

Comprehensive Arts Strategy



St. Petersburg, FL
2021



THIS IS AN INFLECTION POINT IN ST. PETERSBURG'S HISTORY.

Over the past two decades, our city has evolved to become one of the most vibrant and livable places in Florida. An authentic, eclectic arts ecosystem has fueled much of this growth. Entrepreneurs and innovative business leaders are attracted to our art-driven creativity and connectivity. New residents who care about community and authenticity have selected our city from all the other places in the Southeastern U.S. as the place to build their lives. A stable and sustainable arts sector provided a foundation for these benefits to residents and visitors and the resulting economic development over the past 20 years.

This Comprehensive Arts Strategy is designed to leverage our cultural capital and further our artistic development as a city. It identifies new marketing opportunities, highlights existing resources, and identifies immediate and long-term needs. It helps prioritize existing and new audiences and recommends a long-term consistent funding source with advocacy and leadership strategies to build capacity. It lends local sensibilities to our artistic development, while harnessing national cutting-edge thinking. It also includes recommendations for how public and private sector leaders can champion art in our community.

This Strategy relies heavily on public input, including six months of planning, surveys, conversations, workshops, and interviews with arts leaders from other cities. More than 16,000 residents participated, and almost 400 community members were part of focus groups and individual interviews. We also surveyed best practices from other cities. The strategy is thoughtful, integrated, and achievable, though it will take continued effort for many years.

It is tempting to think of this Arts Strategy as having all the answers for our future growth. That is a mistake. This plan encapsulates the best thinking of bright people who are committed to St. Petersburg and to art at this moment in time. This plan allows for the flexibility that is required by changing times, resources, talent, and community evolution. It will continue to be a work in progress with additional input from key stakeholders.

We are grateful for the efforts of so many people who contributed to this Comprehensive Arts Strategy, and we are excited about taking the next steps in our journey to enhance and expand as a City of the Arts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We thank the many people who have invested their energies and resources in the development of this Comprehensive Arts Strategy (CAS). We especially want to thank the Comprehensive Arts Strategy Steering Committee. Their willingness to meet and offer advice was a priceless investment. We appreciate everyone volunteering and look forward to working with all to become the preeminent city of the arts in the Southeastern United States.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Our city benefits from a strong foundation of performing and visual arts organizations, cultural institutions, and a community of artists who contribute to our sense of place and economic vitality. Much of our current success can be attributed to the philanthropic community, individual artists of all disciplines, and a community spirit that emphasizes authenticity, organic growth, diversity, equity, inclusion, and a grassroots spirit.

This strategy builds on our existing strengths and lays out concrete actions to fund and promote the arts, provide dedicated advocacy and leadership for the arts community, and evaluate progress with consensus-driven metrics. It was developed in consultation with artists; political, business, and community leaders; and the general public.

Vision

Our vision is for St. Petersburg to be the preeminent city of the arts in the Southeastern United States. The Comprehensive Arts Strategy (CAS) presents four key strategies to achieve this vision:

1. Enhanced Collaboration
2. Purposeful Communication
3. Dedicated Leadership and Funding
4. Benchmarked Progress

Enhanced Collaboration

Enhanced collaborative efforts to support the arts as a tool for social and economic growth

During the public listening phase, citizens, artists, arts organizations, and creative businesses praised the arts economy's collaborative nature.

This create-things-together approach manifests itself throughout the arts community. In some 300 hours of conversations, we repeatedly heard that the arts community has honed arts and culture collaborative skills. Investing resources to convene stakeholders and establish new programs will grow and maintain this unique arts economy and, in turn, the community.

All communities, especially creative ones, generate exciting ideas. St. Petersburg is no exception. Participants dream about adding higher education arts programs, a design school, one or more festivals, a cultural center, and more. Big ideas demand significant investments. Smart, creative cities conduct upfront analyses to determine the returns and risks of big ideas before they begin. This strategy highlights some big ideas along with the potential costs and benefits.

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Purposeful Communication

Communicate the arts' economic, health, and social values

Successful artists, arts organizations, and creative businesses communicate with target audiences and gain community support. We need advocacy to increase public support for investing in the revenue and quality of life that the arts economy provides. One outcome of our vision to be the most prominent city of the arts in the Southeastern United States is that the city will also become more recognized as a regional and international arts destination. One brand that ties the arts to economic growth will reinforce support for the arts and improve our economy and quality of life.

Dedicated Leadership and Funding

Provide consistent funding and enhanced leadership to build capacity for artists and creative organizations

To ensure the arts economy's continued vitality and nurture its growth as inclusive, diverse, and equitable, we must invest in consistent funding and leadership. This strategy recommends that the St. Petersburg Arts Alliance expands its role as the catalyst for change and growth. To do this, it needs consistent and adequate funding to build the organization's capacity so it, in turn, becomes the go-to leader for the arts community. This expanded role builds upon the Alliance's mission to raise money and advocate for the creative community. Consistent and adequate funding is the investment that will lift the city's creative economy.

We recommend that leaders work together to deliver consistent, ongoing arts funding to support the Arts Alliance's citywide network and collaborative activities. The city only maximizes its value when every resident can access and participate. The community can lead here even though this country's diversity, equity, and inclusion challenges reach beyond the city and this creative economy.

Benchmarked Progress

Evaluate progress and refine strategies and objectives on an annual basis

Is it working? Are we making progress? Where should we invest resources to grow the creative economy? Answers to these questions and others like them are central to this evaluation strategy.

The strategy seeks to change community thinking. We want people to know that the arts are valuable because people love them and because they contribute to a healthy and desirable community with a dynamic economy. By evaluating our work, we will identify what provides the greatest return on investment, leverage it, and build community support for continued arts economic investments.

The public-private planning process is led by the St. Petersburg Arts Alliance with support from the St. Petersburg Downtown Partnership and the City of St. Petersburg. Karen Eber Davis Consulting guided the process.

Overview

Whether people live in or visit St. Petersburg, they discover a thriving community with an array of arts to see and experience. Choices include museums, galleries, studios, performing arts centers, murals, and more.

The city's identity as an arts destination has been molded by the presence of a strong performing arts community, award-winning professional theaters, ten museums, more than 500 murals, a thriving indie music scene, and some 50 public art studios and galleries. Interwoven in and around these places are dozens of creative businesses, seven arts districts, two neighborhood arts enclaves, and home to an international mural festival, SHINE®. Moreover, throughout the year, millions of people attend programs and events.

Naturally, with all this to offer, St. Petersburg garners national attention as a community that takes the arts seriously. In 2020, for example, the world-class artwork located and unveiled at St. Pete Pier was highlighted and acclaimed.

In winter 2021, the Boston Globe published: "Before the pandemic, St. Petersburg, Fla., was on a roll. The city boasted one of the largest outdoor mural exhibitions in the country, three world-class art museums had recently opened, the 26-acre, \$92 million St. Pete Pier District was nearing completion, and almost 1,000 new hotel rooms were in the planning."¹



L: SHINE® Mural Festival, artwork by Michael Reeder. (c) 2017 City of St. Petersburg.
C: Image courtesy of St. Petersburg Opera Company. Photographer Jim Swallow.
R: Museum of Fine Arts. (c) 2016 City of St. Petersburg.

¹ Despite hardship, St. Pete's arts scene continues to flourish.

https://edition.pagesuite.com/popovers/dynamic_article_popover.aspx?artguid=4f6085ab-7071-474c-a12d-0d76fb0cabd0&appid=1165

COMPREHENSIVE ARTS STRATEGIES AND OBJECTIVES TO GENERATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC VALUE AND GROW THE CITY'S ARTS VIBRANCY

The Setting

COVID-19

The listening phase of the Comprehensive Arts Strategy took place during turbulent times. In October 2020, when the effort began, the country was experiencing new awareness of racial inequity, a presidential election, and the COVID-19 pandemic. While we initially planned to hold public information-gatherings in person, because of COVID-19 all but two of the sessions were virtual.

StPete2050

When the CAS listening process got underway, the City of St. Petersburg was also conducting StPete2050, a citywide conversation about the future. This Comprehensive Arts Strategy includes their arts and cultural strategies.

The Research

As part of the comprehensive arts planning process, the community was eager to explore and build upon other arts cities' knowledge and experiences. We studied print materials and, when possible, interviewed staff from:

- Asheville, North Carolina
- Charlottesville, Virginia
- Grand Rapids, Michigan
- Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- Raleigh, North Carolina
- San Diego, California
- Seattle, Washington

We also took a quick look at Durham, North Carolina; Shreveport, Louisiana; and Sydney, Australia. Field notes from these cities are available upon request from the Arts Alliance.

The Questions

To offer participants a similar opportunity and build upon the city's strengths, we structured our listening around three questions:

1. What is one thing you like best about how St. Petersburg and the arts interact, especially in terms of economic impact? (What are we getting right?)
2. What would make the arts economy even more dynamic, St. Petersburg? (What do we need?)
3. How do we get there?



St. Petersburg Hot Glass Studio at Duncan McClellan Studios.
(c) 2017, City of St. Petersburg.

Strategy 1: Enhanced Collaboration Objectives

- 1.1 Convene artists, arts institutions, creative businesses, and others to initiate collaborations to increase economic and social value.
- 1.2 Define, elevate, and preserve our arts districts and their cultural spaces.
- 1.3 Protect the ability of artists, including musicians, actors, dancers, writers, and filmmakers, to live and work here.
- 1.4 Explore and pilot big "ideas."

Strategy 2: Purposeful Communication Objectives

- 2.1 Launch coordinated advocacy efforts for economic, educational, and city leadership.
- 2.2 Create one comprehensive brand for our city that emphasizes art and creativity. Prioritize audiences, including residents, visitors, arts organizations, artists, and businesses exploring relocation.

Strategy 3: Dedicated Leadership and Funding Objectives

- 3.1 Strengthen the St. Petersburg Arts Alliance to enhance and expand the leadership of the arts economy.
- 3.2 Foster diversity, equity, and inclusion in the arts economy.
- 3.3 Fund the arts economy; provide consistent and adequate funding for collaborations, marketing, and operations.

Strategy 4: Benchmarked Progress Objectives

- 4.1 Develop an arts economic vitality index to evaluate annual progress.
- 4.2 Measure returns on investment yearly and distribute future investments based on a three-year growth cycle.

More information about each of these strategies, objectives, and actions follows in this ambitious five-year plan. Implementing the CAS will depend upon ongoing adequate and dedicated funding and a robust recovery from COVID-19.

STRATEGY 1: ENHANCED COLLABORATION

During the public listening phase, citizens, artists, arts organizations, and creative businesses praised the arts economy's collaborative nature. This create-things-together approach manifests itself throughout the community. ArtWalk and the city's collection of 500 murals are examples of collective activities that make the city vibrant. St. Petersburg's numerous museums demonstrate more synergy, including a recent Florida Orchestra and Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg collaboration featuring performances. An additional example of such collaboration is this strategy, which was developed among a city government, a business partnership, and an arts alliance.

Collective efforts like these generate the community's vibrancy. The way participants talked about the arts economy reveals something they might not know. In some 300 hours of conversations, we repeatedly heard that the city has honed skills presenting arts and culture collaboratively. Presenting arts together is the community arts economy's potential "secret sauce" and a tool to set St. Petersburg apart from other southeastern arts municipalities. By continuing to collaborate, the city will find ways to build more success and to journey together to the next level of artistic excellence.

When we asked participants what they liked about St. Petersburg, they said:

- "Partnerships result in fantastic outcomes."
- "Artists and arts organizations drive what's here. They know how to bring us together."
- "I picked St. Petersburg. I like its collaborative feeling."

Up until now, these collaborations materialized "organically." However, creativity needs organization to fully succeed and dedicated leadership to champion efforts. The strategy builds on the city's collaborative skills, its coastal location, and its make-art-here scene. The following section describes the Enhance Collaboration strategy's objectives and actions.



New and Existing Collaborations

This objective offers a list of collaborative activities that invite various parts of the arts economy to embark on joint activities with the potential to create more than the "sum of the parts" results. Investing resources to enhance collaboration will grow and maintain this unique arts economy and, in turn, the community, and it rewards "playing well together"—the cement that makes cities succeed.

Arts Districts and Enclaves

Arts districts are geography-based collaborations. Currently, the city has five established and two emerging arts districts. The named arts districts provide a sense of neighborhood identity. Together, as a whole, they create an arts destination.

By leading the districts as a whole, this objective will provide answers to questions such as: What's the best way for the arts districts to interact? What are the opportunities around district boundaries? How can we help the districts and enclaves create distinct identities that fit with and reflect the city's brand?

Protect Creatives' Ability to Create

Based on other cities' experiences, St. Petersburg needs to protect artists in all disciplines by protecting cultural spaces. Why is this necessary? Across the country, artists move into low-income areas and add value. As the neighborhood improves, rents increase and property values rise. Over time, artists are priced out of the places they helped revitalize.

Actions in this section preserve cultural spaces and use tools such as zoning changes to balance rising property values. The City of Seattle created a valuable resource, the CAP Report. It lists 30 cultural space preservation options. Using this paper, other resources, and local knowledge, the St. Petersburg Arts Alliance (SPAA) developed a research paper to inform the protection of cultural spaces discussion, "Preserving Our Cultural Spaces." This document can be used as a blueprint moving forward and is available upon request from the Alliance.

Invest Wisely in "Big" Possibilities

All communities, especially creative ones, generate exciting ideas. St. Petersburg is no exception. Participants dream about adding higher education arts programs, a design school, one or more festivals, a cultural center, and more.

Leaders value big ideas for their economic impact, branding potential, and the passion they generate. Yet, big ideas demand significant upfront and often ongoing investments. Smart, creative cities conduct upfront analyses to determine the returns and risks of big ideas before they begin.



Above - Boxcar #113 069-5, Permanent Collection of The Florida Holocaust Museum. (c) The Florida Holocaust Museum.
Below - Morean Arts Center For Clay (c) 2016, City of St. Petersburg.

(c) The Florida Orchestra.

Objective 1.1: Convene artists, arts institutions, creative businesses, and others to initiate collaborations to increase economic and social value.

ACTION ITEMS

1.1.1 Convene performing arts leaders and develop one group objective to enhance attendance and the arts experience, such as shared marketing opportunities, thematic branding, and reigniting St. Pete Performs.²

1.1.2 Partner with museum leaders to increase attendance and enhance museum experiences. Develop shared resources for maps, ticketing, brochures, and a citywide theme and to help resident families access museums during attendance lulls. This objective also supports StPete2050's plan to "Support museums, galleries, events, and performance venues focusing on local artists."

1.1.3 Explore and enhance existing St. Petersburg Arts Alliance initiatives, including ArtWalk, Glass Coast Experience, and St. Pete Performs.

1.1.4 Convene art gallery and studio owners, creative businesses, and tech businesses and invite them to identify collaborative opportunities to involve employees based on the vision to engage in activities to increase their reach.

1.1.5 Incorporate local artists in the design of public places.

1.1.6 Interconnect the community's arts resources physically. Start by adding more trolleys and expand their routes with additional stops at museums, galleries, and studios. Expand bus routes. Add wayfinding sidewalk designs and symbols for walkers and bicyclists.



SPPD Headquarters Ribbon Cutting. Sculpture by Mark Aeling, MGA Sculpture Studio, LLC. (c) 2019, City of St. Petersburg.

1.1.7 Support creative businesses by identifying and growing capacity for workforce development needs. Develop artist exchanges, residencies, educational partnerships, and other opportunities to build arts workforce development. Build upon the City's strategy of including a diverse group of local artists in public arts projects.

Objective 1.2: Coordinate, elevate, and preserve our arts districts and their cultural spaces.

ACTION ITEM

1.2.1 Work with district leadership to support collaborative grant applications for creative placemaking, marketing, and district branding that coordinates with the city's brand, including light pole banners, sidewalk kiosks, custom crosswalk paintings, and similar artful branding.

Objective 1.3: Protect the ability of artists, including musicians, actors, dancers, and filmmakers to live and work here.

ACTION ITEMS

1.3.1 Launch a cultural space advisory group to build on current efforts to preserve and create cultural space. Identify the best return on investment options, including changes to code and permitting processes, considerations for older buildings, offering technical assistance, public policy updates, and financial instruments. The Seattle Cultural Spaces Resources and Reports states, "Finding space, negotiating for space, permitting space, renovating space, and maintaining space can be daunting and confusing even for professional developers. As artists and arts administrators, this new terrain can be nearly impossible to navigate." The advisory group is a stepping stone to a long-term solution, such as hiring a cultural space liaison.

1.3.2 Identify creative options to support performing artists through subsidized space for rehearsals and performances. Develop a rational and economic model for investing public dollars into performance spaces commensurate with the financial and lifestyle benefits accrued from a vibrant performance arts ecosystem.

1.3.3 Build upon the SPAA Arts Resource Center as an arts incubator (now virtual) to provide expertise and technical assistance to emerging artists, arts organizations, and creative businesses. Support emerging creatives and connect them to others in the arts economy by offering courses and workshops at St. Petersburg College Midtown and Downtown campuses as well as The Greenhouse, prioritizing locating arts education opportunities, and piloting district efforts in South St. Petersburg.

Objective 1.4: Explore and pilot big "ideas."

ACTION ITEMS

1.4.1 Develop evaluation criteria for big ideas, such as an arts and music festival or an Art Basel-type festival. Research risks, start-up and operating costs, plus the impact on local artists, arts organizations, and creative businesses.³ Identify a funding stream or streams to provide annual resources and help any idea survive a "bad year." Get expert help.

1.4.2 Pursue one high-return activity, assist with piloting it, and establish the idea's future home.

The following ideas were expressed most frequently.

The SHINE® St. Petersburg Mural Festival: This event is the community's best opportunity to create a brand festival based on a proven concept. Our recommendation is to partner with the SHINE® festival staff, volunteer committee, and SPAA board to explore their vision for the festival and ways to grow it. Funding for this option was included in the one-year plan. This action also supports the StPete2050 plan to "Continue to support the creation of murals through the City."

Other Festivals: A consultant who develops and manages festival budgets of all sizes shared that one festival "funded by a planned gift went through millions with zero to show for it." From local experience and learnings of successful festivals, launching new festivals requires multiyear commitments of one to two million dollars for up to five years.

Cultural Center: Develop a cultural center to house artist studios, galleries, a gift shop, and a site for classes modeled after the McGuffey Art Center run in partnership with the City of Charlottesville, Virginia. The center is housed in a former school building with an operating budget of \$200,000.

Design School: Participants mentioned the need for a local design school or a partnership with an existing design school. Others cited the need for additional learning, including but not limited to certificate and degree programs. The cost of this idea ranges from a conservative \$250,000, to retrofit an existing building and staff it, to \$5 million dollars or more, to induce a design school to open a local campus. Possible partners include the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, St. Petersburg College, Ringling College of Art and Design, and a design school that seeks a Florida footprint, such as the Savannah College of Art and Design.

"THE ARTS ADD CHARM, UNIQUENESS, AND PERSONALITY TO OUR COMMUNITY. THEY EDUCATE US AND MAKE US LAUGH, THINK, AND SING."



(c) 2019, Warehouse Arts District Association.

STRATEGY 2: PURPOSEFUL COMMUNICATION

This objective, while ambitious, is not impossible. Many residents participate in the arts already. In a January 2021 *St. Pete Catalyst* survey, 99 percent of the 73 participants reported they engaged in the local arts economy in a recent year.

Market: Artists, Residents, Tourists

Can the arts be great in St. Petersburg if no one knows about them? The market objective educates current and potential consumers about the community's arts resources and encourages engagement. One outcome of our vision to be the most prominent city of the arts in the Southeastern United States is that St. Petersburg also will become more recognized as a regional and international arts destination.

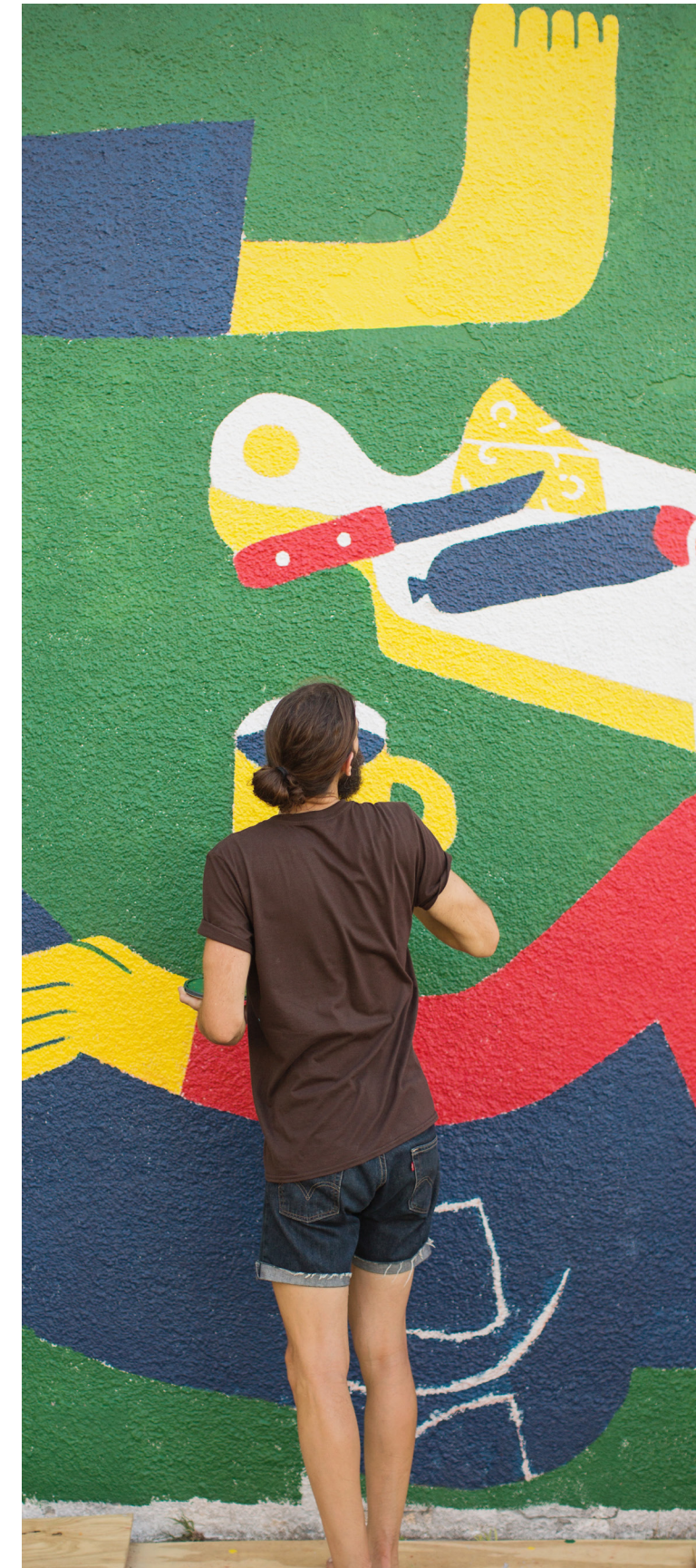
While communicating with everyone would be ideal, limited resources require that we focus our efforts. The top audience priorities include:

- Residents who live in the city or region.
- Artists, arts organizations, and creative businesses.
- Tourists who are visiting or will visit.

When describing the need for marketing, participants said:

- "Many who live in the area are unaware of the opportunities."
- "Artists, arts organizations, and creative businesses are on the frontlines. They make referrals to customers and each other."
- "Tourists, who are here or plan to visit, can be reached to enhance their stay and will be returning to their homes to spread the word."
- "We need national advertising for ArtWalk and everything else."

The Purposeful Communication Strategy's objectives and actions follow.



SHINE® Mural Festival, artwork by Daniel Mrgan. (c) 2016, City of St. Petersburg.

Objective 2.1: Launch coordinated advocacy efforts for economic, educational, and city leadership.

ACTION ITEMS

2.1.1 Design a case for support from elected officials and residents based on the arts being an economic driver. Develop a database to measure the number of citizens and elected officials who support the arts economy.

2.1.2 Advocate for low-cost arts opportunities for individuals and families to experience. Continue to prioritize arts in all levels of education in our community with an emphasis on underserved communities.

2.1.3 Plot the impact of public dollars invested in the arts with a tool like San Diego's Impact Mapping. Arts staff and community planners can organize this tool with elected officials, city staff, and staff from the Economic Development Corporation, the Downtown Partnership, and the Chamber.

Objective 2.2: Create one comprehensive brand for our city that emphasizes art and creativity. Prioritize audiences, including residents, visitors, arts organizations, artists, and businesses exploring relocation.

ACTION ITEMS

2.2.1 Enlist a branding expert to build an authentic brand for St. Petersburg that emphasizes our unique strengths and ties art to our economic vitality. Use the hundreds of comments shared by CAS participants to share the brand. Develop concise, short, and memorable messages about St. Petersburg, and professionally launch the message in a campaign or campaigns to specific markets across the country.

2.2.2 Grow tourism audiences by developing arts experience tourist and visitor packages. Market these experiences through Visit St. Pete/Clearwater and others.

2.2.3 Collaborate with regional event and media planners to create an up-to-date calendar. Creative Pinellas is a few months away from launching such a site.

STRATEGY 3: DEDICATED LEADERSHIP AND FUNDING

For more than 100 years, St. Petersburg's arts economy grew organically. Residents are proud of their arts and cultural grassroots origins. To ensure the continued vitality of the arts economy and nurture its growth as inclusive, diverse, and equitable, we recommend the city invest in dedicated leadership and funding.

Leadership

The community's arts economy needs leadership to organize, advocate, and support artistic efforts. Community members said:

- "We need a master landscaper to organize us together."
- "We need more connections between arts and major community pillars, including entry-level apprenticeships, higher education, and workforce development."

The Steering Committee recommended that the St. Petersburg Arts Alliance continue and expand its role as the arts umbrella organization to:

- Initiate, pilot, and evaluate collaborations.
- Advocate for creative economy education and skill-building.
- Evaluate arts investments, risks, and returns, and advise funders on the costs (in dollars, volunteer labor, and in-kind resources).
- Scan the horizon for best practices, approaches, and opportunities.
- Possibly take on a property ownership role.

This expanded role aligns with and builds upon the Alliance's current mission to raise money and advocate for the creative community.



Imagine Museum in St. Petersburg Florida. (c) 2018, City of St. Petersburg.

Consistent and adequate funding is the fuel that will lift St. Petersburg's creative economy upward. It buys consistent leadership to leverage current and new assets. Without consistent and adequate funding, arts economic growth will likely be limited to the current level. To reach the vision, the arts need funding.

During every Comprehensive Arts Strategy's listening stop, we asked "What would make the arts economy even more dynamic?" Participants shared revenue opportunities, including:

- Bed tax funding from the Tourist Development Council (TDC) to support marketing St. Pete as an arts destination.
- A percentage for the arts from private development for capacity-building.
- Dedicated annual revenue from the County Commission.

- A dedicated revenue stream from the City based upon a percentage of the annual budget for capacity-building.
- A millage assessment for the arts.
- Resources to help arts organizations to reach "solid financial turf."
- Philanthropic support for the St. Petersburg Arts Endowment Fund held at the Community Foundation of Tampa Bay.
- Legislative support for a new local option sales tax to support arts and culture.
- Develop a strategy for securing additional corporate and philanthropic engagement and support for art.

Consistent funding for the arts economy is an intractable challenge. If we fail to solve the funding challenge now, we will embark on a new strategy process in a few years and reach the same conclusion. To avoid this redundancy, we recommend that leaders work together to deliver dedicated, ongoing arts funding to support the Arts Alliance's citywide work and collaborative activities.

While the funding task is a challenge, it is not impossible. For years, prosperous arts cities such as Seattle, Raleigh, Salt Lake City, and San Diego have invested in supporting dynamic creative economies. Research by the Americans for the Arts has documented the payoff of investing tax dollars. For every public dollar invested in arts, seven return to the economy.⁴

The action items outline income opportunities from the immediate to longer-term solutions. We labeled the longer-term resources as secondary.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

St. Petersburg can only maximize its value when every resident can access and participate.

While this country's diversity, equity, and inclusion challenges reach beyond the community and this creative economy, the city's arts and cultural community can lead here. During the listening phase, participants recommended we:

- "Measure the current diversification of boards and staff of existing arts organizations."
- "Uplift the midtown community through arts education."
- "Seek economic equity in race and place."
- "Seek arts for all, not only for Central Ave. and downtown."
- "Measure public funding equity."
- "Showcase and support talent from black and brown communities."

This strategy provides consistent leadership to make inroads into equity, diversity, and inclusion challenges.

The next section shares the Leadership and Funding Strategy's objectives and actions.



The Dali Museum: Magritte & Dali Exhibit. (c) 2018, City of St. Petersburg.



⁴ www.speraconnect.com/news/arts-return-up-to-7-for-every-1-invested

Above - Ray Charles Day Studio@620. (c) 2019, City of St. Petersburg.

Mural by: B - Jujmo (@jujmo), L - John Gasgot (@jgascot), A - Painkiller Cam (@painkillercam), C - Catherine Weaver (@uniquelyoriginalarts), K - Nuclear Sky Art (@nuclearskyart), L - Wayward Walls (@waywardwalls), I - Laura Spencer (@lauraspencerillustrates), V - James Hartzell (@artbyjames), E - Artist Esh (@artish_esh), S - Jade Jackson (@avacatoto), M - James Kitchens (@freestylatattoo), A - Megasupremo (@megasupremo), T - Von Walters (@von.walters), T - Plum Howlett (@pvo_tattooshop), E - Melanie Posner (@therealmelpoz), R - Daniel Barojas (@r5imaging). Photo © 2020, City of St. Petersburg.

Objective 3.1: Strengthen the St. Petersburg Arts Alliance to establish, enhance, and expand leadership for the arts economy.

ACTION ITEMS

3.1.1 Create an arts campaign committee (working group) to secure funding to implement the strategy. The working group will include members of the Steering Committee and community leaders who will articulate and share the case with elected officials and appointees. The goal is to ensure that no stone is left unturned to provide consistent leadership and funding as soon as possible to sustain and deliver more social and economic value.

3.1.2 Guide the arts economy and act as an economic development corporation for the arts. Partner with the St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce and others to provide joint programming and coordination of resources to avoid duplication and link members of the arts and business communities.

3.1.3 Participate with city staff and planners to support citywide arts facility plans, including public arts sites.⁵

3.1.4 Expand the Alliance’s earned revenue, including sponsorships, events, shared services, and membership options.

3.1.5 Explore creating a private-public development authority to own property and serve as an intermediary between cultural development and commercial property development. This option can lead to the creation of performance venues, artist housing, and artists’ workspaces. Consider adapting existing models, such as NYC’s New 42nd Street, Sydney’s long-term and short-term creative space programs, Pittsburgh’s Cultural Trust, and Shreveport’s Historic Firehouse Tower.

Objective 3.2: Foster diversity, equity, and inclusion in the arts economy.

ACTION ITEMS

3.2.1 Promote city solutions for diversity, equity, and inclusion for everyone. Establish a baseline of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the arts community by measuring the current diversity of nonprofit boards and staff, as well as artists in the Alliance’s database. Include diversity, equity, and inclusion actions in Strategy 1 actions.

3.2.2 Measure public funding equity in arts funding.

3.2.3 Convene local advisors to review diversity, equity, and inclusion successes as well as opportunities yearly— Partner with national experts to identify and adapt promising practices.

3.2.4 Encourage museums and galleries to showcase minority and female artists, as well as to educate curators and collectors to advance minority and female artists.



James Museum of Western and Wildlife Art. (c) 2019, City of St. Petersburg.

Objective 3.3:

Fund the arts economy; provide consistent funding for collaborations, marketing, and operations.

ACTION ITEMS

3.3.1 Partner with the TDC for dollars based on a percentage of St. Petersburg’s bed taxes for promotions, marketing, and advertising to support tourist development. Seek 25 percent TDC revenue derived from St. Petersburg’s number of hotel rooms. Based on 2019 numbers, this equates to about 2 million dollars per year.

3.3.2 Partner with the City to dedicate one percent of its budget to support the arts economy and collaborative activities. During the fiscal year 2021, this would equal \$2,928,700.⁶

3.3.3 Partner with donors and foundations to secure donated revenue. Seek contributions for collaborations and the St. Petersburg Arts Endowment.

3.3.4 Pursue long-term funding from the State of Florida legislative process via a local sales tax.

3.3.5 Seek project-based funds from the State of Florida and the National Endowment for the Arts. Engage professional lobbying services to promote arts funding.



Florida Craft Arts St. Petersburg, Florida. (c) 2016, City of St. Petersburg.

⁵ This calculation is from the FY21 Operating Budget Summary, page 13.

⁶ General funds and reserves equals \$292,870,001 X 1 percent. stpete.org/city_departments/docs/FY21%20Adopted%20Budget%202012.14.20.pdf.

STRATEGY 4: BENCHMARKED PROGRESS

Is it working? Are we making progress? Where should we invest resources to grow the creative economy? Answers to these questions and others like them are central to this evaluation strategy.

The strategy seeks to change community thinking. We want people to know that the arts are valuable because people love them, and because they contribute to healthy and desirable live-in cities with dynamic economies. By evaluating our work holistically, we will identify what provides the greatest return on investments and leverage it. We will increase the community support of continued arts economy investments.

Objective 4.1: Develop an arts economic vitality index to evaluate annual progress.

ACTION ITEM

4.1.1 Use concepts such as the SMU Arts Vibrancy Index to measure St. Petersburg's arts economy yearly.

Objective 4.2: Measure returns on investment yearly and distribute future investments based on a three-year growth cycle.

ACTION ITEMS

4.2.1 Report the evaluation results and a going-forward plan to the Steering Committee or similar group annually.

4.2.2 Evaluate high-return nonprofit programs that lack consistent funding streams and provide partial funding for their operations. Nonprofit organizations often provide high-value community services for which no viable funding model exists. This action seeks to support these programs by funding the gap between what the organization can raise and what it needs to operate.



BEACON St. Pete - Helen Hansen French. Photo by Tom Kramer.

APPENDIX A: STEERING COMMITTEE

The CAS was directed by a steering committee of community, business, and arts leaders, including:

- Paul Carder
- Liz Dimmitt
- Bob Glaser
- Stephanie Gularte
- Alex Harris
- Dr. Kimberly Jackson
- Duncan McClellan
- Chuck Prather
- David Ramsey
- Melissa Seixas
- Chris Steinocher
- Dr. Kanika Tomalin

APPENDIX B

Definitions

The Arts: We intentionally considered a wide definition of the arts. Our framework was to include all art forms where undergraduate degrees or college coursework exists. Therefore, the arts include theatre, dance, opera, museums and galleries, live music, writing, poetry, spoken word, festivals, events, visual arts, glass blowing, murals, film, graphic design, craft arts, architecture, and design.

The city: The uncapitalized word refers to the place, St. Petersburg.

The City: When capitalized, the word "city" denotes the City of St. Petersburg's government.

Collaborate: To bring individuals and groups together to partner and cooperate, where at least one individual or organization represents an artist, arts nonprofit, or creative business. Successful convenings discuss mutual goals and explore if synergies are available by working together. The purpose of collaborations is to create new value for those who participate and for the city's economy.

Strategy: The strategy is an overall big-picture game plan of how the city and the arts will win together. Our goal was to create an ambitious and doable approach that is simple to understand and adopt. For example, during the listening stage, we heard about the need for a citywide calendar of events. Using the convene strategy, we brainstormed who was already in this space and with whom we might partner.



Bending Arc at The St. Pete Pier (c) 2020, City of St. Petersburg.

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