CULTURAL POLICY AT THE GRASSROOTS
2003 Seminar Sites: Nashville, Los Angeles, New Orleans

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Center for Arts and Culture
www.culturalpolicy.org
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Introduction

Recognizing that national issues and conditions affect state and local levels, in 2003 the Center for Arts and Culture began a project to examine how government policies affect community-based cultural organizations. Because reduced state funding directly impacts local support for the arts—but is not discussed or monitored as closely and systematically as at the state-level—this project is proving to have strong resonance among local communities across the country. State and local budget cuts have caused many cultural organizations to merge or simply go out of business. How local and grassroots cultural organizations respond to these tough economic times is an important and pressing cultural policy concern.

Generous funding for the project was provided by the Nathan Cummings Foundation. According to Claudine Brown, Program Director for Arts and Culture of the Nathan Cummings Foundation, projects such as this are important because they are able to “facilitate discussions between policymakers and grassroots practitioners. The Nathan Cummings Foundation believes that it is important for the work of the policy community to be informed by research as well as evolving community practice.”
Cultural policy issues bear a significant impact at the local level, where many decisions are made in a decentralized policy system. The cultural sector must take a seat at the policy table and become an integral part of developing and implementing the community agenda. Only by engaging in policy activity will the cultural sector help to ensure that arts education continues in local schools, artists and creative workers have adequate live/work space, communities save their historic sites and local libraries, cities respond to changing demographics, and cultural assets receive the needed investments as a stimulus to tourism and business/citizen relocation.

The Center’s local cultural policy project mission is to build knowledge and networks for strengthening cultural policy in local communities. As noted by Robert L. Lynch, President and CEO of Americans for the Arts, “The local cultural community has much to gain from active participation in the local policy making process. It provides an opportunity to demonstrate to policy decision makers that culture and the arts are key contributors to the development of vibrant, successful communities. Active participation helps shape not only important cultural decisions but critical civic decisions are, in general, made better by the arts as part of the civic dialogue.” The project is based on the premise that arts and culture contribute to a sense of place, economic well-being, quality of life, and personal fulfillment.

The purpose of this report is to document the process and the discussion from the seminars conducted in the pilot project and to create a publication that might be useful to other communities interested in bringing together the cultural sector to articulate policy needs and affect policy change.

To begin this dialogue between the Center and local cultural communities, the Center designed and conducted one and one-and-a-half day seminars at three sites across the country: Nashville, TN; Los Angeles, CA; and New Orleans, LA. Each of these seminars was co-hosted by a local university policy center in partnership with local municipal agencies and community-based organizations.

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—Claudine Brown
Program Director for Arts and Culture, Nathan Cummings Foundation

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President and CEO, Americans for the Arts
We care about our artists. We’ve increased public support for the arts over the past four years. The first initiative of my administration was a Percent for Public Art ordinance that will significantly increase funds for public art...We’ve got to maintain cohesion and develop collaborations. No other more important discussions are occurring in Nashville today."

— Bill Purcell
Mayor of Nashville

Nashville: In Nashville, local participants identified arts education, affordable venues, and cultural tourism as policy areas that needed additional thinking and advancement. Since the city was coincidentally creating The Plan of Nashville, an 18-month project to develop a community-based vision and design principles for metropolitan Nashville’s urban core, the seminar was particularly opportune and welcomed as a way for an unheard segment of the population to be able to contribute its thoughts to the citywide plan and to deliver recommendations to the director of the project. The seminar generated ideas and recommendations that provided valuable input into the plan, such as creating better public transportation to increase cultural tourism and creating affordable spaces for nonprofit organizations.

Nashville Mayor Bill Purcell, an advocate for a vibrant cultural community, opened the seminar: “We care about our artists. We’ve increased public support for the arts over the past four years. The first initiative of my administration was a Percent for Public Art ordinance that will significantly increase funds for public art. This proposal was adopted by the Metro Council in the first year of the administration. An arts high school is in the planning phases. We’ve got to maintain cohesion and develop collaborations. No other more important discussions are occurring in Nashville today.”

The cultural community appreciated the chance to come together in one venue to discuss issues facing the sector: “It was good to bring this diverse group together,” one participant noted, while another added, “Things will never change for the better regarding ‘arts’ if open dialogue does not occur.” Another seminar participant appreciated new resources that were made available through concrete examples and case studies from other cities; one cultural leader commented, “It motivated me and made me feel proud to live in Nashville.”

According to Bill Ivey, former Chair of the National Endowment for the Arts and Director of the Curb Center for Art, Enterprise, and Public Policy at Vanderbilt University, “Forums like this are extremely important. They not only let allied local cultural leaders meet and discuss important policy issues—education, housing and tourism—in a non-arts exclusive context, but they also create bridges of understanding between cultural leaders and their neighborhoods, city administrators and their constituents, and universities and towns.” Ivey felt there were three clear outcomes that benefited
the Nashville seminar participants: (1) they were gathered in the same room with other leaders of small arts organizations and realized there was a community of shared concerns; (2) they were invited to discuss these issues at Vanderbilt University, reducing some of the “town and gown” divide; and (3) they broadened the discussion about their work beyond the arts context, linking arts policy with other policy issues such as zoning and transportation. The Curb Center plans to build on this local “longing to talk about the issues.” The Civic Design Center, the organization spearheading The Plan of Nashville, also intends to hold a second caucus to move the recommendations forward.

Los Angeles: In Los Angeles, there was lively discussion about the recent budget cuts to the state arts council as well as city cuts to local arts agencies. Because the seminar coincided with the state’s budget crisis, there was a heightened urgency to come together as a community and better address issues to build collective clout, improve advocacy efforts, increase communication within the sector, and strengthen and develop leadership. Representatives from smaller organizations expressed an interest in forming partnerships with the larger institutions, and hoped to be able to follow up the seminar with such a meeting. Los Angeles also has a unique set of characteristics, such as its large geographic size, which makes it difficult for cultural organizations to gain visibility and to network across the region. According to panelist Irene Hirano, Executive Director of the Japanese American National Museum, “Because of Los Angeles’ size and breadth of offerings, it is important that members of the cultural community communicate with one another to promote the sector and to work together. Partnerships among local organizations are increasingly important these days, for enhancing programs, increasing financial support and for gaining visibility.”

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—Irene Hirano
Executive Director, Japanese American National Museum

The powerful entertainment industry also looms large on the local cultural landscape. Participants discussed the need to forge relationships and bridges with the for-profit entertainment industry, which accounts for more than 90% of cultural revenues in the region.¹

Participants appreciated the seminar. One individual wrote, “I got exposed to the syntax of the field…” and another, “Thanks for the opportunity to dialogue and to reflect on these issues!” For others, it was a good chance to connect with those who work on opposite sides of the county and promote “…a wider sense of the arts community in LA.”

The Center for Civil Society at UCLA plans in 2004 to conduct an extensive survey of the arts and cultural sector in Los Angeles, with an emphasis on documenting small grassroots organizations not included in past statistical data. The seminar introduced the Center for Civil Society to those leaders engaged at the grassroots who will be able to assist them in their future work, and introduced the local community to a new resource at the UCLA School for Public Policy. Los Angeles participants also expressed an

¹ From an overview by Helmut Anheier, Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations in Los Angeles, Center for Civil Society, UCLA, November 12, 2003.
The creative sector in New Orleans and throughout Louisiana is extremely important. Forums like this offer opportunities to discuss and consider a broader view of the arts. Louisiana is rich in the arts, culture and history—the question for us is how to package them so that these areas strengthen the economy and improve the quality of life for the state’s citizens.

— MICH LANDINGE
Louisiana Lieutenant Governor

establishing a vernacular and context for art and creativity in our community is fundamental to any measure of “success.” The forum provided handholds and necessary common ground for aligning community support and bringing “non-usual suspects” into the discussion… New Orleans now has a means of mobilizing its amazing breadth and diversity of talent and planning that future.

— ROBBIE VITRANO
Trumpet Advertising

creativity to learn more about national cultural policy issues. Many noted that they were so consumed with managing their organizations, that they did not have “time to think about policy” but appreciated the opportunity to be informed on current national topics. In addition, participants from the seminar were interested in continuing the dialogue to develop an action agenda and asked the Center to provide them with contact information of all interested participants to create a network and mailing list for further action.

New Orleans: In New Orleans, the local community identified the most pressing policy issue as economic development. The goal was to develop the leadership to work together as a creative sector and to find the right investments (private or public) to stimulate activity. Focus group meetings were held in early November and in partnership with local partners—Creative Industry, Tulane University School of Architecture, the Contemporary Arts Center, the University of New Orleans Arts Administration Program, and Xavier University, a Tulane affiliate and the leading African-American university in New Orleans. The focus groups helped identify the pressing policy issues within the creative industries umbrella. The seminar organizers wanted to discuss ways to identify, quantify, and bolster the creative sector, so that the sector has a seat at the policy table and is recognized for its full economic development potential and value.

The New Orleans seminar was timed to capitalize on the election of a new governor and lieutenant governor. Mitch Landrieu, Lieutenant Governor-elect, was a guest speaker at the seminar and expressed great hopes for the economic development potential of the creative sector:

“The creative sector in New Orleans is extremely important. Forums like this offer opportunities to discuss and consider a broader view of the arts. Louisiana is rich in the arts, culture and history—the question for us is how to package them so that these areas strengthen the economy and improve the quality of life for the state’s citizens. I believe the answer is to define and develop our creative industries. What I envision for Louisiana is part of a greater movement happening in other parts of the country.”
As a result of the seminar, two committees have formed: 
(1) one group submitted a series of recommendations to Governor Blanco, Lieutenant Governor Landrieu, and Mayor of New Orleans Nagin on ways to stimulate and enhance the creative economy; and (2) another group launched an initiative to measure the regional creative economy.

At the seminar, both commercial creative industries and the nonprofit arts community were able to come to discuss common goals for New Orleans. For participant Robbie Vitrano, of Trumpet Advertising, the forum was beneficial: “Establishing a vernacular and context for art and creativity in our community is fundamental to any measure of ‘success.’ The forum provided handholds and necessary common ground for aligning community support and bringing ‘non-usual suspects’ into the discussion. The future is hungry for what Buckminster Fuller referred to as the ‘synthesis of artist, inventor, mechanic, objective economist and evolutionary strategist.’ New Orleans now has a means of mobilizing its amazing breadth and diversity of talent and planning that future.”

The Center for Arts and Culture is committed to assisting our local partners with follow up to ensure and encourage ongoing policy discussions.

**Project Background and Process**

Throughout this past year, we had a number of goals in mind:

- To expand the cultural policy community to encompass local cultural interests, and culturally-specific organizations;
- To engage leaders of such groups in policy work within and beyond their communities and to involve local political leaders in cultural policy;
- To inform both public and corporate policies by including more diverse community voices;
- To identify the most important policy issues to grassroots organizations and interpret them through seminars;
- To provide organizations an introduction to the Center’s interactive portal site, Cultural Commons; to bring their concerns and ideas to the policy community; to learn from others, and to enrich the discussion; and
- To form partnerships between local policy centers and scholars at colleges and universities and local cultural organizations, so that the policy discussion can be informed and sustained.

Because the Center was particularly interested in finding out from the grassroots organizations what the local policy issues were, we purposefully did not predetermine an agenda for each seminar. In
underlying policies and an understanding of how other policies influence how culture is developed, nurtured, and disseminated at the local level.

What is "cultural policy at the grassroots?"

The Center defines policies as the ideas that guide actions and resource allocation. It uses a wide lens to examine cultural policies at the international, federal, state and local levels and in the public, private and philanthropic sectors. The Center is interested in how a variety of public policies, including but not limited to appropriations and funding, contribute to cultural and civic life.

The Center wanted to engage discussion at the community level because it is at the local level where most cultural activities are developed and disseminated. Cultural access and development are important issues related to a variety of local policies such as zoning ordinances, which could dictate where live/work space is located; tax streams dedicated to culture; and arts education programs in the public school system.

Examining cultural policy at the local level also informs the Center’s work by furthering understanding of the cultural policy ecosystem. A look at the local issues can provide those in the cultural policy field a “reality check” about what is being discussed at the organization level. On the broader cultural policy level, discussion might center on media consolidation and copyright issues, but what is the situation at the local level? In this sense, the Center hopes to continue its role as a “bridge” between practitioners and the policy community.
TEN TRENDS, AS EVIDENCED AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

While the three sites chosen are very different in their size, population, and specific needs, some recurring themes emerged from the focus group and seminar discussions.

(1) Difficult economic times drive policy discussions and potential change. Participants acknowledged that members of the cultural community often come together in times of crisis to react to a situation or policy, rather than creating an agenda of their own to work towards. They acknowledged that they are often “reactive” rather than “pro-active.”

(2) Difficult economic times create competition, which doesn’t always lend itself to collective action. Because the cultural community is usually under-funded, when arts agency and foundation money is even tighter, individual organizations often feel competitive with one another. This competitive atmosphere tends to keep organizations from coming together to form partnerships or undertake collective work.
(3) The definition of arts and cultural organizations is expanding beyond a strictly arts focus to include social, health, and economic services. Recognizing that the “arts” funding pool is limited, organizations are becoming more aware that they must find overlapping goals, mutual interests, and allies in other sectors. Today cultural activities are often embedded in social service organizations, rather than being located only within arts organizations. For example, senior services, youth services, and neighborhood services usually have a cultural component to them.

(4) The sector is increasingly being viewed as integrating non-profits and for-profits. As the New England report on the creative sector has indicated, in order to fully understand the cultural sector, both non-profit and for-profit enterprises must be considered. For the younger generation of artists and arts leaders, the distinction between for-profit and non-profit is beginning to fade. Understanding and integrating this system may help commercial artists and creators overcome barriers to government resources.

(5) Local organizations want more action and less study, survey, and discussion. Participants noted that many studies and reports about the cultural community are available, but they were frustrated by the lack of an action agenda and real results from these surveys and discussions.

(6) Demographics are changing the nature of cultural activities and participation. As immigrant populations are growing in cities and towns across the country, cultural activities and audience participation trends are starting to reflect these new demographics. Many older and established local cultural institutions realize they must change and grapple with the question of how to engage new audiences to reflect population changes.

(7) Consolidation and mergers are needed. There is a strong feeling that local arts and cultural activities are fragmented and that efforts need to be better coordinated, so people are not constantly “reinventing the wheel.”

(8) There is a desire to alleviate town-gown divide. In each of the cities we visited, the local university policy center was eager to work within their local community and to get to know the local cultural leaders. These local policy centers, far from being isolated academic bastions, can be valuable sources for information, research, and other resources.

(9) There is a growing interest for cultural policy discussions and research at the local level. This desire was evidenced by the robust attendance and discussion at the seminars, along with the number of participants who signed up for the Center’s list-serv or requested further information.

(10) Small organizations feel they do not have the resources, time, or clout to be part of policy making or discussion. This barrier is integrally connected to the need for collaborations and less duplication of activity. Collaborations bring clout and additional resources, but this takes time and staff, which many grassroots organizations do not have.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite the differences among the three seminar sites, four over-arching recommendations have emerged thus far from the project:

(1) **Take collective action.** Create a coordinating non-governmental organization dedicated to the local cultural community. Such an organization could better facilitate local policy, advocacy, and communications efforts for the sector (across both non-profit and for-profit organizations). This organization could also act as a convener and as a clearinghouse and disseminator of information.

(2) **Establish alliances within the arts and cultural field, with business leaders, journalists, politicians, and with leaders in other sectors such as labor, health and social services, and economic development.** Engage leaders and champions in local policy and look beyond the likely suspects to those who do not necessarily have a track record in culture. Relationships should be established and nurtured before a crisis occurs. Key policy players should continuously be made aware of the work and impact of the cultural sector in their community and the ramifications of their policy decisions on local cultural life.
(3) Enhance credibility and clout through strategic partnerships. Conduct careful research that will help make the case—for example, who is being served in the community and how many are being served. Build a broad base of support within the cultural community and make connections with issues such as sustainable development, education reform, and environmental conservation. Establishing key strategic partnerships with those in the business community can earn credibility among politicians. For example, in Massachusetts alliances with the New England Council (the regional chamber of commerce) and the regional Federal Reserve greatly bolstered efforts for the Creative Economy Initiative.

(4) Communicate the public good of arts and culture. Create and hone different messages for different audiences to make connections between arts and cultural issues and other policy arenas (youth, economic development, crime, etc.). Understand the context you are operating within and how arts and culture can fit into or improve that context. Take the lead in communicating how the cultural sector adds to the public good in terms that support or enhance policymakers’ agendas or goals.

Questions to ponder

Several key questions have emerged in our work at the state and local levels. These questions have stimulated dialogue and discussion among various stakeholders in the cultural community. We offer them as a starting point for your own thinking and discussion within your community.

• Garnering local support: Who are the key stakeholders in your community? Are they on your side? If not, how can you develop this support?

• Articulating your needs beyond funding: What can policymakers do, besides providing financial resources to facilitate and support your activities? Are there regulations or policies that could be implemented or improved to help you fulfill your mission?

• Building partnerships and alliances: What partners would enhance your capacity to reach your target audience? To help you build clout in your community? What complimentary needs do non-profit and for-profit organizations satisfy? What can you offer each other? What common goals do you have? How can you and your potential partner(s) work towards a more integrated creative economy?

• Developing new audiences: What audience would you like to reach that you haven’t? What are their interests and how could you frame your message to appeal to them? What partners would enhance your reaching them?
The pilot project in Los Angeles, New Orleans, and Nashville has been a positive experience—for the participants of the seminars, our local partners, and for the Center. Because of this, we are eager to embark upon a second round of sites for 2004–2005. We are researching potential sites and additional funding streams and welcome calls or emails from interested partners and municipalities. We can be reached at (202) 783-5277 or center@culturalpolicy.org.

Throughout the project, the Center would:

- Select and invite outside experts to inform local issues after consulting with local stakeholders.
- Run focus group meetings as a neutral third party.
- Consult with a local advisory committee on agenda items and an invitation list.
- Manage all correspondence and logistics to hold a local cultural policy seminar.
- Hire a professional facilitator for the seminar, as needed.
- Work with local partners to fund raise for local matching funds.
Hosting a local cultural policy meeting in your community: Our 8 Step Process

One: Identify key players from various parts of the for-profit and not-for-profit cultural sector and other important local partners (such as key political supporters or staff). Engage the Center for Arts and Culture in your work and consider a partnership with us. Form a steering committee of 5-7 people to determine if there is fertile ground for a collaborative, cultural policy initiative in your locality. Consider funding mechanisms for the meeting. Encourage the steering committee to read local cultural policy information at http://www.culturalpolicy.org for ideas on what might work in your locality.

Two: Hold preliminary phone conversations with the steering committee members to discuss readiness for a discussion on collaboration and cultural policy innovations. It might be helpful to engage a third-party convener in your discussions.

If readiness is believed to exist, discuss potential dates, locations, invitees, preliminary agendas and statements of purpose, and tangible outcomes.

- **Dates**: Think about the political climate. Do you have a new Mayor or member of the Board of County Commissioners who will take office soon? Consider timing the meeting to coincide with changes in the political environment.

- **Location**: Consider holding the meeting in a neutral space, for example, a local municipal building, such as the public library, or nearby college or university conference center.

- **Invitation List**: Decide on target numbers and include not only leaders in the non-profit and for-profit cultural fields, but also local political leaders, foundation representatives, and current or potential partners outside of the arts and cultural arena.
Consider inviting the Governor of your state or other key legislators to offer welcoming remarks to the group. Make sure your invitation list reflects the many sectors and peoples of your city.

- **Agenda and Statements of Purpose:** Review the agenda suggestions offered by the Center for Arts and Culture, which includes time for out-of-city or in-city presentations of collaborative projects or policies and break-out sessions to discuss local, statewide, and national issues. Each city will have different needs and suggestions for addressing them. The suggested agendas might offer a starting point as you plan your own meeting. It would also be helpful to draft a statement of purpose for the meeting.

- **Tangible Outcomes:** Build end results into the meeting framework by committing (within the agenda) to developing a report to the Mayor or City Council and/or a cultural policy steering committee to draft legislation and questions for a Mayoral candidate interview process.

**Three:** Approach potential regional funders and local agencies with a statement of purpose and agenda ideas. Based on response, determine if the meeting is possible. Try to include participant subsidies and speaker honorariums in the budget, in addition to the direct costs of the meeting.

**Four:** Once the agenda, meeting focus, and funding are determined and secured, invite presenters and recruit local political and civic leaders to speak and participate (several months’ lead time is desired). Arrange event logistics such as food, entertainment, technical equipment, hotels, etc.

**Five:** Send packets of information to participants six weeks in advance. Include in the packet a letter of invitation and advance reading. Monitor RSVPs and invite more participants if needed, including the local media.

**Six:** Prepare last minute meeting details: name badges, speaker bios, welcome packets, written resources, etc.

**Seven:** Hold meeting. Consider using and saving flip charts for future analysis. Discuss ways that the dialogue can continue beyond the meeting, such as setting up a list-serv or using the Center’s online discussion forum (www.culturalcommons.org).

**Eight:** Send thank you notes. Pay bills. Follow through on desired tangible outcomes by forming a cultural policy steering committee to write a report to the Mayor and City Council. Look for ways to maintain and build consensus. Set timeline and goals for the cultural policy steering committee’s work. Write and submit grant/financial reports to funders.
RELEVANT RESOURCES FOR STATE AND LOCAL CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS, ARTISTS, AND RESEARCHERS

Organizations
- Center for Arts & Culture (www.culturalpolicy.org; www.culturalcommons.org)
- Americans for the Arts (www.artsusa.org)
- The Curb Center for Art, Enterprise, and Public Policy (www.vanderbilt.edu/curbcenter)
- National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (www.nasaa-arts.org)
- UCLA Center for Civil Society (www.sppsr.ucla.edu/ccs/default.cfm)

Research
- Strengthening Communities through Culture, by Elizabeth Strom (www.culturalpolicy.org/pdf/communities.pdf)
- Policy Partners: Making the Case for State Investment in Culture, by Chris Dwyer (www.culturalpolicy.org/pdf/policypartners.pdf)
APPENDIX: SEMINAR AGENDAS AND PROCEEDINGS

Agenda
The Plan of Nashville
July 10-11, 2003

THURSDAY, JULY 10
6:30-6:40 Opening Remarks and Welcome: Ellen McCulloch-Lovell, Center for Arts & Culture
6:40-7:00 Cultural Policy at the Grassroots:
Bill Ivey, Vanderbilt University’s Curb Center for Art, Enterprise, and Public Policy, offers a project overview and how public policies in these three areas affect the arts and cultural life of Nashville and economic development.
7:00-7:30 The Plan of Nashville:
Seab Tuck, Founding Principal, Tuck Hinton Architects
7:30-8:30 Reception

FRIDAY, JULY 11
8:00-8:25 Continental Breakfast
8:25-8:40 Opening Remarks: Bill Ivey
Welcome: Mayor Bill Purcell
8:45-9:40  Arts Education: Nashville to National

Nashville Challenge
• Pedro Garcia, Director of Schools, Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools

National Perspective
• Jane Polin, Philanthropic Advisor
• Vincent Marron, Executive Director, North Carolina A+ Schools Program

Questions fielded by experts.

9:40-10:30  Cultural Tourism: Sharing Nashville with the World

National/Portland Perspective
• Barbara Steinfeld, Director of Cultural Tourism, Portland Oregon Visitors Association

Nashville Perspective
• Greer Broemel, Director of Regional Tourism, Middle Tennessee Tourism Council

Questions fielded by experts.

10:35-10:45  Morning Break

10:45-11:45  Places to Live, Spaces to Create: Affordable Housing and Artist Venues

National Perspective
• Laura Weathered, Executive Director, Near NorthWest Arts Council (Chicago)

Nashville Perspective
• Hank Helton, Director, Mayor’s Office of Affordable Housing

Questions fielded by experts.

11:45-12:30  Working Lunch

12:30-1:30  Participating in the Plan of Nashville:
Small groups (self-selected by issue areas: Arts Education, Cultural Tourism, and Live-Work Spaces) discuss how to make a difference in Nashville. Ideas for shaping the community are written on flip charts.

A delegate is selected to report back to the larger group at 1:30. Questions to consider include:
(1) Who should be involved in addressing your group’s issue? What are some of the barriers to be overcome?
(2) What cultural solutions have you or your partners tried or that are in the works?
(3) Could these efforts be expanded or are new ideas needed?
(4) What are some recommendations to advance your group’s issue?

1:30-2:15  Talk Back: The Plan of Nashville. Each delegate briefly reports his/her group discussion and ideas for how their organizations and the city might move forward in these three areas. The larger group, with the assistance of Mark Schimmenti, Design Director at the Civic Design Center, reflects and discusses the potential of these ideas.

2:15-2:30  Wrap Up
Ellen McCulloch-Lovell and Bill Ivey.

2:30  Adjourn
The Plan of Nashville

July 10–11, 2003

SUMMARY
On July 10-11, the Center for Arts and Culture and the Curb Center for Art, Enterprise, and Public Policy sponsored a one-and-a-half day seminar entitled “The Plan of Nashville: Cultural Policy at the Grassroots.” Over 55 leaders of small to middle-sized arts and community based organizations attended, as did Mayor Purcell, Superintendent Pedro Garcia, and several city council and school board members. The meeting, which focused on Arts Education, Cultural Tourism, and Affordable Housing/Venues, was designed to inform The Plan of Nashville, an 18-month project to develop a community-based vision and design principle for metropolitan Nashville. The group made numerous observations and recommendations. The Civic Design Center, a Nashville-based organization that is charged with developing The Plan of Nashville, intends to hold a second caucus later in the summer to move the recommendations forward.

PROCEEDINGS

July 10 Kick-Off
On July 10, Bill Ivey of the Curb Center for Art, Enterprise, and Public Policy and Ellen McCulloch-Lovell of the Center for Arts & Culture welcomed the group to the Civic Design Center in downtown Nashville. McCulloch-Lovell detailed the Center’s mission to make a clear connection between policy, arts and cultural life. Ivey reflected on arts education, cultural tourism, and affordable housing/venue issues in Nashville. They also welcomed Mark Schimmenti, the Design Director of the Civic Design Center, who provided an overview of The Plan of Nashville. More information on the Plan can be found at http://www.planofnashville.com. A reception followed this kick-off evening of presentations.

July 11 Welcoming Remarks
On Friday, July 11, Mayor Bill Purcell thanked Bill Ivey, the City Council, Superintendent Pedro Garcia, Ellen McCulloch-Lovell and the Center for Arts & Culture for participating in this forum. He expressed delight that so many people were in attendance and celebrated increased public support for the arts over the previous four years and the City Council’s initiative to create a percent for public art mandate. He noted the pilot program that the Office of Affordable Housing was developing to accept payment in lieu of taxes to reduce the cost of housing. This reinforces the notion that we care about our artists, Purcell said. An arts high school is in the planning phases. He encouraged the group to maintain cohesion and develop collaborations and said, “No other more important discussions are occurring in Nashville today.” At the conclusion of his remarks, he received a Curb Center hat.

Arts Education Panel
Ellen McCulloch-Lovell introduced Pedro Garcia, Superintendent of Nashville Metro Schools; Jane Polin, a Philanthropic Advisor from New York City; and Vincent Marron, Executive Director of the A+ Schools Program in North Carolina to kick off the arts education portion of the meeting.

Pedro Garcia presented the dilemma he faced two years ago, when he arrived in Nashville—to get test scores and performance up. If after three years a school remains an “unnoticed school” (low-performing), a principle can lose his job. The No Child Left Behind Act also places stipulations on scores for funding purposes. In 2001 (when Garcia arrived), 77 Nashville schools were below the national average and 20% of students were in special education classes. Garcia attributed most of these special education cases to reading deficiencies. About 18,000 students couldn’t read. To tackle this, Garcia focused on the elementary level; 6,000 teachers went through staff training this summer. Since 2001, special education students have dropped from 20% to 14%.
The school district’s dilemma is to improve reading without affecting the arts. Garcia laments that last year the arts took an unintended hit. The 18,000 students who couldn’t read (in grades 5-10) were required to take a reading class. This required class eliminated 10,000 elective options. Garcia is committed to preventing this consequence in 2003-2004. 42 arts/music teachers have been added; this represents an increase of $2.4 million in the budget. Mike Curb has committed to raise $1.5 million for musical instruments in schools; new instruments were last purchased in 1972. Garcia also related several personal anecdotes, detailing how the arts “saved” his son in high school. His son now has a master’s degree in fine arts.

Jane Polin, Philanthropic Advisor, responded to Garcia’s dilemma to raise test scores by reminding participants that there has been a tremendous amount of research in arts learning, ways to integrate arts into learning have been developed, and Nashville has a tremendous resource in Bill Ivey, who helped recast arts education as arts learning (which is not limited to the school day). The dilemma, Jane assures Garcia, can be solved, but it requires professional development investment. Having one art/music teacher in every school in Nashville is unique, and TPAC and Mike Curb are effective community leaders.

Polin discussed the economic imperative of giving students the skills needed in the workplace, which are increasingly heightened by a global perspective, creativity, and sensitivity to others. Arts can give those skills. She closed her presentation with a set of questions to prepare for the future:

- How can you provide the best professional development options for teachers?
- How can you best prep teaching artists?
- How can you establish a set of diverse leaders that reflects the entire community?

Vincent Marron of the A+ Schools Program in North Carolina explained the arts-centered approach of his program. The art, not the curriculum, is central at the schools where the program is in place. The arts changes the way teachers think and collaborate. In the beginning, the program realized it would not impact the role of arts in school unless it looked at schools as a whole.

The No Child Left Behind Act calls upon schools to achieve in every subcategory (racial/ethnic/special needs); Marron’s group ran tests in North Carolina and found that high-performing schools failed the NCLB test. An arts-integrated approach in the schools, however, works for every category of students—low performing/average/high/special education. The role of arts is, therefore, key to making sure that we leave no child behind.

Cultural Tourism Panel
Barbara Steinfeld, Director of Cultural Tourism for the Portland Oregon Visitors Association, stressed that “heads in beds and butts in seats=bucks in bank” during her presentation. She provided evidence that cultural travelers, who tend to have higher education and incomes, spend more time and money at destinations. Historic sites are the most popular. Steinfeld offered numerous examples of cultural tourism programming in Portland—the “Big Deal” for off-season travel and “Cultural Tour Brochures.” She also stressed the importance of regional partnerships and suggested participants visit www.culturalcascades.com, where “5 cities + 2 countries=Endless Possibilities.” This partnership’s slogan is: “On Board” (Amtrak), “On View” (Visual Art), “On Stage” (Performance Art), “On the Table” (Culinary Tourism), and “On Fire” (glass art).
Steinfeld highlighted several trends. Revenue from cultural tourism is expected to reach $200 billion by 2005. Travelers are looking for authentic experiences that are hands-on. They also look for confirmation of American values and are traveling to smaller cities (giving potential to rural festivals).

Hank Helton of the Mayor’s Office of Affordable Housing detailed the potential developments in Nashville (including Neuhoff, Crest, Avenue of the Arts, Laurel House, the Gulch, and Rolling Mill Hill). He also alerted the group to an August 6th meeting to discuss the Rolling Mill Hill development and discussed the importance of public-private partnerships. Financial incentives are in place to encourage development, and flexible building codes—essentially the more progressive international building codes—have been adopted. Unfortunately, Nashville doesn’t have the mass of abandoned warehouse space that other cities have. Good first steps are the 5th Avenue of the Arts and the Arts Redevelopment District. While rehabilitation is expensive, finance structures can make them happen. Interested parties can also take a cooperative position to share one mortgage for the entire building, as the Acme Artist Community did in Chicago.

Break Out Sessions
During lunch, three break-out groups discussed the panel issues further. Participants self-selected the issue that most interested them—arts education, cultural tourism, and affordable housing/venues. After discussing these issues and potential recommendations at length, the larger group reconvened in the early afternoon to share their ideas and recommendations with each other and Mark Schimmenti of the Civic Design Center. Their ideas are summarized below:

Cultural Tourism Observations and Recommendations

- Parking and transportation are challenges that affect tourism.
- The sports and music industry can be key partners.
- Funding is a challenge.
- Tourism needs to address diversity and shifting demographics.
one month from now to continue these discussions. The cultural aspects, Schimmenti said, need to be throughout the plan. The design goals may need to be rewritten to reflect these needs and interests.

Bill Ivey and Ellen McCulloch-Lovell drew the forum to a close with a few last comments. Bill Ivey thanked the Center for Arts & Culture and Heather Conley at the Curb Center for their help in producing the forum and applauded the group for bringing to the forefront so many pertinent issues at such a timely point in Nashville’s planning process. He pondered, however, why so many plans for Nashville have been shelved and determined that we have to find a way to put real public dollars behind these wonderful ideas. Ellen McCulloch-Lovell was also impressed with the participation at the meetings and the Mayor and Superintendent’s remarks. She shared some thoughts on how a cultural plan might address policy issues as a compendium to The Plan of Nashville. After thanking everyone for coming, McCulloch-Lovell closed the forum by noting that the Mayor’s invitation to submit recommendations was a genuine one, and the group might want to consider transmitting a compressed synthesis of the discussions to his office.

Arts Education Observations and Recommendations
• A Community Audit for arts education is needed. This should be done with all types of schools and in partnership with government agencies and the community.
• The Audit should be connected back to The Plan of Nashville and any existing strategic plans for schools and parks.
• The Audit and its recommendations should be applied to all students.

Affordable Housing/Venues Observations and Recommendations
• The most pressing need is more venues for performances and art activities.
• There is an opportunity to plan and work with the Civic Design Center on this issue.
• Coalitions should be built that are multi-disciplinary and collaborative.
• Break-even spaces for non-profits are needed.
• There is a need for more government partnerships (such as the Shakespeare Theatre). The group is “looking for government to be an enthusiastic partner.”

Summary
In conclusion, Mark Schimmenti made two final points. He said the Civic Design Center needed to examine whether cultural spaces should be scattered throughout the city or consolidated in one area. He also suggested the Civic Design Center hold a caucus
Moderated Discussion: Perspectives Beyond Los Angeles

- Beate Becker, Creative Economy Initiative, Boston Redevelopment Authority
- Barbara Goldstein, Director, Public and Community Arts Program, Seattle Arts Commission
- Mary Ellen Williams, Fund Administrator, Scientific and Cultural Facilities Fund, Denver

Moderator: Jerry Yoshitomi, Independent Cultural Facilitator

Lunch

Break out groups/Discussion

Moderated Discussion: Working with Public and Private Policymakers

- Bill Lasarow, Founder and President, Mural Conservancy of Los Angeles
- Douglas Otto, Board Co-Chair, Public Corporation for the Arts, Long Beach
- Josephine Ramirez, Program Officer, Getty Grant Program/J. Paul Getty Trust

Moderator: Laura Zucker, Executive Director, Los Angeles County Arts Commission

Wrap Up and Next Steps

Conclusion
Leadership, Advocacy, and Communication: Los Angeles
November 12, 2003

PROCEEDINGS
In his opening remarks Leslie Thomas, Assistant General Manager, City of Los Angeles, Cultural Affairs Office, commented on Los Angeles’ many assets, but noted its size can be overwhelming. The city is also complex—by the nature of its geography and in the diversity of its population. The challenge is how to craft policies to deliver services to this diverse population. He anticipated that the seminar outcomes would inform his work, and open up new opportunities for his department to work with the cultural community.

Ellen Lovell of the Center for Arts and Culture discussed the juxtaposition of “culture” and “policy.” Policies, she noted, are ideas that guide actions and the allocation of resources. While the discussion often revolves around resources, there are policies that affect artists and how culture is developed, presented, and accessed, though they may not be considered “cultural policies.” She referred to the latter as “unintentional” cultural policies, adding that such policies should be part of the public policy discourse, in the same manner in which environmental policy is part of the public policy discourse.

Dean Barbara Nelson introduced the participants to the work of the School for Public Policy and Social Research at UCLA and invited all of the participants to be in close contact with the SPPSR.

Helmut Anheier, of the Center for Civil Society at the School of Public Policy and Social Research presented an initial glimpse of the Los Angeles cultural community (the five county region of Los Angeles). He based his findings on data from IRS 990 forms, a fact that would result in a reduced picture of the total cultural community, since some organizations are not officially incorporated as a nonprofit and have not filed tax returns.

- 11% of all nonprofit organizations in the region are devoted to arts and culture, approximately 800–900 organizations.
- 43,000 nonprofit organizations produce $20 billion in revenues; arts and culture organizations account for $1 billion in revenue.
- If related commercial industries are counted (arts, entertainment, creative industries)—4% of revenue is from nonprofit arts and cultural organizations.
- Arts and cultural organizations in the region comprise half of all arts and cultural organizations in the state of California and account for 1/3 of arts and cultural revenues for the state. Los Angeles County boasts the highest number of organizations of the five-county the region.
- Museum revenue accounts for 20% of the nonprofit arts and culture sector.
- West Los Angeles and the Wilshire area have high densities of arts and cultural organizations.

The Center for Civil Society plans to conduct an extensive survey on the arts and cultural sector and hopes to be able to present more detailed and accurate findings within a year.

Panel 1: Local Perspectives
Helmut Anheier opened the panel by noting that Los Angeles, unique in its size and diversity, still harbors a sense of isolationism with a vacuum in specific leadership skills and infrastructure to meet special needs of its population. He asked the panelists to comment on how their organizations have managed to succeed in a challenging environment such as Los Angeles.

Tomas Benitez of Self Help Graphics explained that Self Help’s development has been organic and artist-driven. As the organization grew it transitioned to becoming more of a traditional nonprofit organization. At the same time, the tradition of participation and maintaining key participation at all levels has remained central. Increasing and engaging participation not only can strengthen an
talking with policymakers about issues and concerns, but also working to elect arts/culture friendly school board members or other elected officials. She stressed the need to get policymakers on board and to connect what you are doing to their goals.

**Participant Discussion**

- The dramatic cut to the California Arts Council budget could be an opportunity to galvanize the community.
- The importance of arts and culture needs to be made obvious. The arts community needs to be considered as part of the community network and a team player in community development.
- The community cannot be exclusive and needs to expand the audience and find allies in those who value culture.
- To effectively participate in the special interest process of budget appropriations, the cultural community needs to learn how to participate in the process and to engage in dialogue with elected officials. The cultural community can learn from others on how to be more effective in the policymaking process (e.g., the labor community).
- An attitude and paradigm shift needs to occur to put the cultural sector on par with business interests. The major challenge is how to galvanize/play to our own strengths.
- New and strengthened leadership must be created. Create a concrete plan with goals and strategies.
- The network of support that exists for the arts should be exposed. Legislators appropriated $1 million to the CAC when they realized they would be losing matching NEA federal funding if the budget was zeroed out.
- Different messages should be created for different audiences, based on their values and interests.

**Panel 2: Perspectives Beyond Los Angeles**

Jerry Yoshitomi, independent cultural facilitator, told participants that he approached the day's agenda with some skepticism. The cultural community has already been in discussion about the issues presented. For those in the room the main issue is a lack of resources. His hope for the day is that the discussion moves to
the level of action. He asked the panelists to bring their perspective to Los Angeles’ context.

Barbara Goldstein of the City of Seattle Public Art Program asserted that cultural activities should permeate all departments in city government. When she arrived in Seattle, the city had a reputable public art program, but was overlooking the strength of the neighborhoods and how to engage the neighborhoods in its public art program. Her agency engaged artists in the civic dialogue and placed them within city departments (water, electricity) and neighborhoods with the goal of telling a story about the agency or community. This work is harder to measure because the product is not necessarily a physical piece of art. By integrating artists into community issues, you make a stronger case for the arts and why it is important. She is also working to get her agency at the table of other discussions, outside the arts agency. Art should be a part of as many dialogues as possible—housing, youth, economic development, etc. Her agency is now part of the Youth Task Force and the Economic Development Task Force for the city. Not only is there more funding available in these areas, but being a part of the various dialogues demonstrates the power and the value of the arts.

Beate Becker of the Creative Economy Initiative, Boston Redevelopment Authority, explained that the Creative Economy Initiative grew out of necessity when the Massachusetts Cultural Council almost closed due to state budget cuts 10 years ago. MCC survived the cuts, but needed to make a stronger case for the relevance of the arts. One area of focus was the connection with economic development, and MCC created the Cultural Economic Development Program in 1996. At the same time, the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA) published a report on the economic impact of the nonprofit art sector in the regional economy. The report was brought to the attention of the New England Council, an agency that serves as the chamber of commerce for the region. A regional working group was formed, comprised of the New England Council (representing the business sector), the state art agencies (state government), and NEFA and the Boston Symphony (cultural organizations). The diversity of this initial working group was important. The group examined how the findings could be applied to economic policy, beyond the cultural tourism perspective. They called upon Mt. Auburn Associates, a non-arts consulting firm, who suggested that a comprehensive strategy would have to consider the sector, commercial and nonprofit, as an integrated sector. From this key principle they begin to think of new strategies.

They created an action plan, “Blueprint for Investment” in June 2001. The New England Council, in the role of the spokesperson from the business community for the initiative, was instrumental in getting visibility and excellent media coverage. A partnership with the regional Federal Reserve Bank gave them a lot of credibility and a much stronger voice. Beate suggested finding people in positions of influence whose direct work may not be in the cultural sector, but who have a private interest in the arts. Such people are often willing to integrate their private interest with their professional work. She added that you need to think of the commercial and nonprofit as an integrated sector and that the cultural community should get to know the commercial sector and try to form partnerships by aligning interests. An example might be aligning the interests of the film industry with the cultural community’s goals. The movie industry should have an interest in strong arts education that would provide them with an educated workforce in the future. While she acknowledged that Los Angeles does not have a New England Council, she suggested that the community look at its own assets, framework, relationships, and structures and from that build upon what is unique to Los Angeles.

It takes time for policy makers to understand the importance of the creative sector. Recently, Massachusetts cut its state arts coun-
must have a compelling vision, and an alignment of mission and goals. Public policy operates in the same fashion. The panel began with discussion of the Public Corporation for the Arts in Long Beach whose budget has been cut dramatically over the past few years and will be further cut next year.

Doug Otto, Board member of the PCA, attorney and community volunteer, told participants that in Long Beach, they are at the beginning stage of creating a plan to establish a long-term stream of revenue for PCA independent of the City’s budget situation. Because arts supporters want to have stronger voice, the working group will include arts groups as well as those in positions of influence to find additional funding stream for the arts. He made clear that in Long Beach, the budget for the PCA was cut because it was a money issue; budgets were cut across the board. He added that credibility of an organization is critical in gaining political support. Policymaking is a process that needs to be strategic, informed and must follow protocol. Passion is also essential because it can set you apart from other interests. Connect the strategy/plan to a broader vision. Every community has conducted a strategic plan, city plan or community plan. You must place your idea into the context of a wider vision.

Josephine Ramirez addressed working with larger funding institutions such as the Getty Trust, (a large organization, but a mid-size grantmaker). In order to affect change or to work with larger institutions you must learn the politics of an organization. If you are successful in doing this, you may be able to affect change. You also have to consider the broader agenda of the foundation and realize that many foundations do not specifically fund the arts.

Josephine added that while it is hard to make generalization about private foundations and their policies, foundations are interested in public policy and may be interested in leveraging opportunities where a grant small contribution could have large impacts. In Los
Wrap Up Session: Thoughts and Suggestions

• Need for long-term education of policymakers.
• Establish umbrella organization, advocate, active lobbying, central clearinghouse, and mechanism to gather information.
• Identify leaders that support arts and culture and build relationships.
• Commission a paper similar to the New England report on the creative industries.
• Gather data and research to assist with advocacy efforts. Conduct research on policymakers/key leaders and find out their interests. Conduct research to find numbers that exemplify arts participation. Make sure ideas are research based.
• Work to better organize/galvanize the cultural community.
• Create policies that affect/influence how artists/arts/arts participation are depicted in the mass media.
• Create policies that highlight the relevance of the arts to everyday life and decrease the idea of the isolated artist; that advocate arts for all; that support creativity and the artistic practice by and for all, but that also uphold the notion that it takes serious discipline to make art.
• Cultivate the idea of cultural citizens. Use the power of testimony to show cultural participation.
• Establish an entity to bring together media/nonprofit sector/entertainment industries to discuss common interests.
• Inform nonprofits the IRS rules as they pertain to lobbying.
• Establish a Los Angeles Arts Award program honoring innovations in visual arts, performing arts, media arts, etc, and engage the entertainment industry and corporate sponsors.
• Find a cultural affairs ambassador (e.g., Quincy Jones, Maria Shriver).
• Utilize an email campaign, similar to the Moveon.org campaigns.
• Connect beyond the cultural community to other sectors. Bring culture and creativity to all aspects of government: economic development, transportation, social welfare, labor, etc.
• Increase exposure and public relations of cultural activities.
• Support one another; know what others are doing within the community.

Angeles there is the LA Arts Funders group, a group of public and private funders that come together to discuss local funding issues. Dialogue with foundations is two-way and is built upon relationships. If the cultural community can come together to establish a collective agenda, they should begin a dialogue with the LA Funders group.

Bill Lasarow discussed his work with the Mural Conservancy of Los Angeles and its recent $1.7 million line item appropriation from the California Department of Transportation. The Conservancy realized they had to do something two and half years ago when the Los Angeles freeways murals were being covered with graffiti. They found there were no state policies for the conservation of murals and went to Jackie Goldberg who was their legislative contact person and understood what the murals meant to her constituents. Bill emphasized establishing equal-peer relationships with policymakers and government agencies and suggested inviting them to see the work you do and find out what their interests are. You also need to take the time to get to know the legislators before you approach them for a favor. By providing information that is useful to legislators you can show them you are expert that they can rely upon. In terms of fitting your concept into a broader context, policymakers do not need to see your larger vision to support a project; they only need to see a fit with their job description, agency mission, or connection with their constituents. He warned against fitting a project to a grantmaker’s agenda. You need to translate the importance of art and culture in terms that foundations and policymakers can understand and appreciate.

Laura Zucker noted that policymaking is unpredictable, an open ended proposition, and not without risks and requires long term commitment.
Observations from the Day

• The key is what to do with what you have; utilize public affairs strategies, communication.
• Building relationships with the right people/organizations is critical.
• Research is important; but it should also be done well.
• Innovative policy might be outside the current system.
• Foundations are also policymakers.
• The cultural community needs time, resources, and strategy, and some kind of intermediary organization or person to pull the parts of the sector together.
• Recognition that even among the small to mid-size organizations, there is a great variety and difference among the group. Talk about what makes us different from each other as well as what the common interests are.
• An interesting statistic: it has been estimated that the MTA strike has affected nearly 400,000 people. However, based on data collected by the LA County Arts Commission from only 100 cultural organizations, these organizations have served over 750,000 people (without any duplication).

Next Steps/Action Items

• For the next discussion, the larger cultural institutions should be included along with the small to mid-size organizations. This does not mean giving the leadership of any activity to the larger organizations, but rather the need to establish partnerships.
• Address the need for an umbrella organization. The Los Angeles Arts Commission looked into this once before (with Arts, Inc.). The question is where to site it, or to create another 501(c) 3. The Center for Cultural Innovation might be a good fit. The LA Arts Commission is willing to look into this.
9:35-10:35  DESCRIBING AND DEFINING NEW ORLEANS’ CREATIVE SECTOR

Shirley Trusty Corey, Arts Council of New Orleans
Richard Gruber, Executive Director, Ogden Museum of Southern Art
Irvin Mayfield, New Orleans Jazz Orchestra
Jay Weigel, E.D., Contemporary Arts Center

Moderator: Jeanne Nathan

10:35-10:50  Morning Break

10:50-11:50  STRENGTHENING THE CREATIVE SECTOR BREAK OUT SESSIONS.

Small groups (self-selected by breakout topics listed below) discuss and consider the following topics. Specific recommendations are made and recorded.

TOPICS
• Working Together: Unity and Diversity. Facilitated by Nyree Ramsey, Dir., Tourism and Arts, City of New Orleans
• Advocacy. Facilitated by Val Marmillion, Pres., Pacific Visions Communications
• Marketing/Working with Local Tourism. Facilitated by Barbara Steinfeld, Portland Oregon Visitors Association
• Attracting, Educating and Retaining a Creative Workforce. Co-facilitated by Michael Kane, Mt. Auburn Associates, and Ron Bechet, Dir., Arts Dept, Xavier University
• Fostering Creativity, Innovation and Invention within the Community and with individuals. Facilitated by Robert C. Tannen, DMJM-Harris

Facilitator or a delegate is selected to report back to the larger group at 11:50. Questions to consider include:

• Who should be involved in addressing your group’s issue? What are some of the barriers to be overcome?
• What solutions have you or your partners tried or that are in the works?
• Could these efforts be expanded or are new ideas needed?
• What are some recommendations to advance this issue?

11:50-12:20  Report Outs
12:20-1:00  Lunch
1:00-2:00  CREATIVE SECTOR CASE STUDIES: STRATEGIES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE FUTURE

• Barbara Steinfeld, Director of Cultural Tourism, Portland Oregon Visitors Association
• Alley Duffy, film producer
• Tim Williamson, President, Idea Village
• Scott Aiges, New Orleans Music Business Development
• Ellen McCulloch-Lovell, Center for Arts & Culture

Moderator: Val Marmillion

2:00-2:30  RESPONDING TO OUR “WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY”

Small groups (pre-selected to ensure representative groups) discuss and prioritize the most important next-steps, taking into account all the information, recommendations, and ideas that have been generated.

Facilitators:
• John Talmage, Mayor’s Office of Economic Development
• Gina Charbonnet, Community Arts Partnership Coordinator, Xavier University
• Don Marshall, Chair, UNO, Dept. of Arts Administration
• Robbie Vitrano, Trumpet Advertising
Creative Investments in New Orleans

December 11-12, 2003

SUMMARY
On December 11-12, the Center for Arts and Culture and Creative Industries, the Contemporary Arts Center, Tulane University School of Architecture, Xavier University, and the University of New Orleans’ Arts Administration program sponsored a one-and-a-half day seminar entitled Creative Investments in New Orleans: Cultural Policy at the Grassroots. Over 70 leaders of small to middle-sized arts and community based organizations attended, as did Lieutenant Governor Mitch Landrieu. The meeting examined and advanced the policy goals of the creative industries in New Orleans.

In view of an increased awareness of the importance of the creative class to the state and city’s economic development, participants strategized ways to further prioritize the sector as an important part of state and local economic development strategic planning. Discussion informed a “working paper” that was disseminated to the Lieutenant Governor and the creative sector in February—making the paper a timely reflection of the creative sector’s priorities and policy recommendations. For more information about the working paper, contact Creative Industries at jyno@aol.com.

PROCEEDINGS

DECEMBER 11 KICK-OFF
On December 11, Ron Filson, Dean of the Tulane School of Architecture and Ellen McCulloch-Lovell of the Center for Arts & Culture welcomed the group to the Tulane School of Architecture. McCulloch-Lovell detailed the Center’s mission to make a clear connection between policy, arts and cultural life. Filson reflected on the Creative Sector work that has been done to date in New Orleans.

2:45-3:30 Talk Back
Each delegate briefly reports his/her group discussion and ideas for how their organizations and the city might move forward. The larger group, with the assistance of Ellen McCulloch-Lovell, reflects and discusses the potential of these ideas and next steps.

3:30 Wrap Up and Next Steps
Ellen McCulloch-Lovell and Jeanne Nathan

3:35 Final Words
John Talmage, Asst. Dir., Economic Development,
City of New Orleans and R. King Milling, President, Whitney Bank

3:30 Adjourn
Describing and Defining New Orleans’ Creative Sector:
Ellen McCulloch-Lovell introduced panelists: Shirley Trusty Corey (Arts Council of New Orleans), Richard Gruber (Ogden Museum of Southern Art), Jay Weigel (Contemporary Arts Center), and Irvin Mayfield (New Orleans Jazz Orchestra) to kick off the panel. They discussed ways the cultural community could bring people together, create jobs, and demonstrate a sizable percentage of employment within their sector and at colleges and universities. They also pointed out the sizable challenge of assessing needs, creating a definition, and communicating within and beyond their sector.

Break Out Sessions
In the late morning, five break-out groups discussed key issues in the New Orleans cultural community. Participants self-selected the issue that most interested them—unity and diversity, advocacy, cultural tourism, education and workforce issues, and fostering creativity within the community. After discussing these issues and potential recommendations at length, the larger group reconvened before lunch to share their ideas and recommendations with each other. Their comments and ideas are summarized below:

December 12 Welcoming Remarks
On Friday, December 12, Jeanne Nathan, President of Creative Industries, thanked Ellen McCulloch-Lovell and the Center for Arts & Culture for participating in this forum. She expressed delight that so many people were in attendance and thanked the Contemporary Arts Center for hosting our meetings and the Nathan Cummings Foundation, the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, the New Orleans’ Mayor’s Office of Economic Development, and the Whitney National Bank for financial support of the forum. Nathan introduced Jay Weigel, Executive Director of the Contemporary Arts Center, who offered some opening remarks about the creative sector in New Orleans and reflected on the need for the non-profit and commercial sides of the sector to join together.

Orleans. They also welcomed Michael Kane of Mt. Auburn Associates, who gave a keynote address on the New England Creative Economy Initiative. Michael Kane stressed the rich base in New Orleans, the need to leverage the city’s assets, and the city’s unique challenge, in relation to Memphis, New England, and Manhattan. He prompted New Orleans’ cultural community to define, quantify and build strategies to make the sector even stronger and to approach their activity through an economic development perspective.

In the New England Creative Economy study, the economic contribution of the commercial side of the sector (publishing, interior design, and galleries), individual artists, non-profits, and support services (art supplies, agents, distribution, etc.) were culled to show the economic force of the sector, which is growing faster than any other sector (in the late ‘90s, the growth rate was 15%) and is predicted to increase. The sector is also an exporter, taking creative content to other cities globally. More information on the initiative can be found at http://www.creativeeconomy.org. A reception followed this kick-off evening of presentations.

Working Together: Unity and Diversity Breakout
Nyree Ramsey, Director of Tourism and Arts for the City of New Orleans, facilitated this break-out session. The general observations and recommendations were:

• Communication barriers exist between different entities in the creative communities (artists, community, schools, agencies, etc.). The city should be a catalyst: as a producer (by building collaborations) and as a convener, providing a “safe space” to hold discussions. An organization is needed that will address the need for open communication without self interest and that will moderate and organize diverse and inclusive meetings.
• Greater trust and healing are needed, as some people have been culturally exploited and have not reaped the benefits of their creativity. The benefits should return to constituents.
• Persistent communication and social work is needed to break down barriers and build representation and participation with the disenfranchised. The cultural community needs to come together to diversify and share power, money, access, networks, advocacy efforts, participation, and programming.
• Neighborhoods should be rebuilt through arts programs and neighborhood celebrations, making art more decentralized.
• The city’s complexities should be marketed, including the diverse neighborhoods and unique culture.
• Arts education should be acknowledged for its potential to bring greater opportunities and embrace a universal language.

Advocacy Break-out
Led by Val Marmillion, President of Pacific Visions Communications, participants discussed the need for greater and more effective advocacy and made the following recommendations:

• Identify all stakeholders to go beyond the people who are always at the table and to ensure inclusiveness and cohesion of message.
• Embrace younger and inspired activists in community organizing and advocacy.
• Broaden the strong statewide advocacy group to include the for-profit arts sector.
• Launch a CVB for arts/culture.
• Acknowledge and debate the conflicts in priorities that create barriers for advocacy, such as: the “fear of commercialism” that threatens artistic “loss of soul,” the ongoing conflict between preservation/history and progress, the competition for capital assets, New Orleans’ aversion to contemporary art, and the devaluation of New Orleans’ culture.
• Create a coalition to work with community activists and civic leaders to build a “creative sector” concept.
• Build entrepreneurial skills amongst artists and arts organizations through training and incentives.

Marketing/Cultural Tourism Breakout
Barbara Steinfeld of the Portland, Oregon Visitors Association facilitated the cultural tourism break-out session. The cultural community, it was believed, should:

• Network between tourism and arts/cultural organizations at the staff level.
• Designate a staff person within arts and tourism organizations to focus on cultural tourism (or hire someone).
• Revive a partnership between arts/culture and tourism (this was tried in New Orleans 6-8 years ago).
• Build the motivation and develop the influences to include arts in tourism on the state and local level, so that a divide will not be created between heritage and arts.
• Create themed “Weeks” that include culinary tourism, visual arts, performances, etc.
• Maximize the “authentic” experience.
• Gather local, national and international data on cultural tourism to better make the case for marketing and financial commitments.
• Develop a ticket distribution vehicle for small arts organizations/venues.

Education and Creative Workforce Break-out
Led by Michael Kane of Mt. Auburn Associates and Ron Bechet of Xavier University, participants noted that:

• New Orleans is good at attracting, but not educating and retaining artists (several factors were cited, such as New Orleans’ lack of a dance company and its poverty level wages).
• Art—underexposed—should be reintroduced into schools (arts were taken out of schools over the last thirty years). The poor state of the public school system is holding back the creative industry and economic development. 47% of New Orleans is functionally illiterate. Middle class education and infrastructure is needed.
• Local universities should offer arts management courses, development courses, and entrepreneurial opportunities for business start-ups. Business skills are greatly needed in the cultural community.
• The sports, rap, and hospitality industries are good models for how to work
Final Panel on Strategies and Opportunities

A final panel synthesized the strategies and opportunities that New Orleans should embrace in the future. They agreed on the following:

- Consensus building must occur.
- Public-private partnerships and networks should be created so that this industry is seen as entrepreneurial. Tourism should meet the sector at the table.
- Creative leaders must be repositioned as business leaders. Artists are looking for the same economic respect as other start-ups.
- Young people must be brought into the conversation and infrastructure.
- An organizing group must be established to create reports that define and quantify employment/economic impact, and analyze/strategize the challenges or barriers to a strong creative workforce (such as healthcare and education) and the existing infrastructure. Some problems with implementation, however, are a lack of trust, a “passing the buck” mentality, and a potential reluctance to take risks.

Michael Kane made a series of concrete recommendations for next steps:

- Convene an organizing group with key stakeholders and appropriate people.
- Produce quantitative and qualitative reports which include: Concept/definition/structure of sector and quantification—employment and economic impact.
- Analyze reports to assess challenges and barriers at the institutional and organizational levels (i.e. workforce issues such as jobs, careers, wages, training and education).
- Develop strategies and recommendations for strengthening the economic engine, organizational infrastructures, artists, and workforce reeducation.

Summary

In conclusion, New Orleans has a rich arts and cultural cluster, but questions remain:
About the Center

The Center for Arts and Culture is a non-partisan, non-government policy center whose mission is to inform and improve policy decisions that affect cultural life. The guiding principles of that mission include freedom of imagination, inquiry, and expression, as well as freedom of opportunity for all to participate in a vital and diverse culture. The Center pursues its mission by addressing critical issues, stimulating research, disseminating information and analysis, and facilitating the exchange of ideas. It uses a wide lens to examine cultural policies at the international, federal, state, and local levels and in the public, private and philanthropic sectors.

The Center was incorporated in 1994 by a group of foundation leaders who perceived a fundamental need and beckoning opportunity for the cultural sector. In 1994, every other significant field of public interest, whether economic affairs, international relations, health, human services or education, had a developed organizational framework for policy research and debate. The cultural sector, however, lacked policy research and mechanisms for elevating the debate about many important cultural issues. The Center was created to fill this void and examine the cultural dimensions of policies such as intellectual property, preservation of cultural heritage, public diplomacy, the effects of globalization on cultural identity, the training of a creative workforce for the new economy, investment in culture, and access to and participation in the arts. The Center is also focused on the relationship between citizens and their cultural life, believing that cultural life is linked to the vitality of civic life and thus to our democracy.
The Center is supported by foundations and individuals, and is governed by a Board of Directors, and advised by a Research Advisory Council.

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