

## **OFFICE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS (OCA) REPORT FOR NOVEMBER 2023**

Selected activities organized by goals in *Cultural Connection: San Jose's Cultural Plan*

The Arts Commission meetings are convening in person at City Hall and virtually on Zoom for members of the public.

### **Support Diverse Cultural Spaces & Places Throughout the Community**

The Community and Economic Recovery Task Force recommended several arts-related recovery strategies to the City Council, including removing cost barriers for small and mid-sized art organizations access to venues. The Council appropriated \$100,000 to implement this recommendation. OCA staff coordinated with City-owned theater operators to develop criteria and a process to provide a partial venue rental subsidies. OCA allocated \$25,000 respectively to the operators of the Montgomery Theater, California Theatre, Hammer Theatre and Mexican Heritage Plaza Theatre for FY 23-24.

### **Integrate High Impact Public Art & Urban Design throughout the Community**

The City of San José Public Art Program inspires community through artworks and exhibitions. We expand community participation opportunities and impact the economic and visual dynamics of the city. Our priorities are guided by the goals and values of project partners and the community. Through active engagement between artists and project stakeholders, we celebrate diversity, innovative spirit, rich history, present and envisioned future. The program facilitates projects that are recognized nationally and internationally for innovative programming. For the most recent update on public art projects, please visit: <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showdocument?id=105219&t=638313456375130890>

### **Strengthen the Cultural Community's Infrastructure**

#### **Cornerstone of the Arts Awards**

On October 18<sup>th</sup>, the OCA and the Arts Commission presented the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Cornerstone of the Arts Awards. Honorees included Connie Martinez (Cornerstone of the Arts), the David and Lucille Packard Foundation (Support of the Arts), and the San Jose Museum of Art Let's Look at Art docent-led arts education program (Creative Impact Award). The event was very well attended.

#### **Cultural Funding Portfolio - Investments in Art, Creativity, and Culture**

**FY24-25 Cultural Grants** – Pre-application workshops for OCA's three (3) core grant programs are scheduled for early December 2023. Staff will also hold virtual office hours to provide technical assistance and answer applicants' questions. Application deadlines and more information for each of the grant programs ((take pART, Festival, Parade, and Celebrations, and Operating) can be found at the OCA website under "[Grants Program](#)."

**Capitalization and Sustainability (CAPSUS) Grant** - OCA re-launched the CAPSUS grant for FY23-24. The grant is targeted at arts organizations receiving operating grant support in recognition of the City's significant financial investment in organizations that offer year-round programs to broad audiences and employ professional artists, technicians, and administrators. The CAPSUS grants are intended to be one-time catalytic investments that improve the capitalization and sustainability of an organization. A panel is currently reviewing 22 eligible applications with an internal panel review meeting scheduled for Monday, November 13. Recommendations of awardees will be brought forward to the Arts Commission at the January 2024 meeting.

### **Enhance Support for Creative Entrepreneurs and the Commercial Creative Sector Arts**

This year, OCA brought back The Creative Economy Fund (formerly known as the Creative Industries Incentive Fund), the popular program supporting San José creative businesses. Seven (7) recipients were awarded up to \$8,000 in funding for a total of \$40,000 available funds. This opportunity is a partnership between OCA and the Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI) which administers the fund. CCI posted a press release announcing the 2023-2024 Creative Economy Fund recipients on their [CCI website](#) on October 4, 2023.

### **Support Residents' Active, Personal Participation in Arts and Culture**

**San José Creates and Connects** - Launched in 2016, the San José Creates and Connects initiative aims to connect San José residents across communities and within neighborhoods through creative, participatory experiences. The initiative includes Make Music Day San José, #WeCreate408, and the Creative Ambassadors Program.

**Creative Ambassadors Program** - The role of the Creative Ambassador is to champion the power of creative expression and engage members of the public in finding their own creative voice. The Creative Ambassador's efforts will seek to recognize, celebrate, and promote diverse creative experiences citywide. Applications closed on October 6, 2023. Five (5) Creative Ambassadors for 2024 were selected by a panel representing past and current Creative Ambassadors, a San José Arts Commissioner, and professionals from the arts, cultural, and creative community. For more information about the Creative Ambassadors Program, visit <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/your-government/departments-offices/cultural-affairs/participate/creative-ambassadors>

### **Destination Events in San Jose**

**Outdoor Event Highlights:** October kicked off with the annual Rock n Roll Half Marathon where more than 10,000 runners filled the streets in downtown. That following weekend, residents were able to walk around downtown at the monthly STREET MRKT or go to Plaza de Cesar Chavez to enjoy the San Jose Veggiefest or go to St. James Park to enjoy the weekly Levitt Fall Concert series that ran every Sunday in October. Amongst many events and celebrations, October was the start for many Day of the Dead celebrations including Dia San Jose, an annual festival that celebrates life on the day of the dead with performances, artists, vendors, lucha libre, and a lot of food. The San Jose Multicultural Artist Guild also had a celebration that had hundreds of people participate in a procession from City View Plaza to

the San Jose Museum of Art. The month ended with a Dia de los Muertos run by Gardner Health Services along the Guadalupe River Trail and the annual Halloween in Japantown on October 31<sup>st</sup>. The events worked very closely with Team San Jose this month to close down San Carlos St. in front of the Convention Center for a couple of events- something that is not typically done and has not been accomplished since the World Wide Developer Conference many years ago. The team has also been working closely with the Post St. stakeholders to support the weekly Post St. closure and special events like the Qmunity Night Circus on October 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Upcoming Outdoor Events:** As many have noticed, Downtown Ice and Christmas in the Park have started loading in to their event spaces, very exciting as we all gear up for a busy holiday season in downtown San Jose! The three major Downtown for the Holiday events, Winter Wonderland, Christmas in the Park, and Downtown Ice, will begin in November during and after Thanksgiving week. To continue with the festivities, November will also have the return of San Jose's annual beloved Veteran's Day Parade and the annual Turkey Trot with thousands of participants ready to run before a big feast. The month will begin with a few Dia de los Muertos celebrations like events in new closed spaces including Calle Willow Dia de los Muertos and the Culture Night Market at Alum Rock Village events. ICA's Auction at Parque de los Pobladores and a new Pop-Up at Kickz Inc. will take place on that same day. A busy weekend to start off November.

**On-Going Outdoor Event Support:** As the outdoor event industry continues to evolve, so do the services that are established to support our event organizers. Our Special Events Team continues to develop an opportunity to connect event organizers with various event and permitting professionals through a monthly Brown Bag Event Permitting Series. The team is working on how to support event organizers navigate the increasingly changing City which prompts for new event layouts, new routes, or in some cases understanding updates to policies or guidelines from other city or county departments that provide permits or services to these events. The team also continues to work on the Downtown Vibrancy Event Initiative, which is aimed at facilitating increased vibrancy in the public realm through the removal of barriers to activation at dedicated plazas and parks. We look forward to sharing more details as our processes develop.

For a full list of upcoming events overseen by the Office of Economic Development and Cultural Affairs' Special Events team, please visit [SanJoseCulture.org](https://www.sanjoseculture.org).

### **Operating Budget for FY 23-24**

As part of the FY 23-24 Operating Budget the City Council approved the cultural art grant recommendations as well as \$1 M from the General Fund to augment the available TOT resources. In response to [Manager's Budget Addendum 58 on Arts, Culture, and Hospitality Funding](#) as part of the adoption of the [Mayor's June Budget Message for FY 23-24](#), the Mayor and Council approved a [recommendation from Councilmember Torres](#) that the Administration should report back to the full Council as part of a study session on different possible models for additional arts and tourism funding including those that may require being placed on a ballot measure for Council consideration. The City Council Study Session is planned for early 2024. The OCA has engaged the Cultural Planning Group to research

funding models, with community stakeholder input and the City Administration to develop a presentation for consideration by the City Council.

### **CODAsummit 2023**

From October 4 – 6, 2023, the OCA was the local host of CODAsummit, a leading public art conference at the intersection of art and technology presented by CODAworx. Approximately 425 attendees enjoyed and experienced San Jose’s public art, cultural facilities, and downtown. City Public Art and Adobe staff led downtown walking tours. Evening receptions were held at the City Hall Rotunda, San Jose Museum of Art, and the convention center. The reception ended on First Fridays so attendees could enjoy ArtWalk in the SoFA District and beyond.

### **2023 Arts and Economic Prosperity 6 Study**

The newly released [Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 Study \(AEP6\)](#) is an economic and social impact study of the local nonprofit arts and culture industry conducted by Americans for the Arts in partnership with the City of San José’s Office of Economic Development and Cultural Affairs (OEDCA) and SVCREATES. The report highlights that San José’s nonprofit arts and culture sector generated \$292 million in economic activity in 2022 – nearly \$100 million in spending by San José arts and culture organizations and an additional \$192 million in event-related expenditures by their audiences.

Other key figures include:

- Nonprofit arts and culture organizations in San José support 4,738 jobs, from direct support of employing staff and artists to indirect support of printers, hospitality staff, graphic designers and more.
- These arts and culture organizations generated \$18.1 million in local, state and federal government revenue.
- The typical attendee spends \$43.88 per event in San José, not including the cost of admission.
- 23.7% of arts and culture attendees were from outside Santa Clara County. They spent an average of \$65.69, vital income for local businesses.
- 86.4% of San José respondents agreed that the activity or venue they were attending was “a source of neighborhood pride for the community.”
- 85.2% said they would “feel a sense of loss if that activity or venue was no longer available.”

### **Recovery and Resurgence of Downtown Events and Activity**

Downtown San José’s economic recovery continues to progress with a near recovery of its cultural events and increases in visitor numbers. For calendar year 2023, OEDCA has to date permitted 76 downtown events totaling 265 event days. OEDCA estimates that these events will attract a total of 1.98 million attendees by calendar year 2023’s end, meaning we are at 97% of our pre-pandemic attendance number of permitted events in Downtown. These events include San José Jazz Summerfest, Levitt Pavilion San José, Viva CalleSJ,

CityDance, and the upcoming Veteran's Day Parade, Silicon Valley Turkey Trot, Christmas in the Park, Winter Wonderland and Downtown Ice.

Our partners have reported an increase in attendance to events at City-owned facilities. For example, attendance to the four theaters operated by Team San Jose - the Center for the Performing Arts, Civic Auditorium, California Theatre, and the Montgomery Theater - are at 102% of pre-pandemic levels. Downtown activity is also trending up. The number of unique visitors in Downtown San José during the months of March-June 2023 reached 96% of 2019 levels, according to a new University of Toronto study based on mobile phone data. San José's recovery ranked 3rd nationwide and was the best-performing city in California. Strong event attendance, San José State University's growth, and new multifamily homes are seen as at least partly responsible for this trend. This increase in activity is notable given that downtown economic and lifestyle patterns, like many other cities around the country, are impacted by the continued popularity of hybrid work schedules.

These and the other numbers in the report reflect the crucial role San José's arts and cultural industry play in the city's recovery and resurgence, and offer insight on how investing in our artists, arts organizations and cultural and sporting facilities can help the City and downtown survive and thrive in this post-pandemic era.