

New York City Naturally Occurring Cultural District Roundtable August 2010



Roundtable attendees met August 12, 2010 in J.M. Kaplan Fund's conference room to discuss ways to strengthen and sustain New York City's naturally occurring cultural districts.

Sponsored by
Arts + Community Change Initiative
and **Fourth Arts Block**



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Introduction

On August 12, 2010, arts leaders, policymakers, funders, and researchers met for a cross-sector roundtable discussion on “Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts” (NOCDs), co-sponsored by the Arts + Community Change Initiative and Fourth Arts Block, and hosted by The J.M. Kaplan Fund. Highlighting exemplary practices from across New York City, this forum aimed to develop policy recommendations and implementation strategies to support these districts. The conversation was grounded in values of equity, inclusion and recognition of the integral role of arts and culture in communities.

Roundtable Framing

Some cultural districts are planned and developed as part of initiatives from institutions, while others spring up more organically in the context of their neighborhoods. However, while there are numerous policy tools and support mechanisms for institutional cultural districts, far fewer exist for naturally occurring districts. There is much talk about the creative economy, but rarely in the framework of equitable development or sustainable communities. Naturally occurring cultural districts can provide a window into a broader understanding of the dynamic inter-relationship between a community’s cultural assets, social networks, and economic and environmental well-being.

Participants were asked to consider the following questions:

- How can arts and culture be supported as an ecology rather than a hierarchy?
- How does one organize and support these districts in a manner that honors their natural growth and development, without creating a process or structure that is so formal that natural growth is no longer possible?
- How can we generate and equitably distribute investment while preserving neighborhoods and avoiding displacement?
- What kind of relationship do these initiatives have to urban planning, housing, tourism, neighborhood revitalization strategies, and cultural policy?
- In what ways can community members have a voice in decision-making about this policy?

The conversation drew on research by the University of Pennsylvania’s Social Impact of the Arts Project (SIAP), and the knowledge generated from three prior roundtables¹ to begin to identify the characteristics and benefits of NOCDs, recognizing the challenges of defining something that by its very nature is diverse, fluid, and dynamic.

Two previous roundtable sponsors opened the conversation with public policy and private

funding questions and considerations. New York City Councilmember Brad Lander (who co-sponsored the first roundtable when he directed the Pratt Center) described how naturally occurring cultural districts are not created by public policy – but rather by the intentional action of actors on the ground. Creative, eclectic, and diverse, they exist in an intuitive place where the gap is smaller between community and artist. He asked the group to consider how to foster this creativity, especially in low-income communities and communities of color where equity and inclusion are challenged. How can we enact public policy to support naturally occurring cultural districts, recognizing that this is, by definition, challenging?

Roberta Uno raised additional questions that grow out of her work as Senior Program Officer at the Ford Foundation. How do we create access? With respect to social justice and equity, are we replicating conventional models or welcoming new equity to tap incredible cultural assets? How does that translate into projects, leadership, stakeholders and processes? What is the centrality of artists in these efforts?

Characteristics of Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts:

Presented by Susan Seifert, Director, Social Impact of the Arts Project

Drawing on Philadelphia-based research by University of Pennsylvania’s Social Impact of the Arts Project, Susan Seifert defined naturally occurring cultural districts as concentrations of a variety of cultural assets – artists and artisans, organizations and firms, participants and consumers – in particular neighborhoods or urban areas. These clusters of cultural agents generate social networks that build community and reinforce diversity within neighborhoods as well as help connect communities across the city. All cultural clusters, or NOCDs, generate social and civic benefits for local residents. In Philadelphia, for example, disadvantaged neighborhoods that are cultural clusters tend to have lower levels of ethnic harassment and higher public health scores. Many have experienced a decline in poverty and an increase in population. Some NOCDs become destinations, or *market districts*, that draw people and resources into the area and generate greater economic benefits for the local community.

The self-organizing character and positive spillover effects of naturally occurring cultural districts provide an opportunity for policy-makers and philanthropists interested in fostering social inclusion and economic equity. A proactive strategy to “discover” and “cultivate” these districts – especially disadvantaged *civic clusters* – can stimulate the community capacity generated by cultural engagement and help leverage economic opportunity for local residents. Moreover, with investment, NOCDs have the potential to serve as neighborhood anchors of New York’s creative economy and aid in a more equitable distribution of benefits (and costs).

Examples from Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens

The roundtable discussion was grounded in a diverse group of examples from three New York City’s boroughs. The first set focused on the relationship between arts, culture,

Part One: Cultural Districts, Community Networks and Placemaking

Example 1:

Fourth Arts Block (FAB) and the East 4th Street Cultural District (Manhattan)

Presentation:

*Tamara Greenfield,
Executive Director
Fourth Arts Block*

Fourth Arts Block (FAB) is rooted in the Lower East Side's long history of hosting community and cultural spaces that served marginalized immigrants, artists, and activists. In the 1960s and 70s, East 4th Street coalesced as a center for experimental theater and film. With the wide availability of low cost spaces, artists and collectives passed studios and theaters from one generation to the next. Local artists reclaimed undesirable spaces, secured low-cost leases in City properties, and actively participated in low-income housing programs. As gentrification gripped the neighborhood in the 1990s, FAB was formed to sustain affordability, livelihood and connectivity between the East 4th Street Cultural District's arts spaces and the community. Today, FAB weaves the arts with neighboring small businesses to reinforce an inter-dependent placemaking identity. It seeks ways to broaden cross-sector networks and make the cultural sector a full partner with the community in neighborhood planning.



FAB! Festival & Block Party

Street festivals are one of the ways that Fourth Arts Block features local artists and artisans, fostering connectivity between the East 4th Cultural District and the community.

Photo credit: Fourth Arts Block

Response:

*Lisa Kaplan, Chief of Staff
Councilmember Rosie Mendez*

Relations between more recently arrived artists and long-time residents were often in conflict in the past. With new artists often perceived as harbingers of gentrification, coalition building required a deliberate and grassroots approach from artists. Today, artists, cultural groups, and other residents have been threatened by lack of affordability. FAB has become a valuable resource for developing network strategies and offering real estate expertise to struggling cultural groups.

Discussion

Preservation and Development and later affirmed by the NYC Department of City Planning). One participant suggested that the cultural district designation was initially constructed to help the City transfer its property to cultural groups without requiring a Request For Proposal process. Nevertheless, the title continues to assist FAB in public promotion efforts and in leveraging requests for city services. In response to questions about culture-making, Greenfield stressed that FAB enlists multiple stakeholders, including residents, community groups and retailers, in defining the district's cultural identity. Unlike other cities' downtown districts that are designed to feed market revitalization, Greenfield sees the East 4th Street Cultural District as a reaction and protection to pervasive East Village real estate pressure that has displaced many other small arts organizations.

Example 2:

Queens Museum of Art and Corona Plaza (Corona, Queens)

Presentation:

*Alexandra Garcia,
Community Organizer
Queens Museum of Art*

Queens Museum of Art (QMA), housed at the edge of Corona Park, is separated from its residential neighborhoods by a tangle of highways and complex infrastructure. Additionally, it has encountered a dramatic demographic shift in the last 20 years, with African Americans moving out and Latin American immigrants moving in. Amid these changes, QMA is transforming its definition of community by expanding its audience beyond the gallery walls, encouraging links between the museum, social organizations and civic groups. The Museum's Heart of Corona Coalition maps the neighborhood's cultural assets. Community public art projects have helped to identify cultural and economic hubs, fueling new NYC Department of Transportation attention toward Corona Plaza's redesign.

Response:

*Laura Hansen, Director, City Life Program
J.M. Kaplan Fund*

This is an institution-led cultural network where the museum is committed to becoming part of a changing community and developing long-term partnerships. QMA brings institutional resources – funding and organizing – to the district, while sharing vision, control and power



Make the Road NY

In September 2010, MRNY hit the road with more than 500 community members to raise almost \$50,000 to support and empower NYC's Latino, immigrant and low-income communities. Journeying through Elmhurst and Corona—two of the most diverse immigrant neighborhoods in the world—the walk finished with a lively cultural festival at the Queens Museum of Art.

Photo credit: QMA

However, QMA faces challenges related to public space, and is beginning to exceed its resources in areas such as sustained plaza maintenance.

Discussion

The group explored the idea of the museum and plaza as part of a much larger web including social services, urban planning and civic groups. How might they capitalize on cross-organization connections, and what would a holistic policy look like to support this? Questions were raised about how QMA coordinates with neighborhood-grown arts and cultural practices and if there is a role for the museum in helping sustain local traditional and contemporary music and dance artists. Garcia responded that QMA is part of a network – including churches and schools – that provide rehearsal and performance space for artists. Additionally, it aims to expand financial support of the community-based Corona Plaza Festival. Just as the museum influences its neighborhood, opportunities have emerged for residents to influence museum programming. Local interaction is sparking a reconsideration of the mobility, and permeability, of QMA’s exhibits.

Part Two: Sustainable Communities and Creative Industries

Example 3:

El Puente and the Green Light District (Williamsburg, Brooklyn)

Presentation:

*Luis Garden Acosta,
Founder/President and CEO
El Puente*

Williamsburg, these days, is fast becoming the national center for “hipsterdom.” Thirty years ago, however, numerous aggressions were being acted out in Williamsburg, with little insistence on accountability. The

Southside was the poorest, most concentrated Latino community in the city. It was labeled “the teenage gang capital of New York City,” and later known as “the most toxic neighborhood.” Knowing that no community grows in a meaningful way when patronized by, and held accountable to, forces outside of the community, El Puente galvanized resources – human and otherwise – to network with other community members. With this emphasis on self-determination, El Puente created an infrastructure through which members connect with each other and drive their own development, making connections between community and culture. As the New York Times headlined, El Puente built “a bridge from hope to social action.” Consolidating its experience in conducting participatory epidemiological research



Fly Girl Fest

El Puente’s annual Fly Girl Fest celebrates the female spirit, mind, body and soul, featuring performances from the El Puente Academy students and participants in many of El Puente’s special after school programs.
Image credit: El Puente

is now launching its Green Light District initiative. This ten-year initiative goes beyond El Puente's 2,000 members to develop, by going door to door, individual/family action plans for community and environmental wellness. The Green Light District aims to move the community forward in the production of energy, food, and employment, as well as in the expression of culture while working to ensure that every school, community venue, and public space is a center for optimum growth and empowerment.

Response:

*Ron Shiffman, Urban Planning Professor
Pratt Institute*

When planners go into communities they traditionally try to divide things into categories, but communities don't make these divisions. The challenge of planning is not separating out the relationships between community, culture and the environment, but weaving them together. El Puente's holistic approach taps culture and self-identity and aims to integrate groups to achieve community ownership and attain environmental, social, economic and educational justice. This initiative builds on principles articulated by El Puente, its partners and neighborhood residents, and a sense of community ownership, rather than reacting to real estate market pressures or replacing values through gentrification.

Discussion

Councilmember Diana Reyna and Ron Shiffman described how a proposal to deck over the Brooklyn Queens Expressway – one of the Green Light District's showpiece proposals – would reconnect divided neighborhoods, create a new open space for the community and buffer environmental degradation associated with storm water overflow and auto emissions. Garden Acosta and Shiffman emphasized Green Light's focus on local artists and cultural practices as part of their change process, rather than looking to artists from outside to transform the community.

Example 4:

Greenpoint Manufacturing and Design Center (Greenpoint, Brooklyn)

Presentation:

*Brian Coleman, CEO
Greenpoint Manufacturing
and Design Center*

Greenpoint Manufacturing and Design Center (GMDC) was founded as New York City's first non-profit manufacturing center. It owns and manages five North Brooklyn properties, which supply more than half a million square feet of



GMDC's 1155-1205 Manhattan Avenue

This 366,000 square foot facility is home to 80 units of creative industry. Photo credit: GMDC

per worker. When founded, GMDC was able to acquire their first space for \$1, which was supplemented by \$1 million in municipal support. Subsequent projects have been developed in market transactions with some public subsidy and a combination of debt and/or tax credits. After quick growth in the late 1990s and early 2000s, a white-hot real estate market – which expanded the North Brooklyn’s stock of legal and illegal loft conversions – generated a climate that inhibits GMDC’s ability to acquire and develop property with affordable rents that small artisanal businesses can afford. In spite of a \$20 million program created by the City to curb displacement in 2005, many small manufacturers and artisanal businesses have been displaced, due to an ever-decreasing supply of space. Despite this strategy, and programs like the Industrial Business Zones, manufacturing is a “hard sell” as a viable economic sector citywide.

Example 5:

Made in Midtown: The Garment District (Manhattan)

Presentation:

*Jerome Chou, Director of Programs
Design Trust for Public Space*

Through their online project *Made in Midtown*, Design Trust for Public Space assesses the state of manufacturing in Manhattan’s Garment District today. Apparel manufacturing is the largest manufacturing sector in the City; the largest cluster of apparel manufacturing firms is located in Midtown. The Garment District is home to approximately 8,000 manufacturing jobs, including highly skilled and experienced specialists (sewers, pleaters, patternmakers, etc.) that allow designers to innovate. Despite this reality, there is continued public sentiment that Manhattan manufacturing – including the Garment District – is dead. Although the City aimed to preserve the district’s manufacturing character through a 1987 Special Zoning District, a thriving industry confronts challenges in a Midtown neighborhood surrounded by new residential and office districts. Challenges in evaluating the garment district’s future include the following questions: What are the true values and costs to converting manufacturing space? How do these change? What other models are applicable? Is there a way to support manufacturing while addressing property owners’ and the City’s fiscal priorities?



Why the Garment District Matters

A video from Design Trust for Public Space’s *Made in Manhattan* project highlights the vitality of the Garment District.
Photo credit: DTSP

Response to Greenpoint Manufacturing and Made in Manhattan:

*Adam Friedman, Director
Pratt Center for Community Development*

City policies that affect the manufacturing sector assume a similar identity among all

industrial development partners that have their ears to the ground. How can the City integrate land use with the budget? We have to capture value as the zoning shifts occur, to be buying space to lock in protection and the value to be created by that zoning. The City needs to embed financing mechanisms into the land use process so that it's permanent and can generate a revenue stream. The City has planned obsolescence for manufacturing but we need to revive the idea that NYC needs to include production in its plans for land use and market growth, and build infrastructure to support it.

Discussion

Roundtable participants commented on the relationship that exists, or has existed, between industrial districts and the culturally diverse neighborhoods they serve. Examples included Chinatown's garment district, Greenpoint's 197a plan to preserve the housing and manufacturing mix, and the link between NYCHA housing and the Brooklyn Navy Yard. The question was raised whether there were opportunities for development in the City's outlying areas. For Brian Coleman, Sunset Park, the South Bronx and Bushwick have a strong base but are still in need of financial support. Drawing on the experience of Williamsburg, Luis Garden Acosta observed that zoning has increasingly worked against low-income and poor community members.

The group also discussed the need to shift perceptions of manufacturing. Coleman responded that we can be nostalgic, but it's not our father's industry anymore. They are still good jobs that contribute to the economy, but it's a hard sell. Jerome Chou offered that the Garment District is a variation on the typical model of adaptive re-use. In this case, the buildings, the equipment, and many workers are old, but the industry as a whole responds to 21st century desires. Roundtable participants agreed that there is a need to redefine what industry looks like. Branding, such as "Made in New York" or other niche identity campaigns, may help districts gain traction at City Hall, however some industries are more glamorous to the mainstream than others.

Challenges and Opportunities

Public Policy Response

Three City and State elected officials opened up the discussion about public policy responses. As Chair of the Committee for Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation, New York State Senator Jose M. Serrano recognized the valuable role that naturally occurring cultural districts play in communities. He described a need for the State to institute affordability mechanisms and sustainable measures – rent control laws, arts tax incentives and financial support from state agencies – to preserve the diversity, openness, freedom and activism that are characteristic of the arts. Citing an ascending real estate market in Long Island City, Councilmember and Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International Intergroup Relations chair Jimmy Van Bramer reinforced affordability concerns. He recommended rent-to-own partnerships and the reinforcement of live-work spaces to

Committee chair Diana Reyna identified the need for an expanded definition of economic activity, including the “small business” role that arts groups play to sustain the local economy. She also considered the obstacles facing small businesses, including government. PolicyLink Director of Communications Milly Hawk Daniel underscored the potential power of policy in assuring an inter-dependent and equitable development process. For her, economic development is not only about real estate; it also involves schools, jobs and community exchange.

Breaking Down Silos

An overall theme of the day was the need to work across traditionally isolated and sometimes competing silos. The holistic relationship between arts, culture, community and economic development can reveal multiple sources by which to support NOCDs. Community Board-level cultural affairs committees were named as one potential area of coordination. The group discussed the potential role that for-profit developers might play in fostering NOCDs. While there is currently minimal engagement of this sort, Williamsburg’s Center for Performance Research offers one example. The Center’s LEED Gold-certified dance studio was financed largely through income generated by market-rate condos on its upper floors. McCormack Baron Salazar in St. Louis offers another example: they develop mixed-use housing that centers communities around existing urban schools.

Recommendations and Actions

The concluding session of the roundtable focused on the question of how to best nurture and support the emerging field of naturally occurring cultural districts. Participants made recommendations in the areas of public policy, funding, practice, research, and communications. Recommendations were grounded in the following values and considerations expressed throughout the discussion:

- An inclusive and holistic view of sustainable communities including arts, culture broadly defined, small business, and creative manufacturing
- Arts and culture as a diverse ecology rather than a hierarchy
- Benefits shared fairly and equitably across communities
- Arts and culture as social processes as well as products
- A long term perspective
- Community members, artists and cultural leaders as active participants in decision making with a value on local leadership
- Advantage of a cross-sector perspective and approach to policymaking
- A paradigm shift away from imposing and towards discovery

Public Policy and Funding

1. Support diversity – both cultural and economic – as an underlying strength of New York City:

intermingling of diverse peoples.

- Support diverse economies, including small businesses and creative manufacturing, during both hot and cool markets.

2. Break down silos to create more integrated, cross-sector policies:

- Convene an interagency stakeholders roundtable with a focused agenda and clear milestones, to create a blueprint for support.
- Encourage agencies, such as the Department of Cultural Affairs, Public Health, Transportation, Small Business Services, and City Planning, to come together to think about an area of the City holistically, including the arts.
- Explore the Federal Government's new approach to connecting transit and housing.
- Recognize when it is more effective to focus the discussion rather than broaden it.



Corona International Family Day

This annual gathering in Corona Plaza celebrates music and dances that represent various nationalities.

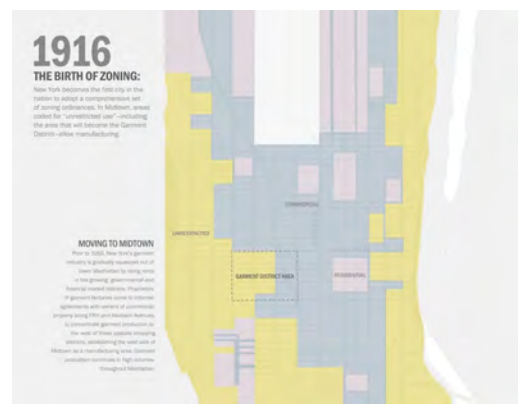
Photo credit: QMA

3. Strengthen multi-stakeholder, integrated, and empowered community planning and make structural changes to decentralize power in NYC:

- Culture should be at the table for every neighborhood planning effort. In many neighborhoods, activist artists, cultural workers, and community organizers are well positioned to take the lead in neighborhood planning.
- Re-evaluate ULURP and 197a community-based planning processes to empower communities around land use discussions.
- Support Community Board cultural committees and other community-based planning as a place for coordinated efforts, with the stipulation that city agencies follow communities' leads.
- Facilitate community-based charter revisions, with the support of the City Council.

4. Re-evaluate land use/zoning policies and processes that can further manufacturing, creative, and craft industries to benefit working people and low-income communities:

- Use both regulatory and stewardship models.
- Embed financing mechanisms into the land use process to capture value as zoning shifts take place.



types of production within residential zones.

5. Increase affordability and sustainability of housing and community facilities for arts, cultural production and presentation:
 - Sustain rent regulation and implement rent reform laws to stabilize communities and provide space to nurture artists and creative work.
 - Support rent-to-own partnerships and live-work spaces.
 - Develop long-term deeds.
 - Support diversity, with attention to new immigrant communities. For example, support the Mexican communities in Queens who are just now finding their first spaces.
6. Leverage resources and maximize investments.
 - Private funders can coordinate efforts and leverage public funding.
 - Provide risk capital to strong nonprofits that can create opportunities for others.
 - Support intermediaries / hub organizations that provide technical assistance to grassroots organizations.
 - Make long-term investments.
 - Enforce NYC's Percent For Art law, which requires that 1% of the budget for City-funded construction projects be spent on artwork for City facilities.
7. Support cultural equity and remove bureaucratic impediments and structural barriers.
 - Evaluate how the arts are organized and supported, and how creativity is distributed in relation to equity.
 - Typically oriented to aiding large arts and cultural institutions, city agencies and foundations need to adjust their approach and criteria to meet the variable needs of NOCDs' small organizations and businesses.
 - Re-evaluate funding mechanisms and liability issues to facilitate the leadership and participation of small cultural organizations, especially in low-income communities.
 - Identify and review policies and requirements that impede the nurturing of NOCDs. For example, the city model for plaza projects is based on revenue that is not available in low-income communities.
 - Consider the time that is needed to plan and carry out collaborative work and allow for sufficient timelines in RFPs.
8. Look at models from outside New York and from outside the arts.
 - Examples include: housing in Providence, community arts funding in Philadelphia, funding for small businesses in Chicago and San Francisco, tenure systems and land trusts for community gardens in St Louis, land trust housing models, health cooperatives, and credit unions.

9. Invest in indigenous, community-led efforts that bridge communities and welcome all creative forces. Recognize the small cultural institutions with large-sized influence that connect the arts with the rest of the community.
 - Identify and support local leadership.
 - Empower small, locally based organizations by helping them access tools and resources, and by supporting capacity building and peer support.
 - Support groups at various stages of development, including nascent and stabilizing stages.

10. Support collaborative and cross-sector efforts to strengthen and sustain practice.
 - Create a cultural, creative and industrial strategy by connecting civic clusters, which are high in cultural assets, with production clusters, which have high leverage potential.
 - Engage in cross-sector dialogues, concrete partnerships, and sustained community-based networks. Allow sufficient time for this long-term and complicated process to unfold.
 - Encourage nonprofit and for-profit developers to help sustain cultural communities. For example, private developers can provide substantial technical assistance to measure and evaluate a non-profit's assets and risks in deciding whether they should pursue an ownership model.
 - Recognize the connection between arts and culture, youth development, and economic development.
 - Support community organizing and coalition building as critical components of NOCDs.
 - Don't forget about the artist and the art.

Research

11. Take a comprehensive, cross-sector, and quantifiable look at how arts impact struggling communities and the transformative effect they can have.
 - NOCDs are quite varied in their cultural ecology as well as their socio-economic origins and impacts. Consider qualitative as well as quantitative analysis of case study districts to assess arts practitioners, community engines of change, and policy/planning needs.
 - Consider the importance of new jobs for the workforce with a focus on the *quality* of jobs.
 - When measuring benefits, assess the social, community, and environmental impacts of these districts as well as the economic ones.
 - Assess the impacts of these districts not only on neighborhood communities, but also on the citywide creative economy.

Communications

- Reframe definitions and roles of artists and their relationships to the public. A focus limited to artist and audience diminishes the many relationships artists actually have in their community.
- When appropriate, identify when NOCD social/cultural networks function as small businesses.
- Incorporate a broad and full definition of arts, culture, and industry including both process and product. Culture making needs to include the artful and meaning- infused practices and systems of everyday life and not be strictly defined by the commodity/financial system.
- Redefine what industry looks like. Branding, such as the “Made in New York” or a niche identity campaign, may help districts gain traction at City Hall.
- Frame the issues as opportunities, not as opposition (i.e. artists versus others).

13. Develop a celebration and exhibition of self-defined, self-sustained cultural communities where artists document their own community as part of the exhibit.

Next Steps

A working group has come together to follow up on the recommendations – and draw on the powerful cross-sector constituency – of the roundtables. The working group is seeking support to advance five NYC focused strategies:

1. Strengthen practice for participating NOCDs through peer mentoring, while providing technical assistance and support for newly organizing hubs and coalitions.
2. Work with researchers, including the Social Impact of the Arts Project, to link research, practice, and evaluation.
3. Produce reports, case studies, and roundtables that promote public discourse on NOCDs and their value to communities.
4. Meet with public and private partners to identify appropriate policy, funding, and financing opportunities and help move them into action through collective advocacy.
5. Build a broader alliance to further this work.

Roundtable Participants

Caron Atlas, Arts + Community Change Initiative
Luis Garden Acosta, El Puente
Bennet Baruch, Office of City Councilmember Diana Reyna
Tom Borrup, Creative Community Builders
Jerome Chou, Design Trust for Public Space
Brian T. Coleman, Greenpoint Manufacturing and Design Center
Milly Hawk Daniel, PolicyLink
Adam Friedman, Pratt Center for Community Development
Alexandra García, Queens Museum of Art
Ryan Gilliam, Downtown Art
Tamara Greenfield, Fourth Arts Block
Laura Hansen, J.M. Kaplan Fund
Joseph Heathcott, The New School
Michael Hickey, Center for NYC Neighborhoods
Maria Rosario Jackson, Urban Institute
Lisa Kaplan, Office of City Councilmember Rosie Mendez
Leah Krauss, Mertz-Gilmore Foundation
Brad Lander, New York City Council
Karen Mack, LA Commons
Sam Marks, Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation
Tom Oesau, Arts + Community Change Initiative
Judilee Reed, Leveraging Investments in Creativity
Antonio Reynoso, Office of City Councilmember Diana Reyna
Diana Reyna, New York City Council
José M. Serrano, New York State Senate
Susan C. Seifert, Social Impact of the Arts Project, University of Pennsylvania
Ronald Shiffman, Pratt Institute Graduate Center for Planning and the Environment
Lynn E. Stern, Surdna Foundation
Jack (John Kuo Wei) Tchen, New York University Asian/Pacific/American Institute
Edwin Torres, Rockefeller Foundation
Roberta Uno, Ford Foundation
Jimmy Van Bramer, New York City Council
Anusha Venkataraman, Arts + Community Change Initiative

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Roundtable organizers and report authors: Caron Atlas, Tamara Greenfield, Thomas Oesau and Anusha Venkataraman.

Additional Online Resources

Creativity and Neighborhood Development, Social Impact of the Arts Project, University of Pennsylvania with The Reinvestment Fund and the Rockefeller Foundation:

<http://www.trfund.com/resource/creativity.html>

Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts, article on the Urban Omnibus website, November 17, 2010: <http://urbanomnibus.net/2010/11/naturally-occurring-cultural-districts>

Websites for featured organizations:

Fourth Arts Block

<http://www.fabnyc.org/background.php>

Queens Museum Heart of Corona Initiative

<http://community.queensmuseum.org/lang/en/blog/corona-plaza/about-heart-of-corona/>

El Puente

<http://elpuente.us/homepage.htm>

Greenpoint Manufacturing & Design Center

<http://www.gmdconline.org/about/>

Made in Midtown

<http://madeinmidtown.org/#made-in-midtown>

Appendix

Agenda (Attached)

**Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts: Developing Policy for NYC Roundtable,
August 12 12:30 – 5:00 pm**

At the J.M. Kaplan Fund, 261 Madison Ave, 19th Floor New York, NY

Agenda

Lunch 12:30-1:00

Framing the day 1:00-1:40

Introductions

Welcome

Laura Hansen, Director, City Life Program, J.M. Kaplan Fund

Roundtable history, format, and focus

Caron Atlas, Director, Arts + Community Change Initiative

Roberta Uno, Senior Program Officer, Arts and Culture, Ford Foundation

Brad Lander, Councilmember, New York City Council

Examples 1:40-3:00

We will have two sessions of short examples, which are followed by clarifying questions, a respondent that identifies broader themes and issues, and a full group discussion.

(Each presentation is 5 minutes with 5-minute response and 5 minutes Q&A)

Examples part 1: Cultural districts, community networks and placemaking

Fourth Arts Block

Presenter: Tamara Greenfield, Executive Director, Fourth Arts Block

Response: Lisa Kaplan, Chief of Staff, Councilmember Rosie Mendez

Queens Museum of Art / Corona Plaza

Alexandra Garcia, Community Organizer, Queens Museum of the Arts

Response: Laura Hansen, JM Kaplan Fund

Examples 2: Sustainable communities and creative industries

El Puente / Green Light District

Presenter: Luis Garden Acosta, Founder/President and CEO, El Puente

Response: Ron Shiffman, Professor, Pratt Graduate Center for Planning and the Environment

Greenpoint Manufacturing and Design Center

Presenter: Brian Coleman, Chief Executive Officer, Greenpoint Manufacturing and Design Center

Made in Midtown

Group discussion

Break 3:00-3:10

Supporting the field 3:10-5:00

Research on Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts

Susan Seifert, Director, Social Impact of the Arts Project, University of Pennsylvania

Policy Response:

Senator José Serrano, Chair, Standing Committee on Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation, New York State Senate

Councilmember Jimmy Van Bramer, Chair, Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations Committee, New York City Council

Councilmember Diana Reyna, Chair, Small Business Committee, New York City Council

Milly Hawk Daniel, Vice President for Communications, PolicyLink

Group discussion

Recommendations:

Our final conversation will focus on opportunities and recommendations for how policymakers and funders can nurture and support the emerging field of naturally occurring cultural districts.

Each participant will have the opportunity to recommend (1-1.5 minute each):

1. What could arts leaders, public policymakers and funders do over the next two-three years to support this work? Over the next five-ten years?
2. What should they avoid doing?

Response

What is needed to move these recommendations into action?