



# sfac

san francisco  
arts commission

## Visioning Workshop Summary

submitted by

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## Background

The San Francisco Arts Commission (SFAC) hosted a Visioning Workshop for the strategic planning process on May 20, 2013 from 9:00 to 12:30 pm. Approximately 12 Commissioners and 45 SFAC staff members attended the workshop held at Casa de la Vista, Treasure Island. The workshop was considered a special meeting of the SFAC and was publicly noticed.

SFAC has embarked on a comprehensive strategic planning and community engagement process. The Strategic Plan process represents an opportunity for SFAC to work collaboratively with the arts community and City partners to guide the agency through program development and prioritization, budget processes and overall communication of values, policies and broad-based impact to the general public. The Strategic Plan will serve as an overarching framework that determines how SFAC operates over the next five years.

During the Visioning Workshop, conducted by strategic planning consultants MIG and MMC, participants were asked to discuss the agency's core values, review and refresh the SFAC mission and develop a vision statement that described the SFAC's desired future. The workshop featured large group presentations and facilitated small group discussions.

The primary objectives for the Visioning Workshop were to:

- Define Core Values: What principles should guide our work at SFAC?
- Clarify Mission: Why do we exist? For whom? To what impact?
- Develop a Future Vision: What is our vision for what SFAC needs to be for the communities of San Francisco?

This document summarizes the general discussion and comments made by the facilitators, presenters and participants during the Visioning Workshop; it is not intended as a transcription of the meeting. Official minutes of the meeting were kept by the Commission Secretary, approved by the Commission and publicly posted in accordance with City policy. The source documents for this report include the wallgraphics (a unique, visual representation of the discussion points raised during the workshop) and a transcription of the notes reported in each of the small groups. The results of the workshop will be used to inform the development of a draft Strategic Plan.

## I. Welcome and Introductions

JD Beltran, President of the SFAC, opened the commission meeting and conducted roll call for the Commissioners. The opportunity for public comment was provided to the audience. Following the public comment period, Tom DeCaigny, Director of Cultural Affairs, welcomed participants and thanked everyone for attending. He gave a brief overview of the strategic planning process. He expressed appreciation

for everyone's participation. He also noted how this effort will include opportunities for the public to provide input on the plan as well.

Mr. DeCaigny explained that participants, who included SFAC staff, Commissioners and members of the consultant team, were seated at assigned tables. The seating assignments were designed to ensure a mix of program representation and expertise in each group and to balance the participation of the Commissioners.

Next, Ms. Beltran remarked on the importance of the strategic planning process and offered her appreciation for everyone's participation and enthusiasm for the process. Ms. Beltran then turned the meeting over to the lead MIG facilitator, Joan Chaplick, who reviewed the workshop's agenda.

Ms. Chaplick briefly reviewed the agenda and the desired outcomes for the meeting which were to:

- Articulate a set of core values for SFAC that will serve as the guiding principles for all of SFAC's work
- Revisit the SFAC mission and take a fresh look at why SFAC exists, who it serves and to what impact
- Create a future vision for SFAC and to discuss what the agency aspires to become over the next 5 - 10 years

Ms. Chaplick then briefly described the small group process and the general timing of the activities. The members of the consultant teams were also introduced.

## **II. Defining Our Values**

In the large group setting, Ms. Chaplick introduced the core values concept and provided instructions for the small group discussions. Each group had 7-8 participants and a facilitator. The facilitators were members of the consultant team.

The small group facilitators briefly introduced themselves and asked each person in the group to introduce themselves (e.g., name, role, and how long they have been a part of the SFAC). Following the introductions, the small groups launched into the values discussion. The facilitator started by reviewing the "Core Values Handout" with the small group which included the following prompts:

- ***What are core values?***
  - Core values are the principles on which your organization is built. They answer the question, "What do we believe in?"
- ***Why do we need core values?***
  - These are the beliefs that drive your organization. They provide a basis for planning and decision-making.

- They inspire and guide the people inside your organization.
- Core values anchor your organization. Operating practices will change with time, but your core values will stay the same.

Participants were asked to use the handout to brainstorm core values individually and then to discuss their ideas with the group. The participants were not required to come to consensus on their comments, but were requested to summarize the main points of agreement in order to report back to the larger group. The key words and phrases from each report out were recorded on the wallgraphic.

During the breakout groups, participants contributed creative and thoughtful responses regarding the core values they believe should guide SFAC's work. The following section highlights values and key themes raised during the small group discussions.

***Core Values:***

- Commitment to excellence and quality
- Increased visibility and awareness among the public
- Equity
- Civic responsibility and public service
- Integration of the arts across sectors
- Transparency
- Partnerships and collaboration
- Enhanced access to the arts and arts programming
- Diversity of artistic voices
- Community engagement
- Visionary leadership
- Enhanced role of local government in the arts
- Representation of diverse communities
- Responsiveness to community needs
- Evidence-driven decision making
- Dedicated support and resources for the arts and artists
- Accountability
- Innovation
- Inclusiveness

**III. Clarifying Our Mission**

Following the core values discussion, Ms. Chaplick introduced Adrienne Horn, President of MMC, who provided a framework for how the groups would approach the review of the mission statement. She explained how the activity was designed

to facilitate generative, big-picture thinking regarding the SFAC mission. Ms. Horn's remarks helped the group understand the role and function of a mission statement and the questions that are answered by an effective mission statement.

Next, Ms. Horn reviewed a handout that included several example mission statements from other arts organizations such as the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Philadelphia Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy. She then instructed the small groups to discuss and respond to the following questions:

- ***Why does SFAC exist? What is our purpose?***
- ***For whom? Who do we serve?***
- ***What impact do we achieve?***

The facilitators led the small groups in a discussion of these three questions and recorded their responses. The following themes emerged from the group reports. Note that the summarized responses to the three questions are separated; however, based on the close relationship between the questions, there is some overlap in the responses. The overlap reinforces the synergy between SFAC's purpose, recipients of SFAC's work and the overall impact of SFAC's accomplishments.

#### ***Why does SFAC exist? What is our purpose?***

- Support the arts and artists in San Francisco
- Provide access to art and cultural resources
- Continue the tradition of government support of the arts
- Promote progressive arts dialogue locally, nationally, globally
- Establish San Francisco as a world class city and cultural destination
- Raise awareness of the essential nature of arts in a creative, culturally rich city
- Establish San Francisco as a model city for artistic innovation and civic pride
- Act as stewards of the city's creative ecosystem
- Promote growth and vitality of the city's artistic environments
- Facilitate and provide resources for arts and artists
- Develop partnerships and coordinate efforts
- Build infrastructure to provide services to the arts community

#### ***For whom? Who do we serve?***

- Emerging artists
- Established artists

- General public
  - Everyone
  - Residents
  - Tourists/ Visitors
- City of San Francisco
- Businesses
- Future generations of citizens and artists

***What impact do we achieve?***

- Integrate the arts into civic life, public policy and the economy
- Enhance San Francisco's stature as a cultural destination
- Enrich the civic realm
- Educate and engage the public through the arts
- Strengthen the local economy and create models for alternative economies
- Enhance the well-being of communities through artistic vitality
- Catalyze and develop creative partnerships
- Increase the economic awareness of the role of the arts
- Create a sense of place and shared experience through the arts
- Level the playing field for arts accessibility
- Support and facilitate the creation of art
- Enhance the urban experience and the built environment through the arts
- Provide access and link the arts community to city resources
- Act as a bridge between local communities and the arts

**IV. Shaping Our Future**

During the final activity of the workshop, participants explored the future vision for SFAC. Ms. Chaplick provided directions regarding the vision statement activity, explaining that a vision statement collectively describes what we aspire the SFAC to become. She asked the group to take a moment to think 5-10 years into the future, about the future focus of the SFAC's work, and its role in the arts community.

Working in small groups, the facilitators asked participants to review the sample vision statements from arts organizations including the Seattle Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs and the California Arts Council. The facilitators then asked each small group participant to take a few moments to write down the phrases that

describe SFAC's future. To guide the conversation, the facilitators used the following prompts to encourage discussion such as:

- ***How would you like to focus the work of the SFAC?***
- ***What do you consider are the most important future accomplishments for the SFAC?***
- ***What does success look like?***

The visioning activity yielded a wide-ranging set of ideas and opinions regarding the future vision statement for SFAC. Many participants agreed that the sample vision statements were helpful in brainstorming ideas and drawing inspiration for SFAC's vision. Some participants identified the tension between the various roles of SFAC as convener, funder, service provider, promoter and landlord. Other participants reflected on the role of the City of San Francisco as a leader and visionary in the arts world. The next section highlights key themes that emerged during the small group discussions.

### ***Key Themes:***

#### **Future Roles of SFAC**

- Champion of the arts
- Strong influencer and "key player" in city government decisions
- Curator of active, creative and collaborative partnerships
- Advance arts policies and programs in the political realm
- Refinement on the multiple roles of SFAC (e.g., convener, funder, service provider, incubator, promoter and facilitator of the arts)
- Capacity-builder and resource for technical assistance within the arts community
- Developer of sustainable and innovative models

#### **The City of San Francisco**

- San Francisco is renowned as a leading city in artistic innovation
- Welcoming home for artists and creative economies
- Cultural destination for residents and tourists
- SFAC has a prominent, physical presence in local neighborhoods

#### **Aspirations for SFAC**

- High-level of local, national and international visibility



- Arts are perceived as the heart and soul of the city
- Vision must connect directly to SFAC's core values
- Future vision is grounded in the spirit of racial and social equity
- Better integration and cross-pollination across sectors
- Elimination of program silos
- Resources to develop and sustain projects and programs
- Arts are an essential element of the live, work and play concept
- Economic and cultural equity is achieved through SFAC's impact

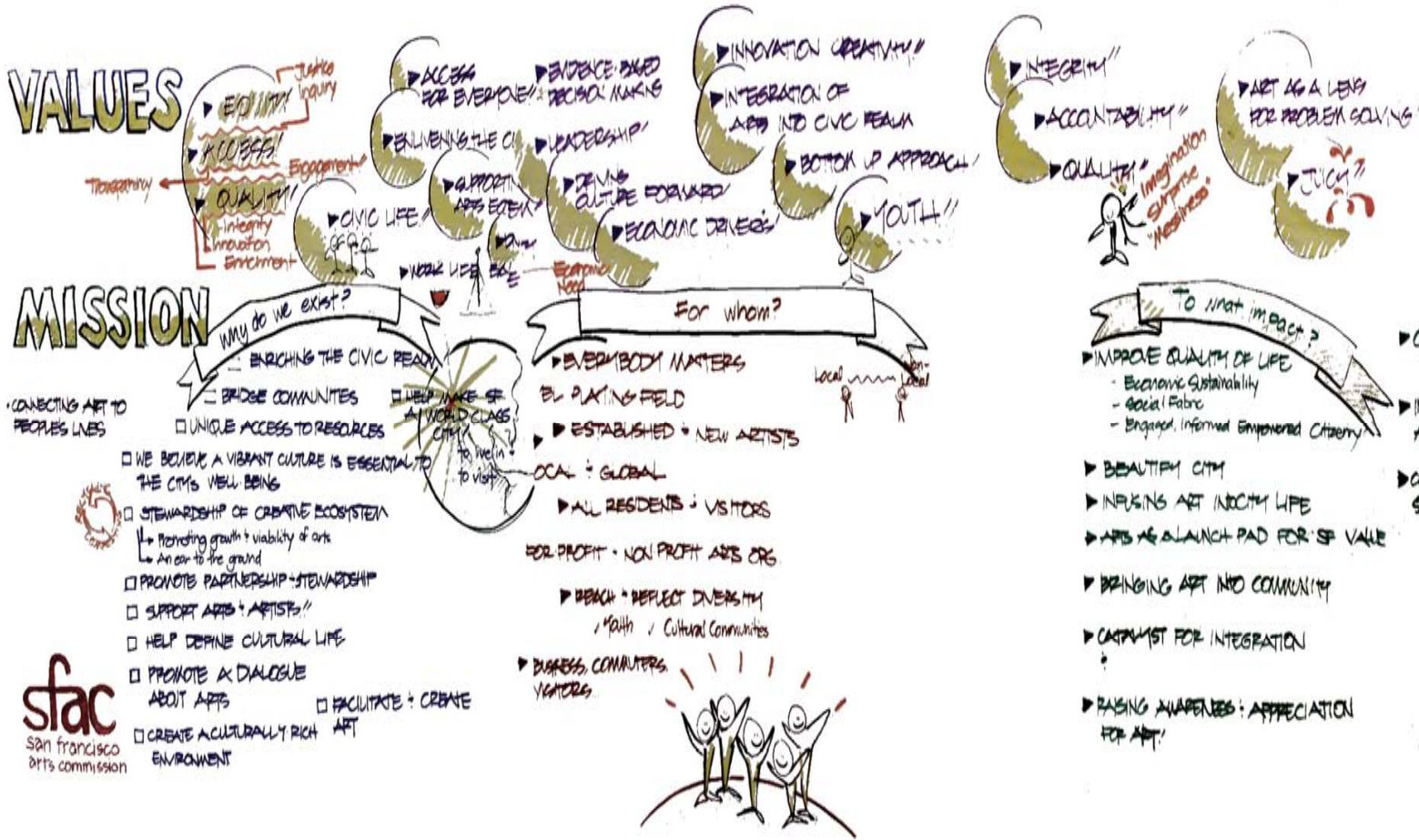
## **V. Next Steps**

Following the vision activity, Ms. Chaplick provided a brief recap of the day's activities and described the next steps in the process. These include:

- Analysis of visioning workshop results to create goal categories
- Scheduling of goal working groups
- Development and piloting of the outreach plan
- Discussion of draft outreach plan at May 21 staff meeting

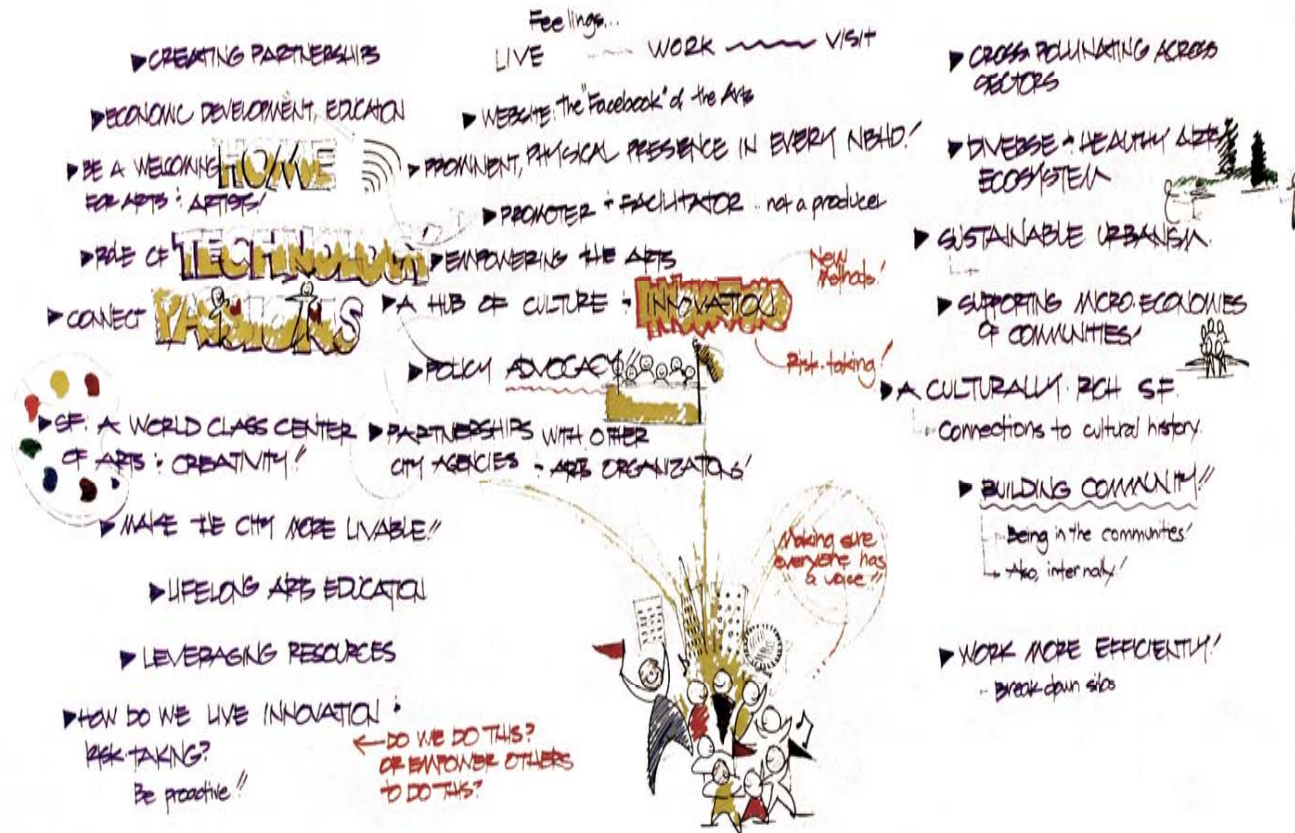
Closing remarks were given by Mr. DeCaigny and Ms. Beltran who thanked everyone for their participation and encouraged everyone to continue their involvement in the strategic planning process. The meeting was adjourned.

The wallgraphics from the workshop are attached at the end of this document.



**San Francisco Arts Commission  
Visioning Workshop – May 20, 2013**

# VISION



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