

BELONGING IN OAKLAND: A CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN



JUNE 2018

Cultural Affairs Staff

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Consulting Team

Vanessa Whang, *Lead Consultant (research, strategy, survey, writer)*

Communities in Collaboration, *Community Engagement Consultancy (in-person community meetings)*

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*30 years have passed since Oakland had a cultural plan.
This plan is intended to serve as
the first of two phases of a reset for Cultural Affairs
that is relevant to today's Oakland.*

Phase One: *Adopt a new vision of
cultural equity for the City &
redefine the work of Cultural Affairs*

Phase Two: *Ground the vision in
new practices & resources*



“Rock on Oakland” - Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Donna Billick, artist

THE PLANNING PROCESS TIMELINE

Research & Discovery: 60+ individual interviews/small group meetings ♦ extensive City document & field literature review ♦ wide range of City & community meeting & event attendance (since April 2017)

Community Engagement: community-based meetings in every Council District – 7 Cultural Conversations w/the arts & culture community and 7 Community Dialogues w/the general public ♦ online survey (August-November 2017)

Plan Draft & Community Input: December 2017-April 2018

Finalize Plan: April 2018

Plan Adoption by City Council: June 2018 (projected)



COMMUNITY VOICE



IN THE COMMUNITY

Hosts & Locations of Community Engagement Meetings

Cultural Conversations *with the Cultural Affairs Manager*

E. M. Wolfman Bookstore (Downtown)

Farley's East (Uptown)

Intertribal Friendship House (East Lake)

Peralta Hacienda Historical Park (Peralta Hacienda)

RBA Creative (Laurel)

Red Bay Coffee (Fruitvale)

Zoo Labs (West Oakland)

Community Dialogues

Dimond Branch Library (Dimond)

East Oakland Boxing Association (Deep East)

Eastside Arts Alliance (San Antonio)

Flight Deck (Downtown)

Heartlands Merchant Association (Central East)

Oakland Asian Cultural Center (Chinatown)

Rockridge Branch Library (Rockridge)

REFLECTIONS FROM...

THE CULTURAL COMMUNITY

- Shrinking investments in the arts & culture sector
- Retaining cultural spaces in an over-heated real estate market
- Lack of adequate performance venues
- Need for more equitable funding

THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Likes: Diversity ♦ Environmental Beauty ♦ People (unpretentious, open, progressive) ♦ Arts & Culture Activities

Wants:

- All people feel their culture is respected
- Neighborhood-based resources
- Create connections to build unity and understanding
- Orient newcomers to the culture of Oakland
- Programs for youth and marginalized people
- People take greater ownership of the community



A NEW CULTURAL VISION FOR OAKLAND

Equity is the Driving Force

Analyze and address the causes of disparities and advocate for robust funding of disinvested communities

Culture is the Frame

Embrace cultures as systems of knowledge, values, and ways of being—and artmaking as one powerful aspect of culture

Belonging is the Goal

Promote belonging through social connectedness and engagement in the civic commons

Working Across Government

Promote the value of cultural diversity across city government in order to advance equity

CULTURAL EQUITY DEFINED

Cultural equity in a democratic and diverse society recognizes:

- *all cultures have value;*
- *cultural diversity makes society more resilient; and*
- *all cultures should have equal access to opportunities to achieve social esteem.*

This equity of opportunity entails:

- *self-determined cultural expression, affirmation, and learning;*
- *spaces and resources for cultural production and participation;*
- *creating connections and cross-cultural understanding and engagement;*
- *stewardship of place; and*
- *access to knowledge and skills to advocate for community cultural development.*

*Achieving cultural equity requires **fair and just distribution of resources** and the **identification and remedying of institutionalized norms that have systemically disadvantaged categories of people** based on, e.g., race, ethnicity, customs, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, disability, and socioeconomic or citizenship status.*

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- **Build Trust**
- **Focus on Assets, not Deficits**
- **Leverage Resources**
- **Work Collaboratively**
- **Look for Intersectionality**
- **Build Capacity for Civic Engagement**
- **Continually Improve**

FULFILLING THE VISION: A NEW ROLE FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS



*Golden Gate Recreational Center
Joaquin Newman & Eduardo Pineda, artists
Paul Kuroda, photography*

OAKLAND'S CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

The work of Cultural Affairs must **fully recognize and strengthen** the realms **where cultural life actually takes place**. Where culture flourishes has no hard boundaries—non-profit or for-profit, owned or rented, lived in workspace or worked in living space.

The organizations and businesses of Oakland's arts & cultural economy (ACE) engage over **5,500 full & part-time employees**, around **2,500 contractors & interns**, and **2,200 volunteers**.

ACE Non-Profits			ACE For-Profits		
# of orgs	Employees	Expenditures	# of firms	Employees	Gross Sales
217	1,489	\$83M	1,055	4,065	\$390M

A map of Oakland's cultural assets extends far beyond its cultural spaces to embrace community centers, faith organizations, parks and libraries, school yards, music and movement studios, arts and book stores—all the places people build community.

FULFILLING THE VISION: A NEW ROLE FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Cultural Spaces: Cultural production and presentation take place in many kinds of spaces—all needed for a healthy creative ecology.

→ **Work across sectors to retain, improve, and create cultural spaces**

Neighborhood Places: Many neighborhoods don't have the cultural resources they need to thrive.

→ **Address disparities and build neighborhood capacity for cultural expression**

Culture in the Civic Commons: Public spaces are the civic assets that exist in each area of the city and can be engaged more robustly to build equity.

→ **Promote cultural equity through the civic commons**

FULFILLING THE VISION: A NEW ROLE FOR CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Strengthening Oakland's Cultural Ecosystem: Oakland's cultural communities have social and creative capital that should be lifted up.

→ **Build cultural equity and asset-based approaches to strengthen the diverse cultural ecosystem**

Building Infrastructure for Cultural Equity: Making cultural equity a reality is not possible without more staffing, training, tools, and added resources to put into communities.

→ **Strengthen Cultural Affairs' capacity to implement meaningful change for communities and to promote cultural equity across government**

FULFILLING THE VISION: NEXT STEPS

- **Plan adoption by City Council**
- **Hire Cultural Affairs support staff to reactivate Commission**
- **Identify and secure internal and external resources to advance the implementation of the cultural plan**
- **Racial/cultural equity impact analysis**
- **Launch Neighborhood Voice and Creative Fellows grant opportunities**
- **Revise/create programs with a stronger equity orientation**
- **Collaborate with other City offices to advance equity holistically for Oakland**

ART CREDITS

“Dream” mural & tinsel sculpture: *EastSide Arts Alliance and Civic Design Studio at the Sol Building. Jose Garcia, Darren Villegas, Vanessa Espinosa, and Visual Element (mural artists). Civic Design Studio, Fremont Architecture Academy & Castlemont Sustainable Urban Design Academy (tinsel wire sculpture). Vanessa Whang, photography.*

‘Rock on Oakland’ - Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, aerial view: *Donna Billick (artist).*

Community engagement meetings photo collage: *Susana Morales, photography.*

A Cultural Vision for Oakland photo collage: *Dia de los Muertos installation/Fruitvale, Chinatown mural, Fruitvale BART station mural – Vanessa Whang, photography. Naomi Diouf (dancer), Dedication/Kiazi & Massengo (drummers) – Spencer Wilkinson, photography. “Live to Dance in Oakland” – Joel Warner, photography. Oakland Ballet press photo.*

Fulfilling the Vision: *Golden Gate Recreational Center,/Teen Lounge (detail), Joaquin Newman & Eduardo Pineda (artists) – Paul Kuroda, photography.*