



Central City 2035 Symposium Minutes

Civic & Cultural Life – April 28, 2011

1900 SW 4th Avenue, Room 2500A

Facilitator: Doug Zenn

Panelists in attendance: Tad Savinar, Cary Clarke, Jeff Miller, Caryn Brooks, Vince Porter, Mike McCulloch, Jarkko Cain, Jose Gonzalez, Judy Siemssen, Nim Xuto, Chet Orloff, Jeff Hawthorne, Rebecca Gates, Bill Foster, Tim DuRoche, Brad Malsin, Ronault Catalani

Staff in attendance: Troy Doss, Diane Hale, Elisa Hamblin, Kathryn Hartinger, Mark Raggett, Steve Iwata, Peter Englander (PDC), Shannon Buono, Marisol Caron

Public in attendance: Amy Lewin, Wendy Rahm, Judy Litt, Sharon McAllister, Mary Czarnecki, Mathangi Murthy

1. Welcome and Participant Introductions

- Doug welcomed participants.
- Doug asked for corrections to the previous symposium minutes, none were offered.

2. Participant Introductions

3. Overview of Prior Symposium (April 8)

- Identified the role of arts and culture amenities in the Central City and barriers and opportunities.

4. Discussion – Focus Topics

a. Access and Public Spaces: How can we plan for safe, attractive places that are available to all types of arts, activities and people?

- Cary Clarke – Festival streets at Director Park allow for street closures for public events. Are there other locations where this might make sense?
- Mike McCulloch – We should identify places that could house temporary events: riverside spaces, space near Memorial Coliseum are potential opportunities.
- Caryn Brooks – Bridges are an opportunity, specifically the Morrison Bridge and the Innovation District.
- Chet Orloff – Look at transit and bike infrastructure and how it might support cultural sites.
- Jarkko Cain – Available spaces that haven't been fully utilized might be good for smaller groups; advertise through web to facilitate signup, educate groups about options.

- Tad Savinar – The Central Eastside Industrial District presents many possibilities; co-ownership of events facilities offers opportunity.
- Tim DuRoche – Differentiate between spaces for activity versus spaces for static art; explore the role of utilizing spaces that are temporarily vacant.
- Jeff Miller – Keep management of spaces (who is assigned to which space) out of the public sector.
- Jeff Hawthorne – Look to other cities for how to best utilize flexible spaces.
- Mike McCulloch – Should we think about a clearinghouse for an ombudsman to coordinate events and spaces throughout the Central City, helping to match interested parties with appropriate spaces?
- Jeff Hawthorne – RACC conducted a space inventory last year and it's available online.
- Nim Xuto – We don't have a problem finding spaces, the problem is the human issue: who will get involved? Funding is another issue. In looking for spaces, look for MAX proximity and spaces easily accessible to the multicultural community.
- Tim DuRoche – Seattle looked at the role street musicians can play in creating safer, more vibrant spaces. How can Portland use existing assets (i.e., vibrant music communities) to activate public spaces and improve safety?
- Cary Clarke – Office of Neighborhood Involvement looked at street performers – this might be a good connection to look at. Paul Van Orden is person to talk to. As Central City densifies, we need to think about pressures that could arise for the preservation of performance space (as well as issues surrounding noise mitigation).
- Doug Zenn – As a note, today we are not focusing on funding or education because this plan does not have a huge impact on those things.

b. Identity, Diversity, and Place: How can we create unique districts which strengthen our multicultural identity, allow neighborhoods to flourish, and maximize connections to and use of the river?

- Jeff Miller – Our neighborhoods happened organically. There is discussion of branding the Yamhill-Morrison spine. How do you encourage these things to happen organically? It is crucial to have different overlays of activities and people in these areas distinct areas.
- Chet Orloff – One of the things that makes Portland unique is that we have discreet districts and to the extent that we can reinforce that distinctness, we will help define the identity of the entire city. Arts and cultural institutions are crucial in helping reinforce district identity.
- Tim DuRoche – We can't talk about the design of the City without discussing affordability. When we start branding, it separates; make sure to examine equity issues.
- Nim Xuto – Look at the Pearl, the galleries are all gone; Alberta Street has problems too. Look at these as lessons in what not to do as we move forward. To

bring people together from different cultures, bring opportunities for these people into the Central City (e.g., jobs, dancing, music). Multi-language publications might help. Make the Central City appealing to different cultures.

- Tad Savinar – “90 Minutes from Portland” video shows amenities that are easily accessed. What would happen if we did a walking video using Pioneer Square as ground zero? Maybe this is a different type of brand for the Central City to look at – all of the different cultural opportunities and amenities accessible within a short walk from downtown.
- Caryn Brooks – Establish a “MAX fest” with different activities happening at or near stations to get people moving around the City.
- Cary Clarke – We have had some transit-oriented events in the past. We also need to keep in mind both the challenges and benefits of having activities right in the middle of neighborhoods (i.e., accessibility versus nuisance issues).
- Nim Xuto – Many neighborhood events result in the public looking at art, but artists are not actually selling much. This is a problem.
- Cary Clarke – There is an existing survey that shows that they do sell some. Cary asked Jose Gonzalez about the Miracle Theater Group’s ability to pull from outside the City.
- Jose Gonzalez – They have been a little surprised by their success as well. They do a lot of outreach and attribute much of their broader success to the success of their Day of the Dead festival, which draws people in regionally and even from other states.
- Jarkko Cain – Asked what the level of awareness was regarding the density of cultural amenities in Central City, particularly on Eastside. Also commented on branding the “arts scene loop” that could join the East and West sides.
- Brad Malsin – Madrid and Barcelona rely on cultural tourism. People come to Portland because there is a sense of culture/community, not for jobs (which are not plentiful). This sense of culture is what has driven Spanish cities to retain activity and economic development over hundreds of years. Bike tours are great opportunities to see cities. The diversity of districts, uniqueness and inclusiveness of Portland – there are the elements that draw people here.
- Jeff Hawthorne – RACC has been conducting some informal polling. People are generally aware that Portland has a great diversity of amenities for arts and culture. What is less clear is whether arts and culture are a clear “priority” for the City – it is not clearly in our brand, as compared to places like Oklahoma (“Where creativity happens”).
- Chet Orloff – Sustainability is a given but this is not the case with arts and culture; this theme should be a brand of the state. What will the role be, district by district, of arts and cultural organizations? What do we want to imbed in CC2035? What is the role of arts and culture in CC2035? If it’s not clear, it’s not going to be there.

- Cary Clarke – In response to Jarkko Cain’s comments on the loop: what opportunities does the new streetcar line present for the Eastside? There might be a possibility for joint branding.
- Caryn Brooks – Problem is not lack of arts-related performances, but packaging. If we create a loop, we connect what’s already there.
- Mark Raggett – If you look at Austin, South by Southwest festival is a huge draw. Austin is a music city. In thinking about branding, what do we want to push? What would that big thing be? It doesn’t have to be music.
- Nim Xuto – Legion restaurant (SE 82nd and Division) hosts large events, but it’s about to be purchased by PCC. Where are places in the city where people can celebrate their cultures? Why don’t we have a big Chinatown with outdoor retail, etc. like San Francisco? In conversation with an artist from SE Portland, the idea of a “Made in Portland” logo was brought up.
- Tim DuRoche – We no longer exist in a top-down world; we can no longer think just about organizations. We have many more self-organized events now. People are using the institutions, but things are happening in nodes around the city. The Central City is a node. How are we creating flows in and around it? Regarding entrepreneurship, graduated micro-retail spaces (e.g., Minneapolis Lake Street Market) facilitate cultural exchange from the ground up.
- Mike McCulloch – Introduced the “Year of the Eastside” idea. We don’t want to neglect Westside, but a year-long campaign to focus people on the Eastside could be a vehicle for explaining and showcasing what’s going on there.
- Jose Gonzalez – We are located in CEID, but over last decade, things have taken off, both “over” ground and underground (due to zoning restrictions). In Minneapolis, blighted industrial districts stayed that way until artists moved in for the low rent. Because of this activity, these areas began to attract attention and then developers, increasing rents and pushing artists out. How do you create ownership so artists are not displaced? This situation is already forming on the Eastside. What policies are in place to preserve its character? Look at zoning. We might want to consider how to support landlords’ housing of artistic tenants so they don’t simply cave into the market. Encourage artist ownership as well. The streetcar will stop ½ block from the Miracle Theater, but nobody will know this unless the theater pays \$500/mo for a sign; how do we subsidize this expense for smaller organizations?
- Tad Savinar – We need to change our message. Portland has a great arts scene, ALMOST as good as Seattle, etc. Challenge to participants: how do we think beyond being “good?” How do we think about creating facilities and opportunities that catapult existing creativity to a higher level?

c. Economic Development: In what ways can we build off of the creative economy, encourage tourism through our identity and attractions and enable more artistic development and activity?

- Brad Malsin – Just completed Milepost 5 (NE 82nd Ave). The building includes living space, shared gallery space, and live/work space for less than \$200/month. The building and opportunity were there, even though it was a little far out.

Buildings like this start the conversation of how to best support the arts community and utilize partnerships between for profit and nonprofit groups.

- Peter Englander – Artists are often the first into a neighborhood; they make it “cool.” We need to find a way to keep them there and not be pushed out. One role of the Central City is to provide connections to what’s going on in the surrounding neighborhoods. Use the massive transportation system that we’ve created and combine it with bike infrastructure and you really have an accessible city. In planning though, we need to stay flexible because we don’t know what’s “next.”
- Chet Orloff – We have a tendency in these meetings to speak aspirationally. Bringing it back, what specific items can we put into CC2035 so that people moving forward can look back on, hold up and use to justify future plans? We need to be specific about our objectives and get into the details. What can be captured and imbedded in this plan? Let’s begin to develop some policy that other agencies will recognize.
- Vince Porter – Creativity used to require a facility, which created a barrier to entry; this really isn’t the case anymore. Focusing on facilities too much might be a mistake. How can we help artists connect? Technology may be the critical infrastructure of the future.
- Tim DuRoche – Scale is important; we shouldn’t assume that growth is the natural course. We need to look at policy and lead policy; look at culture as the fourth leg of sustainability.
- Rebecca Gates – Portland has a vibrant tech culture that artists need to be part of; technology access needs to be a priority for the City. What can we offer artists looking to move here? Space and funding, but what about sustainability? How are we going to keep artists working? How do we ease the transition for artists moving here? How do we move artists around the City? Additionally, the river is latent but it has so much potential. Look at what’s here and how can it be better served.
- Jarkko Cain – Is Portland’s lack of “titan patrons” an opportunity rather than a problem? There are advantages to smaller projects (e.g., more freedom for artists). Could we create a bond measure for arts organizations that included a provision for free tickets for patrons?
- Cary Clarke – This already exists; we’ll discuss it down the line.
- Mary Czarnecki – Regarding the downtown core: park blocks on Westside should be duplicated on the Eastside to balance intensity. Bring museums and community schools to the Eastside to draw activity toward the center. If you look at the Central Eastside, the New Market Theater is missing, falling apart. It used to be a major market and theater and it should be brought back. There is a difference between “big” moves and “little” moves. We should focus on, and showcase, each neighborhood at different times to improve dialogue between these neighborhoods, as well as improve transportation connections. Is there a possibility of creating an “Eastside Center?” Our geography is moving farther and farther east.

- Nim Xuto – The brand is “New Portland.” However, there is a problem of marketing – no one is buying art. Artists need marketing support to make a living. *The Oregonian* does not cover a diversity of Portland artists; it always covers the same handful of people. The Pearl art shows are the same, featuring the same artists every time. You cannot plan for a diverse Portland if there’s no diversity in the room – and there doesn’t appear to be a lot of diversity in the room today.
- Caryn Brooks – We could not have predicted 20 years ago many of the things that have happened (e.g., the slow death of retail in the core, etc.). We need to be flexible. Perhaps we could create a credit program for artists to pay for basic needs. However, even this would need to be flexible enough to accommodate things like technology change.
- Judy Litt – Commented on existing opportunities to get out and see cultural and arts areas throughout City. She also commented on the open studio concept and putting arts out into the neighborhoods.

5. Break

d. Affordability and Art Space: How can we maintain affordability and increase flexibility while increasing the supply of housing, art space, and venues?

- Ronault Catalani – We have such an opportunity to have Mariachi and Chinese opera singers in the Central City; we have a wealth of newcomer cultural capital, but these people are not living downtown. I would suggest a deeper inventory of what we have. Don’t use brown faces to dress up downtown. We need to start budgeting for true inclusion.
- Judy Litt – Public buildings used for arts and cultural events are not earthquake safe. These must be upgraded.
- Sharon McCallister – Loves idea of bike tours. Also loves Peter Englander’s comment about combining light rail and bikes. Loves Mike McCulloch’s idea of “Year of the Eastside.” Each year put an emphasis on a different part of the city to create long-term depth. One of the strengths of Portland is its bottom-up culture. Taking this, how do we become world class? How can current artists become mentors for new artists?
- Cary Clarke – Reviewed a list of place-based projects on his radar, but made it clear he is not advocating for any of them: a mobile stage on the river; a floating entertainment zone; permanent infrastructure on Waterfront Park; a film-production studio (internet infrastructure would be critical for this); practice spaces for musicians; an all-ages music/arts facility (which has been difficult to create due to OLCC regulations); a contemporary arts center on Eastside; and an international arts and culture hub (not necessarily in the Central City).
- Caryn Brooks – How do we go to the next level? One idea is to develop a sponsored artist house. What the artists give back to the community are mentorships and connections.
- Tim DuRoche – It is dangerous to talk about artists separate from community because they are part of the community. Houston’s Project Row Houses dovetails artists with community service needs: artists lift the boat for everybody.

This is a concern about Milepost 5: benefits that go to artists and not the community can create divides.

- Nim Xuto – Use existing venues we have right now. Focus on the river as other cities do. We badly need to develop marketing strategies for artists. We also need to do more community outreach for newcomers.

6. Public Comment

- Given throughout discussion

7. Discussion – Civic and Cultural Life ‘On the Ground’

a. Review areas of change and existing infrastructure

b. Review existing arts and culture hotspots

c. Identification of where targeted efforts should take place

- Peter Englander – The active management of particular areas of town have been highly successful (e.g., Director Park, Pioneer Square, etc.). These management efforts facilitate event planning by giving interested individuals someone to go to regarding space.
- Tim DuRoche – We like things to develop organically. This is largely why the Rose Quarter has failed: it’s a weird, inorganic space. Allow for flexibility.
- Cary Clarke – (Looking at map) The Innovation District should be expanded East slightly or we could draw another circle next to it, from 8th to 12th. There are also lots of opportunities along the new Burnside/Couch couplet; these opportunities should also be flagged.
- Tim DuRoche – On Westside, mark the Davis Street corridor from Weiden-Kennedy all the way over to Front Street; this could be called the Cultural Education District.
- Amy Lewin – On the Eastside, there is no library in the Innovation District. Not looking for a traditional library, but more of a resource center for all, but specifically for area artists.
- Judy Litt – Referenced the “Maine example.” Temporarily vacant spaces were used for a sculpture competition. Something like this could work along the river in the summertime, under the freeways. Works were sold and proceeds benefited arts funding.
- Caryn Brooks – it would help to have a technology expert/futurist make predictions about the future of the City of Portland.
- Mary Czarnecki – Would like to see the Riverfront have a few public museums: aquarium, botanical garden, etc. Would also like to see artists have more opportunities to contribute to the design of buildings themselves, not just have art in them.
- Judy Litt – Where new community centers are built, they should have dedicated room for arts and cultural events.

- Sharon McCallister – IMAGO has a big space which is underutilized right now. We would like to be a support for the arts community, but are still trying to figure out how to move into the future, expanding on the Burnside/Couch couplet.
- Cary Clarke – On the Westside, just south of Burnside where the nightclubs are – this is possibly an area for an entertainment district with a separate noise code, etc. What’s going on there is changing, how can we direct this activity?
- Nim Xuto - How can we use existing facilities for multiple purposes? Can we better utilize these spaces? Think about holding art shows at libraries, etc.
- Rebecca Gates – Is there a way to think about activating extant spaces better?
- Mike McCulloch – [Described the loop he drew on the group map] A way to connect major amenities, better connecting East and West sides.
- Chet Orloff – We are looking at the loop as an organizing principle of the City, and wondering if having the civic and cultural life community see it the same way could reinforce all efforts.
- Steve Iwata – Considering the Portland Mall Management Model and its potential application for the street car - is this a good model to help keep new areas active and safe 24/7? One area we haven’t discussed much is the Lloyd District, which doesn’t seem to have good “bones” for the organic growth we often talk about. Is there a role there for the arts and cultural community to help activate the district?
- Nim Xuto – Most cities have more consolidated “center” of culture: either a museum or a river. We should focus more centrally rather than on a loop. If artists don’t make money, they will be gone; expand programs like the Saturday Market (hours, days) to increase income potential.
- Mary Czarnecki – Start with what you already have. It is more difficult to define spaces as you move out. Monuments and sculptures define neighborhood character and identify, also create gateways.
- Jose Gonzalez – The Central Eastside has a unique character, history, and composition of facilities that make it attractive to artist investment. It also has great access for people from outside of the Portland area. As we look at future development here, we should be conscious of these things and not try to make it into the Pearl or downtown. The other issue is that many of the facilities are older – and as such, there are issues with seismic, etc. If we really want this area to become more viable, some thoughtful investment for upgrades is necessary.
- Jarkko Cain – High Line Park in New York was an architecturally inspiring park/corridor that might be a good model for linking spaces on the Eastside.
- Mike McCulloch – Asked Jarkko Cain where in Portland he sends visiting New York friends.
- Jarkko Cain – They want to see restaurants, artisanal “everything,” small shops, etc.
- Rebecca Gates – Sends people to Washington Park and Forest Park.
- Judy Litt - Noise on the freeway makes atmosphere on Westside unpleasant.

8. Next Steps

- Staff will draft a policy framework (typically 1-2 pages of broad goals and objectives). This will be circulated by email to participants and taken to the Advisory Group on June 7 at 4:00 p.m.

9. Public Comment

- Given throughout discussion

10. Adjourn

- The meeting was adjourned at 11:53 a.m.

DRAFT