

San José Cultural Connection

Participate : Create : Connect

San José's Cultural Vision Plan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A New Vision for a New Decade

Cultural Connection is San José's plan for cultural development in the coming decade. Its purpose is to help create a more vibrant San José through arts and culture. The result of a



Movimiento Cósmico celebrates the Mayan Lunar Year at Circle of Palms, downtown San José

yearlong process involving more than 3,000 people, *Cultural Connection* presents a vision and shared goals for the City of San José and community partners. This vision is founded on San José's distinct cultural identity and its abundant cultural resources. The plan will both strengthen that culture while making it better known and understood in the region, the nation and the world.

Why Cultural Planning and Why Now?

Dramatically changed circumstances for the City, the economy and the culture at large require a realignment of the City's cultural resources with new priorities. Articulating a cultural vision allows the City and

community partners to leverage their resources and

partner more effectively. And it galvanizes leadership around cultural goals that reinforce one another and that support other goals, such as the City's *Economic Strategy 2010*.

Cultural Connection will better enable the community to fulfill its cultural vision for the next ten years and enhance the public value of arts and culture.

What has changed? Money and the culture. San José, like other California cities, faces ongoing structural budget challenges in addition to the current economic recession. While tax revenues are down, other factors drive cost increases faster than revenues. This makes it more difficult for cities to fulfill residents' expectations from local government, including providing cultural amenities. San José's Office of Cultural Affairs, the City's arts agency, has experienced substantial budget cuts in recent years, reflecting this downward pressure on City spending. In addition, the unique character and diversity of Silicon Valley's culture, and shifts in the overall culture, require new responses. Virtually every San José resident participates in cultural activities but there is an increasing disconnect between their interests and the delivery systems. The proliferation of informal or amateur cultural activity outside the nonprofit arts world, the growth in popular culture, the deepening use of technology, and the sheer diversity of cultural expression—all necessitate reevaluation of how to fulfill the community's cultural needs.

Cultural Connection was developed in the context of many related responses to this change. The City is





currently developing an update to its general plan, *Envision San José 2040*. *Cultural Connection* was informed by *Envision San José 2040* and it is intended that it become a component of the general plan. In addition, the City and community cultural organizations have produced several recent plans and studies that will benefit from alignment and coordination.

San José's Cultural Identity and Vision

San José has a distinct and, in some ways, unique culture and a collective portrait of this cultural identity emerged from the planning process. Diversity is the most frequently mentioned element of San José's culture, both as a demographic fact and as a long-held civic commitment. Reflecting in part the influence of Silicon Valley, the population is, on the average, relatively well-educated, affluent, international and transitional. In addition, San José has a highly diverse multicultural population not connected to Silicon Valley, spanning a range of multigenerational families and recent immigrants.

San José's culture is highly participatory, and residents' cultural activities are often personal, active, informal and "off the radar" of cultural institutions. San José has also made a long-term investment in its own cultural development, and has created a vital community of nonprofit arts and cultural organizations, artists and arts-related businesses. San José's diversity has shaped its arts and cultural community. There has been an emphasis on culturally-based as well as mainstream arts, and the community produces and participates in a broad array of cultural expressions, such as low-riders, ethnic dance, textiles, and hip hop culture. Not surprisingly, a consistent theme of planning was getting beyond comparisons with San Francisco and the Bay Area, and celebrating and promoting San José's own culture.

A cultural vision for San José was developed through the planning process, one that describes the vibrant arts and cultural life desired by and for the community, and is founded on its distinct cultural identity:

Arts and culture in San Jose connects people, provides rich opportunities for participation, and fosters creativity.

Guiding Principles

Cultural Connection is based on five guiding principles, which were identified as authentic traits inherent in San José's cultural sector through *Envision San Jose 2040*, recent research, trends in the field, and ideas which emerged from the community process. Five national issue experts were selected to prepare white papers which more fully describe each theme and how San José can strengthen the cultural vision plan through its inclusion.

Cultural Participation: Supporting residents' personal, active participation in arts and culture. Issue expert: Alan Brown, WolfBrown.

Innovation: Fostering new responses to new challenges in cultural development. Issue expert: Ben Cameron, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

Cultural Pluralism: Using culture as a connector and fostering a “cultural commons” through arts and culture. Issue expert: Maria Rosario Jackson, The Urban Institute.



Music in the Park

Arts and Economic Prosperity: Promoting economic development of the creative sector. Issue expert: Robert Lynch, Americans for the Arts.

Public Value of the Arts: Using personally meaningful arts experiences to help achieve community goals and create a better San José. Issue expert: Jerry Yoshitomi, Meaning Matters, Inc.

New Directions Based on Past Achievements

Key ideas in *Cultural Connection* are based on San José’s existing cultural strengths and assets. They are opportunities arising

from the starting point of past accomplishments in the community’s cultural development. For example:

Emphasizing Personal Participation: San José has made a sustained investment in its arts and cultural infrastructure, with an emphasis on institutions and facilities for audiences to experience professional artists. *Cultural Connection* seeks to strengthen this infrastructure while providing more opportunities and places throughout the community for people to learn, practice, share, and celebrate their own personal cultural interests.

Using Culture to Promote San José as a Destination: San José’s cultural community has reached the point where it can become an effective draw. The plan proposes ways to boost cultural tourism while reinforcing San José’s own distinct culture.

Using Culture as a Connector: San José’s has a long-term commitment to celebrating diversity and fostering multiculturalism. This collection of artists, cultural organizations, relationships and attitudes now provides the opportunity for an even greater “cultural commons.”

Using Culture to Enliven Many Places: San José has developed (and redeveloped) a collection of key cultural facilities, primarily in the downtown area. Cultural development downtown and in the neighborhoods can now focus on diverse, smaller-scale spaces and public places that enliven the community with a broader range of cultural activities, more embedded in everyday life.



Cinema San Pedro



Mariachi Festival

Developing San José's Creative Economy: San José has focused its cultural policy on developing the nonprofit arts and cultural sector. The creative economy also encompasses the economic activity of individual creatives and arts-related businesses, and growth is best accomplished with support for all elements of the creative sector.

The Plan: Ten Goals

Cultural Connection has ten, inter-related goals to fulfill the community's cultural vision.

1. Support Residents' Active, Personal Participation in Arts and Culture.
2. Support the Availability of Diverse Cultural Spaces and Places Throughout the Community.
3. Strengthen Downtown San Jose as the Cultural Center of the Silicon Valley.
4. Integrate High Impact Public Art throughout the Community.
5. Expand Residents' Access to Arts and Cultural Learning Opportunities.
6. Foster Destination Quality Events in San José.
7. Strengthen Communitywide Marketing and Audience Engagement.
8. Enhance Support for the Creative Economy.
9. Increase Funding for Cultural Development.
10. Strengthen the Cultural Infrastructure.

Implementation

Cultural Connection is a ten-year plan for the City and its community partners. In recognition of the current economic challenges facing the City and the community, the plan balances the practical with the visionary by identifying short-term recommendations that can be accomplished or initiated in the coming two years, often using currently available resources. There are also more ambitious, long-term recommendations that will require substantial preparation, new resources, and other changes before implementation begins.



Show Your Stripes, public art by Jim Conti at The 88 on San Fernando at 1st Street. Interactive light element; public can change patterns/color by dialing a phone number and entering 3-digit numbers of their choosing to activate.

Past Cultural Planning Successes

Cultural planning, much like other community planning, is a continuum. In that spirit, San Jose Cultural Connection: San Jose's Cultural Vision Plan, a vision to the future, builds upon successes from San Jose's two previous cultural plans.

20/21: A Cultural Plan for the New Millennium, adopted in 1997 as a 10 year vision for cultural development, was a major regional planning initiative in partnership with the Arts Council Silicon Valley. Significant accomplishments that resulted from the 20/21 Cultural Plan include:

- *Update of the public art ordinance leading to the development of Public Art Next!, the City of San Jose's Public Art Master Plan*
- *Artsopolis, a model regional arts marketing initiative*
- *Cultural Initiatives Silicon Valley which developed and raised millions of dollars for a comprehensive arts education initiative that is now housed in the Santa Clara County Office of Education*
- *Zero1's 015J: the Biennial Art and Technology Festival, emerging as one of the world's most significant events of its kind*
- *Renovation of the historic California Theatre into a major downtown, mid-size venue*
- *A private-sector leadership initiative now realized at 1st ACT Silicon Valley*

The 20/21 Cultural Plan was preceded by the City's first cultural plan, the 1988 San Jose Arts 2020 which served as the mandate for the City's cultural policy including the development of the Office of Cultural Affairs, the development of the arts grants, public art and arts education programs, and program assistance that fostered the development of many small and mid-size arts organizations.



Symphony Silicon Valley at the renovated California Theatre

IMPLEMENTATION

Cultural Connection is a ten-year plan for the City and its community partners. It has ten strategic goals and recommended actions to support them. The plan balances the practical with the visionary by identifying short-term recommendations that can be accomplished or initiated in the coming two years, often using currently available resources. There are also more ambitious, long-term recommendations that will require substantial preparation, new resources, and other changes before implementation begins.

The following pages present Table #3: All Recommendations

Table 3: ALL RECOMMENDATIONS

Ten Strategic Goals and Recommended Actions to Support Them

#	Recommendation
Goal 1. Support Residents' Active, Personal Participation in Arts and Culture.	
1	Create a communitywide working group to identify and develop new opportunities for cultural participation.
2	Nurture the success of small-scale, live performing arts venues.
3	Assist in the realizing the vision of the Mexican Heritage Plaza as a community school of arts and culture.
4	Develop a communitywide cultural participation directory/portal of classes, informal events, spaces, venues, etc., building on existing resources, such as Artsopolis, MeetUp.com, FaceBook, and others.
5	Develop a comprehensive neighborhood initiative to identify, connect and enhance local cultural resources on the grassroots level.
Goal 2. Support the Availability of Diverse Cultural Spaces and Places Throughout the Community.	
6	Update the inventory of facilities, venues and spaces, including City-owned, nonprofit, church, commercial and school-based that can be used for cultural activities.
7	Encourage multipurpose space in private development and public projects that is appropriate for events, programs, rehearsals and performances serving a variety of organizations.
8	Create a public/private artists' space initiative to identify and assess available space for living, working and presentation.
9	Enhance consideration of cultural uses in planning for development and operation of parks, libraries, and community and recreation centers.
10	Explore development of spaces for cultural participation in neighborhoods.
11	Promote high design standards in civic and private architecture, and in urban design.
Goal 3. Strengthen Downtown San Jose as the Cultural Center of the Silicon Valley.	
12	Reinforce downtown cultural activities by marketing specific focus areas, such as the cultural institutions near Cesar Chavez Plaza, SoFA District, San Pedro Square, creative retail businesses, live music venues, commercial art galleries, Convention Center area, and artists' studios.
13	Explore creation of a downtown cultural district with specific focus areas.
14	Create a facility use fund to increase access by small- and mid-sized organizations to existing cultural facilities, such as the Montgomery Theatre.
15	Explore creation of a dedicated, downtown festival site.
Goal 4. Integrate High Impact Public art throughout the Community.	
16	Prioritize projects in key areas of City development: Downtown, North San Jose and the Airport.
17	Incorporate public art in high-traffic transportation corridors and pedestrian areas.
18	Support public art projects in community gathering places.
19	Integrate public art into the City's long-term planning initiative.
20	Encourage private financial participation in public art, starting downtown and North San Jose.

Table 3: ALL RECOMMENDATIONS continued

#	Recommendation
Goal 5. Expand Residents' Access to Arts and Cultural Learning Opportunities.	
21	Provide arts and cultural learning opportunities in community settings.
22	Support K-12 arts education.
23	Utilize partnerships among City departments and programs.
Goal 6. Foster Destination Quality Events in San José.	
24	Attract new and cultivate existing signature events.
25	Encourage neighborhood-based cultural activities.
26	Develop a collaborative marketing “umbrella” for a season of events sharing a compelling theme.
27	Support the success of outdoor special events, especially those that attract visitors and generate hotel tax revenue.
28	Establish a Cultural Tourism Task Force, including representatives of key stakeholder groups, to develop a cultural tourism strategy, and to develop projects, that serve interests of both tourism and cultural sectors.
29	Establish a Cultural Tourism Investment Fund to implement the cultural tourism strategy.
Goal 7. Strengthen Communitywide Marketing and Audience Engagement.	
30	Enhance communitywide marketing and audience engagement, including 1) increased marketing/visibility of Artsopolis and 2) development of a cultural participation directory/portal.
31	Develop a communitywide marketing/audience engagement collaborative, including arts and cultural organizations and creative businesses, to identify and pursue cooperative initiatives.
32	Develop an electronic, communitywide cultural audience list, building on the Big List and other existing lists, and conduct a market analysis of the list.
33	Support technology projects that engage and connect people around cultural interests.
34	Expand access to training in arts marketing for arts and cultural organizations, including National Arts Marketing Project workshops.
Goal 8. Enhance Support for the Creative Economy.	
35	Produce an ongoing Creative Economic Forum, a resource fair for creative businesses.
36	Initiate a Creative Business Committee at the San José Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce.
37	Create a web-based resource for San José artists.
38	Continue to offer training to artists through arts service organizations or the City’s Public Art or Workforce Development programs.
39	Provide a jobs development program focusing on employment in creative businesses.
40	Facilitate access to group services, such as health, liability and other insurance.
41	Provide access to small business services tailored to creative businesses.
42	Facilitate access to funding for start-up and expansion of creative businesses.
43	Explore the creation of an “Innovation Institute” for business executives, government and nonprofit leaders, and experienced entrepreneurs to help catalyze creativity and innovation in San José.
44	Develop an innovation in arts management initiative.

Table 3: ALL RECOMMENDATIONS continued

#	Recommendation
Goal 9. Increase Funding for Cultural Development.	
45	Explore a fiscal structure to facilitate development (fundraising and sponsorships) that supports communitywide cultural development, including implementation of this plan.
46	Preserve the level of and, as funding becomes available, increase grant support for nonprofit arts and cultural organizations.
47	Explore funding for specific cultural facility projects, e.g., artists live/work projects, smaller venues, historic preservation, and redevelopment.
48	Enact a private development contribution requirement to provide on or off-site arts and cultural funding.
49	Explore new revenue sources dedicated to San José’s arts and culture, such as an admissions fee and/or a quality of life tax.
50	Encourage foundation funding for communitywide initiatives, such as marketing and audience engagement, cultural participation, and advocacy.
51	Encourage private sector support through development of an Arts & Business Council.
Goal 10: Strengthen the Cultural Infrastructure.	
52	Develop an ongoing, community-based advocacy network.
53	Provide support to arts and cultural organizations to increase artistic capacity through experimentation and other professional development.
54	Provide training for boards of directors of nonprofit arts and cultural organizations, and their senior executives, that encompasses the specific needs of the sector.
55	Support enhanced leadership development, including multicultural, emerging and business leaders.
56	Develop a cultural leadership recognition program.
57	Provide access to training in resource development to assist the staff and boards of nonprofit arts and cultural organizations to successfully navigate the special challenges of raising funds in the San José environment.

