Celebrating Community: A Cultural Plan for Portland, Maine

HITACHI
V-C55B

Celebrating Community: A Cultural Plan for Portland, Maine

Prepared by *Celebrating Community* Steering Committe

On October 5, 1998, the Portland City Council adopted this plan as an element of the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Portland, Maine.

Kay Wagenknecht-Harte 1951-1997

Landscape Architect, Architect and Portland's Urban Designer/Cultural Liaison (1993-1997)

Celebrating Community is dedicated to Kay, who was deeply committed to enhancing the culture and community of Portland. Those of us privileged to work closely with her were inspired by Kay's determination, insight, integrity, and generosity.

Detail:
Historian
Portland
Paul D' Amato

Celebrating Community: A Cultural Plan for Portland, Maine

English

Celebrating Community is a community-wide plan to create more vital neighborhoods in Portland by supporting broadly defined arts and culture: classical and traditional arts, humanities, ethnic cultures, festivals, community-based arts programs, and public art. For a translation of the plan's mission, goals, and ideas for action, please call 874-8723.

Khmer

ការធ្វើបុណ្យសហគមកើតឡើងនៅទីក្រុងផតឡែនរដ្ឋមេន
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874-8723

Somali

Dabaaldega Bulshada waa qorshe loogu talagalay balaarinta iyo adkaynta xiriirka deris-wadaaga bulshada Portland, laguna xoojinaayo fanka iyo dhaqanka: fanka iyo suugaanta dhqamada kala duwan, insaaniyada, xafladaha bulshadaha kala duwan, iyo fanka dadwaynaha. Tarjumaada quorshaha hawi-galka iyo talooyinka fulintooda, fadian nagala soo xiriir telefoonkan 874-8723.

Vietnamese

Lễ Cộng Đỗng lã kế hoạch mở rong cộng đỗng để tao tĩnh thãn mãt cấn thiết ở Portland qua việc lám phong phú vắn hơa vã nghê thuật: nghệ thuật dãn gian vã cô truyến, khoa hoc nhãn vắn, vắn hóa dãn tộc, chương trĩnh nghệ thuật cộng đỗng, vã nghệ thuật quấn chúng. Để có bản dịch vế sừ mệnh của tổ chừc, vã y kiến vế chương trĩnh, xin goi 874-8723.

Spanish

Celebración de la Communidad es un plan para toda la communidad para crear mas vitales vecindades en Portland soportando ampleamente arte y cultúra: arte clasico y tradicional, humanidades, culturas étnicas, festivales, programas de arte basado en la comunidad, y arte público. Para una traducción de las metas de este plan, para ideas de acción, por favor llame al 874-8723.

Russian

Празднуя Общественность - это всеобщий план более создания интегрированных районов в Портланде поддерживая всесторонние с еры искусства и культуры: классическое и традиционное искусство, гуманитарные науки, этничесие культуры, фестивали, районные программы по искусству, и народное исскуство. Для перевода целей миссии плана, и для идей, пожалуйтса звоните 874-8723.

Bosnian

Slavimo Zajednicu je društveni plan da izgradimo vitalnija susjedstva u Portlandu podržavajuci široko definisane kulturno-umjetničke discipline: klasična i tradicionalna umjetnost, humanistika, folklor, festivali, i kulturno-umjetnički programi. Za sprovođenje ciljeva i ideja ovog plana molimo vas da nazovete 874-8723.

French

Célébration de la Communauté est un plan à échelle communautaire afin de créer des voisinages plus vitaux à Portland en portant globalement appui aux arts et à la culture définies: arts classiques et traditionnels, attributs humains, cultures ethniques, festivals, programmes d'art communautaires, et l'art public. Pour une traduction des objectifs du plan, et des idées pour action, veuillez appeler 874-8723.

Swahili

Kushangiliya jamii ni mpango wa kupanua jamii kwa kuumba ujiraniwa maana mu Portland tukisaidia kazi mbali mbali za picha na za malezi: kazi za maarufu na za zamani, kazi za umutu, malezi za kundi za watu, mashangilio, programu za jamii, na kazi za watu wote. Kwa kupata mafafanio ya nia ya ujumbe, mawazo na matendo ya mpango hiyo, piga simu ku namba 874-8723.

Preface

Celebrating Community, Portland's Community Cultural Plan, is the result of a community-wide process of fact finding and consensus building; *Celebrating Community* identifies cultural needs and aspirations of Portland's neighborhoods, and proposes policies and actions in response. This is the third phase of an effort that began with the *Downtown Vision* plan and continued with *A Plan for Portland's Art District*. The Portland Arts and Cultural Alliance (PACA), along with the City of Portland Planning Office, began the planning process for *Celebrating Community* in 1996 to strengthen the role of arts and culture in creating vital neighborhoods, and forge links between the goals of the Arts District to the neighborhoods of Portland. A citizen Steering Committee consisting of representatives from PACA, the Planning Office, arts and cultural institutions, education, and the artists' community guided the process.

The cultural planning process began with personal interviews of 63 Portland leaders representing various ethnic, religious, cultural, political, and neighborhood groups. Interviews explored the range of community constituents, their cultural lives and their cultural needs. A series of Public Forums was held in the spring of 1997. Teachers, school officials, artists and arts organizations discussed the needs and opportunities to link education and the arts. A revised version of *Kid's Cultural Horizons* was produced within this effort; the updated version, entitled *Cultural Horizons*, is a catalogue of arts and cultural offerings available to schools and community groups. More surveys were taken at the Community Development meetings in the fall of '97, asking residents about the cultural life of their neighborhood. The Steering Committee distilled the information and ideas from all sources and developed a draft report. During the spring of '98, the Steering Committee held four community forums using interactive exercises and facilitated discussions to set priorities and refine the ideas in the plan. New ideas were collected from participants at the forums and folded into the mix for discussion and consideration. This final process formed the mission, principles, seven goals, and twenty-four main action ideas of *Celebrating Community*.

As a companion piece to *Celebrating Community* five professional photographers were commissioned to find and capture images of cultural expression within a distinct Portland community of their choosing. In this project, entitled *Expressions of Culture*, the photographers were given broad discretion in interpreting what forms a community and its culture. *Expressions of Culture* is a case in point, that the arts are uniquely capable of revealing the soul of a community. The images speak as much as all the printed words about the people and places that make the Portland community.

This book presents some images from the *Expressions of Culture* project, along with the findings, goals and recommendations of *Celebrating Community*. By incorporating *Celebrating Community* into the city's comprehensive plan, Portland recognizes the importance of cultural vitality to the community. Comprehensive plans inform policy of city government and are the basis for decision making on things like ordinances, programming, and capital investments. *A Plan for Portland's Art District*, for example, helped the city understand the "arts' industry" and motivated the City to support PACA. The Arts District and the *Celebrating Community* plans will serve as a blueprint for PACA's work and help PACA's members fulfill the cultural and creative aspirations of Portlanders. This is a partnership effort that embodies our mutual understanding of arts and culture in the life of the community. *Celebrating Community* sets the stage for how the City and PACA can work together to enhance the quality of life for all of Portland's citizens.

The ideas contained in Celebrating Community are not prescriptive, exhaustive, or final. Rather, the plan sets a framework for fostering grassroots initiative, provides a compass for establishing policy and priorities, and marks a commitment to secure resources to respond. The plan is flexible and adaptable, and should be viewed as the next step to linking the diversity of our people, the identity of our neighborhoods, and the expressions of our cultures to the strengthening of our community.

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Introduction: Culture and Community

Community and *culture,* two key words frequently used, abused and misconstrued, are concepts that require some boundaries as we consider their prominence in the cultural plan. Portland is itself a community, but so is Stroudwater, the Waterfront or the kitchen staff at the Village Cafe. Many people think of culture as the stuff that resides in Greek Revival museums and opera houses, the elite arts of 18th and 19th century Europe, a realm that few millennial Americans occupy.

For the framers of this report, community and culture are assumed to have the broadest possible readings, which may also allow for highly specific contextual usage. Community and culture are characteristics of social existence which we all share, and interact in the complex and multi-layered dance which makes Portland, Maine a dynamic and exciting environment.

What is a community? Any grouping of individuals who share something, anything, in common, and consider themselves to have some allegiance to each other as a result is a community. We all begin life within the community of our own families, but quickly become part of other participatory communities as well: second graders, baseball players, dancers, college students, workers, parents, senior citizens. Some communities, such as nationality, ethnicity or religion, we are born into. Others we select for ourselves: political affiliation, occupation, place of residence, pursuit of interests. Within each of these spheres, we share with the other members of the group a set of common experiences and assumptions about what is valued, how it is to be cherished and how to interact with each other and the world. Each of us is part of many different communities, effortlessly shifting conceptual gears as we move among them. The internal rules which govern what is proper and what is unacceptable will vary substantially between the dance hall on Saturday night and the church on Sunday morning; still, many people participate in both communities without committing social gaffes or feeling any sort of conflict.

It is this complex matrix of coexisting and overlapping community allegiances which forms the core of personal and social identity, and which this report addresses. The larger idea of *Portland* contains within it myriad diverse communities, each of which contributes to the greater civic community. Each of these communities within our community is worth celebrating, because each embodies its own culture.

Culture is the enactment of community. It is the way communities select to express themselves, the glue that binds them together internally, and the displays that represent them to the world. Culture is expressed in what we wear, what we eat, how we dance, who we revere, how we worship. It is an Indian woman's sari, Italians making pasta, fishermen's knowledge of how to read the weather signs, the etiquette of a society wedding, French people dancing *Lady of the Lake*, and the stories refugees tell their children about their homelands. Every community has its own culture that interacts with and influences every other culture with which it coexists. This ongoing process of cross-fertilization is part of what keeps cultures and communities dynamic and healthy.

This conception of culture is inclusive of the performing and visual arts. It contains the classical and traditional art forms of dance, music and craft, as well as contemporary painting, free jazz and avant-garde theater — all of which are expressions of a community-based aesthetic. But it is not restricted to the domains usually associated with "the arts." Our definition of culture is broader, extending from the fabric of personal interactions to the rituals which signal our participation in community. Far from any notion of elite culture, our aim has been to thoroughly democratize our cultural perspective and to empower communities that have previously been absent from public cultural discourse. At its core, this planning process has been an attempt to take a measure of our entire community and its constituent cultures, and to devise a set of mechanisms through which our representative civic government might address their needs and aspirations. In so doing, *Celebrating Community* intends to enrich and enliven Portland's civic life and spirit. As we celebrate the diversity of Portland's people, we nurture the unique and positive spirit of the whole community.

Expressions of Culture: Five Photographers, Five Communities

A year ago last August, five Portland photographers sat with twice as many city planners, urban designers and arts administrators in a small, crowded office and began a conversation about documenting community culture.

The task presented was to create a photographic essay about Portland's diverse cultural communities. With the assignment, a new layer of complexity was added to the already dynamic relationship between community, culture and the arts within our small city.

Community can be defined in many ways — from the obvious and involuntary delineations of neighborhood, ethnicity and religion to the voluntary choices groups of people make — as in the work they do, the values they hold or the social clubs to which they belong. In addition the use of the term culture has broadened, both within this planning document and by the field, to include the patterns and expressions of all groupings and communities of human beings and the products of their artistic expressions, whether presented at the grange hall or auditorium, a fishing net workshop or gallery space.

Each of the photographic images illuminating this planning document tells a short story about the culture of a distinct community. The photographers, invited to the project for their artistic merit and work experience, were each asked to choose a community that they desired to observe more closely.

Their choices for communities may appear arbitrary: Tonee Harbert selected Portland's diverse, expressive Congress Street neighborhood; Jim Daniels chose the Cambodian newcomers, the largest and oldest Asian refugee population; Paul D'Amato's portraits examine the faces of individuals as they participate in social clubs and community gatherings; Jocelyn Lee captures the private world made by children at play in her own Munjoy Hill neighborhood; and David McLain immersed himself in Portland's distinct working waterfront.

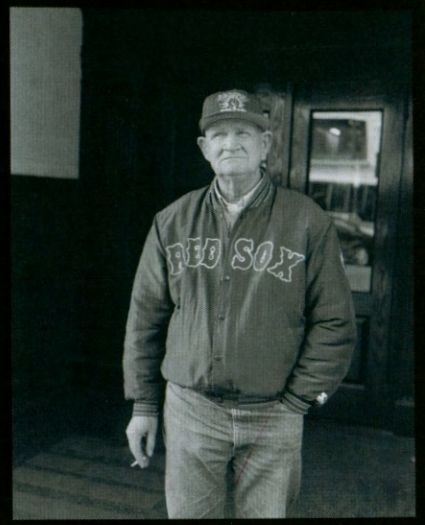
The images provide us, as viewers, a way to broaden and test our ideas about community and culture.

As a city, we are beginning to understand that the arts and culture are found in many places not seen before, and the traditions and rituals of ethnic groups, communities of manual laborers and a couple dancing at a social club, all provide a richness that adds to the cultural depth and wholeness of our city.

Robert Robinson, Shoe Shiner

Fred Hoffmeister, Violinist

Ashantis Yeboah, Student



Ralph Dahms, Retired Concession Worker

Tonee Harbert

The community I have documented is an urban stretch of Congress Street, roughly five blocks long between Monument and Congress Square. Congress Street is a neighborhood, a place where people live and work, do business, hang out. It would be difficult to find a street with a greater mix of humanity in the state of Maine.

The people in these photographs were chosen because I see them often on the street, and was drawn to their faces, their postures and life they bring to their community.

I am using the genre of street portraiture to put a face on a place. This is my own personal and subjective approach and not an academic, ethnographic or sociological survey.

Untitled

Untitled

Jim Daniels

Community means different things to different people, but to me it signifies a group held together by a shared purpose, usually existing within the context of a larger society. I chose to spend time with the Cambodian community, a group of over three thousand refugees, and the largest Asian community in the city.

This is a group of people who have come here out of need, some out of desperation, and most through extremely trying circumstances.

I approached this project with an open, albeit, Western eye, while looking for images of commonality. I see my photography as an expression of who I am as much as it is a reflection of what I see. I try always to maintain a great deal of respect for my subjects, but long ago gave up trying to be completely objective because objectivity is mostly illusion. The more important point is to be completely honest.

Pool Players, Woodfords Club, Portland

Trefethen Club, Peaks Island

Paul D'Amato

I photographed at events on the islands and at various social clubs on the mainland. I went from place to place, event to event, looking for something they all had in common that superseded ethnic, religious, class, or geographic affiliation. I was guided by a few simple observations: that community is the promise of refuge from isolation, and that we all negotiate the gulf between our sense of self and belonging (to a group) in different ways and to different degrees. Though we constantly strive to be a part of something larger — a social club, a sports team, a political party, a 12 step program — most of us feel separate from the whole, always a little different from the rest.

Whatever community we belong to, we live in the space that exists between our sense of self and our sense of the group. I want to make pictures that describe this emotional terrain, pictures that represent the larger community that we all share in, which we are a part of and separate from at the same time.

Untitled

Untitled

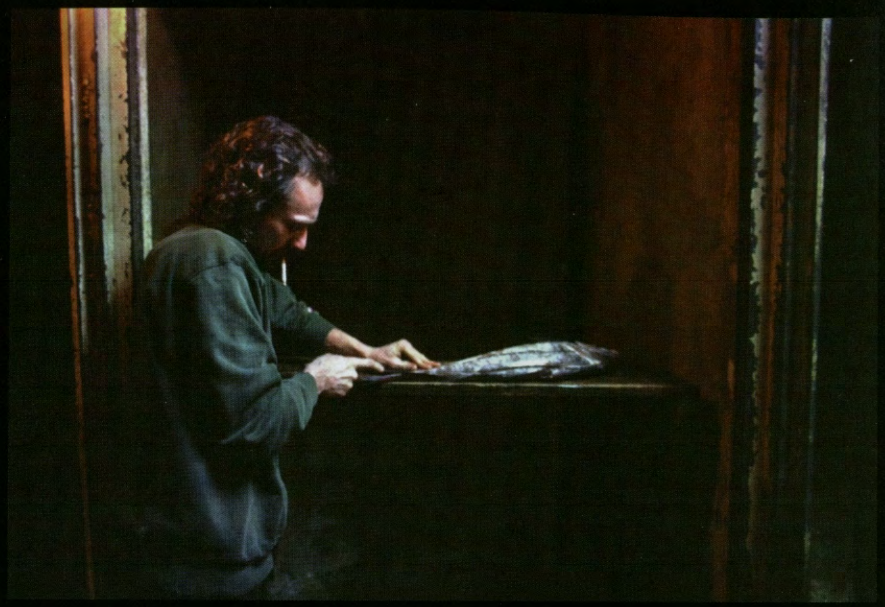
Jocelyn Lee

Munjoy Hill is a neighborhood with a physical boundary. On a hill with its outer limits defined by Casco Bay, an interstate highway, and the city of Portland, the once stately neighborhood is not maintained or developed like many other Portland communities.

Economically, Munjoy Hill is diverse, representing a kind of core sample of Portland's population, without perhaps the very wealthy. Students, professionals, and the elderly live next door to families struggling to survive on welfare. Like many inner city communities, most homes are multilevel dwellings with small to nonexistent backyards. Because of this structure, the children's play occurs primarily out of doors, often in the streets, or in the small green areas between houses. When weather permits, the grassy hills that lead to the water also provide hidden, overgrown areas, fertile for game playing.

The photographs in this series are about the space children create when all they have at their disposal is their own bodies and the physical world around them. In making these images it was my intention to show how children moving through a familiar landscape, like a neighborhood, discover and reinvent that landscape through play. Although all of these photographs were made in the moderately urban area of Munjoy Hill, (filled with cement driveways, sidewalks, cars and small backyards) the ability of the children to transport themselves with few tools (apples, ice, a small pool, a hose, a tree, a house cat) remains large and ever inspiring.

Net Maker



Fisherman in Hold

David McLain

Before spending a large amount of time on the Portland waterfront, I was drawn to the array of "sub" communities appearing to co-exist in and around the wharves; condominiums next to fish markets and lobster boats moored next to luxury yachts. This diversity within a community intrigued me and I believed it to be the defining characteristic of Portland's waterfront.

But as I spent more time there, I began to make a distinction. I was drawn not to the people who *live* on the waterfront, but to the people who *make* their living from the waterfront. It is the boat builders, net makers, and fisherman whose presence created a singular, unique environment. These people, earning their living because of the waterfront, comprise a vibrant part of Portland's cultural landscape and create a unique community rooted in a rich history and deep connection to the water.

Mission, Principles, Goals

Celebrating Community is based on the Mission:

To celebrate Portland's shared history and to instill pride in our cultural diversity;

To promote greater awareness of and access to arts and culture for all of Portland's citizens, both individually and collectively;

To encourage greater community participation in arts and cultural activities and increase the sustainability of Portland's arts and cultural life; and

To strengthen community through our arts and culture.

The Mission is based on the following Principles:

People in the community are enriched by the exchange and interconnection of cultural expression.

Intergenerational transfer of culture and tradition is valuable.

Every individual deserves an opportunity to explore and develop his/her creative and expressive potential.

Arts enhance learning.

The public school system should set the highest standard of arts access and education.

Active participation and engagement in the cultural life of the community increases the connection and commitment of the citizenry.

Arts and culture contributes to the economic vitality of Portland.

Arts and cultural organizations have an obligation to stay abreast of the changing interests and needs of its community, and concurrently, they have a responsibility to communicate and disseminate art and cultural traditions.

To achieve this Mission and based on the Principles, Celebrating Community has these 7 Goals:

1. Promote discovery, appreciation, understanding, and pride in Portland and the diverse cultures found within the City.

2. Develop and enhance opportunities for students of all ages to engage, create and perform with the local arts community.

3. Build, expand and sustain audiences.

4. Encourage and safeguard artists' continuing presence in the community.

5. Improve the vitality and civic support of arts and culture throughout the City.

6. Apply arts and cultural solutions to the community's social issues.

7. Strengthen neighborhood identity through cultural programming and create connections between neighborhoods and the Arts District.

The following pages elaborate these seven goals, summarize findings from community participants, and present ideas for action. These findings, goals, and ideas for action form the basis for future initiatives by the City and cultural community. Participants offered many specific suggestions, some of which are presented here to illustrate the range of potential activities that could come from this plan.

Great neighborhoods make a great city

Goal Promote discovery, appreciation and pride in Portland and the diverse cultures found within the City.

Immigrants and refugees have contributed immeasurably to our city. They have raised their families, made homes and invested a great deal in this city. The interests, aspirations, and hope of security in the community exist for us all; they are not exclusively one culture or the other.

Kaleidoscope of Cultures
Volume 2, January 1996
Portland Police Department

Findings

Portland has a rich history as a maritime center and urban community. Historically Portland's population was white Anglo-Saxon, with a substantial minority of Irish, Italians, Jews, Greeks, Armenians, and other immigrants. In the 1980's Portland was designated a Refugee Resettlement community. Today 42 languages are spoken in the Portland public schools with most of the recent immigrants coming from Cambodia, Vietnam, Eastern Europe, Africa and Islamic nations.

Currently there is a community desire for more cultural programs that reflect the heritage of Portland and highlight the multiple cultures represented in the City. Many respondents cited a need for a community center, serving all ethnic communities and residents, which would promote broad artistic expression and cultural understanding. Opportunities are sought for traditional and emerging artists to develop their work, to broaden audience appreciation of heritage arts, and to include new cultural arts within the whole arts' community.

Many artists, community leaders, and religious leaders expressed feelings of alienation and lack of acknowledgment, respect and understanding for their work and cultural traditions. As one religious leader stated, "It always feels incumbent on the minority to reach out; it is always hard to say, 'Oh, you forgot us.'" The arts can bridge across language, religious and cultural differences. Cultural outreach is a means to create connections and build trust in every aspect of community.

Ideas for Action

1. Increase opportunities for programs, festivals, and collaborative series that reflect and celebrate the history, cultures, heritages, religions, and interests of all Portland citizens.

Encourage opportunities for local artists of diverse heritages to develop, present, perform, and record their work.

Establish exhibit space to present Portland's history and to document current aspects of the community so that a wider variety of Portland's population can see their interests presented.

Create traveling photography exhibits of historic neighborhood photographs, and other photo documentaries such as *Expressions of Culture*, to exhibit in Portland neighborhoods.

Detail:
Untitled
Jim Daniels

There's something about passion, emotions, doing and being present - while being aware of others - these are part of my creative process. In fact, when I'm doing it well, I'm not performing. As a community person, I need a community to be in a similar place as me, open to experimentation, allowing itself to be vulnerable, where I can feel safe to create, to touch the divine with all the power that it contains. One way this happens is through song. My culture and faith run through all I do.

Rabbi Carol Braun
Temple Beth El

Create opportunities for the continuation of ceremony, custom, music and art forms between generations.

2. Commission work from visual, performing and heritage artists to advance Portland's reputation as a creative center.

Exhibit art, crafts, and collections in City Hall and other public buildings.

Support an ongoing Maine Artist's exhibition program in Portland.

Hold an annual competition for local authors and publish the winners in a collection of short stories, essays, and poetry.

Support opportunities for interactive theater focused on diversity issues and indigenous theater performed in the native language.

3. Create connections between the City's schools and traditional and ethnic artists.

Connect students and emerging artists with master artists to learn traditional arts.

4. Enable people, particularly those who have been left out, to participate in cultural events and encourage a "feeling of belonging to that world."

Establish a mentoring or outreach component within community art programs.

Make more exhibits hands-on and performances approachable for individuals who are visually or hearing impaired, or face mobility challenges.

5. Support a community center in the Arts District for performing and visual arts which serves all citizens and is accessible to the broadest range of artistic expression. The Center could provide space for workshops, exhibitions, performances, residencies, master classes, and mentoring programs.

Detail:
Mark Sanborn
Library Volunteer
Tonee Harbert

Goal Develop and enhance opportunities for students of all ages to engage, create and perform with the local arts community.

What I like about Portland is the sense of community here... I would like to see the adults and shopowners of Portland become more welcoming to teenagers and I wish there were more places for us to go, like clubs that will have more all-ages concerts.

Althea
Portland High School

Findings

"It would be great if there were more opportunities to educate adults that making art isn't just for kids," stated one respondent. Many citizens cited a need for affordable space to accommodate a range of uses, such as studios, classrooms, exhibit space, performance areas, and community kitchens. Organizations and institutions offering educational opportunities to adults frequently identified a need for teachers and mentors to teach their programs.

Educators in the public schools offer arts and culture to students in many creative ways, and teachers are using outside resources to enhance learning in their classrooms with a high degree of satisfaction. Limitations to incorporating local artists and programs into schools include inadequate funding levels for visiting artists, transportation expenses, schedule conflicts, and lack of information of local opportunities. Based on survey responses, public school teachers list the following six priorities to achieve their objectives for arts and cultural education in the classrooms: Funding, 88%; Resource Materials, 50%; Available Time, 51%; Adequate Transportation, 46%; Support for Arts and Cultural Education, 42%; and Access to Artists and Resources, 42%. Artists and cultural representatives express a desire to share their talents, arts, and knowledge in the schools, and to seek assistance in forging these connections. The greatest needs are to expand funding for arts and cultural education, to share information on available arts and cultural programs, and to integrate local arts and cultural resources into the curriculum.

Ideas for Action

1. **Expand the arts' curriculum (K-12) to ensure comprehensive and multi-cultural arts education in every classroom with related after-school/Saturday/summer season activities.**

2. **Combine efforts of the Arts in Education Committee of Portland Partnership and PACA to increase and coordinate support for arts education in Portland's public schools.**

Create sponsorships and scholarships for young artists to pursue their arts and cultural education.

Update, publish and distribute *Cultural Horizons*.

Hold an open house event in the schools to introduce teachers to artists and organizations that are offering arts and cultural programs for students.

The key to the long-term vitality of any community is directly related to one question: what is the community doing today to develop the artist and art participants of tomorrow? Investment in the cultural and artistic future of our children is an investment in the long-term sustainability of our community. A community without a thriving arts and cultural environment is partially dead.

Glen Cummings
Executive Director
Portland Partnership

Develop connections with local businesses engaged in the arts to serve as mentors and as destinations for "Art to Work" field trips.

Integrate the Maine Center for the Blind &Visually Impaired, and the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf into the City's arts and educational life.

Establish an awards program in the schools to recognize outstanding achievements in using the arts as a learning resource.

3. Coordinate exhibits, performances and resources available at community institutions with the school curriculum.

Create collaborations between museums, colleges, arts' organizations, and local schools to offer joint modules on themes such as Portland's heritage and development, the history and language of Native Americans, immigration to Portland over the centuries, or other topics using shared resources.

Bring more artists into the classrooms to perform, demonstrate, create, and discuss their work.

Coordinate the use of resources, staff and equipment between schools, and use "block booking" for artists.

Create an "arts bus" dedicated to transporting students to local arts and cultural resources.

4. Support lifelong learning and participation in the arts for all citizens.

Offer more studio art classes through adult education and support the acquisition of needed equipment, such as pottery wheels and metal smithing materials.

Inventory facilities and list physical upgrades required for the success of the arts and cultural curriculum. Match educational needs with existing local resources where possible.

Offer recent immigrants and other interested citizens training and support to develop businesses employing their traditional arts.

Promote and develop neighborhood mural projects, theater groups, writing groups and other creative ventures.

Goal Build, sustain and expand audiences.

Findings

The relationship between artists, audiences, and arts and cultural institutions is often portrayed as a triangular model that is successful when the sides and angles of the triangle are equal. Currently, a healthy relationship exists in Portland. According to the market study conducted for *A Plan for Portland's Arts District*, 50% of Portland's primary market area attended a live performing arts or entertainment event within the year and 49% had attended a museum or art gallery. The study also found that 70% of the attenders are considered heavy attenders, having participated in seven or more events. Participation levels continue to increase with the Portland Museum of Art logging its largest number of visitors during 1997, and record audiences are attending performances at Merrill Auditorium. Nonetheless, many reported limitations to participation including high ticket prices, time constraints, lack of transportation, and language and cultural barriers. Arts providers seek to improve community awareness about events, organizations and artists through clear advertising of arts offerings. Increased access and outreach will sustain these relationships and broaden Portland's audience base.

Ideas for Action

1. Encourage broad audience participation by leveraging connections within the community.

Include diverse membership in the design and presentation of community programs.

Build upon the creative relationship that existed for generations between the arts and religious communities, and create collaborative efforts for networking and presenting.

Collaborate on joint advertising and marketing, using concepts of market segmentation and person-to-person marketing, and securing free or low-cost advertising.

It is exciting that the Portland arts, political and economic communities are now coming together to focus on the importance of the arts in our collective lives. The social and economic impact of the arts in our daily lives has for too long been underestimated and undervalued.

Peter S. Plumb
Attorney and
Community Leader

2. Increase opportunities for low-income individuals, students, and families to attend museums, concerts, and arts events.

Provide free tickets (expand the neighborhood access program), group discounts to community groups, discounted passes for families, and cheaper same night tickets.

Provide access to child care during performances.

3. Assess the need for a 150 to 400 seat performance facility designed for traditional and contemporary performances.

4. Cultivate media connections to accurately inform and support positive coverage of the arts.

Develop a close relationship between the arts community and the local media, including the Public Access Station, to increase exposure of local arts.

Community arts reporting could include a calendar of events, storytelling, art criticism, poetry, writers, record reviews, local arts news, school events, close-ups of artists and art businesses, and other programs highlighting local art and cultural activities.

Goal Encourage and safeguard artists' continuing presence in the community.

Art is a celebration of life. It gets people through the hard times and makes them strong. It cures sadness. Music is medicine sometimes. It would be good to find a way to make our artists known. This would be a way to draw people to Maine, a way to build the economy. Artists are very international people. Now they are too localized in their audience.

Bernard Tshimangoley
Singer, Drummer, Painter, Performer

Findings

A Plan for Portland's Art District documented the presence of many individual artists, representing many arts disciplines, who expressed great interest in the City's cultural planning process. The primary interest of artists is to perform or show their work, particularly for emerging and ethnic artists. Artists interviewed or surveyed for *Celebrating Community* and the second edition of *Cultural Horizons* also seek affordable spaces to produce their work, practice, perform and live. Networking, feeling connected within the arts community, and learning from other artists are objectives of many artists.

Ideas for Action

1. **Encourage and develop live/work and work spaces for artists, controlled by artists.**

2. **Support more activity on the street and in the public realm, such as street musicians, public art, community murals, and festivals.**

3. **Provide technical assistance to artists and organizations.**

Help develop promotional and marketing materials, business planning, copyright law, and networking.

Develop a training program for the business activities of artists.

Support more opportunities for employment and training.

Detail:
Ship Builder
David McLain

Goal Improve the vitality and civic support of arts and culture throughout the city.

Portland's lively art scene and cultural richness contributes to the vibrancy of our city, making this a great place to live, work, and play. We all benefit from a healthy arts and cultural environment, and we all have a responsibility to do what we can to support it.

Joe Malone
Businessman
Member of the Portland Public Arts Committee

Findings

Portland is rich with diverse and outstanding arts and cultural organizations. The arts' industry is a major economic force as documented in *A Plan for Portland's Arts District*. Total direct impact of cultural spending in Portland is over $33 million annually. Arts and cultural organizations alone spend $21 million, including $9.8 million in payroll each year. There are over 2,000 events annually, of which more than half are free, and the total audience exceeds 900,000 people. The Arts District is the central location for the City's cultural life; over 96% of the free events and 76% of paid admissions occur within the District. Portland's arts industry needs and deserves financial support and up-to-date information.

Ideas for Action

1. **Establish a PACA funding program to secure or to commission arts and cultural programs, created by local artists and organizations, which address identified public objectives.**

2. **Create an information clearinghouse in PACA. The clearinghouse would be a centralized and coordinated source of information for artists, cultural community representatives, teachers, citizens, neighborhoods, social service agencies, and arts and cultural organizations. The potential information to be maintained includes:**

Unified way of listing and accessing resources;

Grants information;

Develop an on-going referral network of arts, heritage, and cultural programs available for community groups, businesses, and schools;

Census of local artists, performers, musicians, and heritage artists: names, description of work, and how to contact;

Master calendar of upcoming events;

Calendar of religious and other holidays;

Opportunities for potential collaborations among community organizations, schools, artists, and cultural institutions;

Models of creative and successful projects for promoting arts and culture in communities.

Develop a web site/cultural map as a virtual marketplace/arts exchange tied to PACA's central clearinghouse of data, the cultural census, and *Cultural Horizons*.

3. **Advocate for State financial involvement in supporting arts and culture in Portland.**

4. **Expand support for Portland's Public Art Program. Educate citizens to the value of public art, and offer a venue for artists and students to make and exhibit public art.**

Designate site(s) for continuous installations of temporary and experimental sculpture.

Create a master plan for public art, identifying and prioritizing key locations for potential public art projects.

Goal Apply arts and cultural solutions to the community's social issues

Portland does pretty well for a city its size; it has the arts district; however it is very difficult for low income families to attend. There are free days but what if work schedules don't permit attendance? Business sponsorships could sponsor/pay for membership passes or tickets to allow families to attend. Art is everyday life - as a function of life - art is for everybody, not just the rich and well-educated; art is inclusive. We need to diffuse the myths about art that it is an "extra"- art is integral to life.

Linda Hogan
East End Children's Workshop

Findings

Many of Portland's community service agencies offer arts and cultural programs for their clients. There are unmet needs and opportunities for enrichment of these programs. Sometimes agencies have program ideas to carry out, resources and space to be used, and client issues to be addressed through arts and cultural programming. A teen center and programs/activities for youth were recommended by neighborhood leaders and social service organizations. These findings correspond with the recommendations of City's Task Force on Youth Activities, which has resulted in Portland's Park and Recreation Department securing City funding for a teen center and a skateboard park. Creative expression can provide an appropriate outlet for youth to process the stress and tensions of urban life, and can help them develop self confidence and respect for others.

Ideas for Action

1. **Develop more opportunities outside school for youth, particularly low-income students and children with special needs, to see, experience, and participate in visual, performance, and heritage arts.**

Create programs to actively engage youth in the arts through opportunities to sing in a chorus, to take music lessons, to learn a craft, to write a play, or to participate in other arts and cultural endeavors.

Provide programmatic support for a teen center.

Establish a community arts center in the St. Lawrence Church to reach out to youth at risk, and engage them in arts and cultural programs and skill building.

Detail:
Untitled
Jocelyn Lee

2. Work with human services/social service agencies to expand arts programs for all, and to address community issues and special needs of citizens.

Expand volunteer opportunities for art students to work with various groups in the community using the arts as a learning tool.

Use community service newsletters to distribute information regarding arts and cultural events, potential collaborations, and programs/services.

Book a monthly art activity or program that travels to local social service agencies.

Use the arts as a bridge to connect new and established racial and ethnic groups, and as a safe expressive outlet for the stresses and tensions inherent in a changing social fabric.

Detail:
Harvest Dance
Woodfords Club
Portland
Paul D'Amato

Goal Strengthen neighborhood identity through cultural programming, and create connections between neighborhoods and the Arts District.

Bringing people and art together enriches the entire community because art is an expression of life, a reflection of life. Celebrating Community is about putting a local thumbprint on how we express and reflect our lives.

Solange Kellerman
Portland Adult Education
Community Life Coordinator

Findings

A survey distributed at the City's neighborhood meetings revealed that the sense of community and level of neighborhood activities are well defined in particular neighborhoods and islands, but lacking in other neighborhoods. Community leaders seek arts and cultural programming to address cultural needs and to build a sense of community in neighborhoods. Transportation is a limiting factor for many neighborhoods, community groups, and public school classes. Full participation in the City's arts and cultural life also requires overcoming the obstacles of cost, availability, scheduling and fear of the unfamiliar.

Ideas for Action

1. Create a City-wide approach where both neighborhoods and the Arts District are venues for heritage, performing, visual, and public art projects.

Develop arts and cultural centers in every neighborhood by creating partnerships with existing facilities (schools, public buildings, churches, parks, storefronts, etc.).

Expand the hours of the public libraries, and increase the use the schools and parks for community events and art programs.

Identify opportunities to merge neighborhood activities with arts and cultural events in the Arts District.

Organize an Artmobile (like a bookmobile) to take art programs into new locations.

Sponsor arts and cultural activities, performances, concerts and exhibits in the neighborhoods.

Encourage arts and cultural organizations in the Arts District to develop activities in the neighborhoods.

2. Improve transportation access to arts and cultural venues throughout the City.

Coordinate METRO's schedules with events to meet the particular needs of youth, families, and elderly citizens.

Collaborate between cultural institutions and METRO to create a fare and ticket program targeted to students and their families (e.g., Saturday matinee package deal for family of three or more).

Improve transportation access from the ferry to the Arts District.

Provide an art bus or trolley to take people to the locations where arts and cultural events take place.

Implementing Celebrating Community: Portland's Community Cultural Plan

Celebrating Community is filled with exciting and imaginative ideas for action; it is an ambitious blueprint for dramatically increasing the variety and number of arts and cultural activities and projects in Portland. The question, of course, is WHO will do this?

Portland Arts and Cultural Alliance

The Portland Arts and Cultural Alliance (PACA) will take the lead in implementing this plan. Its members include arts and cultural organizations, educational groups, businesses, and individuals. Established as Portland's local arts agency in 1997, PACA has focused on promoting, strengthening, and enhancing arts and cultural organizations and activities in the city. Now, with this plan, PACA can move forward in developing community arts programs.

Contact:
Deborah Krichels, Executive Director
Portland Arts & Cultural Alliance
PO Box 4532
Portland, ME 04112
207.772.0150

Detail:
Untitled
Jocelyn Lee

The City of Portland

The City of Portland has shown true leadership in the conception and development of the Arts District Plan and this Community Cultural Plan, and has supported these efforts generously. The City of Portland will continue to play an important role in implementing this plan. Particular areas of city government which can play a significant role in this plan include Planning Department; Parks and Recreation; Community Policing; Housing and Community Development; Portland Housing Authority.

Contact:
Alan Holt, AIA
Urban Designer & Cultural Liaison
Planning Department
City Hall - 389 Congress Street
Portland, ME 04101
207.874.8723

The Portland Partnership and the Portland School Department

The Portland Partnership and its Arts in Education Committee has the important role of linking the arts community to the schools. It sponsors an annual arts minigrant program to support innovative arts projects in the classrooms and works with PACA on several joint projects. The Portland School Department will continue to be involved in community arts through the Portland Partnership as well as through PTO groups, school administrators and, of course, the teachers themselves.

Contact:
Glenn Cummings, Executive Director
Portland Partnership
331 Veranda Street
Portland, ME 04103
207.874.8100

The Public Arts Committee

The Public Arts Committee, a volunteer citizen committee appointed by the City Council, has the charge of overseeing Portland's Percent for Art program in the city and developing a public art plan. The Committee will take an active role in implementing aspects of the cultural plan.

Contact:
Alice Spencer, Chair, Public Arts Committee
c/o Alan Holt, AIA, Urban Designer & Cultural Liaison
City Hall – 389 Congress Street
Portland, ME 04101
207.874.8723

The Community

PACA and its partners cannot implement *Celebrating Community* alone, however. While taking the lead in some areas, PACA will work to foster collaborations and partnerships with other interested groups so that shared resources can create projects responsive to the needs and desires of communities. PACA will also provide technical assistance and advice, and develop an arts information clearinghouse that will serve all constituencies. Just as the planning process went out into the grass roots to gather ideas, so too will the implementation depend heavily on the participation of the many formal and informal community groups in the city.

Everyone is invited to get involved and get things going: neighborhood, community, cultural and heritage groups; religious organizations of all kinds; social service providers; youth organizations; informal groups of neighbors! We ask you to read this plan – see what excites you, talk with other interested people, come up with new ideas! Community arts spring out of the communities themselves. Come to PACA for information, advice, and assistance. Together we can make Portland one of the liveliest arts and cultural cities in the nation!

Design: Woodworth Associates