



GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

ARTS, CULTURE & CREATIVE ECONOMY

EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT | MAY 2020





Give Me Your Hand by Milton Davis, 1995. Art in Public Places Program.

Source: Art in Public Places Program.

INTRODUCTION

Creativity and the arts are in Culver City's DNA. Its history is rooted in the film industry, and its creative identity has only expanded and diversified to include – among many others – the robust presence of the arts and design community, and more recently, major creative/technology companies. This contemporary phase of the creative sector is described as transitioning from *Screenland to Streamland*.

While the influx of new major employers is welcomed by many, concerns about rising real estate values, higher commercial and residential rents, increased traffic and parking issues, and other outcomes of growth and density, are challenges for City government and should be a priority for the General Plan Update. For example, the loss of art galleries and other creative businesses is disrupting the Culver City Arts District, formerly a defining feature of the District, due primarily to rising rents and shifts in purchasing patterns of arts consumers, where purchases are made online or through an art fair and not at a gallery.

Culver City's residents and workers are generally arts-oriented and, reflecting this, the City's long involvement in arts and culture has evolved in recent decades. Its arts functions have been constrained by the need to minimize General Fund expenditures, so the General Plan Update is an opportunity to reconsider the City's role, investments, and partnerships in arts, culture and the creative economy. Culver City's creative community is an extraordinary collective resource that can be engaged and leveraged in new and innovative ways.



Culver City's first movie studio, circa 1915.

Source: Culver City Historical Society.

ARTS AND CULTURE HISTORY

Culver City's modern origin story is intertwined with artists and creativity. As is often now retold, in 1913 Harry Culver paid \$2,000 for 93 acres of barley fields located between Los Angeles and the Pacific Ocean and went on to incorporate in 1917 the city that would bear his name. In 1915, Harry Culver spotted Thomas Ince filming a Western on location at the Ballona Creek and soon invited him to build the first film studio within the city, Ince/Triangle Studios, which became Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) Studios in 1924, then Sony Pictures Studios from 1990 to the present. In 1919, silent film comedy producer Hal Roach built the studio that would later become known as the "Laugh Factory to the World." By the 1920s, Culver City had become a significant center for motion picture and later television production, best known as the home of MGM. It has been a center for creative industries with working-class roots ever since, with set painters, screenwriters, and stagehands calling Culver City home.¹

Culver City played a significant and continuous role in movie production often associated with Hollywood. Innumerable movies associated with "Hollywood history" were filmed in Culver City, such as *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Thin Man*, *Gone with the Wind*, *Rebecca*, the *Tarzan* series, and the original *King Kong*. Hal Roach Studios produced comedies by Harold Lloyd, *Our Gang*, and Laurel and Hardy, as well as television and WWII training films. Culver City has "corrected the record" by branding itself as the "Heart of Screenland" and promoting its history and current status as a center for film production and creativity.

In the past several decades, Culver City has been claimed as home by many smaller creative enterprises, with architecture firms, design companies, the UCLA Graduate Art Studios, high-end restaurants, and many more choosing to locate in the city. There are high concentrations of creative businesses in the Hayden Tract, Arts District, along the Cultural Corridor, and other areas. One original attraction was the availability of affordable light industry buildings but the city quickly became desirable for its creative and innovative community. The Hayden Tract is an example, distinguished by avant-garde architecture as well as the concentrated presence of the design community. This has been driven in part by enlightened developers who encouraged and supported creativity in development projects. Notably, a few buildings in the Hayden Tract qualified as Architecture as Art within the Art in Public Places Program.

This continuous confluence of arts and the creative sector in Culver City is currently expanding, with the recent and planned arrival of major creative and technology companies. The contemporary phase of the creative sector has been described as transitioning "from Screenland to Streamland." Culver City is retaining its creative cachet and appeal, continuing to be the home to Sony Entertainment Studios and Apple and welcoming newcomers like Amazon Studios and HBO. While the influx of new major employers is welcomed by many, there are concerns about rising real estate values, higher

¹ Sources for this section are: 1) the City's history webpages, <https://www.culverCity.org/how-do-i/learn/about-culver-city/history-of-culver-city>, 2) *Culver City, California: The First Hundred Years*, Julie Lugo Cerra, 3) *Culver City Chronicles*, Julie Lugo Cerra, 2013, and 4) stakeholder interviews.

commercial and residential rents, increased traffic and parking issues, and other outcomes of growth and density.



Umbrella by Eric Owen Moss, 1999, in the Hayden Tract. Designated Architecture as Art, Art in Public Places Program.

Source: Eric Owen Moss Architects

The City's involvement in arts and culture is marked by the 1951 opening of the Veterans Memorial Auditorium (VMA), housed in Veterans Memorial Building (VMB), which provided the city's first large performing arts venue. PRCS offered art activities to residents throughout the second half of the century. The City's current Cultural Affairs programs date to the 1988 formation of the Art in Public Places Program and the 2001 formation of the Cultural Affairs Commission. The Historic Preservation ordinance was adopted in 1991, based on a citywide assessment of historic places and structures.

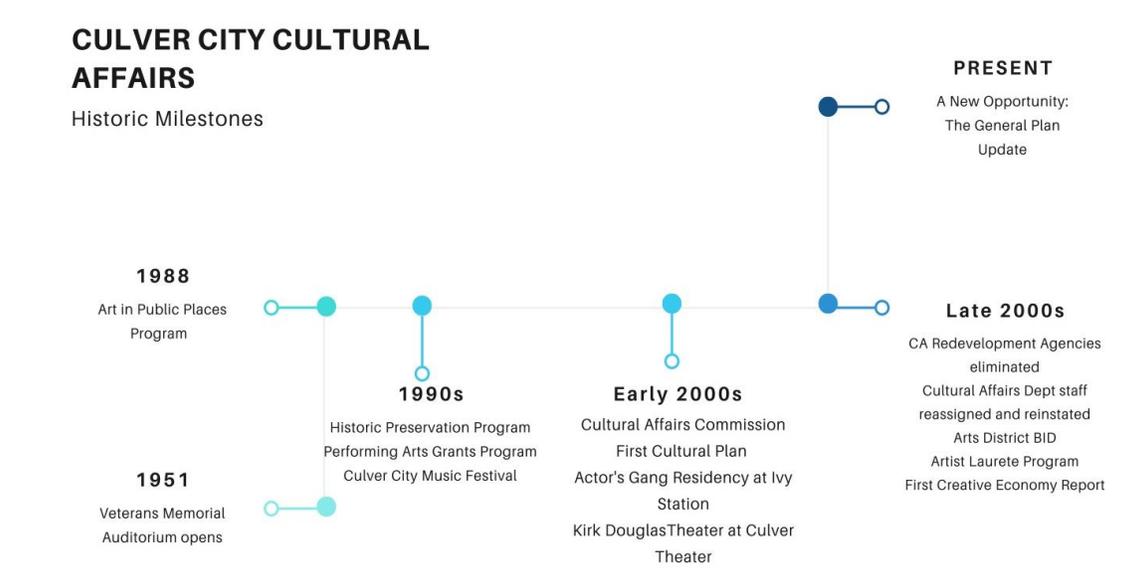
The City created a Cultural Trust Fund to administer public art monies and provide funds for other Cultural Affairs programs. In 2018, the City authorized the formation of the Culver City Arts Foundation, formerly the Culver City Cultural Affairs Foundation, as a fundraising support organization for City arts programming, and administered separately from city staff

The City Council adopted Culver City's first Community Cultural Plan in 2003, which guided most of the City's investments and programs through about 2012. While the cultural plan was never updated, the the City commissioned a 2017 Creative Economy report to highlight and understand a more holistic perspective of the city's creative identity and sector.

In 2003, the Culver City Unified School District became one of the first districts to participate in Los Angeles County’s Arts for All initiative (now called the Los Angeles County Arts Ed Collective). This nationally-recognized arts education initiative seeks to make systemic change in public schools that allows them to fully implement the State’s K-12 curriculum standards for visual and performing arts. The Culver City Unified School District has been successful over the past 15 years in achieving equitable access to music and visual art for all elementary students, while also expanding theatre, film, and dance offerings for all students. This has had corresponding positive effects on families and the community, with increased access to the arts for children and their families. According to the District, this expansion of arts education over time is believed to have increased the value placed by the community on arts and arts education, across diverse socio-economic populations.

The Cultural Affairs Commission operated under auspices of the Culver City Redevelopment Agency until all redevelopment agencies were dissolved statewide in 2012. That same year, the City suspended most of its arts and cultural program because of Recession budget cuts, with staff reassigned to other functions. Many programs were suspended but aspects of the Art in Public Places and Historic Preservation Programs continued in the two years after the elimination of redevelopment. The Cultural Affairs Coordinator who was assigned for two years to the Transportation Department continued work on the programs as they related to new development projects. Other aspects of those two programs were suspended. The same applied to the Performing Arts Grant Program, as staff continued to implement the program after being reassigned to PRCS in 2012. One full-time Cultural Affairs staff position was reinstated in 2014 (prior to 2012, there were three full-time staff positions). The Cultural Affairs Division now operates within the Administrative Services Department.

There has been a community of nonprofit arts and cultural organizations in Culver City since at least the 1960s. These include nationally prominent performing arts organizations, such as the Center Theatre Group/Kirk Douglas Theatre and the Actors’ Gang, which became resident in City-owned theatres in 2005. Additional organizations are the Wende Museum of the Cold War, the Mayme A. Clayton Library and Museum (its archive will now be housed at West LA College), plus many smaller budget organizations of all artistic disciplines. The nonprofit arts community is profiled in greater detail in the “Cultural Assets” section of this report.



ARTS, CULTURE, AND CREATIVE ECONOMY TODAY

Key points of the current ecosystem for Culver City's arts, culture, and creative economy include:

Creative Industries/Workers: Culver City has among the nation's highest per-capita concentrations of creative industries and creative workers. The city's creative sector includes a broad range of industries and occupations, and a supporting infrastructure of arts education, arts funding, and amateur arts activities. In 2018, Culver City had a total of 20,045 creative sector jobs, including self-employment, which was about one-third of all jobs in the city. Total creative industry sales were approximately \$12.8 billion and total earnings were \$3.6 billion.

Arts Districts: There are four arts districts in Culver City, one officially designated Arts District and three unofficial arts districts: the Hayden Tract, Helms Bakery, and Cultural Corridor. They all have a concentration of creative businesses, arts organizations, public artworks, and interesting architecture, and help define the place-based character of Culver City's creative community. They are geographically in close proximity to one another, in the northeastern portion of the city.

Performing Arts Venues: There are 14 performing arts venues in Culver City, primarily concentrated in downtown and along or near Culver Boulevard, with none in the southern areas of the city. Stakeholders and staff report a shortage of venues and cultural facilities. The VMA functions a community cultural center and faces a range of issues limiting arts uses of the auditorium and meeting rooms.

Art in Public Places Program: The City's Art in Public Places Program has generated a citywide collection of artworks under the auspices of the former Culver City Arts Committee and the current Cultural Affairs Commission (CAC). The CAC was created by ordinance in 2001. Before 2001 the Culver City Arts Committee was responsible for implementing the Art in Public Places Program. The Arts Committee was dissolved when the CAC was created. The majority of works was created through a 'percent-for-art' requirement on private development projects. Artworks are well distributed in nearly all areas of the city, with higher concentrations in the eastern and downtown areas.

Arts and Cultural Nonprofit Organizations: There are approximately 33 nonprofit arts and cultural nonprofits located in Culver City, spanning a broad range of artistic disciplines, cultural interests, and budget sizes. Their programs take place both inside and outside the city, and some are considered a regional or national draw. In addition to organizations based in Culver City, there are more based outside the city that provide programs in the city, such as some Performing Arts Grantees and users of the VMA.

City Arts and Cultural Programs: The City's modern involvement in arts and culture began in 1951 with the opening of the VMA and 1988 with the adoption of the Art in Public Places Program Ordinance. Since that time, the City's arts and cultural planning, programming, and funding have proliferated and are continuing to evolve. The City's arts and cultural functions are staffed by one full-time staff position, two part-time positions, and contractors who perform specialized professional services.

Arts and Cultural Funding: Overall, the City's investments in arts and culture are modest, although they provide a significant amount of community benefit with limited use of General Fund expenditures. The largest portions of the City's investment are developers' fees paid into a Cultural Trust Fund to fulfill Art in Public Places Program requirements, and costs associated with the part-

time positions and contractors. The City has effectively leveraged its development through its art requirement on private development and its real estate, especially the donated leases for the Kirk Douglas Theatre, Ivy Substation, and Wende Museum. As the current rapid pace of development slows, contributions to the Cultural Trust Fund are expected to decline. The City is facing structural challenges to its budget that limit its capacity to expand staffing and other General Fund expenditures.

Arts Marketing: Culver City arts and cultural organizations consistently report arts marketing as a challenge. They describe a “noisy” media environment where people have difficulty finding timely information about things that interest them, and marketers have difficulty reaching the right people. The Cultural Affairs Commission and Culver City Arts Foundation have identified this as a communitywide, shared problem and would like to provide a solution that can furnish marketing capabilities beyond the capacity of an individual organization. The City does not have a communications department or staff and currently contracts limited public relations services through a consulting firm.

Demographics: Culver City’s population is better educated, more affluent, and has more creatives² compared to the region. Arts participation is most closely associated with people who have higher education and income, and have had past arts exposure, so this indicates a strong demand for arts and culture. In addition, these characteristics illustrate the opportunity to create ways to increase inclusion and access to arts and culture for all population groups, including those that may face barriers such as time, cost, and location.

Geography: The majority of arts and cultural assets are located closer to higher-income neighborhoods and major employers in the eastern portions of the city. People of color and lower-income households are generally farther from cultural assets such as performing arts venues and art galleries. While distances in Culver City are not great, travel time is a barrier to arts participation for those who live or work in other areas of the city.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Arts, culture, and creative economy issues for the General Plan Update embrace a range of larger structural challenges and aspirational possibilities. They offer opportunities for integrating arts and creativity with other areas of the General Plan, as well as innovating in civic issues.

Positioning Culver City as a center for innovation and creativity: Culver City is a truly exceptional creative community, in the midst of expansion and change. While it faces challenges such as funding, cost, displacement, and facilities, it has the aspiration and potential to continue advancing its identity and image as a creative center. The General Plan Update shall reflect the community’s vision as a unique creative community, and take a broad view of roles for arts, culture, and the creative economy.

Expanding focus outwards from arts and culture to the wider creative economy: The history of the City’s role in arts and culture shows a focus generally on the nonprofit and fine arts sectors, including the Art in Public Places Program. This stands in contrast to the major and increasing

² Creatives are individuals with advanced training and experience in the design and production of a broad range of cultural products and services, including many individual artists of all disciplines.

presence of the larger creative economy. In recent years, the City has engaged with the creative industries in new ways; for example, through its 2017 Creative Economy Report and more recent convenings of creatives. The General Plan Update provides an opportunity for the City to define and expand its role in engaging and activating its creative community, and to partner with major creative sector employers in defining a mutually beneficial relationship beyond financial contributions.

Engaging Culver City's creative workers (creatives): A defining element of Culver City's creative community is its many creatives, both those who live and those who work in the city. This population is an extraordinary collective asset. There are some organized networks of creatives, such as the Culver City Arts District, and, as noted, the City is exploring a nascent effort to convene and activate creatives. The City has recently created a new Artist Laureate Program. However, stakeholders report a need and desire for greater connectivity among creatives. The General Plan Update is an opportunity for innovation in engaging this community in civic issues, such as economic development, housing, homelessness, public safety, civic engagement, social cohesion, urban design, education, and many other areas. The City can consider its role in engaging and activating this community, such as convener, director, and/or funder. Other possibilities include using artists and other creatives in civic projects such as those relating to Ballona Creek and the Inglewood Oil Field, as well as integrating them into the work of City departments and functions.

Addressing structural funding issues for arts and culture: The City's investments in arts and culture have been modest, minimizing General Fund expenses in favor of requiring developer public art fees, leveraging its real estate, and encouraging private contributions. Yet Cultural Trust Fund revenues are expected to decline, and the City is also facing structural challenges to its budget that limit its capacity to expand staffing and other General Fund expenditures. The General Plan Update is an opportunity to consider new public and private sources for arts and cultural funding that address these systemic issues, in addition to existing funding sources, including the General Fund.

Addressing geographic issues and access to arts and culture: Most cultural venues and assets are in the northeast area of the city and downtown, including along the Cultural Corridor, but stakeholders cite the desire to have cultural programming available closer to where they live, instead of having to come downtown, given the barriers of traffic congestion in the city. The General Plan Update should consider how the City can make cultural experiences and activities more accessible and equitable for all populations and areas of the city, and the types of programming best provided in community settings. This can include consideration of expanded funding for public events and activities and partnering with the city's vibrant arts and cultural community. It can also include activating the community directly through community-initiated creative or civic projects that include an arts component. The Art in Public Places program is an additional opportunity to locate artworks in less-well-served neighborhoods and areas, and to engage the community in their creation. The Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department (PRCS) may be an appropriate avenue to deliver enhanced arts and cultural services, given residents' expressed desire for increased programming in the parks. Addressing accessibility can also build on the accomplishments of the Culver City Unified School District (CCUSD) to expand its arts education and identify new partnerships to support the CCUSD's efforts.

Addressing facility and space issues for arts and culture: Affordability is an issue across-the-board for the creative community. It is reflected in needs for affordable live/work spaces for artists, performing and rehearsal venues, and other spaces. The VMB has a backlog of needs. The General Plan Update will need to address which facilities and spaces are needed, how rising rents can be mitigated for arts uses, and what role the City can play in fulfilling these community needs. An overarching issue is how Culver City can remain an inclusive home for creatives, as it has been since its founding, and be accessible for the younger creative and the emerging artist. One possibility is to consider opportunities to include live/work spaces for artists within the City's overall plans for affordable housing.

Sustaining Culver City's arts districts: The four arts districts in the city – Culver City Arts District, Hayden Tract, Helms Bakery, and Cultural Corridor – are vital but are facing a range of changes. For example, the Arts District is losing galleries, reports permitting challenges, and is becoming less pedestrian-friendly. The General Plan Update shall consider ways the City can sustain the vitality of these creative places and determine what the next steps are in the evolution of Culver City's arts districts. The issue includes, but is larger than, funding and might involve collaborations, joint programming, and new governance and management structures.

Demonstrating support for arts, culture, and creativity: Arts and cultural funding is viewed by stakeholders, inside and outside of City government, in part as a symbolic demonstration of support for the arts. While nearly all stakeholders value arts and culture and view it as an essential component of Culver City, this priority is not always expressed through the budget. There is a shared desire among stakeholders for the General Plan Update to identify a new way to balance the need for resources with the City's fiscal realities and to demonstrate the value placed on arts and creativity in a meaningful way. This includes identifying an appropriate level of staffing.

THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

The creative economy is comprised of economic systems where value is based on imaginative qualities rather than the traditional resources of land, labor, and capital. The term is used to describe creativity throughout a whole economy.³

As part of the creative economy, the industries, which include arts and crafts, advertising, design, entertainment, architecture, books, media, and software, are a vital force in individual and community development. They empower people to take ownership of development and stimulate the innovation that drives inclusive, sustainable growth. When well-supported, the creative economy is a source of structural economic transformation, socio-economic progress, job creation, and innovation, while contributing to social inclusion through policies recognizing cultural differences and multicultural perspectives.⁴

³ John Howkins. *The Creative Economy*, www.creativeeconomy.com

⁴ United Nations Development Program, <http://www.hdr.undp.org/en/content/how-cultural-and-creative-industries-can-power-human-development-21st-century>

Creativity and the arts are in Culver City’s DNA. Its creative sector includes an extraordinary concentration of creative people, businesses, nonprofits, and other cultural resources. Despite a very slight decline of fewer than 200 jobs in creative occupations from 2017 to 2018, creative earnings increased \$160 million during the same period, with total creative industry earnings of \$3.6 billion for 2018. This indicates considerable potential for current and future investment.

Culver City boasts a higher concentration of creatives than the Los Angeles region as a whole. This collection of creatives holds great potential for further development in areas such as economic development, civic engagement, social cohesion, urban design, education, and many other areas.

Culver City’s creative industries include for-profit, nonprofit and sole proprietor business enterprises. It is appropriate for communities to self-define their creative sectors, and with Culver City’s Creative Economy Report, released in 2017 (based on data from 2005-2014), 669 creative enterprises, in more than 40 industries, were identified as the core of the city’s creative economy.

According to the 2018 WESTAF Creative Vitality Index (CVI), Culver City scores a 12.16 on an index of 1.00. This is among the highest values of any US community. Historically, Culver City has trended up in creative vitality since 2013. The index has declined slightly since the 2016 value of 14.00, with fluctuations mainly in the motion picture and video production jobs and earnings categories.

Total sales for Culver City’s creative industries were \$12.8 billion in 2018. The top five sectors with the highest industry sales are motion picture and video production, software publishers, advertising agencies, internet publishing and broadcasting, and motion picture and video distribution. The great majority of sales – \$10 billion – was generated in motion picture and video production.⁵ In the same year, Culver City had 20,045 creative sector jobs,⁶ which make up about one-third of all jobs in the city. The creative industry earned approximately \$3.6 billion and nonprofit arts and cultural organizations in the city had total revenues of \$9.3 million.

Top creative sector jobs include producers and directors, film and video editors, actors, audio and video equipment technicians, media and communication equipment workers, multimedia artists and animators, camera operators, and writers and authors, accounting for approximately 58% of the total creative sector occupations. Creative occupations declined less than 1% between 2017 and 2018.



⁵ WESTAF Creative Suite 2017

⁶ Creative sector jobs include four classes of workers: Extended Proprietors, Non-QCEW Employees, QCEW Employees, Self-employed. Source: Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI).

Critical to building and sustaining a vibrant creative economy are arts education and nonprofit arts and cultural organizational resources. In Culver City, as described earlier in the Arts and Cultural History section, K-12 arts education is relatively strong and is offered in public schools and “beyond the classroom” through classes and experiences offered in various settings in partnership with arts organizations in the community. The UCLA Graduate Art Studios are also located in Culver City. Although representing a relatively small share of economic activity, Culver City’s nonprofit arts and cultural organizations contribute to its artistic vibrancy. Also, PRCS offers an abundant range of community arts activities through its daily creative classes, activities, and events at the Veterans Memorial Building and Culver City Senior Center.

Culver City’s creative economy is a critical economic force that contributes to sustained economic growth and can play a role in building a more inclusive, connected, and collaborative city. However, while the creative economy is strong, it faces challenges such as the rising cost of creative workspaces, the cost of housing for creatives, and barriers in transportation/commuting to Culver City jobs. It is increasingly difficult to afford to both live and work in Culver City.



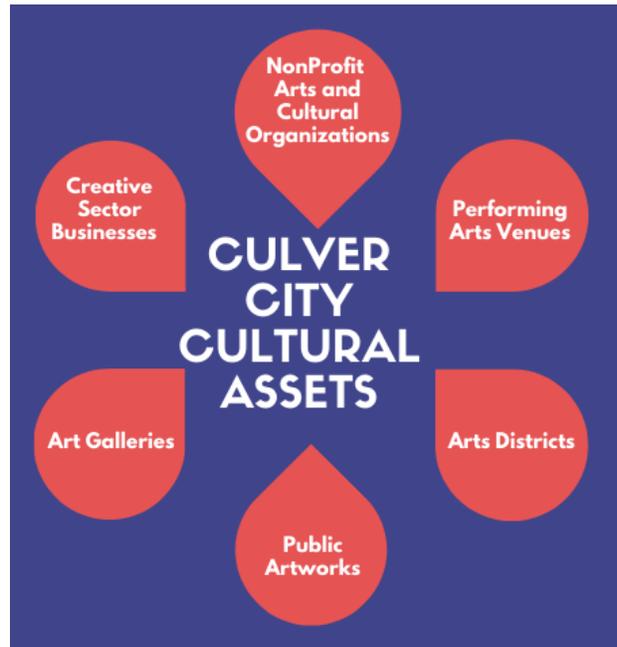
The arrival of Amazon Studios brings new creative jobs to Culver City.

Source: Culver Steps.

CULTURAL ASSETS

As a subset of the creative sector, Culver City's cultural assets include an array of arts enterprises, venues, and places:

- **Nonprofit arts and cultural organizations:** Tax-exempt arts and cultural groups recognized by the IRS
- **Performing arts venues:** Theaters, auditoriums, and public spaces regularly used for performances
- **Art galleries:** Professional galleries displaying and selling artwork
- **Public artworks:** Artworks created through the City's Art in Public Places Program, including Architecture as Art
- **Arts districts and places:** Culver City Arts District, Hayden Tract, Helms Bakery, and Cultural Corridor



NONPROFIT ARTS AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

Table 1 lists 33 nonprofit arts and cultural organizations located in Culver City, spanning a broad range of artistic disciplines and cultural interests. There are a handful with annual operating budgets greater than \$1 million, so the majority are small and mid-sized organizations. There is a concentration located downtown but organizations' addresses are found throughout the city. Their programs take place both inside and outside the city, and some are considered a regional or national draw. In addition to organizations based in Culver City, there are more located outside the city providing programs in the city, such as some of the Performing Arts Grantees and some users of the VMA and rest of the VMB. Most of these nonprofits – located inside and outside Culver City – do not have a direct relationship with the city.

PERFORMING ARTS VENUES

There are at least 14 performing arts venues in Culver City (see Figure 1). These include the VMA (up to 1,100 seats) and newly renovated Robert Frost Auditorium at Culver City High School (1,200 seats). There are also several studio and black box theatres, several outdoor/park venues, a bookstore, and music store. The map shows their concentration in downtown and along or near Culver Boulevard, with none in the southern areas of the city. Performances also take place at informal venues such as City Hall, schools, and churches. Stakeholders and staff report a shortage of venues and the need to consider cultural facilities needs for the community. The City's Performing Arts Grant program is limited primarily to music and dance since there are few or no venues with the appropriate schedule availability and/or technical requirements for theatre performances. Stakeholders cite the desire of residents to have performances and other cultural activities available close to where they live or work,

and to not always have to come downtown. The Ivy Substation is by terms of its lease with the City available only one week per year for community rentals, typically in the summer.

KIRK DOUGLAS THEATRE

The city's performing arts venues include the Kirk Douglas Theatre, which is centrally located in downtown and houses two stages, one with 317 seats and a second with 100 seats. Opened in 1947 as the Culver Theatre, the *Streamline Moderne* venue was a movie house. The Center Theatre Group, with support from the Culver City Redevelopment Agency, renovated the theatre into its current configuration and reopened in 2004 renamed for Ann and Kirk Douglas. The venue is available for rentals but has limited schedule availability and is expensive for many users.



The Kirk Douglas Theatre is located in downtown Culver City and available for rentals.

Source: EKYR Architects.

VETERANS MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM

PRCS operates the VMA with 1,100 seats, stage, and basketball court which is located within VMB. It is a community cultural center that is continuously active and provides a great range of community uses and benefits. The facility is unique in one respect: the auditorium accommodates an adult basketball league four days per week in addition to performing arts uses. Affectionately termed a “basket-torium,” the space is defined by the need to transform from sports to arts uses on an almost daily basis and this limits its effectiveness as a performing arts venue. Still, the auditorium is well-used for performing arts, including five orchestras, a children’s theatre program, dance concerts, and many other performing groups. The auditorium has a digital projector, a screen and portable sound system, and upgraded stage rigging. Stakeholders cite a range of issues for the auditorium, especially regarding the need for more and better performing arts venues generally in the city:

- Seating is divided among the flat floor, rear orchestra raised seating, and balcony seating with a plexiglass barrier that impacts sound, viewing, and the immediacy of a live performance.
- Related to the seating arrangement, there are sightline problems, especially with the flat gym floor and removable chair seating.
- The stage is relatively small, and backstage space is limited.
- Acoustics are inadequate and “gym-like” for many uses.
- The portable sound system is inadequate, although the stage has updated lighting and electrical systems.
- There are two kitchens in the VMB, one of which serves the auditorium and four food service areas that all need upgrading to increase revenue opportunities.
- There is currently no WIFI enabled in VMB, which limits certain performances that may integrate live internet components. This also limits attendees' ability to share information on social media about performances in real-time, limiting the spread of word-of-mouth which could increase future attendance.

In addition to the auditorium, VMB is home to the Culver City Historical Society and houses its collection. The Historical Society’s space is inadequate for its growing collection and provides a very limited display area.

The building also has 12 multipurpose rooms and spaces rented at a sliding scale. There is high community demand for these uses and the building has a full schedule of classes, meetings, rehearsals, special events, religious services, City meetings and events, film shoots, etc. The PRCS Department also provides an ongoing schedule in the building of community arts classes, such as ukulele classes, tiny tots ballet, seniors’ music groups, and children’s theatre. Stakeholders cite the inadequacies of the rooms for arts and other uses, including their condition, lack of sound insulation, lack of WIFI and other technologies, and other needs for specific arts uses.

The staff has done much to maintain the auditorium and building and to make incremental improvements to accommodate inadequacies. The City has discussed the possibility of renovating or replacing the facility internally, but there is no current assessment of the auditorium or building, and there has been no community process to determine the feasibility of future uses. It would be a major capital project and portions of the auditorium and building may qualify for historic preservation status, adding to the complexity and cost of capital changes. In the meantime, there is the potential to use the stage as a black box with relatively simple changes to the existing stage capacity.



VMB hosts creative programming in Culver City.

Source: City of Culver City

ART GALLERIES

There are about 10 art galleries in Culver City, located in the north and northeastern area of the city and with the majority in the Culver City Arts District (see Figure 2). This number represents a decrease in recent years as galleries move out of the city because of rising rents, and challenges in the business model for art galleries, including the rise in purchases made online and at art fairs. In the past, art galleries were a defining feature of Culver City's cultural scene, including the core identity of the Culver City Arts District.

PUBLIC ARTWORKS

Established in 1988, the Art in Public Places Program has generated a collection of artworks, most created under the auspices of the Cultural Affairs Commission since its formation in 2001 (see Figure 3). The program aims to:

- Enhance the quality of life for individuals living and working within the city; and
- Preserve and improve the quality of the urban environment, increase real property values, and have a positive economic impact.

Between 2005 and 2015, \$4,840,299 in art was commissioned or purchased. Funding for the program derives from a one percent requirement for both public and private development projects, as defined by the ordinance, with a provision for developers to pay an in-lieu fee. The private portion of the public art program is funded through the Cultural Trust Fund, which is supported through an in-lieu fee from private development, receiving an average of approximately \$300,000 annually. However, for the past three fiscal years, actual Cultural Trust Fund annual revenues were higher because of an increased amount of permitted development projects: \$912,486 in 2017/18, \$438,439 in 2018/19, and \$800,000 in 2019/20. Also, these amounts do not reflect additional amounts invested by developers in permanent artworks outside of the Cultural Trust Fund. The Cultural Trust Fund has a current balance of \$2.5 million, but the City anticipates that revenues will begin to decline again beginning in fiscal year 2020/21 as the pace of real estate development slows. The ordinance was updated in 2013 and the Cultural Affairs Commission is currently working on another update to clarify the artist/artwork selection processes to focus on redefined aesthetic standards. In 2018, the City celebrated the program's 30th anniversary and published a tour guide of the City's installed public art.

Figure 3 shows 89 works currently on public display. There are 53 artworks installed on private property (financed through developer fees), 31 installed on City property (financed through the City's public art requirement), and five Architecture as Art projects (also private developer projects). There are a few additional works on display in City Hall not shown in Figure 3. Because artworks are primarily created through a development requirement, they are located within public view at the development site. Figure 3 shows that artworks are well distributed in nearly all areas of the city, but with greater concentrations in the eastern and downtown areas.

Supporting lists for Figures 1, 2, and 3 are located in the Appendix.



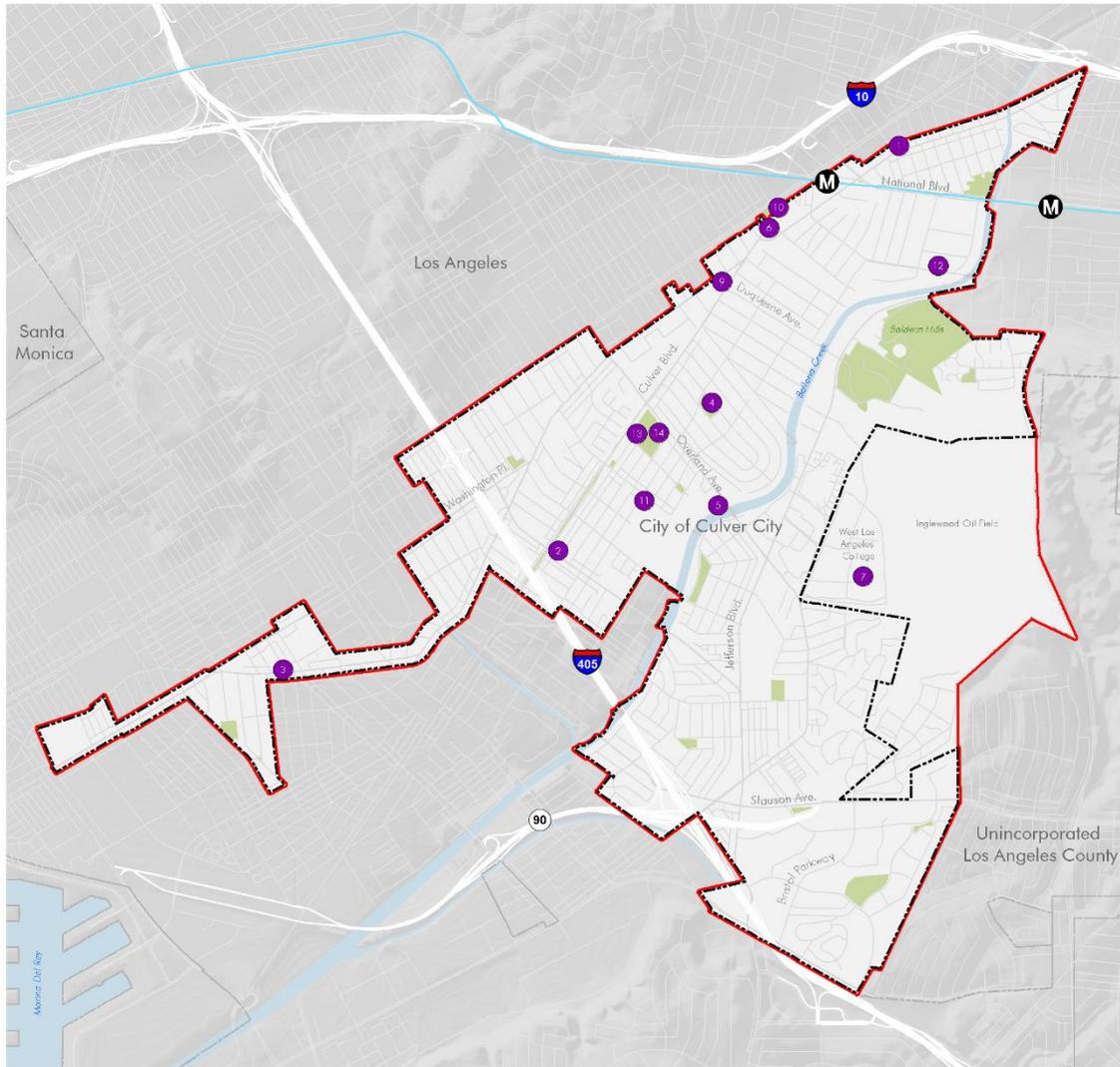
Arlette Cardenes, Music Director, Culver City Chamber Orchestra

Source: Culver City Chamber Orchestra

Table 1: Nonprofit Arts and Cultural Organizations in Culver City

1.	Academy Of Visual And Performing Arts Foundation
2.	Arts And Cultural Bridge Foundation
3.	Ballet Folklorico Del Pacifico (Pacifico Dance Company)
4.	Brasil Brasil Cultural Center
5.	Brave New Films
6.	BULGARIAN-AMERICAN CULTURAL EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION - Xorotroptz / Bulgarian Dance
7.	Calder Performing Arts Organization
8.	Culver City Chamber Orchestra
9.	Culver City Cultural Affairs Foundation
10.	Culver City Historical Society
11.	Culver City Public Theatre Inc
12.	Halau Hula 'O Nalikotauikeiulani
13.	History Of Recorded Sound Foundation
14.	Humanus Documentary Films Corp
15.	Kirk Douglas Theatre (Center Theatre Group)
16.	Los Angeles Doctors Symphony Orchestra
17.	Monarch Theatre Guild
18.	Music & Conversations Inc
19.	New American Theatre
20.	No Limits Theater Group Inc
21.	Passion For Dance Project
22.	Professional Photographers Of Los Angeles County
23.	Slavenska Dance Preservation Inc
24.	Socal Symphony Society (Culver City Symphony Orchestra)
25.	Symphonic Jazz Orchestra
26.	The Actors' Gang
27.	The Duke Ellington Society Of Southern California
28.	The Wende Museum Of The Cold War Inc
29.	Vox Femina Los Angeles
30.	Greek Heritage Society Of Southern California (<i>Culver City Heritage Organization</i>)
31.	Sons Of Norway (<i>Culver City Heritage Organization</i>)
32.	The Chinese Language School Of Southern California (<i>Culver City Heritage Organization</i>)
33.	Tibetan Association Of Southern California (<i>Culver City Heritage Organization</i>)
	<i>Source: Internal Revenue Source (2017).</i>

Figure 1: Performing Arts Venues in Culver City



Jurisdictional Boundaries

- City of Culver City City Limits
- City of Culver City Sphere of Influence
- Jurisdictional Boundaries

Transportation Features

- Expo Line
- Metro Station

Other Features

- Water
- Parks and Open Spaces

Arts and Culture Features

- Performing Arts Venues

Sources: City of Culver City, 2019; County of Los Angeles, 2019.

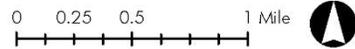
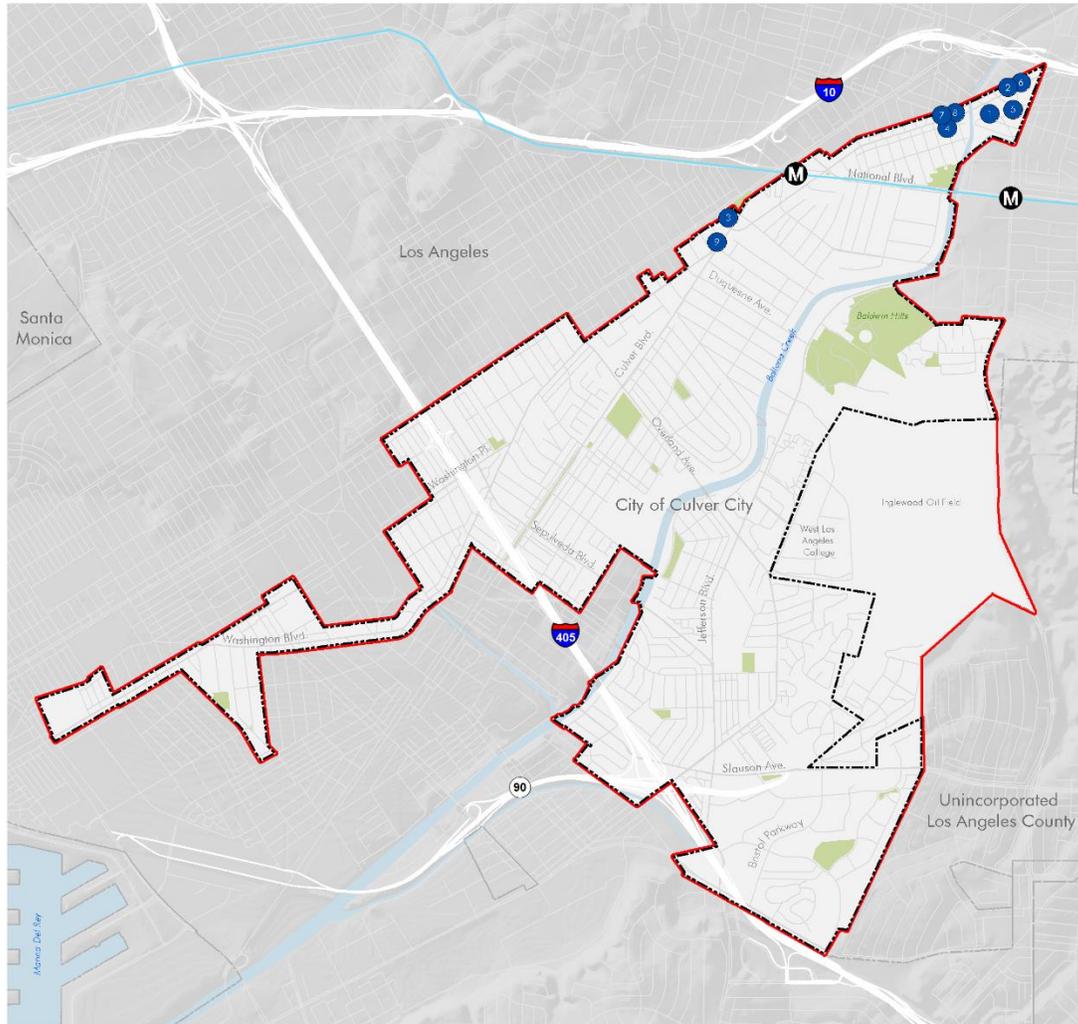


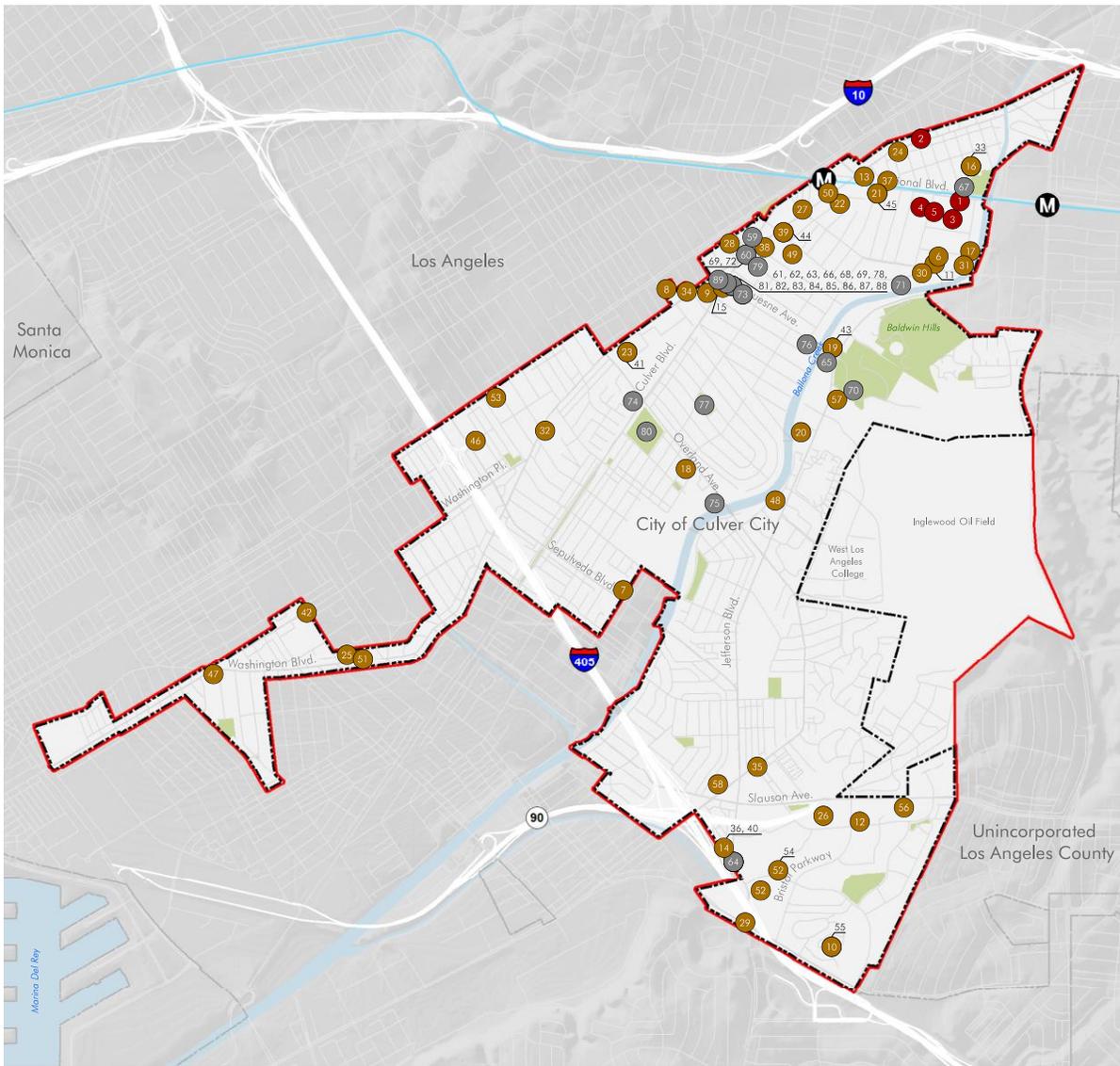
Figure 2: Art Galleries in Culver City



Sources: City of Culver City, 2019; County of Los Angeles, 2019.

<p>Jurisdictional Boundaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Culver City City Limits City of Culver City Sphere of Influence Jurisdictional Boundaries <p>Transportation Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expo Line M Metro Station <p>Other Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Parks and Open Spaces 	<p>Arts and Culture Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Art Galleries 	<p>0 0.25 0.5 1 Mile</p>
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Figure 3: Art in Public Places Artworks in Culver City



Sources: City of Culver City, 2019; County of Los Angeles, 2019.

Jurisdictional Boundaries

- City of Culver City City Limits
- City of Culver City Sphere of Influence
- Jurisdictional Boundaries

Arts and Culture Features

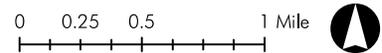
- Architecture as Art (Private)
- Private Art
- Public Art

Transportation Features

- Expo Line
- Metro Station

Other Features

- Water
- Parks and Open Spaces



ARTS DISTRICTS AND PLACES

There are four arts districts in Culver City, one officially designated Arts District and three unofficial places considered arts districts. They all have a concentration of creative businesses, arts organizations, public artworks, and interesting architecture, including Architecture as Art, and help define the place-based character of Culver City's creative community. They are all located in or near the northeastern portion of the city, as shown in Figure 4.

CULVER CITY ARTS DISTRICT

The Arts District is a City-designated business improvement district formed by community-minded business and property owners in the northeast corner of the city. It is home to a collection of art galleries, boutique and design retailers, specialty restaurants, coffee bars, and other creative firms such as architecture, advertising, culinary arts, post-production, and interior design. The Arts District sponsors the Second Saturday Art Walk and the annual Art Walk and Roll Festival, a closed-street celebration of art and new mobility, featuring live bands, food, drinks, artisans, and new mobility vendors. As described in the Art Galleries section above, the Arts District was once primarily an art gallery district, but in recent years many of the art galleries have relocated elsewhere and many of those storefronts are now occupied by small creative businesses not open to the public. This has made portions of the district less visually accessible and inviting for pedestrians, limiting its ability to market itself as an arts and cultural district. Arts District stakeholders also cite City permitting challenges inhibiting their ability to hold art openings and other events. The primary challenges are the extra cost and work associated with the requirements for fire safety and serving alcohol.

HAYDEN TRACT

Located just south of the Arts District, in an industrial zone populated with warehouses, the Hayden Tract is now a dense cluster of creative enterprises including architects, film, sound and design studios, apparel designers, software companies, and the UCLA Graduate Art Studios. A small amount of light industrial uses remain. A significant factor in the rebirth of the Hayden Tract was the collaboration between local architect Eric Owen Moss (former director of the Southern California Institute of Architecture) and his clients, developers Frederick and Laurie Samitaur Smith. Eric Owen Moss, whose studio is in the Hayden Tract, has built a celebrated collection of experimental buildings called Conjunctive Points located in the tract.

HELMS BAKERY DISTRICT

The Helms Bakery is a creative redevelopment of a historic commercial bakery building in northeast Culver City, located on the western edge of the Arts District. Purchased in 1972 by Wally Marks, the Art Deco property was redeveloped into a mixed-use project that has evolved to its current status as a commercially vital collection of design retailers, creative offices, restaurants and an art bookstore that offers a year-round series of events. The Helms Bakery has been approved for inclusion in the Arts District, as of December 2019.

CULTURAL CORRIDOR

The Cultural Corridor (see Figure 5) is a commonly-used name for a concentration of creative sector businesses, organizations and buildings along a 1.4-mile stretch of Culver Boulevard. This informally acknowledged district is anchored in the east by the Ivy Substation, a 99-seat theatre that houses the Actors' Gang; at mid-point by Center Theatre Group's Kirk Douglas Theatre and Sony Pictures Studios;

and at the western terminus by the Veterans Memorial Complex (where the Culver City Historical Society is located) and Wende Museum. The Wende Museum is proposing an adaptive reuse project for the “AmVets” Building, which is adjacent to the museum on Culver Boulevard. This project would include a new exhibition space for the Mayme A. Clayton Library and Museum and other uses. The City is also considering other uses for this site, including for affordable housing.

Figure 4: Arts Districts



CULTURAL PARTICIPATION

Cultural participation refers to the creative activities in which residents of a community are engaged. It is a measure of how active people are in arts and culture and the nature of their engagement. On one level, nearly everyone does it – we almost all listen to music, read, or create in the kitchen. Scholars identify seven types of cultural participation but it is often useful to describe it as either “doing or watching” arts and culture. “Doing” refers to activities such as playing a musical instrument, making photographs, writing stories, or competing in a poetry slam. It is defined most often as the personal creative activities of the passionate amateur. “Watching” refers to attending a performance, hearing a concert, or visiting a museum. It refers more generally to the appreciation of the artistic work of others.

Cultural participation is better understood when quantified through surveys or a market demand study. There will be opportunities to survey Culver City residents and workers during the General Plan Update. This information is not yet available, however. Culver City is a community with high levels of cultural participation, based on stakeholder interviews and discussion groups. The demographics of Culver City and its many creatives are also strongly correlated with high levels of participation (the key identifiers are higher levels of education, income, and past exposure to the arts). Some observations are:

- Culver City residents attend arts and cultural organizations or programming in the city. These include the Kirk Douglas Theatre, The Actors’ Gang, Robert Frost Auditorium, and Wende Museum.
- They also attend City-sponsored performances, such as the Culver City Music Festival, performances funded by the Performing Arts Grant Program, and events in the parks.
- Residents attend the Culver City Arts District art galleries and events, such as the Second Saturday Art Walk and the Art Walk and Roll Festival.
- People are participating widely in online digital arts – movies, TV shows, YouTube, games, social media videos, and artwork through their cellphones and other devices.
- Culver City’s audience comes from both the city and the surrounding region. Arts and cultural organizations report that their audiences are regional, drawing on Culver City, Los Angeles, and other nearby cities.
- Residents participate in amateur arts classes provided through the PRCS Recreation Division, and community arts groups are active in using available spaces, such as the VMB.
- The Culver City Unified School District reports strong parent and family participation in student arts activities.

From a policy perspective, cultural participation is desirable because it builds cultural capital. Individual factors influence cultural participation – better education, abundant supply, ready access, higher income. It is also influenced by communities and social networks, and culture is an important part of forming these networks.⁷ Culver City is stronger in its individual factors but less well-developed

⁷ Cultural Participation and Communities: The Role of Individual and Neighborhood Effects, Mark J. Stern and Susan C. Seifert, University of Pennsylvania, 2017.

in the community and social supports, like increasing access to arts and cultural experiences to a more inclusive audience.

ARTS MARKETING

A corollary to cultural participation is arts marketing: how do people access information about arts and cultural offerings that interest them? Is it working? Most arts and cultural organizations and events focus substantial resources on marketing to attract an audience, yet the best way to reach the right people remains an elusive practice. In Culver City, arts and cultural organizations consistently report that arts marketing is a challenge. Since most such organizations are operating with scarce resources, there is rarely sufficient money, staff time, and marketing tools for the task. The Cultural Affairs Commission has identified this as a communitywide, shared problem. They describe a “noisy” media environment where people have difficulty finding timely information about things that interest them, and marketers have difficulty reaching the right people. The Commission and Culver City Arts Foundation would like to provide a solution that can provide marketing capabilities beyond the capacity of an individual organization.

There does not appear to be any overarching marketing channel for arts and culture identified with Culver City. Organizations and events each have their own marketing programs. In addition to these individual efforts, the main public source of information about local arts programming is by the City itself:

- City event calendar
- City social media and publicity
- GovDelivery listservs
- City’s online map of the public art collection and walking tours

Given that Culver City’s arts and cultural audience is regional, people and organizations also turn to aggregated arts information sources for the Los Angeles region, including:

- Discover Los Angeles
- LA Weekly (free weekly)
- Eventbrite
- Timeout Los Angeles
- Curate LA



Advertising for the Culver City Art Walk and Roll Festival.

Source: Culver City Arts District



Helms Coach Gone A Rye by Andrea Cohen Gehring, Art Mortimer and Global Entertainment Industry, 2002. Art in Public Places Program.

Source: Lisa Naruko.

ARTS AND CULTURE PLANNING AND PROGRAMS

EXISTING PLANS AND STUDIES

Several existing City plans and studies focus on arts, culture, and the creative economy. Some provide a policy basis for the General Plan Update, while others document the value placed by the City and community on arts, culture and the creative economy. The existing General Plan does not have an arts and culture element but it has been the basis for some cultural development over the past 30 years or so. The 2017 Creative Economy report recognizes that arts and culture must be inclusive of for-profit creative businesses and individual creatives. The 2009 Parks and Recreation Master Plan emphasizes the need for expanded arts and cultural programming.

GENERAL PLAN

Significant existing policies provide a foundation for Culver City's arts and cultural development. In the City's General Plan, one goal is shared among the Conservation, Open Space, and Land Use Elements: "...a community that provides recreational, historical and cultural opportunities."

The Land Use Element has several policies recognizing the role arts and culture can play in the city's economic development and encourages uses and standards that will encourage viable and creative development.

- Policy 5.C: Encourage development of cultural, education and entertainment uses that will provide leisure activities for Culver City residents and enhance the image of the city.
- Policy 5.H: Encourage and support entertainment and media businesses by promoting Culver City's image as the "Heart of Screenland."
- Policy 22.I: Encourage art, media, and cultural "street fairs" and farmers' markets within the Downtown area, that could attract new patronage for existing and desirable new businesses.

The Conservation Element contains several references to preserving cultural and historical resources.

- Objective 14: Historic Preservation. Promote the city's architectural and cultural heritage by preserving buildings and sites that reflect Culver City's varied history and development.

The policies identified in the existing General Plan are general in nature and do not have accompanying strategies that can be evaluated for measuring implementation to date. However, there are many examples of ways these goals have been met. Under Goal 5.C, the City provides in-kind leases of City-owned properties to local arts organizations, programs at the VMB and Auditorium, and Performing Arts Grants. Under 5.H, the City has facilitated the location of many high tech and creative companies to the city. Under Policy 22.I, the City has established the Culver City Arts District and supports community arts events through the Special Events Grant Program, both of which include programming in and near downtown. With regard to Objective 14, the City has established a Historic Preservation Program overseen by the Cultural Affairs Commission.

THE CREATIVE ECONOMY OF CULVER CITY

The Cultural Affairs Commission and staff produced a Creative Economy Report in 2017 that is a comprehensive and thoughtful description and analysis of the city's creative economy, based on data from 2014.⁸ The report “widens the lens” beyond a traditional focus on arts and culture, and profiles Culver City's large and growing creative sector as an important component of the city's overall economy and one which compares very favorably to the Los Angeles region.

In addition to traditional economic measures, the report describes the “spillover” influence of creativity on the economy and the competitive advantage it offers to creative places, such as Culver City:

This openness to new ideas and the ability to make associations and connections that other people do not see is one of the defining characteristics of creativity. ...regions and cities acquire a competitive advantage when they attract creative employees because creative thinkers encourage innovation, which in turn fosters economic growth.

The report also takes a holistic view of the creative sector, including elements such as arts education, arts funding, and amateur arts activities.

In a broader sense, the creative economy must include a support system that teaches, nurtures and sustains creative activity: arts programs in PreK-12 schools, post-secondary arts institutions to develop talent, and philanthropic foundations along with other nonprofit funding organizations to provide financial resources and services to the creative arts.

CULVER CITY ARTS DISTRICT BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT – 2016 WORK PLAN: BEAUTIFY, PROMOTE, ADVOCATE TOGETHER

As profiled above, the Culver City Arts District is comprised of art galleries, architecture firms, creative businesses, specialty retail, restaurants, professional services, and design/wholesale firms located in northeast Culver City. The Arts District has worked to encourage engagement among the business community and create and promote a brand identity for the area. The Arts District was recognized by the City Council in September 2013 as a “City organization,” and established itself as a formal Business Improvement District in 2016. Governed by an Advisory Board, the Arts District is now funded through assessments on businesses in the district, collected through the business license renewal process. The work plan also proposed activities in three focus areas: 1) maintenance/beautification, 2) advocacy and administration, and 3) marketing and promotion.

COMMUNITY CULTURAL PLAN

In 2001, the Culver City Council established the Cultural Affairs Commission and created an ordinance by which the Commission would operate. The existing Art in Public Places and Historic Preservation

⁸ *The Center of Art Culture Music Technology Architecture Fashion Design Entertainment – The Creative Economy of Culver City*, Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation, <https://www.culverCity.org/home/showdocument?id=7940>

Programs were folded under this Commission's purview. One of the objectives outlined was the formulation of a Community Cultural Plan.

In 2003, the Community Cultural Plan was adopted and established the following goals:

- Goal 1: Nurture and promote Culver City's resources for lifelong learning in and through arts and culture.
- Goal 2: Strengthen Culver City's arts and creative image, capitalizing on and strengthening its legacy of film history, cultural history, public art, and historic preservation.
- Goal 3: Facilitate the development of diverse arts and cultural facilities.
- Goal 4: Develop a network of cultural resources throughout Culver City.
- Goal 5: Support Culver City's arts and cultural organizations and artists.
- Goal 6: Establish the infrastructure and funding to support ongoing cultural development in Culver City.

Annual accomplishments by Cultural Affairs were reported to the Commission and City Council for the years 2004 through 2012. The reporting ended when state ended funding for Redevelopment Agency and Cultural Affairs staffing capacity was halted.



Christie Lennee performing at Boulevard Music.

Source: Martine Ehrenclou

CULVER CITY LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY PLATFORM (2016)

The Legislative and Policy Platform provides a framework for the City of Culver City's legislative program and policy positions. Adopted by the City Council every two years, the Platform is the foundation of a focused advocacy strategy and serves as a reference guide for legislative and policy

positions and objectives that provide direction for the City Council and staff throughout the year. The 2016 Platform includes several components relevant to arts, culture, and the creative economy:

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Support efforts to:

- Expand arts opportunities for the public.
- Identify funding for the City's community arts programs and arts education in our schools.
- Keep film, television, and commercial advertisement production and post-production in Culver City, California, and the United States.
- Recognize and preserve the arts as an economic value and resource to the City.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Support efforts to:

- Foster the City's efforts to spur economic development, revitalize neighborhoods, and remove blight.
- Develop and promote policies, legislation, and grants that help urban areas foster greater economic opportunity.
- Retain, expand, and attract businesses to the city that create jobs compatible with the local workforce and tax revenues for the local economy.



Vox Femina Chorus (Recipient of a Performing Arts Grant)

Source: Frances Chee

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CIVIL DISCOURSE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

The City of Culver City and the National Institute for Civil Discourse (NICD) collaborated during 2018 to hold two community meetings focused on Fox Hills, a historically under-represented, diverse, and densely-populated neighborhood facing pressure to grow. This project was part of NICD’s Revive Civility and Respect Cities Initiative to enhance the engagement between citizens and elected officials and to use civil discourse to address a specific community issue. Culver City was selected to participate in this effort as one of five municipalities from around the country based on the City’s commitment to changing the way it interacts with residents.

Prominent themes that emerged from this public engagement regarding Fox Hills were the desire to preserve “...the culture and uniqueness of the community, attract greater amenities, and better sync neighborhood needs with City goals.” One specific suggestion was for more neighborhood-based arts and cultural events such as “concerts in the parks (like Playa Vista).”

CULVER CITY PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN UPDATE

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update documents the community’s interest in arts and cultural programming and a decades-long involvement by PRCS in arts and cultural programming and facilities. This 2009 plan also identifies arts and culture as a tool to promote cultural equity and youth development in the community. Corey Lakin, PRCS Director confirmed that the Plan is outdated and an update is needed to reflect demographics that have changed over the last decade and to hear from the community.

SECTION 3.6: CULTURAL AND ARTS VENUES

This section identifies existing cultural venues and programs listed elsewhere in this report.

CHAPTER 4: RECREATION ACTIVITIES, PROGRAMS & SERVICES

This chapter identifies existing cultural events hosted or presented by the City. Holiday events and cultural/arts celebrations are hosted frequently by the City. These events are often free to attend and are held at City facilities as well as cooperative locations throughout the city, including:

- Fiesta La Ballona
- Charity and Fundraising Events
- Annual Garden Show & Plant Sale
- Walking Tours of Downtown
- Art and Culinary Events
- Annual Interfaith Alliance Music & Culture Festival
- Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration

Youth and teen programs include sports, music and arts classes and camps, ceramic classes, and a musical theatre camp. For seniors, art, dance, and music classes are offered. There are also arts programs sponsored by outside organizations.

Key findings from the survey, community workshops, and focus groups:

- The cultural and fine arts be given greater prominence in programs and events.
- Cultural and fine arts programs and activities need to play a greater role in PRCS offerings.
- The Cultural Affairs Division needs to work with and dovetail into PRCS facilities and services.
- Arts and cultural activities are innate to this community and assets that should be showcased.
- There were significant requests for increases in the number of cultural and fine arts, music and social activities sponsored through PRCS and to identify Culver City as a regional cultural resource.

CHAPTER 7: IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES

Section 7.3.4 – Cultural Arts Programming: A key finding from the public outreach tools was that consideration should be given to cultural and fine arts and that they are given a greater spotlight in programs and events in Culver City. The public indicated that the City should find ways to involve “at-risk” youth in cultural activities as a possible avenue to building self-esteem. Attendance at citywide events is strong and there is a large community support for festivals. The needs analysis shows that residents are interested in arts education and cultural programming. There is also a vibrant music and art scene in the region and a wide variety of private-sector commercial music and art establishments. All of the above are the reasons the community would like to see the City integrate cultural and arts programming into its programs and activities. Recommended ways to accomplish this include:

- Using cultural and ethnic themes for community festivals and events
- Expand fee-based classes in the creative arts, music, and dance
- Host talent events or competitions open to all types of ethnic talent
- Collaborate with the library and schools to provide targeted programs and outreach to “at-risk” youth
- Use public forums and community center wall space for exhibitions of local artists’ work



The Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2009) encourages the integration of arts and culture and City events and festivals, such as Culver City’s Boulevard Music Summer Festival.

Source: Boulevard Music

CULTURAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

The City's role in arts and culture has proliferated and evolved in recent decades to encompass cultural facilities, public programming, funding, and other activities.

CULTURAL FACILITIES

The City owns two downtown theatres that are operated by resident nonprofit theatre companies under in-kind leases. The Kirk Douglas Theatre, a division of the Center Theatre Group, renovated and operates in the former Culver Theater. The Actors' Gang operates in the Ivy Substation theatre. The City also provides the Wende Museum of the Cold War with an in-kind lease for the former National Guard Armory building. As detailed in the "Cultural Assets" section of this report, the City also owns and operates the VMA and rest of the VMB.

STAFFING

City arts and cultural programs are currently staffed by one full-time and two part-time positions (plus contractors, such as art conservators, who perform specialized project-based services on an as-needed basis). One full-time position, located within the Administrative Services Department, coordinates Art in Public Places, the Commission, Historic Preservation, and other programs, with a part-time associate. A second part-time contract position administers the Performing Arts Grant Program and other programs and projects. There are additional staff members at the Veterans Memorial Complex who are not cultural affairs staff but support the arts uses of the facility. Nearly all stakeholders cite limitations in the current staffing level and the need for additional staff. They acknowledge the City's financial challenges in adding new positions but frame the need in terms of sustaining current functions, enhancing the City's role in its creative sector, and demonstrating a more significant civic commitment to arts, culture and the creative economy.



Mural in Culver City Arts District by D*Face.

Source: Jamie Rojo



Culver Current by Nate Mohler, 2019. Art in Public Places Program.

Source: Art in Public Places Program

ARTS AND CULTURE PROGRAMS

ART IN PUBLIC PLACES PROGRAM

See description in the “Cultural Assets” section of this report.

ART WALK

This annual, free, self-guided, citywide tour includes many of the art galleries and exhibition spaces in the Culver City area.

ARTIST LAUREATE PROGRAM

This is a new program, through which the City selects an individual artist from the community in one of three artistic disciplines – performing, visual, or literary – for a two-year appointment. The award recognizes artistic excellence, supports the artist’s development, and spotlights the important role

individual artists play in contributing to a vibrant community. The Artist Laureate will serve as a cultural ambassador by attending community and arts events, exhibiting/performing/engaging with the public, and partnering with the Culver City Unified School District, nonprofit organizations, or the business community.

BOULEVARD MUSIC SUMMER FESTIVAL

The City produces a free, annual outdoor summer concert series at the Dale Jones City Hall Courtyard. This well-loved and well-attended concert series produced by Boulevard Music, an independent local producer, and sponsored by the City and local businesses.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

Established by ordinance in 1991, this program includes a process by which sites can be designated Cultural Resources at one of three levels based on their architectural, historical, or cultural importance. In 1987, Thirtieth Street Architects completed a field survey of significant structures in Culver City that became the basis for the Culver City Historic Preservation Advisory Committee Report ("HPAC Report"). The 1990 HPAC Report ranked over 100 structures (including film studio, commercial and residential properties) for designation as Cultural Resources at either "Landmark," "Significant," or "Recognized" levels. City Council designated 50 structures as having either "Landmark" or "Significant" designations. Culver City also has three designated historic districts: 11027-11047 Braddock Drive, 4052-4070 Lafayette Place, and 4128-4181 McConnell Boulevard. Three of Culver City's "Landmark" structures are on the National Register of Historic Places. These are the Washington Building (9720-9730 Washington Blvd), the Citizen Building (9355 Culver Blvd), and the Culver Hotel (9400 Culver Blvd). The City partners with the Culver City Historical Society and has a designated City Historian to advise the City Council and Cultural Affairs Commission on local historical issues.

PERFORMING ARTS GRANT PROGRAM

Established in 1994 as part of Art in Public Places, this funding program makes annual grants to nonprofit performing arts organizations located in Los Angeles County and provides funding for public programs in Culver City. Under the purview of the City Council and the Cultural Affairs Commission, the Performing Arts Grant Program is designed to support arts organizations and to bring distinguished cultural programming to Culver City. Grant awards can be up to \$6,500 (in 2020) and must be matched. The total annual grants budget is set at a minimum of \$25,000 plus additional amounts, including up to 25% of developer fees deposited in the prior fiscal year into the Cultural Trust Fund and annual contributions from donors such as Sony Pictures Entertainment and the Culver City Arts Foundation. Between 2011 and 2016, a total of \$279,510 was distributed. In 2019, the 25th anniversary of the program, the budget was \$160,000.

SPECIAL EVENTS GRANT PROGRAM

In addition to the Performing Arts Grant Program the City also makes annual grants that include an arts/cultural category for partial support of events taking place in the city, such as the LA Film Festival, Arts District Art Walk and Roll Festival, Asian World Film Festival, and Culver City Symphony

Orchestra. Arts/culture grant awards range from approximately \$1,250 to \$8,945. In the 2019/2020 fiscal year, 23 grants were awarded totaling approximately \$90,000. These grants overlap with the Performing Arts Grant Program although they are inclusive of a broader range of applicants and activities. Organizations may only apply to one grant program for the same event.

ARTS AND CULTURE FUNDING

The Culver City arts and cultural ecosystem relies on a range of both earned and contributed revenues. In Culver City, the majority of creative activity occurs in for-profit creative enterprises, ranging from Sony Pictures Entertainment to small art galleries. However, the topic of arts and cultural funding generally refers to the availability of *contributed* dollars for the arts: grants, donations, gifts, and commissions given to nonprofit arts and cultural organizations and individual artists. Arts and cultural organizations also typically generate *earned* revenues from their public programs, such as sales of theatre and concert tickets, admissions, and concessions. Similarly, individual artists earn revenues often from the sale of their artwork or services. Culver City's primary sources and categories of contributed dollars for arts and culture include:

- City funding programs: General Fund, Cultural Trust Fund, Performing Arts Grant Program, and Special Event Grant Program.
- City of Culver City's Special Arts Appropriations: City Council makes annual appropriations for specific arts programs, which may be ongoing, such as the annual Boulevard Music Summer Festival, and one-time appropriations.
- Government Grants from outside of Culver City: These sources include the Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture, City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department, California Arts Council, and National Endowment for the Arts.
- Private Contributions: This encompasses non-governmental giving, such as foundation grants and individual charitable contributions.
- Corporate Giving: Corporations and businesses in Culver City are active contributors to the community's arts and cultural scene through sponsorships and other contributions. Sony Pictures Entertainment, in particular, has made a sustained philanthropic arts investment in Culver City through its contributions to the Performing Arts Grant Program, arts education in the Culver City Unified School District, and other arts grantmaking.
- Culver City Cultural Affairs Foundation: On June 26, 2006 the City Council established the Culver City Cultural Affairs Foundation, also known as 'Culver Arts' (dba. Culver Arts Foundation). On August 4, 2008 the Internal Revenue Service issued its determination that the CCCAF qualified as a tax exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, retroactive to September 26, 2006. Its goal for the current year is to raise \$90,000 for grants that supplement and fill gaps in the City's Performing Arts Grants. The Foundation is also interested in expanding its role and fundraising in addition to the City's recommendations.
- Donated Use of Facilities: The City makes a significant in-kind investment in the arts and cultural ecosystem through its donated leases of the Kirk Douglas Theatre, Ivy Substation, and Wende Museum. It also provides discounted rental rates to nonprofit users of the VMB.
- Culver City Redevelopment Agency: Before its elimination in 2012, Redevelopment had an important role in arts and cultural funding and support. For example, the agency took a lead role in the formation and development of the Culver City Art District. The District became its

own Business Improvement District in 2016, in part to replace the revenues and administration formerly provided by Redevelopment.

Overall, the City's investments in arts and culture are modest but they provide a significant amount of community benefit with limited use of General Fund expenditures. The largest portions of the City's investment are developers' fees paid into the Cultural Trust Fund to fulfill most operating costs of the Cultural Affairs Division (office supplies, commissioner stipends, conference costs, etc.), contractor/consultant fees, maintenance and restoration of City-owned artworks, new temporary and permanent art commissions on City property, and the majority of the money allocated each year to the Performing Arts Grant Program. The City has effectively leveraged its development – through its more than 30-year art requirement on private development – and its real estate – especially the donated leases to arts organizations. The City has also encouraged private contributions through Culver Arts and the Cultural Trust Fund. However, as the current rapid pace of development slows, developer contributions to the Cultural Trust Fund are expected to decline. The City is also facing structural challenges to its budget that limit its capacity to expand staffing and other General Fund expenditures. There is a clear need to consider new options for arts and cultural funding that address these systemic issues.

Arts and cultural funding is also viewed by stakeholders, inside and outside of City government, as a symbolic demonstration of support. While nearly all stakeholders value arts and culture and view it as an essential component of Culver City, this priority is not always expressed through the City's budget. There is a shared desire among stakeholders to identify a new way to balance the need for resources with the City's fiscal realities and to demonstrate the value placed on arts and creativity in a meaningful way.

APPENDICES

DEFINITIONS

Artists. Creative Workers. Arts. Culture. Creative Economy and Industries.

The term definitions for this **Arts, Culture and Creative Economy Element of the Culver City General Plan** are based on an inclusive view of *artists*, the *arts*, and the *culture* of Culver City. The definitions draw an indistinct circle around the central domain of the arts sector and expand to encompass the unique culture of the city, its residents, and its *creative economy*.

Artist.⁹ The title of “Artist” is traditionally applied to a person who engages in an activity deemed to be an art – creating, practicing, and/or demonstrating an artistic practice, typically within a discipline such as visual, performing, or literary arts, music, or dance. Today, the definition of an artist is broader, running the gamut from an individual, traditional artist to a commercially-oriented creative worker. Artists are moving across the business, industrial, and creative sectors working in collaboration with the commercial world and are significant drivers of economic growth and innovation. In *Living with Art*,¹⁰ Mark Getlein proposes five activities, services, or functions of today’s artists: They create places for human purpose, create extraordinary versions of ordinary objects, record and commemorate, give tangible form to the unknown and emotion, and refresh our vision and help us to see the world in new ways.

With the vast changes in the technology sector, the artist is working in a more collective, team-based model, especially in design fields. Although some studio and performing artists still work more traditionally, digital artists do not. Digital artists are part of the fastest-growing working groups in the world and are at the forefront of creative industries.

Creative Workers/Creatives.¹¹ Creative workers or ‘creatives,’ like artists, are very diverse. They are responsible for creative output in the areas of design, media, and the arts whereby the production process is reliant on creativity both as an individual skill and organizational source of competitive advantage. The occupation categories typically include writing, design, theatre, television, radio, motion pictures, related crafts, advertising, marketing, scientific research and development, product development, digital media, software development, engineering, and more. Individual communities may define creative workers either more broadly or narrowly depending on their specific creative sectors.

Arts.¹² The term *arts* traditionally meant the fine arts: visual arts, music, theatre, dance, and literature. The recent shift in the definition of artist affects the current definition of the arts. Choreographer Liz Lerman, a MacArthur Genius Award recipient, describes the shift to a modern definition as a vertical

⁹ What Do We Mean by Art, Artists, Culture, and Industry? The evolution of meaning in relation to changing patterns of work, Ann M. Galligan, 2007.

¹⁰ *Living with Art*, Mark Getlein, 10th edition, 2012.

¹¹ WESTAF <https://cvsuite.org/learn-2/creative-industries/#workers>

¹² What Do We Mean by Art, Artists, Culture, and Industry? The evolution of meaning in relation to changing patterns of work, Ann M. Galligan, 2007.

hierarchy becoming a level playing field, with all art forms holding parallel value with a different focus, from the mural artist doing community-engaged work to the classically trained musician on stage.

Culture. Historically, the term culture described tending to the earth and fostering growth, or cultivation and nurture, and then evolved to culture as a thing in and of itself. It is most often defined in anthropological terms: “*An integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior. The outlook, attitudes, values, morals, goals, and customs shared by a society or group...*”¹³ It includes the characteristics and knowledge of a community, encompassing language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music, and arts.

Culture is understood to be broad and inclusive, although, for a specific community, the definition is idiomatic and is defined by the place and the people who live there.

*"Culture encompasses religion, food, what we wear, how we wear it, our language, marriage, music, what we believe is right or wrong, how we sit at the table, how we greet visitors, how we behave with loved ones, and a million other things."*¹⁴

Creative Economy. The Creative Economy Report¹⁵ defines the creative economy as the businesses and individuals involved in producing cultural, artistic and design goods and services. The creative economy also includes organizations that provide a venue for artists to share their work with the public, such as museums, art galleries, and theatres. In a broader sense, the creative economy must include a support system that teaches, nurtures and sustains creative activity: arts programs in PreK-12 schools, post-secondary arts institutions to develop talent, and philanthropic foundations along with other nonprofit funding organizations to provide financial resources and services to the creative arts.

Creative Industries.¹⁶ Creative industries are the types of business enterprises – for-profit, nonprofit and sole proprietor – comprising the creative economy. Individual urban areas may define their creative sectors to include a different set of industries, although business types commonly included are:

- Fine arts – venues for the arts, museums, performing arts, music, visual arts, arts organizations
- Design – engineering, architecture, manufacturing technology, fashion
- Support services for creative industries – R&D services, consulting, post-secondary education
- Media/communications – advertising, graphic design, marketing, public relations, publishing, broadcasting
- Entertainment – media, educational and training film development, post-production, recreation, video gaming development

¹³ Cultural Anthropology, McGraw Hill, 1990.

¹⁴ Cristina De Rossi, Anthropologist, London, 2017.

¹⁵ The Center of Art Culture Music Technology Architecture Fashion Design Entertainment – The Creative Economy of Culver City, Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation, 2017.

¹⁶ WESTAF Creative Vitality Suite, <https://cvsuite.org/learn-2/creative-industries/#industries>

- Data sciences – communications, internet, telecomm
- Software and hardware – manufacturing and retail software

CULTURAL ASSET LISTS

Table 2: Performing Arts Venues in Culver City

ID #	Venue Name
1	Arcana: Books on the Arts
2	Boulevard Music
3	Brasil Brasil Cultural Center
4	Carlson Park
5	Culver City Julian Dixon Library
6	Culver Steps
7	Fine Arts Complex (West Los Angeles Community College)
8	Ivy Substation (The Actors' Gang)
9	Kirk Douglas Theatre (Center Theatre Group)
10	Media Park
11	Robert Frost Auditorium (Culver City High School)
12	The Willows Community School
13	Veterans Memorial Auditorium
14	Veterans Memorial Park

Source: City of Culver City

Table 3: Art Galleries in Culver City

ID #	Gallery Name
1	Fabien Castanier Gallery
2	FP Contemporary
3	Gallery 9 (The Whole 9)
4	Klowden Mann
5	Robert Graham Studio
6	Roberts and Tilton
7	Sixty29 Contemporary
8	Thinkspace Art Gallery
9	WWA Gallery

Source: City of Culver City

Table 4: Culver City Art in Public Places Collection

ID #	Name of Artwork	Type of Artwork
1	Beehive	Architecture as Art
2	Studio Pali Fekete Architects Building and MODAA Lofts Studio	Architecture as Art
3	Umbrella	Architecture as Art
4	Untitled (Pittard & Sullivan Building)	Architecture as Art
5	What Wall?	Architecture as Art
6	A Child's Landscape and Untitled	Private Art
7	After Market Wheel	Private Art
8	Baptismal Font (St. Augustine's Church)	Private Art
9	Bloom Dimension	Private Art
10	Canaan	Private Art
11	Children In Flight	Private Art
12	Cirrostratus	Private Art
13	Cloud	Private Art
14	Culver City Currency	Private Art
15	Culver...Is That You?	Private Art
16	Echo Echo	Private Art
17	Edges & Ends	Private Art
18	Emerald Rings	Private Art
19	Euclid	Private Art
20	Five Elements	Private Art
21	Gate Eccentrics	Private Art
22	Gehry Loggia	Private Art
23	Golden Time	Private Art
24	Helms Coach Gone A Rye	Private Art
25	Higher Ground	Private Art
26	Illumination	Private Art
27	Light Wave	Private Art
28	Linear Cascade	Private Art
29	M Grass	Private Art
30	Magnetic Field I	Private Art

ID #	Name of Artwork	Type of Artwork
31	Magnetic Field li	Private Art
32	Media In Motion	Private Art
33	Meditation Garden	Private Art
34	Modulation/Demodulation	Private Art
35	Multiplicity/ Ways Of Seeing	Private Art
36	Neptune's Necklace	Private Art
37	Nueva	Private Art
38	Plato's Cup	Private Art
39	Primordial Reflections	Private Art
40	Punctuation Station	Private Art
41	Rainbow	Private Art
42	Reach For The Sun	Private Art
43	Rough And Tumble & Ode To Friendship (two separate sculptures)	Private Art
44	Scan	Private Art
45	Shadows	Private Art
46	Solar Alignment	Private Art
47	Soleil	Private Art
48	Street Eyes	Private Art
49	Studio Pass	Private Art
50	Technicolor Drip	Private Art
51	The Doors	Private Art
52	Two Of Hearts	Private Art
53	Underlying Currents	Private Art
54	UNTITLED (Sculpture By Richard Gerrish)	Private Art
55	VALLEY OF THE PROPHETS (4 stained glass windows & decorative floor)	Private Art
56	Walter	Private Art
57	Water Tower	Private Art
58	We're Holding Together Just Fine	Private Art
59	A Moment In Time	Public Art
60	ALMOST INVISIBLE BOXES (multiple pieces)	Public Art
61	Boulevard	Public Art

ID #	Name of Artwork	Type of Artwork
62	Catching A Shade	Public Art
63	City Sequence	Public Art
64	COUGARS I And II	Public Art
65	Crossed Currents	Public Art
66	Culver Current (temporary installation)	Public Art
67	Day To Night	Public Art
68	Dream Figure	Public Art
69	Duck And Fruits	Public Art
70	Homage To Ballona Creek	Public Art
71	King Kong Gone	Public Art
72	Moving Pictures (7 zoetropes total)	Public Art
73	Our Best	Public Art
74	Path Of Life	Public Art
75	Postcards From Ballona	Public Art
76	Rivers Of The World	Public Art
77	Tree Of Life	Public Art
78	Apple Trees	Public Art
79	Culver City Singularity	Public Art
80	Film Strip U.S.A.	Public Art
81	Give Me Your Hand	Public Art
82	Hanging Garden	Public Art
83	La Ballona	Public Art
84	Panoramic	Public Art
85	Quotation Courtyard	Public Art
86	Sentry	Public Art
87	Singers	Public Art
88	The Lion's Fountain	Public Art
89	Truth Or Fiction	Public Art

Source: Culver City Art in Public Places Program