



Commission for Arts and Culture

CITY OF SAN DIEGO COMMISSION FOR ARTS AND CULTURE

AGENDA

[Online Meeting](#)

Friday, September 24, 2021

11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

11:30 a.m.	I.	Call to Order & Statement of Purpose+Vision	Janet Poutré, Chair
11:31 a.m.	II.	Non-agenda Public Comment	Janet Poutré, Chair
11:32 a.m.	III.	Chair’s Reports	Janet Poutré, Chair
		A. ACTION – July 23, 2021 Commission Meeting Minutes	
		B. Other Reports	
11:42 a.m.	IV.	Presentation	Janet Poutré, Chair
		A. City Heights Library Annex Arts Reactivation, Victoria Plettner-Saunders	
12:00 p.m.	V.	Committee Reports	
		A. Policy & Funding Committee	Ann Bossler, Committee Chair
		B. Public Art Committee	Ben Meza, Committee Chair
		C. Advocacy & Outreach Committee	Tyler Hewes, Committee Chair

Page 1 of 2

VISION: Expanding our world by celebrating creativity in San Diego

PURPOSE: The City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture serves in an advisory capacity to the Mayor and City Council on promoting, encouraging and increasing support for the region's artistic and cultural assets, integrating arts and culture into community life and showcasing San Diego as an international tourist destination.

Meeting will be aired live and recorded. PUBLIC COMMENT: Any member of the public may address the Committee on any subject in its area of responsibility on any matter not presently pending or previously discussed at the Committee. Pursuant to the provisions California Executive Order 29-20, Committee meetings will be held via teleconference until further notice. In lieu of in-person attendance, members of the public may submit their comments via a public comment [webform, or they may join the meeting as a “webinar attendee” at the link provided in the Commission or Committee meeting website](#). For members of the public wishing to address the Committee under Public Comment via the [webform](#) prior to the meeting, instructions for word limitations and deadlines will be noted on the [webform](#). Pursuant to open meeting laws, no discussion or action, other than a referral, shall be taken by the Committee on any issue brought forth under non-agenda public comment. As required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), requests for agenda information to be made available in alternative formats, and any requests for disability-related modifications or accommodations required to facilitate meeting participation, including requests for alternatives to observing meetings and offering public comment as noted above, may be made by contacting the City Clerk at (619) 533-4000 or <mailto:cityclerk@sandiego.gov>. The City is committed to resolving accessibility requests swiftly in order to maximize accessibility.

D. Commissioner Engagement Ad Hoc Committee

Udoka Nwanna, Ad Hoc Committee Chair

1:00 p.m.	VI.	Director's Reports	Jonathon Glus, Executive Director
1:20 p.m.	VII.	New Business for Future Agendas	Janet Poutré
1:25 p.m.	VIII.	Commissioner Speed-Round – What arts, culture and creative experiences have you had this month (who, what, when, where)?	Janet Poutré
1:30 p.m.	IX.	Adjourn	Janet Poutré

Page 2 of 2

VISION: Expanding our world by celebrating creativity in San Diego

PURPOSE: The City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture serves in an advisory capacity to the Mayor and City Council on promoting, encouraging and increasing support for the region's artistic and cultural assets, integrating arts and culture into community life and showcasing San Diego as an international tourist destination.

Meeting will be aired live and recorded. PUBLIC COMMENT: Any member of the public may address the Committee on any subject in its area of responsibility on any matter not presently pending or previously discussed at the Committee. Pursuant to the provisions California Executive Order 29-20, Committee meetings will be held via teleconference until further notice. In lieu of in-person attendance, members of the public may submit their comments via a public comment [webform, or they may join the meeting as a "webinar attendee" at the link provided in the Commission or Committee meeting website](#). For members of the public wishing to address the Committee under Public Comment via the [webform](#) prior to the meeting, instructions for word limitations and deadlines will be noted on the [webform](#). Pursuant to open meeting laws, no discussion or action, other than a referral, shall be taken by the Committee on any issue brought forth under non-agenda public comment. As required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), requests for agenda information to be made available in alternative formats, and any requests for disability-related modifications or accommodations required to facilitate meeting participation, including requests for alternatives to observing meetings and offering public comment as noted above, may be made by contacting the City Clerk at (619) 533-4000 or <mailto:cityclerk@sandiego.gov>. The City is committed to resolving accessibility requests swiftly in order to maximize accessibility.



Commission for Arts and Culture

City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture | Microsoft Teams Online Meeting

MINUTES

Friday, July 23, 2021

Hyperlink to view full meeting available [here](#)

closed caption available at bottom right of screen

Commissioners Present

Janet Poutré, Chair
Rebecca Smith
Ann Bossler
Tracy Dezenzo
Michael Brown
Fritz Friedman
Gina M. Jackson
Michael Brown
Dajahn Blevins

Commissioners Absent

Vernon Franck, Vice Chair
Udoka Nwanna
Doreen Schonbrun
Tyler Hewes
Ben Meza
Jason Whooper

Staff Present

Jonathon Glus
Christine E. Jones
Charles Miller
Bell Reza
Karla Centeno
Lara Bullock
Diana Agostini

-
- I. **Call to Order & Statement of Purpose Vision | [View Here](#)** –Chair Janet Poutré called the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture online meeting to order at 11:37 a.m., introduced herself, and took roll call to confirm Commissioner attendance. Chair Poutré read the Commission’s statement of purpose and vision and called on Project Manager Bell Reza to review the guidelines for the meeting.
- II. **Non-agenda Public Comment | [View Here](#)**
- III. **Chair’s Reports | [View Here](#)**
- A. **ACTION** – June 25, 2021 Commission Meeting Minutes
Commissioner Rebecca Smith made a motion to approve, Commissioner Ann Bossler seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous; the motion passed.
 - B. Other Reports
- IV. **Committee Reports | [View Here](#)**
- A. **Policy and Funding Committee, Commissioner Ann Bossler | [View Here](#)**
 - B. **Public Art Committee, Charles G. Miller | [View Here](#)**
 - 1. **ACTION** - Temporary Exhibit Proposal from the New Children’s Museum: In the Balance by Risa Puno

Commissioner Fritz Friedman made a motion to approve, Commissioner Ann Bossler seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous; the motion passed.

2. **ACTION - Temporary Mural Proposal from the University City Parks Council: Sunburst California Scene by Andrew Sanchez**
Commissioner Tracy Dezenzo made a motion to approve, Commissioner Dajahn Blevins seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous; the motion passed.

C. Advocacy and Outreach Committee

Committee Chair Tyler Hewes was not present

D. Commissioner Engagement Ad Hoc Committee

Committee Chair Udoka Nwanna was not present

- V. **Director's Report** | [View Here](#)
Executive Director Jonathon Glus

- VI. **Adjourn** – Commissioner Janet Poutré adjourned the meeting at 12:20 p.m.

City Heights Multimedia IDEA LAB & Performance Annex Business Plan Summary

PREPARED FOR:

CITY OF SAN DIEGO PUBLIC LIBRARY

PRICE CHARITIES

CITY OF SAN DIEGO COMMISSION FOR ARTS AND CULTURE

PREPARED BY

VICTORIA PLETTNER-SAUNDERS

PRINCIPAL, THE ARTS AT WORK

MARCH 31, 2021

Updates added September 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....2

THE WEINGART/CITY HEIGHTS LIBRARY ANNEX.....2

 The Performance Annex: A Beloved Theatre Space for Decades 2

 The IDEA LAB: A New Multimedia Cultural Facility for City Heights 3

THE NEW BUSINESS MODEL4

 Resident Operators 4

 Funding and Finances 5

RECOMMENDATIONS6

 General Recommendations..... 6

 The Performance Annex and its Environs 6

 The Multimedia Community Access Broadcasting IDEA LAB 7

RESIDENT OPERATOR REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL CONSIDERATIONS8

CITY HEIGHTS MULTI-MEDIA IDEA LAB & PERFORMANCE ANNEX BUSINESS PLAN

INTRODUCTION

In December 2020, the City of San Diego Public Library (SDPL), Commission for Arts and Culture and Price Charities came together to create a business plan for the City Heights Performance Annex and a new multimedia broadcasting studio. The Performance Annex is next to the City Heights/Weingart Library and composed of the Black Box and an outdoor Amphitheatre. The Library also has a mostly vacant space on its second floor with approximately 1400 square feet, which is the future location of a community access multimedia broadcasting center, referred to here as the IDEA LAB. The SDPL manages the second floor space as well as the Performance Annex, while the City's Parks and Recreation Department oversees the park in which they sit.

This business plan is a collaborative effort between the City and Price Charities that is greatly informed by interviews with stakeholders including previous organizational users, artists, philanthropic foundations, educators and City Heights community members as well as digital media and theatre technical professionals.

In April 2021, SDPL and its partners embarked on Phase II. Victoria Plettner-Saunders, the consultant hired to develop the business plan, will continue in a project management capacity at least through December 2021. Her role is to facilitate and coordinate the various stakeholders, identify funding opportunities, and provide general project management to support Phase II implementation.

The plan's mission is to ensure that those who live, work, educate and entertain themselves in City Heights have access to creative experiences and activities that reflect City Heights vibrant multinational cultures.

Conceptually, reinvigorating the Annex by activating it through the daily presence of resident organizations that both produce and present programs to engage, educate and entertain the community, makes sense. How it ultimately plays out and what makes it successful in the long run will, in part, require significant collaboration between the City, SDPL, Commission for Arts and Culture, the organizations in residence, and the City Heights community.

THE WEINGART/CITY HEIGHTS LIBRARY ANNEX

The Performance Annex: A Beloved Theatre Space for Decades

The Performance Annex meets a need for a publicly accessible indoor theatre space not otherwise addressed in the Mid-City area, as well as the general need for public outdoor performance and gathering places throughout San Diego.

The Black Box provides cultural and community programming, with an emphasis on musical, dance, and theatrical programs. In addition, the Amphitheatre has become a place for multi-disciplinary performances (e.g., Fern Street Circus and San Diego Guild of Puppetry) and community organizations who celebrate culturally specific holidays with festivals and outdoor gatherings. The

Black Box is also used for rehearsals, educational programs, community meetings, workshops, and Library programs.

Historically, local arts and culture organizations have used the space at no charge to produce performances that are provided free to the community. There is a “rental fee” for those organizations that choose to charge admissions. The Black Box has been an important venue for performing arts groups to try out work, provide outreach performances and conduct out-of-school programs for City Heights youth.

A facility needs assessment conducted as part of this planning process identified several limitations to the Black Box as a performance venue. The most critical need is for secondary spaces – a lobby, ticketing/concessions booth, green room and dressing rooms. There is also a severe lack of storage. Other concerns include better acoustics for live performances and film screenings, and a sound-proof door for the Amphitheatre opening. If it is to be operated by a resident company, office space is needed. The Annex also lacks easily accessible street and off-street parking, which can be a problem for evening performances.

Despite these limitations however, users (artists and arts organizations) indicate that it is a beloved space for its intimacy, its versatility and its relationship to the culturally rich neighborhood in which it resides. There are strong, positive associations with the venue and peoples’ experiences there.

The IDEA LAB: A New Multimedia Cultural Facility for City Heights

In addition to the Performance Annex, this plan includes the creation of a new facility, the Multimedia IDEA LAB (IDEA LAB), that will provide an entirely new offering for residents and visitors to City Heights. Through the City’s use of restricted Public, Educational and Government Access¹ (PEG) funds it will re-purpose the second floor space for community access use as a multimedia broadcasting center. The use of PEG funds enables the expansion of SDPL’s city-wide efforts to help bridge San Diego’s digital divide through dedicated multimedia sites.

The development of the IDEA LAB, a dedicated site with state-of-the-art production technology, makes possible community access to the means for creative production such as filmmaking and editing, podcasting, community-driven programming, live streaming of events in the Black Box and in the IDEA LAB’s studios, music recording, and more.

Additionally, community arts and culture organizations and others (individuals and groups) can use the studios to create multimedia iterations of their work for broadcast and distribution. Youth and adults can learn to use technology for personal projects, as well as for workforce and economic development, and skill building. Further, it provides opportunities for students in broadcast programs at Hoover High School, City College and San Diego State University, for example, to continue their training or creating outside of those educational settings. College students may also find work as teaching artists or workshop leaders.

¹ PEG funds can only be used for technology and capital improvements to spaces for the creation of content for broadcasting through community media access channels (television, internet, radio etc.)

THE NEW BUSINESS MODEL

While the plan supports two entities, the Performance Annex and the IDEA LAB, the resident operators are expected to work together in partnership with the City, other community organizations, educational institutions, and individuals to provide locally relevant programs and services. The “big vision” is for these organizations to collaborate across disciplines to create an active, vibrant center for artistic production, presentation, education and engagement that celebrates City Heights multicultural, multiethnic identity.

Resident Operators

The new business model replaces previous City staff formerly charged with programming and oversight of the Performance Annex with “resident operators”, highly experienced nonprofit organizations that provide programs and services in exchange for rent-free space. The rationale for this change is that while providing an array of programs for the community is within the library’s mission, operating a cultural facility is generally not.

Resident operators will continue to be able to earn revenue through ticket sales and program fees in addition to other fundraising activities for contributed income. A plan for ensuring City Heights residents have access to free and reduced-price fees and admission will be worked out during contracting.

Operator Profile

While enticing to many organizations as a means for free space, it is not suitable for every organization. Organizations that are already engaged in a search for new space and have adequate staff and financial operating resources are likely a better fit. Similarly, those groups that already have a community engagement focus as part of their mission as evidenced by a history of relevant work, are stronger candidates to support the ‘outward facing’ aspects of creating a venue that is not only for their use but for the public’s benefit as well. Finally, organizations with a track record for engaging in community partnerships and collaborations, particularly in culturally diverse communities, will better fit the spirit of and vision for this opportunity.

The IDEA LAB Operator

Media Arts Center San Diego will be the first contracted resident operator for the IDEA LAB. They are currently actively working in City Heights through community partnerships. More specifically, they are in the final year of a ten-year California Endowment funded community journalism program in partnership with KPBS and AjA Project, Speak City Heights. This program will now be “embedded” in City Heights, at the IDEA LAB. The Black Box can be used for film screenings such as the annual San Diego Latino Film Festival as well as movies at the Amphitheatre in the summer.

The Annex Operator

An RFP will be developed, and a competitive process will be conducted to identify an operator for the Performance Annex. SDPL will implement these activities with the Commission for Arts.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The resident operators are responsible for costs related to their own programming and to program delivery. They are also responsible for day-to-day care and wear and tear-related maintenance of the equipment. They may fundraise as well as develop earned revenue streams.

- When appropriate and deemed to be mutually beneficial, collaborative efforts are encouraged to secure additional targeted program and/operating funds with the SDPL Foundation.
- The City continues to absorb the facility costs (utilities, security, building maintenance) that are already built into the SDPL's operating expenses. Additionally, they are responsible for improvements or upgrades to the buildings and technology identified now, as part of this plan, or as determined at a future date.
- SDPL will have a staff liaison who works with venues to facilitate communication and venue management.

Funding and Finances

Concerns have been raised by some in the arts community that the additional costs of overseeing and managing the venues on the City's behalf without additional funding from the City or other sources could negatively impact the resident arts organizations' financial stability.

The role of additional operational budget support and capital improvement funds will receive greater consideration in Phase II. Ideas to explore include joint grant writing, ensuring inclusion of the Annex in SDPL Foundation matching fund opportunities, and reviving the Friends of the Performance Annex fund. Some potential sources² include:

- California Endowment (programs)
- Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) (various)
- State and federal infrastructure grants
- Clare Rose Foundation (youth development programs)
- Conrad Prebys Foundation (capital, programs and operations)
- LISC San Diego (program related to workforce and economic development)
- The Parker Foundation (challenge grants, matching funds, capital, operating, program)
- Walter C. and Betty J. Zable Foundation (youth and underserved programs)

September 2021 Update

Since the development of the March 2021 planning document, several funding opportunities at the state and federal have become available. The House of Representatives Appropriations Committee's Community Project Funding program and the California State Library's Building Forward infrastructure grant program have come online. While SDPL is waiting for the guidelines for the latter, a request for \$1M was made for Community Project Funding by invitation from Rep. Sara Jacobs. Community Project Funding, if received, will be matched with PEG money, and enable significant exterior improvements to the Performance Annex and its environs that align with the Business Plan's recommendations.

Workforce development funding from the City's Economic Development Department will enable the creation of a multimedia training program for at-risk youth ages 16-24. Participants will receive paid training by MACSD and be placed throughout City departments as paid video production

² All but Walter C. and Betty J. Zable Foundation have been contacted about this project. San Diego City Council District 9 has also been in conversation with City staff and the consultant and aware of the potential this could have for CDGB allocations.

interns. The interns will be creating training and promotional videos with departments such as the Fire Department, Human Resources, the Commission for Arts and Culture and the Central and branch libraries throughout the City. In addition to one-time funding this year, additional multi-year funds are available for future years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

General Recommendations

Coordination

- Create a general coordinator position that supports cross facility collaborations, community engagement, the community advisory committee and ongoing fundraising efforts.
- Establish a community advisory committee to build and maintain strong liaisons with stakeholders (residents, businesses, and community organizations) and increase residents' connection to and interactivity with both the IDEA LAB and the Annex.

Funding

- In addition to providing space in exchange for presenting community-focused programming, consider providing the resident operator with a budget to support those presenting efforts to ensure that providing community services for the City do not take resources away from their own mission-driven work.
- Develop a fund similar to the Horton Plaza Theatre Foundation's Production Assistance Fund to provide financial assistance to local nonprofit community and performing arts organizations that encourage and enable community/culturally relevant performances and festivals at the Annex.
- Build a second floor to the Black Box that provides new rehearsal, office, green room, bathroom and dressing room spaces. This addition could also be designed with a second-floor lobby.

Rebranding

- Create a new brand identity that includes both the IDEA LAB and the Performance Annex.

Program

- Create an annual short-term artist(s) in residence program to select and fund a multi-disciplinary artist or team of artists that create work which engages the community, IDEA LAB and Annex.

The Performance Annex and its Environs

Improvements

- Develop an exterior revitalization plan for the park area directly in front of the outdoor Amphitheatre stage and Annex. The plan should provide for:
 - increased exterior lighting and other means for strengthening personal safety
 - the possible extension of the apron to create a larger Amphitheatre stage
 - possible reconsideration of the placement of picnic tables to create more open space in front of the stage
 - reconceptualization of the courtyard between the Annex and the IDEA LAB for better use of the area as an outdoor gathering space and/or temporary Black Box support area

- more aesthetically pleasing entries from both the east and west sides
- an easily retractable awning to shade performers in mid-afternoon
- a fresh coat of paint
- Locate office space for the managing theatre.
- Address the need for a secondary space (separate from public access) that includes a green room, dressing rooms, access to private bathrooms as well as a box office and covered lobby or audience waiting area.
- Enclose the lighting/sound booth.
- Install a new film projector, screen and speaker system.
- Add significantly more storage for both the resident operator and renters to use for props, costumes and sets between performances.
- Install a new roll-up door at the Amphitheatre opening to create a more effective sound and climate-control barrier for activities taking place inside the theatre, particularly those related to audio or visual recordings and live stream broadcasting.
- Install improved sound absorption materials on the left and right walls to avoid standing waves
- Create a more flexible, adjustable lighting and drapery plan.
- Add a third exit on the southeast side of the building for easier crossovers and flow.
- Explore the reconfiguration of the interior Black Box space with a wall to create two distinct performance areas – the Black Box and the Amphitheatre.

Signage and Parking

- Increase wayfinding throughout the complex and at the park's periphery to better direct users to Annex entrances, facilities, restrooms etc.
- Install at least one marquis style sign near the corners of Fairmount and Wightman to announce activities at the Annex, and IDEA LAB as well as the Library.
- Explore a partnership with the retail shopping center across Wightman for parking in the evening.

The Multimedia Community Access Broadcasting IDEA LAB

- Determine if any programming can begin in late July or August. It may include outdoor films (at the Amphitheatre) or appropriately distanced indoor/outdoor multimedia activities.
- Create and implement a development plan in partnership with the SDPL Foundation that provides ongoing multi-year funding for educational multimedia programs.
- Work closely with community stakeholders and through organizations like LISC to develop partnerships that advance efforts for community-responsive programming, economic and workforce development and broadcast services.
- Begin developing or continuing partnerships with community colleges and universities for student mentors, teaching artists, and educational programs that support workforce development and pathways to college and career.

RESIDENT OPERATOR REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Develop the Request for Proposals invitation with specific language to identify a managing entity that, at minimum:
 - Has an existing, working relationship with City Heights organizations and residents
 - Can provide a detailed plan engaging the community in the development of relevant, participatory cultural programs
 - Can provide a detailed plan for identifying potential productions and programs to present at the Annex
 - Can provide written references from community groups or leaders who can attest to the organization's history or commitment to encouraging participatory engagement with the community
 - Has experience with producing and/or presenting programs for wide-ranging culturally diverse groups
 - Has the organizational capacity to maintain the staff and financial resources necessary to provide ongoing programs and services for the length of its contractual arrangement with the City
 - The scope of services for the nonprofit managing organization should include requirements for culturally relevant programming and promoting events in multiple languages.