
LEARNING TOUR BRIEF #8

Balboa Park: A Collaborative Hub for Art, Science, and Culture

OVERVIEW AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Through the real-life experience of the [Balboa Park Cultural Partnership](#), you will evaluate the advantages and challenges of bringing together 27 art, science, and cultural institutions within the largest urban cultural park in the nation. Later on, you'll split into smaller groups to explore select museums and from their models, consider how cultural institutions use the arts to connect with diverse local communities, encourage accessibility of their museums to all populations, and ensure their long-term sustainability by maximizing donor gifts.

As you participate in this learning tour, you'll have a chance to:

- Understand the complexity and lessons learned of the Balboa Park Cultural Partnership and key funders
- Learn about the importance of collaboration among nonprofits as well as funders
- Learn ways to increase community engagement through making the cultural programs and institutions relevant to a broad community
- Understand the importance of using research to motivate action
- Share best practices on how to engage donors in the sustainability of our community's cultural assets

LEARNING TOUR AGENDA

Part I: Welcome and Overview

Part II: Visit Cultural Centers

- Museum of Photographic Arts
- San Diego Museum of Man
- The Old Globe

Part III: Lunch and Debrief at The Prado Restaurant

ISSUE STATEMENT

Art, cultural and performing arts organizations are confronting systemic challenges to their historic operating and capital revenue bases, as well as declines in traditional audiences. These shifts are exacerbated by new technology and media tools that allow participation in forms not contemplated even a decade ago.

Unfortunately, there is neither consensus nor solid research to guide the way for policy makers, funders, and institutional leaders as they navigate complicated choices. Moreover, while many leading funders and institutions share a sense of urgency about the present financial dangers, not all see the challenges in the same light. Some leaders in the field see the dangers as inescapable; others hope that the threats will pass without requiring radical restructuring. Some see the problems as cyclical; others see them as more permanent problems. While different assumptions make collective action difficult, this is a unique point in time to shift the conversation towards community engagement as a way to make cultural programs and institutions more relevant and sustainable.



NATIONAL TRENDS

Sustainability

“The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance.”
- Aristotle

[Sustain Arts video](#)

In 2009, the National Endowment for the Arts surveyed the state of the arts. Their results highlighted issues already evident – audiences for museums, galleries, and performing arts were dwindling. While arts and art institutes have a long and distinguished history of providing a valuable public service, new approaches needed to be implemented. The Hauser Center at Harvard University recently launched *Initiative for Sustainable Arts in America*; a 3-year effort to strengthen the arts infrastructure and develop a fact-based assessment of the sustainability of urban arts institutions across the country.

Supported by the Hauser Center, the Foundation Center and Fractured Atlas, Sustain Arts’ mission is to create a national strategy to ensure a vibrant future for the arts. Sustain Arts is a community based effort to strengthen the nation’s cultural infrastructure. Working with a diverse range of community partners across the country, they will analyze the linkages between capitalization, demography, and participation, leading to bold new policies to support the arts at the local and national level.

National Endowment for the Arts

In 2011, the National Endowment for the Arts announced the [Our Town Initiative](#). Our Town is funds partnerships led by arts and design organizations and local governments to implement projects that contribute toward the livability of communities and help transform them into lively, beautiful, and sustainable places with the arts at their centers. Through Our Town, the NEA has supported 190 projects totaling more than \$16 million across the country. Projects encourage creative activity, develop community identity and a sense of place, and help revitalize local economies. All Our Town grant awards are made to partnerships that consist of at least one nonprofit organization and a local government entity.

For 2013, Our Town projects will focus on arts engagement projects and cultural planning projects. Arts engagement involves public art and festivals that foster interaction among community members or are designed to activate existing cultural assets. Design and cultural planning projects include master planning for cultural districts, asset mapping, and creative entrepreneurship. Design and planning projects include the design of artist spaces, cultural facilities, and public spaces.

Cultural and Community Relevancy

“By involving stakeholders early, the story may become altogether different, potentially richer and more nuanced as well as relevant”.

-Darcie Macmahon, Florida Museum of Natural History

Arts and culture strategies help to reveal and enhance the ever-evolving identity of the physical and social form of a community. The community character of a city, county, town, or neighborhood can be seen as a story or narrative of a place. Planners and community members can come together to reveal and burnish this narrative through:

- An articulation of the historic, cultural, economic, and cultural context of the community;
- A commitment to the reinforcement and enhancement of the community’s identity; and
- The implementation of policies, regulations, and incentives that support and enhance this evolving identity.

Key Things to Consider from American Planning Association:

1. *Understand the Community Context:*

The Boston Indicators Project — a partnership among the Boston Foundation, the City of Boston, and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council — explores, measures, and assesses the values, resources, and assets of the city and its residents within the context of civic vitality, cultural life and the arts, the economy, education, the



environment, health, housing, public safety, technology, and transportation. The project relies on the interaction and participation of a broad range of stakeholders (from schoolchildren and engaged residents to academic and community based experts to public officials and policy makers) to achieve its goals and objectives.

In an effort to better understand how Boston's growing ethnically and culturally diverse population — which comprises more than 50 nationalities and ethnicities and more than 100 languages and dialects — is expressing its presence in the city and the region, the project and the Mayor's Office of New Bostonians developed the Greater Boston Cultural Resources Survey. This survey was designed to "assess movement along a continuum of cultural expressions, as groups develop resources to transact their own businesses, move toward reflecting themselves to the larger community, and grow in ways that begin to reshape the cultural landscape of the city."¹ The survey invites residents to share "insider" information about the city's cultural and ethnic heritage, commercial establishments, traditions, resources, and amenities.

2. *Celebrate Community Character*

Ybor City — the Latin Quarter of Tampa, Florida — is known as a center of the cigar industry but also as a vibrant, multicultural melting pot. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Ybor City was home to more than 230 cigar factories, as well as many Spanish, Cuban, African, Italian, German, and Jewish immigrants. During the 1950s and 1960s, federal urban-renewal efforts aimed at slum clearance and interstate freeway construction disfigured Ybor City. The preservation of architectural and streetscape features that indicate the neighborhood's multiethnic heritage — second-floor balconies, ornate cornice and tile designs, five-globe street lamps, wide sidewalks of hex-shaped pavers, decorative shop windows, wrought-iron benches, and ornate curlicue light fixtures — is due in large part to the work of the Barrio Latino Commission, Tampa's first architectural review commission, created in 1959. The 1983 Ybor City Historic District Revitalization Plan resulted in more than \$12 million in private investment to revitalize the neighborhood. The City of Tampa relaxed the district's zoning laws to permit nighttime uses, such as bars and clubs, to attract tourists and visitors. While these efforts worked as stimulants for economic development, Ybor City quickly became a popular entertainment district, attracting a young, rowdy crowd at night but very few people during the day. Through community involvement — as well as the collaboration of a variety of institutions, including the local development corporation, the city planning office, and the historic district — Ybor City is once again experiencing a wave of revitalization efforts. With the introduction of the Tampa Electric Company streetcar line, the revitalization of historic buildings, new infill housing to the north and south of the historic core, and a variety of new businesses and restaurants, Ybor City continues to balance its multiethnic heritage with the goals and needs of current residents. Guided by the 2004 Ybor City Vision Plan, Seventh Avenue in the heart of Ybor City was selected as one of 2008 American Planning Association's Great Streets in America on account of its history, character, and evidence of strong community involvement

3. *Local Implementation Framework*

Preserving and enhancing the local identity, uniqueness, and arts and culture assets of a community require that local decision making, planning processes, policies, and regulations reflect and support this community character. Local government programs, policies, and regulations that incorporate the underlying philosophy or identity of a community can provide a framework for decision making, encourage development that is place based, and reinforce the cultural goals and vision of a community. This framework supports the work of civic leaders and community advocates and can help bring new allies, talent, and ideas into the planning process.

4. *Arts and Cultural Programming*

Seattle's Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs has established two programs that support community character through financial assistance and programming: the Neighborhood and Community Arts (NCA) Program and a small awards initiative (smART ventures) that invests in community-based arts and culture programs. NCA provides support to neighborhood groups that "produce recurring festivals and that promote arts and cultural participation, build community and enhance the visibility of neighborhoods through arts and culture." By contrast, smART ventures provides small, one-time financial assistance to "spark innovative ideas and widen arts and cultural participation, particularly among diverse and underserved communities." In 2008, a smART ventures grant provided funding to filmmakers Melissa Young and Mark Dworkin to provide free screenings of their documentary Good Food, which explores the meaning of good food and its value to healthy communities.



ECONOMIC IMPACT

Conducted by Americans for the Arts, *Arts & Economic Prosperity IV* is a study of the nonprofit arts and culture industry's impact on the economy. It provides a quantifiable economic impact of nonprofit arts and culture organizations and their audiences. Using findings from 182 regions representing all 50 states and the District of Columbia, an input-output economic model is able to deliver national estimates.

In 2010, \$135.2 billion of national economic activity was generated:

- \$61.1 billion by the nation's nonprofit arts and culture organizations
- \$74.1 billion in event-related expenditures by their audiences
- 4.13 million in full-time jobs
- \$86.68 billion in resident household income
- \$22.3 billion in revenue to local, state, and federal governments every year (public funding provided \$4 billion in arts allocations)

Additionally, based on the 151,802 audience surveys, the typical arts attendee spends \$24.60 per person, per event, beyond the cost of admission. Communities that draw cultural tourists experience an additional boost of economic activity. Event spending for attendees who live outside the county in which the arts event took place spend more than twice local attendees – \$39.96 vs. \$17.42.

HOW IS BALBOA PARK DEALING WITH THIS ISSUE?

Balboa Park is a 1,200-acre urban cultural park in San Diego that is home to open space areas, gardens, walking paths, museums, performing arts organizations, cultural centers and the world-famous San Diego Zoo. The Balboa Park Cultural Partnership is a nonprofit organization through which 27 of these arts, science and cultural institutions in the Park collaborate to achieve greater organizational efficiency, innovation and excellence.

The Partnership was formed in 2003 to provide a means for member organizations to identify and achieve collective goals and to speak with one voice on issues of mutual benefit and importance. The Board of Directors is comprised of executive directors of member institutions. Park staff, trustees and volunteers participate in the development and implementation of Partnership programs — Balboa Park Sustainability, Collective Business Operations, Learning Institute, Balboa Park Governance and Balboa Park 2015 Centennial Celebration Planning.

The Partnership conducts programs and initiatives and participates in public policy impacting sustainability, collective business operations, learning and promotion of Balboa Park. This collaboration helps members save money through economies of scale, adopt sustainable business practices, and advocate effectively for issues that affect the Park and the cultural community in San Diego.

[Balboa Park Map](#)

ARE THERE MORE RESOURCES I CAN ACCESS ON THIS?

- Identify foundations funding the arts in the top 25 metro areas with [Sustain Arts Interactive Map](#)
- Find your state in [Our Town Projects](#)

REFERENCES:

[Americans for Arts](#)
[American Planning Association](#)
[Arts Economic Impact Report](#)
[Balboa Park](#)
[Balboa Park Report](#)
[Balboa Park History](#)
[Balboa Park Cultural Partnership](#)

[BPCP Resources](#)
[Fractured Atlas](#)
[Making Museums Relevant](#)
[Op-Ed Huffington Post - Arts and the Economy](#)
[Participatory Museum](#)
[Sustainable Arts in America](#)
[Sustain Arts](#)

