

Arts, Culture, and Creative Economy Policy Framework

August 17, 2021 Draft

Culver City community members are creating a new vision and guiding principles for the city's future. This initiative, "Picture Culver City," is a comprehensive General Plan Update (GPU) and will result in new long-range planning documents with goals, policies, and actions. These documents will work together to maintain Culver City's uniqueness and create opportunities to improve every aspect of the city—including economic growth, transportation, housing, climate change, and more—through 2045.

This Arts, Culture, and Creative Economic Policy Framework DRAFT is an **interim step** in the GPU process before drafting the elements (or chapters). It incorporates input from the community, the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC), the Technical Advisory Committees (TACs), City staff, and City Council.

The current framework is based on more than 18 months of research and stakeholder engagement, beginning in September 2019, and extending to March 2021. The existing conditions report for arts, culture and creative economy was developed and shared virtually with the public and GPAC during 2020. In December 2020 and March 2021, the GPU team convened a TAC composed of ten Culver City residents with professional qualifications in this area during two meetings. This TAC will meet one more time to identify and discuss key issues and generate ideas for the goals and policies document. This framework includes policies that the TAC has suggested to date.

Where We Are Now: Culver City's Creative Sector

Arts, culture, and the creative economy are in Culver City's DNA. The creative sector plays a significant role in the overall economy for the city and for the region. While City government's involvement in arts and culture has evolved in recent decades, it has been impacted by the need to minimize General Fund expenditures and rely on other resources. This GPU is an opportunity to reconsider the City's role in investments and partnerships in arts, culture, and the creative economy.

Current concerns affecting the creative sector include lasting economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, rising real estate values, higher commercial and residential rents, increased traffic and parking issues, and other outcomes of growth and density. For example, the Culver City Arts District has lost art galleries and other creative businesses because of rising rents. Art galleries and creative businesses have also been negatively impacted as arts consumers buy more online or through art fairs and not at galleries.

Arts, culture, and creative economy issues for the GPU 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 and innovating in civic issues. The main areas of opportunity are:

- **Positioning Culver City as a center for innovation and creativity:** While the challenges include funding, displacement, and facilities, Culver City's potential to continue advancing its identity and image as a creative center is great.
- **Expanding focus to the wider creative economy:** The history of the City's role in arts and culture shows a focus generally on the nonprofit and performing and fine arts sectors, including the Art in Public Places Program. The City has an opportunity to redefine and expand its role in engaging its creative community and in partnering with major creative sector employers.
- **Engaging Culver City's creative workers (creatives¹):** A defining element of Culver City's creative community is its many creatives, both those who live and those who work in the city. The City is starting to convene existing organized networks of creatives, like the Culver City Arts District, and activating creatives. The City can consider its role in engaging and activating this community, such as convener, director, and/or funder.
- **Addressing structural funding issues:** The City's investments in arts and culture have been modest, minimizing General Fund expenses in favor of relying heavily on developer public art fees, leveraging its real estate, and encouraging private contributions. The GPU offers an opportunity to consider new public and private sources for arts and cultural funding, beyond existing funding sources like the General Fund, to address these systemic issues.
- **Addressing geographic issues and access:** Most cultural venues and assets are in the northeast area of the city and Downtown, including along the Cultural Corridor. However, stakeholders have requested cultural programming closer to where they live. Most cultural programming is Downtown and the city's traffic congestion serves as a barrier to participating in these programs. The plan can address how to 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.
- **Addressing facility and space issues:** Affordability is an issue for the creative community. It is reflected in needs for affordable live/workspaces for artists, performing and rehearsal venues, and other spaces. The GPU can address facility needs like rising rents and align this goal with affordable housing plans.
- **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 various challenges. The City can consider ways to sustain the vitality of these creative places and determine what are the next steps in the evolution of Culver City's arts districts.
- **Demonstrating support for arts, culture, and creativity:** Stakeholders inside and outside of City government partly view arts and cultural funding 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, the budget does not always reflect this priority. Dedicated funding and increased staff for arts, culture, and the creative economy are essential.

¹ "Creatives" is an inclusive definition of individuals with advanced training and experience in the design and production of a broad range of cultural products and services, including individual artists of all disciplines but extending to designers, media and communications workers.

Key Engagement Themes

This section summarizes themes from discussion groups and interviews relating to Culver City's arts, culture, and creative economy.

Key Considerations + Concerns for Planning

- Lack of funding and staffing for the arts;
- Changing role of City staff and types of services need review and integration;
- High and rising costs of space and housing for the creative sector;
- Staying true to the City's cultural identity;
- Gap between how much the City claims to value arts and culture and how much it actual supports it;
- Limited definition/concept of arts in Culver City; need to also include creativity in architecture, film, digital, culinary, style, etc.; and
- Traffic and parking issues.

Assets + Opportunities

- Improve on Culver City brand consistency;
- Tell the story of Culver City as a narrative, including pre-development, Indigenous people's history;
- Culver City's creative identity is strong and growing;
- Integrate creative economy into more of the City's functions and issues, like land use and housing;
- Develop the Culver City Cultural Corridor, from the Wende Museum to Ivy Substation;
- Succession planning for Cultural Affairs through the GPU;
- Opportunity to reassess and improve existing City arts programs;
- Update the survey of structures 45 years or older and the inventory of designated Culver City Cultural Resources;
- Address structural funding issues;
- Better support through permissions and other non-financial assistance for arts uses, facilities, and projects in the city;
- Explore City partnerships with tech sector companies;
- Embrace a role in the global creative community – be a place that welcomes and supports artists and their innovation;
- Appetite for bold, innovative ideas;
- Individual artists and creatives are a collective asset and opportunity;
- Pay attention to needs of individual artists and creatives;
- Strategically use Culver City's business, community, and creative individuals;
- Increase access to programming, make the arts more a part of people's daily lives;
- Consult those in the creative sector when changing development standards or if incorporating a development design review committee;
- Enliven cityscape with programming that engages the public;
- Close the gaps in arts marketing to the community – too much noise in the environment;

- Exemplary commitment to arts education in the Culver City Unified School District;
- There are wonderful arts facilities but also gaps and needs, including Kirk Douglas Theatre, Ivy Substation and Veterans Memorial Auditorium;
- Opportunity for creativity in urban planning; and
- Leverage the built environment's small scale and location as regional crossroads.

Where We Want to Be in the Future

The Arts, Culture, and Creative Economy Policy Framework will achieve outcomes, goals, policies, and actions that are based on feedback from Culver City members, stakeholders, State agencies, and City staff through the community outreach and engagement process since 2019. Each outcome will include key performance indicators with targets for measuring progress. Each goal is accompanied by a symbol that identifies the following cross-cutting community values supported through the policy's implementation.



Equity + Inclusion



Compassion + Community



Innovation + Creativity










Sustainability

Outcomes and Performance Indicators





- **Outcome:** Creative industries are growing steadily and maintaining healthy diversity.
 - **Target:** Positive rates of growth for the creative industries across sectors among large and small enterprises, in multiple industries/fields, and among for profit and nonprofit.
 - **Key Performance Indicators:** Positive measures of annual growth in creative sector jobs, earnings, and sales.
- **Outcome:** The City meets the creative sector's facility and space needs.
 - **Target:** Needs for a diverse range of affordable facilities and space are researched, identified, and planned.
 - **Key Performance Indicators:** Increased and appropriate space is available for performing arts, studio, work, and live entertainment uses, and space subsidy programs are in place.
- **Outcome:** Arts and cultural programs for the community are inclusive and address the needs of all segments of Culver City's population.

- **Target:** Needs and interests of diverse segments of Culver City's population are researched and understood and inform the design of cultural programming.
 - **Key Performance Indicators:** Culver City's population has equitable access to relevant cultural programming, across all races/ethnicities, ages, incomes, backgrounds, abilities, genders, and other characteristics.
- **Outcome:** There is sufficient and sustainable funding to meet arts and creative industry needs.
 - **Target:** Increased and sustained funding sources for nonprofit arts and cultural organizations, individual artists, smaller creative businesses, and City arts programs.
 - **Key Performance Indicators:** Healthy financial condition of nonprofit arts and cultural organizations, increased numbers and amounts of grants made to artists annually, new, and increased loans and rental assistance to small creative enterprises and increased cultural programming for the community.
- **Outcome:** Culver City is branded and recognized regionally, nationally, and internationally as a center for innovation and creativity.
 - **Target:** Regional, national, and international awareness of Culver City's creative identity is well known and understood.
 - **Key Performance Indicators:** Increase in public and media awareness and recognition, consistent creative business retention, and demand for relocations.




Policy Framework

- **Goal 1: Connected creatives.** Culver City's creatives are well-connected with one another and actively contributing to the community's civic welfare and economic prosperity.    
 - **Policy:** Convene and activate Culver City's creatives to address community and civic needs.
 - **Action:** Empower creatives to initiate defining the objectives and methods for their action. Examples include producing artistic projects, addressing societal problems, improving City functions, and demonstrating innovation.
 - **Action:** Provide City support and seek partnerships with local businesses and organizations for actions led by creatives.
 - **Policy:** Recognize and celebrate leadership accomplishments of Culver City creatives.
 - **Action:** Create an awards program and other rewards for creative leadership.
 - **Policy:** Expand the City government artist engagement efforts.
 - **Action:** Develop an artist in residence program placing artists within City departments to mutually define a project or role that advances the work of the department.
 - **Action:** Expand and enable the Artist Laureate Program to increase its capacity to lead creative projects in the community on behalf of the City, including multiple artists, greater compensation, and project funding.
- **Goal 2: Thriving creative sector.** All creative industries in Culver City's creative sector are thriving.   
 - **Policy:** Focus on the needs of the creative sector as an essential element of Culver City's economic success.
 - **Action:** Develop policy recognizing the role and importance of the creative sector to Culver City's past, current, and future economic prosperity.
 - **Action:** Develop a Creative Economy Strategy within Economic Development.
 - **Action:** Develop or facilitate access to workforce programs for creative sector jobs, connecting them to opportunities in Culver City creative businesses, such as job training, internships, mentorships, and apprenticeships.
 - **Policy:** Support Culver City's small- and mid-sized creative businesses.
 - **Action:** Develop or facilitate access to small business support, like technical assistance; financing; and shared marketing.

- **Action:** Evaluate a rental assistance program for creative enterprises.
 - **Policy:** Retain and support Culver City's large creative businesses.
 - **Action:** Keep communicating with Culver City's large creative businesses and respond to their requests for assistance.
- **Goal 3: Affordable working and living spaces.** There are affordable work and living spaces to meet the diverse needs of Culver City's creative sector.

 - **Policy:** Research, analyze, and identify the creative sector's space needs and solutions throughout the city. Such needs include affordable work, studio, exhibition, sales, rehearsal, performance, and living spaces.
 - **Action:** Develop a comprehensive, citywide creative facilities and space inventory, directory, needs assessment and master plan.
 - **Action:** Identify public/private partnership opportunities to meet identified facility and space needs, including through community benefit agreements and Art in Public Places Program requirements with developers.
 - **Action:** Include affordable live/work spaces for artists and creatives in the City's affordable housing policy.
 - **Action:** Explore developing a social purpose real estate organization, whose goals are mission-driven and not primarily financial, for creative space projects.
 - **Policy:** Support adaptive reuse of Culver City's historic structures.
 - **Action:** Develop an updated inventory of the city's historic resources.
 - **Action:** Reassess the City's role in historic preservation.
 - **Action:** Develop a plan to renovate or replace the Veterans Memorial Auditorium and Building, including involvement of PRCS.
 - **Action:** Continue ongoing maintenance and improvement of Kirk Douglas Theatre and Ivy Substation.
 - **Policy:** Promote the success and sustainability of Culver City's arts and cultural districts.
 - **Action:** Identify and address the needs of the four existing districts: the Arts District, Hayden Tract, Cultural Corridor and Helms Bakery.
 - **Action:** Develop a new creative district in Fox Hills to help attract and retain creative enterprises in that area.

- **Goal 4: Inclusive arts and cultural programming.** All of Culver City's population and areas of the city have meaningful access to inclusive and relevant arts and cultural programming.   
- **Policy:** Make available arts and cultural programming in underserved areas of the city, including Clarkdale (Tellefson Park), Culver/West (West Washington), and Fox Hills.
 - **Action:** Encourage interdepartmental collaboration to increase use of parks and other public venues for arts and cultural programming.
 - **Action:** Engage communities and neighborhoods when developing programming choices.
 - **Action:** Prioritize Art in Public Places artworks for underserved areas of the city.
 - **Action:** Increase diverse opportunities for arts and cultural programming that involve the active participation of residents and workers of all ages and backgrounds.
- **Policy:** Support lifelong learning in the arts.
 - **Action:** Support full implementation of the State Arts Standards for Public Schools in partnership with the Culver City Unified School District, Culver City Education Foundation, Los Angeles County Arts Education Collaborative, and the local arts community.
 - **Action:** Increase arts learning opportunities in community settings for populations facing barriers to access, such as children and young people, seniors, immigrants, low-income communities, and people experiencing homelessness.
- **Policy:** Increase awareness of the full breadth and depth of the community's history and the attributes and unique qualities of the local and regional ecosystem.
 - **Action:** Integrate historical narratives and imagery in arts and cultural projects and events.
 - **Action:** Use natural and open space areas as forums for cultural expression or arts events.
- **Policy:** Promote and advance diversity, equity and inclusion relating to all City programs and functions that involve the creative sector.
 - **Action:** Partner with the Equity and Human Relations Advisory Committee to develop a cultural equity policy and plan for the Cultural Affairs Commission.
 - **Action:** Develop policies and plans for diversity, equity, and inclusion for City programs and initiatives relating to the creative economy.
- **Policy:** Improve transportation access to arts and cultural programming and venues.

- **Action:** Coordinate with the City of Culver City Transportation Department, LA Metro, and other transportation agencies to improve transit access to arts and cultural programming and venues.
- **Action:** Incorporate current and future cultural event and venue information in multimodal transportation planning and operations.

- **Goal 5: Resources for the creative sector.**

There are sufficient and sustainable resources to meet the diverse needs of Culver City's creative sector.







- **Policy:** Increase funding for arts, culture, and creative economy.
 - **Action:** Develop additional revenues for the Cultural Trust Fund such as memberships for businesses and corporations, and employee contributions and involvement.
 - **Action:** Increase City allocations to the Cultural Trust Fund.
 - **Action:** Develop the capacity of Culver Arts as a fundraising entity by investing in professional staff and enhancing its leadership.
 - **Action:** Increase the developer requirement in the Art in Public Places Program from 1% to 2% on all new development and redevelopment.
 - **Action:** Evaluate creating a dedicated public revenue source, such as a portion of the hotel occupancy, sales, beverage, admissions, or other tax.
 - **Action:** Evaluate the use of municipal bonds for arts, culture, and creative economy capital projects.
 - **Action:** Evaluate the formation of one or more Business/Property Improvement Districts to support the cultural district(s).
 - **Action:** Continue to obtain grant funding to support arts, culture, and the creative economy in Culver City, and if necessary as increase funding, explore potential for hiring a dedicated City staff member to pursue grant funding.

- **Goal 6: City leadership.** The City has effective and strong leadership capacities for arts, culture, and creative economy.



- **Policy:** Recognize the role of the creative sector in Culver City's economic prosperity and community identity.
 - **Action:** Reorganize and consolidate City arts, culture, and creative economy functions in a Creative Economy Office.

- **Action:** Reorganize the Cultural Affairs Commission into a Creative Economy Commission with an expanded mission that encompasses the entire creative sector.
 - **Action:** Adopt a policy statement recognizing the importance of the creative sector to Culver City's economy and identity, and to other City functions, such as economic development, equity and racial justice, affordable housing, environmental health, and other civic issues.
 - **Action:** Adopt an active role for the City's leadership in arts, culture, and creative economy, including proactively identifying and facilitating projects and solutions.
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- **Goal 7: Center for innovation and creativity.** Culver City is branded and recognized nationally and internationally as a center for innovation and creativity.  
 - **Policy:** Develop a unified Culver City brand for its creative industries.
 - **Action:** Conduct an inclusive and equitable branding process for the creative sector.
 - **Action:** Conduct a long-term campaign to promote Culver City's creative industries to attract and retain businesses, and to support tourism and Culver City's identity.
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- **Goal 8: Ballona Creek.** Ballona Creek is a center for creativity.  
 - **Policy:** Enhance opportunities for arts, education, and culture when planning for improvements and activities along the Ballona Creek corridor.
 - **Action:** Develop plans and identify funding to implement public art and cultural amenities that promote community identity, history, and the environment associated with Ballona Creek.
 - **Action:** Work with commercial developments to incorporate art, culture, and design into creek-adjacent areas.
 - **Action:** Collaborate with the Culver City Unified School District and other local educational institutions to promote outdoor classrooms and curriculum focused on the native ecosystem, water resource management, and Native American history along the creek.
 - **Action:** Work with local Native American tribes and communities in developing curriculum and interpretive exhibits that share and uplift the traditions and culture of Indigenous people and association with the Ballona Creek.
 - **Action:** Explore creating gathering spaces along the creek, like small public plazas or parks, or even an amphitheater.