

Cultural Plan

City of Visalia, California

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Prepared by:



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I. **Executive Summary**

The City of Visalia commissioned a Cultural Plan in 2007. Along with a citizens' Steering Committee, comprised of a cross-section of community and civic leadership, the arts management consulting firm AMS Planning & Research oversaw a series of research tasks and planning steps to create this document. The Plan is the result of input from more than 500 people who attended meetings and public forums, completed written surveys, and helped draft and prioritize the Plan's recommendations. Seven overall goals contain a series of recommendations (objectives) in areas ranging from audience development to cultural tourism.

Goals and Recommendations

Goal A - Programming

This goal consists of strategies to create new programs and sustain (and ensure the consistency of) existing cultural programming. The Steering Committee assigned its top priority to the specific task of creating a "signature event" to showcase Visalia's cultural and heritage resources. Coordinated and thematic programming among arts groups, co-promotional opportunities and youth-targeted events are also proposed.

Goal B – Inclusion & Heritage

Outreach to ethnic and underserved populations in the region, and development of a "brand identity" for Visalia's cultural sector are the two specific objectives under Goal B.

Goal C – Information & Marketing

A cornerstone of most cultural plans is a set of strategies to provide better information to the potential arts-attending public, and to pursue audience development activities collaboratively. Visalia's plan is no exception, delineating specific ideas for marketing tailored to the market.

Goal D – Coordination & Leadership

Perhaps more than any other fact of successful implementation of a Cultural Plan is the commitment and development of leadership, and the effectiveness of coordinated efforts. Goal D contains specific suggestions for networking, volunteerism, and growth of the city's non-profit cultural sector.

Goal E – Cultural Tourism

Visalia's unique location means it is already a destination and/or starting point for thousands of visitors annually. Capturing them, and attracting others, to partake of the community's arts and cultural offerings, is the intent of this goal.

Goal F – Venues & Places

Spaces to exhibit, perform, and create works of art, and the support spaces to go along with them, are a common need of arts groups and individual artists. Visalia

has identified a number of specific facility-related needs, from further renovation of historic venues to studies for possible new ones, as well as strategies to better utilize existing spaces.

Goal G – Education & Youth

Visalia is a community that values its young people and faces challenges to provide school-age students and others with affordable, accessible, and meaningful cultural experiences. Specific arts education strategies, and special youth programs, are recommended.

Priority Recommendations

The Steering Committee voted on priorities for implementation, with seven specific recommendations receiving the majority of votes. These are:

- Develop and implement a formal Cultural Tourism Plan involving appropriate tourism and hospitality industry partners (Convention & Visitors Bureau, Sequoia Valley Visitor Council, hotels, local and regional governments, National Parks, etc.).
- Plan a “Signature Event” for Visalia that promotes the community’s arts, culture, and heritage.
- Pursue a collaborative marketing and audience development effort for the city’s arts, cultural, heritage, and related institutions and programs.
- Work with appropriate partners to institute planning and scheduling calendars to avoid conflicts and enable synergies between program and event times/days.
- Pursue opportunities for coordinated and thematic programming among arts and cultural and community organizations.
- Ensure that Visalia’s Art Hops and studio tours (e.g., Visalia Artist Studio Tours - VAST) are consistent and sustainable programs.
- Conduct targeted outreach into ethnic and underserved communities (e.g., Hispanic and Southeast Asian populations, residents of the “Oval” area, youth groups, etc.) aimed at cultural exchange, cross-over attendance, bringing programs (such as Farmer’s Market, Arts Market, etc.) into various neighborhoods, and so on.

Consultant Recommendation

We would like to call particular attention to recommendation #2 under Goal D (Coordination & Leadership) which calls upon a coalition of private sector and public leadership to “grow and sustain the city’s non-profit arts and cultural sector through technical assistance, funding, volunteerism, and so on.” AMS believes strongly that in addition to the priorities identified by the Steering

committee, this recommendation represents a crucial step for the long-term health of the city's arts community.

The composition of most of the city's arts groups – volunteer-run and operating with “shoestring budgets” – makes it difficult to achieve lasting success or sustainable organizations. An injection of human capital, capital dollars, and operating support, could go a long way to creating a consistent brand and product to aid in cultural tourism efforts, facing community challenges (such as gang prevention), and could have real economic benefits for the city and region.

Benefits

The Cultural Plan Steering Committee believes that a commitment by local government, other public agencies, non-profit groups, individuals, and private businesses and foundations can result in strengthening Visalia's identity as a place that values arts/culture. A coordinated effort to achieve the recommendations in this Cultural Plan could yield a number of benefits, among them:

- Ancillary audience spending retained in city (based on a national average of \$27.79 per person in addition to the cost of their tickets) through improved nightlife and weekend arts activity
- Visits by residents of the overall area for fairs, festivals, special events, on-going performances and exhibits, and more cultural tourists visiting the city and region
- Leveraging state and private funding to match city dollars
- An enhanced approach to economic development, downtown and community revitalization, through recognition of cultural tourism and the “creative economy” (e.g., becoming an artist-friendly community) as potential niches for Visalia¹
- The arts as a force to help solve community challenges such as gang prevention efforts for at-risk youth
- A better quality of life for families, seniors, citizens of all ages

¹ Some cities, such as Paducah, Kentucky, have instituted “artist relocation” projects providing housing and employment incentives to lure artists to live and work in their communities, seeking to capitalize on an approach to economic development that Richard Florida described in his book *The Rise of the Creative Class*.

II. Introduction

Background

(Summarized from the City's web site)

Visalia is the oldest town between San Francisco and Los Angeles and indeed is known as the Crown Jewel of the San Joaquin Valley. When California achieved statehood in 1850, Tulare County did not exist. The land that now forms the county was part of Mariposa. In 1852 some pioneers settled in the area then known as Four Creeks, petitioned the state legislature for county status and on July 10 of that same year Tulare County was recognized.

One of the first inhabitants was Nathaniel Vise, responsible for surveying the new settlement. In 1853 the town, named for Vise's ancestral home (Visalia, Kentucky) became the county seat of the new county. In 1858 Visalia was added to John Butterfield's Overland Stage route from St. Louis to San Francisco. Included in the early crop of citizens were some notorious individuals who preyed upon the Stage travelers.

Once a creek side settlement, Visalia is now a thriving city with over 118,000 inhabitants and has become a community that takes great pride in the small town feel and high quality of life that accompanies big city amenities.

Research Methodology

In 2006 the City Council elected to pursue creation of a Cultural Plan. In 2007 the city issued a request for proposals for a consultant to create a Cultural Plan, resulting in the selection of AMS Planning & Research and a planning process culminating in this document.

AMS's research for the Cultural Plan consisted of **interviews** with community leaders, elected officials, and key individuals representing organizations and agencies whose missions were deemed to be relevant to the goals of the planning process.

A **market analysis** (involving demographic and lifestyle profiles) was undertaken covering the city itself and the Core-Based Statistical Area (CBSA) as defined by the US Census Bureau. Interviews were conducted with arts, cultural and heritage **organizations** in the city. A **public intercept survey** involving written surveys from over 400 residents of the city was undertaken by student surveyors to assist in assessing community attitudes and opinions with respect to the city's existing and future arts and culture resources.

A series of **public forums** was then held with specific interest-area groups in various locations in the city. Sessions for individual artists, cultural groups, business leaders, and young people in the community (in their 20s and early 30s)

were targeted. A **Town Meeting** was also held during which any and all topics relevant to the cultural arts plan were open for public comment.

III. Intercept Survey Highlights

An “intercept survey” was conducted at several locations/events around Visalia yielding a total of 411 responses. Among the findings from the survey:

- About 45% of respondents are long-time residents of the city living in Visalia for 15 years or more, with about 18% being residents for four years or less.
- Attendance rates are similar to national norms, with 64% of respondents reporting having attended at least one professional performing arts event in the past year in Visalia. The majority of attendances are in Visalia proper, with only about 35% of respondents reporting attending performances elsewhere in Tulare county, or anywhere else, in the past year.
- In terms of art exhibits, about 45% have attended at least one exhibition in the past year. Visitation to historic sites or history museums (at least once in the past year) was reported by about 37% of respondents, and almost two-thirds of the sample (64%) noted they’d attended an outdoor fair or festival in the past year (the majority in Visalia proper).
- When asked where they would take visitors for a cultural experience, a combined 20% mentioned Main Street and downtown Visalia, with 12% citing Mooney Grove Museum.
- For 65% of the sample, “lack of time” was the reason they do not attend cultural events more often, though “lack of information” was the second most often-mentioned at 43%. Cost of attending came in fifth with 23%.
- Whereas 11% rate the availability of arts/cultural programs in the City as “excellent,” 41% reported availability of programs as “good” and 40% rated availability as only “fair.”
- In terms of leisure activities, movies (67%), time with family (62%), and outdoor activities (54%) were the top mentions.
- When asked about their interest in specific cultural programs, arts/crafts fairs and festivals (36%), stage plays (35%), and musical theater (32%) were the top three disciplines cited.
- A series of attitudinal questions revealed that:
 - 78% believe the arts contribute to the local economy (24% “significant amount,” 54% “a modest amount”).

- 66% believe it is “extremely important” for children to have arts education in schools (and an additional 28% believe it somewhat important).
- Newspapers are the most common source of information on arts/cultural events, cited by 60% of the sample, followed by family/friends (56%) and radio (32%).
- Strong interest was expressed in various options for receiving information and special offers:
 - 39% extremely interested in a master calendar of programs on the internet
 - 44% extremely interested in receiving special offers and discounts via e-mail
- A reasonable level of interest was expressed for contributing to a united arts fund (a “united way for the arts”) with 23% reporting they’d be “extremely” likely to contribute and 50% somewhat likely.
- The sample was broadly representative of the city population:
 - 57% of respondents have children at home under age 16
 - 8 ZIP codes were represented (with more than 1.5% of respondents in each)
 - 22% reported high school as the highest grade completed; 40% attended some college, 21% have undergraduate degrees, and 11% attended graduate school.
 - 49% are White (not Hispanic), 32% of Hispanic/Latino origin, 5% Asian/Pacific Islander, 7% African-American, 3.5% Native American.

IV. Market Analysis Highlights

Demographics

A demographic profile was prepared covering the City of Visalia proper, the Core Based Statistical Area (CBSA) as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, with the State of California as a base for comparison. The table below summarizes the key demographic variables associated with the city, market area, and state populations.

SUMMARY OF KEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Variable	Visalia, CA Place	Visalia, CA CBSA	State of California
2006 Estimated Population	107,114	411,352	36,579,455
2000 Population	91,565	368,021	33,871,648
Median Age	31.7	29.3	34.4
% Generation Y (5-17 yrs)	24.8%	26.3%	22.1%
% Generation X (18-34 yrs)	26.9%	26.7%	29.4%
% Baby Boomers (35-59 yrs)	21.7%	19.9%	23.3%
% Mature (60+ Yrs)	10.4%	9.4%	10.8%
Median Household Income	\$48,030	\$40,177	\$54,508
% over \$75,000	25.1%	18.6%	28.5%
% with College Degree	18.8%	11.5%	26.2%
Households with Children	44.9%	49.8%	39.6%
% Black	2.2%	1.7%	6.4%
% Asian	5.5%	3.5%	12.3%
% Hispanic (all races)	39.7%	55.3%	35.3%

As the table illustrates, the City of Visalia has higher “market quality” for measures typically associated with arts attendance (e.g., income and education). In these areas, the city has greater representation of target arts attender populations than in the larger CBSA (e.g., 25% of households with income over \$75,000 in the city, 19% of adults with college degrees compared to only 12% in the CBSA).

Arts Participation Indices

Looking at some measures of the lifestyles of residents paints a similar picture of a population in the city that is more “culturally-inclined” than that of the larger CBSA. According to the table below, indices for cultural participation, where an index of 100 equals average propensity to engage in an activity, are higher in the city than in the CBSA. An index of 107 for “going to live theater once a year” suggests residents within the city are 7% more likely to attend theater than are average US citizens. The indices for Visalia show close to average proclivity to participate in arts/cultural activities, lower than those for the state as a whole, but higher than those for the larger CBSA.

Lifestyle Attribute	Visalia CA Place	Visalia CA CBSA	California
Belong to an Arts Association (A)	87	73	127
Buy Classical Music (A)	97	82	120
Go to Live Theater 1yr (A)	107	81	118
Go to Museum 1yr (A)	100	89	115
Go to Rock/Pop Concert (A)	109	94	118
Go to Music/Dance Performance (A)	103	93	114
Interested in the Arts (A)	96	88	118

Lifestyle Segmentation

The consultants also looked at the PrizmNE lifestyle segmentation of households in the market area. According to Prizm, every household in the US is classified into one of 66 distinct segments based on product preferences, leisure activities, and other attributes. Several of the segments noted for high arts attendance potential are represented in the city, many of which are also those with highly-educated and upper income residents. Segments such as “Second City Elite,” “Brite Lites L’il City,” and “Upward Bound” in particular compose a significant proportion of the population, are relatively high-income and well-educated households. Detailed lifestyle segmentation tables can be found at the end of this report along with descriptions of a few key segments.

PRIZM NE PROFILE REPORT							
Visalia Place vs. Visalia CBSA							
Seg. #	Segment Title	Visalia CBSA		Visalia Place		%Pen	Index
		Base Count	Base %Comp	Analysis Count	Analysis %Comp		
5	Country Squires	1,332	1.1%	768	2.2%	57.7%	197
10	Second City Elite	2,120	1.8%	1,364	3.8%	64.3%	219
12	Brite Lites, Li'l City	2,838	2.3%	1,472	4.1%	51.9%	177
13	Upward Bound	5,363	4.4%	2,253	6.3%	42.0%	143
18	Kids & Cul-de-sacs	1,488	1.2%	832	2.3%	55.9%	191
19	Home Sweet Home	1,241	1.0%	755	2.1%	60.8%	207
24	Up-and-Comers	2,230	1.8%	896	2.5%	40.2%	137
27	Middleburg Managers	3,796	3.1%	1,933	5.4%	50.9%	174
30	Suburban Sprawl	1,058	0.9%	752	2.1%	71.1%	242
34	White Picket Fences	7,369	6.1%	3,116	8.8%	42.3%	144
35	Boomtown Singles	3,289	2.7%	1,526	4.3%	46.4%	158
36	Blue-Chip Blues	2,196	1.8%	1,358	3.8%	61.8%	211
41	Sunset City Blues	4,557	3.8%	2,070	5.8%	45.4%	155
47	City Startups	3,254	2.7%	1367	3.8%	42.0%	143
49	American Classics	1,427	1.2%	889	2.5%	62.3%	212
52	Suburban Pioneers	2,178	1.8%	1,162	3.3%	53.4%	182
53	Mobility Blues	4,119	3.4%	1364	3.8%	33.1%	113
60	Park Bench Seniors	2,308	1.9%	1077	3.0%	46.7%	159
62	Hometown Retired	4,642	3.8%	1559	4.4%	33.6%	115
63	Family Thrifts	12,630	10.4%	3617	10.2%	28.6%	98
	Total		57.2%		84.7%		

V. Model Case Study Highlights

The consultants sought to identify model municipal arts programs to study as comparables for Visalia's Cultural Plan. We identified four California cities with notable municipal arts programs, including Walnut Creek (pop'n. 65,000), Pleasanton (pop 65,000), Ventura (pop 104,000), and Redding (pop 90,000). Highlights of this research are provided here.

City of Walnut Creek

The City of Walnut Creek is an upscale suburb of 65,000 in the East Bay region of the San Francisco Bay Area. The city has a long history of arts programming dating to the 1950s. Its arts program is administered through the Arts, Recreation & Community Services Department which oversees five key program areas: Civic Arts Education, Leshner Center for the Arts, Bedford Gallery, Recreation Services, and Youth & Family Services Program. With a budget of nearly \$7 million annually (about \$1.5 million from city general funds), some 35 full-time staff members are employed.

The city's Arts Commission consists of seven members serving three-year terms and holding monthly meetings. Its charge is to review arts programs and make recommendations to City Council, prepare and maintain a 10-year plan (and 8-year operating and capital facilities plans), establish and work closely with Advisory Councils for each program (see below), and work with staff and the non-profit Diablo Regional Arts Association (DRAA) to determine private sector arts funding needs.

Several distinct Advisory Councils work with each individual program, including Civic Arts Education (7 members, 3-year terms, 6 appointed by the Arts Commission and 1 by the DRAA); Bedford Gallery (which reviews proposals for exhibitions and education programs and reviews and approves all public art projects for the City); and the Clay Arts Guild (membership organization that offers pottery studio time, exhibit and sales opportunities, with about 150 members).

Specific Commission/Department programs include:

- Art exhibitions, about 5-6 annually in the Bedford Gallery, including docent tours, workshops, lectures, public programs.
- Center REPeritory Company is a city-operated theater company producing six shows annually at the Leshner Center.
- The Civic Arts Education is the oldest and largest community arts education provider in northern California with some 140 classes in art,

dance, music, performing arts, in studio classrooms in Civic Park facilities, serving some 16,000+ area residents.

- The Fine Arts Preschool program (ArtReach) provides tailored arts education programs to various schools in Contra Costa County consisting of in-class residencies, staff development, after school programs.
- The Friends of Civic Arts Education Foundation was recently formed and raised \$11,000 for scholarships through an annual gala event. It is currently embarking on a \$15-20 million capital campaign for expanded arts education facilities.
- Public Art is funded through 1% of city capital projects and 1% of private construction projects over 25,000 square feet, and ½% for private projects between 15,000 - 25,000 sq. ft.

The city's Civic Arts program also operates several facilities, including the signature Lesher Center for the Arts (opened 1990) consisting of 785-seat, 300-seat, and 133-seat theaters and the 3,500 sq. ft. Bedford Gallery. It serves as the performance home for the city's Center Repertory Co., Diablo Light Opera Co. and Contra Costa Musical Theatre. Some 65 community organizations rent the venues annually accounting for 900+ performances. Other city facilities include the Shadelands Art Center (classroom facility, available for private rentals) and the Del Valle Theatre (380-seat venue formerly high school theater).

The primary focus of the non-profit Diablo Regional Arts Association (DRAA) is to support major tenants of the Lesher Center. Its mission is:

Dedicated to enriching the quality of programming within the Lesher Center for the Arts and to creating avenues for everyone to enjoy the arts. We accomplish this mission through exemplary leadership and funding.

The Association holds monthly meetings and coordinates its efforts with the Walnut Creek Arts Commission, with an annual budget of nearly \$750,000 (including \$100,000 from the city and city-provided office space). Grants are made to Lesher Center arts producers including:

- Artistic Excellence Grant Program (\$250,000 to 8 groups in '06) "to increase the quality of the artistic offerings within the Lesher Center by motivating producers to include qualitative stretches within their seasons."
- The Arts Access Program provides opportunities for families, children, seniors and low-income or at-risk individuals to experience the arts.

City of Pleasanton

The City of Pleasanton (another San Francisco Bay Area suburb with about 65,000 residents), established its Civic Arts Program in 1989. A non-profit group, the Pleasanton Cultural Arts Council (PCAC), was created in 1974 and in the 1980s it spearheaded an effort to purchase and renovate the historic Amador Theater. The city then created its Civic Arts Program (a Division of the Department of Parks & Community Services) to operate and program the theater.

The Civic Arts Program operates with four full-time and six part-time staff, and an annual budget of \$1.4 million (all of which derives from the city's general operating budget). The appointed Civic Arts Commission has seven members plus one alternate and holds monthly meetings, with the following mission:

“To promote the acquisition, construction, and installation of public art in Pleasanton and advise the City Council on matters related to city-sponsored arts and cultural programs.”

Among its programs are the following:

- Civic Arts Presents is an annual series of performances by touring artists in theater, comedy, dance, storytellers, puppeteers, authors, and concerts at the Amador Theater.
- Shakespeare in the Park is offered for free during the summer months.
- An extensive series of Literary Arts programs includes Poet Laureate program (poetry readings, workshops for adults and youth), Open Mic nights, “Everything Poetry” (writers group), and an annual day-long Poetry, Prose and Arts Festival.
- Education programs include the Civic Arts School Concert Series (classroom field trips), the Youth Music Festival (part of the city's Teen and Youth Services program), the Children's Outdoor Art Festival (annually in June), a 3-week Summer Drama Camp (featuring culminating public performances at the Amador Theater).
- While there is no formal Civic Arts Re-Granting program, the city does provide \$40,000 annually (up to \$7,500 per organization) “to fund cultural and artistic projects that build community, provide public education in the arts, create increased diversity and provide technical assistance increasing self-sufficiency.”
- While there is no formal Public Art ordinance, the city budgets \$50,000 annually for public art maintenance and acquisition with the program administered by the Civic Arts program.

City of Visalia Cultural Plan

- Technical Assistance/Advocacy is offered including seminars/workshops for local artists, co-sponsored with PCAC

The city operates facilities including the 900-seat Amador Theater (built in 1930s, part of HS campus), a Cultural Arts Center in Community Park (home for Civic Arts classes), and is pursuing plans for a downtown firehouse as cultural arts center which will feature a small theater and art gallery. The city is working with the non-profit Pleasanton Cultural Arts Council (see below) on this project.

The city's non-profit partner is the Pleasanton Cultural Arts Council (PCAC) founded in 1974 "to promote appreciation of the arts, provide facilities for arts activities, and create an environment where residents can pursue and enjoy a wide range of cultural opportunities." Its 13-member board has a \$55,000 annual budget (income from memberships). Programs include:

- Arts in the Schools, a grant program for arts programs in Pleasanton K-12 schools (\$13,000 awarded in 2005).
- Young Artist Achievement and Arts Supporter of the Year awards.
- The PCAC so-sponsors the Poetry, Prose & Arts Festival

PCAC recently formed the Pleasanton Arts Foundation to raise funds for the fire station project. The Foundation has a separate 9-member board and a 14-member community advisory board. The City has committed some funding and will operate the Arts Center.

City of Ventura

With just over 100,000 residents, this seaside southern California city (in Ventura county, to the northwest of Los Angeles) is a case study in cultural development following a Cultural Plan. Its Cultural Affairs Division was established in 1992 as result of a community Cultural Plan. Its mission is to:

Promote broad community awareness of, access to, and education in the arts and the city's historic resources in Ventura. Provide opportunities and support to Ventura artists and arts organizations. Foster cross-cultural understanding. Support economic development and tourism, especially in the downtown core.

With a budget of more than \$1.75 million (46% from general fund, 27% from percent-for-art ordinance, 27% from grants and program revenue), the department has eight full-time and six part-time staff. A mayoral-appointed 5-member Cultural Affairs Commission and seven-member Public Art Commission provide advisory input.

Programs include:

- Cowboys, Heroes & Outlaws, family-focused cultural event at the city-operated historic Adobe, including workshops, demonstrations, period entertainment, historic interpreters, and “cowboy college.”
- Music Under the Stars is an annual summer concert series at the Adobe.
- Special Events include Downtown Street Festivals (attract 30,000 – 50,000), ArtWalks (60+ participating sites, attracting up to 10,000), and Discover Ventura Tours (scheduled tours of Ventura’s historic sites such as its downtown, Olivas and Albinger Adobes).
- Education programs include Children’s Celebration of the Arts (professional artists visit school classrooms for hands-on visual and performing arts workshops, involving some 215 workshops annually with 6,000+ participants); Classes offered at the Arts Center (and some schools, featuring 460 visual, performing, and literary arts classes for 4,000+ registrants each year); and summer cultural enrichment programs (Literary Arts Camp, Theatre Enrichment Week).

The city runs a Cultural Funding Program consisting of grants to arts organizations and individual artists. The program was created in 1993 “to increase access to arts education programs for youth; increase the number of programs that celebrate Ventura’s diverse community and rich history; and make the arts a major component of the community’s fabric.” Grants are awarded in the areas of general operating support, cultural projects, artist fellowships, and facility use categories (in-kind support for local group usage of city-owned venues). A total of \$174,500 was awarded in 2006 including \$135,000 to 18 local arts groups and \$39,500 to 10 local artists.

In terms of facilities, the Cultural Affairs Division manages city-owned historic sites:

- Olivas Adobe Historical Park (large volunteer docent group); Ortega Adobe (recently opened, no programming offered); Albinger Archaeological Museum (in a partnership with the Ventura Co. Museum of History & Art); the Barranca Vista Arts Center (arts education classes).

The City administers a Public Percent-For-Art Program consisting of 2% of qualifying projects from city capital improvement projects. Funding includes the Municipal Art Acquisition program to document the history of visual art in Ventura through acquisition of significant works by area artists; the collection is displayed in City Hall and other municipal buildings.

Technical Assistance is offered for arts organizations and artists including individual consultations with professional arts management consultants,

workshops and seminars. Publications include “State of the Arts” (a tri-annual newsletter, information for arts community) with a bi-monthly electronic version under development; My Ventura is a guide to city classes and activities.

Among the city’s latest developments is the designation of a Downtown Cultural District whereby the Cultural Affairs Division provides ongoing programming and technical support and challenge grants to district tenants to develop or expand facilities. Staff are currently working on affordable artist live/work space projects in downtown.

City of Redding

The City of Redding’s cultural activities are spearheaded by the Shasta County Arts Council, a non-profit established in 1981 whose mission is “to promote the arts and public interest in the arts, to provide assistance and services to arts organizations, institutions and individuals, and to significantly enhance the impact of the arts and arts education on the quality of life in Shasta County.” With a budget of \$135,000 (including \$22,000 annually from the City), one full-time and one part-time staff member oversee programs and services. The City also owns the building in which the Council is located and provides maintenance and rent-free space for offices and programs. Other sources of revenue include grants and contributions, and earned income from program fees and art gallery sales (up to 35% of annual budget).

The council occupies the Old City Hall Arts Center, a 1907 building that originally housed city offices and the police department, renovated in 1987 for the Arts Council’s use. The Arts Center includes gallery, classroom, 150-seat performance hall, green room, video production studio, gift shop, and SCAC offices. A surrounding city park and courtyard are used for receptions and gatherings.

Among its programs are ARTsMART Downtown a monthly Saturday event with music, local artists displaying and selling work. Other notable programs include:

- Old City Hall Gallery exhibitions (8 per year)
- Open Studio Tour (35 local artists)
- Silent Film Festival
- Day trip bus tours to San Francisco museums, ballet, opera, music performances (3-4 per year)

In terms of education programs, classes are offered at the art center, for adults and children, in areas such as ballroom dance, ballet, belly dancing, yoga, drawing, painting, and photography. The KARE program (Kid’s Art Recreation

and Education) provides after school arts programming for youth living in transitional housing.

While the Council does not provide any funding to artists or other non-profit arts groups, some other notable programs include:

- Four annual scholarships for college students majoring in visual, performing or literary arts (\$500); \$1,000 award to outstanding applicant.
- Technical Assistance in the form of a local/regional coordinated arts calendar; artists opportunities, auditions, etc. in a bi-monthly Arts Essential newsletter and on the Council's web site
- An Artists registry, referral service, with links on the web site

The Council has some 550 members (200 are artists) who receive discounts on classes, programs, invitations to special events, etc. Member artists can participate in the registry/referral service.

Summary of Case Study Findings

These case studies clearly illustrate the wide range of arts and cultural programs, services, and venues that are funded and/or operated by city governments in more or less "suburban" communities (or edge cities) with populations in the 65,000 to 100,000 range. From these studies we can summarize the following major findings:

- The use of city general funds to support arts programs, staff, and facilities is quite common among the case study communities; most also employ other public and private funding sources to support the arts in their communities.
- City-sponsored and supported festivals are a common element among the communities we studied; also free summer park concert series.
- Public art programs are fairly common, typically covering public capital improvement projects. In Walnut Creek a requirement for public art in private developments is also a policy.
- Re-granting for organizations and in many cases, individual artists, is another common use of cultural arts program dollars.
- Non profit partners are also common (in Pleasanton, Walnut Creek) but typically work alongside the professionally-staffed City Cultural Affairs divisions, and focus on fundraising for capital projects and re-granting funds.

- Literary programs were identified in a few of the communities, and technical assistance services are common among all the city departments.

VI. Visalia's Cultural Plan

All in all, approximately 500 people provided input for the Cultural Plan, including those who completed intercept surveys, participated in interviews, and attended public forums and meetings. Through a series of planning workshops, the citizens' Steering committee decided to organize the Plan according to a series of specific goals.

Recommendations are offered under each goal. A subsequent section addresses infrastructure - providing the staff and financial resources that will be required to implement the Plan's recommendations.

City of Visalia City Council Goals & Priorities

The Visalia City Council holds an annual planning retreat to determine overall city goals and priorities. The consultants reviewed the priorities that were determined in both 2007 and 2008 planning sessions.

Among the nine specific areas that were identified in 2007 were two that have a direct relationship to the proposals in this document, those being Downtown Visalia projects, and addressing blighted neighborhoods. It is envisioned that several of the recommendations in this Cultural Plan would contribute to the furtherance of these areas of the city's priorities.

In its most recent strategic planning workshop the Council identified 15 priority goals for 2008-2010. Again, several of the recommendations in this Cultural Plan speak directly to these council priorities, which might be understood as follows:

- Among the city's top three priorities (by vote of the city council) is "community beautification and positive city image." Clearly, as this Cultural Plan illustrates, arts and culture and heritage contribute greatly to the city's physical beauty and image, through murals, other art in public places, cultural tourism promotion, and so on. Several specific recommendations in this Plan (cultural tourism, percent-for-public art ordinance, etc.) speak directly to this council priority.
- In its second group of priorities is a "neighborhood preservation program." Whereas many of the Plan's recommendations are focused on downtown Visalia, there are numerous opportunities to integrate arts, culture and heritage at the neighborhood level to help strengthen community development, revitalization, and preservation efforts. Specifically, recommendations cover areas such as gallery hop and studio tours, outreach to ethnic and underserved communities, and programming for youth-at-risk, all areas that would target Visalia's neighborhoods.

- In its third category of priorities are three priorities that relate directly to several of this Plan’s recommendations and priority objectives; the council noted that “gang response programs,” “increased regional tourism,” and a “vital downtown” are among its goals for 2008-2010. This Cultural Plan has specific objectives that speak to each of these council priorities:
 - Youth-at-risk programming under Goal G (Education & Youth) is, in many communities, a cornerstone of gang prevention and response efforts.²
 - The Cultural Plan has a stand-alone goal (E) for Cultural Tourism which is envisioned to be an important facet of overall regional tourism development efforts.
 - Downtown is also an important focus of this Plan with several goals (A and F in particular) having specific objectives related to arts, culture, and heritage programs and venues in downtown Visalia.

City of Visalia Existing Programs

Over several years the City of Visalia has provided assistance to arts groups in a number of ways. Below is a partial list of some of the city’s funding and technical assistance efforts for the arts and cultural community:

- Provides \$15,000 in annual seed grant assistance to non-profit arts organizations
- Grants \$167,000 annually to support youth organizations, several of which offer arts and cultural activities
- Provides space for art exhibits at the Convention Center
- Assisted with a loan to Arts Visalia to obtain a permanent building
- Leases space to the Creative Center and the Ice House Theatre for a nominal annual fee
- Leases space to the Enchanted Playhouse

² A national arts service organization, Americans for the Arts, publishes the Youth Arts Tool Kit, with case studies and documentation of how arts and cultural programs can be used in gang prevention, juvenile probation, and other related areas.

- Provided \$40,000 in funding in recent budgets to support art programs/ events including the Arts Market

Roles & Responsibilities

The Cultural Plan will require a true public/private partnership for effective implementation. The participation of private funders, businesses and corporations, volunteers, non-profit arts and cultural organizations, local government, school districts and others, will be necessary for implementation of this Plan. However, the City Council and the city's arts community are looked to for leadership roles.

The City is envisioned as playing the role of lead agency, coordinating and facilitating the work of other partners. While other agencies and organizations in the community are eager to play roles, they are looking to the city, through its professionally-staffed departments, to serve as the initial coordinating entity. Visalia public schools, the Arts Consortium, the Chamber of Commerce and Convention & Visitors Bureau, to name a few, can each be participants in implementing the Plan but need the city's convening function to marshal the resources and establish a common agenda. The City is also asked to participate in funding strategies through the provision of seed funding, grants, and support to other grant-seeking entities.

This Cultural Plan contains a series of goals and recommendations on the following pages that address specific needs and desires of the city's residents, arts community, and other stakeholders. The specific proposals in the Plan relate to sustaining and growing the city's arts and cultural "sector" and improving public access to cultural resources.

Overall Themes

Visalia's Cultural Plan is grounded in a few overall themes that have guided its creation and are intended to serve as a backdrop to the specific proposed goals and recommendations.

- The Plan should at all times be inclusive of diverse cultures and constituencies while, as an overall goal, attempting to better link people to a larger sense of community. Whenever possible, integrate arts/cultural programs and interests into other community sectors, venues, and so on. Stakeholders in this Plan's implementation should showcase the city's diverse tastes (from Country & Western to Hip Hop), heritage, and cultural expressions (from custom car shows to the local gourd art "patch.")
- Leverage the city's youth culture and energy as evidenced through its two new community radio stations, as ways to cement and disseminate a commercial-free community voice that is seen as "creating togetherness, promoting local events, and celebrating 'Localism'."

- Ways for arts/cultural groups to work together, and with other community sectors and agencies, should be based on understanding of a continuum of opportunities ranging from Communication, Cooperation, Collaboration, Coordination, and potentially Consolidation.
- Initially the city of Visalia should be looked to in the role of coordinating (and facilitating) entity providing seed funding, platforms for collaboration, and working to encourage widespread involvement in this Plan's implementation.
- Integrate the Cultural Plan with other official City goals, priorities and plans such as the city's East Downtown Plan and other similar documents.

VII. GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

A. PROGRAMMING

Background & Research

While most cultural plans address a series of needs and opportunities related to artists and cultural organizations, as well as marketing and audience development strategies, fewer tend to focus on actual “product development” in business parlance. As is noted below, one of this Plan’s top priorities is development of a signature event (festival) as a means of promoting the community’s arts/cultural assets and attracting new audiences and visitors.

From our research we learned that only 11% of respondents to the intercept survey rated the availability of arts/cultural programs as “excellent,” while 40% rated them only “fair,” leading the Steering Committee to focus on new program ideas as a way to showcase a wide range of cultural offerings. Members of the public responding to the survey, and those who participated in community forums, expressed interest in a wide range of program types, from festivals to theatrical productions to historical exhibitions. The recommendations under this goal focus on new ways to engage the public through new, consistent and sustainable programming.

Recommendations

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATION

1. Plan a “Signature Event” for Visalia that promotes the community’s arts, culture, and heritage.
 - Consider inter-arts-disciplinary approaches such as Art & Jazz festival, extending and/or combining existing community events (e.g., car shows, Mariachi heritage festival) and/or major regional events (e.g., Farm show) with arts/cultural components, or themed public art events (painted fire hydrants, “cows on parade,” etc.).
 - Explore models in communities such as Santa Barbara (I Madonnari chalk art Festival), Laguna Beach, Capitola (Art & Wine), and so on.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATION

2. Ensure that Visalia’s Art Hops and studio tours (e.g., Visalia Artist Studio Tours - VAST) are consistent and sustainable programs.
 - Look to models in San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and other communities for funding and marketing strategies

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATION

3. Pursue opportunities for coordinated and thematic programming among arts and cultural and community organizations.
 - Explore Louisville’s Classics in Context model involving advance planning for thematic exhibits and performances by the community’s arts/cultural organizations, with grass-roots marketing through restaurants, libraries, etc.

Other Recommendations

4. Work with appropriate city staff and other agencies to assess and review the special event application process to enable participation by more diverse community organizations and younger artists, performers, etc.
5. Pursue co-promotional opportunities for touring arts and residency programming between non-profit arts/cultural groups, the City of Visalia, educational institutions (C.O.S., Visalia public schools, etc.), and other partners
6. Work with community partners to develop more youth-oriented programming (e.g., “cutting edge”) that celebrates the region’s cultural diversity (such as SE Asian Rap music, spoken word, poetry, film, etc.).

B. INCLUSION & HERITAGE

Background & Research

As noted in the preceding “Overall Themes” section, this Cultural Plan has, from its inception, involved members of diverse ethnic communities in its creation. It is a cornerstone of the document that it “be inclusive of diverse cultures and constituencies while attempting to better link people to a larger sense of community.” Accordingly, this goal contains two specific recommendations about underserved communities and developing a brand for Visalia that embraces its rich heritage.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATION

1. Conduct targeted outreach into ethnic and underserved communities (e.g., Hispanic and Southeast Asian populations, residents of the “Oval” area) aimed at cultural exchange, cross-over attendance, bringing programs (such as Farmer’s Market, Arts Market, etc.) into various neighborhoods, and so on.

Other Recommendations

2. Develop more recognizable and consistent cultural “brand identity” for Visalia.
 - Explore possible “AHA” theme (e.g., Art, History, Agriculture), the community’s historic identity and signature products (fine saddle-making), and so on.

C. COMMUNICATION & MARKETING

Background & Research

A major underpinning of this Plan is the desire to expose and involve a larger percentage of the population in arts and cultural endeavors. Arts activities, such as community theater, have been described as a modern-day “neighborly rituals” in times when shared harvests and similar community traditions have almost vanished. Whereas 62% of respondents to the intercept survey noted that “time with family” competes for spare time, many believe that arts and cultural activities could be “positioned” to help fulfill this need.

Survey research indicates that Visalia residents are hungry for more information about cultural activities, with 43% citing “lack of information” as a reason for not attending more often, 40% reporting being “extremely interested” in a master calendar of events on the Internet, and 44% extremely interested in special offers via e-mail. It is the intent of the Steering Committee that this goal offers an approach to better promoting the city’s arts and cultural resources.

(See also Goal E - Cultural Tourism and, in the Appendix, an Article on Community Radio and Localism).

Recommendations

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATION

1. Pursue a collaborative marketing and audience development effort for the city’s arts, cultural, heritage, and related institutions and programs.
 - Utilize existing web sites (e.g., Visitvisalia.org), new e-mail marketing technologies, open-access calendar posting, etc. (Consider www.CreativeFresno.com as a potential model).
 - Utilize traditional and non-traditional press outlets including a possible Valley Voice specialty arts insert, a revival of the city’s Parks & Recreation Guide arts section, Thrifty Nickel, Trends weekly, and so on.
 - Work with community agencies and businesses (e.g., libraries, restaurants, hotels, etc.) to pursue “guerrilla marketing” low-cost strategies (e.g., table tents, etc.).
 - Downtown kiosks (and elsewhere), Campus bulletin boards
 - Explore opportunities for promotion through physical venues and fixtures such as bus advertising, transit benches, sports park signage, an actual “information shop,” space in malls, outdoor screens and display windows, and so on.

- Work closely with community radio stations (such as 101 and 94 FM) as promotional vehicles for arts/cultural programs and events.
- Include promotions on radio web sites, MySpace and other social networking site

Other Recommendations

2. Create a master database of information on arts/cultural organizations, individual artists/entertainers, arts education opportunities and resources, and so on.
 - Respond to identified need – “who do we call” – when wanting to access artists, artist services, programs, instructors, etc. (Example – one or more entities should play a leadership role in gathering useful information on individual artists and performers, so that if someone seeks a classical guitarist for a wedding reception they’ll know “who to call” for a referral).

D. COORDINATION & LEADERSHIP

Background & Research

The foundation of many cultural plans is a range of services for community-based arts and cultural organizations and individual artists. Research conducted for this planning process revealed an arts sector consisting primarily of arts and cultural organizations run by volunteers or small professional staffs. These groups can benefit from professional development opportunities in marketing, fundraising, audience development, organizational management, and so forth. Individual artists can also be assisted through promotion of “good and services” to consumers and local businesses.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATION

1. Work with appropriate partners to institute planning and scheduling calendars to avoid conflicts and enable synergies between program and event times/days.
 - Consider the Parks & Recreation Department as a model for planning meetings for special events and festivals and classes, involving community organizations such as PAL, YMCA, and other regional and countywide organizations. Consider expanding the city’s Special Events Committee model.
 - Explore adding a staff position such as with the Higher Education Consortium model (with partial city funding).

Other Recommendations

2. Involve community leadership from businesses, education, government, service and community organizations in an effort to grow and sustain the city’s non-profit arts and cultural sector through provision of technical assistance, additional funding, in-kind volunteers and services, and so on.
 - Research the feasibility of a United Arts Fund (UAF), a “united way for the arts,” to raise private dollars in support of arts, cultural, and education programs.
3. Work with nearby communities and other partners (e.g., Exeter, Three Rivers, National Parks) in a regional approach to arts promotion, advocacy, and leadership.
4. Supporting existing (such as through the Arts Consortium) and create new regular opportunities for networking among arts/cultural organizations, artists, civic and community organizations (e.g., such as a rotating informal “Arts Pub” model).
5. Work with appropriate partners to improve recruitment, training and opportunities for volunteering with arts/cultural organizations.

6. Develop a coordinated approach to making Visalia an artist-friendly and supportive community through inter-generational artist mentoring, support services and funding, coordinated marketing, and attracting special educational events/programs such as “Gourd College.”

E. CULTURAL TOURISM

Background & Research

A decade ago the White House Conference on Tourism identified “Cultural Tourism” as a high-growth sector; communities throughout the country began brainstorming programs and promotions to lure cultural tourists, a decidedly upscale travel segment. Cultural tourism has been defined as “based on the mosaic of places, traditions, art forms, celebrations, and experiences” that define an area. Research has documented the facts that cultural and heritage visitors spend more, stay longer, are more likely to stay in lodging, use air travel, shop, and pursue “shoulder season” (e.g., often spring and fall visits falling outside of typical peak travel months) visits than the average traveler and are a growing segment of the US travel market. According to a survey conducted by the Travel Industry Association of America, one-third of all adult U.S. travelers included either a visit to an historic place or cultural event on their itineraries.

During the intercept survey conducted for this Plan, residents were asked about where they would take out-of-town visitors for a “cultural experience” in Visalia with the top three answers being Mooney Grove Museum, Downtown Visalia/Main Street, and the nearby National Parks. Along with proposals for signature events under Goal A (programming), this goal seeks to develop a concerted, strategic promotion of Visalia as a cultural destination.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATION

1. Develop and implement a formal Cultural Tourism Plan involving appropriate tourism and hospitality industry partners (Convention & Visitors Bureau, Sequoia Valley Visitor Council, hotels, local and regional governments, National Parks, etc.) which might include:
 - Potential partnerships with business, hotels
 - A new Visitor Center (modeled on that in Springville) with staffing by local artists and/or exhibit/studio spaces.
 - Specialty itineraries and tours such as public art, Farm, etc.
 - Identification of target audiences (such as weekend-getaway “AAA”)
 - Use of e-mail technology for regular “E-Blasts” to target markets
 - Ways to reach existing traveler segments such as families attending sports tournaments in the city’s sports park and other venues, foreign tourists en route to national Parks, etc.
 - Ways to promote tourism opportunities to local and regional residents (such as Louisville’s Be a Tourist in Your Hometown model)

- A retail storefront (“The Visalia Store”) featuring local products (cheeses, etc.) and crafts
- Familiarity (“Fam”) trips for media and other stakeholders (e.g., concierge and hospitality staff, etc.)

F. VENUES & PLACES

Background & Research

Cultural facilities to accommodate performances, exhibitions, rehearsals, classes, and the creation of artwork represent an important cornerstone in the culture of a community. As other communities have recognized, it is often difficult for arts and cultural organizations to grow and thrive without adequate venues which are welcoming and comfortable for audiences and visitors, and technically suitable for artists. Public input received for this Cultural Plan, particularly from representatives of arts groups and local artists, has focused on needs for facilities and venues as critical. The potential integration of more cultural spaces and uses into downtown Visalia is aligned with the City Council's stated priority of downtown revitalization. Other recommendations in this goal seek to move forward concepts for ethnic cultural attractions and use of non-traditional performance spaces – bringing arts to the public in addition to attracting audiences to arts spaces.

Recommendations

1. Utilize non-traditional venues (e.g., parks, sports park, community garden, convention center, etc.) as venues for arts/cultural programs, exhibits, and targeted marketing efforts.
2. Work with appropriate city and community partners to integrate arts/cultural spaces into downtown Visalia, such as Live/Work and Work/Exhibit spaces for artists, galleries, festival plaza(s) (to accommodate small performances and events such as a Farmer's Market, as in Chico), and so on.
3. Implement proposed improvements to the Fox Theater (e.g., backstage, public support spaces) in an effort to stabilize and improve the venue in order to increase programming levels.
4. Work with other community partners (e.g., Mariachi Heritage Foundation, youth-serving organizations) to explore ways to create new cultural attractions such as a Hispanic Cultural Center, All-Ages performance venue (e.g., such as The Dawn, Java Jungle, etc.).
5. Undertake a feasibility analysis of the need for an additional mid-sized to large theater and/or amphitheater (e.g., 1,200+ seats) potentially in conjunction with a new High School.
6. Institute a program and funding source (e.g., "Access Grants") to make city- owned and –funded venues (e.g., Oaks Stadium, Convention Center, etc.) available for occasional free and/or subsidized use to local community-based arts/cultural groups.

G. EDUCATION & YOUTH

Background & Research

Recent studies conducted nationally now provide conclusive evidence that children who partake of a comprehensive arts education curriculum perform better in all aspects of school work: from math and science test scores to team-building and social skill development. Respondents to the intercept survey agreed overwhelmingly that the community's young people should have access to quality arts education (two-thirds think it "extremely" important, 28% "somewhat"). In fact, when asked how to target municipal cultural funding, youth programs were ranked first by two-thirds of respondents. This goal is intended to increase participation in arts and culture by the young people of Visalia, to raise community expectations for the cultural enrichment these children will enjoy, and facilitate arts and cultural expression by the county's young generation. Especially targeted are the community's at-risk young people (hand-in-hand with gang prevention efforts) and ways to encourage attendance by secondary school students at local cultural activities.

Recommendations

1. Work with appropriate partners (Parks & Recreation, PAL, youth-serving organizations) to integrate arts/cultural programming for youth-at-risk and underserved, disadvantaged populations, and in gang prevention efforts.
2. Work with the Visalia Unified School District to enhance arts education and enrichment opportunities through field trips (sponsorship funding for buses and tickets), artist residencies (as possible co-sponsorships with COS and non-profit arts groups), arts career education, arts "contests and teams" (e.g., awards and recognition ceremonies, etc.).³
 - Consider the Atlanta model ensuring one arts field trip at every grade level, with grade-appropriate curriculum and programs.
3. Create incentives for school students (especially Middle and High School) to attend performances at discounts (e.g., COS's Thursday night student discounts with \$5 tickets) through underwriting of ticket prices, targeted marketing through schools and social networking sites, and so on.
 - Consider the Author-in-Residence model involving Imagine U, Arts Visalia, etc.

³ It is important to note that the Visalia Unified School District already maintains an extensive arts education program including annual field trips (at each grade level) to at least one (sometimes more) museum, historical site, or cultural arts program. It is one of the few Districts in the region that provides no-cost choral, orchestral, and band instruction beginning in Grade 4. In addition, all High Schools in the District, as of the 2008-09 school year, have dance facilities and arts programs. The District also sponsors a particularly noteworthy visiting artist program.

VIII. PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Steering Committee voted on priorities for implementation, with seven specific recommendations receiving the majority of votes. These are:

- Develop and implement a formal Cultural Tourism Plan involving appropriate tourism and hospitality industry partners (Convention & Visitors Bureau, Sequoia Valley Visitor Council, hotels, local and regional governments, National Parks, etc.).
- Plan a “Signature Event” for Visalia that promotes the community’s arts, culture, and heritage.
- Pursue a collaborative marketing and audience development effort for the city’s arts, cultural, heritage, and related institutions and programs.
- Work with appropriate partners to institute planning and scheduling calendars to avoid conflicts and enable synergies between program and event times/days.
- Pursue opportunities for coordinated and thematic programming among arts and cultural and community organizations.
- Ensure that Visalia’s Art Hops and studio tours (e.g., Visalia Artist Studio Tours - VAST) are consistent and sustainable programs.
- Conduct targeted outreach into ethnic and underserved communities (e.g., Hispanic and Southeast Asian populations, residents of the “Oval” area, youth groups, etc.) aimed at cultural exchange, cross-over attendance, bringing programs (such as Farmer’s Market, Arts Market, etc.) into various neighborhoods, and so on.

Consultant Recommendation

We would like to call particular attention to recommendation #2 under Goal D (Coordination & Leadership) which calls upon a coalition of private sector and public leadership to “grow and sustain the city’s non-profit arts and cultural sector through technical assistance, funding, volunteerism, and so on.” AMS believes strongly that in addition to the priorities identified by the Steering committee, this recommendation represents a crucial step for the long-term health of the city’s arts community. The composition of most of the city’s arts groups – volunteer-run and operating with “shoestring budgets” – makes it difficult to achieve lasting success or sustainable organizations. An injection of human capital, capital dollars, and operating support could go a long way to creating a consistent brand and product to aid in cultural tourism efforts, to aid in facing community challenges (such as gang prevention), and could have real economic benefits for the city and region.

IX. INFRASTRUCTURE: FUNDING & STAFFING

Background & Research

During the process of creating this Cultural Plan, careful attention has been paid to making the objectives pragmatic, opportunistic, and achievable. A variety of partnerships and methods to work more cohesively are proposed in anticipation of a more unified and sustainable arts community. Respondents to the intercept survey offered resounding support for using local government dollars for arts and culture, with 63% saying it is “extremely important” to support programs and venues in downtown. Potential support for a united and coordinated private fundraising effort (known as a united arts fund, such as a “United Way for the arts”) was also high with 73% of intercept survey respondents expressing interest (likelihood) in contributing to such an effort. A few important funding and resource initiatives should be pursued in order to make significant progress on this Plan’s agenda, and see Visalia’s cultural community a vital element in the community’s overall economic and community development efforts.

Recommendations

1. Create a city staff position (or provide seed funding to a local non-profit organization) for an Arts Coordinator to oversee and coordinate implementation of this Cultural Plan and other cultural programs and opportunities.
2. Explore creation of a United Arts fund (UAF) for the city’s arts/cultural organizations.
3. Work with a contract grant writer to research and identify opportunities for government and private funding in support of cultural plan programs and services (e.g., Irvine Foundation, Community Foundation, etc.).
4. Explore provision of city funding for arts/culture through:
 - A percent-for-art ordinance for public art as part of public capital improvement projects. (An ordinance devoting 1% of city capital improvement projects to art-in-public-places would have provided approximately \$23,000 in FY 2008, or an average of \$33,000 annually over the past three years).
 - An incentive/encouragement for art in public places as part of private developments
 - Formalization of the city’s arts/cultural grants program (e.g., consistent policies, peer panels, applications, targeted funding, etc.)

How the Arts are Funded

There has been extensive research conducted at the national level with respect to how local arts agencies (councils, commissions, offices of cultural affairs, both public and private) are supported. Americans for the Arts, a national organization serving the local arts agency field, publishes *Local Arts Agency Facts* on a nearly triennial cycle; its last summary report was issued in 2003, in which 749 agencies reported data. Of these arts agencies, 64% are private non-profits and 23% are public government offices.

The summary report provides data based on size of community with categories for populations of 30,000-99,999 and 100,000-249,000. With a population of about 107,000, Visalia falls almost in between these two cohorts in the report. It is useful, therefore, to understand how other arts agencies in similar communities generate their funding:

- The average annual budget (in 2003) of all arts agencies was \$1.4 million. For communities under 100,000 it was \$242,204, and \$623,636 for those between 100,000 and 250,000.
- Just considering public (government office) arts councils, figures are \$281,664 (30-99,999) and \$844,848 (100-250,000).
- Sources of revenue overall are 50.7% from local government, 18.3% from private contributions, and 17.1% from earned income. For communities of 30,000 to 99,999, these figures are 31.8%, 16.1%, and 40.1%, respectively, and for those of 100,000-250,000, are 34%, 25%, and 30.7%, respectively.⁴
- It is perhaps most illuminating for this Plan to see what types of public funding comprises the public funding source pot:
 - For local arts agencies across the board, the following public funding sources are used:
 - 24.4% use Hotel/Lodging tax
 - 10.9% cited Percent-for-Art Ordinances
 - 7.5% receive funds through property taxes
 - 7.1% get sales tax funds
 - All other public sources represent 1% or less (e.g., admissions, lottery/gambling proceeds, income tax, community development funds, etc.)

⁴ It is important to note that earned income sources include admissions (many arts agencies operate venues and/or produce or present performing arts programming), fundraising (sometimes counted as an earned source), sales and rentals (again, of venues and/or from art sales commissions), and memberships.

- For local arts agencies serving communities with populations between 30,000 and 99,999:
 - 13.4% use Hotel/Lodging tax
 - 10.2% cited Percent-for-Art Ordinances
 - 7.9% receive funds through property taxes
 - 7.9% get sales tax funds
 - All other public sources represent 1% or less (e.g., admissions, lottery/gambling proceeds, income tax, community development funds, etc.)

- For local arts agencies serving communities with populations between 100,000 and 249,000:
 - 30.7% use Hotel/Lodging tax
 - 2.6% cited Percent-for-Art Ordinances
 - 7.0% receive funds through property taxes
 - 4.4% get sales tax funds
 - All other public sources represent 2% or less (e.g., admissions, lottery/gambling proceeds, income tax, community development funds, etc.)

“How To” Commence Implementation

Implementation of the Cultural Plan should involve the oversight and resources of the city of Visalia professional staff along with representatives of the Cultural Plan Steering Committee, Visalia public schools, the Convention & Visitors Bureau and other prospective partners.

The city government is envisioned to play a coordinating role vis-à-vis this Plan’s goals and recommendations; a major focus should be on serving as a “central coordinating entity” and clearinghouse. The proposed dedicated staff position would have primary responsibility for advancing the Plan’s goals and objectives. Duties would include:

- serving as a liaison with civic, social, and government agencies to ensure the “cultural agenda” is represented
- convening and staffing occasional meetings of the Steering Committee (as an ad hoc Committee of the City Council)
- convening and staffing regular meetings of the city’s arts and cultural organizations
- developing cooperative approaches for marketing and information services among arts and cultural organization staff, board members, and volunteers
- serve as a liaison with the Visalia Public schools, College of the Sequoias, and other education providers and organizations
- serve as a community spokesperson by introducing the Cultural Plan (along with Steering Committee members) at community meetings and events
- conduct and/or facilitate board and volunteer development workshops for recruitment and training
- organize and present media and marketing workshops, inviting guests, pursuing follow-up actions
- work with appropriate entities to facilitate arts community involvement in cultural tourism development and promotion (and other related projects, such as festivals and special events)
- convene meetings of citizen advisory groups to assist with implementation of specific Plan objectives

Steering Committee

The Cultural Plan Steering Committee (or a new incarnation thereof, such as a City Arts & Culture Commission or Standing Committee of an existing commission, such as the Citizens Advisory Committee) should play a continuing role to advance the Plan's goals and recommendations with local and county governments, private agencies (such as chambers of commerce), educational institutions, and so forth. Acting as volunteers, convened by professional city staff, Committee members would be called upon to play public-speaking roles, to identify and secure commitments from other volunteer leadership, and to monitor overall implementation of the Plan.

X. Summary of Recommendations

The table below provides a summary of the 26 specific recommendations which can be found under the three overall Plan goals.

Goal	Type of Recommendation			Timeframe		
	Action Step	Policy	Further Study	Short	Medium	Long
Goal A – Programming						
Signature event	√		√		√	
Gallery hops & studio tours	√				√	
Coordinated & thematic programming			√			√
Special event application process	√	√		√		
Co-promotions and residencies	√			√		
Youth-oriented programming	√				√	
Goal B – Inclusion & Heritage						
Outreach to ethnic and underserved communities	√	√		√		
Develop Visalia brand identity			√			√
Goal C – Information & Marketing						
Collaborative marketing and audience development			√		√	
Master database of information	√			√		
Goal D – Coordination & Leadership						
Planning and scheduling calendars	√			√		
Grow and sustain non-profit cultural sector		√	√		√	
Regional approach and cooperation		√			√	
Networking among arts/cultural groups	√			√		
Recruit and train volunteers	√	√				√
“Artist-friendly” community		√	√		√	
Goal E – Cultural Tourism						
Formalize a cultural tourism Plan	√	√	√	√		

Goal	Type of Recommendation			Timeframe		
	Action Step	Policy	Further Study	Short	Medium	Long
Goal F – Venues & Places						
Utilize non-traditional venues	√	√		√		
Integrate arts and culture spaces into downtown			√			√
Implement Fox Theater improvements	√					√
Create new cultural attractions (e.g., Mariachi cultural center)	√		√			√
Feasibility study for new mid-sized to large theater and/or amphitheater			√			√
Funding for access to city venues	√	√		√		
Goal G – Education & Youth						
Youth at risk programming	√		√		√	
Arts education and enrichment	√		√			√
Student attendance incentives	√	√		√		

XI. How To Get Involved

Consider getting involved in our community's cultural plan:

- Schedule a cultural plan or arts group presentation at your next civic or social club meeting or event
- Provide leadership within a group or association to adopt and accomplish one of the Plan's recommendations that is compatible with your mission and services
- Come to a future meeting of the Cultural Plan Steering Committee to learn about projects and committees where your skills and energy can be most useful
- Become a member or subscriber at one of the city's arts organizations or volunteer a few hours of your time
- Organize a group to attend to a performing arts event or exhibition with a special docent tour or group sales package
- Decorate your home or office with affordable original artwork purchased at art fairs and local galleries
- Improve your creative skills by taking a class or workshop at one of the city's community centers or educational institutions

For additional information, please contact the City of Visalia Office of the City Manager at (559) 713-4317 or by e-mail at lcaviglia@ci.visalia.ca.us.

XII. APPENDICES

**CITY OF VISALIA – CULTURAL PLAN
INTERCEPT SURVEY TOPLINE REPORT**

**Non-weighted sample:
411 Responses**

Q1. For how long have you been a resident of Visalia?

	Percent
1 year or less -----	5.5%
2 to 4 years -----	12.6%
5 to 9 years -----	19.5%
10 to 14 years -----	17.9%
15 years or more-----	44.5%

Q2. How many times in the past year did you attend a live performing arts event (such as theater, music, dance)...

	<u>Visalia</u>	<u>Tulare County</u>	<u>Anywhere else</u>
None -----	35.8%	62.8%	65.2%
1 time -----	14.6%	16.3%	10.9%
2 or 3 times -----	32.8%	14.4%	14.6%
4 or 5 times -----	8.5%	3.4%	5.8%
6 to 9 times-----	5.1%	2.4%	1.2%
10 or more times-----	3.2%	0.7%	2.2%

Q3. How many times in the past year did you attend an exhibition of visual art or an art museum?

	<u>Visalia</u>	<u>Tulare County</u>	<u>Anywhere else</u>
None -----	54.5%	78.1%	69.6%
1 time -----	18.0%	9.2%	15.3%
2 or 3 times -----	18.5%	9.0%	10.0%
4 or 5 times -----	5.6%	2.4%	2.9%
6 to 9 times-----	2.7%	1.0%	1.0%
10 or more times-----	0.7%	0.2%	1.2%

Q4. How many times in the past year did you visit a heritage site or museum?

	<u>Visalia</u>	<u>Tulare County</u>	<u>Anywhere else</u>
None -----	62.5%	80.0%	69.3%
1 time -----	18.2%	10.0%	14.6%
2 or 3 times -----	12.2%	6.3%	11.9%
4 or 5 times -----	5.1%	1.5%	1.7%
6 to 9 times-----	1.9%	2.2%	1.7%
10 or more times-----	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%

Q5. How many times in the past year did you attend an outdoor fair or festival?

	<u>Visalia</u>	<u>Tulare County</u>	<u>Anywhere else</u>
None	36.0%	59.1%	62.8%
1 time	22.4%	21.9%	17.3%
2 or 3 times	29.9%	13.6%	12.2%
4 or 5 times	7.3%	2.7%	4.9%
6 to 9 times	3.2%	1.2%	1.2%
10 or more times	1.2%	1.5%	1.7%

Q6. At what specific location or venue did you most recently attend an arts, cultural, or heritage program or event?

	<u>Responses (n=443)</u>	<u>Respondents (n=411)</u>
Fresno	9.5%	10.2%
Visalia	9.0%	9.7%
Tulare	8.6%	9.2%
Mainstreet	5.2%	5.6%
Downtown Visalia	4.1%	4.4%
Fox Theater	3.6%	3.9%
Visalia Convention Center	2.5%	2.7%
Mooney Grove Museum	2.3%	2.4%
Tulare County Fair	2.3%	2.4%
Los Angeles	2.0%	2.2%
College	2.0%	2.2%
COS	1.6%	1.7%
Museum	1.6%	1.7%
Enchanted Playhouse	1.6%	1.7%
Porterville	1.6%	1.7%
San Francisco	1.4%	1.5%
Plaza Park	1.1%	1.2%
LJ Williams	1.1%	1.2%
Arts Visalia	1.1%	1.2%
San Jose	1.1%	1.2%
Wood Lake	1.1%	1.2%
Dinuba	1.1%	1.2%
All other responses less than 1%		

Q7. Where would you take friends or tell visitors to go for a “cultural experience” in Visalia?

	Responses (n=387)	Respondents (n=411)
Mooney Grove Museum	12.4%	11.7%
Downtown Visalia	11.1%	10.5%
Parks	9.8%	9.2%
Mainstreet	8.3%	7.8%
Fox Theater	7.5%	7.1%
Movies	6.2%	5.8%
Visalia Convention Center	4.7%	4.4%
Fairs	3.9%	3.6%
Museum	3.6%	3.4%
COS	3.1%	2.9%
Murals	2.8%	2.7%
School Events	2.1%	1.9%
Sequoia	1.8%	1.7%
Visalia	1.6%	1.5%
Concerts	1.6%	1.5%
LJ Williams	1.3%	1.2%
Mall	1.3%	1.2%
Plaza Park	1.0%	1.0%
Fresno	1.0%	1.0%
Art Fair	1.0%	1.0%
Mountains	1.0%	1.0%
All other responses less than 1%		

Q8. What are some of the reasons that you don’t attend arts and cultural events more often?

	Percent
Lack of time	65.4%
Lack of information	43.0%
Lack of events in Visalia	25.5%
No one to attend with	23.7%
Cost of attending	23.4%
Parking/Access problems	15.1%
Too far to drive	12.2%
Other	3.4%

Q9. How would you rate the availability of arts and cultural programs in Visalia?

	Percent
Excellent	11.3%
Good	41.2%
Fair	39.9%
Poor	7.6%

Q10. How would you rate the availability of arts and cultural programs in Tulare County?

	Percent
Excellent	18.6%
Good	33.0%
Fair	42.1%
Poor	6.3%

Q11. Which of the following types of programs are you most interested in?

	Percent
Arts/Crafts fairs and festivals -----	36.4%
Stage plays -----	34.9%
Musical theater -----	32.2%
Ballet/Dance -----	30.2%
Family/Children's theatre -----	27.7%
History museum/exhibits -----	27.2%
Folk or jazz music -----	25.2%
Art exhibitions -----	24.8%
Classical music -----	24.5%
Art in public places -----	23.0%
Lectures -----	18.8%
Film series -----	18.6%
Arts/Crafts classes -----	17.8%
Heritage sites and programs -----	17.1%
Walking tours -----	16.3%
Neighborhood arts programs -----	14.4%
Poetry/Novel readings -----	5.0%
Other -----	1.5%

Q12. Which of the following leisure activities do you participate in?

	Percent
Movies -----	66.7%
Time with family -----	61.7%
Outdoor activities -----	53.5%
School activities -----	47.2%
Attending sports events -----	44.6%
Participating in sports -----	42.5%
Exercise -----	38.8%
Reading -----	38.6%
Television/Videos -----	35.2%
Home improvement -----	34.1%
Shopping -----	32.3%
Travel -----	30.7%
Entertaining at home -----	29.9%
Gardening -----	29.1%
Arts/Crafts -----	22.8%
Volunteer work -----	21.5%
Visiting heritage sites -----	15.5%
Other -----	0.8%

Q13. To what extent do you think arts, culture, and heritage impact the city's economy?

	Percent
Significant amount-----	24.3%
A modest amount-----	53.5%
Not very much-----	19.3%
None at all-----	2.9%

Q14. How important is it for children to have access to arts education in public schools?

	Percent
Extremely-----	65.8%
Somewhat-----	27.9%
Not very-----	5.5%
Not at all-----	0.8%

Q15. How important is it for the county to support arts and cultural programs and venues in downtown Visalia?

	Percent
Extremely-----	62.5%
Somewhat-----	32.7%
Not very-----	4.3%
Not at all-----	0.5%

Q16. How important is it for the city to support arts, cultural, and heritage programs and venues elsewhere in the city?

	Percent
Extremely-----	52.5%
Somewhat-----	36.7%
Not very-----	9.4%
Not at all-----	1.3%

Q17. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 meaning "not important" and 10 meaning "very important," where should support for arts and culture rank among the city's priorities?

<u>n</u>	<u>Mean</u>
360-----	7.45

Q18. If you could recommend how the county government should support arts, culture, and heritage, which would you like to see receive more support?

	Percent
Youth programs-----	65.8%
Outdoor fairs and festivals -----	52.8%
Arts education -----	44.7%
Theater performances-----	36.1%
Music performances -----	35.6%
Neighborhood programs-----	34.8%
Diversity programs -----	30.2%
Public art and sculpture-----	29.4%
Senior programs-----	28.6%
Support for artists-----	26.1%
Performing arts spaces -----	24.3%
Exhibit spaces-----	21.6%
Humanities programs-----	19.7%
Heritage sites and programs-----	18.3%
Cultural districts-----	12.9%
Lectures/Seminars -----	11.1%
Promotion and marketing-----	10.5%
Other-----	1.6%

Q19. Where do you get most of your information about arts and cultural events?

	Percent
Newspaper-----	60.0%
Family/Friends-----	56.2%
Radio station-----	32.2%
Television-----	30.0%
Through schools -----	28.9%
Posters -----	23.2%
Internet/E-mail-----	14.6%
Community newsletters-----	13.5%
Recreation guide-----	13.0%
Brochures in the mail-----	10.3%
Magazine -----	9.7%
Arts group mailings-----	3.2%
Other-----	0.5%

Q19A. Newspapers

	Newspaper Responses (n=157)	All Respondents (n=411)
Times Delta -----	86.6%	33.1%
Fresno Bee-----	10.2%	3.9%
Valley Voice-----	5.7%	2.2%
Visalia Times -----	1.3%	0.5%
Dinuba Sentinel -----	1.3%	0.5%
KJUG -----	0.6%	0.2%
South Valley Bee -----	0.6%	0.2%
Advance Register-----	0.6%	0.2%
LA Times -----	0.6%	0.2%
Tulare One -----	0.6%	0.2%

Q19B. Magazines

	Magazine Responses (n=17)	All Respondents (n=411)
Lifestyle -----	41.2%	1.7%
Direct -----	17.6%	0.7%
Visalia Magazine-----	11.8%	0.5%
Time -----	11.8%	0.5%
Choices -----	5.9%	0.2%
Style -----	5.9%	0.2%
People-----	5.9%	0.2%
Newsweek-----	5.9%	0.2%
Sunset-----	5.9%	0.2%

Q19C. Radio Stations

	Radio Responses (n=73)	All Respondents (n=411)
KMJ	12.3%	2.2%
104.9	9.6%	1.7%
B 95	8.2%	1.5%
99.7	6.8%	1.2%
104.1	6.8%	1.2%
KJUG	5.5%	1.0%
580	5.5%	1.0%
97.1	5.5%	1.0%
KDUV	5.5%	1.0%
KISS COUNTRY	4.1%	0.7%
92.9	4.1%	0.7%
98.9	4.1%	0.7%
94.9	4.1%	0.7%
106.3	4.1%	0.7%
105.9	2.7%	0.5%
LOCAL	2.7%	0.5%
KTLP	2.7%	0.5%
KSKS - 93.7	2.7%	0.5%
97.9	2.7%	0.5%
103.3	2.7%	0.5%
SPANISH STATIONS	2.7%	0.5%
PRECIOSA	2.7%	0.5%
KMPH	1.4%	0.2%
94.1	1.4%	0.2%
21	1.4%	0.2%
NEWS TALK 58	1.4%	0.2%
98.1	1.4%	0.2%
97.3	1.4%	0.2%
106.7	1.4%	0.2%
XM	1.4%	0.2%
NPR	1.4%	0.2%

Q19C. Television Stations

	Television Responses (n=58)	All Respondents (n=411)
FOX - 26	32.8%	4.6%
KSEE - 24	25.9%	3.6%
KMPH	10.3%	1.5%
21	10.3%	1.5%
LOCAL	8.6%	1.2%
30	6.9%	1.0%
6	3.4%	0.5%
UNIVISION	3.4%	0.5%
PBS	3.4%	0.5%
DIRECT TV	1.7%	0.2%
94.1	1.7%	0.2%
HGTV	1.7%	0.2%
50	1.7%	0.2%
CBS	1.7%	0.2%
ABC	1.7%	0.2%
A & E	1.7%	0.2%
BIOGRAPHY	1.7%	0.2%
CABLE	1.7%	0.2%
18	1.7%	0.2%
47	1.7%	0.2%
9	1.7%	0.2%
FRESNO STATIONS	1.7%	0.2%
ISPANA	1.7%	0.2%

Q20. How interested would you be in a master calendar of arts, cultural, and heritage programs available on the Internet?

	Percent
Extremely	39.1%
Somewhat	48.0%
Not very	9.1%
Not at all	3.8%

Q21. How interested would you be in receiving special offers and discounts to attend arts and cultural event via e-mail?

	Percent
Extremely	44.1%
Somewhat	37.6%
Not very	13.2%
Not at all	5.1%

Q22. If you had the opportunity to make a small contribution to a “United Way for the Arts” to support cultural programs and groups in Visalia and Tulare County, how likely do you think you might be to do so?

	Percent
Extremely-----	22.6%
Somewhat-----	50.1%
Not very-----	19.4%
Not at all-----	7.8%

Q23. Home ZIP Code

	Percent (n=340)
93277-----	27.6%
93291-----	27.4%
93292-----	20.9%
93221-----	5.9%
93274-----	4.1%
93223-----	2.4%
93227-----	2.4%
93290-----	1.8%
93247-----	0.6%
93271-----	0.6%
93297-----	0.6%
93313-----	0.6%
93654-----	0.6%
93710-----	0.6%
53292-----	0.3%
92227-----	0.3%
93202-----	0.3%
93230-----	0.3%
93235-----	0.3%
93272-----	0.3%
93273-----	0.3%
93294-----	0.3%
93614-----	0.3%
93618-----	0.3%
93647-----	0.3%
93706-----	0.3%
93722-----	0.3%
93977-----	0.3%

Q24. People in the household under age 16?

	Hholds w/ Children (n=233)	All Respondents (n=411)
One -----	21.0%	11.9%
Two -----	42.5%	24.1%
Three -----	21.9%	12.4%
Four -----	8.6%	4.9%
Five -----	4.7%	2.7%
Six -----	0.4%	0.2%
Eight -----	0.4%	0.2%
Nine -----	0.4%	0.2%

Q25. Your age?

	Percent
Under 19 -----	4.8%
19 – 24 -----	12.5%
25 – 34 -----	24.9%
35 – 44 -----	24.9%
45 – 54 -----	16.4%
55 – 64 -----	11.4%
65 – 74 -----	4.0%
75+ -----	1.1%

Q26. What is the last level of school you completed?

	Percent
Less than High School -----	6.7%
High School Graduate -----	21.7%
Vocational School after High School -----	6.2%
Some College -----	33.8%
Bachelors Degree -----	20.9%
Graduate School -----	10.7%

Q27. Which of the following best describes your racial/ethnic background?

	Percent
White, Not Hispanic -----	49.3%
Asian/Pacific Islander -----	4.9%
Black/African American -----	6.5%
Hispanic/Latino Origin -----	32.3%
American Indian/Native American -----	3.5%
Other -----	3.5%

“Localism” – Blogs, Brew, and Community Radio in Visalia

(reprinted from an AMS Newsletter article)

As part of a Cultural Plan AMS undertook for California’s central valley community of Visalia, we recently facilitated a community discussion on the outdoor patio of a local brewpub, at which almost 30 mostly under-30 year olds gathered to discuss their cultural interests and wishes for the Plan. At the outset of the session we came to realize that most found out about the meeting from two recently-christened 100-watt community radio stations (KFSC 94.1, and KVLP 101.5), or from a local blog. Life-stages that were represented ranged from students at the local College of the Sequoias to new parents of pre-school age children, and a few “mature” but young-at-heart culture mavens in tune with the community radio/blog scene.

A local blogger announced the meeting with a touch of skepticism but also optimistic that opinions from this group were being sought:

“Want more music in Visalia? Better music? Want film festivals, plays or poetry readings on something interesting? Want something different that you never thought you would see in Visalia? Think no one really cares about what you think and things will never change in Visalia?”

This is quoted from a newspaper which quoted an email forward from a deputy city manager. And to those 5 questions, I respond 1) yes, 2) yes, 3) yes, 4) yes, and 5) I hope that what you’re about to tell me will change my answer.

Turns out, the city staff actually want to hear what us, the people of Visalia, think about the arts and culture scene in Visalia. Imagine! A cultural plan that actually involves the young adults that participate in said culture! Unfortunately, that means you’re going to actually have to get off your [common 3-letter slang term for rear end] and show up at Brewbakers on Tuesday, 6-8 pm. Then again, free food.

Google also tells me that this deputy city manager enigma that has never talked to us before and therefore never existed before this moment also has an email address. So for those of you who have something to say about the state of the (lack of) culture but are too lazy/busy with soccer practice/resistant to be bribed with free food to come Tuesday, email your ideas. But to those of us too unlazy/not busy with soccer practice/too cheap to buy our own groceries: Freeeeeeee fooooooooood!

The blog coupled with PSAs on the radio stations delivered a fine turnout for the discussion which lasted well beyond its scheduled 90 minutes. There was a palpable pent-up desire to be heard in evidence throughout the evening. We discussed a wide range of topics, from tapping into nascent volunteerism to celebrating the region’s cultural diversity; from ways to ensure access at cultural events to strategies for keeping the conversation going; from “micro-grants” for local entrepreneurs to the need for more alternative media; all with a big-picture focus on stopping the “brain drain” and keeping young people in Visalia.

Perhaps the most profound findings stemmed from a line of questioning as to how the local radio stations were able to galvanize such energy and involvement in delivering folks to the evening meeting. We asked, “how does community radio create connectedness?” and heard responses like:

- creating a community voice
- it’s not mass media
- the antithesis of Clear Channel, creating togetherness
- a commercial-free local voice promoting local events

And then, as summarized by one of the more heavily tattooed attendees, **“Community Radio is Localism.”**

A MySpace page created by one of the stations describes its mission as including “Community, Awareness, Diversity, Empowerment, Live Music, Peace and Social Justice,” and goes on to claim “We are the only Visalia station: not only our license, but our antenna, transmitter, underwriting supporters, and volunteers. We cannot be bought, sold, or traded. We are not ‘Little Fresno,’ we are in the midst of the Garden of Eden,” concluding with a quote from Thomas Jefferson: “Enlighten the people generally and tyranny and oppressions of body and mind will vanish like evil spirits at the dawn of the day.”

It is our strong sense that the Visalia Cultural Plan will be different from many other Plans created over the last several decades owing largely to the involvement and participation of what Richard Florida would call “the creative class,” but what this consultant came to embrace as a group of young people, out for a beer on a Tuesday night, celebrating their unique brand of “localism” by voicing opinions for city staff and elected officials. Most were insistent on repeating the experience, perhaps gathering every quarter to build effective coalitions and channel the advocacy energy. Something (well, actually, many things) very exciting is (are) happening in California’s central valley community of Visalia, and AMS is honored to be a small part of it.

PRIZM NE PROFILE REPORT							
Visalia CBSA vs. State of California						4/1/2008	
Seg. #	Segment Title	State of CA		Visalia CBSA		%Pen	Index
		Base Count	Base %Comp	Analysis Count	Analysis %Comp		
1	Upper Crust	309,879	2.5%	184	0.2%	0.1%	6
2	Blue Blood Estates	187,656	1.5%	399	0.3%	0.2%	22
3	Movers & Shakers	308,043	2.5%	416	0.3%	0.1%	14
4	Young Digerati	434,813	3.5%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
5	Country Squires	140,362	1.1%	1,332	1.1%	1.0%	96
6	Winner's Circle	181,036	1.5%	551	0.5%	0.3%	31
7	Money & Brains	742,870	6.1%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
8	Executive Suites	168,840	1.4%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
9	Big Fish, Small Pond	163,722	1.3%	1,040	0.9%	0.6%	64
10	Second City Elite	194,142	1.6%	2,120	1.8%	1.1%	111
11	God's Country	125,313	1.0%	729	0.6%	0.6%	59
12	Brite Lites, Li'l City	283,153	2.3%	2,838	2.3%	1.0%	101
13	Upward Bound	341,441	2.8%	5,363	4.4%	1.6%	159
14	New Empty Nests	132,094	1.1%	200	0.2%	0.2%	15
15	Pools & Patios	167,731	1.4%	353	0.3%	0.2%	21
16	Bohemian Mix	657,283	5.4%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
17	Beltway Boomers	148,335	1.2%	463	0.4%	0.3%	32
18	Kids & Cul-de-sacs	237,601	1.9%	1,488	1.2%	0.6%	63
19	Home Sweet Home	177,471	1.4%	1,241	1.0%	0.7%	71
20	Fast-Track Families	52,581	0.4%	1,683	1.4%	3.2%	324
21	Gray Power	107,711	0.9%	469	0.4%	0.4%	44
22	Young Influentials	129,518	1.1%	462	0.4%	0.4%	36
23	Greenbelt Sports	77,324	0.6%	374	0.3%	0.5%	49
24	Up-and-Comers	225,239	1.8%	2,230	1.8%	1.0%	100
25	Country Casuals	39,168	0.3%	937	0.8%	2.4%	242
26	The Cosmopolitans	301,673	2.5%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
27	Middleburg Managers	256,893	2.1%	3,796	3.1%	1.5%	150
28	Traditional Times	155,043	1.3%	1,842	1.5%	1.2%	120
29	American Dreams	672,691	5.5%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
30	Suburban Sprawl	123,744	1.0%	1,058	0.9%	0.9%	87
31	Urban Achievers	442,009	3.6%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
32	New Homesteaders	115,255	0.9%	2,505	2.1%	2.2%	220
33	Big Sky Families	62,277	0.5%	1,553	1.3%	2.5%	252
34	White Picket Fences	253,497	2.1%	7,369	6.1%	2.9%	294
35	Boomtown Singles	134,875	1.1%	3,289	2.7%	2.4%	247
36	Blue-Chip Blues	173,171	1.4%	2,196	1.8%	1.3%	128
37	Mayberry-ville	69,170	0.6%	1,974	1.6%	2.9%	289
38	Simple Pleasures	98,303	0.8%	1,812	1.5%	1.8%	187
39	Domestic Duos	69,071	0.6%	849	0.7%	1.2%	124
40	Close-In Couples	214,865	1.8%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
41	Sunset City Blues	139,496	1.1%	4,557	3.8%	3.3%	331

42	Red, White & Blues	54,354	0.4%	1,886	1.6%	3.5%	351
43	Heartlanders	68,879	0.6%	1,905	1.6%	2.8%	280
44	New Beginnings	103,471	0.8%	662	0.6%	0.6%	65
45	Blue Highways	26,388	0.2%	1096	0.9%	4.2%	421
46	Old Glories	62,898	0.5%	591	0.5%	0.9%	95
47	City Startups	143,277	1.2%	3254	2.7%	2.3%	230
48	Young & Rustic	73,054	0.6%	2883	2.4%	4.0%	400
49	American Classics	71,581	0.6%	1,427	1.2%	2.0%	202
50	Kid Country, USA	72,641	0.6%	4310	3.6%	5.9%	601
51	Shotguns & Pickups	41,179	0.3%	1858	1.5%	4.5%	457
52	Suburban Pioneers	100,509	0.8%	2,178	1.8%	2.2%	219
53	Mobility Blues	101,354	0.8%	4119	3.4%	4.1%	411
54	Multi-Culti Mosaic	381,587	3.1%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
55	Golden Ponds	55,169	0.5%	529	0.4%	1.0%	97
56	Crossroads Villagers	59,058	0.5%	4463	3.7%	7.6%	765
57	Old Milltowns	66,082	0.5%	2158	1.8%	3.3%	331
58	Back Country Folks	49,637	0.4%	1629	1.3%	3.3%	332
59	Urban Elders	243,867	2.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
60	Park Bench Seniors	109,640	0.9%	2308	1.9%	2.1%	213
61	City Roots	159,057	1.3%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
62	Hometown Retired	92,998	0.8%	4642	3.8%	5.0%	505
63	Family Thrifts	283,556	2.3%	12630	10.4%	4.5%	451
64	Bedrock America	87,343	0.7%	9126	7.5%	10.5%	1058
65	Big City Blues	304,594	2.5%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
66	Low-Rise Living	457,363	3.7%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
-	Total	12,284,895	100.0%	121,326	100.0%	1.0%	100

PRIZM NE PROFILE REPORT							
Visalia Place vs. State of California							4/1/2008
Seg. #	Segment Title	State of CA		Visalia Place		%Pen	Index
		Base Count	Base %Comp	Analysis Count	Analysis %Comp		
1	Upper Crust	309,879	2.5%	119	0.3%	0.0%	13
2	Blue Blood Estates	187,656	1.5%	223	0.6%	0.1%	41
3	Movers & Shakers	308,043	2.5%	210	0.6%	0.1%	24
4	Young Digerati	434,813	3.5%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
5	Country Squires	140,362	1.1%	768	2.2%	0.6%	189
6	Winner's Circle	181,036	1.5%	298	0.8%	0.2%	57
7	Money & Brains	742,870	6.1%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
8	Executive Suites	168,840	1.4%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
9	Big Fish, Small Pond	163,722	1.3%	129	0.4%	0.1%	27
10	Second City Elite	194,142	1.6%	1,364	3.8%	0.7%	243
11	God's Country	125,313	1.0%	446	1.3%	0.4%	123
12	Brite Lites, Li'l City	283,153	2.3%	1,472	4.1%	0.5%	179
13	Upward Bound	341,441	2.8%	2,253	6.3%	0.7%	228
14	New Empty Nests	132,094	1.1%	119	0.3%	0.1%	31
15	Pools & Patios	167,731	1.4%	247	0.7%	0.2%	51
16	Bohemian Mix	657,283	5.4%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
17	Beltway Boomers	148,335	1.2%	270	0.8%	0.2%	63
18	Kids & Cul-de-sacs	237,601	1.9%	832	2.3%	0.4%	121
19	Home Sweet Home	177,471	1.4%	755	2.1%	0.4%	147
20	Fast-Track Families	52,581	0.4%	51	0.1%	0.1%	33
21	Gray Power	107,711	0.9%	389	1.1%	0.4%	125
22	Young Influentials	129,518	1.1%	361	1.0%	0.3%	96
23	Greenbelt Sports	77,324	0.6%	151	0.4%	0.2%	67
24	Up-and-Comers	225,239	1.8%	896	2.5%	0.4%	137
25	Country Casuals	39,168	0.3%	78	0.2%	0.2%	69
26	The Cosmopolitans	301,673	2.5%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
27	Middleburg Managers	256,893	2.1%	1,933	5.4%	0.8%	260
28	Traditional Times	155,043	1.3%	86	0.2%	0.1%	19
29	American Dreams	672,691	5.5%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
30	Suburban Sprawl	123,744	1.0%	752	2.1%	0.6%	210
31	Urban Achievers	442,009	3.6%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
32	New Homesteaders	115,255	0.9%	404	1.1%	0.4%	121
33	Big Sky Families	62,277	0.5%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
34	White Picket Fences	253,497	2.1%	3,116	8.8%	1.2%	424
35	Boomtown Singles	134,875	1.1%	1,526	4.3%	1.1%	391
36	Blue-Chip Blues	173,171	1.4%	1,358	3.8%	0.8%	271
37	Mayberry-ville	69,170	0.6%	119	0.3%	0.2%	59
38	Simple Pleasures	98,303	0.8%	104	0.3%	0.1%	37
39	Domestic Duos	69,071	0.6%	511	1.4%	0.7%	255
40	Close-In Couples	214,865	1.8%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
41	Sunset City Blues	139,496	1.1%	2,070	5.8%	1.5%	512

42	Red, White & Blues	54,354	0.4%	67	0.2%	0.1%	43
43	Heartlanders	68,879	0.6%	83	0.2%	0.1%	42
44	New Beginnings	103,471	0.8%	338	1.0%	0.3%	113
45	Blue Highways	26,388	0.2%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
46	Old Glories	62,898	0.5%	338	1.0%	0.5%	186
47	City Startups	143,277	1.2%	1367	3.8%	1.0%	329
48	Young & Rustic	73,054	0.6%	12	0.0%	0.0%	6
49	American Classics	71,581	0.6%	889	2.5%	1.2%	429
50	Kid Country, USA	72,641	0.6%	144	0.4%	0.2%	68
51	Shotguns & Pickups	41,179	0.3%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
52	Suburban Pioneers	100,509	0.8%	1,162	3.3%	1.2%	399
53	Mobility Blues	101,354	0.8%	1364	3.8%	1.4%	465
54	Multi-Culti Mosaic	381,587	3.1%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
55	Golden Ponds	55,169	0.5%	39	0.1%	0.1%	24
56	Crossroads Villagers	59,058	0.5%	15	0.0%	0.0%	9
57	Old Milltowns	66,082	0.5%	52	0.2%	0.1%	27
58	Back Country Folks	49,637	0.4%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
59	Urban Elders	243,867	2.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
60	Park Bench Seniors	109,640	0.9%	1077	3.0%	1.0%	339
61	City Roots	159,057	1.3%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
62	Hometown Retired	92,998	0.8%	1559	4.4%	1.7%	579
63	Family Thrifts	283,556	2.3%	3617	10.2%	1.3%	440
64	Bedrock America	87,343	0.7%	47	0.1%	0.1%	19
65	Big City Blues	304,594	2.5%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
66	Low-Rise Living	457,363	3.7%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
-	Total	12,284,895	100.0%	35,580	100.0%	0.3%	100

PRIZM NE PROFILE REPORT							
Visalia Place vs. Visalia CBSA							4/1/2008
Seg. #	Segment Title	Visalia CBSA		Visalia Place		%Pen	Index
		Base Count	Base %Comp	Analysis Count	Analysis %Comp		
1	Upper Crust	184	0.2%	119	0.3%	64.7%	221
2	Blue Blood Estates	399	0.3%	223	0.6%	55.9%	191
3	Movers & Shakers	416	0.3%	210	0.6%	50.5%	172
4	Young Digerati	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
5	Country Squires	1,332	1.1%	768	2.2%	57.7%	197
6	Winner's Circle	551	0.5%	298	0.8%	54.1%	184
7	Money & Brains	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
8	Executive Suites	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
9	Big Fish, Small Pond	1,040	0.9%	129	0.4%	12.4%	42
10	Second City Elite	2,120	1.8%	1,364	3.8%	64.3%	219
11	God's Country	729	0.6%	446	1.3%	61.2%	209
12	Brite Lites, Li'l City	2,838	2.3%	1,472	4.1%	51.9%	177
13	Upward Bound	5,363	4.4%	2,253	6.3%	42.0%	143
14	New Empty Nests	200	0.2%	119	0.3%	59.5%	203
15	Pools & Patios	353	0.3%	247	0.7%	70.0%	239
16	Bohemian Mix	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
17	Beltway Boomers	463	0.4%	270	0.8%	58.3%	199
18	Kids & Cul-de-sacs	1,488	1.2%	832	2.3%	55.9%	191
19	Home Sweet Home	1,241	1.0%	755	2.1%	60.8%	207
20	Fast-Track Families	1,683	1.4%	51	0.1%	3.0%	10
21	Gray Power	469	0.4%	389	1.1%	82.9%	283
22	Young Influentials	462	0.4%	361	1.0%	78.1%	266
23	Greenbelt Sports	374	0.3%	151	0.4%	40.4%	138
24	Up-and-Comers	2,230	1.8%	896	2.5%	40.2%	137
25	Country Casuals	937	0.8%	78	0.2%	8.3%	28
26	The Cosmopolitans	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
27	Middleburg Managers	3,796	3.1%	1,933	5.4%	50.9%	174
28	Traditional Times	1,842	1.5%	86	0.2%	4.7%	16
29	American Dreams	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
30	Suburban Sprawl	1,058	0.9%	752	2.1%	71.1%	242
31	Urban Achievers	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
32	New Homesteaders	2,505	2.1%	404	1.1%	16.1%	55
33	Big Sky Families	1,553	1.3%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
34	White Picket Fences	7,369	6.1%	3,116	8.8%	42.3%	144
35	Boomtown Singles	3,289	2.7%	1,526	4.3%	46.4%	158
36	Blue-Chip Blues	2,196	1.8%	1,358	3.8%	61.8%	211
37	Mayberry-ville	1,974	1.6%	119	0.3%	6.0%	21
38	Simple Pleasures	1,812	1.5%	104	0.3%	5.7%	20
39	Domestic Duos	849	0.7%	511	1.4%	60.2%	205
40	Close-In Couples	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
41	Sunset City Blues	4,557	3.8%	2,070	5.8%	45.4%	155

42	Red, White & Blues	1,886	1.6%	67	0.2%	3.6%	12
43	Heartlanders	1,905	1.6%	83	0.2%	4.4%	15
44	New Beginnings	662	0.6%	338	1.0%	51.1%	174
45	Blue Highways	1,096	0.9%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
46	Old Glories	591	0.5%	338	1.0%	57.2%	195
47	City Startups	3,254	2.7%	1367	3.8%	42.0%	143
48	Young & Rustic	2,883	2.4%	12	0.0%	0.4%	1
49	American Classics	1,427	1.2%	889	2.5%	62.3%	212
50	Kid Country, USA	4,310	3.6%	144	0.4%	3.3%	11
51	Shotguns & Pickups	1,858	1.5%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
52	Suburban Pioneers	2,178	1.8%	1,162	3.3%	53.4%	182
53	Mobility Blues	4,119	3.4%	1364	3.8%	33.1%	113
54	Multi-Culti Mosaic	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
55	Golden Ponds	529	0.4%	39	0.1%	7.4%	25
56	Crossroads Villagers	4,463	3.7%	15	0.0%	0.3%	1
57	Old Milltowns	2,158	1.8%	52	0.2%	2.4%	8
58	Back Country Folks	1,629	1.3%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
59	Urban Elders	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
60	Park Bench Seniors	2,308	1.9%	1077	3.0%	46.7%	159
61	City Roots	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
62	Hometown Retired	4,642	3.8%	1559	4.4%	33.6%	115
63	Family Thrifts	12,630	10.4%	3617	10.2%	28.6%	98
64	Bedrock America	9,126	7.5%	47	0.1%	0.5%	2
65	Big City Blues	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
66	Low-Rise Living	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0
-	Total	121,326	100.0%	35,580	100.0%	29.3%	100