish language discussions
- Stakeholder interviews



The Listen and Engage Phase facilitated 70 events and activities and reached nearly 1,800 people including: residents all throughout the city, artists, transborder artists, creatives, cultural and community leaders, for-profit arts and creative industries, nonprofit arts and culture industry, arts-adjacent sectors, City stakeholders, and regional stakeholders. The discussions and meetings were open to all.





# Industry Sector Discussions

- 20+ discussions with City staff, and Office of the Mayor
- Artist housing/artist spaces
- Arts District Liberty Station resident nonprofit arts/culture organizations
- Arts education service providers
- Balboa Park Cultural District
- Barrio Logan Cultural District
- Black Arts + Culture District
- Chicano Park artists and community
- Climate + sustainability
- Community development
- Community/social service organizations for immigrants, child and youth success, and military/veterans
- Convoy Pan-Asian Cultural and Business Innovation District



- Countywide local arts agencies
- Creative sector employers/professional associations
- Creative youth development
- Economic development/creative economy
- Festivals, arts and entertainment organizers
- Film/digital media industries
- Higher education
- Homelessness, community and social service organizations
- Individual artists (2)
- Individual creatives
  - Kumeyaay artists and culture bearers/practitioners
- Music industry
- Nonprofit arts and cultural organizations (4)
- Philanthropic and corporate funders that do not support the arts
- Philanthropic and corporate funders that support the arts
- Senior service providers
- Tourism
- Transborder artists/arts organizers
- Visual arts industry



# Public Events in all Nine Districts

## Creative City Forums

- In-person launch at the Soap Factory
- Virtual forum

## Pop-ups

- Bread & Salt
- City Heights Performance Annex
- Light Box Theater
- Malcom X/Valencia Park Branch Library
- Mira Mesa Recreation Center
- Mission Trails Regional Park Visitors Center
- Ocean Air Recreation Center
- Rancho Peñasquitos Branch Library
- San Ysidro Branch Library
- WorldBeat Cultural Center



## DIY Community Conversations

- Ajumma EXP
- Ocean Beach
- Little Saigon
- Southeast San Diego



# Artist Engagement



**Diana Cervera and Josemar Gonzalez**

are multidisciplinary transborder artists and organizers whose practices include community engagement through cultivating partnerships with cultural leaders and organizations to craft

and inform their work. For Creative City, the artists facilitated engagement with culturally specific communities in City Heights. Through a two-part workshop with participants, the artists garnered insights from the perspective of these individuals residing in City Heights, activating them through poetry and storytelling. This work included building connections and creating a narrative, incorporating it into the second workshop and a final collective artistic creation. The stories emerging from the workshops highlight the current state of how creativity plays a part in the diverse communities of San Diego. Additionally, Cervera and Gonzalez conducted in-depth video interviews with cultural community stakeholders, sharing issues, goals, and values central to their work rooted in improving their communities and creativity within the community.



**Yolanda Franklin** is an actress and artistic director. For Creative City, she created a Legacy Renaissance project to engage the Black/African American community in Southeastern San Diego and Black artists in San Diego with their legacy stories – the stories that helped build the community.

In multiple sessions, she worked with artists and cultural practitioners to gather and share legacy stories and uplift black voices. The first workshop convened descendants of legacy makers, focusing on their stories and discussing why history is essential and how to incorporate this rich cultural history into the future. The project culminated in conversations about arts and culture as a tool for understanding and a tour of the Elks Lodge, a nearly 100-year-old Black-owned establishment, revealing part of its rich history and connection to “Harlem of the West” which the artist has uncovered. As a whole, the project aims to help build the Southeastern community from the legend ancestors and local living legends to its future “bridgers.”

**Jacole Kitchen** is a theatre director, producer, casting director, and director of arts engagement whose artistic practice involves serving the military community of San Diego through creative enrichment and therapeutic opportunities. For Creative City, she engaged veterans to talk about the intersection of the military and the arts,

posing questions like, What is happening now in the veterans’ community related to the arts? What is working well? What is needed? And how the arts have changed their lives and what they see in the future? After the discussion, veterans shared examples of their work, finding community and providing insights.





**Katie Ruiz** is a Chicana interdisciplinary artist, making work in painting and fiber sculpture. Ruiz collaborated with the Institute of Contemporary Art San Diego and the City to facilitate art-making at Creative City public events throughout San Diego over the summer. Hundreds of Creative City participants helped with The PomPom Project, producing nearly 2,000 handmade yarn pom poms while sharing their ideas for the city's first-ever cultural plan. The pom-poms were then installed in the City's Civic Center Concourse—a site shared by all San Diegans—creating a shared work of art for temporary public display. This colorful display became a visualization that celebrated Creative City and its vibrant communities sharing experiences, insight, and practices.

**Cat Chiu Phillips** is a local artist and educator who creates installations in public spaces, often using traditional handicraft methods such as crochet, weaving, and embroidery. Her fiber art workshops for Creative City were inspired by Kamayan or Filipino feasts where food items are served on banana leaves and without utensils as a communal way to share a meal and build trust and intimacy among the diners. Participants contributed to making food for this faux food experience at the workshops. All levels of crochet experience were welcome! The artist introduced other textile methods to participants so all could contribute to the collaborative community feast and participate in conversations about arts and culture as a tool for understanding and successfully weaving cultures together in the diverse city of San Diego.



## Outcomes

Over a five-month period, nearly 1,800 individuals participated in the engagement process, generating momentum, enthusiasm, and expectations for the cultural plan. San Diegans articulated visions for their city's creative future with diverse narratives and visuals.

**70+**  
EVENTS

**75**  
ZIP CODES

**10**  
PUBLIC  
POP-UP  
EVENTS

**9**  
COUNCIL  
DISTRICTS

**37** SECTOR  
DISCUSSION  
GROUPS

**1,800**  
PEOPLE INVOLVED

**800**  
SURVEY  
RESPONDENTS

**16**  
ARTIST LED  
WORKSHOP  
EVENTS

**2** CREATIVE CITY  
FORUMS

**4** DIY COMMUNITY  
TALKS

**130**  
LANGUAGES





# WHAT WE **LEARNED**

**Here are key messages of the public engagement and research, organized in categories but not in priority order.**

## Equity

Equity is a core value.

Equity is a foundational principle for the City, which extends to the City's investments in arts and culture. Public engagement confirmed that significant inequities persist in access to resources. Creative City is seen as an important tool in addressing cultural inequity and supporting the City's equity commitment.



## The Public

**San Diegans are highly engaged in creativity.**

San Diegans participate a great deal in creative activities. More than three-quarters of survey respondents attended at least one arts event in the past six months and the great majority have a personal creative practice, such as playing a musical instrument, drawing, writing poetry, or expressing cultural traditions.

**San Diegans want greater access to arts and culture in their neighborhoods.**

People throughout the city expressed the desire for more arts and cultural opportunities close to home. Some historically less-resourced communities such as Southeast San Diego, Barrio Logan, and San Ysidro, have not benefited from cultural investment at the same level as other parts of the city, and there are vast "arts deserts" in other areas of the city, such as Linda Vista, Serra Mesa, and Mira Mesa, where residential development has not been accompanied by cultural infrastructure development. In both instances, informal cultural vibrancy has evolved in spite of, not because of City support. San Diegans want opportunities for all ages – classes, workshops, small-scale venues, culturally-based activities, public art, and more. Parks, libraries, schools, community centers, and new commercial and residential development can be places for neighborhood-based activity.

San Diegans want Creative City to prioritize support for arts and culture.

San Diegans value their creative and cultural communities and want the cultural plan to address longstanding challenges in public support for the arts. 77% of Creative City survey respondents strongly support dedicated City funding for the arts and creative life of their communities. Even 50% of survey respondents who participate least, or not at all, in the arts support dedicated funding.

## Creative Sector Context

Artists and creatives are essential to Creative City's vision.

San Diego's creative and arts and cultural ecosystems are central to its vibrancy. Yet individual artists and creative workers lack key support needed to enable their work, including affordable work and living spaces. Artists seek greater opportunities to work, create, and participate in the city as a whole.

The high cost of space and living in San Diego threatens its creative sector.

The high and rising cost of space limits the sustainability of many arts and cultural organizations and creative businesses. It also limits their ability to engage the public and to produce and present their creative work. Similarly, artists and creative workers are increasingly being forced out of the city by the cost of housing and living. This is the number one challenge in Creative City.

Arts and culture play valuable roles in the city, beyond art-for-arts-sake.

San Diegans love the arts for themselves. They also recognize that arts and culture are an effective partner in advancing the city's goals in a broad cross section of areas including youth development, housing, equity, homelessness, social and racial justice, economic prosperity, public safety, mobility, and other areas of civic life. The City and its people can help achieve goals in these many fields and more by harnessing the power of arts and creativity.



The transborder culture distinguishes and differentiates.

The San Diego-Tijuana border region is a unique and defining feature of the city. It has long produced distinctive arts and culture widely recognized outside the region but less so here at home. Artists living and working on both sides of the border seek greater opportunity and support. They also want barriers to travel and artistic collaboration lessened.

Creative City is a distinct opportunity to empower Indigenous culture and creativity.

San Diego's Kumeyaay artists and culture bearers identify recognition as a key issue facing the tribes. They seek opportunities to celebrate their culture as well as their contemporary artistry, and to be acknowledged as an integral part of San Diego's cultural and creative communities.



San Diego has among the greatest number of City-owned cultural facilities in the U.S.

A surprising fact to many is that the City owns 60 cultural facilities – among the highest number of any U.S. city. This includes 36 in Balboa Park plus 24 buildings outside the park, like the San Diego Civic, Balboa and Lyceum Theatres; small arts venues in several park and library facilities; and historic buildings. Many are operated by nonprofit partners whose mission-driven work serves San Diego’s people and visitors. This collection of cultural assets can be leveraged for even greater public benefit.

San Diego is a city of innovation.

San Diegans share an aspiration to become a global center for artistic innovation and creativity, much as the city has catapulted to become a global center for technology innovation. This includes supporting various methods of creative knowledge exchange, experimentation and production. This breadth can and should be supported to evolve into a global city for the arts. There is an appetite for innovating in arts infrastructure and support as well, such as creative enterprise zones and partnering with the private sector.

# THE CITY OWNS 60 CULTURAL FACILITIES





## Creative Economy

Creative industries make a major impact.

San Diego's creative economy is large and growing. Total economic impact in 2022 was \$10.8 billion dollars with 23% jobs growth in four years. Total creative economy employment was about 170,000 full-time jobs. Still, the creative economy is underrecognized and often not included in economic development strategies among the City's partner agencies. The City's Economic Development Department included creative industries in its 2023 development strategy to demonstrate an initial commitment to San Diego's creative economy and encourage partners to do the same.

The creative economy is primed for further growth.

Key creative industries – music, events, film, media, design – are poised for growth. San Diego needs a plan to stimulate these fields, build markets, and remove barriers to their growth. Similarly, the city will benefit from development of equitable career pathways and other workforce development that equip San Diego's young people for employment in the creative economy, and attract and retain a more diversified workforce.

There is much greater potential for cultural and creative tourism.

San Diego has long promoted arts and culture as one driver of tourism. Fully 15% of attendance at paid arts events are visitors from outside San Diego County, and in some areas of the city the percentage of national and international attendance is well above 50%. Recent tourism research shows that arts and culture are the greatest area for growth in visitation, and visitors increasingly seek authentic and participatory creative experiences rooted in place and local culture. There is an opportunity to expand the brand of San Diego and market the city with greater emphasis on its creative vitality and breadth of cultural experiences.



## City Leadership

The City has the opportunity to elevate its creative sector leadership

San Diegans, from artists and arts organizations to creative businesses and the general public, all look to the City to play a leadership role. Peer and aspirational cities have a proven success record of creative sector leadership, expanding the role and function of arts and culture to help meet city goals. The City now has the opportunity to meet the challenges identified through Creative City and advance San Diego as a creative city

of global significance, and one that provides equitable access to arts and cultural resources and experiences. The City's Department of Cultural Affairs has moved in this direction in recent years and San Diegans welcome City leadership. The agency will require funding and staffing resources, as well as cross-departmental collaboration and external partnerships, to fulfill its role in implementing Creative City.





# THE PLAN

Creative City is a long-term plan organized into four goals and accompanying strategies. Each goal has a vision statement – what success will look like in the future as the plan is implemented. The goals and strategies provide the plan’s overall focal points and framework. An Implementation Appendix contains more than 150 actions providing additional details on how strategies can be accomplished. The Department of Cultural Affairs will identify and prioritize actions for implementation each year through its annual work plans and budgets. An Implementation Appendix contains more than 150 actions, providing additional detail on how strategies can be accomplished. The Department of Cultural Affairs will identify and prioritize implementation actions yearly through its annual work plans and budgets.



## Goal 1 |

# Centering Artists, Creatives and Spaces

Core to this plan is empowering artists to thrive in their work and the nonprofit organizations they often work through to fulfill their visions and missions. Meeting the need for affordable and accessible spaces is critical for sustainability and the growth and development of the city’s arts and cultural ecosystems. Expanding equity in access to resources, including grants, facilities, and technical assistance, is a priority, ensuring that all individuals and organizations, regardless of background or scale, have the support they need. Through expanding opportunities for artists and arts and culture organizations, San Diego will enhance its sense of place through cultural vitality, creativity, and inclusivity, enriching the lives of all San Diegans.

## Strategies

- 1.1 Address the critical need for affordable creative spaces.
- 1.2 Continue to evolve grantmaking strategies to advance equity, building on current efforts.
- 1.3 Expand funding available for individual artists.
- 1.4 Strengthen and create service organizations to support the success of artists through nonprofit arts and cultural organizations, creative industries such as music and film, arts education, and creative youth development.
- 1.5 Establish an equity fund to create pathways to organizational growth and sustainability for arts and cultural organizations led by and serving historically less-resourced communities.
- 1.6 Facilitate building the capacity of the creative industries through targeted convenings, thought-leadership programs, and support for incorporating best practices.
- 1.7 Partner large cultural institutions with smaller organizations to encourage mutual learning and to build capacity by providing mentorship and access to greater organizational infrastructure.
- 1.8 Create artist and designer fellowships or residencies within City government, building on the current Exposure Photo Fellowship program.
- 1.9 Develop an ongoing Kumeyaay Nation relationship to empower and celebrate Indigenous culture and creativity.
- 1.10 Continue to streamline procurement and contracting processes for arts and culture to advance equity, timeliness, and access.

## Goal 2 | Arts in Community

Arts, culture, and creativity are key elements of a vibrant and inclusive city, accessible to everyone. All San Diegans can experience and contribute to the rich tapestry of artistic expression that defines our cultural landscape.

### Strategies

- 2.1 Expand access to arts and cultural programming available in the city through enhanced partnerships with libraries, parks, recreation and community centers, and other partners.
- 2.2 Support development of arts and cultural elements as a part of community plans.
- 2.3 Expand existing “culture pass” programs with the ultimate goal of universal free access to San Diego museums and cultural centers.
- 2.4 Create a formal designation and support program for arts and cultural districts and creative enterprise zones.
- 2.5 Target arts and culture investments in historically less-resourced communities.
- 2.6 Evolve and expand the Public Art program.
- 2.7 Support implementation of the Balboa Park Visitor Experience Plan.





## Goal 3 | Creative Entrepreneurship

The creative economy flourishes and entrepreneurs, innovators, and visionaries are empowered to transform their ideas into thriving businesses. The mission and work of creative entrepreneurs is enabled by open access to education, tools, and resources. Equity and full inclusion of historically less-resourced communities is a core principle in fostering a vibrant creative economy.

### Strategies

- 3.1 Research and develop a creative economy strategic growth plan.
- 3.2 Explore intersections and overlap with regional innovation economy, including start-up capital, shared infrastructure and business recruitment strategies.
- 3.3 Target small business support for existing and start-up creative businesses, including individual artist-run enterprises, arts-related for-profit businesses, and others.
- 3.4 Establish a broad-based coalition for inclusive workforce development of creative workers and creative entrepreneurs.
- 3.5 Develop partnerships with arts and cultural districts and creative enterprise zones to provide small business support to artists and arts-related businesses in the districts/zones.
- 3.6 Identify and support growth and development in targeted creative industries.
- 3.7 Implement the creative economy strategies and recommendations of the Creative Economy Report in collaboration with economic development agencies.

## Goal 4 | Global Creative City

San Diego aspires to emerge as a vibrant global hub for arts, culture, and creativity, celebrated for its fresh, authentic, and engaging offerings and opportunities reflective of the region’s diversity and spirit of innovation. San Diego intends to position itself as a center for creative business and creative entrepreneurs, as well as a cultural and creative travel destination.

Through strategic partnerships in workforce development, small business development, recruiting, and tourism initiatives, the aim is to reposition San Diego as a premier destination for creative exploration and exchange, attracting people from around the world to live, work and explore.

### Strategies

- 4.1 Expand San Diego’s destination marketing efforts to further incorporate the arts, culture and creativity.
- 4.2 Expand management and partnerships to support growth and development of San Diego’s cultural and creative tourism offerings.
- 4.3 Strengthen awareness and success of San Diego arts and creative economy in the global marketplace.
- 4.4 Based on learning experiences from World Design Capital, produce or develop one or more signature events/destination events.
- 4.5 Recognize and support expanded transborder artistry.







# FUNDING AND STAFFING **RESOURCES**

Fully realizing the potential of Creative City will require investments in each of the goals and strategies. Implementation is only possible with additional resources for programs and initiatives, human resources, and overall capacity. Historically, the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) has operated with a lean staff, limiting capacity to explore new programs or expand their reach across the city. While DCA has the motivation and many ideas for expanded service to communities, lack of resources has curtailed their ability to further realize their leadership role.

As a policy matter, arts and culture in a city are stronger and more sustainable when supported by diversified revenue sources. Diversification helps protect against disruptive fluctuations. The recommended funding options for Creative City seek to provide multiple revenue sources to create healthy diversification.

To place Creative City's funding recommendations in context, the City has experienced chronic and systemic budget shortfalls that have at times necessitated difficult budget cuts, including to the arts. In response, the City Council placed a measure on the November 2024 ballot seeking voter authorization of one-cent sales tax increase. Projected to generate approximately \$400 million annually in additional general fund revenues for the city, this increase would eliminate current operating shortfalls and help pay for a backlog of capital needs. For the arts, revenues generated by the sales tax increase would "free up" hotel occupancy tax dollars needed to implement the "Penny for the Arts" proposal and generally make funding more available for Creative City initiatives.



## Recommended Funding Options

### 1. Implement the "Penny for the Arts."

- Implement the "Penny for the Arts" policy allocating 9.52% of total Tourism Occupancy Tax revenues to the City's Department of Cultural Affairs, on an ongoing annual basis.

### 2. Encourage the establishment of an independently created Arts and Culture Foundation to secure private and public funding for arts and culture in San Diego.

- Establish policies maintaining clear independence of the Arts and Culture Foundation from the City of San Diego.

### 3. Research and develop an admissions fee to fund arts and culture.

- Research and design an admissions fee for public and private arts, entertainment and sports events and venues, drawing on the successful experience of other US cities, such as New York, Chicago, and Seattle.
- Tailor the admissions fee to balance the need for sufficient revenues with the need to protect the sustainability of small and mid-size nonprofit arts and cultural organizations and smaller venues. Work in consultation with stakeholders to identify and address concerns about sustainability and other potential impacts of an admissions fee.
- Dedicate and restrict the use of revenues from an admissions fee to arts and culture purposes, such as grants, programs, capital needs, creative economy investments, and other uses consistent with Creative City.



**4. Allocate annual and one-time general funds to implement elements of Creative City.**

- Supplement current funding with general fund allocations as appropriate to implement Creative City objectives.

**5. Encourage and support funding collaborations combining and leveraging public and private funding.**

- Identify and seek partners for initiatives, such as meeting the need for affordable housing for artists and the cultural and creative workforce, the need for creative spaces, addressing equity in arts and cultural funding, and funding individual artists.
- Partner with philanthropic organizations to identify cross-sector opportunities for arts and culture and to coordinate local arts funders to leverage national funding opportunities.



**6. Develop partnerships with City of San Diego Economic Development Department and other economic development agencies to bring new resources to implement Creative City.**

- In collaboration with the Economic Development Department, expand the current Capacity Building Grant Program to include arts and cultural organizations and creative businesses.
- Explore and develop a partnership with the San Diego Promise Zone and San Diego Regional Enterprise Zone to identify resources for artists, arts and cultural organizations, and creative businesses.
- Explore and develop partnerships with business districts to identify resources for artists, arts and cultural organizations, and creative businesses.
- Explore designation and development of Creative Enterprise Zones, as specified in Arts In Community, #2.4, above.
- Explore designation and development of taxing districts for creative enterprise zones and arts and cultural districts, as specified in Arts In Community, #2.4, above. Taxing districts might include business improvement districts (BIDs) and enhanced infrastructure financing districts (EIFDs).



# Staffing Recommendations

## 7. Expand staffing and capacity in the City's Department of Cultural Affairs to enable implementation of elements of this plan.

- Creative City calls for new staff positions to implement programs and initiatives, including in offices or divisions for creative space, cultural and creative tourism, creative economy, and coordination with Parks and Recreation and Library departments. In addition, current staffing of the City's Department of Cultural Affairs for current programs is below the levels of comparable city arts agencies.
- Providing ongoing professional development opportunities for staff is key to success in new and expanded initiatives. Resources should be made available for training, conferences, research, site visits, and other learning opportunities to inform and improve implementation of Creative City.



# GLOSSARY

**Artist.**<sup>4,5</sup> The term “Artist” is applied to a person who engages in an art activity – creating, producing, practicing, and demonstrating an artistic practice, typically within a discipline such as visual, performing, or literary arts, or a combination thereof. For this plan, the definition of an artist is broader, running the gamut from an individual practicing artist to a commercially oriented artist-worker. Artists are not confined to a single sector; they are moving across business, industrial, and creative sectors, collaborating and driving economic growth and innovation. With vast changes in different sectors, such as technology, the artist is increasingly working in more collective, team-based models. Digital artists, in particular, are part of the fastest-growing working groups in the world and are at the forefront of creative industries, showcasing the potential for growth and innovation within the artist communities.

**Creative Economy.**<sup>6</sup> As defined in Creative Economy in the San Diego Region, the creative economy is defined as the businesses and individuals involved in producing cultural, artistic and design goods or services, and intellectual property.

**Creative Industries.**<sup>7</sup> Creative industries are the types of business enterprises – for profit, nonprofit and sole proprietor – comprising the creative economy. In San Diego, the City defines 71 industries as comprising the creative economy in the region ranging from digital media and music to architecture and interior design and fashion.

**Creative Sector.** Creative sector is a synonym for the creative economy. It encompasses the organizations, businesses, individuals and support systems in the creative economy. However, it refers to their interconnected relationships in addition to their economic role. Creative sector refers to the entire ecosystem of creative production, presentation, and support – how arts, culture and creativity fit into society and are enabled to do their work.

**Creative Spaces.** Refers to the full range of physical spaces and facilities in the creative sector. It includes all spaces and facilities for artistic, creative and cultural process, supply and production, performance, presentation, exhibition, training and education. It also includes live/work spaces used for these purposes. This refers to both public and private creative spaces and both interior and exterior.

**Creative Tourism.** Refers to a more specialized, immersive, and interactive form of cultural tourism, offering visitors the opportunity to develop their creative potential through active participation in courses, workshops, and learning experiences characteristic of the destination they are visiting. Creative City intends to foster the growth and development of both forms of tourism.

**Creative Worker.**<sup>8</sup> Refers to those people responsible for creative output in the areas of design, media and the arts whereby the production process is reliant on creativity both as an individual skill and as an organizational source of competitive advantage. The occupation categories typically include writing, design, theater, television, radio, film, advertising, marketing, product development, digital media, music, visual arts, software development, architecture, and more. Artists are generally defined as part of the creative workforce; however, not all creative workers are artists.

**Cultural Tourism.** Refers to a form of tourism that focuses on experiencing the culture, history, and heritage of a destination.

<sup>4</sup> What Do We Mean by Art, Artists, Culture, and Industry? The evolution of meaning in relation to changing patterns of work, Ann M. Galligan, 2007.

<sup>5</sup> The City adheres to definition of artist in San Diego Municipal Code section 22.5902 et seq.

<sup>6</sup> *Creative Economy in the San Diego Region*, San Diego Regional Policy and Innovation Center, City of San Diego, 2023.

<sup>7</sup> WESTAF Creative Vitality Suite, <https://cvsuite.org/learn-2/creative-industries/#industries>

<sup>8</sup> WESTAF <https://cvsuite.org/learn-2/creative-industries/#workers>

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# Creative City

## Implementation – Strategies and Actions

The goals and strategies of Creative City are supported by more than 150 actions that provide details on implementation. Through the Department of Cultural Affairs, the City of San Diego (City) will lead implementation through its annual work plans and budgets and collaborate with other City departments related to their roles and responsibilities in plan implementation. While the goals and strategies are not likely to change, it is anticipated and expected that progress will evolve in a long-term plan as circumstances change and new opportunities arise. The City and its partners will and should adapt implementation actions to future change.

### **GOAL 1| CENTERING ARTISTS, CREATIVES AND SPACES**

#### Strategy/Actions

##### **1.1 Address the critical need for affordable creative spaces.**

###### **a) Initiatives and Projects – City-Owned Facilities**

- 1.1.1 Recognize the City's collection of cultural facilities as one of the largest in the country, organize to better support as a key asset for community use and tourism, and create policy and practice to increase use and ensure equitable access.
- 1.1.2 Create a directory of City-owned spaces for artists, organizations and creative endeavors. Alternatively, provide seed funding for this resource or expansion to non-City owned spaces.
- 1.1.3 Consolidate management of leases for all City-owned cultural facilities in one department.
- 1.1.4 Create a cohort of leaseholders and joint use sites in City-owned cultural facilities.
- 1.1.5 Establish equity goals and strategies for inclusion in leases of City-owned cultural facilities.
- 1.1.6 Develop method of tracking aggregate of City support to and investment in leaseholders in City-owned cultural facilities, including annual grants, value of lease, utilities, etc.
- 1.1.7 Develop or expand support services for leaseholders in City-owned cultural facilities, such as professional development, cooperative marketing, and joint services/purchasing.
- 1.1.8 Facilitate peer sharing and support among leaseholders in City-owned cultural facilities.
- 1.1.9 Establish rental and use fees for non-lessee use of City-owned cultural facilities that scale with organizational budgets. Establish a creative community equity fund for City-owned cultural facilities to augment rental and use fees for small and historically less-resourced organizations.
- 1.1.10 Partner with Parks and Recreation and Library departments to provide outreach programming produced by Operational Support Program funding recipients at library, recreation and parks sites to augment arts and culture activities provided by those departments.
- 1.1.11 To ensure greater citywide access to quality, affordable arts and culture, consider inclusion of affordable lease space for arts and culture organizations in new construction and renovations of City parks, recreation and library facilities. Consider expansion to other City types of facilities.
- 1.1.12 Ensure that the Department of Cultural Affairs is a party to internal decisions on changes in use of City-owned properties, to better consider creative uses of these properties.
- 1.1.13 Repurpose City-owned properties for cultural and creative purposes.

**b) Initiatives and Projects – All Creative Spaces**

- 1.1.14 Facilitate the success of privately initiated creative space projects through permitting, other regulatory assistance, and incentive programs.
- 1.1.15 Actively promote and facilitate the inclusion of creative spaces and uses within private development projects.
- 1.1.16 Develop a toolkit to assist and encourage developers to embed creative space in their development projects.
- 1.1.17 Prioritize creative space projects in communities of concern and areas of the city with fewer cultural resources.
- 1.1.18 Partner with the San Diego Housing Commission to develop or support affordable artists live/workspaces.
- 1.1.19 Establish a creative use space program with BIDS/PBIDS and other management districts to streamline placement of arts and cultural organizations as well as artists in vacant or underutilized spaces. Explore incentives for BIDS/PBIDS to prioritize creative space use.
- 1.1.20 Identify and facilitate opportunities to use empty commercial spaces outside of BIDS/PBIDS for creative space.
- 1.1.21 Develop Creative Enterprise Zones to support creative practice and space development (CR 2.5).

**c) Investments**

- 1.1.22 Establish a creative space program within the Department of Cultural Affairs to focus on and improve equitable access to space for the creative industries to accomplish actions 1-2.
- 1.1.23 Replicate the Performance Assistance Fund model at the Lyceum Theatre to create a fund and provide rent subsidies for targeted cultural facilities/creative spaces throughout the city starting with City-owned facilities
- 1.1.24 Provide access to technical assistance for development of creative space projects.
- 1.1.25 Explore development of artists' live/work projects with nonprofit developers, such as ArtSpace.
- 1.1.26 Consider a public/private partnership to expand and leverage public funds for creative space projects.
- 1.1.27 Support bond initiatives and other financing initiatives to address the capital needs of City-owned cultural facilities.
- 1.1.28 Explore development of a California Community Land Trust to preserve or develop new creative spaces. Will require significant public and/or private funding to purchase land or property rights.
- 1.1.29 Support climate-adaptive, environmental sustainability in all City-owned cultural facilities. Similarly, support universal accessibility in all cultural facilities. Establish guidelines and standards for this work. Seek resources to support and incentivize implementation.
- 1.1.30 Consider establishment of a nonprofit developer of affordable creative space, a 'cultural trust' that can provide leadership, facilitation, technical assistance, financing, and other services needed to plan and complete affordable real estate projects serving the creative sectors. Explore the possibility of a public/private partnership for this purpose.



- 1.1.31 Support plans to replace or renovate the San Diego Civic Theatre to realize multiple space strategy/actions as outlined in Creative City cultural plan.
- 1.1.32 Consider the proposed San Diego Downtown Arts District as the platform for a potential new civic center, encompassing civic uses, affordable housing, workforce training opportunities in the arts, etc., in addition to and building on the existing arts facilities.
- 1.1.33 Research and assess needs to create one or more large outdoor performance venues for music and entertainment.
- 1.1.34 Develop a creative space strategy to address affordable creative space needs throughout the city, including nonprofits and for-profits in the creative sectors.

**1.2 Continue to evolve grantmaking strategies to advance equity, building on current efforts.**

- 1.2.1 Increase total funding available for current funding categories.
- 1.2.2 Regularly monitor funding programs and identify ways to increase funding investments in individual artists, creatives, collaboratives, cooperatives, and community groups providing desired arts and culture activities.
- 1.2.3 Implement the Department of Cultural Affairs' plans for new funding category, such as City Artist and new iterations of the Impact category.
- 1.2.4 Create a micro-grants category to respond on a timely basis to more immediate needs of artists and organizations.
- 1.2.5 Continue to simplify application processes and reporting to lower barriers to access.
- 1.2.6 Expand outreach and address barriers of language and culture.
- 1.2.7 Examine Organizational Support Program guidelines, requirements and funding formula to enhance equity in this category, including considering a multi-year funding cycle.

**1.3 Expand funding available for individual artists.**

- 1.3.1 Encourage citywide systems of support dedicated for individual artists, such as fellowships, grants, professional development, and other uses and partner with private philanthropy and funders to invest in artists.
- 1.3.2 Identify external partners to encourage funding available for individual artists.

**1.4 Strengthen and create service organizations to support artists, nonprofit arts and culture organizations, creative industries such as music and film, arts education, and creative youth development.**

- 1.4.1 Support field research to identify fieldwide needs and develop ways to meet those needs.
- 1.4.2 Develop a list of service and field needs that can be addressed by working with recognized service organizations.
- 1.4.3 Create relationships with recognized service organizations to meet identified needs in the field.
- 1.4.4 Allocate financial resources to procure and contract with service organizations to provide services and programs that meet identified needs in their industry and/or disciplines.
- 1.4.5 Develop a network of service organizations to share information and resources in fulfilling their missions.

**1.5 Establish an equity fund that creates pathways to organizational growth and sustainability for arts and cultural organizations led by and serving historically less-resourced communities.**

- 1.5.1 In partnership with private philanthropy and funders, support organizations serving BIPOC communities through arts and culture.
- 1.5.2 To advance arts and culture as a tool for health and wellbeing, support cross-sector work serving specific populations, such as houseless, youth, veterans, people with disabilities, etc.
- 1.5.3 Citing successful national collective impact models. Consider establishing a collaborative public/private fund(s).

**1.6 Facilitate building the capacity of the creative industries through targeted convenings, thought-leadership programs, and support for incorporating best practices.**

- 1.6.1 Hold fieldwide convenings through service organizations/professional associations to take stock of field issues and identify solutions.
- 1.6.2 Develop programs to provide training and career development for artists and creative workers. See also Creative Entrepreneurship, strategy 3, Creative Workforce Development.
- 1.6.3 Support service organizations/professional associations to develop centralized resources for artists, creatives, arts and cultural organizations, and creative businesses to enable better connections within the sector.

**1.7 Partner large cultural institutions with smaller organizations to encourage mutual learning and to build capacity by providing mentorship and access to greater organizational infrastructure.**

- 1.7.1 Build on and expand the success of existing models designed to incubate artistic talent provide administrative support and training.
- 1.7.2 Expand or replicate existing models to include mentoring, technical and administrative training, space use, joint programming, etc.
- 1.7.3 Ensure adequate financial compensation is provided to all participants.
- 1.7.4 Seek private funding and leadership for this initiative.

**1.8 Create artist and designer fellowships or residencies within City government, building on the current Exposure Photo Fellowship program.**

- 1.8.1 Expand and develop an artist fellowship or residency program placing artists in City departments, offices, or initiatives to enhance the work of that department, aligned with City priorities.
- 1.8.2 Create guidelines for artists and designers to design their residencies in collaboration with the department hosting the residency and consider multi-year fellowships or residencies.
- 1.8.3 Leverage the WDC2024 Legacy Program to place designers-in-residence in key departments across the city, including Sustainability and Mobility, Transportation and Planning.
- 1.8.4 Create interdepartmental MOUs to outline shared costs and desired outcomes of each artist residency.
- 1.8.5 Create a peer learning cohort of artists engaged in fellowships or residencies, including alumni of the program.
- 1.8.6 Report program outcomes on a periodic basis, including sharing with the public, to increase awareness of the benefits of engaging artists to better society.

**1.9 Develop an ongoing Kumeyaay Nation relationship to empower and celebrate Indigenous culture and creativity.**

- 1.9.1 Consult with Kumeyaay communities on the development of a leadership group of Kumeyaay artists and cultural leaders to partner with the City, building on current collaborative efforts.
- 1.9.2 Maintain a commitment to Kumeyaay Nation self-determination, cultural authority, and leadership in defining the focus of interactions with the City.
- 1.9.3 Strengthen, identify and embed Kumeyaay Nation arts and culture, focusing on topics that might include support for Kumeyaay cultural production and entrepreneurship.
- 1.9.4 Consider creating a permanent space for Kumeyaay artists, creatives, and organizations to create and present work; strengthen engagement, research, and advocacy relating to Kumeyaay Nation arts and culture bearers; and develop opportunities that bring new focus to understanding and support of their creative projects, collaborations, and presentations.
- 1.9.5 Invite and include Kumeyaay leadership in transborder artists’ activities and projects.
- 1.9.6 Explore development of a formalized strategy or approach, and establish ongoing consultative relationship with tribal leaders.

**1.10 Continue to streamline procurement and contracting processes for arts and culture to advance equity, timeliness, and access.**

- 1.10.1 Review and assess guidelines and requirements for arts and cultural funding.
- 1.10.2 Continue implementation of recommendations from the 2019 Arts & Culture Equity Assessment regarding procurement and contracting.
- 1.10.3 Explore alternative to the City’s standard procurement portal for artist procurement.
- 1.10.4 Review and assess procurement and contracting processes and requirements with the goal of reducing insurance requirements for small businesses and sole proprietors contracted for services with the Department of Cultural Affairs.

## **GOAL 2| ARTS IN COMMUNITY**

### **2.1 Expand access to arts and cultural activities available in the city through enhanced partnerships with libraries, parks, recreation and community centers, and other partners.**

- 2.1.1 Provide greater opportunities for artists to work in community settings through grants and commissions building on the recent efforts such as Park Social and Far South/Border North programs.
- 2.1.2 Designate dedicated liaison staff positions in the departments of Race and Equity, Library, and Parks and Recreation, the Office of Child and Youth Success, and other City departments to coordinate with the Department of Cultural Affairs to facilitate expanded access to arts and culture programming.
- 2.1.3 Review, streamline and make more transparent regulations, permitting, contracting and other requirements for arts events and activations, cultural activities and nightlife with the goal of enlivening and activating public spaces for arts and cultural events, activities, filming, music, placemaking, etc.
- 2.1.4 Encourage fundraising for community programming and activations through an independently created foundation to support arts and culture (See Funding and Staffing Resources). Provide City match for private contributions, as the Library currently does, targeting these funds to less resourced communities.

### **2.2 Support development of arts and cultural elements as a part of community plans.**

- 2.2.1 Require community and neighborhood plans to include an arts and cultural component. The Department of Cultural Affairs can provide guidance and technical assistance for these plans, working in coordination with other City departments.
- 2.2.2 Support implementation of the arts and cultural component of community plans in alignment with Creative City.
- 2.2.3 Support and facilitate development of local arts and cultural venues and spaces through the Affordable Space recommendation #1, above.

### **2.3 Expand existing “culture pass” programs with the ultimate goal of universal free access to San Diego museums and cultural centers.**

- 2.3.1. Convene existing culture pass programs to identify opportunities and barriers, articulate access objectives, and develop a plan for expanded access to include both local passes and visitor pass programs.
- 2.3.2 Explore creation of a public/private fund to support free admission to City-owned museums and cultural facilities for city residents through an expanded cultural pass which can be an expanded to other non-City owned.

### **2.4 Create a formal designation and support program for arts and cultural districts and creative enterprise zones.**

- 2.4.1 Recognize arts and cultural districts and creative enterprise zones as tools for economic development and community empowerment.
- 2.4.2 Support development of strategic plans for districts and zones.

- 2.4.3 Enact an ordinance authorizing and requiring all City departments and initiatives to support implementation of districts/zones' plans – a “whole of government” approach to success.
- 2.4.4 Create a position to organize and coordinate efforts across all concerned departments including the Department of Cultural Affairs, Planning, Parks and Recreation, Economic Development,, and Sustainability and Mobility.
- 2.4.5 Create an annual operating support program to fund basic operations of the districts/zones to establish a foundation of sustainable capacity.
- 2.4.6 Explore development of a transborder cultural district in San Ysidro and Tijuana. See Global Creative City, #4, Transborder Artistry, below.

**2.5 Target arts and culture investments in historically less-resourced communities.**

- 2.5.1 Engage recognized arts and cultural districts representing racial/ethnic communities to identify specific needs and investment opportunities, including the Black Arts & Culture District, Barrio Logan Cultural District, and Convoy Pan-Asian Cultural and Innovation District. Investments may include capacity building, venues development, small business support, programming, branding, creative tourism product development, and other identified needs.
- 2.5.2 Explore partnerships with business improvement districts, and Planning and Economic Development departments, to bring additional resources to arts and cultural district/creative enterprise zone development.
- 2.5.3 Consider creation of new arts and cultural districts in communities that express interest such as San Ysidro and City Heights. See Arts in Community/#4 Cultural Districts, above, and Global Creative City, #4, Transborder Artistry, below.
- 2.5.4 Partner with arts and cultural districts/zones to fund and implement arts, cultural, and creative sector investments.
- 2.5.5 Pursue development of affordable housing and other spaces for the cultural and creative sectors in alignment with the arts and cultural district and communities.

**2.6 Evolve and expand the Public Art program.**

- 2.6.1 Develop a five-year work plan for the public art program, building on engagement and research conducted for Creative City and in response to the existing Public Art Master Plan. Incorporate opportunities and priorities from Creative City and consider structural needs for the program. Consider establishing divisions to include Capital Improvements Program, Collections Management, galleries and exhibitions, temporary public space initiatives, Art in Private Development.
- 2.6.2 Fund and implement plans for program expansion in alignment with Creative City.
- 2.6.3 Increase staffing levels sufficient to manage current and future program workloads to reflect the needs of 2.6.1 and to support work of external agencies, such as. Caltrans.
- 2.6.4 Enhance public education and awareness of the public art program and Civic Art Collection.
- 2.6.5 Develop guidelines to encourage real estate developers to embed creative spaces or cultural use within their projects. See Centering Artists, #1, Affordable Space, above.
- 2.6.6 Ensure the Department of Cultural Affairs is a party to developer negotiations to explore and identify the best fulfillment of public benefit and art in private development requirements in alignment with Creative City.

- 2.6.7 Explore combining or pooling public art set-aside funds for capital improvements and civic enhancement fees for art in private development for the purpose of creating high impact public/private cultural infrastructure projects.
- 2.6.8 Ensure the inclusion of gallery or exhibition space and auditorium/lecture space in anticipated future City Hall and explore the viability of creating a design center.

### **2.7 Support implementation of the Balboa Park Visitor Experience Plan.**

- 2.7.1 Initiate temporary and permanent public art projects in collaboration with Balboa Park stakeholders in the park.
- 2.7.2 Support the implementation of the Visitor Experience Plan recommendations for wayfinding, placemaking and mobility.
- 2.7.3 Support the implementation of the Visitor Experience Plan recommendations to enhance inclusive welcoming and decolonization.
- 2.7.4 Support activation of public spaces in the park with arts and culture programming.

## **GOAL 3| CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

### **3.1 Research and develop a creative economy strategic growth plan**

- 3.1.1 Acknowledge and build upon the two San Diego creative economy reports and recent design industry research, defining and assessing the significant scale of the city's creative industries through the development of a creative economy strategic growth plan.
- 3.1.2 Articulate clear definitions of constituencies and growth goals for specific industries and occupations, including an expanded definition that embraces emerging technologies.
- 3.1.3 Align and intersect with other economic development agencies and plans, such as City of San Diego Economic Development, San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation, Workforce Partnership, County of San Diego, and San Diego Chamber of Commerce.
- 3.1.4 Draw on the successes and lessons learned in developing the innovation economy and apply to expanding the creative economy.
- 3.1.5 Adopt a mechanism for expanding exports of the creative industries – knowledge, ideas and products.
- 3.1.6 Commission research to identify intersections between creative industries and designated growth sectors like tourism, medical, and innovation.
- 3.1.7 Leverage existing research and data from Baja California to identify regional growth strategies for creative industries.

**3.2 Explore intersections and overlap with regional innovation economy, including start-up capital, shared infrastructure, and business recruitment strategies.**

- 3.2.1 Partner with the San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation to integrate the creative economy into the Inclusive Growth Initiative.
- 3.2.2 Utilize existing networking and business development infrastructure to create stronger connections between the innovation economy and creative industries. Partners may include the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce and Downtown San Diego Partnership.

**3.3 Target small business support for existing and start-up creative businesses, including individual artist-run enterprises, arts-related for-profit businesses, and others.**

- 3.3.1 Partner with City of San Diego Economic Development Department and outside partners to focus on the creative economy as a vital sector for growth and expansion, building markets for target creative industries.
- 3.3.2 Establish a small creative business catalyst fund with internal and external partners.
- 3.3.3 Advocate for integration of creative industries into business and economic development strategies among partner agencies such as the San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation, Workforce Partnership, County of San Diego, and San Diego Chamber of Commerce.
- 3.3.4 Develop and provide professional development for artists and other creative entrepreneurs. Explore partnerships with agencies to provide these services.
- 3.3.5 Repackage existing business programs for creatives businesses.
- 3.3.6 Support organization and coalition building for the creative economy similar to small business organization and tech sector organization, including ongoing convening and networking for creatives

**3.4 Establish a broad-based coalition for inclusive workforce development of creative workers and creative entrepreneurs.**

- 3.4.1 Identify target industries and occupations needing workforce assistance to support growth and sustainable jobs.
- 3.4.2 Develop a creative apprenticeship program in collaboration with partners such as San Diego Unified School District (College and Career Technical Education Department, Visual and Performing Arts Department), San Diego Workforce Partnership, community colleges, San Diego nonprofit arts and cultural organizations, creative youth development organizations, and creative sector businesses.
- 3.4.3 Explore partnerships with regional economic development agencies to integrate creative industries into talent pipeline growth efforts.
- 3.4.4 Explore partnerships with K-12 schools, creative youth development organizations, and higher education institutions to reinforce pathways to employment and careers in the creative economy.

**3.5 Develop partnerships with arts and cultural districts and creative enterprise zones to provide small business support to artists and arts-related businesses in the districts/zones.**

- 3.5.1 Draw on districts' local knowledge and relationships to target small businesses and types of support.
- 3.5.2 Support and incentivize programs for districts/zones to attract and incubate creative businesses, including artists-run enterprises.
- 3.5.3 Create a capital investment fund to incentivize facility and space projects serving the arts and other creative uses in the districts/zones.

**3.6 Identify and support growth and development in targeted creative industries.**

- 3.6.1 Potential industries for growth and development include music, film, visual arts, and the nighttime economy.
- 3.6.2 Commission studies and plans as needed to support growth in the targeted industries.
- 3.6.3 Partner with regional business development agencies to recruit large companies within creative industries to relocate to San Diego for a sector growth and expansion.
- 3.6.4 Consider incentives, regulatory relief, and other supports for the targeted industries.

**3.7 Implement the creative economy strategies and recommendations of the Creative Economy Report in collaboration with economic development agencies.**

- 3.7.1 Create a position in the Department of Cultural Affairs focused on investing in and expanding the creative economy.
- 3.7.2 Serve as the liaison internally across departments and externally among partner agencies to implement the creative entrepreneurship strategies.

## **GOAL 4| GLOBAL CREATIVE CITY**

**4.1 Expand San Diego's destination marketing to further incorporate the arts, culture and creativity.**

- 4.1.1 Partner with the San Diego Tourism Authority to evolve the city's global identity to further incorporate arts and culture. Expand the focus to include creative industries such as music, visual arts, film, design, etc., as well as cultural experiences and creative spaces.
- 4.1.2 Utilize existing research to determine global and national brand awareness of San Diego as a creative city to determine gaps for further research.
- 4.1.3 Commission additional research based on identified gaps in knowledge to determine a unique selling proposition among peer and aspirational cities in California, the U.S., and abroad.
- 4.1.4 Build on the success of World Design Capital 2024 in building global awareness of San Diego to attract additional global partners and designations, such as UNESCO Creative Cities, World Cultural Capitals, Global Cultural District Network, etc.
- 4.1.5 Create a plan focused on long-term strategies to redefine San Diego's identity as global hub for arts, culture, and creativity.
- 4.1.6 Partner with the Economic Development Corporation in promoting San Diego's creative sector and its related industries for global trade.



**4.2 Expand management and partnerships to support growth and development of San Diego’s cultural and creative tourism offerings.**

- 4.2.1 Expand cultural tourism to include creative tourism.
- 4.2.2 Create a division or program of cultural and creative tourism potentially within the Department of Cultural Affairs.
- 4.2.3 Enhance destination marketing to reflect San Diego as a global hub for arts, culture and creativity.
- 4.2.4 Support implementation of the San Diego Tourism Authority’s Stewardship Plan, including Department of Cultural Affairs’ participation on the Destination Stewardship Council.
- 4.2.5 Research and develop cultural and creative tourism experiences and products, such as self-guided tours focusing on arts and cultural experiences and events. Collaborate and coordinate with the San Diego Tourism Authority and other partners on development and promotion of cultural and creative tourism products.
- 4.2.6 Identify and organize creative tourism ‘products’ into strategic focus areas, such as the live music industry, creative nightlife, or artists’ studios, galleries, fairs and events.
- 4.2.7 Identify and collaborate with artists, organizations, arts and cultural districts, creative enterprise zones, and event producers as partners in cultural and creative tourism.

**4.3 Strengthen awareness and success of San Diego arts and creative economy in the global marketplace.**

- 4.3.1 Integrate arts, culture and creative talent and product into regional and global economic development strategies to expand revenue and increase awareness of San Diego as a competitive creative hub.
- 4.3.2 Partner with the San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation to elevate arts and creative economy in their international business development programming.
- 4.3.3 Create an investment fund for international promotional efforts to represent San Diego arts and creative economy (e.g., international booking conferences and trade fairs).
- 4.3.4 Establish a fund for hosting international producers and presenters to attend and experience San Diego arts and culture programming and to support business networking for creative entrepreneurs.

**4.4 Based on learning experiences from World Design Capital, produce or develop one or more signature events/destination events.**

- 4.4.1 Invest in existing efforts such as museum month, theater week, and design week.
- 4.4.2 Consider major new art and design signature/destination events such as a major contemporary art fair, biennial, Nuit blanche, global theatre festival.
- 4.4.3 Partner with San Diego sister cities to explore and consider artist exchange programs with those cities.

#### **4.5 Recognize and support expanded transborder artistry.**

- 4.5.1 Elevate the visibility of transborder history and culture and the role artists and cultural practitioners play in the region.
- 4.5.2 Explore ways to streamline and improve border crossings for artists and creatives, as well as movement of artistic materials across the border. Consider expanding Tijuana’s “fast lane” program for medical tourists and business investors to include artists and creatives.
- 4.5.3 Expand eligibility for project funding to accommodate artists from both sides of the border. Consider public/private funding collaborations as one means to accomplish this objective.
- 4.5.4 Expand transborder artists’ programming and exchange opportunities in all art forms.
- 4.5.5 Encourage continued and expanded collaborations among major institutions and community-based organizations on both sides of the border.
- 4.5.6 Explore development of a binational cultural council of transborder artists and arts leadership to support transborder artistry and programming, building on the current relationship of Instituto Municipal Arte y Cultura and the Department of Cultural Affairs. Acknowledge the power differential in the relationship of the two cities and encourage mutuality.
- 4.5.7 Create an exchange program of artists residencies in the City of San Diego and City of Tijuana.
- 4.5.8 Explore development of a transborder arts and cultural district or creative enterprise zone in San Ysidro and Tijuana. See Arts in Community #2, above.
- 4.5.9 Leverage World Design Capital (WDC) as a platform for building greater international cultural and creative industry relationships and visibility. Continue to actively participate in the WDC global network post 2024 to expand design and innovation partnerships, continue to build awareness of San Diego-Tijuana as a center of creativity and innovation, and promote creative business development.



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