

**Arts & Cultural District Strategies**  
For Consideration in  
An Economic Development Strategy for  
Central Market, San Francisco

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On behalf of the  
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# Introduction

## Background

San Francisco's Central Market district is at an important juncture in its development. Recent efforts by the City's Office of Economic & Workforce Development (OEWD), the San Francisco Arts Commission, Grants for the Arts, and a range of community stakeholders have invested resources in planning, incentivized new development, and have initiated arts and cultural activities. These efforts have created a nexus of opportunity and interest in further developing the district as a unique, eclectic arts district in Central Market that will serve the adjacent Tenderloin and South of Market neighborhoods, the City, and the region.

In early 2011, community and City leaders recognized the need for a coordinated strategy to guide ongoing and future efforts to strengthen the Central Market Arts District. An interagency team was assembled of City staff, a number of community-based partners and several consultants to develop an Economic Strategy with arts and culture as a key component. The purpose of the Economic Strategy is to prioritize activities – both ongoing and those that have not yet been undertaken – that are essential for Central Market's development. It is intended to provide a strategic framework for the many City and community stakeholders currently involved in the revitalization of Central Market and will be informed by community stakeholder input, a wide range of existing and newly collected data, best practices research, and the interests and needs of both current residents and prospective newcomers to the area.

For purposes of developing the Economic Strategy and in particular, the arts and cultural component priorities, this report was commissioned to include:

- Research of best practices used in developing arts and cultural districts across the United States, including interviews with key agents and stakeholders;
- Development of several case studies that could inform the planning of Central Market; and
- Evaluation of key strategies for consideration based on the case studies and best practices research in the context of the specific challenges and opportunities of Central Market.

## Methodology

This study consists of research and evaluation of case studies that are specifically relevant to the Central Market district, that involve initiatives that cultivate or catalyze an arts district, that support and provide benefits to an existing low-income community, and that can stabilize the existing arts assets while attracting new organizations and investment.

The process involved compiling and reviewing literature related to the cultivation of successful urban arts districts, conducting interviews with key agents and representatives of the districts, and the synthesis of information collected to create an opportunities and strategies analysis that would be considered in crafting the Economic Strategy.

The research for this report sought a wide range of cities across the U.S. and Canada, with a population range neither too small nor too large to have relevance for San Francisco. <sup>1</sup> Initial research focused on the following cities:

Austin, Texas (population 786,386)  
Birmingham, Alabama (population 230,131)  
Chattanooga, Tennessee (population 171,350)  
Cleveland, Ohio (population 431,369)  
Columbus, Ohio (population 769,332)  
Miami, Florida (population 433,136)  
Minneapolis, Minnesota (385,378)  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (population 1,547,297)  
Pittsburg, Pennsylvania (population 311,647)  
Portland, Oregon (population 566,143)  
Queens, New York (population 171,350)  
Seattle, Washington (population 616,627)  
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada (578,000) <sup>2</sup>

*(Note: Populations are for incorporated city areas only so may be significantly under-representing the population of some cities on this list.)*

Based on early findings, including the status of cultural district development, availability of key agents and documents for review, conditions of the district prior to development, and overall potential applicability to San Francisco, the research was narrowed to 3 cities and 3 catalytic projects:

District Case Studies: Cleveland, Columbus, and Miami; and

Catalytic Project Case Studies: Austin, Seattle, and Queens.

Interviews were conducted with at least 3 representatives for each district and where possible, included one arts organization representative, one municipal representative, and one community leader, preferably a community development organization director or a business improvement district director. In total, personal interviews were conducted of 29 individuals for this report.

Stakeholder outreach commenced in the Spring of 2011 with focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and community meetings. Other community outreach initiatives included resident surveys, street intercept surveys, community workshops, and philanthropic organization interviews conducted by city staff, consultants, and community organizations. The process of community input into the broader economic strategy continues as of the publication of this report. Furthermore, efforts are underway to provide a long-term citizens' advisory process to evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives and to assist in directing new strategies.

# Arts Districts and Their Development

## A Perspective

Arts districts are complex entities that develop over long periods of time, usually decades, and are comprised of multiple actors and agents who contribute in different ways and at different times to the districts' character and success. There are two broad categories of arts and cultural districts: those that are created almost exclusively through major redevelopment and comprised principally of large anchor organizations and those created more organically with finer grain infill and more diversity of development. The former was a popular urban redevelopment strategy during the late 1970s, 1980s and into the 1990s and is exemplified by Yerba Buena in San Francisco or Chattanooga's Riverfront and Dallas' arts district. These districts are institutionally driven, made up almost exclusively of large anchor organizations, and their resulting character is relatively plastic, lacking local character, but often containing some important architectural landmarks and destination venues.

The finer grained arts district, or community-based district, has burgeoned in recent years with many cities across the United States in the process of developing or stabilizing sometimes several districts at a time. This increase in community-based districts appears to be partially due to the dramatic downturn in national and local economies, which has reduced the availability of funds for major capital projects. However, there is another reason they are so popular: both the private and public sectors have realized the potential of community-based arts districts to deliver multi-dimensional benefits at a time when other tools for community development are flagging. Unlike the national dialogue around arts and culture -- which recently has resulted in proposals to eliminate the National Endowment for the Arts, cut funding to the Institute for Library and Museum Services, or force arts organizations to cancel controversial arts projects -- local civic and community leaders understand the potential of arts and cultural activities to achieve real community change with limited but strategically employed funding.

Community-based arts districts are also highly transitional and constantly in flux. Artists, arts or cultural organizations, creative industries, entertainment and retail establishments often come and go over time, while residential development and large arts or other anchors act as important community stabilizers. It is therefore helpful to analyze the different developmental phases of arts districts: emergent, incubator, vibrant, and transitional.

During the *emergent stage*, early pioneers, usually independent artists, move into a neighborhood spurred by low property values and cheap rents. Some new arts, retail or food services often have begun to follow; but, at this stage, the district is not broadly recognized as an arts destination. Emergent arts districts are often still physically under-developed with vacant and deteriorating properties, and are typically plagued by social problems that are a byproduct of poverty and underserved communities.

The *incubator stage* is when the civic or private community leaders begin to make strategic investments. These investments are sometimes focused on the arts but just as often are focused on residential improvements or the physical realm. It is during this stage that creative industries, restaurants, cafes or bars might join the early arts pioneers to create a certain amount of energy in the district. It is also during this stage when community stabilization and social development initiatives begin to take hold and improve the quality of life for local residents.

During the *vibrant stage*, the neighborhood has developed an identity as an arts district, commercial activity begins to thrive, and residential properties are improved and expanded. Street life, day and night, is active and safe. Arts organizations are thriving, supported by the district's identity as well as the residential life and commercial amenities.

Finally, the *transitional stage* is when forces within the district shift, altering its character and success. There are many reasons this can occur. The most frequently cited is that commercial and residential desirability causes property values and rents to increase, which in turn pushes out arts organizations, artists and other residents. Although commonly referenced, this can be avoided or reduced with early community stabilization efforts and is not the only change that can negatively impact a vibrant arts district. Other factors can include the fragile nature of smaller arts organizations and a certain amount of natural growth, alteration or failure within the sector regardless of their location. Sometimes, new resident communities arrive and bring new cultural interests as well as new community needs. Competition with other newer districts may cause an area to lose its "edge" to segments of the youth population or even the arts community itself. During the transitional stage stabilization initiatives can be effective but the outcomes may take some time to be realized.

Planners, community leaders, and arts stakeholders must understand that change over time is unavoidable and often desirable. It is therefore important to view all arts and cultural districts as fluid and to continually and strategically seek to amplify the community benefits no matter what stage of development they are in.

## Case Studies

# Wynwood Arts District Miami, Florida

### Background

Throughout the 1980s, the City of Miami experienced a dramatic increase in poverty. The poverty rate rose from 24.5 percent to 31.2 percent, making Miami the fourth poorest city in the United States. Some neighborhoods suffered from housing deterioration, economic disinvestment, increased social needs, and significantly higher rates of poverty, sometimes as much as 3 to 5 times that of the state overall. Wynwood was one such neighborhood, with an estimated poverty rate of 37.4%.<sup>3</sup>

The Wynwood neighborhood is bordered by the Design District to the north and downtown to the south and is comprised of several smaller districts within it. The neighborhood's strengths are identified as its diverse populations including Puerto Ricans, Haitians, and others; it is well served by public transit; and is readily accessible by several major roadways. The Puerto Rican area in the north of the district is a fairly stable working class family neighborhood. Other sections, including the central area, were predominately zoned for light industrial use and include many empty warehouses and boarded-up structures. Housing deterioration created much substandard housing and limited available housing, which was already under pressure from increasing immigrant populations.<sup>4</sup>



Wynwood area, corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and 26<sup>th</sup> Street in 2006.

Photo courtesy of Goldman Properties.

In 1996, the City published an extensive Neighborhood Planning Program for Wynwood that would attempt to address its specific needs. This report identified focus areas as economic development, housing rehabilitation and new housing, and social services. The prescribed action plans included strong efforts at combating crime, improving the physical public realm, and fostering economic growth, including efforts focused on marketing the Fashion District. The report found that the neighborhood was well positioned to improve with new retail and commercial opportunities as well as housing given its proximity to downtown, its transit and the planned construction of the Dade Performing Arts Center.<sup>5</sup>

More recently, Miami's 2004-2009 Consolidated Plan includes a specific focus on Wynwood. The Consolidated Plan was developed to target specific neighborhoods for intensive community



development. It focused on the creation of Neighborhood Development Zones (NDZs) and within each NDZ, it targeted smaller geographic areas poised for revitalization (Model Blocks). Wynwood was included in the Neighborhood Planning Zone as a target.<sup>6</sup>

## Arrival of the Arts

Concurrent with the City undertaking its studies and development planning strategies, the artists of Miami were discovering the neighborhood. Artists and galleries were moving out of the high-priced Miami Beach area into the inexpensive light industrial structures that the neighborhood offered.

## Private Leadership

The low property values and the presence of the small arts community attracted several developers, most notably Goldman Properties. Goldman took a leadership role by buying up extensive tracts of built and vacant land, approximately 500,000 square feet in total. Most of the sites had 1 and 2 story warehouses and were zoned for “Light Industrial.” Goldman purchased properties strategically with a long-term commitment to the neighborhood. They bought properties clustered near the geographic center and selected them so they could control entire blocks and corners.<sup>7</sup>

Subsequently Goldman invested in rehabilitating (at relatively low cost) the warehouses for arts, creative commercial and some key cultural uses, and they subsidize rental rates to attract more artists and organizations. Two important early projects undertaken by Goldman were the conversion of a 17,000 square foot space for the New World School of the Arts, a college program, for their studio and classroom spaces; and the creation of a collaborative Performing arts center. This center, named the “Lightbox at Goldman Warehouse,” provides space for four performing arts groups that have office and rehearsal space in this facility. In addition, there is a 100 seat theater shared by the tenants and usable by other groups. The four groups came from all over Miami to be housed here. The facility is operated by the Miami Light Project.<sup>8</sup> Goldman provided funding for the renovation of the facility and the Knight Foundation provided a \$400,000 grant to initiate programming.<sup>9</sup>



Lightbox at Goldman Warehouse. Photo courtesy of Goldman Properties.

Goldman’s efforts also include providing support to local arts organizations, marketing the district’s assets, subsidizing street art programs, and hosting art fairs. The most notable of these projects, the Wynwood Walls, was curated by Jeffrey Deitch, formerly of Deitch Galleries

(housed in Wynwood) and currently Executive Director of MOCA in Los Angeles. Goldman provided funding for 12 international artists to create major murals on empty walls in a central area of the district. Goldman paid for all travel, hotel and related expenses. The artists did not charge a fee but they were the top names in street art at the time, including artists such as Shepard Fairey and several from San Francisco. With Art Basel 2010, the murals project expanded to another lot nearby with another 6 murals.



Wynwood Walls.  
Photo courtesy of Goldman Properties.

The project ended up creating a “town center” for Wynwood, which had lacked a central gathering place. Now, people go to tour the murals and then stay to eat lunch in one of two new restaurants opened by Goldman. It’s been estimated that 4,000 people visit the murals for the mural walk organized each month.<sup>10</sup>

## Public Sector Planning & Reforms

Concurrent with Goldman’s early development efforts in Wynwood, the City of Miami was updating the entire planning code, ultimately issuing Miami 21.<sup>11</sup> This plan included some key zoning changes, among other initiatives, that would be important to encourage low-income artist housing to be built when properties were being rehabilitated or newly constructed. They implemented three key zoning changes that in simple terms:

- a) Allowed artist studios without special approval within the “Light Industrial” use categories;
- b) Allowed up to 50% residential live/work spaces within an industrial structure;
- c) Exempted particular mixed-use properties from minimum square foot allowances for cultural worker housing.<sup>12</sup>

These zoning changes encouraged developers to include artist live/work residences in their developments and in particular, allowed them to be constructed at lower cost so they could be offered to artists at lower rental rates.<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, the recession and housing market

conditions have depressed new construction of the larger planned mixed-use and mixed-income housing projects contemplated by the developer and the City.

Another aspect of the City's planning focused on enhancing street activity by attracting entertainment venues. Miami's liquor regulations were complicated and allowed only a limited number of clubs and bars (1 every 1,000 ft.). An exhaustive analysis of the application of those regulations in Wynwood was undertaken to see how many new bars and clubs could be accommodated in the district without creating other problems. A map was created that diagramed the distances between properties to achieve a reasonable distribution of these establishments, and then guidelines were created for obtaining approval for new establishments. The City provided a number of inducements to bring cafes and restaurants into the district, particularly with reduced parking requirements. Further, they created a mechanism for an administrative permit to be issued rather than requiring a public hearing for approval.<sup>14</sup>



Wynwood at night.  
Photo courtesy of Goldman Properties.

Consideration was given to a requirement for inclusion of some type of “art component” for each café or bar in the neighborhood, but the final planning documents did not include it despite then Planning Director Ana Gelabart-Sanchez's support of this and the other key zoning changes.<sup>15</sup> The neighborhood developers consider the new Planning Code “Miami 21” (finalized in 2010 but amended in January 2011), a major achievement but also a work in progress, and hope that further adjustments will be made that will help Wynwood, among other neighborhoods.<sup>16</sup>

## Wynwood Today

Today, Wynwood is still in an “incubation” stage needing much more work. Despite the City's planning efforts and zoning changes, it has not yet initiated many of the programs outlined in their planning documents. The district does not, for example, have enough police resources to significantly address crime or to support the arts programs or existing businesses.

Developers and other stakeholders are disappointed by the City's insufficient investment but remain hopeful that when the economy rebounds, the City will be in a position to further assist the neighborhood. They look to the City to address social services, public streetscape improvements, and safety/security, among others. Currently, Goldman and the other

developers provide private security for the center of the district from 8:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. The Wynwood Arts District Association, a neighborhood/merchant membership organization with 100 members, provides services that might be provided by a Business Improvement District or Community Benefit District. For example, they provide street cleaning, lighting, and security from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.<sup>17</sup>

Joseph Furst of Goldman Properties identifies private sector leadership and a compelling vision for the district as the two most important aspects to the Wynwood District's development to date and to its opportunities for the future. He credits the City of Miami with the comprehensive planning effort, key zoning changes, and a shared vision for the district.

The Wynwood District is an example of how an arts district can be nurtured by private sector leadership through strategic investment, but also by layering arts programming and physical interventions. Through the creation of activity centers in the district, whether through the multi-tenant performing arts center or through the town center created by Wynwood Walls, the district now has an identity as a thriving arts district that attracts people of all ages. Wynwood is also beginning to demonstrate sustained economic growth as evidenced by the success of the district's restaurants and a new office and commercial development, of approx. 50,000 square feet for small creative businesses, that is slated to open in the fall of 2011.<sup>18</sup>



Wynwood Kitchen and Bar with Wynwood Walls around courtyard.  
Photo courtesy of Goldman Properties.

# Gordon Square Arts District

## Cleveland, Ohio

### Background

Gordon Square Arts District is within the Detroit Shoreway neighborhood of West Cleveland. The area was developed throughout the 1800-1900s principally as a residential neighborhood with some light industry. Over time, it came to house a number of important employers, such as Westinghouse. It was populated by immigrants from numerous countries, including Germany, Italy, Romania, and Ireland, among others.

In the 1920's, the neighborhood boasted a premier entertainment destination with the Gordon Square Arcade and its Capital Theater, which showcased the popular movies of the time. The Arcade was the largest construction project of its time on the west side of Cleveland, and included an ice rink, retail, offices and a residence hotel along with the theater. The Gordon Theater (the Gordon) nearby was the center of live entertainment in Cleveland and all the great vaudeville acts performed there during their national tours. It is believed that legendary comedian Bob Hope began his career in vaudeville at the Gordon. The Gordon thrived through the "Roaring Twenties" but could not survive the Great Depression and closed as a theater in 1932. The large employers also left the neighborhood or closed, initiating the area's decline. In the post-World War II boom, residents left the area for the suburbs which further spurred a substantial decline in the neighborhood.<sup>19 20</sup>



Historic Gordon Square Arcade and  
Capital Theater  
Photo courtesy of Detroit Shoreway  
Community Development Organization

What followed were years of degrading infrastructure and housing, empty warehouses and shuttered businesses. By the 1980s, buildings such as the Gordon were condemned. However, the empty neighborhood began to attract new immigrants, which prompted substantial neighborhood changes and needs.

A brief history review found few references to initiatives or changes in the Detroit Shoreway until the last few decades. One of the first initiatives was the formation of the Detroit Shoreway

Community Development Organization (DSCDO) in the 1970s to begin to deal with the rapid social change in the area.<sup>21</sup> This was important because at this time, the City of Cleveland was focused on improving the central business district and did not look to less central neighborhoods until much later, principally the 1990s.<sup>22</sup>

## Community Development Leadership

The DSCDO's first major initiative was to purchase the Arcade, including the Capital Theater, in 1979. Using a federal Urban Development Action Grant, the DSCDO was able to renovate portions of the Arcade and save it from demolition. Then, in 1987 with the passage of the Reform Act of 1987, tax credits became available and DSCDO had a new funding source. By this time, the district was suffering from a 40% poverty rate so DSCDO focused first on housing including Section 8 housing for seniors and the disabled as well as other low-income housing. DSCDO took as its highest priority the stabilization of the neighborhood and they saw that housing was critical to retaining families and creating a lively neighborhood. Using tax credits, they purchased ten structures along the main retail corridor and converted them to mixed-use with retail on the ground floor and low-income housing above.<sup>23</sup>



Detroit Avenue 2005.

Photo courtesy of DSCDO.

The Cleveland Housing Network, a low and moderate income housing provider, began in 1987 to buy up about 150 homes in the surrounding neighborhood and upgrade them using low income housing tax credits. They then provided the homes to low-income residents in a lease-to-own arrangement. This was to further stabilize the local community of existing residents.<sup>24</sup>

Also during this time, the State of Ohio began a massive roadway project to convert the Detroit Shoreway highway (which connects Cleveland with Detroit) into a boulevard along the waterfront. The commitment of the State to fund this project inspired developers to begin to look more closely at the neighborhood. One developer bought the EverReady Battery factory in 2006 and commenced construction on a mixed income housing development. This spurred other developers to do the same.

One of the early arts pioneers in the district, the Cleveland Public Theater (CPT) moved to the district in 1984 and was performing in the Irish American Club in a black box type venue

(modeled on the Café La Mama Theater in New York). In 1995, CPT bought the condemned Gordon Square Theater, which was almost entirely gutted by this time, so they could turn it into a flexible space theater.<sup>25</sup> They also wanted to buy an adjacent property, a small Romanian 1911 church that seated about 100 people plus its parish hall, which would provide space for their education programs and for a recital hall. They needed to run a major capital campaign to renovate and secure the church property. James Levin, then director of CPT, and Chris Warren, then director of Cleveland Housing Network, joined together to plan a funding strategy.<sup>26 27</sup>

Near West Theater (NWT), another performing arts venue that had been founded 33 years ago was also in need of a new venue. They are a community theater group that provides excellent productions at a reasonable price and also engages at-risk youth and adults in order to provide them with new opportunities through the arts. They were operating in a different area of town, but had grown and thrived despite very limited facilities. DSCDO undertook an effort to lure NWT to come to Gordon Square by offering to give them land if they built their home there. In addition, there was an empty lot next door where they could build a mixed-use project that would help subsidize their operations. NWT too needed to run a capital campaign.

In 1997, DSCDO developed a Master Plan for the district which would articulate the plan for economic revitalization through the creation of an arts district. This plan was supported by the City of Cleveland, which by the 1990s was looking at neighborhoods outside the central business district with assets that could be built upon to stem the continuing loss of population in the region.<sup>28</sup>

## **The Gordon Square Arts District Formation**

City and foundation leaders urged the two theater organizations (CPT and NWT) to partner and to form an economic development strategy founded on the theaters' development. Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization entered into a partnership with CPT and NWT in 2004 to launch the Gordon Square Arts District. This economic development initiative used the arts as the anchor for the district as well as to revitalize the neighborhood and commercial district.<sup>29</sup> Out of this effort, the Gordon Square Arts District organization ("GSAD") was formed and James Levin left CPT and became the GSAD's first director.

In 2006, the GSAD was fully incorporated as a non-profit. Its board consisted of several top key corporate leaders, along with legal, financial and philanthropic expertise. Joy Roller, the current Executive Director, was hired and the organization began to focus on marketing the vision for Gordon Square and implementing the joint capital campaign for the theaters. Concurrently, they focused on creating a constituency for the district and raising public awareness about the opportunities it presented. Organizing the joint capital campaign was delicate but ultimately collaborative. To be successful, none of the three theaters could raise money independently but rather all funds were raised centrally and distributed to the theaters on a percentage basis.<sup>30</sup>

Meanwhile, the stakeholders recognized the streetscape needed work and that the old Capital Theater also needed to be addressed. Council member Matt Zone became interested, engaged the City in the vision for the district, and obtained funding for some of the needed streetscape improvements and for a loan of \$1.5 million for the Capital Theater Project. DSCDO then put together a financing package consisting of historic and new market tax credits along with the City loan and some grant funding to revitalize the Capital Theater.<sup>31</sup>

The Capital Theater project commenced in 2008. It restored the old movie house and converted it into two theaters, with 800 and 400 seats respectively, plus two 100 seat venues – all with state of the art audio visual infrastructure.

Retail activity did not begin to pick up until the publicity surrounding the theaters brought renewed public interest to the district. DSCDO was able to select some of the early retailers because they owned so many buildings. In this way, they could control the quality and type of retail incubation in the neighborhood. They lured a named chef to the district who opened a catalytic restaurant. In addition, a private developer converted the old American Greetings factory into a mixed-use development focused on artist studios, galleries, and related creative uses.



Detroit Avenue with new merchants.  
Photo courtesy of DSCDO.

In 2008, the Gordon Square Arts District organization began a \$30 million capital campaign for four other projects key to the area's new success and identity:

- \$3 million to improve the main commercial corridor by narrowing the street and widening the sidewalk, removing utility poles and wires, and installing public art;
- \$7 million to make further improvements to the buildings that house the Cleveland Public Theatre;
- \$5 million to \$7 million for the Near West Theatre; and
- More than \$1 million to add surface parking in the neighborhood.

It has been estimated that the \$30 million overall investment could leverage up to \$500 million in economic impact for the neighborhood.<sup>32</sup>

Over the years, the Cleveland Public Theater became an important anchor to the district, not only through exemplifying the importance of the arts to Gordon Square but also through its commitment to small local ensembles, giving them a venue for experimentation and public exposure. CPT has nurtured or launched at least five theater companies and gained national



recognition for its relationship with theater leaders and for its creative ensemble based work. Additionally, their association with the later development of the Gordon Square Arts District was invaluable in the broader branding of the district.

During the last couple decades, the neighborhood grew, bringing in a new and diverse community including Puerto Ricans, Appalachians, Mexicans, Vietnamese, Laotians and African Americans who all contribute to the rich cultural heritage of the Detroit Shoreway community. This growth spurred extensive housing development. Between 1990 and 2004, DSCDO and other nonprofits built or rehabilitated 500 homes. Between 2004 and 2008, private investors built another 300.<sup>33</sup> These efforts were supported by the City of Cleveland's property tax abatement program initiated in the 1990s for all new housing construction projects.<sup>34</sup>

## Social Development Goes Hand in Hand with the Arts

Social factors in Gordon Square were not ignored in favor of the arts. DSCDO worked in collaboration with the City on a number of initiatives. They targeted single room occupancy hotels (SROs) with the highest number of police calls, bought them and used Hope VI financing to rehabilitate them and convert them to residential housing units above street level retail. In 2006, they partnered with another organization and developed permanent supportive housing, enriched with social services to provide mental health counseling, drug addiction assistance, and other needs. They financed the project with tax credit financing along with social service funds. Additionally, they worked with local police to organize radio patrols by residents who alerted police to drug activity to help police improve effectiveness in targeting drugs and the related criminal activities.

Finally, the DSCDO created a \$700,000 Responsibility Fund. The fund is to support local low-income community members and to help them stay in the district. For example, the GSAD paid the tax assessment for the 6 single family homes actually within the Business Improvement District (BID) to offset the tax increase created by the BID. The commitment to creating this Fund along with the other neighborhood stabilization and social service initiatives reduced fears and pushback from the local community on the economic development of the neighborhood.<sup>35</sup>



Cleveland Public Theater's Step Program.  
Photo courtesy of Cleveland Public Theater.

Cleveland Public Theater, as the main arts anchor for the district, has also been a major player in serving the local community. They maintain numerous core programs that provide services for

people in a range of ages and with a range of needs. They provide arts education and job training for low income urban teens and a program for homeless men in recovery that provides training in performing arts and technical aspects of theatre to create, and perform an original play based on their personal experiences. CPT also runs on-site programs for children in public housing as well as programs for women recovering from domestic abuse or addictions and transitioning to independent living.<sup>36</sup>

## Gordon Square Today

Today, Gordon Square has 15 new restaurants, 43 new businesses, 17 galleries and studios, and a new streetscape with lighting, trees and benches. According to an economic impact study conducted by the Gordon Square Arts District in 2006 and then updated in 2010:

“GSAD has already attracted 33 new businesses with 520 jobs to its Westside Cleveland neighborhood since 2006. Team NEO, an economic development clearinghouse for 16 Northeast Ohio counties, reports that the completion of GSAD’s five construction projects in 2013 will create:

- about 950 permanent jobs in Ohio, with 773 of those in Cleveland
- an additional annual average of 310 construction jobs each year, 2010 - 2013
- an additional annual-average 130 induced and indirect construction jobs in Ohio from 2010 - 2013
- \$317 million of economic output in Cleveland alone by 2013
- an additional \$119 million of supply-chain effects across Ohio
- \$2.3 million in city, county and state tax revenues each year.”<sup>37</sup>

The district is maturing even though the Near West Theater project and other development referenced in the economic impact report have not yet been completed. It is transitioning from an emergent to a vibrant district with a distinct character and diverse community.



The Arcade and Capital Theater.  
Photo courtesy of DSCDO.

While the community stabilization efforts succeeded in stabilizing the low-income community, the neighborhood still lacks middle income families. The City and DSCDO want to expand the arts and commercial gains into new housing that will attract families into the neighborhood. In

addition, the City is looking to increase and stabilize artists' housing by rethinking its live/work zoning. Currently, zoning allows live/work but not sales from residential housing units. They are considering legislation that would allow controlled sales by appointment.<sup>38</sup>

Gordon Square Arts District is an example of how private sector leadership with a significant commitment to neighborhood stabilization can effectively weave economic development strategies with arts and social development. The role of Cleveland Public Theater as an anchor organization with a core social and educational mission underscores the potential of the arts to engage and support its immediate community.

The creation of an umbrella organization that can market and fund key arts initiatives, demonstrates how to both stabilize and expand existing cultural assets in a community. It further highlights how creative funding strategies, such as the combined capital campaign for the three theaters, can overcome individual organizational weakness while building partnerships and using resources efficiently.

# The Short North Arts District Columbus, Ohio

## Background

The Short North District of Columbus, Ohio is a large district comprised principally of a central business corridor along High Street connecting downtown to the university in the north. It is over 18 blocks long and is the main traffic and transportation corridor running north/south across the city. Despite its centrality, the district that had once thrived in the 1920s was abandoned after WWII as residents moved out and into the suburbs.



Historic Short North.

Photo courtesy of Short North Business Association.

The corridor was heavily blighted with boarded up storefronts, porn theaters, and degraded residential communities on either side. The term “Short North” was actually police slang for the area during the 1960s and 1970s when crime was rampant.<sup>39</sup> Blight was accelerated by the construction of the convention center which started in 1978 and closed High Street to traffic. The Greater Columbus Convention Center opened its first venue in 1980. Re-opening of the street at that time created an opportunity for redeveloping Short North as the City’s excitement over the center and its contributions to the economic vitality of Columbus brought the condition of Short North into focus.<sup>40 41</sup>

## The Arts District’s Development

As with many blighted districts across the United States, artists and gallery owners moved into Short North to take advantage of cheap property values and rents. One artist and gallery owner, Maria Galloway became the first leader of the arts community and ended up playing a major role in the development of the district over many years. Maria opened her PM Gallery in 1980 and has served as the president, vice president, and is currently a board member of the Short North Business Association. Maria and some of the early artists and owners were smart enough to buy their property rather than rent, which helped to stabilize the community for a long time.<sup>42 43</sup>

Approximately 25 years ago, the City of Columbus determined that it needed to implement a planning effort for Short North’s future. That planning effort led to the City making much needed investments in the district, beginning with basic street improvements such as restoring curbs and brickwork, improving street lighting and planting trees. The City also acquired four key properties that were a source of blight.<sup>44</sup> These efforts brought the district to the attention of

developers who began to redevelop properties for housing. They maintained the retail space at street level, but converted the upper stories to housing. This added much needed new housing at mixed-income levels, helped to activate the street and support the galleries that were coming in. However, few stabilization efforts were enacted at this early stage in the district's revitalization to help low income families stay in the residential single family homes nearby.

In 1998, a Special Improvement District-- the Short North SID -- was established. The SID began in 2000 to clean up graffiti and paint nearly everything the City had not improved, including painting private storefronts that were vacant or boarded up. Gradually, these improvements made Short North viable for more galleries.

As a cluster of galleries in the central part of the district were established, Maria Galloway and other artists and gallery owners, began to host gallery openings. Initially these were small openings just for their friends and colleagues. In 1984, Maria partnered with the owner of Artreach to sponsor the first multi-gallery event, the predecessor of the popular Gallery Hop that further marketed the district. When the first major commercial gallery, Spangler Cummings Gallery came in 1985, they marketed themselves and the district which brought more credibility and attention to the area with theater-like openings that drew not only the arts community but the "glitterati."<sup>45</sup> Spangler Cummings' owner, Melinda Johnson, also worked tirelessly to support local talent, show challenging and experimental work, and to build a reputation for Columbus' art scene. She also encouraged other galleries to relocate to the district, which was key to building the popularity of the district.<sup>46</sup>

Under Executive Director Tim Wagner, the SID stepped up its efforts to brand the district with the creation of the Short North Arches project. This project rebuilt the historic arches (circa 1888) that had originally been used to light the roadway and later to power the streetcar line. Completed in 2002, the Arches have become the iconic symbol of the District, both branding it and creating a physical connection between the south and north ends of the district.



Short North Arches.

Photo courtesy of Short North Business Association.

Arts in the district expanded with a variety of initiatives, including murals projects, fairs and festivals. Some property owners installed murals on older buildings not yet renovated and the murals were such a success that others followed the example. The Short North Business Association (SBNA) sponsors a farmers market as well as music and performing arts festivals.

The Garden Theater had been closed and empty for about 20 years, following years as a porn theater venue, when a developer purchased the property in the late 2000s. Given the Garden Theater's historic character and the cost of redeveloping it for other uses, the developer rented it cheaply to a newly forming musical theater company. The Short North Stage was founded in 2010 and seeks to create a new venue that will train young people in theater, provide jobs in the industry, and expand its impact in the region and beyond.<sup>47</sup>

With the success of the arts in the district during the 1990s and 2000s, commercial activity blossomed. Restaurants, bars and cafes flocked to the neighborhood, both capitalizing on the brand of Short North as being a fun, artistic community and driving new street activity to the galleries and creative retail. The Gallery hop continues to be a popular event with stores, restaurants and bars capitalizing on the activity by staying open late and providing non-traditional venues for arts programming. The SBNA manages the Hop and organizes the street performers and vendors interested in participating.



Short North performers.  
Photo courtesy of Short North Business Association.

## Neighborhood Stabilization Efforts

While Short North was developing as an arts and retail center, real estate developed principally in an organic process led by several private property developers. Early in Short North's development, the City of Columbus provided some rehabilitation funds for rental properties developed by private developers but on the whole, did little to stabilize or increase low income housing opportunities.<sup>48</sup>

Housing initiatives were principally focused to the north of the district near the University and along north High Street which continued to remain partially blighted despite improvements in the central Short North High Street corridor. These housing initiatives have been collaborations between federal, state and local governmental agencies along with non-profit community development entities and private developers. Campus Partners was formed by the Ohio State University and the City of Columbus as a non-profit to undertake urban development projects in and around the university. As part of a broad revitalization plan, Campus Partners undertook an extensive community process that identified a series of goals, including the goal to maintain a diversity of residents.<sup>49</sup>

Campus Partners collaborated with private developer Wagenbrenner Development, Clean Ohio Revitalization Fund (CORF), and Housing and Urban Development to purchase vacant and derelict properties in the Weinland neighborhood adjacent to Short North and to convert them to mixed-income housing, particularly focused on middle-income housing.<sup>50</sup>

Additionally, in 2003, Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing (OCCH), an independent non-profit began a \$100 million low-income housing preservation project to rehabilitate approximately 1,300 Section 8 affordable housing sites scattered in seven urban neighborhoods, focused primarily around Ohio State University and nearby areas, including 30 units in the Italian Village residential area east of High Street in Short North and 500 more units in Weinland Park, just northeast of Short North.<sup>51 52</sup>

The commercial boom of the Short North district resulted in increases in rents and property values due to the concurrent revitalization of the single family residential districts on either side of the corridor. According to Tim Wagner of the Short North SID, by the early 2000s many of the low-income residents in those homes had moved out as the district became more desirable.<sup>53</sup>

The housing initiatives undertaken by Campus Partners, Wagenbrenner, OCCH, and others have been highly effective in creating new low and mixed-income housing and upgrading existing housing but may have been too late to successfully provide alternative housing for low-income Short North residents forced out by increased property values.

In recognition of the failure to stabilize the low-income and artist communities in Short North, the City of Columbus began to look to Franklinton, the last downtown neighborhood to be developed, as an opportunity to create a new community founded on the arts. The Mayor of Columbus, Michael B. Coleman, announced in early 2011 a comprehensive planning process for Franklinton, and described the vision for the neighborhood in his *State of the City* address:

“In doing so, we will market, incentivize and build an affordable neighborhood tailored for live-work housing, for our city’s creative sector. Our creative sector includes professions like artists, designers, performers, media, architects, engineers, techies, marketers and those in the advertising industry. . .

This new creative live-work district will be a healthy, sustainable community connected to Downtown housing. It will be a cool, funky and, most of all, an affordable place to be.”<sup>54</sup>

The planning process is intended to be more strategic and intentional than the organic development that occurred in the Short North. The City has convened a process to engage a broad range of community stakeholders in the planning process. In addition, they have brought together a group of private property owners, the non-profit community development organization, and relevant city agencies to comprehensively plan and collaborate on the redevelopment of Franklinton. Together, these groups control over 25 acres of land, and as such will become key catalysts for change.<sup>55</sup>

The planning process is still in early stages but will focus on creating an arts community of a different character than Short North and with the appropriate housing to attract and maintain a community of diverse income levels. While planning continues, some efforts have already begun, including the purchase of a large 13 acre industrial parcel along the river by the Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority to create a large mixed-income residential and retail development.<sup>56</sup>

## Arts Stabilization Efforts

By the early 2000s, artists and gallery owners in Short North began feel the strain of increasing rents and property values and many were forced out, despite efforts by some property owners to keep rents lower than market value. Many people, beyond just the artists and gallery owners, began to feel that the district was less of an arts district and more of a restaurant destination.<sup>57</sup>

### Multi-Tenancy Arts Project

In hopes of further stabilizing arts in the district, a group from disparate backgrounds (a developer, an artist, a retailer, and a musician), came together to try and do something to the abandoned Wonder Bread factory as soon as it became available. They convened local community partner meetings and began talking with everyone they could, including the city, county, local banks and other potential financial partners.

The project, “Wonderland” had received great community wide support and had come to be seen as a way to link Short North to its neighboring district, Jeffrey Mining. Great care was taken in designing the street frontages to accentuate the connection to Short North in one direction and Jeffrey Mining in the other as well as to encourage pedestrian activity.

To establish the exact uses for the building, a market research company was engaged to evaluate the demand and opportunities for various uses. The building was planned to include a mix of artists studios, a black box theater of 350-400 seats, a recording studio, multi-media spaces, bar, restaurant, and café, cooking school, offices and co-working spaces, and a gym. The plans were innovative by including co-working spaces as an incubator for local businesses and entrepreneurs.<sup>58</sup> They had hoped that these spaces would attract those interested in starting a business that once established, would move into the more permanent office spaces. The project also planned a micro-lending fund to assist such small businesses to establish themselves.<sup>59</sup>

Funding for Wonderland had been pulled together from a variety of sources, including \$1.4 million in state and historic tax credits, initial investor donations, and a rent-to-own purchase agreement. The factory’s owner had originally agreed to rent the space to the Wonderland organization far below market rent for the first six years, at which time Wonderland would purchase the building. During the six year rental term, the difference between rents received by Wonderland and the rent paid to the original owner would have also helped to subsidize the purchase. The partners formed a non-profit organization to manage the project as well as the building’s rental, maintenance and uses on an ongoing basis.

As of the publication of this report, the financial demands of the building owner became untenable for the non-profit and the Executive Director of Wonderland, Adam Brouillette, reported that they are now seeking an alternative venue. Although a new location has not been finalized, it appears that this project will not be able to locate in the Short North area. The Wonderland team continues to hold community events while it seeks to find a permanent home.<sup>60</sup>

Kim Stands, Assistant Housing Administrator for the Department of Development, City of Columbus, and one of the leaders of Franklinton’s planning, reports that the City is courting the Wonderland team. They view the Wonderland model as an important community center and catalytic project that brings together the arts and creative industries.<sup>61</sup>



## Other Arts Initiatives

The neighborhood SID has planned and has partially implemented two Short North initiatives to further layer the district with arts related programming. The first was the implementation of arts walks, both self-guided and organized, that take visitors through the neighborhood to visit the murals, to see other public art and to visit galleries and other cultural organizations. The second was to install physical kiosks that provide maps of the district, which identify arts organizations and their locations as well as retail, restaurants, and entertainment venues. Each of these kiosks is being designed with an art or cultural component, often designed by an artist from the neighborhood.

In a truly unique application of the arts and social development, the Department of Public Health, under the inspiration of Betsy Pandora, Director of the Healthy Places Project, has initiated the Art Walk. This is a walking tour using the arts as a tool to inspire people to walk more and thereby improve their health.<sup>62</sup> Eventually, nine different neighborhoods in Columbus will have their own Art Walks. These were given a high priority by the Health Commissioner and are being developed currently with an anticipated completion by the end of 2011. Because Columbus does not have funding for new public art, they thought they could bring more focus to their existing arts assets. They also realized there was a social cohesion aspect achieved by connecting people with places in a new way. The Art Walks are published in several formats, printed, cell-phone application and pod-cast.

The Short North walk includes architecture, murals, public art, historical and cultural sites (including sites that were catalytic in the creation of the arts district). To create the maps, the department convened a group of stakeholders in each district. They asked what needs to be celebrated and what story should be told to create pride of place and help make the Art Walks authentic. The idea was to create the feeling that one is walking through someone else's story, so that it feels personal. The Short North theme or story was identified through this community process as "entrepreneurship."<sup>63</sup>

The Department of Public Health is also creating small neighborhood walking maps for accessing neighborhood needs and amenities that shows distance and time to get to the places people use regularly in the neighborhood, such as the grocery store or laundry. This map will tell people how much exercise they are getting so they will be inspired to keep walking.

## Short North Today

Short North has evolved from its early days with just a few struggling artists and galleries in a blighted district to a city-wide destination not only for its arts but for its restaurants and retail. Short North now has 17 galleries and visual arts organizations and the Garden Theater is completing a major renovation project and will reopen in 2011. The district includes movie theaters, hotels, and over 40 restaurants and bars.

Lacking some of the early community stabilization efforts undertaken by other districts, such as Gordon Square, Short North's success began to erode its existing low-income community, including its artists and arts organizations. Realizing this, community leaders have initiated stabilization efforts, including new but limited low-income housing as well as new arts initiatives to maintain the district's identity and support its arts organizations.

New arts initiatives are also being added, bringing new interest and excitement in Short North. One such initiative is the Art al Fresco event which has been held for the last few years. It is an annual day-long event celebrating the artistic spirit of Columbus. Artists from the region create art in real time. Visual artists install exhibits in unexpected venues and performance artists take over retail windows and the streets. The scale of this event energizes the entire district and draws thousands of visitors “The entire Short North will serve as their stage and their gallery for a day.”<sup>64</sup>



Art al Fresco 2011

Alleys are Scary, artist Stephanie Rond (left) and Urban Scrawl muralists (right).  
Photos courtesy of Short North Business Association.

Short North’s story is one of committed community leaders like Maria Galloway and Tim Wagner, not only pioneering neighborhood investment but also staying as permanent activists. It is also about a new generation of leaders like Betsy Pandora and Adam Brouillette who see that districts change and that strategic timing of interventions cannot only stabilize the arts, but also bring about social cohesion and pride of place. Short North continues to be popular with all ages and demographic groups who come to enjoy its vital restaurant scene and its many arts attractions.

Short North’s success has also been catalytic for other neighborhoods like Franklinton, which will benefit from public and civic recognition of the power of the arts and creative enterprise to create healthy vibrant communities. Franklinton will also be a beneficiary of lessons learned from Short North’s private, market driven real estate. Despite some developers’ early efforts to keep rents low, Short North’s story has highlighted the need for timely community stabilization initiatives, particularly those that create and maintain low-income housing essential to maintaining a diverse community.

## Catalytic Projects

### The Queens Museum Queens, New York

The Queens Museum of Art (QMA) is a leader in forging relationships and supporting its community by weaving together arts and social impact initiatives. The neighborhood where QMA is located has undergone severe demographic shifts in recent decades with prior longtime residents leaving and new immigrant populations settling in. During the 1990s, public safety in the areas surrounding CMA was not improving as it was elsewhere in Queens. Additionally, there were large underserved communities, many of whom had limited English proficiency and few opportunities for economic advancement<sup>65</sup>

#### Connecting with Community

In 2002, the then new Executive Director Tom Finkelppearl began working with his staff to ask the question: “what is a contemporary art museum in this community?” They understood that they needed to distinguish themselves from the major Manhattan institutions and that the institution’s primary distinction was its location in Queens. They also discovered that they were only serving about one-third of their local population.<sup>66</sup>

To partially answer this question, they began a series of pilot programs and initiatives. These included:

- 1) Producing exhibitions and programs that relate to the diverse ethnic immigrant communities of the surrounding neighborhoods (principally the Asian populations of Flushing and Spanish speaking communities in Corona);
- 2) Adding foreign language speaking staff, utilizing local residents to help with early programs and outreach;
- 3) Producing the Queens International Biennale utilizing only artists who live or work in Queens;
- 4) Producing the Nexus exhibition which looked at cultural life of the Taiwanese in the community; and
- 5) Offering space to local community organizations for events in QMA that were open to the public and contained an arts or cultural component, or for community forums where community issues were being discussed.



Redline Crisis Exhibition & Community Discussion, Center for Urban Pedagogy. Photos courtesy of QMA.

The initial impact from these events was that QMA got to know their community for the first time. They increased their understanding of the social and economic issues facing their community, they created real partnerships that could be built upon, and they brought new audiences into the museum on a regular basis.

## Key Initiatives

### Community Partnership Gallery

The Museum created a Community Partnership Gallery with programming set by local community organizations and public schools. The gallery is not programmed or controlled by the curatorial team, but supported by the Education Department or the Public Events Department, depending on their needs. The program brings new audiences into the gallery, provides exposure for small arts and cultural organizations, and continues the building of partnerships.

### Leadership through the Arts

This program targets at-risk youth aged 16-24 and provides two workshop programs. Saturday workshops, partnering with other community organizations, focus on important topics such as politics, anti-oppression, and human rights, and provide an opportunity for students to learn how they can become engaged in their communities around these issues. The weekday afternoon workshops focus on the arts and technical training in skills such as art production and photography so that students gain job skills. The Ford Foundation provides community development funding that would not have been available to QMA otherwise. The Leadership through the Arts program prompted QMA to hire staff specifically to work with students. QMA found that the success of this program correlated with the intensity of the program and the resources put into it, which in turn helped them to plan other projects.<sup>67</sup>

### Heart of Corona



Corona Park beautification.  
Photo courtesy of Queens Museum of Art.

QMA staff determined that they needed to strengthen its connection with the nearby Corona community and to be a contributing stakeholder in the community's revitalization. They saw that Corona Plaza, the central square of the neighborhood, had not been cared for in many

years. It was full of debris, and generally an eye-sore, such that the neighbors did not use it, but rather avoided it. QMA got the idea that they could help improve the quality of the space, use it for programming and create a place of pride for the community which would further connect the museum to the businesses and the residents.<sup>68</sup>

QMA partnered with the business association, “Corona Community Action Network” and other neighborhood organizations to achieve the following:

- Developed a coalition of the “Heart of Corona;”
- Secured donated materials from local businesses for clean-up and created a maintenance schedule;
- Brought in City officials to look at the problems, including the trash, broken fire hydrants, lighting, etc.;
- Identified health issues as a major problem, finding that few residents had any insurance;
- Planned and coordinated health fairs, brought in “headliner” performers and organized art making workshops;
- Partnered with public health hospitals and an insurance company for the fairs;
- Made an oral history project around food, collected local residents’ recipes and then had health partners adjust them to make them healthier; and
- Published the cookbook and distributed them free to community partners (funded predominately by sponsors).



Health fair in Corona Park.  
Photo courtesy of QMA.

Added to these efforts was an intensive program of public art. QMA received grants from the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) for fairs for public art projects. These funds principally supported site specific artwork with a participatory element and an exhibit at the museum that connected it to the site artworks.

The goals of the Heart of Corona project were not only to create a central gathering place for the community, build further community partnerships, and link the arts with social development, but also to get the City to pay attention and begin investing in the neighborhood.

At the end of 2006, QMA hired its first community organizer, principally funded by the Ford Foundation (at first), then later IMLS, Deutsche Bank Foundation, as well as other public program funds raised by the museum. QMA's community organizing staff continues their work with the organization today.<sup>69</sup>

## **Launch Pad Projects**

In 2007, the housing foreclosure crisis hit and impacted the neighborhood in a big way. QMA realized it needed to do something around the issue as well. The Museum sought and received a Warhol Foundation grant to give artists a museum exhibition with a socially collaborative aspect to it. They hired independent curators to work on it at first and then their curatorial staff got engaged. The first exhibition was the *Redlines Housing Crisis*, a collaboration with the N.Y. based organization, Center for Urban Pedagogy, who mounted the exhibition at QMA. In addition to the exhibition, they created a learning center, ran two town hall meetings with a dozen partners, and hosted a closing party to thank all the participants.

## **New New Yorkers**

Education for New New Yorkers was the next initiative QMA undertook. A collaboration with the public libraries, the program consisted of a set of workshops that combined visual literacy with language acquisition. It was an extremely popular program that ran every ten weeks, with 4 or 5 classes concurrently. They used web design, photography, and other arts and cultural creation activities to lead conversations around the visual realm. The adult education programs were taught in other languages in an ESL format. This program has been extremely successful in addressing the barriers to engaging in cultural creation and appreciation while helping the participants gain better language skills.

## **Immigrants and Parks Collaborative**

QMA also plays an interesting role in another community based initiative – the Immigrant Parks Collaborative commenced in 2005. According to Silvette Garcia, Director of the Immigrant Parks Collaborative, the Collaborative wanted to focus on the special role that parks have in neighborhoods as safe and open places for everyone, particularly new immigrant communities. It was also understood that the use of parks can increase civic engagement which is of vital importance for new immigrants.

QMA was the only arts organization selected to participate in the program, funded by the J.M. Kaplan fund. As a member of the Collaborative, QMA assigned a “fellow” dedicated to acting as an outreach coordinator and to participate in developing a model for building bridges with immigrant communities. QMA had existing relationships with the City's Parks Administration and was able to leverage those relationships and other resources to help immigrant organizations with everything from obtaining park permits to understanding what would be required for the organization to hold a successful park event. In particular, QMA helped new immigrant communities use the park for cultural festivals and celebrations around their diverse arts. QMA helped with marketing the events and publicly acknowledged the organizations as partners, thereby giving them broad exposure to new audiences.



Immigrant Parks Collaborative event.  
Photo courtesy of Queens Museum of Art.

The QMA represents a unique model and the Immigrant Parks Collaborative wishes they could expand to other museums in New York but so far, QMA is the only participant. QMA's principal strategy for success was the simple act of going out into the community – bringing the art to the community rather than expecting them to come to QMA. For QMA, being a member of the Collaborative has helped them forge stronger ties with their community, brought new audiences into the Museum and helped QMA diversify the arts and cultural offerings at its park site.

## **QMA: Innovator in Community Engagement**

In 2011, the Queens Museum of Art continues to expand its community work, taking on new initiatives and partnerships, helping new populations engage with the arts, supporting local arts initiatives and generally expanding their role as an important community stakeholder. They feel their programs need to be fluid and that they should learn by experimentation so that they can continuously improve their effectiveness in engaging with local residents and reaching new communities. The Queens Museum of Art is a catalytic project for its community and a national leader in merging community development with the arts. It has broken the barrier between the formal arts and community programs, has opened its doors to experimentation and innovation, and has become an important and valued stakeholder in its community.

# Youngstown Cultural Arts Center Seattle, Washington

The Youngstown Cultural Arts Center (YCAC) is a 25,000 square foot mixed-tenancy project focused on improving the lives of at-risk youth through engagement with the arts. The organization identifies themselves as: “dedicated to arts, education, and to the provision of space for members of the community to create, converse, and perform.”<sup>70</sup>

YCAC was founded principally through the efforts of the Delridge Neighborhood Development Association (DNDA), a community development organization operating in the area. They received a planning grant of \$50,000 from the City of Seattle and subsequently initiated a capital campaign to raise the funds needed for construction of the YCAC. They also received federal tax credit funding for the conversion of the building.



Youngstown Cultural Arts Center.  
Photo courtesy of DNDA and Randy  
Engstrom, former Director.

## Shared Tenancy Project

Located in West Seattle, the Center offers affordable rental spaces for a range of uses, including: live performances, classes and workshops, as well as business, civic and special events. The facility is comprised of diverse spaces, including a recording studio, media lab, 150 seat performance venue, studios, workshops, offices, a gallery, and classrooms.<sup>71</sup>

Non-profit arts organizations rent the space at low subsidized rates, making the facility accessible to a wide range of organizations, particularly those who could not otherwise access such a facility.

## Programming

Programming at YCAC is also funded and run by the DNDA. It includes several primary programs: “**All Access**” is an after school arts project dedicated to empowering local youth through arts-based programs and learning experiences on a sustained basis. YCAC provides the space, teachers, artists and community partners, as well as the resources to support the program.<sup>72</sup>



**“Youngstown Records”** is a youth-driven record label and music cooperative run as an extension of the All Access program. Youngstown Records is committed to empowering and amplifying the talents and interests of local residents. Youth participants can also develop leadership skills in a year-long program of artist-led workshops, studio recording, performances as well as training in new media arts.<sup>73</sup>



Youngstown Records.  
Photo courtesy of DNDA.

**“Youngstown Youth Programming Committee”** (YPC) was formed four years ago to engage youth more fully in examining their own potential through the YCAC. The participants can explore their common and unique experiences while learning the value of “community.” The program delegates leadership to the youth who decide what after school programs, arts classes and special events come to the YCAC. Program members also participate in fundraising efforts for their programs, plan special events, and attend various workshops and a range of arts events. Program participants also receive stipend internships based on the hours they have committed to the program.<sup>74</sup>

**“Food Empowerment Education and Sustainability Team”** (FEEST) engages neighborhood youth to prepare and share healthy meals, learn about growing food, and become actively engaged in issues of food resources and how our built environment impacts their lives. FEEST is also youth-led and holds weekly dinners and monthly community-wide potluck dinners. FEEST leaders have also been encouraged to engage with local food related policy making organizations and have been asked to present their work at regional and national conferences. FEEST has become a model program in the engagement of young people from underserved communities.<sup>75</sup>

## Low-Income Artist Housing

In addition to arts programming, Youngstown Cultural Arts Center was built to provide 36 units of affordable live/work housing for rent to artists of all disciplines on the top floors of the building. Many of the artists living in the “Cooper Artists Housing” also assist with programming at YCAC. To qualify for the housing, artists must first meet the low-income standards of the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development funding that YCAC receives. After that, a committee reviews the application for housing to ensure that the applicants are artists or engaged in creative activities. They give preference to those who are interested in being active members of the community.<sup>76</sup>

## **YCAC: Model for Community Empowerment through Arts**

The Youngstown Cultural Arts Center is an interesting example of a shared, multi-tenancy project that focuses on social development through the arts as well as providing affordable housing for artists through a live/work complex. It is a model of effectively blending different uses to generate earned revenue to support the operations of the facility and its community programs.



Youngstown youth program.  
Photo courtesy of DNDA.

YCAC's programs have been catalytic in terms of serving and empowering local youth, broadening participation in the arts, and creating a sense of community and pride of place in the neighborhood.

# CreateAustin Cultural Plan and Ballet Austin Austin, Texas

## Background

Director, Cookie Ruiz, has as served as Director of Ballet Austin since 1997 when the ballet company was running four separate facilities spread across a 10 block area. They were located on the edge of the city bordering the suburbs, about 18 blocks from the Capital. Over the next few years, under Cookie Ruiz's leadership, the company added 7 satellite facilities in order to better engage the community. However, the multiple facilities made the organization less efficient and more costly to manage, so Ballet Austin began to consider consolidating at a single facility. At the same time (1998-2000), Austin's technology sector was expanding and property values rose as technology businesses competed for quality, centrally located space. Due to this competition, it took several years for the company to find a large warehouse on the edge of the CBD, which they finally purchased in 2002 for \$3.5 million. It was the perfect location, just a few blocks west of the CBD and along the edge of the live music entertainment district.<sup>77</sup>

The warehouse however badly needed major renovation and to do so, Ballet Austin would need a capital campaign to fund the improvements. During the campaign and planning stages, they leased about 1/3 of the building to a performing arts organization and the other almost 2/3, to a local hospital for temporary offices and training center. Ballet Austin retained a small area where they could staff their project and where they could temporarily locate staff as they slowly moved out of their multiple facilities. The rental income off-set costs during this transition period. In 2004, their capital campaign began in earnest and by 2006, they were able to commence construction. In 2007, Ballet Austin opened their new facility with 38,000 square feet of new studios, a 300 seat theater, board room, a community center, and offices. The total cost of the renovation was \$10.3 million.<sup>78</sup>



Photo courtesy of Ballet Austin.

Concurrent with her efforts to bring Ballet Austin together under one roof, Cookie Ruiz became a leader for the arts and community development beyond her organization, heading up the community Leadership Task Force for CreateAustin.

## Cultural Planning: CreateAustin

CreateAustin was a city-wide planning effort to create a cultural plan for the City for the next 10 years. The plan took two years to develop through an extensive community engagement process and was submitted to the City Council in late 2008. CreateAustin attempted to take stock of existing cultural resources and develop strategies to maintain, enhance and improve the vitality of the Austin community through the arts.

The plan identified the following important statistics for demonstrating the importance of the arts to Austin's economic success:

- In 2004 the creative sector employed 44,000 people in Austin.
- The creative sector generates over \$2.2 billion in economic activity and \$48 million in local tax revenue.
- Arts-related tourism generates over \$1 billion in economic impact and \$36 million in local tax revenue.
- The not-for-profit performing arts and visual arts generate \$532 million in economic impact and \$6 million in local tax revenue.
- The City of Austin provides nearly \$5 million annually of the Hotel Occupancy Tax to contract with non-profit arts and cultural organizations for services rendered.
- Over 200 cultural contractors funded by the City of Austin reach and aggregate audience of 2.5 million annually.
- Austin is the #2 major U.S. city in the number of community celebrations, festivals, fairs, and parades per thousand population.
- Live Music contributes \$616 million in economic impact and \$11 million in local tax revenue.
- There are 1,543 music-related businesses in Austin and 1,903 Austin music acts.
- Film/TV /Commercials/Corporate/Sports/Animation generates \$113 million and 3,674 permanent and crew jobs.
- Richard Florida named Austin the #2 most creative city in the U.S. after San Francisco.<sup>79</sup>

The planning process included a broad definition of "culture" and "arts" and incorporated everything from architecture, fashion, and culinary arts to heritage, community arts, graphic design, film/video/television, digital arts, as well as performing and visual arts. The principal recommendations of the plan were:

1. Establish a CreateAustin Leadership Task Force that will report regularly to City Council and the community on Plan progress.
2. Form a community-based Creative Alliance.
3. Create a City Department of Arts and Culture that consolidates all arts, culture, music, and film activities into one department charged with creativity development so they will work more effectively
4. Launch a focused public awareness campaign to "reposition" the creative sector with Austin leaders, and enhance audience development.
5. Forge partnerships between area universities and colleges and the creative community.
6. Increase private sector support.
7. Increase business development and technical assistance services to strengthen entities' business management, marketing, fundraising, individual professional development, and other skills to create a stronger, sustainable cultural ecosystem long term.

8. Encourage neighborhood-based cultural development and activity.
9. Develop affordable and accessible cultural space of all types.
10. Develop a Creativity Teaching and Learning Project to improve access to creative and cultural education programs across ages, arts disciplines, geography, and class.<sup>80</sup>

CreateAustin concluded that it was vital to Austin’s success that the City sustains itself as a magnet for arts, culture and creativity as follows:

*The benefits and impacts of cultural, and creative vitality are acknowledged worldwide. Cities are competing to create quality of life opportunities for their residents, to attract tourism, talent, and investment. As Austin grows and seeks to prosper, it must now compare itself to cities that dream big — San Francisco, New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Bilbao, Glasgow, Toronto, and others. Austin’s artistic, cultural, and creative sector is a beautiful and fragile ecosystem made up of many interdependent elements. In order to sustain the unique qualities that make Austin special and successful, community-wide action continues to be marshaled to unite the creative sector and the broader community to nurture Austin’s culture of creativity. What is at stake? — Nothing less than Austin’s unique identity, its future prosperity and its quality of life.<sup>81</sup>*



CreateAustin Plan cover page.  
Courtesy of City of Austin’s Cultural Arts Division.

The CreateAustin plan was not acted upon immediately by the City Council however, so the private sector through a collaborative effort between the Leadership Task Force and other community stakeholders decided to try and advance the plan’s goals. They prioritized the plan’s 10 objectives and 5 really took hold within the community. They finally got the Council to approve the Plan in 2010 but as of yet, they don’t know what the City will do with it. At least, it appears to be acting as a blueprint for both public and private initiative.<sup>82</sup>

The City of Austin’s Cultural Arts Division did act upon the objective to improve business and technical skills in order to build a strong creative community and initiated the “Take it to the Next Level” program. “Take it to the Next Level” runs workshops, lectures, and training sessions for non-profit arts organizations to provide professional management skill building in a wide

range of topics including establishing non-profit tax status, real estate management and acquisition, marketing and the role of arts in enlivening business districts, among others.<sup>83</sup>

The Austin Creative Alliance was formed, as recommended in the plan, by the private sector and led by Latifa Taormina, a veteran of the arts in Austin. The Austin Creative Alliance (ACC) was created out of another organization, a performing arts support organization which had grown to encompass all arts. It primarily exists as an alliance of arts organizations that can advocate for itself, serve the wider community through advocacy, and strengthen the capacity of its members. The ACC provides extensive services to artists and its member organizations, including marketing, professional development and capacity building, technical assistance, and support services.<sup>84</sup>

Still developing, the organization is exploring how to look at the community as an “eco-system”. The for profit community and the non-profit community are learning to work together, support one another, and learn from each other. “This is consistent with current thinking around the importance of the Creative Economy,” says Latifa Taormina, former Executive Director of Austin Creative Alliance.

One outcome of the work of CreateAustin and the Austin Creative Alliance is the shift in how they talk about the arts and culture in Austin, preferring now to use “Creative Community.” Their community outreach work identified that many people felt that the word “culture” was equated to “cultural heritage” and the word “arts” predominately related only to the “formal arts,” so by shifting their terminology, they felt they were beginning to break down barriers as well as be more inclusive of the creative economic sector.<sup>85</sup>

## **Ballet Austin & Community Engagement**

It was Cookie Ruiz’s broader civic engagement as well as the long-term community connection of the ballet company that spurred the organization to strengthen and expand its community programs in its new facilities. Key initiatives included:

- Expand their professional dance academy to create a community dance program;
- Combine dance with health initiatives;
- Provide jobs and internships; and
- Incubate and support new artists and arts productions.

Prior to opening their new facility, Ballet Austin had the opportunity to try some pilot programs and to see what caught on with the community. Some things they tried did not work so they could retool and rethink before they built their new space. According to Cookie Ruiz, the programs that worked are:

### **Butler Community School**

Ballet Austin had always had a dance academy to train talented young dancers to become professional dancers but this program only served a limited pool of about 1,000 dancers. The Butler Community School (BCS) was created and physically designed along the lines of the Alvin Ailey project in New York with glass windows allowing the public and the dancers to see one another. The BCS is currently serving another 3,200 students and provides classes in all types of dance, including contemporary and multi-ethnic dances, and the program changes in response to the community’s interests. The BCS also incorporates wellness training and encourages life-long commitments to exercising and staying active.

## Pilates Program

The Pilates Program came out of the BCS wellness initiatives as Ballet Austin realized that there was a serious need in the community to help address a range of serious health challenges in the community. The Pilates Program serves a wide range of clients, including cancer survivors, seniors concerned with fall prevention, elite athletes recovering from injuries, and ordinary community members interested in improving their strength and well-being. Through a partnership with a local hospital, BCS developed the curriculum and trained staff. The program incubated for about seven years and now serves approximately 500 clients with four certified instructors. Each year, Ballet Austin raises \$250,000 to provide community scholarships to the programs.



Community Program  
Photo courtesy of Ballet Austin.

## Jobs and Internships

Ballet Austin's professional dancers are all full-time paid employees with benefits. However, Ballet Austin recognized that developing dancers who commit many hours to training needed a way to transition into professional dancers so they created an internship program. This program has been highly successful and has converted 90% of the internship students into the professional dancers' program, thereby providing a vehicle for developing dancers to gain access to training and future employment. Finally, Ballet Austin has collaborated with the University of Texas at Austin to allow dancers in training to get their Bachelor's degree.<sup>86</sup>

## Arts Incubator

Ballet Austin has always tried to showcase the work of new artists but with the new facility, its expanded studios and performance hall, they are working to take this to a new level. They are expanding their programming to include not just dance but independent film and live performance, and other works. They are also dedicated to exposing the public to new work, not just older well-known performances and artists.

## Ballet Austin: Community Leadership through the Arts

The popularity of Ballet Austin, its programs and its facility, has brought new energy to the district. Development is occurring that will bridge Ballet Austin and the Central Business District, connect to the entertainment district, and create a new pedestrian experience. Based on Ballet Austin's success, a real estate developer built a 44 story apartment building that brought much needed housing to the neighborhood. Following the construction of the residences, the developer bought Austin Music Center and renovated it. Subsequently, a new W Hotel one block away was constructed. Ballet Austin has also partnered with retailers in the neighborhood and created a program where they give their visitors a map of local retail partners in order to drive business to the cafes and restaurants.

Ballet Austin provides programs that reflect the needs and interests of the community and demonstrates its willingness to experiment in its support for arts of all kinds. Through Cookie Ruiz's leadership Ballet Austin has used its non-profit arts expertise to inform the broader community dialogue, to help shape cultural policy in the City of Austin, and to help support and sustain other arts organizations in Austin. In addition, Ballet Austin's facility and programs have been catalytic in creating a new district desirable for residential as well as retail uses.



Hip Hop Program  
Photo courtesy of Ballet Austin.



## Findings and Strategy Recommendations

The district case studies highlighted in this research were selected because they contained strategic development initiatives that were either catalytic in nature, or stabilizing of the existing community, specific arts assets or the district brand. Further, they each started against a stark background of blight and each are in a different stage of development today.

The catalytic projects selected for this report represent different approaches to using the arts to provide deep and meaningful community benefits. Each of the organizations highlighted has used their facilities and resources to build community and provide educational opportunities, not just in the arts, but in health, community and personal empowerment, job training, and skills development.

Finally, the case studies and catalytic projects were selected because some of the strategies or initiatives they employed may in whole or in part, have some potential for effectiveness in San Francisco's Central Market District. While it would be inconceivable that any strategy or initiative could be imported wholesale into San Francisco, many of the ideas highlighted are worthy of consideration and could potentially be altered, advanced, scaled-up, or twisted to meet the unique creative spirit of San Francisco and its arts community.



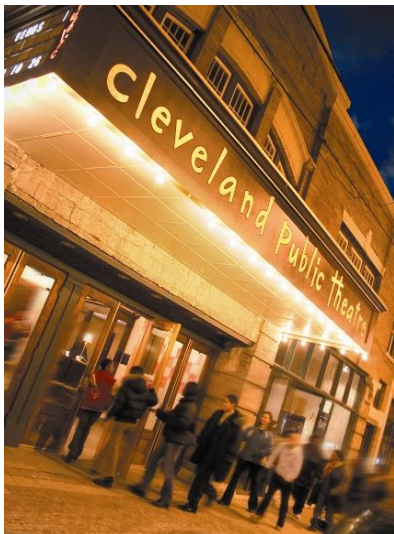
Central Market @ UN Plaza.  
Sculpture by Karen Cusolito, made possible  
by the San Francisco Arts Commission and  
Black Rock Arts Foundation.

## Emergent Themes & Potential Strategies

The strategies that had the most impact in the case studies and catalytic projects researched for this report include the following:

### Large Anchors as Social Development & Community Builders

While every arts district does not need numerous large anchors, it is clear that large anchors that employ significant community focused programs play an important role. They can be not only catalytic to the creation of the district but also helpful in supporting existing communities and in particular, to improving their quality of life. In Cleveland's Gordon Square for example, the district's creation was entirely dependent upon the Cleveland Public Theater (CPT) both for its city-wide reputation as an exciting cultural asset and for its partnerships with other organizations. It fostered a sense of community responsibility while bringing an immediately identifiable brand to the area that other development could capitalize on. Without CPT, it is questionable whether cultivation of an arts district would have been initiated. Further, CPT's long-term commitment to the district has stabilized the area and helped to maintain the focus on the arts as various development projects were undertaken.



Cleveland Public Theater Marquee.  
Photo courtesy of CPT.

In the case of the Queens Museum of Art, they are a major anchor for the entire community. QMA functions as a catalyst not only for blending arts and social development initiatives but also for community building. They form broad partnerships and use their highly developed organizational skills to assist other organizations in accessing community resources, undertaking arts and cultural initiatives, and creating a sense of pride in a multi-cultural and transitional community.

### Shared Tenancy or Multi-Use Projects

Like large anchors, shared tenancy projects can help catalyze the arts in a given community, help create a district identity, and help stabilize the community. However, they often have a greater opportunity to forge meaningful partnerships with diverse arts, cultural and social development organizations. As in Youngstown, they can create a safe place where community members can

explore their own potential, engage with practicing artists, and improve their education through a variety of art forms and experiences, while at the same time providing support for artists and small non-profits with the potential to grow in service to their communities.

In Wynwood, the multi-tenant performing arts venue provides performing and rehearsal facilities for small organizations who cannot afford to manage their own venue. In addition, the center creates a lively presence in the district that is larger and more active than any single institution might be able to generate.

In the case of Wonderland, although its plans to locate in the Short North area may not be fulfilled, this multi-tenancy project has the potential to create a vibrant cultural community that engages local residents in varied arts activities but also support artists and creative entrepreneurs. By blending arts organizations, non-profits and for-profits, the hope is to provide an incubator environment in which organizations can learn from one another. They understand that the lines between the formal arts and the creative economies have been blurring for some time as artists employ a wide range of technologies that they can market in creative ways in order to support themselves.

## **New Models for Housing Creative Communities**

The shared tenancy projects like Youngstown Cultural Arts Center and Wonderland provide new models of “Creative Communities” by mixing residential with work spaces, work incubators, shared facilities, and more. In almost every city covered by the early research for this report, whether Seattle, Portland, Austin, or Birmingham, efforts have been employed or are planned to provide stable housing for artists and cultural workers. These efforts may address economics as well as the physical qualities of the residences themselves. It has been widely recognized that artists are not only key players in the emergence of arts districts, they are social actors often deeply engaged with their communities, and they are vital contributors to the Creative Economy.<sup>87</sup>

For the Wynwood district, the City of Miami passed new zoning legislation to encourage developers to provide housing opportunities for artists and cultural workers at rates that artists could truly afford by easing size requirements for units. In addition, they are considering new legislation that would ease requirements for new housing in order to spur development of Creative Communities through new residential typologies that would allow shared living and work spaces. Through these efforts they hope to not only encourage artists to move in to neighborhoods but to help them stay there.

The issue of determining who qualifies for artist housing is addressed differently in cities across the nation. The City of Miami, for example, does not monitor the leasing of space to artists but reviews the spatial configuration of development projects during permitting to ensure they are consistent with the code.<sup>88</sup> The City appears to expect the marketplace to self-manage this process as the spaces themselves are not attractive to other types of residential uses such as families. Private sector developers who are interested in building this type of use also have an interest in renting to artists and cultural workers for other reasons, in part because these units may not be as profitable as full market rate housing typologies.

Youngstown Cultural Center.

Photo courtesy of Delridge Neighborhood Development Association.

In Youngstown, a committee reviews prospective artists' applications to determine their eligibility for the dedicated housing units. The housing is funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, so artists must first meet HUD's low-income thresholds to be eligible for the committee review process.



Youngstown Cultural Center, youth meeting (left) and community classroom space (right).

Photo courtesy of Delridge Neighborhood Development Association.

In the neighborhood adjoining Short North and in the Franklinton neighborhood, housing activists are providing low-income housing for residents and artists in an effort to stabilize low-income, artist and cultural worker housing. They use traditional low-income housing funding resources and methodologies.

In each of these districts, some of the earliest resident “pioneers” were creative (sometimes termed “cultural”) businesses that employ artists. These might include architects, graphic design firms, web design companies, music production companies, among many others. In almost every district researched, these creative businesses depend upon their artist workers and vice-versa. They also contribute to the brand of an area as supporting innovation and creation. With the extreme blurring of the lines between the formal arts and the digital arts, as well as the role these creative entrepreneurs play in cultural communities, it is no longer practical or realistic to separate them in importance as actors or agents in a community’s development.

## **Layering of Arts & Cultural Components: Scale and Timing are Important**

Arts districts are complex entities and so too are the qualities and types of arts programming that make each district successful. While many districts are catalyzed by one large anchor institution whose community focus helps support broader economic and social goals, it is also important that each district build its own portfolio of arts by layering both physical and programmatic events. The vitality of each district is created by the district’s unique blending of physical and temporal events. The timing of efforts is also key. For example, many districts employ art in storefront projects during the emergent phase when larger initiatives are not yet feasible. These small scale projects rarely last as the district matures as they are replaced by newer, larger projects.

In the physical realm, public art can help brand the district, such as was the case with the Wynwood Walls mural project. Temporary art installations and cultural events are used by all districts but how and when they are used is important. Layering on of temporal events when early arts infrastructure is in place can help catapult the district's public perception. If scaled appropriately and relevant to the local community, such as Wynwood's Arts Fair focused on street art, the potential to engage both the local community and draw visitors from across the region is increased.

Layering on art, historical or cultural walks can help stabilize the district by creating pride of place, connecting people more deeply to the district's assets, and provide opportunities for engaging new audiences. In Short-North, the Department of Public health's phone application and pod-cast art walks have been so effective that they are planning to expand them to eight other neighborhoods.



Wynwood Kitchen.  
Photo Courtesy of Goldman Properties.

Whatever combination of arts layers a district develops, it is important that at least one of the arts entities, programs or temporal projects is scaled large enough that it helps form the district identity. In Gordon Square, this role is filled by Cleveland Public Theater and its reputation for experimentation and community engagement. In Miami, the Wynwood Walls are massive in scale and utilize some internationally recognized artists as well as local artists and as such, has become a destination for all of Miami. In Short North, it was the concentration of galleries and the related evening "Gallery Hop" that branded the district.

## **Branding: Must be Unique & Authentic**

An arts district's identity and brand must be unique and authentic to that place. Logos and banners are not enough to create an environment of innovation and entertainment that will draw either creative residents, innovative businesses or visitors seeking a new experience. Short North used its history and branded its district by replacing the old street arches with contemporary versions. The Wynwood Walls project created a unique identity that is used to develop programming and events and to promote the district as a destination. In Gordon Square, the three rehabilitated theaters form a performing arts focus for the district while a brand identity still seems to be in development.

## Social Interventions Must Go Hand in Hand

In districts with deeply entrenched social problems, supporting artists or layering on arts programming will not address the problems of crime, drug use or the poor quality of life for underserved residents. In Cleveland, this was particularly well understood. The Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization wanted to ensure that the local low-income resident population be better served, stabilized so they would stay, and provided with improved housing options and needed social services. By partnering with low-income housing providers and permanent supportive housing providers, they greatly improved the quality of housing for residents, improved the social services available, and reduced the concentration of transient populations involved in criminal activities. They converted strategically selected privately owned SROs, where the populations were highly transient and where crime was rampant, into low-income housing and thereby not only created better housing for the stable resident population, but also improved safety in the neighborhood.

The Queens Museum of Art realized that its community had serious issues that the arts alone could not address and that were potentially inhibiting the residents from enjoying and participating in the arts. They developed key partnerships and used their resources, organizational skills, and connections to civic officials and funders to undertake initiatives aimed at fully integrating the arts with social development efforts. They tackled everything from literacy to health to community place-making. They empowered smaller organizations with limited resources and made cross-cultural connections through these partnerships. In so doing, QMA has broken down common perceptions of arts organizations as elite and demonstrated that arts organizations can be important community stakeholders.

In Columbus, the City recognized the opportunity to combine public health initiatives with the arts through their Art Walks initiative. Creating the Arts Walks provided a forum for community building while the walks themselves contribute to a sense of pride and deeper connections to the neighborhood. It is a multi-dimensional effort, both supporting the arts and building stronger community connections while creating healthier lifestyles.



Columbus Art Walks logo.

Image courtesy of Columbus Public Health, Healthy Places Program.

Both Ballet Austin and Youngstown Cultural Arts Center (YCAC) understood that the arts were a forum to address other social issues. At Ballet Austin, programs use dance and movement to encourage exercise and healthy lifestyles, and meet the specific needs of a variety of clients such as seniors and cancer survivors. They provide job training, internships, and educational opportunities for a broad spectrum of the community, not just for those who can afford to pay for programs. YCAC from its inception was planned as a social development organization targeting at-risk youth. Arts are their tool for engagement and a platform for building skills and self-esteem.

## Incentives for the Inclusion of Arts & Social Development

Almost every city contacted for this research was interested in implementing incentives for development projects to include either or both arts and social development programs. Few had found legislative or formulaic methods, preferring “softer” efforts of encouragement. For example, in Short North’s emergent phase, Maria Galloway and other neighborhood activists encouraged restaurants, bars and retail establishments to embrace the brand of the district by incorporating an arts component in their venue. They communicated the benefits of maintaining the brand, continuing to attract arts visitors to the neighborhood, and supporting local artists. Once the City of Columbus assisted with public realm improvements, the identity was further supported and enhanced.

In Miami, the detailed analysis of encouraging entertainment uses while preventing social problems was an important aspect of Wynwood attracting new nightlife. Additionally, the City of Miami explored ways to encourage development to include an arts aspect although it has yet to be implemented. In Cleveland, Councilman Matt Zone became excited by the new vision for the district and helped obtain funding for the renovation of the Capital Theater which in turn catalyzed private sector funding.

Several cities, such as Miami and Seattle, are looking to create new creative communities by removing barriers to cultural worker housing. In Miami, legislation eased requirements for cultural worker housing so they could be built at lower costs which would translate into lower rents. In Seattle, a Cultural District Overlay (CDO) was developed with years of community input. While it has not been initiated, the plan details the needs of the arts community and proposes a wide range of recommendations for supporting the arts and artists in Seattle.<sup>89</sup> There are hopes that the CDO would bring funding from the state for such things as relocating artists who were being displaced into new residences. They are also looking at easing permitting of live/work housing along key pedestrian corridors.<sup>90</sup> The Youngstown Cultural Arts Center has at its core subsidized artists’ housing which not only provides much needed artist housing but also feeds its social development programs with the resources provided by the artists themselves.



Queens Museum of Art, Art and Literacy Program.  
Photo courtesy of QMA.

Projects that are catalytic for communities all embrace some type of social development efforts. Queens Museum of Art (QMA) has realized how effective their programs, skills development and arts engagement can be in serving the social needs of the community. Whether through their literacy programs or their health fairs, QMA has become a valued community stakeholder

and has begun to develop the next generation of artists and arts consumers. QMA has been further incentivized by the availability of new funding sources previously not available to them for the work of community building and arts based social initiatives.

In Youngstown, the arts help local youth cope with violence prevention, self-esteem issues, and development of job skills. In Cleveland, Cleveland Public Theater's programs not only nurture new performing artists and new organizations, their programs serve children and urban youth as well as homeless men recovering from addiction and women recovering from domestic violence and addiction.

## **Community Stabilization Efforts**

Where there is potential for displacement of low-income communities due to new development, efforts can and should be taken to stabilize those communities early in the process. The DSCDO in Gordon Square understood this from its inception and pursued partnerships with housing and social service providers to build new or upgraded low-income and mixed-income housing. They removed blighted properties and helped residents transition to better housing within the neighborhood. They also helped remove sources of drug dealing and crime, thereby improving the safety of the neighborhood for everyone. And most creatively, the DSCDO developed the Responsibility Fund to be used for on-going stabilization efforts.

Where a district has become vibrant and economics threaten the low-income residents, including the artists and arts organizations, stabilization efforts can be effective. In Short North, the work of private developers to protect and add housing for low-income residents will be an important step to both retaining the arts brand of the district and to continuing to support the local community. Further, other neighborhoods such as Franklinton, will benefit from a heightened understanding of the importance of stabilizing low-income residents early in the development process, learned from Short North's experience with escalating real estate prices and rents.

## **Private Sector Leadership & Supporting Organizations**

In all the case studies and catalytic projects covered by this research, private sector leadership was essential. While city departments and elected officials played key roles at strategic moments, such as providing funding for the public realm improvements or implementing key zoning changes necessary to spur desired development, private sector leaders are critical to the development and success of an arts district.

Private sector leadership can come in many forms. In Gordon Square, Cleveland, private sector leadership in the form of a Community Benefit District brought creative funding resources to bear and led the effort to initiate major quality of life and social development initiatives. They helped stabilize the low-income community with housing, helped create permanent supportive housing, and helped the city fight crime in the neighborhood. They also created the arts organization to lead a capital campaign for the arts, as well as to market and brand the district.

In Short North, Columbus, the initial leadership of just one artist, who helped found a community of artists and provided long-term activism in support of the arts, was transformative. The on-going work of the Short North Special Improvement District and the Short North Business Association has been instrumental in sponsoring programs and new arts initiatives as well as attracting and supporting creative retail.





Photo courtesy of Short North Business Association.

In Wynwood, Miami, one private developer took advantage of low property values to purchase and transform for creative uses numerous properties. But they also went further, creating large-scale arts projects, fairs and festivals that have branded the district and created a lively destination.

In all the districts researched, community based organizations played key roles. In Short North, the Special Improvement District provided needed public realm improvements, created the brand for the district, and markets both the merchants and arts organization and activities. In the Gordon Square area of Cleveland, the Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization was instrumental in all aspects of the district's creation and in improving the quality of life for low-income residents. It was also instrumental in the creation of the Gordon Square Arts District Association which has raised all the funds for the theaters' capital campaign, established partnerships with higher education programs, and in marketing the district and attracting retail and restaurants. In Wynwood, the Wynwood Arts District Association promotes the arts in the district as well as works to improve the character and safety of the neighborhood.

In Austin, while the City's "Take It to the Next Level" program assists non-profit arts organizations with skill building, the private sector also had to invest in these efforts to ensure that the impact would be broad and deep enough to have an impact. So, while "Take it to the Next level" has been an important effort, it is reliant upon the Austin Creative Alliance to build on that work through their programs to stabilize and enhance the arts.

It is clear that the vibrant arts programs and organizations are supported by these private community driven organizations in ways the public sector cannot. These organizations take different forms as special improvement districts, arts advocacy and support organizations, community development organizations, or a hybrid of those. They can bring considerable resources, plan and implement arts events and installations, provide capacity building support for arts organizations, and create art projects at a scale necessary to attract visitors from around the region.

## Conclusion

While San Francisco is known for its culture of innovation and its support for the arts, there remains an enormous opportunity in Central Market. In considering the neighborhood's future, each of the strategies presented in this report, and highlighted by the case studies, warrants consideration. Each of these strategies can be tailored to San Francisco's particular needs, challenges and opportunities. They are not prescriptive but are presented for further evaluation and community dialogue as potential opportunities to create a unique Economic Strategy developed specifically for Central Market.



*Central Market Dreamscape* by artist Paz de la Calzada.  
San Francisco Arts Commission ARTery Project in Central Market.

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### Primary Research

Much of the information collected for this report came from personal interviews of key stakeholders in each of the districts. In particular, the following individuals were essential to this research and gave generously of their time and provided valuable documents, information and insights:

#### **Wynwood, Miami, Florida**

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Luciana L. González, Asst. to Planning Director, City of Miami Planning Department; and  
Ana Gelabart-Sanchez, former Planning Director, City of Miami.

#### **Gordon Square, Cleveland, Ohio**

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Robert N. Brown, Director, Cleveland City Planning Commission;  
Jeffrey Ramsey, Executive Director, Detroit Shoreway Community Development  
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Joy Roller, Executive Director, Gordon Square Arts District.

#### **Short North, Columbus, Ohio**

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Maria Galloway, founder and Director, PM Gallery;  
Betsy Pandora, Director of Healthy Places, Public Health Department, City of Columbus;  
Kim Stands, Assistant Housing Administrator, Department of Development,  
Housing Division, City of Columbus; and  
Tim Wagner, Executive Director, Short North Special Improvement District.

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#### **Queens Museum of Art, Queens, New York**

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and  
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## **Youngstown Cultural Center, Seattle, Washington**

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## **Ballet Austin, Austin, Texas**

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## Footnotes

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