

City of Santa Clarita  
Arts Commission

# Arts Blueprint

## Phase I



February 28, 2012

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Section I



## 1.1 Introduction

Shortly after the City of Santa Clarita Arts Commission was formed in December 2009, the Commission began work to develop the first phase of an Arts Blueprint, which is intended to serve as a guiding document for the next three years for five subject areas. As part of the Arts Blueprint process, each Commissioner was responsible for an area of focus (Initiative) and developed a plan for that area for the next three years.

The five sections of the Blueprint are as follows:

- Art in Public Places
- Arts Education
- Arts Venues
- Leadership and Development
- Marketing and Communications

## 1.2 Methodology

The development of each section involved conversations with various stakeholders, such as the leaders of the local arts community, professional artists and musicians, the business community, educators, developers, economic development experts, and local media representatives. Additionally many of the sections researched best practices from others communities, and a survey of local residents was completed to assess the current levels of arts activities and the needs for the future.

The resulting first phase of the Arts Blueprint includes 31 recommendations with several in each section. The Arts Blueprint will serve as a guiding document for the Arts Commission and staff to implement the recommendations over the coming years. The Commission will begin work on the second phase of the Arts Blueprint in early 2012, which will address additional arts and culture areas in a similar process to this first phase. It is anticipated that the second phase of the Arts Blueprint will be completed by the end of 2013.

## 1.3 Art in Public Places

Public art is a valuable tool in bringing art to a community. The nature of art works being placed in public spaces raises awareness of the power of art, particularly visual art, in a way that engages the viewer on a different level than in museums or gallery spaces. As the City of Santa Clarita continues to add art pieces to its collection, it is vital that the processes and approaches balance many factors, how these projects are identified and funded, who is responsible to select the artists to create these works, how does the process encourage all artists, local, regional, and national, to participate in the projects, how are the works maintained, and how does the City deal with potential donations of art works. The Art in Public Places Blueprint section addresses all of these issues, and creates the short and long-term planning processes to ensure that future public art projects are successful and contribute to the artistic life of Santa Clarita.

The Art in Public Places Initiative was led by former Arts Commissioner Sandy Fisher, and was developed utilizing input from community members, including artists, educators, and others who

met on a monthly basis over the last year and a half. This Art in Public Places Initiative Committee identified several key areas to be addressed in the Blueprint, including the benefits of public art, funding sources, an Arts in Public Places Advisory Committee who would develop an annual Public Art Projects Plan, Project Ad Hoc Committees, a balanced support of local and regional artists, maintenance and conservation, and an art donation policy. The goal of this section of the Arts Blueprint is to encourage the continued expansion of the City of Santa Clarita's public art collection, and to develop procedures and processes to further improve the planning and implementation of the program.

#### 1.4 Arts Education

Arts education for the students of the Santa Clarita Valley is a crucial component to their future success, as the arts serve as a wonderful tool to increase creativity and to encourage students to stay in school. Ideally, this opportunity to experience and participate in the arts should be available for an entire lifetime, enriching the lives of the City's residents from childhood to their senior years. While it is not the role of the City of Santa Clarita to get involved in the day-to-day operations of the local schools, there are many opportunities to support and complement the work efforts of the schools, as well as work with the arts community to build bridges between artists and educators. The City has a significant role in several education programs and offers a wide variety of classes in the arts, but there is always room to grow these programs, and to look for new partnerships to ensure the arts are a vital part of the Santa Clarita community.

The Arts Education Initiative was led by Arts Commission Chair Paul Strickland, and was drafted utilizing input from community members, including artists, educators, and others who met on a monthly basis over the last year and a half. The biggest challenge with this area was identifying the role of the City of Santa Clarita and the Arts Commission, as much of the discussions at the monthly meetings focused on what schools and school districts can do to advance the opportunities for their students. As such, the Arts Education Blueprint focuses on creating partnerships and expanding City programs and classes to offer more opportunities for children, youth, adults, and seniors to be exposed to and participate in the arts.

#### 1.5 Arts Venues

Arts facilities and venues are essential in supporting a creative community, as almost all arts related activities require a site for performances or visual art displays to occur. In the development of the Arts Blueprint, almost every initiative area has had discussions about facilities and venues. It is a crucial element to maintaining and developing the arts community in Santa Clarita. With the idea of the Arts Mall, the need for arts facilities is addressed in a creative and innovative way and with a combination of private and public funds being invested in this concept. With economic development being such a vital part of the idea, the potential outcome would not only alter the future of the local arts community, but could also transform Santa Clarita into a major arts and cultural destination.

The Arts Venues Initiative was led by Arts Commission Vice-Chair Eric Schmidt, and was developed through conversations with a variety of stakeholders, including leaders of local arts organizations and associations, professional musicians and visual artists, educators, developers,

economic development experts, and a television studio owner. This section also included an online survey of arts facilities and venues and the completion of a directory of arts facilities in Santa Clarita. The Arts Venues section of the Arts Blueprint addresses three areas, with the primary focus on the Arts Mall Conceptual Plan. The Arts Mall concept is the first step to a long-term solution for supporting arts in Santa Clarita, as well as an idea that could make Santa Clarita renown as an arts and cultural center. .

## 1.6 Leadership and Development

The Arts Commission was formed primarily to provide leadership for the arts community. For local arts groups to survive and grow, it is essential that they can build their infrastructure, be it by increasing funding opportunities, creating stronger boards of directors, or by expanding the audience base. The leadership and development of the arts community is one of the most vital elements to the success of each individual artist and organization in Santa Clarita. When looking at the accomplishments of other arts communities across America, the one commonality is a strong sense of support and collaboration to achieve each artist's or group's goals. This support is not simply financial, but also includes having the opportunities to increase knowledge and expertise and to have the best board leadership each community has to offer. The Santa Clarita Arts Foundation, in conjunction with the City leadership, can build the level of support necessary for Santa Clarita to become a community that has a prosperous arts and cultural life.

The Leadership and Development Initiative was led by Arts Commissioner Dr. Michael Millar. The development of this section involved conversations with a variety of stakeholders, including leaders, staff, and boards of directors of local arts organizations and associations. A survey of 25 cities across the United States of similar size to Santa Clarita was developed to assess what other communities are offering in the leadership and development field. The Leadership and Development section of the Arts Blueprint addresses four areas, with the primary focus on the development of an Arts Foundation. The goal of this section of the Arts Blueprint is to support the arts community in building their professional capacity to ensure that the local arts organizations and individual artists are able to achieve their full potential.

## 1.7 Marketing and Communications

Santa Clarita has a vibrant arts community, composed of talented individuals and successful arts organizations, from elementary school students to professional artists of all types. Tens of thousands of friends, families, teachers, administrators, and funding partners support these artists. This talent must have the opportunity to showcase itself to the entire community. If the community is not aware of local talent, it cannot grow and evolve. Marketing and communications are the tools to inform, engage, and involve the entire community in the arts. Currently there are limited opportunities to share what the arts community contributes to Santa Clarita, but with some strategic and creative approaches, the arts can become more of a part of the community identity.

The Marketing and Communications Initiative was led by Arts Commissioner John Dow, and was developed based on a thorough assessment of existing marketing and communication efforts, including on-line, print, and media and with input from leaders in the arts community,

experts in the communications and marketing field, business leaders, and local media contacts. The result of these conversations and assessments is that the implementation of this Blueprint section will focus on the continued development of the 661Arts.com website, increasing the identity of the arts as a valuable part of the Santa Clarita community, and the creation of a comprehensive community engagement plan that addresses how the Arts Commission communicates and works with other entities, such as City leadership, the business community, the school community, and others. The goal of this section of the Arts Blueprint is to inform, engage, and involve the entire community in the arts

## 1.8 Conclusion

The Arts Blueprint concept was formulated by the Arts Commission to be a tool to tackle numerous arts and culture areas simultaneously. With each Commissioner choosing an area and focusing their efforts on that topic, the result has been to create the first phase of a plan that will guide the Commission and the community into the future. The contributions of the various participants on the five Initiative areas contained in this document are greatly appreciated, and without the time and expertise of everyone who took part in the discussions that led to the creation of the Arts Blueprint the results would not have been nearly as successful.

## 1.9 Attachment

1A – Table of Recommendations



## ARTS BLUEPRINT – PHASE I

### Table of Recommendations

<b>ART IN PUBLIC PLACES</b>
RECOMMENDATION 1 – Clearly communicate the benefits of public art to City leaders, departments, and the community through a strategic outreach campaign.
RECOMMENDATION 2 – Identify and develop consistent funding sources for the Art in Public Places Program.
RECOMMENDATION 3 – Form an Art in Public Places Advisory Committee to develop an Annual Public Art Projects Plan.
RECOMMENDATION 4 – Form Project Ad Hoc Committees for each Public Art Project.
RECOMMENDATION 5 – Develop a balanced approach in supporting local and regional artists.
RECOMMENDATION 6– Develop Public Art Maintenance and Conservation Plan.
RECOMMENDATION 7 – Develop a public art donation policy for City Council adoption.
<b>ARTS EDUCATION</b>
RECOMMENDATION 8– Complete thorough assessment of existing City arts education programs and explore new opportunities for programs and partnerships.
RECOMMENDATION 9 – Partner with the Los Angeles County Arts Commission to help achieve Goal 2 of the Arts for All plan in the Santa Clarita Valley. Goal 2 states, implementers and policy makers have sufficient tools, information, and professional development to achieve sequential K-12 arts education.
RECOMMENDATION 10 – The City of Santa Clarita should become a member of the Santa Clarita Valley K-12 Arts Education Consortium, and the Chair of the Arts Commission should serve, or appoint a member of the Commission to serve, as a representative to the Consortium.
RECOMMENDATION 11 – Include the needs of the arts education community in the implementation of Arts Venues section of the Arts Blueprint.
RECOMMENDATION 12 – Explore and implement opportunities for students to perform or exhibit their artistic works to the entire community.
RECOMMENDATION 13 – Utilize the <a href="http://www.661Arts.com">www.661Arts.com</a> website as a hub for both improving communications between the arts education community and as a tool to share the successes of students and teachers with the entire community.
RECOMMENDATION 14 – Utilize Arts Commission meeting recognitions to focus on student and teacher accomplishments in the arts.
RECOMMENDATION 15 – Explore opportunities to expand the arts courses offered through the City’s Contract Classes program.
RECOMMENDATION 16 – Explore the expansion of the City’s Arts Grants program to include a category for innovative arts education programs.

<b>ARTS VENUES</b>
RECOMMENDATION 17 – Continue to develop the arts facilities directory and make it available to the community through the City of Santa Clarita and 661Arts.com websites.
RECOMMENDATION 18 – Fund the development a feasibility study for the Arts Mall concept including identification of a site and funding options.
<b>LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT</b>
RECOMMENDATION 19 – Create a scholarship program for technical assistance workshops and conferences, and bring broad-based workshops and conferences to Santa Clarita for the benefit of the entire arts community.
RECOMMENDATION 20 – Develop a program to reach out to local businesses and individuals to encourage participation on the boards of directors of local arts organizations.
RECOMMENDATION 21 – Assist the arts community in producing an annual event that brings together both performing and visual arts groups to allow audiences to experience diverse arts offerings.
RECOMMENDATION 22 – Develop a discount ticket package for local art offerings to expose patrons to a greater variety of arts.
RECOMMENDATION 23 – Finalize the formation of the Santa Clarita Arts Foundation which will offer robust programs and fundraise for the entire Santa Clarita arts community.
<b>MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS</b>
RECOMMENDATION 24 – Continue to develop and evolve the 661Arts.com website to improve communications between the arts community and to better inform the broader community about the arts.
RECOMMENDATION 25 – Finalize the team members of the 661Arts.com contributors group and have them begin writing postings for the website.
RECOMMENDATION 26 – Develop a marketing campaign for the 661Arts.com website and implement the campaign at the conclusion of the design phase.
RECOMMENDATION 27 – Work with the 661Arts members to create a unified marketing campaign for the Santa Clarita arts community.
RECOMMENDATION 28 – Develop an outreach program for marketing leaders to demonstrate the value of the arts to the community.
RECOMMENDATION 29 – Schedule individual meetings with agencies that produce regional and national marketing materials and encourage them to include the arts as part of Santa Clarita’s identity.
RECOMMENDATION 30 – Develop and launch a creative and engaging arts marketing campaign with the goal to increase awareness and discussion about the arts.
RECOMMENDATION 31 – Develop a Community Engagement Plan to detail how the Commission partners and shares information with the City and the community.