**New Community Visions Initiative**

**San Jose, California Regional Meeting #3**

***The Arts and….***

**November 19, 2015**

*Mayors throughout the country are increasingly realizing the critical value of arts and creativity in virtually every connection of city building. Mayors recognize that by virtually every measure of success in a community—whether it’s economic success, or health, or safety, thriving communities are created with the arts. And that’s why I’m grateful for the partnership with Americans for the Arts.* ~ Sam Liccardo San Jose Mayor, welcoming everyone to a day of conversation about the role of arts in community building and development for healthy, equitable, and vibrant communities.

*We do a lot of work in the Arts and…. In the military for example, and in health, equity, tourism, public art, tourism, and business. I’m often in meetings where other people say: ‘Why are the arts here? What do the arts have to do with this topic? That’s what we’re here to talk about today. ~ Bob Lynch, Americans for the Arts.*

The New Community Visions Initiative of Americans for the Arts hosted the third of eight

regional meetings on November in San Jose, California. XXX people from five states

met for a full day of conversation about the future of places, community development,

and the arts. About two-thirds of the people in the room were artists or represented arts

organizations, the rest were from other sectors of the community including transportation, health, technology, government, corrections, funders, historic preservation, education, humanities, community development, and environment. About half of the people were from the Northern California area and the rest from other parts of the state and surrounding states of Oregon, Washington, Alaska, and Idaho. The meeting was curated by **Clay Lord, Americans for the Arts**, and the event was designed and implemented by **Michael Rohd, the Center for Performance and Civic Practice**.

**Building Community**

Michael Rohd asked Americans for the Arts’ Clay Lord to share the context for the day.

● What is Americans for the Arts?

*Americans for the Arts is a national organization that advocates for and supports arts and culture. We work with local arts agencies of all kinds. We work at the national level to create national clout. We work with a lot of government agencies and influencers at the national level. My team works at the local level to create services for artists and arts organizations and others who are creating art in communities.*

*When Americans for the Arts was created there were very few of these agencies and now there are many of them, all over the country. We serve the 5000 local arts agencies. Today, we are having a conversation about what those local arts agencies can do to support more healthy, equitable, and vibrant communities. What does it take to create a healthy, equitable, vibrant community and what role can arts and culture play?*

● What is NCVI?

*NCVI stands for New Community Visions Initiative and it is a two-year initiative at Americans for the Arts. It is designed to help us and local arts agencies as well as foundations, arts organizations, individual artists, understand what is going to happen in communities over the next 10 to 15 years, and how the arts can contribute and be part of the community conversation over that time.*

*New Community Visions Initiative sits at the intersection of arts and community. We want to understand how the arts can be part of creating healthy, equitable, vibrant, places.*

*We are having eight of these cross-sector, one-day think tanks across the country. We’re seeing new knowledge about how people interact to create stronger communities.*

*We’ve published the first of three books that we’ll release as part of this initiative to understand the role of arts and communities today, as well as what’s going to happen in those places, and how the arts can be part of that change going forward.*

● What does AFTA hope to learn?

*We want to learn how arts function in communities and how they can work better inside other sectors. We want to surface new knowledge and understand how systems work in communities and the role that arts play in that work.*

*We also want to create a variety of new relationships for Americans for the Arts, and across sectors in your communities, as we work toward more integration of the arts in other sectors for strong communities of the future.*

*Our goal is for AFTA to take lessons from these meetings to develop tools, systems, and services, which can make it easier for arts to be at the table for these community initiatives.*

*At the end of 2016, we’ll publish a book that will explain our thoughts about how to move forward with action steps based on what we are learning from these meetings and other research. This is a ten-year project and ideally it will lead to results along the way and culminates in results in 2025 when we hope to see an increase in the number of people who consider the arts relevant to positive community change. We’ll be considering the nine different ways we’ve identified that arts organizations do their work, like creating partnerships, building capacity, advocacy, grantmaking and more. We’ll create programs, services, and products that make it possible for local arts agencies to do more of the work that creates healthy, equitable, vibrant communities.*

~~Michael added:~~

*~~These meetings are not conversations about how we can get more funding for the arts. The center of these conversations is: how are we thinking about other sectors in our community and how those areas are changing, and how we are hopefully moving toward healthier, more vibrant and equitable communities, and how the arts can help ensure that this happens. How do we get the arts to those tables and in that work?~~*

*~~While the conversation about the value of the arts is critical, today’s conversation is about the arts and other sectors. Moreover, we believe that by doing this work with other sectors, we are also making the case for the value of the arts to communities.~~*

~~● What do you hope this convening offers today, for those who are here?~~

*~~We hope you have the opportunity to develop new relationships that provide value beyond this meeting.~~*

*~~This should be a day of really interesting conversation and deep thinking about things you don't always have the chance to delve into in your day-to-day work. Some new connections and conversations you can carry forward into the future and that will stick with you as you think about developing ways to address community issues in your own work.~~*

*~~We’ll keep you informed about what we learn from today and in other meetings. And we hope you feel free to provide feedback to us because that is what will make this work more valuable for all of us.~~*

**NCVI: A national two-year effort; research, cross-sector think tanks, publications, & creating action-oriented tools and resources; exploring “Arts And” opportunities;**

**Goals: new relationships, make & surface new knowledge about how healthy, vibrant, equitable communities are achieved, and what role the arts can play in getting there.**

**After a series of introductory prompts, the participants responded to Michael’s request for responses:  *What do you know about who is in the room? I know….***

* Someone cares about animals
* All these ladies are working really hard on many things
* Some of us have day jobs and are inspired by our spiritual side
* We have a passion for social justice
* We love to start up new things
* We love to wear multiple hats
* There’s a lot of interesting thinkers in the room and we are already enjoying ourselves
* We strive to realize our values thru action
* Everyone’s personal and professional life is rooted in creativity
* Don’t have to have a talent in the arts to advocate for the arts
* We are rooted in the community and active in building community
* There are passionate people in this room
* Place is a very important part of the context of who we are and what we do

***What do we know about how to think about place? What do we know about how to think about the future of place and how it might change? We know….***

* We are passionate about having arts be a central part of positive change in our communities
* Arts need to be baked into sustainable community development planning
* Not to run from unique tragedy and trauma, they are part of our human experience
* The arts are just a part of a package that includes recreation, and nature and animals and it’s important to recognize them all
* Access, in all the ways it can be defined, is key
* Economic and racial gaps are getting wider
* It’s not self-evident to people doing development work that arts are part of the solution
* Change is happening so fast, and it’s happening so fast sometimes it feels like things are disintegrating
* Cultural neighborhoods and communities can be completely destabilized by gentrification
* Growing sense of urgency about gentrification, environmentalism, and violence, and a growing sense that these are all interconnected
* The arts should be part of the solution to our political divisiveness
* Influencers can come from bottom up
* Everyone has a stake in improving public education
* We are undergoing a demographic revolution
* We know that climate change is important

~~Michael Rohd:~~ *~~Before we break, let’s talk for a minute about audience. Who are we talking to today? Who is this conversation for? I asked Americans for the Arts this question and they told me there are three different audiences for the work.~~*

*~~First Audience: Americans for the Arts. They want to learn and identify tools they can build for others to enhance this work.~~*

*~~Second audience - Local arts agencies, funders, government, and business. These are the arts enabling ecology of service and support entities.~~*

*~~Third audience- Artists, arts organizations, and non-arts sector partners.~~*

**Defining Healthy, Equitable, Vibrant Community**

~~Michael started this part of the day by talking with Clay Lord:~~ *~~Why are we talking about the future? As you talked to the authors in the book of essays about the future, what did you ask them to think about?~~*

~~Clay:~~ *~~The initiative is all about the future, with a focus on a manageable time frame of 10 to 15 years from now. We wanted to focus on the future because it feels like the whole country is in the midst of an amazing transition that is messy and confusing. The arts and artists are in the middle of that transition too, and like others, they are not clear on their role in the transition. We wanted to take about two years to think about all that and to ask a group of people who work in different parts of our country think about that transition and how they think they can be involved.~~*

~~Michael:~~ *~~The essays focus on other sectors in the future. And then they focus on how the arts can intersect with those changing sectors in ways that help create healthy, equitable, vibrant communities. We’re not talking about the future of the arts. And we’re not talking about the arts in those communities, but how the arts help build that kind of community by working with other sectors. As we talk about how to define healthy, equitable, vibrant communities, we’ll focus on how you would want the local arts agency in your community to think about these words.~~*

**Americans for the Arts provided a starting point for the definition of community: *A collection of people sharing place, affinity, or interests.***

*Participants discussed this definition from the perspective of where they work and what they do. Michael asked them to discuss: As you think about your work going forward, how does the word community play into your own work? How is the word community useful or used in your work? Participants shared answers to the question: What are some questions that must be asked when using the word community in your work? What are the questions that have to be asked when we are talking about community?*

* Is it inclusive, does it feel open?
* Are we speaking for a community or are we providing a platform through which community members can speak?
* Are we committed to being educated and impacted by the community?
* Who are the people who we are talking about?
* Is everything that is one of those actually a community?
* Are we empowering the community and how do we empower community?
* What are the core values commonalities, core values, or purpose?
* Is it ever to use the word in the singular, or must we always use it in the plural?
* Who is not at the table that should be?
* What legitimizes, accredits, or validates this community over time?
* What’s the history of the community?
* If you are dealing with community leaders, do they really have followers?
* Who feels welcome?
* What are the communities’ needs and how do we know?
* Who defines that community, are we defining it through our outreach or do we does community define itself?
* How does one participate in a community and how does one reach others to participate in a community?
* How do you define a community when we live in such a globalized environment?
* How do you engage and get people to participate in a community?
* Who are we without our architecture?
* Who shows up and who gets to make the invitation?

*Michael noted: Community is the noun in Americans for the Arts aspirational question: How do the Arts and...contribute to providing healthy, equitable, vibrant communities? We’ve been talking about the noun, not deciding anything, just discussing. Now we will shift to discussing one of the descriptor words: equitable.*

**Americans for the Arts provided a starting point for the definition of equitable: *Fair, accessible, guaranteed opportunity and advancement for all, lacking in barriers that have prevented full participation.***

*What does this word mean for you if gets used where you are, where you work, in the conversations you are in? How do you use that word? How do you critique that word? What are the purposes and intentions of the word when it’s used in your context?*

* Does equitable mean fair?
* How does restorative justice…?
* Are we as as committed to capacity building as we are to equity?
* Does advancement for everyone work if we aren't’ all starting at same place?
* Who defines equitable?
* Do you need to have agreement on what the barriers are toward equity to be working together on it?
* Is lack of privilege part of your conversation?
* How does personal responsibility weigh into work on equity?
* What data will inform conversation about equity since decisionmmakers want data?
* Who are we not serving and why not?
* What is correlation between equity and funding that trickles down to access?
* How do we make spaces for all those questions in our work, in an ongoing way?
* If all voices have been heard and a decision doesn’t go toward some of those, is it equitable?
* How do you decide within an organization who is part of a conversation about equity?

Michael: There is no way that in a room of 100 people that we can find agreement about what equity is, especially while we have so little time. Some of these answers seem to have ‘poked’ some of the people in the room. We need to keep that in mind as we talk through the day.

**Americans for the Arts provided a starting point for the definition of healthy: *Vigor of mind, body, and spirit. A state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being.***

**Americans for the Arts provided a starting point for the definition of vibrant:**

***Full of life and activity. Responsive, sensitive, bright, strong, powerful.***

*The participants discussed: What are the questions that we want to be in a conversation at our organizations about the meaning of the words healthy and vibrant communities? What would we want those words to mean if someone at our workplace said they were making our community more healthy and vibrant?*

*Participants responded to this prompt from Michael: Community is healthy/vibrant if (and still engage with the idea of equitable):*

* healthy if members feel safe
* vibrant if members are active, not passive.
* healthy if the tides or cycles of mental states are valued. (Noting that challenging things are going on in the world and it’s healthy to be aware of that, it’s healthy to work to be centered in the midst of all of that.)
* vibrant if it is diverse.
* healthy if everyone has basic access to basic services like healthcare and job opportunities.
* vibrant if everybody feels they can be engaged.
* healthy if the opportunities extend to everyone, both economic and social opportunities, and if the economy is locally driven.
* vibrant if there is engagement and a sense of identity, and there is a sense of place.
* healthy if members have equal access to economic opportunities.
* healthy if it is intentional about making opportunities for intergenerational and multicultural interaction.
* healthy if prepared for change by being nimble and flexible in the face of change.
* healthy and vibrant when a broad portion of society participates.
* healthy if participation is growing.
* healthy if people are attached to their place so they care for and take of their place.
* healthy if everyone listens to each other’s stories.
* vibrant and healthy if all contributions are valued and people can love with dissent.
* What does complete mean? We wondered if a community be vibrant if it is quiet and more introspective. Our definition is: “A community is healthy and vibrant if each member of the community has the opportunity to experience and express life in a way that is constructive and meaningful.”
* Breaking with the assignment, we feel the word ‘complete’ feels unfair, and balance would be a better word. Also, vibrancy is a put-upon context and vibrancy often means economic within a political stratosphere and should be rethought toward authentic and what is more fulfilling within community.

Michael noted: *We spent the morning building a sense of community and figuring out foundationally what these definitions mean to us before we move to a discussion of Arts and…. this afternoon.*

Michael invited people to share an example of a local example of an *Arts and*...project in which the arts helped a community be more healthy, equitable, and vibrant.

Rick Stein, Executive Director, Arts Orange County & President of Californians for the Arts: *We had a dozen veterans telling their story to a packed audience after six weeks of storytelling training. When asked about their experiences by an audience member, one veteran said he’d always had terrible nightmares and was unable to sleep through the night, but stopped having nightmares for the two weeks prior to the show through this experience.*

Laurie Brooks, Executive Director, William James Association: *We do work in prisons. The first time I walked into San Quentin prison it was pretty scary. The yard was segregated and silent. When we went to the art studio where there was an artist in residence. In the studio, there was a beat, like a heart. People were laughing—there was art on the walls—it was vibrant and happy—people were connecting. It was a real community. The rest of the prison is racially segregated, but in this room it was not like that.*

***In the next session, participants were invited to join a circle on a different Arts and… topic: health, education, or prisons.***

Facilitators in each circle reviewed the summary of the book chapter.

*Michael pointed out that in each of the book chapters there are two things happening in these essays. First, the author attempts to imagine the future of the sector. Second, the author attempts to imagine a role and relationship for the arts to that sector. This is the starting place for the conversation. Where do YOU think the sector is heading and how can the arts intersect with that future of the sector.*

***Participants were invited to join a circle and discuss their own experience with this intersection and what they would like to know. Each circle focused on a different Arts and… topic.***

***Michael asked them to consider:***

***Think about a project that could occur at the intersection of Arts and…. Now imagine that it’s 10 years from now and the project already happened and it successfully made the community more healthy, vibrant, and equitable.***

***What was the project?***

***What capacities need to be built?***

***What relationships are necessary?***

***What resources are necessary?***

***What are the challenges?   
What are the strategies to deal with the challenges?***

***ARTS AND…***

***Health and Wellness***

Read a full essay on this topic at [www.AmericansForTheArts.org/CommunityVisions](http://www.americansforthearts.org/CommunityVisions)

*"This essay looks at changes in the American healthcare system and the role that the arts may play in positively impacting those changes over the next 10–15 years. In particular, this essay proposes the following trends and associated arts interventions:*

* *Future healthcare will focus on the healing of the whole person and will specifically focus more fully on preventative care. In addition, a growing shortage of healthcare professionals will lead to a shift in tasks to adjacent professionals and are structuring generally of the healthcare team. Art and artists have a high potential to become more fully integrated into the healthcare team, entrusted with the care of our citizens, through design, arts-based therapies, and preventative exercise regimens.*
* *The Affordable Care Act and other new legislation will provide support for mental healthcare for the many people who have lacked access to those services in the past. Artists and creative arts therapists will continue to be among the first responders to trauma and crisis. The arts will also be utilized more fully as therapeutic alternatives to medication and as away of easing and providing comfort to the families of those suffering.*
* *As the population of persons 85 and older grows exponentially, so will the need for interventions that can prolong cognitive function, increase quality of life and socialization, and allow for alternatives for a pending shortage of family caregivers. The arts, already known as a good mechanism for dealing with some of these issues, will come into wider use as a way of bettering the lives of our oldest Americans.”*
* “Too much of the art is too light. My kids spent a lot of time in the hospital and I had a friend who did too. And she felt like the art programs were almost condescending. Need more literary arts in hospital. If it’s going to be more therapeutic must be deeper. All of it, the temporary, the interactive, the permanent. You need to work with your users, the docs, the nurses, the patients.”
* “We should have more literary arts in hospitals. People can use help with telling the story of what is happening to them, how they are feeling. It’s so hard to put all that in plain language.”
* “Storytelling is so important. My Dad can’t remember the specific day or time when things happened, but it makes him feel so good every time he share those memories in a story.”

*Clay Lord summarized the group’s discussion. We talked about artist residencies, activating public spaces and gyms where there are health outcomes, and creating cultural centers for longer term cultural outcomes for Native Americans youth. It would be helpful to understand how successful partnerships work over time and what’s needed to make that happen. We also need good research and funding, particularly long-term funding. We need funders who are willing to try new things that may not work, who are able to take risk. We need the capacity to conceptualize complex things and we need more time like this to create space for forward thinking. Many of these complex ideas touch on more than one sector and thinking about designing for Arts and… requires focus.*

***K-12 Education***

Read a full essay on this topic at [www.AmericansForTheArts.org/CommunityVisions](http://www.americansforthearts.org/CommunityVisions)

*“This essay looks at pending changes within the K–12 American formal education system and the role that the arts may play in positively impacting those changes over the next 10–15 years. In particular, this essay proposes the following trends and associated arts interventions:*

* *What is expected of students will shift from simple fact recitation and rote memorization toward deeper and more nuanced learning via systems and concepts. This shift opens up opportunities for the arts to be engaged to create more well-rounded learning environments, as well as a need for the arts to step in to achieve equity in access to quality education.*
* *The blurring of boundaries between the digital and physical learning environment and the increased acceptance of non-place-based learning environments as legitimate alternatives to in-school learning will increase, possibly increasing access to education, but also posing a very real possibility of niche learning experiences that may narrow the worldview of students. The arts will play a role in providing a commons for place-based engagement and learning, as well as an outlet for combating such insulated views.”*
* “We would revisit the way teacher training happens. Every teacher gets help being comfortable using art in everything they teach. They are all prepared and are comfortable incorporating art in all teaching.”
* “We need more consistency in teachers and superintendents. There’s too much political turnover and constant policy changes means there is change in the expectations. We can’t make progress with that much turnover. So we need to reimagine the way we manage the politics and policy at that level to keep people in place longer.”

*Jeff Poulin summarized the group’s conversation. How do we articulate through data and/or storytelling the imperative for the arts and education, as we did with STEM to STEAM? How do we work with businesses and parents and students and grassroots?*

*We want to build a cultural conversation about how we prepare teachers to be teachers, how we connect people through technology, so that arts can we really revolutionize what’s happening in the classrooms.*

***Prisons and Rehabilitation***

Read a full essay on this topic at [www.AmericansForTheArts.org/CommunityVisions](http://www.americansforthearts.org/CommunityVisions)

“This essay looks at changes in the American prison system and the role that the arts may play in positively impacting those changes over the next 10–15 years. In particular, this essay proposes the following trends and associated arts interventions:

● The next 10–15 years will see a continued rise in the number of children who have been impacted by the incarceration of a family member, and the psychological implications of experiencing such trauma threaten to perpetuate cycles of incarceration into a new generation. Innovative arts interventions and partnerships hold the possibility of both easing the trauma of having a parent incarcerated through expressive activity, highlighting the unique issues of children of those incarcerated to a larger audience, and providing an alternative, less destructive path that may help break the cycle.

● Shifts from mass, mostly short-term, incarcerations to fewer, mostly longer-term sentences, including Life without Possibility of Parole, will correspond with a decline in the already minimal interest from the public in interventions that help rehabilitate prisoners who may re-enter society. The importance of prison-based arts programs, of which there are a handful today, will only grow in that new era, as long-term prisoners seek opportunities to maintain humanized, varied lives. Arts-based interventions may be able to increase prisoners’ connection to others, improve psychological health, and enable prisoners to tell their stories.

● As attention and care shifts away from an increasingly permanent prison population serving long or terminal sentences, political and public will to address core issues—who we lock up; the correlation of childhood conditions with future crime; capability of change—will wane. The role of the arts, particularly as vessels through which prisoners can communicate their stories to the world at large, will become paramount.”

* “My brother is incarcerated. The system never gave him a way to get out of that cycle. When I see where he is and it’s a terrible place, but I know he’s a creative person. So I’m concerned about when he gets out, how will he deal with life. What kind of services and programs are they providing that will help him when he gets out. His biggest concern is getting the TV when he wants to watch his show.”
* “We had a writing program in prisons in Washington. Later in another state, sent an artist to a prison. There was a kiln installed in one of the prisons after the artist was embedded there.”
* “What is the preparation for the artist who is doing the work? The artist needs to be healthy too. The training needs to be relevant.”
* “Can we provide incentives to the prisons to do more of this? Private prisons don’t get it. So they need incentives.”
* “Recreation of the middle class is what is going to be needed to make sure that people see a future for themselves when they are still inside.”
* “Getting more artists into prison is good but we need more story telling about what happens.”
* “Educating the gatekeepers about what is documentable and create the logic incentive for the decisionmakers.”

Barbara Schaffer Bacon summarized the conversation. *The group recommended building the capacity of the arts sector to understand the systems of the prisons and the social systems and social analysis of what is connecting people and bringing people into the system. The group believes a resource is the existing information on what works but it depends on gathering enough data to convince private investors that arts is a strategy for rehabilitation and reentry. The commercial prison system is a challenge because there is a vested interest in keeping people in prison and building more units. Capacity building training for the artists in managing being in a prison and working there. The group imagined a project for creating “magnet-prisons”—art prisons that prisoners really want to go to because they can envision using the skills when they leave.*

*Michael noted that these stories and discussions are the input for Americans for the Arts as they develop the output for the coming years. This is how they will determine what they do to assist with future work that supports local arts organizations* that *want to work in these intersections of Arts and….*

**Transportation**

The participants turned to a focused discussion on the *Arts and…*Transportation. They focused on four questions.

* What does the future of transportation look like?
* What does the future of transportation look like in this region?
* How does that future point toward healthy, equitable, vibrant communities, and how does it not?
* How can the arts intersect with transportation and infrastructure to aid in creating healthy, equitable, vibrant communities?

**What does the future of transportation look like?**

Michael interviewed Constance Y. White who authored the essay on the future of [arts, transportation and infrastructure](http://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/reports-and-data/legislation-policy/naappd/arts-transportation-infrastructure).

*Michael: When you were asked to write this essay, what was your journey?*

*Constance: I started with my airport experience. Then I went to the research and history of transportation, starting with trade routes and trails, and how people moved around for socioeconomic reasons. We weren’t thinking much about the economic and environmental consequences and now we are dealing with that. People still need to get around, but now we have to think about how to do that responsibly.*

*Michael: Where’s the future of transportation?*

*Constance: Smart systems means that we design systems in ways that people don’t have to think about how they are used, or direct them. Smart design means we have streets that are flexible for use by public transit, cars, people walking and biking.*

*Michael: If we look ten years into the future, what do we see that’s different from now?*

*Constance: In the future of transportation, light rail will be used much more. Energy use will revolutionize transportation. The experiences we have and what we observe on light rail and on transit will be driven by the user experience because we will have many more users.*

*Michael: Taking arts and culture out of the equation, is transportation’s future moving toward more healthy, equitable, vibrant communities or is an intervention necessary?*

*Constance: Interventions are happening right now. Small and large communities are thinking about access to urban core. So they are focusing on transit and bike paths to get there. They are already thinking about quality of life, so there is a focus on using healthy alternatives for people to get where they are going. Pedestrian and bike paths are a major strategy.*

*Michael: Is everyone included in quality of life conversation?*

*Constance: I’m not sure that every community has figured out who their “everyone” is. And increasingly, there is awareness of the fact that not everyone is within reach of urban core, and not everyone has a car or access to a car. Pedestrian and bicycle access are going to be critical over the next 10 - 15 years.*

Clay noted that transportation impacts many other sectors and as a result many other sectors will begin to focus and raise their voices to talk about the future of transportation. This points toward the complex overlap of many sectors.

**Participants discussed a prompt from Michael: *Where you live, what’s going on with transportation - and what’s happening in the next five to ten years?***

Michael interviewed two participants about local transportation issues.

Yves Louis-Jacques, San Francisco Mayor’s Office of Economic Development, works on improving transportation options for workers, residents, and visitors.

*Michael: You just got here, right?*

*Yves: I’ve been here three weeks, just moved from New York City. [Applause and shouts of welcome.] It’s my first time working in public service and in transportation.*

*Michael: Well that’s great because it means you are on a steep learning curve.*

*Yves: Yes, but I am a fast learner.*

*Michael: What have your colleagues told you to think and learn about to do this work and what do you think you need to focus on?*

*Yves: I realize it’s a big challenge. If SF wants to keep its title as a world-class city, it needs to improve transportation system. BART shuts down at midnight for maintenance. But people are still working then. It’s an equity issue because the people who are working then - in hotels, restaurants, etc. —have jobs that won’t let them afford other options, especially if they have to travel far which increasingly they do because housing costs are getting to be more.*

*Michael: Does the city realize this is an equity issue?*

*Yves: Yes. The nighttime economy is important. It’s a $4B economy. Access is an issue; cost and comfort is too. If you have 24 hour service that would be equitable - and someday it will happen.*

*Michael: Are there challenges to build it in an equitable way?*

*Yves: To move this forward is complicated. Making BART a 24-hour system is very expensive. But it’s very important to workers in low-wage jobs. There is pushback.*

*Michael: In five or ten years will it be a 24 hours system?*

*Yves: Yes, but I can’t say when. That’s why we’re looking at car sharing for some of the night workers at this point.*

Abigail Thorne-Lyman, Principal Planner, BART Planning & Development

BART runs the rail system in the Bay Area.

*Michael: As a planner, you think about what’s coming next for BART. In your conversations with colleagues and community, where do you think we’re heading?*

*Abby: BART is at capacity now. Running the maximum number of trains that we can and it’s very crowded. Infrastructure is aging and needs to be replaced. But there is a capital deficit that we need to fill just to fix, maintain, and modernize the system. That’s before we talking about expansions to address capacity issues.*

*Michael: If BART system as it is today is not functioning well, it affects people’s livelihoods. Right?*

*Abby: We’re looking at how other transit agencies dealt with this problem. We don’t want to experience what happened in Philadelphia when the roads were jammed with people. We need for everyone in the community to see the BART as their issue.*

*Michael: Something that has happened in other conversations, but hasn’t happened here today, is that the conversation quickly turns how to get more money for the arts. And of course we do need that and it’s something Americans for the Arts does all the time. But that’s not what NCVI, the Arts and… work is specifically all about. We’re thinking about how the arts are building healthier, more vibrant and equitable in collaboration with other sectors.*

*It’s been very interesting today to talk very specifically about the transportation issues facing the people who live in the community and how it affects their lives and that the response has NOT been to provide more money to arts, but the arts could engage in this issue, helping the public to see the arts as more relevant. So for now, I want to ask, what do you need, Abby to get through some of the challenges you face now.*

*Abby: We need the support of the region as a whole, not just our riders. About a fourth of the people who live in this area. We need to help people see that even when you take BART only once a year as their issue too. We want them to think: “I’m affected when BART isn’t available to people who need it—that will ripple to affect me and people I care about.”*

Michael: *Two people have just spoken about a transportation/public infrastructure issues in the Bay Area. How might the Arts and…. positively affect those issues?*

Participants discussed this question in small groups as a small case study.

**Michael: How can the arts intersect with transportation to make a more healthy, equitable, vibrant communities—focusing on the stories we just heard?**

* Art and artists can tell the stories of our community by getting more people on BART and building more support for the money needed.
* Embed a city employee in transit agency who speaks “art” who can explain to engineers why and how the arts can add value.
* Artists involved in transportation by asking them to solve big problems with art, not just make art for transit.
* If we can engage the night workers so that their stories become the PSAs for the campaign to build support and awareness? How do we build connections in a community so that the bus riders understand they share in the outcomes? BART connects us physically but not culturally. So we have to see each other better. And then attract the funding we need.
* Our county put the arts district into the map for the bus system.
* Custom created crosswalks to give neighborhood connections.
* Arts tacked itself onto something else that was equally important - for a campaign in Minnesota.
* Construction on a line creates confusion. We’d have performers redirecting people and mitigating the tension. Artists can create visuals to for a more pleasant rush hour experience, like helping thinking about the space they are taking up and not crowding the door.
* Use public art to pay artists to promote Vision Zero outreach.
* How do we put a design-thinking fix on it? How do we change the pattern of when people go to work? Put creatives in the room to solve the root cause of issues. We talked about aiming creativity at the challenge, not just creating something that lies on top of it.

Michael: *What’s interesting is when we start to think about more than specific projects, but about a way of bringing an artistic practice or a way of thinking to a challenge. What’s necessary for the arts to contribute to addressing a community issue? We’re not talking about creating art or more money for arts. I’m curious how that affects your thinking about:*

* *What kinds of capacities are needed?*
* *What kinds of resources are necessary?*
* *What are the challenges?*
* *What are strategies?*

Participants discussed these questions.

**Capacities and Resources:**

* Language because different departments/sectors have different ways of speaking, so translation is important.
* Building spaces for artists and civic leaders to come together for conversation.
* Resource is developing and sharing models of practice.
* Professional development related to models is a capacity.
* Help community leaders see this as a model
* Building capacity by putting an artist into a situation and letting their creativity flow, capacity for the artists to do that, and for the org to receive it and have the dialogue. (Existing CA model with grants from the state.)
* Building capacity for the artist to work in a new environment.
* Capacity for the non-artist to work with artists.
* Need to develop both divergent and convergent thinking skills.
* Capacity to create and sustain partnerships.

**Challenges and Strategies:**

* Can the non-arts organization or sector receive an artist?
* There’s a language issue and problem of using the word art with other sectors. Non-artists—they stop listening when we say “arts” or have the word in our title or organizational name.
* When we talk about what the arts can bring, it sounds like we are special and coming off the mountain and bringing something special.
* We have too much of our identity wrapped up in being outsiders, when we come to that table we seek to be understood instead of seeking to understand. We must have capacity for listening and learning. Don’t want to be the person who always talks about the arts.
* Understanding which of the 30 sectors and community contributors is the most important at any one moment.
* Making sure that artists get paid for being at those tables.
* When you are working with an agency the data needed is different, the messages are different from what the arts is used to making. We aren’t interested in economic development but we are interested in safety.
* Since community development can lead to displacement, people may feel nervous about arts infused into development.
* Are we offering arts in educational program for planners and engineers?
* Need to infuse arts into the society so that we don’t have to make this case the same way going forward.
* We want people to think of the arts as, instead of the *Arts and…*.

Michael posed questions that came from the day’s discussion for a conversation with Americans for the Arts staff and the audience.

Michael: *What* ***information*** *do WE (meaning both the forum participants and Americans for the Arts) need to help you do your work around Arts and…? What information can Americans for the Arts gather and provide to you? And what information does Americans need to develop?*

* Longitudinal data that proves and supports what we are talking about, even if we have to go backward to gather intel that would be helpful.
* We don’t need more information. We need curated information, specific info that will give us the exact data, it may already exist, and if so we don’t need to create new data sets.
* Tinder for the arts, arts matchmaking so that we can simply figure out what we need and know what is available.
* Successful examples of partnerships with for-profits and developers that are replicable in my place.
* Also need to know how people really felt about those partnerships, the processes and outcomes, not just a PR narrative of what happened.
* We need info on replicability, like: case studies about successes *and* failures.

Michael: *What* ***skills and capacities*** *do we need to develop? What skills and capacities can Americans for the Arts develop to support you?*

* Language is really important. We need a language toolkit or toolbox for advocacy with civic leaders, ethnic diverse civic leaders, president CEO of an org, mayor, city staff (political), designers, architects, and engineers.
* More language: A guide to practitioners from different sectors.
* Asset mapping and future mapping.
* Information about how long it takes to get things done in other sectors.
* We’re also having a hard time breaking thru as arts, so getting the language wrong on the other field makes that work harder.
* Convenings are good for sharing best practices.
* Arts action fund on the local level to get more involved in the local politics.
* Storytelling about how to build a presentation.
* Ability to identify resources in our own communities.
* Understanding the risk tolerance of our partners.
* Being able to see challenges as opportunities.
* Templates for creating partnerships.
* How do we change the perceived value of the field so that we are seen as contributing when we ask to join the table?

Michael: *What partnerships and alliances should we build? Americans for the Arts does a lot of this, is good at it, and can do more of it.*

* AFTAs national partnerships should be scaled down to the state and local level, using the tourism partnerships as an example
* Planning departments and developers
* Different leaders for change, not necessarily the appointed or elected people
* Partnerships within commercial industries, like Google or lyft and uber (re: transportation)
* Staff for elected and appointed, because they outlive political changes
* Conventions and convenings of other sectors
* Top 10 private sector entities of any sector, especially the ones that are providing services to public sector
* Airport convenings - can reach people from all over the sector at those conferences
* Real estate and affordable housing sector, preservation of neighborhoods

**Conclusion**

Clay Lord of Americans for the Arts concluded the day: *We’ve gotten many interesting stories with practical ideas about what the future looks like, what it will take to get there and have healthy, equitable, vibrant communities, and what’s missing and is needed to improve the journey.*

*We’re trying to define where we want to be, and the state of the road that will get us there. We heard about partnerships, capacity building, advocacy and policy, communications and more. Our sense of arts and culture in communities is becoming richer and more connected. These are the stories we’re looking for in these meetings.*

*We invite you to share your reactions and ideas after this event. What should we be adding to the list of things for follow-up?*

Bob Lynch: *One thing that would be useful is a “web of connectivity” related to all of these partnerships we discussed - federal, state, and local. As one example, we do this now with the United States Conference of Mayors at the federal level. We could extend that partnership to state and local gatherings of mayors, working with organizations in states and localities. If we did we’d have even more impact with each of those partnerships.*

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Closing and thank you notes wrapped up the day. Next steps include blog posts and rough summaries, blog salons, pre-conference and plenary about this work at the annual conference in June. Followed by a synthesis of the findings and a plan for action.