



A Seattle Neighborhood Strengthened

BACKGROUND

A neighborhood constellation of the arts, anchored by several non-profits, has organically formed on Capitol Hill around East Pike/Pine and 12th Avenue. Over the last fifteen years, a diverse group of organizations has moved to this formerly light industrial area. As this has happened without a coordinating plan or structure, few in the region are aware of the breadth of opportunities. A key example of Creative Placemaking, the next steps are to first organize, frame, and market a formal Capitol Hill Arts District, and second, leverage the arts as the means to achieve neighborhood goals.

East Pike/Pine and 12th Avenue now have small and mid-sized organizations of nearly every medium. The list includes Northwest Photographic Center, Seattle University's Lee Center for the Arts (Theater and Visual Art), Northwest Film Forum, Annex Theatre, Richard Hugo House (literary), Velocity Dance Center, and Artist Trust (Washington's Artist Service Organization). Opening in fall 2014, 12th Avenue Arts will house three new theater companies and Three Dollar Bill Cinema. Yet there is no formal collaborative model for the organizations, and the neighborhood has not been described as a theater or arts district.

At the same time, this neighborhood is experiencing rapid change and gentrification. The existing arts organizations are under real threat of being displaced by rising rents and redevelopment. Capitol Hill is increasingly perceived as being in danger of losing its soul.

A cultural problem needs a cultural solution.

THE DISTRICT

The Arts District model is a valuable tool to preserve and create space for the arts. In a focused geographic area, it uses land use incentives, collective marketing, and new resources to make sure Capitol Hill remains a center for innovation and cutting edge arts.

A COLLABORATIVE SOLUTION

The Capitol Hill Arts District is a deep collaboration between Capitol Hill Housing (the neighborhood Community Development Corporation), the Capitol Hill Chamber of Commerce, the City of Seattle and the neighborhood arts organizations and artists. With the strong arts infrastructure and deep working relationship with the City of Seattle already in place, we can keep the arts at the center of Capitol Hill's identity, and provide a template for other neighborhoods.

2015 GOALS

- Work with neighborhood arts groups to utilize new City arts space incentives to preserve the arts
- Market the Arts District and organizations as a destination, using tools such as sidewalk kiosks, street sign caps, custom painted sidewalks, mapping tools, and others
- Explore collective resources to draw audiences, preserve arts uses and build staff capacity for the Arts District
- Explore and pilot a shared arts destination district benefits: ticketing discount model, map or wayfinding, neighborhood arts festival, collective media buys
- Actively support real estate development projects using arts district incentives

TARGETED LAUNCH DATE:

November 15, 2014

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