



# **Creative Community Phase 1 Summary Report:**

## **A framework for cultural vitality**

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## Introduction

In 2014, a small group of leaders within Santa Barbara County's cultural sector came together to ask important questions about the future health and sustainability of the sector.

- What does a thriving cultural sector look like for Santa Barbara County?
- How should the sector be defined?
- Who are the stakeholders in a vibrant cultural sector, and how can they be activated in shaping the future?
- What leadership and resources are required to achieve a vision of success?
- How might success be measured?

While those who work in the cultural sector implicitly understand the value of their work to residents and communities, it is helpful to be explicit about why culture matters, why cultural planning is important, and why scarce resources should be invested in cultural infrastructure. What's at stake here?

### **The Public Value of Culture, Heritage and the Arts**

Scholars have described and debated the value of culture and the arts to society for centuries. In recent years, national arts agencies in the US, England and Australia have commissioned numerous studies taking stock of the various impacts and benefits of culture, heritage, and the arts to individuals, families and society at large. Some of these studies tackle the difficult question of culture's unique value – the value germane to culture that no other sector, such as sports, can deliver. Common themes across numerous studies point to several distinct veins of public value (in no particular order):

- **Economic prosperity.** Culture, heritage and the arts contribute to a region's economic base. Numerous studies by economists suggest that investments in cultural programs and amenities generate a positive net return on investment in terms of employment and tax receipts.
  - Economic impact is greatest in cities and regions with major cultural attractions such as festivals and cultural districts that attract both residents and tourists.
  - Some studies point to reductions in public spending arising from cultural programs in hospitals (resulting in shorter stays), prisons (lower rates of re-offense) and schools (lower truancy rates).
- **Revitalization.** In many communities, culture is a key contributor to urban revitalization and the regeneration of distressed neighborhoods. Cultural districts are widely recognized as a useful approach to community development.



- Binding to place. Culture helps to build a sense of place – the feeling of belonging and community identity that fosters civic pride and contributes to a community's “livability.”
- Social wellbeing. Culture, heritage and the arts contribute to social wellbeing and social cohesion.
  - Culture, heritage and the arts are seen as an important means of communication, and provide an alternative language that can help people understand each other better.
  - They are a means of coping with complexity – they help people to make sense of life and navigate their way through.
  - They provide an essential means of social connectedness and transmission of shared meaning from generation to generation.
  - There is strong evidence that cultural programs and amenities help to make communities feel safer and stronger to residents.
- Discourse. Culture is an essential means of discourse. Cultural programs can address difficult or sensitive questions, provoke reactions, stimulate debate and encourage people to consider where society has come from and where it might be heading.
  - Cultural programs and activities offer an important forum for the exchange of political views without quick judgment, and a forum where the voices of the disenfranchised can be heard
- Personal development. Culture, heritage and the arts contribute to the intellectual, social, emotional, aesthetic and moral development of children and adults.
  - They allow people to express themselves creatively and give form and meaning to emotions that might otherwise be difficult to comprehend.
  - Individuals, especially children, draw on culture and the arts to develop a sense of personal identity and to convey this identity to others.
  - Active participation in cultural programs can build literacy, social skills, confidence, and self-esteem and is for many an essential avenue of life-long learning.
  - Students who study arts subjects are more employable, and are more likely to stay in employment.
  - They allow people to understand and interpret the views and experiences of other people, especially people from different cultures, contributing to a capacity for empathy, tolerance and acceptance.
  - They unlock the imagination and inspire people to reach for goals that they never before considered.
- Subjective wellbeing. Numerous studies conclude a positive association between cultural participation and subjective wellbeing or life satisfaction.
- Physiological and mental health benefits. Some cultural activities have physiological benefits, such as the therapeutic mental and physical benefits of gardening, hiking along heritage trails, or dancing.
  - Many studies provide evidence of the health benefits of cultural participation to older adults and to adults and children living with disabilities.



The point of this enumeration is to build an evidenced-based argument for the importance of cultural planning to the overall health, prosperity, and quality of life in Santa Barbara County. Culture and creativity are inseparable from life itself. While they are naturally occurring assets, there is much that communities can do to foster the conditions in which they flourish.

## **Background and Methodology**

With generous support from the Santa Barbara Foundation, the ad hoc Steering Committee commissioned WolfBrown to facilitate an initial phase of work to create a road map for the future growth and development of the cultural sector.

Rather than starting off with a conventional cultural planning process, the Steering Committee decided to lay the groundwork first, both in terms of leadership and vision. The first phase of work, therefore, aimed to build consensus around outcomes. What does success look like? Without a clear vision of success, and without a diverse and influential group of leaders driving the process, it would be difficult to get a countywide cultural planning effort off the ground.

Subsequent phases of work will grow the leadership base and further vet the outcome framework, define accountability measures corresponding to the outcomes articulated in this report, and, finally, develop strategies for achieving the intended outcomes. A section at the end of this report suggests next steps in the process.

This process is unconventional in the field of cultural planning. Most cultural plans start with community research and strategy development, then define outcomes and measures of success, and finally turn to issues of leadership and funding. This work tends to play out over six to 12 months and terminates in a final report or “cultural plan.” In truth, many cultural plans that follow this pathway do not bear fruit because the leadership and resources necessary to carry out the plan never existed in the first place.

In fact, the absence of a lead agency that would normally commission a cultural plan for Santa Barbara County (i.e., no “owner” of the process) has provided a rare opportunity to engineer an organic process that can evolve and adapt, and can enfranchise any number of stakeholders. In this case, both the Steering Committee and the funder are open to a range of possibilities for how the process might play out.

With “no one in charge,” a diverse group of leaders quickly emerged – the kind of leadership that seldom coalesces around community cultural planning.

If successful, this journey of self-reflection and discovery will build a new definition of creative wellbeing for Santa Barbara County – one that galvanizes broad community support and galvanizes public and private stakeholders around a common vision of cultural vitality.



This report summarizes Phase 1 of the project, offering a preliminary outcome framework to guide future planning efforts and, ultimately, to guide future investments in Santa Barbara County's cultural sector. It is intended as the opening salvo in a larger and longer cultural planning process that has yet to unfold.

Community consultations were conducted in two waves, the first one in July 2015 (focusing on South County) and the second one in September 2015 (focusing on North County). Members of the leadership group, working in pairs, conducted a total of 71 interviews using a common interview protocol. The list of interviewees was sourced by the leadership group, and included a wide range of stakeholders.



In addition, WolfBrown designed and conducted four focus group discussions to gain a broader perspective from stakeholders who are not deeply entrenched in the sector. These discussions included:

- Art teachers (in-school)
- Young adults (under 30 years old)
- North County Latino residents
- Seniors (retired, over 65 years old)

The protocols for these discussions, and for the interviews pursued two lines of questioning – the first line of questioning interrogating the interviewee's analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of Santa Barbara County's cultural ecosystem, and the second line of questioning eliciting a vision for the future. A separate report from WolfBrown details the findings of the community consultations.

The leadership group met again on October 20, 2015 to take stock of the community input and discuss the implications for the Creative Capital framework that follows.





## Definition of Terms

### The Cultural Sector



Throughout the first phase of planning work, much discussion revolved around what definition should be used to describe the sector of interest. Sitting around the table were representatives of historic sites, natural history and art museums, botanical gardens, zoos, performing and visual arts organizations, arts

education organizations, and funders that support all of these organizations. Throughout the discussions, a pro-arts bias was noted in the language used to talk about the “arts and culture” sector. All agreed that a definition of terms was necessary to be clear about the sector that is the focus of this work. A clear definition is important not only because it signals the scope of the planning work, but because it has the power to exclude or include large numbers of stakeholders who are important to the health and vitality of the sector.

The leadership group’s consensus as of the time of this writing is to use the term “cultural sector” with the understanding that its boundaries are porous and inclusive. This definition includes:

1. Individual cultural practitioners and creative entrepreneurs (see below for a definition), including those who earn money from their cultural practice or creative work, and those who don’t (e.g., landscape designers, spoken word performers, master teachers of folk dance traditions, fashion designers, DJs, illustrators)
2. Nonprofit providers of cultural experiences of an educational, scientific or artistic nature (e.g., natural science museums, historic sites, theatre companies, botanical gardens)
3. For-profit businesses whose products or services support other stakeholders in the cultural sector (e.g., galleries, dance studios, music clubs, crafts fairs)
4. For-profit business that employ cultural practitioners and creative entrepreneurs (e.g., design consultancies, advertising agencies, architecture practices, digital



media firms) and therefore have a stake in the health and vitality of the cultural sector

5. Educational institutions and programs that teach the next generation of cultural practitioners and creative entrepreneurs
6. Governmental bodies that operate cultural programs or facilities
7. Media organizations that contribute meaningfully to other stakeholders in the cultural sector (e.g., public radio, public television, informational websites)

The definition of “cultural sector” does not include:

1. Commercial entertainment businesses (e.g., film studios, music retailers, theme parks, commercial media)

## **Cultural Practitioners and Creative Entrepreneurs**

Given the broad and inclusive definition of the cultural sector, there was significant debate about how to refer to the individuals who practice creativity. While artists are a core part of this group, a more inclusive term was needed – one that includes people who work in the creative industries of advertising, architecture, art, crafts, design, fashion, film, music, dance, theatre, publishing, digital media, etc. The term should also embrace educators who teach any aspect of cultural practice, historians and others who work in the humanities, and scientists whose work reaches over into the realm of culture. Importantly, we also needed a term that would encompass the master teachers and cultural elders representing Santa Barbara County’s diverse cultural traditions.

The term “creatives” was felt to be awkward and overly commercialized. Ultimately, we landed on the term “cultural practitioners and creative entrepreneurs.” For the sake of brevity, this is sometimes shortened to just “cultural practitioners.”

## **Geography of Reference**

[Santa Barbara County](#) is the geography of reference for this planning work, encompassing an extraordinarily diverse collection of cities and places. This definition reflects the purview of the Santa Barbara Foundation and also reflects a genuine belief within the leadership cohort that diversity of cultural expression is an important asset, and that any plan for achieving a higher level of cultural vitality necessarily builds on the diverse cultural values and traditions represented across the County.

In practice, political boundaries have little influence over patterns of cultural participation, which tend to be shaped more by logistical factors such as drive time and natural barriers (e.g., mountains), and, of course, the availability and accessibility of relevant programs and activities.



## **Stakeholders**

The cultural sector has many stakeholders – individuals and organizations with a long-term stake in the health and vitality of the sector. The reciprocal nature of the relationship is key – stakeholders both take from and contribute to the sector in a fluent exchange of resources. The Steering Committee developed a preliminary list of stakeholders in order to identify interview subjects for the first rounds of consultations. The initial list stakeholder groups included:

- Business leaders with a stake in the creative community
- County officials
- Municipal leaders around the county
- Social service leaders
- School officials
- Artists
- Administrative leaders of cultural organizations
- Teachers and youth advocates
- Higher education stakeholders (faculty, administration)
- Philanthropists

As the plan is vetted in wider and wider circles, additional stakeholders and stakeholder groups will be identified and welcomed into the dialogue.



# The Current State of Santa Barbara County's Cultural Sector

The stakeholder interviews uncovered 11 overarching themes that describe the current state of the cultural sector in Santa Barbara County. Nine of these themes represent challenges and barriers to continued development of the County's cultural sector.

## **Santa Barbara County is rich in culture and beauty.**

When first asked to comment on arts and cultural activities and offerings in Santa Barbara County, interviewees and focus group participants were quick to point out the wealth of offerings. There is always a lot going on, and many find the quality of activities, institutions, art and cultural experience is astounding within South Santa Barbara County and Santa Barbara City, given its size in comparison to Los Angeles. In addition, the natural beauty of the landscape provides inspiration for artists, serves as an attraction for tourists with disposable income, and welcomes retirees and others.

## **There is a sense of solidarity and support within the artist community.**

Even though many visual artists in particular painted a gloomy picture of the state of the sector, most are hopeful about the future, bolstered by colleagues within the artist community. This is particularly the case for art teachers and young adults. One artist commented that if it weren't for the robust and supportive artist community, she wouldn't have stayed. Artists moving to North County, where there is more available and affordable space, are starting to build communities that are self-sustaining and able to support themselves because the cost of living is more reasonable than in the South.

## **Santa Barbara County's prioritization of tourism diverts resources from support of local communities, artists, and organizations.**

This finding offers a counterpoint to the first theme – that Santa Barbara County is rich in its offerings and natural beauty. Although tourism provides a much-needed source of income and energy to the region, some stakeholders expressed concern and frustration that the focus on attracting and supporting tourists deters and detracts from a profound need to better serve those who live and work in the County. One interviewee wondered, *"If we (Santa Barbara County) are so focused on tourists and the tourism industry, are we missing out on the opportunity to keep the community alive from within?"* The perceived lack of attention paid to the County's native arts and cultural infrastructure impairs the sector's ability to build a stronger audience and philanthropic base.

## **Access and resources are not distributed equitably.**

Although the County as a whole has many assets and resources, many feel these resources are not allocated equitably, and that access to cultural activities and opportunities is limited to a privileged few. The most dramatic difference is in access to funding. One interviewee lamented how *"...funds that are available are frequently only available for specific regions of the County. Frequently funding never reaches North County. Programs exist in South County*



*that could be brought to North County, but it never actually gets here.*” However, access to resources is not just a function of geography. While wealth is concentrated in the South part of the County, many communities in the South are still lack resources and opportunities, in particular low income populations and communities of color. Dramatic shifts in demographics in the region, as the County’s population will be majority Hispanic/Latino by 2060 (CA Dept. of Finance) will bring challenges around equitable access and distribution of resources to the forefront. Stakeholders recognized this as a key challenge for the County across multiple sectors, and the cultural field in particular.

**Geographic and political boundaries create significant disconnects between communities and cities.**

Stakeholders were quick to point out the significant divides and disparities between North and South Counties. Santa Barbara County encompasses a wide swath of land that bridges southern and central California. The geographical distance and travel time from Santa Barbara City to Santa Maria, one of the larger North County cities, is a barrier to collaboration and participation for arts organizations, artists and audiences. Although residents desire more unification and connection, they also feel a strong sense of pride in their individual communities, and voiced a strong desire to “stay local” and preserve and protect their community’s unique identity. These competing value systems – the desire for more equitable distribution of resources, and the desire to maintain unique and separate identities – will require careful negotiation to build bridges between communities, cities, and institutions, while recognizing and celebrating the unique identity of all.

**The high cost of living makes it difficult for artists to stay and work.**

Santa Barbara County, in particular South County, is an expensive place to live and work. Housing is an issue for everyone, from teachers to artists and skilled laborers. In particular, all the artists that participated in interviews and focus groups talked about how difficult it is for them to stay, to make a living, to do their work, and to actually support themselves through their art. Some artists simply don’t feel any support from the larger community, government or institutions. Others are moving to more affordable areas in North County, while some are leaving the area altogether. Artists and cultural practitioners are typical drivers of community organizing, change and economic growth. As the area becomes more expensive, more artists will be squeezed out, taking with them their creative energy and ideas.

**Arts education for school children is a high priority, but not provided equitably across the districts.**

Arts education was the focus of the discussion with art teachers and with seniors. Both groups commented on the unequal distribution of arts education opportunities for young people. Although there are several stellar arts education programs in the region, like ICAN’s much lauded public school program, many still feel that there are significant gaps in outreach and access to children. Low-income students, typically students of color, have little to no support network outside of the school which might make up for lack of in-school programming. Art teachers see first hand how art can help to solve significant problems in children’s lives and provide a much needed outlet for them to express their



feelings. However, the system continues to suffer from ongoing lack of funding and attention. Difficulties addressing basic issues like hunger and housing exacerbate these challenges.



**City and County regulations restrict opportunities for individual artists and groups wanting to create and foster creative communities.**

A major theme stemming from nearly all interviews and focus groups was the barriers raised by restrictive government regulations. These regulations, and the underlying lack of support and apathy of government officials, is a significant source of frustration. Many described how their efforts to create new arts spaces, increase support for public art, and encourage business support of the arts were “sabotaged” by overly restrictive municipal regulations and zoning ordinances. Municipal rules and regulations affect everyone, from the artist seeking approval to paint a mural to the business owner whose wall will serve as the canvas; from the community organizer seeking to mount a free cultural event or fair, to the artisan or entrepreneur who will show and sell their work. Many stakeholders feel that evidence of public support for cultural and creative expression is lacking, and signals a general lack of interest or energy around supporting a vibrant cultural sector.

**Holding on to traditional philanthropy and artistic practice may inhibit progress.**

There is a significant generation gap in regards to preferences, practice and philanthropy. One young interviewee argued that, “*Santa Barbara is full of older fuddy-duddy institutions with older fuddy-duddy users.*” There is a particular fear, especially amongst younger adults, around conservatism in regards to philanthropy and artistic practice. Artists fear that strongly adhering to classical expression and art forms without pushing the envelope will impede the evolution and future sustainability of the County’s cultural institutions. Other stakeholders, in particular some of the senior donors who have supported the arts and cultural institutions for some time, were concerned about the lack of attention and engagement amongst younger donors. Not everyone wants the next generation of donors to simply replicate the current system of philanthropy. Some would like to see a different philanthropic model that welcomes and supports the next generation of cultural practitioners, creative entrepreneurs, and cultural organizations. This raises important questions about what alternative philanthropic practices can be fostered to more fully support a larger, more complex and more diverse ecosystem of culture.

**There is a lack of leadership and cohesion across the sector.**

The fragmentation of the arts and culture sector is not only external – based on geography and cultural frame – but also internal. Many described the sector as lacking collaborative spirit, rampant with competition for money, space and audiences. As an arts administrator described it: “*What I’m experiencing is that individually we don’t network enough...We are having trouble connecting.*” Some of this disconnect might be a byproduct of strong competition for limited dollars and the natural instinct to protect one’s donors and audience. Regardless, the conversation around cohesion and integration within the sector ends up being one about leadership and responsibility. Who owns the larger challenge of cultural development? Who is taking responsibility for addressing the cultural sector’s problems? While some agencies are doing good work in supporting the sector, many feel that more should be done to knit organizations and communities together.



# Creative Capital: A Framework for Santa Barbara County

## What is Creative Capital?

Creative Capital is a conceptual framework for characterizing what makes Santa Barbara County's cultural sector vibrant. Fundamentally, it is an articulation of what success looks like in the long-term, and therein provides a basis for cultural planning.

WolfBrown has developed the idea of Creative Capital over the past eight years, through a variety of research, evaluation and planning projects, most recently in Dallas, Boston and Santa Barbara.

While each community must generate its own definition of Creative Capital in light of its unique cultural assets, history and challenges, a growing body of research and theory points to several elements of Creative Capital that are found in every community, to different degrees (in no particular order):

- Visible signs of creativity in the community – including, but not limited to, public art
- Financially stable cultural organizations with sufficient capital to adapt to changing conditions
- Strong and active leadership capable of strategic thinking both at the institutional level and at the community/ecosystem level
- Strong creative learning systems for children and adults
- Youth and families engaged in generative, creative activities at home and in the community
- Public policies that attract creative people and creative businesses
- A strong cluster of creative industries that provide work opportunities for cultural practitioners and creative entrepreneurs
- Positive social norms around creativity – the attitudes and belief systems that allow creativity to flourish

Just as financial capital is a currency in an economy of money, Creative Capital is a currency in an economy of meaning. It is an intangible asset that has very tangible and diverse expressions. Economists would identify Creative Capital as a 'public good' – it is non-excludable (i.e., impossible to prevent people from using it) and non-rivalrous (i.e., one individual's use does not reduce availability to others).

You cannot buy Creative Capital, but you can invest in the structures and conditions in which it grows. In fact, all individuals, families, neighborhoods and cities have Creative Capital, but to differing degrees, and in different ways. Moreover, the obstacles to building Creative Capital are different for different people and different communities.





In everyday terms, what does Creative Capital look like?

- A grandfather takes his grandchildren to a botanical garden to share his love for plants and trees
- Residents meet to discuss how young designers, artists and scientists can get involved in improving the neighborhood's street life and visual landscape
- A teacher keeps her classroom open after hours as a crafts studio for interested students
- Cultural institutions promote each other's programs
- A city government encourages youth by providing free public transportation to/from classes after hours and on weekends

When Creative Capital is shared broadly across a community, it is a driver of positive civic and social outcomes like quality of life, social connectedness, civic engagement, and youth development.

We define Creative Capital as **“a network of understandings, values, activities, and relationships that individuals, organizations, and communities develop when they share what earlier generations have imagined and when they, in turn, generate and pass on what they imagine.”**

Creative Capital, therefore, acts as a sort of connective tissue bridging cultures, generations, domains and disciplines:

- Individuals with Creative Capital lead richly expressive lives, solve problems, and participate in civic life;
- Parents and caregivers with Creative Capital are raising the next generation of innovators;
- Institutions with high levels of Creative Capital are both imaginative and relevant;
- Neighborhoods with Creative Capital forge social cohesion out of diversity;
- Cities with high levels of Creative Capital are culturally vibrant and inclusive.

In short, everyone has a role to play in nurturing and sustaining Santa Barbara's Creative Capital.

## **Value of the Creative Capital Framework**

The value of adopting a framework for cultural vitality lies in its inclusiveness, its flexibility, and its usefulness: A well-designed outcome framework can:

- Help the sector's stakeholders, including municipalities, set immediate and longer-term priorities;
- Guide the formulation of effective and sustainable strategies;



- Accommodate competing priorities and productively channel the interests of myriad stakeholders;
- Focus policy on emerging values in cultural planning such as access and inclusion;
- Galvanize civic leadership, political, and financial support;
- Forge cross-sector partnerships and creative approaches to funding, re-imagining venues and spaces, and projects that foster creativity across disciplines.

In short, a successful framework establishes core values, allows a full range of stakeholders to see themselves as part of a larger whole, motivates action, and creates accountability.

In adopting this framework, Santa Barbara's cultural leaders are making a fundamental statement about the critical role that culture plays in the quality of life of every resident of Santa Barbara County. They are committing to a view of cultural vitality that...

- is rooted in the creativity of its citizens, from youth to seniors,
- supports creative activities in homes, neighborhoods, schools, libraries, and parks, as well as major venues,
- draws on the diversity of the many cultures contributing to the liveliness of the county,
- builds cross-sector partnerships to build and sustain the county's cultural vitality, and
- views culture as a source of energy and innovation that can inform all aspects of the county's life.

Creative Capital is radical in the sense that it recognizes and values the entirety of the arts, cultural and creative ecosystem, not just the institutionalized and professionalized parts of the ecosystem. It does not privilege one set of cultural values or traditions over another, but rather reflects the realities of an increasingly intercultural society.



## Seven Pillars of Santa Barbary County's Creative Capital

This section lays out the Creative Capital framework as it evolved in the first phase of planning work in Santa Barbara County. The seven pillars presented here are based on extensive consultations with a wide range of stakeholders across the County, and are the result of significant debate and discussion by the leadership group. There are many inter-relationships between and amongst the pillars. While the framework that follows reflects a good deal of community input, it should be considered a work in progress. The framework should continue to evolve as cultural leaders consult with wider and wider circles of stakeholders, all of whom will have valuable opinions about outcomes and priorities.

Pillar	Stakeholders
1. Strong and engaged leadership	Every stakeholder in the cultural ecosystem benefits from strong and engaged leadership; the value system starts with the intrinsic value that leaders gain from their stewardship
2. Creatively engaged people and neighborhoods	All County residents; parents and caregivers of children and youth; caregivers of older adults; higher education; teachers; cultural masters; the healthcare sector; neighborhood associations
3. Visible signs of creativity throughout the County	All County residents who see visible signs of creativity; makers involved in producing creative work for public display; there are also benefits to property owners and municipalities
4. A strong pool of cultural practitioners and creative entrepreneurs	Cultural practitioners and creative entrepreneurs, who are able to live and make work in Santa Barbara County; the education sector benefits from being able to recruit teachers from a strong pool of cultural practitioners
5. An active marketplace for culture and creativity	All County residents benefit from good information about cultural activities; cultural organizations are stakeholders in free public programs and events that build awareness and appreciation for their programs; cultural practitioners and creative entrepreneurs benefit from increased support of their work; businesses who benefit from cultural tourism
6. A sustainable infrastructure of cultural institutions and facilities	Cultural institutions; all County residents benefit from the availability of relevant cultural programs and suitable facilities
7. Supportive public sector policies and goals	Municipalities themselves benefit from policies that build Creative Capital, as reflected in revitalization, public engagement, strong schools, etc.; all other stakeholders in the ecosystem also benefit from good cultural policy





## **Pillar 1: Strong and engaged leadership**

This pillar reflects the overriding importance of leadership to the long-term health and sustainability of the cultural sector, and stems directly from stakeholders' desire for a stronger leadership at the sector level. Steering Committee members identified this as a primary outcome for Santa Barbara County. Without strong leadership, the outcomes articulated under the other six pillars are unlikely to materialize.

Specifically, we refer here to leadership at four levels – institutional leadership, philanthropic leadership, creative leadership, and leadership through advocacy.

- A. A pool of active, talented, diverse and culturally competent leaders guides Santa Barbara County's nonprofit cultural organizations at the board, staff and volunteer levels
  - i. Leaders have opportunities to learn and grow, and are able to draw on best practices in nonprofit management
  - ii. A spirit of trust and cooperation connects Santa Barbara County's cultural institutions with each other
  - iii. Leaders are drawn from diverse communities across the county, bridging the North/South County divide
- B. Santa Barbara County's creative leaders – in the sciences, arts, design, technology and other sectors – are in regular dialogue and grow to see themselves as a collective resource capable of elevating public discourse, solving problems, and generating social and economic impact
- C. A new generation of philanthropic leaders considers, designs and pilot tests new approaches to funding that build the County's Creative Capital at the community level
- D. Stakeholders in the County's cultural sector are effectively mobilized in advocating for public policies that build Creative Capital, and in demonstrating the power of the cultural sector to drive positive civic outcomes
  - i. Strengthened public will to advocate for culture and creativity as a valued component of Santa Barbara County quality of life
  - ii. Board and staff leaders of nonprofit organizations are engaged in advocating for the sector as a whole, not just for their own organization
  - iii. Leaders in the cultural sector have a growing voice in civic affairs more generally, and can be found on the leadership boards and committees of other types of institutions, associations and agencies (e.g., business associations, school boards)



## **Pillar 2: Creatively engaged people and neighborhoods**

Santa Barbara County is alive with active learners and makers – at all levels of skill. Many stakeholders articulated a vision for more programs and venues that encourage and support people from all backgrounds and skill levels in coming together to learn, make and share cultural practices and creative ideas and objects. This pillar focuses on the outcome of equitable access to an expressive life, and assuring that County residents have the opportunities and resources they need to live the creative lives they aspire to lead.

- A. Children and youth across the County have equitable access to high quality arts education and creative learning opportunities.
  - i. System-wide access to arts education and creative learning in, after, and out of school
  - ii. Parents and caregivers value creative activities as important to their child's success in life.
  - iii. [There are many other outcomes here that stakeholders will incorporate]
  
- B. Adults at all levels of proficiency have access to high quality creative learning opportunities
  - i. Adults have broad, diversified and coordinated access to creative learning programs
  - ii. Cultural practitioners and creative entrepreneurs are supported through peer social networks
  - iii. Young adults who aspire to creative vocations have access to supportive networks, training and internship programs throughout the County that span high school, college, and career
  - iv. The public can easily find free information about how to access creative learning opportunities (see also Pillar 5-B)
  
- C. Youth and families are engaged in generative, creative activities at home and in the community
  - i. Youth have more opportunities to be creative in their towns and neighborhoods
  - ii. Cultural traditions representing the County's diverse populations are sustained and nurtured, and passed along from generation to generation (e.g., master teachers are recognized and celebrated; local and regional festivals are easily permitted)



### **Pillar 3: Visible signs of creativity throughout the County**

While Creative Capital is an innate quality of every human being, it is often invisible. Visible manifestations of creativity, therefore, in both public and private settings, are essential to the long-term health of the cultural sector and to social wellbeing more generally. In interviews, however, numerous stakeholders expressed the view that Santa Barbara County's visual landscape, in many places, is unimaginative and does not reflect the creative spirit of the county's diverse communities. Outward expressions of creativity can take many forms and might emanate from the fields of history, botany, design, engineering and technology as well as the arts and culture, and signal something important to the community about its capacity to imagine and invent. While public art can contribute much to this outcome, this pillar contemplates outcomes and strategies much broader than those associated with temporary or permanent exhibitions of public art.

- A. Residents throughout Santa Barbara County are activated in designing and maintaining creative living spaces
  - i. County residents display more art and creative things in their homes
  - ii. County residents are able to display and celebrate their creative work in a “digital creative commons”
  - iii. Neighbors support each other in maintaining the exteriors of their homes, and in designing, planting and maintaining attractive yards and gardens
  
- B. County residents encounter expressions of creativity in public spaces in their everyday lives
  - i. More municipalities develop public art programs and other programs that engage communities in collective acts of imagination
  - ii. Cultural practitioners and creative entrepreneurs actively work to identify opportunities and locations for creative projects
  - iii. Schools, neighborhood associations, business associations and other community organizations can access resources and find support for creating temporary or permanent creative projects with or without municipal support
  
- C. Scientists, artists, historians, architects and designers are called upon with increasing frequency to contribute to community planning and design processes that affect the built environment (e.g., improving transit shelters)
  - i. Leaders in the cultural sector gain a clearer understand of how their knowledge and assets can contribute to community development outcomes and placemaking



## **Pillar 4: A strong pool of cultural practitioners and creative entrepreneurs**

Santa Barbara County is home to many cultural practitioners and creative entrepreneurs, and has many training programs, including those offered through colleges and universities. A key challenge is expanding opportunities to join this community, surmounting barriers of affordable housing and the general cost-of living in South County, and the lack of venues and funding in North County. Unlike Pillar 2, which addresses the outcomes of youth and adult participation in creative endeavors, this pillar asserts that the County's cultural ecosystem cannot be healthy without a strong pool of cultural practitioners and creative entrepreneurs who seek to earn a living, or a portion of their living, from their creative work.

- A. Cultural practitioners choose to stay in Santa Barbara County, or relocate to the County, because it offers a nurturing environment for them to create
  - i. The number of cultural practitioners living in Santa Barbara County holds steady or increases
  - ii. More cultural practitioners can find suitable and affordable spaces to live and make work
  - iii. More artists are able to access networks of supportive peers and collaborators (e.g., social groups, artist collectives, listserves)
  - iv. Individual practitioners can access programs and services that support their creative growth and economic success
- B. Public demand for the creative work of local cultural practitioners and creative entrepreneurs grows, including an increase in the number of businesses that draw on the work of area practitioners (e.g., design studios, galleries, music clubs)
  - i. Santa Barbara County residents support the work of local cultural practitioners by collecting their work, attending their performances, or supporting their cause in other ways
- C. Cultural practitioners are well connected and civically engaged, generating collective impact
  - i. There are recognized networks/collectives of cultural practitioners functioning in communities around the County
  - ii. Cultural practitioners are activated in the work of advocating for public policies that foster Creative Capital
  - iii. Cultural practitioners occupy leadership positions inside and outside of their fields (e.g., city boards and commissions, school boards, other municipal bodies, neighborhood and community organizations)





## **Pillar 5: An active marketplace for arts, culture, and creativity**

Historically, cultural planning has focused on supporting the supply of programs offered by nonprofit organizations. Indeed, nonprofit institutions do much to build demand in the marketplace for arts and culture. However, the research literature and stakeholder input on the ground in Santa Barbara County suggest a superset of outcomes related to building demand that transcend the self-interests of individual nonprofits. Stakeholders envisioned a future in which County residents participate vigorously in cultural programs and activities across disciplines, cultures and communities. These outcomes under this pillar include the benefits resulting from participation in free programs, the outcomes stemming from a well-informed citizenry armed with the knowledge it needs to take advantage of all sorts of cultural programs and activities, and the outcomes resulting from equitable access and introductory experiences.

- A. The City of Santa Barbara collaborates with other municipalities, cultural institutions, and other stakeholders to drive cultural tourism
  - i. Residents welcome and support what it takes for Santa Barbara County to be a world-class cultural destination
  - ii. Visitors come to Santa Barbara County for cultural events, not just wine and the outdoors
  - iii. Santa Barbara County develops distinctive events/ festivals that generate a critical mass of tourism, public attention, identification and production beyond the region
  
- B. Santa Barbara County residents have access to a continuous flow of high quality, multi-lingual, culturally relevant information about cultural programs and opportunities, so that the community can access what is offered
  - i. Information about cultural programs is distributed widely, through existing social networks and media conduits
  - ii. ESL/ELL residents of Santa Barbara County can access information about relevant cultural programs in their first/primary language
  
- C. Santa Barbara County residents have access to, and take advantage of, free public programs representing a diversity of cultural forms
  - i. Residents attend cultural events from traditions outside of their own life experience and neighborhoods, bridging locations, economic differences, as well as ethnic and language differences
  - ii. Free public cultural programs take place in all areas of the County (i.e., there is distributed access)
  - iii. Residents are aware of, and participate in, signature cultural festivals and annual events that play a role in the symbolic construction of place



- iv. Residents participate in free cultural programs offered throughout the County, offered by public libraries, parks, and community centers
  - v. Residents take advantage of free admission programs at cultural institutions
- D. Residents who are new to the area, economically disadvantaged, disabled, or otherwise marginalized have access to high quality cultural experiences
- i. Youth and families that experience economic and other challenges can access cultural experiences through coordinated or centralized access programs (e.g., NYC's Cool Culture program)
  - ii. Cultural organizations work together to consider programming through the lens of introductory experiences – pathways into Santa Barbara's artistic, historical and scientific resources – for those who are new to the County or eager to expand their own horizons.
  - iii. Stakeholders countywide come together to mitigate barriers related to transportation and cost



## Pillar 6: A sustainable infrastructure of cultural institutions and facilities

This pillar addresses the financial sustainability and physical infrastructure that support the County's cultural vitality, with a special focus on achieving a more equitable distribution of resources across the county.

- A. Nonprofit cultural organizations have access to reliable funding support, both public and private
  - i. Cultural organizations are better able to plan and achieve better capitalization
  - ii. The base of private funders and philanthropists is diversified, reducing reliance on a small number of funders
  - iii. North County develops a stronger culture of philanthropy amongst residents, foundations and government agencies
- B. Santa Barbara County's nonprofit arts and cultural organizations increase their capacity to conceive, produce, and present relevant programming that engages the community in all its diversity
  - i. Resources are available to nonprofit cultural organizations that want to strengthen their *creative process* or diversify the creative voices contributing to their programmatic output
  - ii. Cultural organizations, whatever their programmatic focus, develop a stronger diagnostic capacity to understand community need and to identify opportunities to participate in civic discourse and placemaking
- C. Santa Barbara County's nonprofit cultural organizations and their constituents have access to suitable facilities
  - i. Organizations with existing exhibition and performing spaces (high schools, colleges, and universities) open their spaces to community groups
  - ii. Future decisions about investments in capital facilities are guided by an objective analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the infrastructure of existing facilities
  - iii. Facilities that serve a diverse cross-section of the public are prioritized
  - iv. Private development is leveraged to create affordable spaces for nonprofit providers



## **Pillar 7: Supportive public sector policies and goals**

This pillar addresses how municipal and County policies support cultural activity, and how widely public officials use culture and creativity to invigorate policy in other sectors such as health, housing, transportation and the environment. We recognize that this pillar is complex and aspirational in nature – a work in progress. However, as many stakeholders and Steering Committee members argued, the County's cultural sector cannot thrive in the long run without supportive public sector policies.

- A. Municipalities around Santa Barbara County grow to recognize and publicly validate the essential role that culture and creativity plays in public life, and increasingly adopt public policies and regulations that foster creativity and build the Creative Capital of their residents; these policies should:
  - i. Serve to attract creative people and creative businesses to Santa Barbara County
  - ii. Allow diverse expressions of heritage, design and architecture
  - iii. Promote the development of cultural districts in cities and towns across the County
- B. Commercial development contributes financial and other resources for the cultural sector
- C. Municipalities around Santa Barbara County increasingly play a leadership role in convening and catalyzing cultural resources
  - i. Municipalities convene private funders and other stakeholders to explore innovative new public/private sector funding programs
- D. A cultural perspective is integrated into a wide range of municipal operations and departments around the County; there is a broad “civic investment in culture and creativity” as a source of vitality.



## Recommendations for Next Steps

To review, WolfBrown's original proposal to the leadership group identified three phases of work:

**Phase 1: Defining Success.** The first phase of work involves a series of facilitated convenings and community consultations to define what a thriving cultural sector looks like. What are the elements of Creative Capital, and who are the stakeholders in each element? What leadership and resources are required to advance this initiative? This is the essential work of defining success.

**Phase 2: Benchmarking Creative Capital.** Based on the framework for Creative Capital produced in Phase 1, identify indicators of success, assess the feasibility of gathering this information, and gather baseline data as appropriate. This research will likely include analysis of existing secondary data, as well as primary research such as a resident survey.

**Phase 3: Strategy Framework: A Plan for Building Creative Capital.** The third phase of work will develop a strategy framework that addresses each element of the Creative Capital framework, laying out a long-term roadmap for cultural vitality. In some respects, this work will resemble community cultural planning work.

With Phase 1 now completed, the leadership group can take stock of the process as it has played out thus far and consider how to maintain the momentum without compromising the organic nature of the process.

The primary focus of the work that follows should be: 1) expanding the base of leadership and community involvement in the planning process; and 2) exploring funding vehicles for supporting the eventual plan. As noted earlier, lack of these two resources – leadership and funding – are the main reasons why cultural plans do not achieve their goals. Every care must be taken to avoid letting the process “get ahead of itself” by hastily formulating strategies that do not have broad support or by hatching a long list of unfunded programs that stand little chance of getting implemented.

### A Proposed Structure for Moving Forward

We would like to propose a basic structure to the planning work moving forward – a structure that draws from the seven pillars of Creative Capital. While the overall planning work will always require the guidance of a small group of leaders, there are far too many components of Creative Capital for one group of people to oversee. Any group of community leaders, no matter how dedicated, will stagger under the weight of such comprehensive framework.



We envision a distributed leadership model in which independent task forces are formed to tackle each of the pillars (i.e., seven task forces). The precise design of the task forces will need to be debated and finalized. The general idea is to offer people a chance to work on the task force that most closely reflects their own interests and priorities. At least one member of each task force should sit on the Steering Committee to ensure a level of coordination. Some people might sit on multiple task forces, or might periodically move from one task force to another, to explore another facet of Creative Capital.

This would represent a highly flexible and decentralized approach to community cultural planning. Each task force would choose its own leader following an established structure (e.g., a chairperson serves for one-year, with a vice-chairperson assuming the chair the next year). Additionally, we might draw on the local talent pool to recruit task force facilitators.

The task forces would be tasked with:

- Exploring and developing the intended outcomes associated with their pillar
- Examining best practices in other communities, if necessary drawing on outside expertise (e.g., guest speakers)
- Identifying indicators of success associated with their outcomes (with technical support from WolfBrown)
- Developing strategies for accomplishing their outcomes, and setting priorities (i.e., the actual planning work in Phase 3)
- Liaising with other task forces that have a bearing on their work
- Expanding and renewing task force membership so as to maintain continuity and momentum

The task forces would have substantial latitude as to the process they wish to use to accomplish their work. Some might meet monthly, while others might meet quarterly. Some might engage graduate students in supporting roles (e.g., best practices research) while others might proceed without any support. The only requirement would be an annual report to the community. Each year, the leadership group can take stock of the task force process and make changes, as necessary, to ensure that their work is advancing the larger cause of building the county's Creative Capital.

## **Phase 2A - Leadership Development and Coalition Building**

The Creative Capital framework articulated in this report needs to be vetted with stakeholders. It requires a good deal of explanation, and will take time to take root. Does the framework make sense to people? What improvements would make it better? Do they see themselves as stakeholders in its success? How can they get involved?



In sum, we do not feel it is time yet to focus on defining and measuring indicators of success, as originally intended for Phase 2. Instead, we propose an additional phase of work focused on: 1) vetting the Creative Capital framework with stakeholders across the county; 2) widening the base of leadership for the planning process; and 3) exploring alternative funding mechanisms for the ultimate plan. Specific tasks may include:

1. Conduct additional interviews to fill gaps in the list of stakeholders that should have ground-level input on the framework before it “goes public”
2. Create the communications materials (e.g., two-page summary, 3-minute video) that will convey the Creative Capital framework to regular folks
3. Convene and facilitate a series of town hall meetings to present and discuss the Creative Capital framework with stakeholders across the county, recruiting for the task forces along the way
4. Design the task forces, recruit initial task force leaders, and work with the leaders to map out their first year of work
5. Consider what administrative and consulting support will be required to keep the task forces engaged and productive, and how local resources (i.e., cultural facilitators) can be used to reduce dependence on paid consultants
6. Recruit a paid coordinator to support the process moving forward
7. Hold a series of meetings with philanthropists to open up a new dialogue about a range of potential funding mechanisms for the eventual plan

This work could play out over a period of approximately six months (e.g., January through June 2016). In addition to the continued involvement of the leadership group, this phase of work would require an ongoing level of local administrative support, as well as consulting support from WolfBrown.

## **Phase 2B - Activating the Task Forces**

The second part of Phase 2 would involve starting up the task force process and letting them run for a 12-month cycle. This work would include:

1. Preparing orientation materials for each task force
2. Assisting task force leaders in preparing agendas
3. Onboarding task force members (e.g., orientation webinars)
4. Facilitating initial task force meetings and work in between meetings, with the goal of self-sufficiency after several meetings
5. Assure that the work of the task forces is appropriately captured and transmitted to everyone in the system (full transparency)
6. Leading discussions at the task force level about outcomes and indicators, with the goal of moving each task force to consensus about indicators of success within six to nine months
7. Continue the dialogue about funding mechanisms



8. Preparing an initial evaluation of the task force process, with recommendations for improvements

This work would be accomplished by the local coordinator and WolfBrown, working in partnership, with the goal of reducing WolfBrown's level of involvement.





### **Phase 3 - Strategy Framework: A Plan for Building Creative Capital**

Phase 3 is still envisioned as the core planning work. In reality, some of the task forces are likely to drift naturally into discussions of strategies and tactics within their pillar during their first year of work.

The most opportune time to shift a task force's attention to discussions of strategy will be different for each task force. Some of them might require more time to explore best practices and consult with stakeholders, while others may be ready to jump into the strategy work after only a few meetings. For example, the task force for Pillar 7, "Supportive public sector policies and goals" may wish to focus on cultivating a core group of public officials for a year or more, without committing to specific strategies.

In reality, the "cultural plan" will come together over a period of time, with strategies associated with different pillars moving forward on different timelines, and with differing degrees of specificity, and with differing resources behind them.

Although the task force process cannot go on forever, we may want to let go of the idea that the cultural plan for Santa Barbara County will ever be "done, finalized and adopted" in favor of the idea that a blueprint for cultural vitality for a community as diverse as Santa Barbara County is, necessarily, a work in progress, and constantly evolving.



## **Appendix 1: List of Interviewees**

### **July 16-17, 2015 Cycle of Interviews**

Brad Nack, Artist, Director, Arts Fund Gallery  
Jane Mulfinger, Professor and Chair, UCSB Department of Art  
David Pratt, Executive Director, Santa Barbara Symphony  
Justin Rizzo-Weaver, Concert & Publicity Manager, Community Arts Music Association of Santa Barbara, Inc.  
Larry J. Feinberg, Robert and Mercedes Eichholz Director & CEO, Santa Barbara Museum of Art  
Ashlyn Strahle, Club Director, Goleta, Boys and Girls Club, Goleta  
Patsy Hicks, Director of Education, Santa Barbara Museum of Art  
Sigrid Wright, Assistant Director, CEC, Earth Day  
Cathy Oliverson, Manager for Performing Arts & Director Educational Outreach, UCSB Arts and Lectures, Viva El Arte  
Catherine Boyer, 3rd district, SB County Arts Commissioner  
Dr. Donna Ronzone, Principal Roosevelt, VAPA, Roosevelt Elementary  
Roman Baratiak, Associate Director, Arts and Lectures  
Nancy Gifford, Artist, Curator & Board member (Arts Fund), SB Arts Fund Board member, MCA Board member  
Crista Dix, Owner, Wall Space Gallery  
Tim Mikel, Managing Director, State St. Ballet  
Andrew Harper, Executive Director, Center for Life Long Learning, SBCC  
Mary Heebner / MacDuff Everton, Artist, Independent artist  
Ernesto Paredes, Executive Director, Easy lift  
Sheila Cushman, Executive Director, MOXI  
Kim Yasuda, Professor, Spatial Studies, Art Dept., UC Santa Barbara  
Dan Burnham, Philanthropist, Board of the SB CPA  
Jim Kearns, Board Member/ Funder, ICAN  
Laurie Recordon, Owner, Indigo Hotel  
Ron Gallo, President/CEO, Santa Barbara Foundation  
Alice Scharper, Dean of Arts, SBCC  
Katie Laris, Production Chairman Theater, SBCC  
Amber O'rourke, Art teacher, SB Community Academy  
Michael Towbes, Philanthropist, The Towbes Group/Montecito Bank and Trust  
Lindsay Johnson, Executive Director, Explore ecology  
Judy Larson, Director Westmont Ridley-Tree Museum of Art, Westmont Ridley-Tree Museum of Art  
Natalie Gensac, Founder, Youth Interactive  
Ben Romo, Executive Director, First Five  
Sarah Cunningham, Atkinson Gallery Director, SBCC Gallery  
K.C. Thompson, 3rd district, SB County Arts Commissioner



Andrew Harper, Executive Director, Center for Life Long Learning, SBCC  
Joan Davidson, Trustee, Robert & Mercedes Eichholz Foundation

## **September 11, 2015 Cycle of Interviews**

Holly Cline, Executive Director, Santa Ynez Valley Arts  
Mary Harris, Arts Advocate  
Adam Jahnke, Arist / Recycling Coordinator (UCSB), Employed by UCSB Associated Students  
Jeff Theimer, Executive Director, New Noise Music Foundation  
Dr. Niki Sandoval, Education Director, Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians  
Teresa Reyburn, City of Santa Maria Recreation Services Manager  
Yleana Velasco, City of Santa Maria Recreation and Parks Commissioner, PLAY board member  
Dr. Steve Seaford, Superintendent & Principal, Solvang School District  
Alice Patino, Mayor of Santa Maria, City of Santa Maria  
Dennis Smitherman, 5th district, SB County Arts Commissioner  
Alma Hernandez de Wilson, Executive Director, Thrive/Community Action Commission/Guad USD  
Samuel Duarte, Language Justice Network Coordinator, Thrive  
Jim Richardson, Mayor, City of Solvang  
Karen Evangelista, Executive Director and 3rd District Art Commissioner, Guadalupe Cultural Arts and Education Center  
Gina Keough, Director, Visitor and Convention Bureau, Santa Maria Chamber  
Ken Ostini, Pres/CEO, Lompoc Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Esther Bates, Executive Director, Elverhoj Museum of Hist and Art  
Hannah Rubalcava, 4th District Arts Commissioner, SB County Arts Commissioner  
Seyburn Zorthian, Artist  
Craig Shafer, Member and past President, Santa Maria Arts Council  
Lee Rosenberg, Arts Advocate  
Ashley Costa, Executive Director, Lompoc Valley Health Care Org.  
Pam Pilcher, Executive Director, Solvang Theaterfest  
Sandie Mullin, Executive Director, Arts Outreach  
Mark Booher, Artistic Director / Associate Dean, Pacific Conservatory Theater (PCPA)  
Joe Payne, Arts and Culture Writer, Santa Maria Sun  
Andrew Carter, City Administrator, City of Guadalupe



## **Appendix 2: Summary of Findings from Stakeholder Consultations**

Eleven themes emerged from the questioning around the current state of the sector.

- Santa Barbara County is rich in culture and beauty.
- There is a sense of solidarity and support within the artist community.
- Santa Barbara County's prioritization of tourism diverts resources from support of local artists, organizations and communities.
- Access and resources are not distributed equally.
- Geographic and political boundaries create significant disconnects between communities and cities.
- The high cost of living in Santa Barbara makes it difficult for artists to stay and work.
- Arts education for school children is a high priority, but not provided equitably across districts.
- City and County regulations restrict opportunities for individual artists and groups wanting to create and foster creative communities.
- Holding on to traditional philanthropy and artistic practice may inhibit progress.
- There is a lack of leadership and cohesion across the sector.

Nine themes or “visions for the future” were culled from the questioning around what the future should look like – what defines success in terms of cultural vitality.

- Arts and culture is embedded into the fabric of every neighborhood, the expressions of which are readily visible.
- Santa Barbara County is known to visitors as a cultural destination, while County residents take full advantage of cultural offerings.
- The arts and culture sector is a well-knit community, with strong leadership that drives vision and fosters collaboration.
- Local residents define and drive the change they wish to see in their community.
- All school children have exposure to the arts and sustained access to arts learning.
- City and County governments passionately support the arts. In turn, this inspires business and community engagement.
- New funding sources and systems are available at the community level.
- Santa Barbara County attracts and retains a vibrant population of cultural practitioners.
- There is openness to experimentation and the “new.”

A full accounting of the findings of the community consultations may be found in a separate report from WolfBrown, “Summary of Findings from Stakeholder Interviews and Focus Groups,” October 2015.



## Appendix 3: Stakeholder Interview Protocol

Building Santa Barbara County's Creative Capital  
Individual Depth Interviewing Exercise  
September 11, 2015

Prepared by WolfBrown

### Protocol Overview

Introduction by the Interviewer	2 minutes
Respondent Introductions	5 minutes
Perceptions of current state of arts and culture sector	15 minutes
Vision for Santa Barbara County's future	20 minutes
Creative Capital framework exercise	15 minutes
Wrap-up	3 minutes

[Notes to the Interviewers are bracketed.] We will review the interview protocol in detail at the orientation session.

### Before You Start

- Review your Respondent Profile Sheet, which provides background information about the interviewee
- Make sure your Respondent is comfortable
- Introduce yourself and ask the Recorder to introduce himself/herself [name and organizational affiliation]
- Explain that the Recorder is here to capture the conversation, but won't participate in the discussion until the end

### Interviewers Introductions (2 minutes)

- Thank you for meeting with us today. Before we dive into questions, I'd like to give you just a little background. Our conversation today is part of a larger effort by Santa Barbara County's cultural leaders and the Santa Barbara Foundation to define a future path for improving and supporting arts and culture in Santa Barbara County. We are currently in Phase 1 of a multi-year project, which focuses on defining a vision for the future.
- Specifically, I'll be asking you questions about your impressions of the current state of arts and culture in the County, as well as your vision for the future, and how you see yourself and others contributing to achieving that future vision.
- Regarding confidentiality, I can assure you that your name will not be associated with your comments. In other words, some of the things you say might be



repeated, but will not be attributed to you in any printed reports. Is this alright with you?

- Please be as candid as possible with your responses. If I ever ask a question that you'd rather not answer for any reason, just tell me you'd prefer to skip that question, OK?
- I promise to let you go in 60 minutes. Do you have any questions before we begin?

### RESPONDENT INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)

1. It would be helpful if you could start by giving me a little background on yourself. Tell me a little about yourself, your work and how long you've lived in Santa Barbara County.

Probe: What brought you here?

2. [If not answered in the previous question] How do you express yourself creatively? [If necessary, prompt with responses from stakeholder profile sheet] Any others?

Probe: Which creative activities you described above are most important to you?

[For artists] Probe: Where do you find inspiration for your own creative work?

### PERCEPTIONS OF CURRENT STATE OF ARTS AND CULTURE SECTOR (15 MINUTES)

3. Assume that I don't know anything about Santa Barbara County: How would you describe arts and cultural life here, overall? In other words, give me the elevator speech about arts and cultural life in Santa Barbara County.

Probe: What organizations, places or people do I need to know about?

4. Think about all the components of the arts and cultural sector here – programs, institutions, opportunities, people – and all the domains from visual arts and crafts to theatre, dance, gardening, landscaping, and literary arts. In other words, think about the entire arts and culture ecosystem. Where do you think the ecosystem is best supported, and where does the ecosystem deserve more support?
5. [For artists and cultural managers] As a professional working in the arts and cultural sector, do you feel like you have an adequate support network here in Santa Barbara County? Why or why not?

Probe: Are there enough opportunities for you to learn and grow as a professional working in the arts?



6. [For arts educators] What is your impression of the availability and quality of arts education programs for youth in Santa Barbara County?
7. [For government/business/foundations] What are some of the most pressing community issues you are working on today?

Probe: What role does the arts and culture sector play in the broader civic dialogue? In other words, how do arts and culture fit into the bigger picture civic and philanthropic issues you've just described above, if at all?

Probe: What stake does your [business/agency/foundation] have in a thriving arts and cultural sector here in Santa Barbara County?

### VISION FOR SANTA BARBARA COUNTY'S FUTURE (20 MINUTES)

8. As I mentioned at the beginning of our conversation, the key goal of Phase 1 of this work is to define a vision for a thriving and culturally vital Santa Barbara County. I'd like you now to open up your mind, and imagine for me what such a future would look like, from your point of view. You can take a few moments to think about it.  
[Pause]

Walk me through your Santa Barbara County of the future. How would I know that things had changed, that the County was a vital center for creativity in all forms? What would be the evidence of such a sea change?

9. What would be most striking difference(s) in the Santa Barbara County of the future compared to now?
10. What is holding back Santa Barbara County from achieving this vision?
11. What do you think needs to happen over the next 10 to 20 years to significantly build Santa Barbara County's Creative Capital?

### CREATIVE CAPITAL FRAMEWORK EXERCISE (15 MINUTES)

Now, I'd like to take you through a little exercise. [Pass interviewee the Creative Capital handout.]

12. On this sheet of paper are four "pillars" of a community's Creative Capital, a framework for cultural vitality. High levels of Creative Capital foster cultural vibrancy and allow residents of a community to lead richly satisfying creative lives.

We believe that each of these pillars represents a key component of Creative Capital. Underneath each of pillars is a set of subcomponents. This list could be re-organized



in any way, even moving subcomponents around within pillars or lifting them to a higher- level priority.

Take a moment to review the framework, and then I'm going to ask you some questions.

[Allow a few minutes for interviewee to review handout.]

13. Which of the four is most important to you personally? In other words, which of the four would you promote as the number one priority for Santa Barbara County? Why? Are there any subcomponents you would promote to a top level priority.
14. Comparing this framework to your vision, is there anything you would change about your vision? What is it, and why would make that change?

### Wrap-Up

- Ask the Recorder if s/he has any questions or clarifications for the respondent.
- Thank You!

## Four Pillars of Creative Capital - Exercise/Handout

### **Instructions:**

- Consider each of the four pillars, below. Then use the space below to briefly describe what each pillar means to you – what would success look like? For example, what would creatively engaged families and neighborhoods look like in Santa Barbara County? How would we know if we've succeeded?
  - Select the pillar that is most important to you.
1. Creatively engaged families and neighborhoods
  2. A strong pool of artists and creative entrepreneurs
  3. A sustainable infrastructure of arts and cultural institutions
  4. Supportive civic/municipal policies and goals





## Appendix 4: Focus Group Discussion Guides

Building Santa Barbara County's Creative Capital  
Focus Groups with Target Stakeholder Groups  
September 10-12, 2015

Prepared by WolfBrown

<u>Location</u>	<u>Date and Time</u>	<u>Moderator</u>
225 Mission St. Santa Barbara	Sept. 10, 4:30 – 6:00 pm	Rebecca Ratzkin
225 Mission St. Santa Barbara	Sept. 10, 6:45 – 8:15 pm	Rebecca Ratzkin
4681 11th Street, Guadalupe	Sept. 11, 6:15 – 8:00 pm	Alan Brown
225 Mission St. Santa Barbara	Sept. 12, 10:00 – 11:30 am	Rebecca Ratzkin

### Supplies

Nameplates, Sharpies for name plates, pens for respondents  
Handouts: Creative Capital Handout

### Discussion Topics & Time Allocations (90 minutes)

Moderator's Introduction	5 minutes
Participant Introductions and Creative Activity	15 minutes
Perceptions of current state of arts and culture sector	30 minutes
Vision for Santa Barbara County's future	30 minutes
Wrap-up	5 minutes

### Moderator's Introduction – 5 minutes

- Moderator introduction
- This is an informal focus group; introduce observers sitting in the room
- Length of discussion – about 90 minutes, no break
- Purpose – Our discussion today is part of a larger effort by Santa Barbara County's cultural leaders and the Santa Barbara Foundation to define a future path for improving and supporting arts and culture in Santa Barbara County. We are currently in Phase 1 of a multi-year project, which focuses on defining a vision for the future.
- Specifically, I'll be asking you questions about your impressions of the current state of arts and culture in the County, as well as your vision for the future, and how you see yourself and others contributing to achieving that future vision.

### Explanation of the Focus Group Format

- Please speak up so that everyone can hear.
- All your responses as part of this focus group will be kept confidentiality – your names will not be attributed to any of the comments in the report, so please be as candid as possible.



- If you'd like to add something to the conversation, please raise your hand and I'll call on you as quickly as possible.
- I may call on people from time to time, even if they don't have their hand up, in order to make sure that everyone gets a chance to speak.
- As we get into the discussion, please feel free to disagree with something and say "I have a different opinion about that..." because it's very important that we hear differing opinions, when you have them. OK?
- Do you have any questions before we start?

Participant Introductions and Creative Activity (15 minutes)

15. First, let's go around the room with introductions. Tell me a little about yourself, your work and how long you've lived in Santa Barbara County.

16. How do you express yourself creatively?

Probe: Which creative activities you described above are most important to you?

[IF ANY ARTISTS] Probe: Where do you find inspiration for your own creative work?

[FOR FAMILIES] Probe: What, if any, creative activities do your children do?

17. Have you [your students, your family] had to stop doing any creative activity in the past year? Why?

Perceptions of Current State of Arts and Culture Sector (30 minutes)

18. [ALL EXCEPT TEACHERS] Next, I'd like to talk about what you think about arts, culture and creativity in Santa Barbara County. Think about all the arts culture and creative activities available to you [your students, your family]. Think about the things you do now, the things you may want to do but perhaps can't, or haven't yet done.

Take a few minutes to think about this, and then use this sheet [pass out handout] to make a list of the strengths and weaknesses of your experience of arts, culture and creativity here in Santa Barbara County.

[Pause a few minutes for participants to complete exercise.]

Okay, let's hear from some of you. What did you put down as some of the strengths?

Probe: Why is [reference item] a strength for Santa Barbara, in your eyes?

Probe: Did anyone else also write down [reference item] in your strength column?

[Work around the table, probing on strengths.]

Now, let's talk about weaknesses. What do you think are Santa Barbara County's weaknesses?



Probe: Why is [reference item] a weakness for Santa Barbara, in your eyes?

Probe: Did anyone else also write down [reference item] in your weakness column?

[Go around the room, probing on weaknesses.]

[NEXT SECTION IS FOR TEACHERS ONLY]

19. What are the most important issues facing youth in Santa Barbara County today?

20. What is your impression of the availability and quality of arts education programs for youth in Santa Barbara County?

Probe: How do your students express themselves creatively?

Probe: What kinds of barriers do they face in being able to engage in creative activities?

21. How could the arts and cultural better support you, as a teacher, or your students?

Vision for Santa Barbara County's future (30 minutes)

[Hand out paper/pads if haven't already.]

22. Now, we're going to have a little fun. We're going to imagine a future Santa Barbara County, where arts, culture and creativity are alive and thriving throughout the County. I'd like you to open up your mind, and imagine for me what such a future would look like, from your point of view.

Take a few moments, and write down some of the images and thoughts that pop into your head, and then we'll talk about what you've written down. You can describe what the future would look like for your own creative activities, or what your family's future creative life might look like, or you can jot down some ideas about what the community's creative activities might look like.

If you're having some trouble, start by trying to complete the following sentence: "In ten years, cultural life in Santa Barbara will be great, because..."

[PROVIDE EXAMPLE IF OBSERVING PARTICIPANTS HAVING GREATER DIFFICULTY IN RESPONDING.]

[Pause a moment or two to allow people to write down their thoughts.]

Now, I'd like to hear from some of you about what you wrote. Who would like to share something about what your vision of the future of Santa Barbara County? What does success look like?

Probe: How would you know that things had changed, that your vision was achieved?



23. [FOR TEACHERS] What do you think needs to happen over the next 10 to 20 years to create the future you've laid out?

Thanks for your time and input!

