

# ARTS

Evolution



LAGUNA BEACH  
cultural arts plan 2016

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This plan is accompanied by a separate Appendix document that contains supporting information including a list of planning participants, survey reports and a cultural asset inventory. The Appendix is available from the City of Laguna Beach Cultural Arts Department.

# Executive Summary

The Laguna Beach Cultural Plan, undertaken with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, embodies the collective vision and ideas of the community. Laguna Beach was ready to make this plan—community engagement was marked by high levels of energy, dialogue and creativity. The plan is the product of contributions from more than seven hundred residents and visitors who actively participated in interviews, discussion groups, a town hall and two surveys. Many of the ideas in the plan’s recommendations are ones that arose during the community engagement and found a platform in the cultural plan.

## What Did We Learn?

The community engagement yielded consistent messages:

- Planning participants expressed a desire for Laguna Beach to be recognized as a community where artistic activities are part of residents’ daily life and which is a center for artistic innovation and creativity.
- Laguna Beach has high rates of attendance for nearly all types of arts events, and a strong desire to attend more often in Laguna Beach. Residents also attend the arts outside Laguna Beach at high rates.
- Laguna Beach’s artistic identity is important and valued, yet some believe it needs to evolve.
- There is substantial public support for a new cultural center. There is also an expressed demand among Laguna Beach arts organizations and artists for a new cultural facility, coupled with real barriers to accessing suitable, affordable spaces in the city.
- Planning participants and arts organizations both expressed the need for better information and communications about available arts opportunities for residents and visitors.
- Survey respondents consider all of the City’s arts and cultural functions to be important.
- Laguna Beach wants its public art program to include a broad range of artistic projects and activities.
- Laguna Beach’s nonprofit arts sector generates far greater economic impact than national averages, including \$49.1 million in total economic activity and more than \$2 million in local government revenues annually.<sup>1</sup>
- Arts organizations reported a benefit to collaborative marketing efforts and have shared goals to understand how to reach younger and more culturally diverse audiences.
- Arts organizations and local artists alike desire better city recognition and support.
- The Laguna Beach Community Foundation and the nonprofit arts sector reported a difficult local private fundraising environment.

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from Arts and Economic Prosperity IV: The City of Laguna Beach, CA. See page 4 in <http://www.lagunabeachcity.net/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?BlobID=9912>.

- Despite the difficult fundraising environment, there is an interest among some community leaders in helping advance the arts in Laguna Beach, suggesting a latent leadership and fundraising potential for projects with strong civic appeal that can galvanize community leaders to coalesce around shared goals.
- Laguna Beach artists deeply value the community and the role they can play in shaping its future.
- Resident artists face significant obstacles to future sustainability in Laguna Beach.
- Local artists seek greater connectivity and inspiration from outside Laguna Beach.
- Artists working in the field of public art want peer and outside review of public art proposals and would like to see fewer, larger-budget projects.

## **Laguna Beach Vision for the Arts**

Laguna Beach collectively articulated a vision for the arts that addresses the questions, “What do we aspire to and what would success look like for Laguna Beach in ten years?”

Our vision is that Laguna Beach...

- Is an energizing and continually evolving creative community
- Provides plentiful and vital arts opportunities throughout the community that engage its residents and visitors in the arts
- Actively recognizes and supports its working artists
- Has a growing community of artists who live and work within its boundaries and who actively shape its artistic life
- Is an active contributor to the international arts scene
- Is respected regionally and internationally as an essential arts destination

## **The Plan**

The cultural plan is organized into four goals with accompanying strategies. The plan will collectively strengthen and enhance the artistic vitality of Laguna Beach. They will also provide benefits and alignments beyond the arts. They will support increased economic impact, the tourism industry’s goals for repeat visitation and off-season stays, downtown activity that bolsters local merchants, and foster the interests of the community’s younger residents and families.

### **Goal 1: Facilitate and enable working artists to have thriving careers based in Laguna Beach.**

- 1.1. Recognize and promote the role and value of Laguna Beach’s working artists.
- 1.2. Build community and connection among Laguna Beach’s working artists.
- 1.3. Support development of affordable artists’ work/live and work spaces.
- 1.4. Develop stronger linkages for art students to interact with the community.

**Goal 2: Expand the availability of engaging arts offerings for residents and visitors.**

- 2.1. Provide more easily accessible, informal and year-round arts activities downtown and in the community.
- 2.2. Address the community's identified cultural facility needs.
- 2.3. Build on the public art program to achieve the next level of success and impact.
- 2.4. Enhance arts marketing to residents and visitors.

**Goal 3: Enhance Laguna Beach's artistic identity and reputation through greater connection with the global art world and multi-disciplinary creativity.**

- 3.1. Create one or more new, high-profile arts events designed to showcase Laguna's artistic vitality and relevance.

Note that other recommendations in this plan will support implementation of this goal, enhancing Laguna Beach's artist identity and reputation. These include recommended changes to the City's public art program (2.3.)

**Goal 4: Enhance cultural leadership for Laguna Beach.**

- 4.1. Build a civic leadership group and financial support drawing from among Laguna Beach's deep resource of prominent artists, business people and community leaders.
- 4.2. Provide the City resources needed to implement the plan.

Please refer to page 34 for a table of all recommendations.

## **Implementation and Funding**

The Laguna Beach Cultural Plan is an ambitious and long-term framework that will be implemented over ten or more years. It is a plan for the City as well as partners in the community. While the City will be the lead agency for most recommendations, it cannot fulfill the community's vision for arts development without support from artists, arts organizations, community groups and many others. Indeed, these people and organizations were all involved in the creation of this plan and have already contributed to its content.

Funding for much of the plan will be provided by a combination of City funds, most notably the existing sources of arts funding: the City's General Fund and the Business Improvement District. The potential of bond funding for capital needs was discussed during the planning process. Private resources may be provided through the recommended civic leadership group for the arts and the donors program for public art. It is anticipated that some recommendations will attract private funding from businesses, regional and national foundations, and federal government programs. Potential arts grant sources include the National Endowment for the Arts (in particular, the Art Place and Our Town programs), the California Arts Council, and private foundations. The development of this plan provides an excellent basis for grant proposals since it is grounded in the assessment of community needs and demonstrates increased public commitment to fulfilling those needs. Several of the recommendations (e.g., artists work/live, special events policy, international festival, presenting, etc.) will generate revenues as a part of their business models. Moreover, many of the recommendations involve partnerships and collaborations, which can bring non-City resources to shared initiatives, such as sponsorships, staff support, in-kind resources, and volunteers.

# The Context for Planning

## Overview of Laguna Beach

Laguna Beach is an incorporated city on the coast of California's Orange County region with a population of just over 22,000 in 2010. Sandwiched between Dana Point to the south, Newport Beach to the north and Irvine to the east, Laguna Beach residents talk about its greenbelt and its bluebelt – the hills that surround it and the ocean front they face.

Its physical isolation helps define Laguna Beach while the surrounding hills, limited highway access, and dedicated greenbelt have served to create a unique village feel. Moreover, the Laguna Beach coastline is protected by almost six miles of state marine reserve and an additional 1.2 miles of state conservation area.

The effects of this geographically sheltered locale and its natural beauty have inspired much of what residents wish to maintain and visitors travel here to experience – its special sense of place as a haven apart from urbanized Los Angeles and Orange County. For more than a century Laguna Beach has attracted artists, creatives and others who want to be somewhat outside the mainstream of Southern California. Captivated by the natural light and coastal views, the first plein-air painters arrived in 1903. The first art gallery, now the Laguna Art Museum, opened in 1918, and early forms of the now internationally acclaimed Festival of Arts Pageant of the Masters began in 1921.

### **“Laguna Is Both People and Place”**

Musicians and writers soon joined the artists who moved to Laguna Beach, which was fast becoming known as a town of creative and modern thinkers. The Laguna Players debuted in the 1920's and later became the Laguna Playhouse. By the 1930's Laguna Beach had become a social and vacation destination for the Hollywood elite. The “out of the mainstream” aspect of the area also provided an enclave for those in the gay community who sought acceptance and a place to live outside the constrictive and prevailing boundaries of society at that time. By the late 1930's as small gay bars opened and the population grew, Laguna Beach developed a worldwide reputation as a gay friendly place to live and visit.<sup>2</sup> Many believe that the community has developed and retained a culture of tolerance and acceptance.

Written in 2001, Laguna Beach's Vision Laguna 2030 Strategic Plan characterizes the identity of Laguna Beach's community and holds true today:

*...we cherish the spectacular environment that surrounds us, the charm and human scale that characterize our pedestrian-friendly downtown, the diversity of our population, distinctive neighborhoods, and our arts tradition. Laguna is both people and place. We have a tradition of tolerance, philanthropy and civic activism. This tradition is at the heart of our community.<sup>3</sup>*

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the influx of painters, photographers, filmmakers and writers established Laguna Beach as a recognized artist community that still defines its identity today. This has had a

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2 [http://www.savetheboom.com/resources/laguna\\_history.php](http://www.savetheboom.com/resources/laguna_history.php)

3 Vision Laguna 2030 Final Report and Strategic Plan, 2001.

significant effect on its rapid population growth. Since 1920, the population has risen from 300 residents to more than 22,000 today. Density and population growth seem to be kept in check by the geography as well as community activism which have worked together to limit over-development in the city proper. However, areas surrounding the greenbelt have seen and will continue to experience substantial population growth.

Hildegard Hawthorne, granddaughter of the novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne, described Laguna Beach as a "... place where beauty and cheapness and a trifle of remoteness hobnob together in a delightful companionship."<sup>4</sup> Much of this remains true today except for the "cheapness" descriptor. Limits to growth also include the cost of land and the cost of housing.

With the average salary of local workers around \$50,000 annually and the median sale price of a home in between Dec 2015 and March 2016 is \$1.575M<sup>5</sup>, many of those who work in Laguna Beach cannot afford to live in Laguna Beach. Many younger artists and Laguna College of Art + Design students interviewed as part of this research live in neighboring communities such as Aliso Viejo, Tustin or Irvine. Others who have lived here longer were able to have bought years ago and indicated they could not afford their home if it were on the market today. There is a similar situation regarding the availability of affordable artist studio or storefront space. Commercial vacancy rates in Laguna Beach are some of the lowest in the Orange County region, around 2.1% in the first quarter of 2015. The cost of renting or leasing space is upwards of \$3.50 per square foot<sup>6</sup> so even the smallest space can be unaffordable to the average creative entrepreneur.

The high cost of living means that the demographic in Laguna Beach is more generally upper income and older on average than its local city counterparts. With a median age of 49 years, Laguna Beach also has the oldest population of any of its surrounding communities. From 2009 to 2013, the median household income was \$94,325<sup>7</sup>. Only 5% of the City's population lives below the poverty line.

The residential population is dominated by well-educated professionals. In 2009, nearly 30% of the population over 25 years in age had either a graduate or professional college degree.

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) 2013 Profile of the City of Laguna Beach<sup>8</sup> indicates that the population in 2012 was comprised of 84% Non-Hispanic White, 7.5% Hispanic and 8.5% other Non-Hispanic residents.

### ***The Local Economy and Cultural Tourism***

Tourism, the arts and resident-serving businesses comprise the majority of Laguna Beach's economy<sup>9</sup>. By the numbers, tourism (also referred to as leisure in SCAG's research footnoted below) is the primary employer (34%) with education second (18%) and professional/retail services third (15%). While the tourism industry provides more than one-third of Laguna Beach's employment, the sector has the lowest

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4 <http://coasttocanyon.com/laguna-beach/>

5 [http://www.trulia.com/real\\_estate/Laguna\\_Beach-California/market-trends/](http://www.trulia.com/real_estate/Laguna_Beach-California/market-trends/)

6 Calculated using data from <http://www.cityfeet.com/cont/ca/laguna-beach-commercial-real-estate#pageNum=4>

7 The average household income in Laguna Beach was \$150,000 during that same time period, which was approximately 32% higher than the state's average.

8 [http://lagunabeachcity.net/documents\\_Large/CityofLagunaBeachProfile.pdf](http://lagunabeachcity.net/documents_Large/CityofLagunaBeachProfile.pdf)

9 <https://www.scag.ca.gov/Documents/OrangeCountyLP.pdf>



average per job salary (\$24,798) when compared with local jobs overall<sup>10</sup>. Major educational institutions that contribute to local employment include the Laguna Beach Unified School District and Laguna College of Art + Design. Professional/retail services include the creative and arts related businesses and galleries that also contribute to Laguna’s cultural tourism as well.

With an estimated six million people visiting the community annually, the nonprofit and for profit arts and leisure sectors are closely tied. Arts and cultural events such as Festival of Arts/Pageant of the Masters, Sawdust Art Festival, Laguna Art-A-Fair, Laguna Beach Live! and Laguna Dance Festival are significant drivers for local tourism. Much of the cultural programming that encourages tourists to choose Laguna Beach is provided by the nonprofit arts sector which receives an allocation from the Business Improvement District to support program or events which promote tourism. Each year approximately 14 - 16 nonprofit arts organizations receive funding through the City’s Cultural Arts Funding program with revenues provided by the Business Improvement District. In addition, the Laguna Museum of Art, Laguna Playhouse and Laguna College of Art + Design receive annual allocations made each year by the Business Improvement District.

## The City’s Context for Cultural Planning

In June 2015, when the cultural planning process began, the City of Laguna Beach had recently completed or was in the process of developing no fewer than seven planning efforts. Those reviewed for this research included:

- Vision Laguna 2030 Final Report and Strategic Plan
- Laguna Beach General Plan Land Use Element
- The Downtown Specific Plan
- Laguna Parking Management Plan
- Transit Program Service Analysis
- Village Entrance Study
- Enhanced Mobility and Complete Streets Transitions Plan
- Landscape and Scenic Highways Element

Those that were most relevant to this cultural plan were Vision Laguna 2030, the Downtown Specific Plan and the Village Entrance Study. The Downtown Specific Plan illustrated the opportunities and limitations relevant to potentially siting a cultural facility or artist work/live space. In addition, studies related to downtown traffic, parking, and visitors’ access and mobility were helpful to understanding the overall environment in which cultural activities could take place. Furthermore, they clarified the potential concerns and feasibility of increased activity during the summer festival season and helped guide recommendations for off-season cultural events.

Vision Laguna 2030 included an Arts and Culture Strategy Team Action Plan as well as references throughout that correlate with the feelings expressed and the findings identified during this cultural planning process. Recommendations in this cultural plan for affordable artist housing, community

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<sup>10</sup> The average salary for those employed within Laguna Beach’s City limits was \$50,551.

meeting spaces and supporting ongoing efforts to be “known as a community of artists and a home for the arts and cultural programming” reflect back to Vision Laguna 2030.

Some of the arts and culture projects proposed for action in Vision Laguna 2030 have been implemented while many others continue to be a theme for this cultural plan. There are a number of areas of overlap between Vision Laguna 2030’s Arts and Culture Action Plan and this plan. For example, both documents prioritize consideration of a community cultural center, the identification of new funding sources, development of affordable work/live spaces, better use of existing public and private property for cultural activities, and increased connections with the national and international art world. In this way, Vision Laguna 2030 and Art Evolution are companion documents, neither one superseding the other, but rather working collaboratively to address and enrich Laguna Beach’s whole arts and culture ecosystem

Areas of alignment were also identified between this plan and the City’s General Plan Land Use Element including considerations of adaptive reuse of buildings for cultural services and affordable artist work/live space. It further acknowledges that “Culture and the arts have been the cornerstones of the community for many years.”<sup>11</sup>

During the planning process, the cultural planning consultants maintained regular contact with urban planning firm MIG, the Downtown Specific Plan consultants. At the time this plan is being written, MIG’s recommendations were not finalized. Some cultural plan recommendations relate to activities in downtown Laguna Beach, including the Civic Art District. As the Downtown Specific Plan is finalized its recommendations should be coordinated with those contained in this cultural plan.

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11 Laguna Beach General Plan Land Use Element (2012) p. iii.

## Laguna Beach's Inclusive Definition of the Arts

Laguna Beach has long been associated with the visual and performing arts and artists, and they remain a vital part of the arts community. The local definition of arts and artists is now far broader and encompasses all art forms and types of artists. Indeed, the cultural asset inventory reflects a diverse range of artists and arts organizations working in the community.

This cultural plan is intended to be inclusive of all art forms and working artists of all disciplines, including visual, performing, literary, digital and design. It is inclusive of fine arts as well as popular, commercial, craft, historic preservation, architectural and culinary arts activity. This plan also recognizes the role of the arts educator, arts student, the aspiring professional artist, artists who do not make their entire living from their art work, the makers movement, and passionate amateurs.

Laguna Beach is also a community that includes many people who are essential to the arts through their appreciation and assistance—arts curators and gallerists, art collectors, arts lovers and attendees, arts patrons, volunteers and others who support the arts.

# Community Engagement Findings

## The Planning Process

The Laguna Beach Cultural Plan embodies the collective vision and ideas of the community. Laguna Beach was ready to make this plan—community engagement was marked by high levels of energy, dialogue and creativity. The plan is the product of contributions from more than seven hundred residents and visitors who actively participated in interviews, discussion groups, a town hall and two surveys. Many of the ideas in the plan’s recommendations arose during the community engagement and found a platform in the cultural plan.

The goals of planning were to:

- Engage the community at large, as well as arts stakeholders and other community leadership, in a comprehensive process of developing a vision and goals for Laguna Beach’s cultural development.
- Explore and articulate the cultural identity of Laguna Beach as a community, based on the perceptions and aspirations of its people, and a path for development of that identity.
- Explore and articulate the community’s needs and aspirations for arts facilities, on a conceptual level, and identify options for the City and others to exercise leadership in meeting those needs.
- Create a communitywide master plan that can serve as a framework for the City’s cultural development efforts, as well as its partners in the community.
- Coordinate the cultural plan with other City planning efforts, including the Vision Laguna 2030 Strategic Plan, Downtown Specific Plan update, Village Entrance Plan and Laguna Canyon Road Plan.
- Engage and energize leadership in support of the plan and its implementation.

The planning process began in April 2015 and included community interviews and discussion groups clustered in three weeks during June, August and September. An online communitywide survey was distributed between August and October, including intercept surveys conducted at festival sites and City-sponsored concerts in the parks. A total of 515 respondents completed the survey. A survey of arts organizations that could be users of a new cultural facility was conducted in September and October.

Planning was guided by a Steering Committee that included two City Council members, an Arts Commissioner and a Planning Commissioner, in addition to the Cultural Arts Manager. Two planning sessions were conducted with the full Arts Commission and a joint session held with the Arts and Planning Commissions.

A broad cross-section of the community participated in planning: elected officials and community leadership, working artists of diverse disciplines and careers, design professionals, arts organizations, business and tourism leaders, gallery owners, board members, arts donors, residents of diverse ages, students and education leaders. While they do not constitute a random sample of community opinion,

findings were “triangulated” to compensate for the inherent bias of any specific segment of the community.

## What We Learned

***Planning participants expressed a desire for Laguna Beach to be recognized as a community where artistic activities are part of residents’ daily life and which is a center for artistic innovation and creativity.***

Laguna Beach residents and workers across the board acknowledged and value the history and reputation that the city has as an arts community. Survey respondents believe it is important that Laguna Beach be recognized as a community where artistic activities are a part of residents’ daily life, which is a center for artistic innovation and creativity, and is a city of working artists. Planning participants also considered it important for Laguna Beach to have resources available to artists to pursue their careers, including exhibition and performance space for artists, and affordable work and live spaces for artists.

Additional priorities include being recognized as an international arts destination, being known for iconic public art, and celebrating its *plein air* heritage.

***Laguna Beach has high rates of attendance for nearly all types of arts events, and a strong desire to attend more often in Laguna Beach.***

Based on survey responses, Laguna Beach has high rates of attendance for nearly all types of arts events. Moreover, survey respondents seek to attend even more of nearly every type of offering were it available locally. This is consistent with the city’s high education and household income demographics. Some planning participants, including tourism stakeholders, noted that it was more desirable to increase activity during the off-season, when it fills unused room capacity and poses less of a burden on City services, parking, congestion and other quality of life concerns.

Arts participation takes place through traditional attendance at museums, live performances and festivals. It also includes attendance in non-traditional venues (e.g., coffee shops and bars), outdoor public performances/events (e.g., downtown, the beach, or other public places), and creative co-working or “maker spaces.”

### ***Attendance in Laguna Beach in past year and the desire for more.***

Arts Event	Definitely/probably want more in Laguna Beach	Attended 1 - 6+ times in past 12 months in Laguna Beach
Museums (art, history, etc.)	72%	87%
Festivals (music, art, film, etc.)	71%	94%
Outdoor public performances or events (downtown, the beach, or other public places)	69%	79%
Art exhibits or crafts shows	67%	97%
Live performances at traditional venues (theater, dance studio, etc.)	67%	82%
Live performances at non-traditional venues (coffee shops, bars, etc.)	67%	71%

Attending lectures and symposiums on the arts	65%	67%
Special cultural events (ethnic, food, heritage, etc.)	59%	58%
Creative co-working or “maker spaces” (digital art, crafts, machining)	39%	24%

***Residents also attend the arts outside Laguna Beach at high rates.***

A comparison of attendance in and outside Laguna Beach reveals that residents attend arts events in other communities at high rates. This is an additional indicator of the high demand for arts programming among Laguna Beach community members. It also represents substantial loss of attendance to other communities, primarily to Los Angeles and Orange County. This reflects the range and quality of arts events offered in nearby communities, and the cultural development that has been occurring over time throughout Orange and Los Angeles Counties. Despite the high attendance levels previously noted, there are still one-third of survey respondents who identify “not interested in what’s offered” as an obstacle to their attendance. While it is natural and beneficial that residents go elsewhere for some of their arts activities, when coupled with the strong expressed desire to have more arts opportunities available in Laguna Beach, this supports the finding that there is a strong, unmet arts demand in Laguna Beach.

***Attendance Outside Laguna Beach***

Arts Event	Attended 1 to 6+ times in past 12 months OUTSIDE LAGUNA BEACH
Museums (art, history, etc.)	85%
Live performances at traditional venues (theater, dance studio, etc.)	78%
Art exhibits or crafts shows	73%
Festivals (music, art, film, etc.)	70%
Outdoor public performances or events (downtown, the beach, or other public places)	59%
Live performances at non-traditional venues (coffee shops, bars, etc.)	55%
Special cultural events (ethnic, food, heritage, etc.)	53%
Attending lectures and symposiums on the arts	49%
Creative co-working or “maker spaces” (digital art, crafts, machining)	19%

***Laguna Beach’s artistic identity is important and valued, yet some believe it has changed and needs to evolve.***

One opinion held by many, revealed through community engagement, is that Laguna Beach’s artistic identity and reputation, while longstanding and valuable, would benefit from evolution. There is tremendous pride of place and a desire to maintain the vital artistic identity that has been a part of the community for more than a century. In addition, there is widespread acknowledgement and appreciation of the quality and value of the arts community. But there is also a shared sense among professional

stakeholders (such as community leaders, business leaders and working artists) that Laguna Beach's artistic life and reputation could be more engaging and relevant to the current arts world. Criticisms are that Laguna Beach has become, or is perceived as, artistically conservative and safe. Based on the data gathered through the cultural planning process, there are several arguments one could make in favor of evolution.

The first argument relates to ways in which the 21<sup>st</sup> century has changed Laguna Beach's identity as an "arts town." Historically, Laguna Beach differentiated itself from other arts cities (such as Los Angeles or San Francisco) by collectively identifying as an artist's colony. Laguna Beach was a haven for artists and free thinkers whose artistic development thrived on the welcoming and close knit experience that this unique arts community provided. In addition, this distinctiveness was reinforced in part by Laguna Beach's topography, an enclave surrounded by hills and fronting the ocean. In recent decades however, the very characteristics that set the city apart and strengthened it, may be working against its vitality and creative identity. The art world increasingly thrives today on connectivity and interchange, and less on separateness.

Secondly, Laguna Beach's identity as a home for the artist has been tempered in recent years by the fact that the city is an increasingly expensive place to live. Laguna Beach still reflects, in some ways, its permissive, countercultural values while its average population has become older and more conservative, its coastal real estate values have skyrocketed, and its geographic boundaries limit future development and expansion. This reputation and identity as an arts community continues to influence new residents' decisions to move to Laguna Beach, but fewer and fewer are working artists like those in the earlier years. Priced out of the market, it is difficult for working artists to locate or remain here thus putting at risk the notion of being identified as a thriving artists' community.

A third argument in favor of reinvigoration is economic. Laguna Beach's economy is based in part on its festival season, art galleries, downtown village environment, the work of individual artists, and other arts offerings throughout the year. City revenues are derived in part from sales and transient occupancy taxes and parking receipts generated by these activities, and the accompanying hotel stays, restaurant meals, and other spending. However, the marketplace for arts consumers is largely unconstrained by city limits, so buyers increasingly need a positive inducement to keep Laguna Beach as their destination. Also, Orange County has grown up around it in recent decades, creating greater demand for cultural and creative experiences (as seen in the survey data). Visitors have many more choices today and the tourism industry must work harder to maintain a competitive advantage as an arts destination.

The type of artistic evolution needed for Laguna Beach is not an easy question and the responses varied. Some planning participants articulated the desire for a stronger contemporary focus, "edgier" work, or favoring the tastes of the international art collector. Others believe that by making it more possible for working artists to live and create in Laguna Beach and by promoting stronger connections within the artist community, Laguna Beach will remain vital and connected to the larger art world, since successful artists almost always maintain creative connections to their fields of art and the community. Planning participants indicated that their desire for inspiration and influence from beyond the city limits already exists and will only continue to grow as the means for interconnectivity expands.

***There is substantial public support for a new cultural arts space.***

The majority of survey respondents consider a new, flexible arts and cultural space for the community to be extremely or very important for Laguna Beach (66% of intercept respondents and 57% of online respondents). Survey findings align closely with recommendations in Vision Laguna 2030, which call for arts venues, a new community arts center and a world class cultural venue. Respondents believe a new space could provide community classes and programs for people of all ages, exhibition and gallery spaces, and performance and rehearsal spaces. This reinforces the finding that residents seek more arts offerings to be available to them in Laguna Beach, as well as arts experiences that are a part of their daily lives.

***There is an expressed demand among Laguna Beach arts organizations and artists for a new cultural facility.***

Both the facility needs assessment survey and interviews with artists and arts organization representatives overwhelmingly indicated a need for a new cultural facility that accommodates performances, exhibitions, community meetings and administrative space. Performing arts providers noted that a new facility would allow them to present more performances for potentially larger audiences (in some cases) as well as expand the diversity of productions. Visual arts groups expressed their desire for appropriately designed exhibit spaces for temporary and annual arts shows, as well as a venue for larger scale exhibitions. It should be noted that while the research tested the concept of a new cultural facility, the results also support the idea of meeting the needs of arts organizations and artists through a flexible venue perhaps in combination with enhancements to existing venues.

There are a number of performing, visual arts and event spaces available for rental in Laguna Beach, including the Laguna Playhouse, Festival of the Arts/Pageant of the Masters (Irvine Bowl and Forum), Laguna Art Museum, and [seven-degrees]. However, organizations that rent space report many challenges and compromises in availability, schedule, technical capacity, audience size and other use characteristics. Arts organizations that are potential users of a new facility indicated the need for a sufficient number of days of usage for year-round utilization. However, their ability to pay rental charges and related facility costs is low, which also suggests that high rates of subsidy would be required and that a business plan would need to be developed that would accommodate the needed subsidy.

***Planning participants and arts organizations both expressed the need for more effective communications about available arts opportunities for residents and visitors.***

There are multiple information channels available to the community about arts offerings but there are gaps in their effectiveness. About a third of survey respondents state that they miss arts events because they do not hear about them in a timely manner. About two-thirds of respondents indicate they obtain information regarding arts offerings through word of mouth and direct communications from community organizations. Printed materials are still important with more than half of the respondents relying on flyers and newspapers for information. One-third get their arts information online from the Cultural Arts Calendar and from social media. Online news sources are also mentioned in comments as a main source. It appears, therefore, that the overall marketing effort could be better coordinated to improve the reach of arts marketing, to introduce people to new events and activities that might interest them, to reinforce existing relationships, and generally enhance the community's image and visibility as an arts-rich place.



Respondents most often desire information to come directly from community organizations but there was an often-repeated desire for a centralized information resource for the arts. This is corroborated by arts organizations that also express the need for more synchronized marketing and communications efforts, preferably in the form of an online communitywide calendar of events. This would help with scheduling of events for maximum participation as well as create a one-stop source of listings for residents and visitors.

**Laguna Beach’s nonprofit arts sector generates far greater economic impact than national averages.**

The City of Laguna Beach participated in a national study conducted by Americans for the Arts<sup>12</sup> that measured a range of economic impacts of nonprofit arts organizations and their audiences.

The study showed that during fiscal year 2010, which corresponds to the economic downturn that began in 2007, total expenditures by Laguna Beach’s nonprofit arts organizations and their audiences totaled \$49.1 million. This spending—\$27.7 million by nonprofit arts organizations and an additional \$21.4 million in event-related spending by their audiences—supported 1,351 full-time equivalent jobs, generated \$32.1 million in household income to local residents, and delivered \$2 million in local government revenue.

More importantly, as seen in the table below, Laguna Beach’s economic impacts are far higher than other US cities of comparable size.

**TOTAL 2010 Economic Impact of the Nonprofit Arts and Culture Industry in the City of Laguna Beach** (Spending by Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and Their Audiences)

	City of Laguna Beach	Median of Similar Study Regions <i>Pop. = Fewer than 50,000</i>	Laguna Beach vs. Similar Cities
Direct Expenditures	\$49,081,279	\$9,053,126	542%
Full-Time Equivalent Jobs	1,351	287	470%
Resident Household Income	\$32,118,000	\$5,646,000	569%
Local Government Revenue	\$2,041,000	\$357,000	572%
State Government Revenue	\$2,531,000	\$372,000	680%

It must be noted that this study included only Laguna Beach’s nonprofit arts organizations. It does not account for the many arts-related businesses in the city, such as galleries, design firms, restaurants offering entertainment, and other creative enterprises. If the economic impact of Laguna Beach’s entire creative industry were measured, these figures would certainly be far higher.

**Arts organizations report a benefit to collaborative marketing efforts.**

In a focus group with the members of the Passport to the Arts marketing collaborative, participants reported that this cooperative effort resulted in “cross-pollination” of audiences, camaraderie rather than

<sup>12</sup> Source: Arts & Economic Prosperity IV, 2012

competition among partners, and increased revenues. They expressed interest in development and expansion of their collaboration and other initiatives.

***Arts organizations want to understand how to reach younger and more culturally diverse audiences.***

Marketing staff interviewed in the Passport to the Arts focus group indicated that they want to better understand the ways that audiences participate in Laguna Beach's arts offerings relative to other opportunities in surrounding cities. They want to learn how to attract younger audiences (18 to 45 years of age) through programming, marketing and the use of social media and are eager to participate in any technical assistance offerings that are available.

***Arts organizations and the Laguna Beach Community Foundation report a difficult local fundraising environment.***

Laguna Beach's arts organizations, like arts organizations throughout the US, rely on a combination of earned revenues from the sale of tickets or other programs and contributed income from corporate, foundation, and individual philanthropy. However, the city's lack of corporate headquarters or public and private foundations means there are fewer local philanthropic opportunities for nonprofit organizations. Arts organizations report that fundraising locally is made more difficult because of this situation, an observation that was corroborated by the Laguna Beach Community Foundation. The Foundation indicated a similar difficulty in building a culture of local philanthropy among Laguna Beach's individual donors, who often have relationships with, and giving commitments to, institutions and causes outside the community. This means that arts organizations have disproportionately high reliance on earned revenues. There is also a corresponding need for marketing expertise among arts administrators, strong marketing and promotions resources, and greater opportunities to produce, exhibit and present their work.

***There appears to be interest among community leaders to provide leadership and support for communitywide investments in the arts.***

Despite the difficult fundraising environment that is reported, there is an interest among some community leaders to assist the advancement of the arts in Laguna Beach. Many individuals already provide leadership through board service with and financial contributions to local arts organizations. Laguna Beach's citizens include individuals who have been successful in their creative or business careers, and who hold great civic pride and a desire to "give back" to the community. In fact, civic leaders have met to discuss possible ways to improve the arts life of the city and some have explored specific arts projects. This suggests a latent leadership and fundraising potential for projects with strong civic appeal that can galvanize community leaders to coalesce around shared goals.

***Survey respondents consider all of the City's arts and cultural functions to be important.***

Asked what the City of Laguna Beach should focus on to meet residents' arts and cultural needs, planning participants rated nearly all of the City arts functions as almost equally important (between 67% and 62% rated extremely or very important). While this rating may represent an unrealistic desire to "have it all," it also validates the range of functions that the City has filled in its arts leadership over time.

***What should the City of Laguna Beach focus on to meet residents' arts and cultural needs?***

1. Arts and cultural programs for children, youth, adults and seniors

2. Special arts and cultural events in the community (concerts in the parks, neighborhood celebrations)
3. Including artists in City projects, events and planning initiatives
4. Spaces for artists in Laguna Beach (work/live, work space, exhibit, rehearsal space)
5. The public art program
6. Large international events in the community (exhibitions, shows, etc.)

***Laguna Beach wants its public art program to include a broad range of artistic projects and activities.***

When asked what they desire from public art in Laguna Beach, respondents ranked all choices as close in importance (between 3.59 and 4.14 out of 5). This reinforces the importance that respondents place on public art. Their also choices reinforce the theme of the community wanting its artistic life to be well integrated into the fabric of daily living, less formal, and more interactive.

***Thinking about public art in Laguna Beach, how important do you think the following is?***  
 (All functions are within about a half-point of importance on a scale of 1 - 5.)

1. Public art-related events
2. Art integrated into architecture
3. Functional art (artist-designed benches, fences, etc.)
4. Temporary public art exhibits
5. Small-scale neighborhood art
6. Major iconic art

***Laguna Beach artists deeply value the community and the role they can play in shaping its future.***

Many artists who participated in the community engagement expressed a deep personal connection to Laguna Beach both as a place and as a community of people. Over the decades, artists have made a substantial collective contribution to the life of the community through such efforts as initiating creative projects or public art activities, donating time to community service through civic leadership, and supporting Laguna Beach’s arts organizations. Some described artists as having assisted the City by maintaining art installations and donating work to the City. Artists expressed a pride of place and a personal value they place on the deep roots they have established. Furthermore, they desire opportunities that enable them to continue contributing to and shaping Laguna Beach’s artistic future.

***Resident artists face significant obstacles to future sustainability in Laguna Beach.***

Artists look for ways to remain in Laguna Beach despite the rising cost of real estate and the scarcity of affordable work/live or studio spaces. Artists who participated in community engagement discussed the efforts they had made to secure living and/or working spaces. Some were only able to afford to work in Laguna Beach, while living elsewhere. But all expressed the desire, which they believe is shared by many other artists, to live in Laguna Beach.

The City has expressed its support for local artists in many ways, such as commissioning local artists for public art projects and the recent adoption of a comprehensive work/live ordinance. Still, some artists

felt that the City could support their self sufficiency by providing more resources for professional development or technical assistance that help them be more successful with the business of art making.

***Artists desire greater recognition and support from the City.***

In a community like Laguna Beach, when artists are successful everyone benefits from their success. Artists identified several ways the City can provide recognition and support such as sponsoring professional development programs giving artists tools for creating viable businesses, or developing collaborative marketing and promotions initiatives and facilitating increased exhibition and performance opportunities. Artists suggested creating a small pool of funds to seed experimental presentations or exhibitions to explore new and inventive ideas for programming and public engagement. Because the visual arts receive much of the external attention on Laguna Beach's offerings, performing and media artists (musicians, spoken word, filmmakers, poets, etc.) could benefit from a more concerted effort to encourage their growth and productivity in town.

***Local artists want greater connectivity and inspiration from outside Laguna Beach.***

Artists spoke of their desire for opportunities for exposure to more performances and exhibits from outside Laguna Beach to inspire them as well as to further enrich the artistic life of the community. There is a push-pull between how much the City should support local artists and how much it should help bring new ideas and energy from the national and international arts world. Artists suggest, however, that this should be viewed as a "both/and" proposition. They seek an ongoing infusion of creative vitality from beyond the greenbelt that comes from programs such as an international festival or visiting artist residencies. This opinion was echoed in the frequency with which residents attend arts activities outside Laguna Beach, seeking experiences that interest them even when not available locally.

***Public artists want peer and outside review of public art proposals.***

Artists whose practice includes public art expressed their belief that peer and outside review of proposals, a standard practice for most public art programs nationally, not only helps them professionally through outside critique of their work but also strengthens the quality of the work created with public funds. This is another reflection of their desire to be influenced and infused by the art world beyond Laguna Beach.

***Public artists want larger budgets even if it means fewer projects.***

Artists whose practice includes public art also expressed their belief that smaller budgets and more projects, which is the frequent reality for Laguna Beach's public art program, diminish the quality of work created with public funds. Moreover, it can ultimately create a collection with smaller community impact and, some said, lower interest. Artists would prefer that funds be pooled for larger scale and more significant works that would potentially bring outside recognition through a more distinguished artist selection process.

***Arts organizations desire increased City recognition and support.***

Currently, the City brands itself in part on Laguna Beach's arts community which in turn supports its image as a desirable place to live, work and visit. Yet the majority of the nonprofit arts organizations receive only modest funding through the City's Cultural Arts Funding grants.

Under the City's current arts funding scheme, three organizations which meet the funding guidelines (the Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Playhouse and Laguna College of Art + Design) receive an annual allocation of Business Improvement District revenues. In 2014-2015, this allocation was approximately \$177,000 for each of the three organizations. Most other nonprofit arts organizations apply for annual project grants through the Cultural Arts Funding program, which distributes arts grants totaling up to the same amount of \$177,000. In FY2015, Cultural Arts Funding grants totaled about \$171,000. In FY2016 an increase of about 10% in total available funds for arts organizations is anticipated. In FY2015 grants ranged from \$2,000 to \$26,000 with the average grant being \$13,500.

The Arts Commission's Cultural Arts Funding program is clearly a valuable source of support for Laguna Beach's nonprofit arts community. It supports the grantees to provide a range of arts programs available to the public. Given a desire to increase the amount and range of arts offerings available to the community, this funding can be expanded to support additional public programming.

The City Council recently approved two major grants that will in part address this need for greater support. The Laguna Art Museum and the Laguna Playhouse will each receive a \$1 million in anticipation of their upcoming anniversary years. Each grant will be paid over multiple years and include matching requirements.

# Vision Statement

This vision statement for Laguna Beach’s Cultural Plan represents how community members responded when asked, “What do we aspire to and what would success look like for Laguna Beach in ten years?”

It communicates a future for Laguna Beach not unlike that of its past, one in which the arts are interwoven into residents’ daily life, are a celebration of the unique place that is Laguna Beach, and inspire unlimited imagination and creativity. Laguna Beach’s future will continue to be a place where the arts are nurtured, where artists can live, work, prosper and aspire, and where residents’ lives are enriched by the arts.

Our vision is that Laguna Beach...

- Is an energizing and continually evolving creative community
- Provides plentiful and vital arts opportunities throughout the community that engage its residents and visitors in the arts
- Actively recognizes and supports its working artists
- Has a growing community of artists who live and work within its boundaries and who actively shape its artistic life
- Is an active contributor to the international arts scene
- Is respected regionally and internationally as an essential arts destination

# The Plan

## Summary of Goals and Strategies

**Goal 1: Facilitate and enable working artists to have thriving careers based in Laguna Beach.**

- 1.1. Recognize and promote the role and value of Laguna Beach's working artists.
- 1.2. Build community and connection among Laguna Beach's working artists.
- 1.3. Support development of affordable artists' live and work spaces.
- 1.4. Develop stronger linkages for art students to interact with Laguna Beach's community.

**Goal 2: Expand the availability of engaging arts offerings for residents and visitors.**

- 2.1. Provide more easily accessible, informal and year-round arts activities downtown and throughout the community.
- 2.2. Address the community's identified cultural facility needs.
- 2.3. Build on the public art program to achieve the next level of success and impact.
- 2.4. Enhance arts marketing to residents and visitors.

**Goal 3: Enhance Laguna Beach's artistic identity and reputation through greater connection with the global art world and multi-disciplinary creativity.**

- 3.1. Create one or more new, high-profile arts events designed to showcase Laguna Beach's artistic vitality and relevance.

**Goal 4: Enhance cultural leadership for Laguna Beach.**

- 4.1. Build a new leadership group and financial support drawing from among Laguna Beach's deep resource of prominent artists, business people and community leaders.
- 4.2. Provide the City resources needed to implement the plan.

## Detail of Goals, Strategies and Recommended Actions

### Goal 1: Facilitate and enable working artists to have thriving careers based in Laguna Beach.

The central theme in this plan is to assure that Laguna Beach positively evolves its artistic identity in the face of change, and remains a vital arts community and destination into the future. With the high cost of homeownership, it is no longer possible to continue the current paradigm of Laguna Beach as an “artists’ colony.” An essential element of adaptation to this reality is to assure that working artists can choose to live and work in Laguna Beach, despite ongoing increases in the cost of living in the community.

By retaining a critical concentration of working artists, Laguna Beach can continue to develop its own artistic vibrancy and enhance its reputation as an arts city, while also providing its residents and visitors with the higher level of artistic engagement they seek. The reality of the marketplace may mean that it is impossible for the great majority of artists to afford to purchase a home in Laguna Beach; however, much can be done to publically support artists and declare that the city intends to continue to be a creative center. Moreover, artists have deep connections to Laguna Beach and have made many contributions to the artistic and civic life of the community. They seek even greater opportunities to lead, to serve and to “give back” to their chosen home.

- 1.1. Recognize and promote the role and value of Laguna Beach’s working artists.
  - 1.1.1. Develop a City policy statement acknowledging the importance of the contributions of Laguna Beach’s artists and supporting recognition and support of their needs. A public policy declaration on behalf of artists is an important foundation on which to base many of the recommendations of this plan.
  - 1.1.2. Develop and implement capacity building programs to support artists’ business development skills, collaborative marketing and exhibition initiatives, and performance and exhibition opportunities. These programs can change over time to reflect current needs and trends faced by artists in a dynamic business and technological environment.

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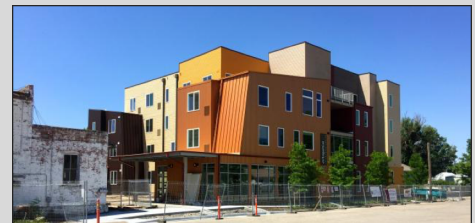
#### **Model Project: Loveland, Colorado** *Artspace Loveland (Rec. 1.3.1.)*

Artspace Loveland is a community arts campus project with two buildings; the historic Feed & Grain and the new Artspace Loveland Lofts work/live unit building.

The Artspace Loveland Lofts will feature 30 new affordable work/live units, and the historic Feed & Grain building will transform into a commercial arts hub.

The Artspace Loveland project will celebrate and build upon Loveland’s cultural heritage. The project will transform a prominent but neglected downtown city block into a community asset where the arts are a common thread weaving together affordable housing, community programs, and creative entrepreneurialism. Artspace, the City of Loveland, and other community partners believe that creating space for a community of artists will be a catalyst for continued downtown development, bring vibrancy and activity to the street, and increase the number of individuals and families living and working downtown.

The total estimated cost of this project is \$8.9 million. Artists will qualify for affordable housing leases through income and artistic selection criteria.





- 1.1.3. Explore the development of business assistance and incentives for creative sector businesses to locate in Laguna Beach. Consider permissions and supports to enable artists' temporary businesses in downtown, as recommended by the Economic Development and Business Assistance Committee.
  - 1.1.4. Update the Arts and Economic Impact Study for Laguna Beach through participation in Americans for the Arts 2016 AEP 5 project.
  - 1.1.5. Create an "Artists' Permit" that facilitates and coordinates permissions required for artists' projects through a one-stop process led by the Cultural Arts Department.
- 1.2. 1.2. Build community and connection among Laguna Beach's working artists.
- 1.2.1. Develop a convening program for Laguna Beach's artists to support networking and connectivity.
  - 1.2.2. Support development of an Artists' Association to address shared needs, such as access to support services, insurance, and arts community communications.
- 1.3. Support development of affordable artists' work/live and work spaces.
- 1.3.1. Explore development of a new artists' work/live project in partnership with a nonprofit developer, such as Artspace. Nonprofit developers typically bring financing to such projects and require a minimal investment on the part of City government, such as land assembly, soft costs for preplanning and permitting assistance. Begin with a feasibility study conducted by Artspace, PLACE or other nonprofit developer.
  - 1.3.2. Explore development of rental incentives for artists' living and working spaces, to support use of existing spaces in the community.
  - 1.3.3. Revisit the existing ordinance "grandfathering in" existing artists' use (Laguna Beach Municipal Code 25.16.050(A)(2)) to include uses that may not be in code compliance and promote the conversion of existing uses/spaces.

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**Model Project: Artspace Tannery Lofts**  
*Santa Cruz, CA (Rec. 1.3.1.)*

In the late 1990s, Santa Cruz was a highly desirable tourist destination with a strong arts and culture community. But as the housing costs increased, few young artists could afford to stay.

In 2001, the historic Salz Tannery closed its doors and Ceil Cirillo, Executive Director of the Santa Cruz Redevelopment Agency, saw an opportunity — a site that could be redeveloped as an arts complex to anchor Santa Cruz's cultural identity well into the future. She persuaded civic leaders to approve the plan and enlisted Artspace to help develop the project.

Commanding an 8.3-acre campus on the San Lorenzo River about a mile from downtown Santa Cruz, two phases of the Tannery Arts Center are complete. Phase 1, the Artspace Tannery Lofts, created 100 units of affordable work/live space in two new buildings for artists and their families. Phase 2, the Digital Media and Creative Arts Center, opened in 2012. Phase 3 will add a Performing Arts Center to the Tannery Campus.



- 1.3.4. Develop an inventory of land and buildings that can be considered as potential sites for artists' work/live, studios and cultural facilities.
- 1.3.5. Explore development of an incubator or co-working facility for artists' projects, creative small businesses and nonprofit organizations at a publically owned property.
- 1.4. Develop stronger linkages for art students to interact with the community.
  - 1.4.1. Encourage the Laguna College of Art + Design and Laguna High School to expand opportunities for students to learn, work and serve in the community. Possibilities include internships with local artists, volunteer opportunities with arts organizations, expansion of mentoring programs, opportunities to participate in community art projects, and volunteer service work with community organizations.

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**Model Project: Work Evolution Laboratories (WE Labs) Co-working Space**

*Long Beach, CA (Recs. 1.1.3. and 1.3.5.)*

Downtown Long Beach is home to Work Evolution Laboratories (WE Labs) co-working community: an inspiring environment designed for innovators and influencers. WE is a home base for a variety of start-ups, freelancers, and entrepreneurs with both for-profit and non-profit business models.

Members enjoy scalable work spaces and amenities such as high-speed internet, coffee, and a live social network of dynamic professionals to share ideas and resources with, gain feedback, and learn from the experience of others. WE Labs serves as a place for people to explore their creativity and create better ideas that are transformed into viable products and services. WE Labs is a tech workspace as well as a dynamic community of social innovators, entrepreneurs, startups, artists, and thinkers.

Committed to supporting the growth of entrepreneurship in Long Beach's creative and technology industries, they provide professional development workshops, opportunities to connect with other successful creative businesses and access to tools and resources unavailable to many start-up tech entrepreneurs such as a recording studio, green screen, arts, tech and creative business consultants. WE Labs has worked has partnered with Long Beach Arts Council to with connect local arts groups as well.

Memberships range in price from \$25 for a day-pass to \$600 per month for a Mega Desk membership - full 24/7 access with dedicated work space for teams. Conference rooms and meeting spaces are available to all members as well as a reception area, kitchen, mailbox, art gallery, networking events, and educational workshops and programs.



## Goal 2: Expand the availability of engaging arts offerings for residents and visitors.

Laguna Beach's residents have very high levels of artistic interest and engagement, and still seek more and different kinds of activities to be available to them locally throughout the year. They would like to see an increase in arts activities integrated into residents' daily life and the built environment, informal "happen upon" activities, performing arts and other artistic forms, temporary public art, greater intellectual stimulation, and challenging or innovative offerings. Artists, including younger artists, want to be active contributors or co-creators in a more varied, active and year-round arts scene. They seek greater opportunity to perform, exhibit and produce other types of creative projects in community settings.

The tourism industry has set goals for attracting younger visitors and off-season stays, and consider increased artistic vibrancy to be a powerful tool in achieving these goals. They point to the need to go beyond the current summer festival season to provide year-round activities that are engaging and accessible for the visitor, and that provide a range of new activities for the repeat visitor.

Residents also favor a new, flexible cultural center that could accommodate more of a range of desired activities. This opinion is corroborated by recommendations in Vision Laguna 2030 to increase arts venues in Laguna Beach, develop a community arts center, and create a world class cultural venue. Their interest is bolstered by the expressed needs of Laguna Beach arts organizations and artists for affordable spaces. For organizations that do not own their own facilities, they must rent space and report many challenges and compromises in availability, schedule, technical capacity, audience size and other use characteristics. A new venue could make possible expanded, higher quality and more varied programming for the public. It could provide needed meeting and event space for hoteliers, businesses and other organizations. A new center could also be a public statement of the importance of Laguna Beach's artistic vitality and identity.

- 2.1. Provide more easily accessible, informal and year-round arts activities downtown and in the community.
  - 2.1.1. Encourage and facilitate artists-initiated projects and activities throughout the community, such as small scale theater, music on the streets, temporary art installations, and a songwriters' showcase.
  - 2.1.2. Start or sponsor a presenting series of performances, lectures and events by artists and thinkers from outside Laguna Beach, such as an expanded dance series, TED Talks, and an Aspen Institute-style ideas festival. This could be initiated through the international/fringe festival recommended in 3.1.1.
  - 2.1.3. Facilitate greater use of the Irvine Bowl for concerts and other public programming, which will require addressing the agreement with the Festival of Arts and use restrictions imposed on renters.
  - 2.1.4. Develop a City special events policy and facilitate special events that have a cultural dimension, sponsored or co-produced by Visit Laguna Beach or the Chamber of Commerce.

- 2.1.5. Create an innovation fund to encourage and seed experimentation by artists and arts organizations with new cultural activities.
- 2.1.6. Encourage and facilitate development of small-scale arts events and activities throughout the year, such as the music scene, café performances, salons, and poetry readings, that provide a greater variety of choices suited to both residents and visitors, and that reinforce Laguna Beach’s arts identity.
- 2.1.7. Increase the Cultural Arts Funding program to provide larger grants to the nonprofit arts community, provide greater sustainability and allow for increased and enhanced public arts programming.

2.2. Address the community’s identified cultural facility needs.

- 2.2.1. Recommended Option: Explore development of a new, multiuse and flexible arts center, with performance and exhibit capability, classroom and studio spaces, an outdoor plaza venue, and technical capacity for digital programming. This center should represent and enable the highest levels of innovation and creativity. The facility could be designed in relation and complementary to existing facilities, as opposed to a “culture palace” that seeks to fill all space needs. One potential is that the center “points to” and coordinates arts activity in other venues and places occurring throughout the community.

Exploration of this potential should begin with a phased feasibility study to develop specific architectural concepts, explore better use of existing spaces, define the market, prepare a management and operational plan, and develop a financing plan that can be presented for community approval. Also, coordinate this study with the feasibility study recommended for the artists’ work/live project (1.3.1.), since the projects may be inter-related.

There are examples of architectural flexibility that can serve as reference points and inspirations (but not as models to be copied). The Yerba Buena Forum space in San Francisco is a flexible space that accommodates 400 - 850 people in various configurations including theater, event, meeting and banquet. Coupled with

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**Model Project: Multi-Use Facility  
The Forum at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco (Rec. 2.2.1.)**

Modern, spacious and elegant, the YBCA Forum is a modular space that offers architectural flexibility and highly diverse possibilities for events such as performances, lectures, digital programming, business and community meetings, social gatherings and other special events.

**Features:**

- 6,700 square feet (approximate measurements: 87’ length x 77’ width x 29’ high)
- Flexible space with a sprung wooden floor and direct access to the East Garden for expanded use and increased capacity.
- Full theatrical lighting and sound, black drapery and modular staging platforms.
- Audio Visuals, Internet connections and analog phones.
- Back stage dressing rooms and restrooms.
- Maximum capacity of 850 for a standing reception and a flexible seating for 550 - 350.
- Public amenities include a spacious lobby, box office, restrooms and pay phones and full wheelchair access.

**House Capacity:**

- 850 standing only.
- 600 lecture with small stage (stage size 9’x8’x24” H) – shown in photo below.
- 400 dining with small stage (40 total - 60” rounds and one 9’x8’x24” stage).
- 320 15’ D x 24’ W x 32” H stage and Grandstand Seating Riser System (set-up varies).



educational and studio/rehearsal spaces, such a facility could accommodate most uses articulated by Laguna Beach arts organizations as well as provide a platform for a great range of events, projects and performances provided by other producers.

Another interesting model, yet to be built, is the new planned headquarters for Google, which features a set of reconfigurable structures under a greenhouse-like canopy. Clearly (pun intended), this is an innovative and appropriate concept to explore as it is one that could provide the platform for flexible uses and an indoor/outdoor experience.

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### **Model Concept: Proposed Design for Google Headquarters**

*Mountain View, CA (Rec. 2.2.1.)*

Google has selected architects at BIG & Heatherwick Studio to design their new Mountain View Campus. The architects have teamed up to produce an innovative and charismatic “Arcadian retro-futurism.” Offices would be contained within a stackable, reconfigurable grid of modular boxes that the company hopes could someday be moved around by robotic arms. The boxes would rise amid thick greenery under a glass canopy: inside a huge greenhouse, in effect. Parking garages would be buried underground, leaving room at ground level for streams, bike paths and community gardens. The design emphasizes openness and accessibility, transparent in both literal and symbolic terms.

Google describes the design: “Instead of constructing immovable concrete buildings, we’ll create lightweight block-like structures which can be moved around easily as we invest in new product areas. (Our self-driving car team, for example, has very different needs when it comes to office space from our Search engineers.) Large translucent canopies will cover each site, controlling the climate inside yet letting in light and air. With trees, landscaping, cafes, and bike paths weaving through these structures, we aim to blur the distinction between our buildings and nature.”



This recommended option would likely be a relatively high cost option, with significant ongoing subsidy required. In addition to cost, there are also significant issues to be worked out regarding location, parking and congestion. The Civic Art District is an area that should be considered, among others, since the City has zoned it to support arts establishments and directed it for arts-related uses.

- 2.2.2. Option 2: Collaborate in development of a new black box theater at the Laguna Playhouse. The theater has formulated preliminary plans for a 200-seat black box space to be located behind the current theater and above the parking lot. Such a space would provide a suitable venue for a portion of the performing arts uses identified in the facility study and might make the main stage theater more available for outside users. This facility would likely be less expensive than the first option. It would require a separate planning effort.
- 2.2.3. Option 3: Make better use of existing facilities. This option is listed here but is not recommended as a sole response, because it would not address the majority of needs identified in the facility study. Potential users participating in the study emphasized that the existing spaces have significant shortcomings in availability, schedule, technical capacity, audience size and other use characteristics most of which are inherent to each venue and cannot be overcome with better scheduling or the addition of technical equipment. Moreover, the existing spaces could not accommodate many uses recommended in this plan, such as the presenting series recommended in 2.1.2. and the high-profile arts events recommended in 3.1.

Among other existing venues, adaptive reuse of the South Coast Cinema building was explored as an option. It is a well-known and well-loved community venue, and one that has attracted much interest for adaptive reuse as an arts space. However, it is privately owned and during this yearlong planning process was unavailable and, later, on the market for a high price. The facility also has inherent limitations: it has a smaller capacity, is historically designated and has no adjacent parking. Furthermore, it would likely require a substantial public investment that could be better utilized in another facility and location.

Notwithstanding, better use of existing facilities should be considered in the feasibility study recommended in 2.1.1. and should be factored into the development of architectural scenarios for a new cultural center.

- 2.3. Build on the public art program to achieve the next level of success and impact.
  - 2.3.1. Consider expansion of the public art ordinance (Municipal Code 1.09) for City capital improvement projects from 1% to 2%.
  - 2.3.2. Expand the focus on temporary public art projects.
  - 2.3.3. Adopt the best practice of using peer review panels for artist selection for public art projects. Also, once selected, incorporate the artist in the design team to develop the specifics of the art project.

- 2.3.4. Develop fewer and larger budget public art projects as additions to the permanent collection.
  - 2.3.5. Produce an annual or biennial temporary public art project intended as a major showcase and that is international or national in stature.
  - 2.3.6 Expand and develop a donors program that would receive financial contributions to the public art program. Establish a dedicated fund to receive contributions restricted to use by the public art program.
- 2.4. Enhance arts marketing to residents and visitors.
- 2.4.1. Enhance the current partnership for communitywide arts marketing, involving the City, Visit Laguna Beach, Chamber of Commerce and the Laguna Beach Alliance for the Arts. Improvements to explore include a more robust and comprehensive, centralized calendar for arts events and activities, a social media program and becoming an entirely digital program. It might also include components such as adding arts to the Trolley app, better wayfinding and signage, coordinated promotions and other ongoing efforts. Consider relationships with other marketing stakeholders.
  - 2.4.2. Consider expansion of the current Passport to the Arts marketing collaborative, in cooperation with the communitywide arts marketing effort in 2.4.1. The collaborative could potentially conduct joint research, receive capacity building assistance, and identify new shared marketing initiatives.
  - 2.4.3. Review existing wayfinding and signage in the downtown area and Civic Art District and implement improvements that increase visitor awareness and access to arts venues and activities.

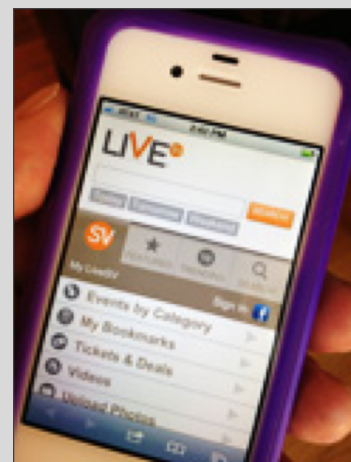
**Model Program: Communitywide Arts Marketing**

**Artsopolis (Rec. 2.4.1.)**  
<http://www.artsopolis.com>

The largest communitywide marketing program for arts and other quality of life activities is Artsopolis, an online platform. Created and licensed by the Arts Council of Silicon Valley, it covers events in a variety of leisure time activities, including: art, family, festivals, food, free, literature, museums, music, nightlife, screen, sports, stage, workshops, and others. This integrates arts and entertainment events with sports and other activities important to the community. Recognizing the importance of social media, it also includes a range of social media tools (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, 4Square, etc.), and an effective mobile platform. A key advantage is that event producers enter data only once and it is distributed to the community and available to other online calendars for wider distribution. Additionally, Artsopolis can “pull” event information from other calendars.

Artsopolis also is a network of communities that use the platform. There are currently more than thirty communities that have versions of the Artsopolis software. Most are local arts agencies, peers of Laguna Beach Cultural Arts, although other types of organizations also operate Artsopolis sites.

A model Artsopolis site is LiveSV, the arts and entertainment marketing program for the Silicon Valley: <http://www.livesv.com>. In addition to event information, it provides unusually comprehensive listings of artists, arts organizations, venues, work opportunities, and educational/learning opportunities. Its event listings include commercial entertainment events, sports and food events (farmers markets, karaoke).



### Goal 3: Enhance Laguna Beach’s artistic identity and reputation through greater connection with the global art world and multi-disciplinary creativity.

As discussed in the Community Engagement Findings, this plan must address ways to positively evolve Laguna Beach’s artistic identity in the face of change, and assure that it remains an artistic crucible. The high cost of real estate, the aging population, and the near-complete build out of the city’s land area are all challenges to maintaining a dynamic arts scene. Also, the current global art world thrives on connectedness and interchange, and the marketplace for art has already become borderless. While it is inappropriate and futile to define what Laguna Beach’s artistic identity should be, it is possible to foster the conditions for increased artistic connection and exchange. Planning participants—residents, artists and visitors alike—all express the desire for arts offerings to reflect these conditions. Many have sophisticated perspectives, experiences and tastes, and would like the arts scene to be an even more successful meeting ground for creativity and stimulation.

- 3.1. Create one or more new, high-profile arts events designed to showcase Laguna’s artistic vitality and relevance.
  - 3.1.1. Create an open, international festival of creativity during the spring or fall that showcases artists and creative projects of any discipline at venues large and small throughout Laguna Beach, e.g., the Irvine Bowl, the amphitheater in Heisler Park, the stage at the Mozambique Restaurant, galleries and street corners. The festival will be most effective if it includes a curated series of showcase artists/projects as well as an open “fringe festival” component where local artists and those from elsewhere can self-produce events under the festival banner and marketing. This festival could be implemented in tandem with the presenting series recommended in 2.1.2.
  - 3.1.2. Develop a high-level, international visual art fair in the spring or fall designed to attract collectors and widespread credibility in the art world. Possibilities include a Miami Basel-style festival of contemporary art (the Fine Art Dealers Association could produce or assist); an art fair focusing on *plein air*, realism and contemporary realism; or an annual international art competition, such as the Grand Rapids Art Prize which includes both community and expert selection of winners.

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#### **Model Project: GLOW** *Santa Monica, CA (Rec. 3.1.1.)*

Glow is an all-night cultural experience featuring original commissions by artists that re-imagine Santa Monica Beach as a playground for thoughtful and participatory temporary artworks. Glow is an adaptation of the European tradition of all-night winter festivals, brought to life on California’s coastline and activating a range of civic spaces in Santa Monica. Festival installations and activities take place on the beach, pier and nearby downtown areas.

The name “Glow” refers in part to the predominant theme of light-based artworks and experiences. Los Angeles and international artists are commissioned and participate in this event.

Thousands attend this free event, produced every two or three years. Glow is a project of the City of Santa Monica and the Santa Monica Arts Foundation.

<http://glowsantamonica.org>





- 3.1.3. Create an artists' residency program that invites national and international artists to live temporarily in Laguna Beach, create work, and interact with the community, through presentations, classes and other activities that connect the artists' work with Laguna Beach.

Note that other recommendations in this plan will support implementation of this goal, enhancing Laguna Beach's artist identity and reputation. These include recommended changes to the City's public art program (2.3.)

## Goal 4: Enhance cultural leadership for Laguna Beach.

Laguna Beach has benefited from extraordinary arts leadership in the form of successful and prominent artists, creative professionals, donors, board members, arts commissioners, community leaders, elected officials and other arts supporters. Based on the recommendations of the 1995 Cultural Arts Plan, City Council created the first arts staff position and authorized development the array of arts programs and services that exist today. Arts and civic leaders have also convened informally on more than one occasion to address problems, exchange ideas and develop solutions. To help guide Laguna Beach into a new era of artistic excellence and prominence, peer leadership will be essential. Many community leaders interviewed for this plan observed that there is a deep resource of people who are professionally involved in, or care deeply about, the arts and the civic life of the community. They have expressed interest in a leadership body that would enable larger-scale community projects in support of Laguna Beach's artistic vibrancy.

In addition to civic leadership, implementation of the plan's recommendations will require new City resources in the form of funding, staff, contracted services and partnerships. The current Cultural Arts Department is fully committed, so taking on new functions and initiatives through that office will require consideration of additional staff, contracts for services and reprioritization of tasks.

- 4.1. Build a civic leadership group and financial support drawing from Laguna Beach's deep resource of prominent artists, business people and community leaders.
  - 4.1.1. Explore development of a civic leadership group for the arts convened by an interested council member and composed of individuals living in or connected to Laguna Beach who share a desire and capacity to enhance the artistic life of the community. Allow this group to define its own goals and priorities, with reference to the recommendations of this plan. Explore and encourage their fundraising and leadership support for civic projects in the arts.
  - 4.1.2. Explore development of a leadership group of young artists living in or connected to Laguna Beach to explore and identify potential innovative ideas, large or small, that would make Laguna Beach's artistic life more relevant to, and reflective of, the interests of younger generations.
- 4.2. Provide the City resources needed to implement the plan.
  - 4.2.1. Add the staff, funding and contractual resources needed to implement the recommendations of this plan in a phased manner.

## Table of All Recommendations

### **Goal 1: Facilitate and enable working artists to have thriving careers based in Laguna Beach.**

- 1.1. Recognize and promote the role and value of Laguna Beach’s working artists.
  - 1.1.1. Develop a City policy statement acknowledging the importance and contributions of Laguna Beach’s artists and supporting recognition and support of their needs. A public policy declaration on behalf of artists is an important foundation on which to base many of the recommendations of this plan.
  - 1.1.2. Develop and implement capacity building programs to support artists’ business skills, collaborative marketing and exhibition initiatives, and performance and exhibition opportunities. These programs can change over time to reflect current needs and trends faced by artists in a dynamic business and technological environment.
  - 1.1.3. Explore the development of business assistance and incentives for creative sector businesses to locate in Laguna Beach. Consider permissions and supports to enable artists’ temporary businesses in downtown, as recommended by the Economic Development and Business Assistance Committee.
  - 1.1.4. Update the Arts and Economic Impact Study for Laguna Beach through participation in Americans for the Arts 2016 AEP 5 project.
  - 1.1.5. Create an “Artists’ Permit” that facilitates and coordinates permissions required for artists’ projects through a one-stop process led by the Cultural Arts Department.
- 1.2. Build community and connection among Laguna Beach’s working artists.
  - 1.2.1. Develop a convening program for Laguna Beach’s artists to support networking and connectivity.
  - 1.2.2. Support development of an Artists’ Association to address shared needs, such as access to support services, insurance, and arts community communications.
- 1.3. Support development of affordable artists’ work/live and work spaces.
  - 1.3.1. Explore development of a new artists’ work/live project in partnership with a nonprofit developer, such as Artspace. Nonprofit developers typically bring financing to such projects and require a minimal investment on the part of City government, such as land assembly, soft costs for preplanning and permitting assistance. Begin with a feasibility study conducted by Artspace, PLACE or other nonprofit developer.
  - 1.3.2. Explore development of rental incentives for artists’ living and working spaces, to support use of existing spaces in the community.
  - 1.3.3. Revisit the existing ordinance “grandfathering in” existing artists’ use (Laguna Beach Municipal Code 25.16.050(A)(2)) to include uses that may not be in code compliance and promote the conversion of existing uses/spaces.
  - 1.3.4. Develop an inventory of land and buildings that can be considered as potential sites for artists’ work/live, studios and cultural facilities.

- 1.3.5. Explore development of an incubator or co-working facility for artists' projects, creative small businesses and nonprofit organizations at a publically owned property.
- 1.4. Develop stronger linkages for art students to interact with the community.
  - 1.4.1. Encourage the Laguna College of Art + Design and Laguna High School to expand opportunities for students to learn, work and serve in the community. Possibilities include internships with local artists, volunteer opportunities with arts organizations, expansion of mentoring programs, opportunities to participate in community art projects, and volunteer service work with community organizations.

**Goal 2: Expand the availability of engaging arts offerings for residents and visitors.**

- 2.1. Provide more easily accessible, informal and year-round arts activities downtown and in the community.
  - 2.1.1. Encourage and facilitate artists-initiated projects and activities throughout the community, such as small scale theater, music on the streets, temporary art installations, and a songwriters' showcase.
  - 2.1.2. Start or sponsor a presenting series of performances, lectures and events by artists and thinkers from outside Laguna Beach, such as an expanded dance series, TED Talks, and an Aspen Institute-style ideas festival. This could be initiated through the international/fringe festival recommended in 3.1.1.
  - 2.1.3. Facilitate greater use of the Irvine Bowl for concerts and other public programming, which will require addressing the agreement with the Festival of Arts and the use restrictions imposed on renters.
  - 2.1.4. Develop a City special events policy and facilitate special events that have a cultural dimension, sponsored or co-produced by Visit Laguna Beach or the Chamber of Commerce.
  - 2.1.5. Create an innovation fund to encourage and seed experimentation by artists and arts organizations with new cultural activities, perhaps through expansion of the existing funding program managed by the Laguna Beach Alliance for the Arts.
  - 2.1.6. Encourage and facilitate development of small-scale arts events and activities throughout the year, such as the music scene, café performances, salons, and poetry readings, that provide a greater amount and variety of choices suited to both residents and visitors, and that reinforce Laguna Beach's arts identity.
  - 2.1.7. Increase the Cultural Arts Funding program to provide larger grants to the nonprofit arts community, provide greater sustainability and allow for increased and enhanced public arts programming.
- 2.2. Address the community's identified cultural facility needs.
  - 2.2.1. Recommended Option: Explore development of a new, multiuse and flexible arts center, with performance and exhibit capability, classroom and studio spaces, an outdoor plaza venue, and technical capacity for digital programming. This center should represent and enable the highest levels of innovation and creativity. The facility could be designed in relation and complementary to existing facilities, as opposed to a "culture palace" that seeks to fill all space needs. One potential is that

the center “points to” and coordinates arts activity in other venues and places occurring throughout the community.

Exploration of this potential should begin with a phased feasibility study to develop specific architectural concepts, explore better use of existing spaces, define the market, prepare a management and operational plan, and develop a financing plan that can be presented for community approval. Also, coordinate this study with the feasibility study recommended for the artists' work/live project (1.3.1.), since the projects may be inter-related.

There are examples of architectural flexibility that can serve as reference points and inspirations (but not as models to be copied). The Yerba Buena Forum space in San Francisco is a flexible space that accommodates 400 - 850 people in various configurations including theater, event, meeting and banquet. Coupled with educational and studio/rehearsal spaces, such a facility could accommodate most uses articulated by Laguna Beach arts organizations as well as provide a platform for a great range of events, projects and performances provided by other producers.

Another interesting model, yet to be built, is the new planned headquarters for Google, which features a set of reconfigurable structures under a greenhouse-like canopy. Clearly (pun intended), this is an innovative and appropriate concept to explore as it is one that could provide the platform for flexible uses and an indoor/outdoor experience.

This recommended option would likely be a relatively high cost option, with significant ongoing subsidy required. The Civic Arts District is the most likely area for consideration as the City has zoned it to support arts establishments and directed it for arts-related uses.

- 2.2.2. Option 2: Collaborate in development of a new black box theater at the Laguna Playhouse. The theater has formulated preliminary plans for a 200-seat black box space to be located behind the current theater and above the parking lot. Such a space would provide a suitable venue for a portion of the performing arts uses identified in the facility study and might make the main stage theater more available for outside uses. This facility would likely be less expensive than the first option. It would require a separate planning effort.
- 2.2.3. Option 3: Make better use of existing facilities. This option is listed here but is not recommended as a sole response, because it would not address the majority of needs identified in the facility study. Potential users participating in the study emphasized that the existing spaces have significant shortcomings in availability, schedule, technical capacity, audience size and other use characteristics most of which are inherent to each venue and cannot be overcome with better scheduling or the addition of technical equipment. Moreover, the existing spaces could not accommodate many uses recommended in this plan, such as the presenting series recommended in 2.1.2. and the high-profile arts events recommended in 3.1.

Among other existing venues, adaptive reuse of the South Coast Cinema building was explored as an option. It is a well-known and well-loved community venue, and one that has attracted much interest for adaptive reuse as an arts space. However, it is privately owned and during this yearlong planning process was unavailable and,

later, on the market for a high price. The facility also has inherent limitations: it has a smaller capacity, is historically designated and has no adjacent parking. Furthermore, it would likely require a substantial public investment that could be better utilized in another facility and location.

Notwithstanding, better use of existing facilities should be considered in the feasibility study recommended in 2.1.1. and should be factored into the development of architectural scenarios for a new cultural center.

- 2.3. Build on the public art program to achieve the next level of success and impact.
  - 2.3.1. Consider expansion of the public art ordinance (Municipal Code 1.09) for City capital improvement projects from 1% to 2%.
  - 2.3.2. Expand the focus on temporary public art projects.
  - 2.3.3. Adopt the best practice of using peer review panels for artist selection for public art projects. Also, once selected, incorporate the artist in the design team to develop the specifics of the art project.
  - 2.3.4. Develop fewer and larger budget public art projects as additions to the permanent collection.
  - 2.3.5. Produce an annual or biennial temporary public art project intended as a major showcase and that is international or national in stature.
  - 2.3.6. Expand and develop a donors program that would receive financial contributions to the public art program. Establish a dedicated fund to receive contributions restricted to use by the public art program.
- 2.4. Enhance arts marketing to residents and visitors.
  - 2.4.4. Enhance the current partnership for communitywide arts marketing, involving the City, Visit Laguna Beach, Chamber of Commerce and the Laguna Beach Alliance for the Arts. Improvements to explore include a more robust and comprehensive, centralized calendar for arts events and activities, a social media program and becoming an entirely digital program. It might also include components such as adding arts to the Trolley app, better wayfinding and signage, coordinated promotions and other ongoing efforts. Consider relationships with other marketing stakeholders.
  - 2.4.5. Consider expansion of the current Passport to the Arts marketing collaborative, in cooperation with the communitywide arts marketing effort in 2.4.1. The collaborative could potentially conduct joint research, receive capacity building assistance, and identify new shared marketing initiatives.
  - 2.4.6. Review existing wayfinding and signage in the downtown area and Civic Art District and implement improvements that increase visitor awareness and access to arts venues and activities.

**Goal 3: Enhance Laguna Beach’s artistic identity and reputation through greater connection with the global art world and multi-disciplinary creativity.**

- 3.1. Create one or more new, high-profile arts events designed to showcase Laguna’s artistic vitality and relevance.
  - 3.1.1. Create an open, international festival of creativity during the spring or fall that showcases artists and creative projects of any discipline at venues large and small throughout Laguna Beach, e.g., the Irvine Bowl, the amphitheater in Heisler Park, the stage at the Mozambique Restaurant, galleries and street corners. The festival will be most effective if it includes a curated series of showcase artists/projects as well as an open “fringe festival” component where local artists and those from elsewhere can self-produce events under the festival banner and marketing. This festival could be implemented in tandem with the presenting series recommended in 2.1.2.
  - 3.1.2. Develop a high-level, international visual art fair in the spring or fall designed to attract collectors and widespread credibility in the art world. Possibilities include a Miami Basel-style festival of contemporary art; an art fair focusing on *plein air*, realism and contemporary realism (the Fine Art Dealers Association could produce or assist); or an annual international art competition, such as the Grand Rapids Art Prize which includes both community and expert selection of winners.
  - 3.1.3. Create an artists’ residency program that invites national and international artists to live temporarily in Laguna Beach, create work, and interact with the community, through presentations, classes and other activities that connect the artists’ work with Laguna Beach.

Note that other recommendations in this plan will support implementation of this goal, enhancing Laguna Beach’s artist identity and reputation. These include recommended changes to the City’s public art program (2.3.)

**Goal 4: Enhance cultural leadership for Laguna Beach.**

- 4.1. Build a new leadership group and financial support drawing from Laguna Beach’s deep resource of prominent artists, business people and community leaders.
  - 4.1.1. Explore development of a civic leadership group for the arts convened by an interested council member and composed of individuals living in or connected to Laguna Beach who share a desire and capacity to enhance the artistic life of the community. Allow this group to define its own goals and priorities, with reference to the recommendations of this plan. Explore and encourage their fundraising and leadership support for civic projects in the arts.
  - 4.1.2. Explore development of a leadership group of young artists living in or connected to Laguna Beach to explore and identify potential innovative ideas, large or small, that would make Laguna Beach’s artistic life more relevant to, and reflective of, the interests of younger generations.
- 4.2. Provide the City resources needed to implement the plan.
  - 4.2.1. Add the staff, funding and contractual resources needed to implement the recommendations of this plan in a phased manner.

# Implementation

The Laguna Beach Cultural Plan is a plan for the City as well as partners in the community. While the City will be the lead agency for most recommendations, it cannot fulfill the community's vision for arts development without collaborative support from artists, arts organizations and community groups, as well as additional cultural arts staff and resources. Indeed, many of these people and organizations were involved in the creation of this plan and have already contributed to its content.

## Funding

Funding for much of the plan will be provided by a combination of City funds, most notably the existing sources of arts funding: the City's General Fund and the Business Improvement District. The potential of bond funding for capital needs was discussed during the planning process. Private resources may be provided through the recommended civic leadership group for the arts and the donors program for public art.

One possibility to explore in the future is an increase in the Business Improvement District tax or the Transient Occupancy Tax, each of which is a "bed tax" imposed on hotel stays.<sup>13</sup> Tourism stakeholders, including Visit Laguna, do not favor an increase at this time because of concern about potential competitive pressures from nearby cities with lower tax rates. However, an increase in the Business Improvement District tax would benefit not only Laguna Beach's arts but also its tourism industry, through additional resources for marketing and promotion. It would be advisable to revisit the allocation of arts dollars flowing through the Business Improvement District, in light of the current and future needs for ongoing arts funding.

The recommendations that include capital costs, such as to investigate the feasibility of a new cultural center and a new artists' work/live facility, will require further planning to identify costs and funding sources. It is intended that a new cultural space would attract significant private funding through a public/private partnership and not be financed solely by the City. Artists' work/live projects facilitated by nonprofit developers, such as Artspace, typically involve limited one-time financial participation by the City, often in the form of land assembly and soft costs. These projects are designed to be self-sustaining through rental and other revenues.

It is anticipated that some recommendations will attract private funding from businesses, regional and national foundations, and federal government programs. Potential arts grant sources include the National Endowment for the Arts (in particular, the Art Place and Our Town programs), the California Arts Council, and private foundations. The development of this plan provides an excellent basis for grant proposals since it is grounded in the assessment of community needs and demonstrates increased public commitment to fulfilling those needs. Several of the recommendations (e.g., artists work/live, special events policy, international festival, presenting, etc.) will generate revenues as a part of their business models. Moreover, many of the recommendations involve partnerships and collaborations,

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<sup>13</sup> Both taxes are imposed on hotel stays. The Transient Occupancy Tax is currently 10% and flows into the City's General Fund. The Business Improvement District levy is a voluntary self-assessment on hotel stays of 2%, imposed by property owners located in the district; it is allocated on an annual basis by its Advisory Board.



which can bring non-City resources to shared initiatives, such as sponsorships, staff support, in-kind resources, and volunteers.

As recommended in 4.2.1., implementation of this plan will require additional City resources in the form of staff and contracted services and partnerships.

## Starting Points for Implementation

The following list presents recommendations intended to be initiated, but not necessarily completed, by the City during the first two years. They include recommendations rated by stakeholders as holding the greatest potential for positive impact in the community as well as “early wins” that can demonstrate more immediate progress in implementing the cultural plan. Detailed work plans and budgets will be developed on an annual basis by staff with recommendations from the Arts Commission.

### YEAR ONE

#### **1. Adding Staff (4.2.1.)**

Cost: \$65,000 - \$83,000 annually  
Funding Source: General Fund

#### **2. Policy Adoption (1.1.1.) (1.1.5.)**

Recognizing the importance and contributions of artists to Laguna Beach  
Artists’ permit and one-stop facilitation process  
Cost: Allocation of staff time

#### **3. Facility Feasibility Studies (1.3.1.) (2.2.1.)**

Two separate but coordinated feasibility studies for an artist work/live project and a mixed use and flexible facility  
Cost: \$75,000 - \$250,000  
Funding Source: Arts Commission Special Programs Budget with matches from General Fund

#### **4. Update Arts and Economic Impact Report (1.1.4.)**

Cost: \$6,000  
Funding Source: Already funded through the current year’s budget

#### **5. Build community and connection among artists (1.2.1.)**

Workshops and seminars  
Cost: \$1,500 per workshop  
Funding Source: Arts Commission Special Programs Budget

#### **6. Cultural Leadership Group**

Develop a civic leadership group  
Cost: Allocation of staff time

Note that the two feasibility studies (1.3.1.) and (2.2.1.) are likely to take place during both years one and two.

## YEAR TWO

### **1. Create an innovation fund (2.1.5.)**

Step one of the creation of an International and Fringe Festival

Cost: \$25,000

Funding Source: Allocation of Cultural Arts Grant funding

### **2. Public Art Program (2.3.)**

Policy and procedural changes

Cost: Allocation of staff time

### **3. Presenting Series (2.1.2.)**

E.g., Aspen Institute, TED Talks

Step two of the creation of an International and Fringe Festival

### **4. Increase to the Cultural Arts Funding Program (2.1.7)**

Increase the total Cultural Arts Funding pool to expand arts grants

Cost: \$200,000 (approximately double the current amount)

Funding Source: TBD from General Fund, Business Improvement District and/or Transient Occupancy Tax