

OUR CREATIVE COMMUNITY

Art and cultural experiences cultivate a rich quality of life in Downtown South Pasadena. Majority of the cultural assets, events, and activities take place in Downtown area, which spotlights art, culture, and entertainment for South Pasadena. It is an area where residents and tourists can experience the unique character of South Pasadena.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The downtown area contains museums, art galleries, public art, performance venues and restaurants. There are numerous stores selling locally designed and manufactured art, crafts, hand-crafted ceramics, hand made paper, and home furnishings. Cultural attractions include a thriving farmer's market, diverse festivals, live music, exhibitions, and year-round events for the whole family.

The downtown area has one national and two state historic districts, and (insert #) designated and (insert #) potential historic resources.

Insert Downtown Asset Map

ArtsCrawl In Summer and Winter, the South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce hosts the ArtsCrawl event to showcase artists and musicians, and highlight downtown businesses. Businesses along Mission Street, Fremont Avenue, Fair Oaks Avenue and Hope Street participate in the event, with many boutiques offering deals on merchandise and extending their hours. This free event allows people to hop between gallery openings, hear live music, hands-on art activities for children, and typically features many group shows and exhibitions.

Eclectic Music Festival and Art Walk The musical affair features over 40 artists that perform at venues throughout the downtown. All stages and galleries are within walking distance on Mission Street, Fair Oaks Avenue and some side streets near the Gold Line Mission Station.

ISSUES

- Need a central location for arts center
- Designate downtown as a Cultural District
- Sustained sources of funding

VISION

Weave art and culture into the fabric of everyday life in Downtown through the growth and expansion of cultural institutions and by nurturing creative and artistic expression in the public realm. The Vision focuses on authenticity and a desire to nurture South Pasadena's unique identity. Part of this emphasis on authenticity includes a comprehensive approach to culture, one that weaves together the broad fabric of the community – artists, architecture, culture, history, and the environment. Through implementation of policies that support the preservation of South Pasadena's local heritage while encouraging artistic development, the City is actively pursuing the integration of art, architecture, culture and history to restore and enhance the unique identity of Downtown.

Downtown is a signature cultural space for people to gather and reflects the best of what South Pasadena has to offer. The high quality urban design is achieved through vibrant civic open spaces, streets that support people activity, and architecturally significant buildings.

Arts Center: Developing an “Art Center” in Downtown area would establish a central place for the community to participate fully in creative experiences and to support the vibrant cultural environment. Downtown would be an ideal location as it would contribute to the economic vibrancy of the area, along with creative businesses and restaurants to truly develop an arts and cultural district. Preliminary ideas as to the scale of such a facility could be around 5,000 square feet, which would include a gallery for exhibitions and installations, a “black box” performance space for performing events (music, dance, theater, spoken word, film screenings, etc.), and space for educational programs.

Arts and Cultural District: Downtown South Pasadena has a high concentration of cultural resources and activities. South Pasadena should evaluate designating the Downtown area as a local cultural district. The designation would increase public awareness of cultural activities, attract more cultural tourists, imbue a sense of pride in Downtown residents and businesses, increase opportunities for artists, craftsmen, and other small businesses. Other benefits could include access to grants, tax credits, financial incentives, expedited permit review, and special marketing initiatives.

Home to Artists: Resident artists are the lifeblood of a vibrant cultural district. Downtown will provide opportunities to make art, perform, or contribute to commercial products that fuel the creative economy in South Pasadena. The streets of downtown feature galleries, multimedia studios, supply store, and other establishments that allow artists to produce artworks and experiences close to home.

Preservation: Downtown possesses a rich architectural heritage with eclectic mix of homes, and institutional and commercial vernacular buildings. Downtown's sense of authentic historic uniqueness contributes to place-making that retains and attract residents, business and visitors. By preserving and enhancing that unique quality

through a commitment to architecture and urban design, this plan lays the groundwork for sustaining Downtown as the city center.

Streets as Canvas: Art is incorporated into the fabric of the street by using wider sections of a sidewalk as performance space. Temporary art element could be installed along a blank wall of a building or vacant lot fence. The Metro Station and sidewalks along Mission Street are all sites for continuous art interventions, whether temporary, permanent, or rotating.

Public Art Projects

The Community Visioning Charrette identified many opportunities for public art in the Downtown area. The design of these projects would benefit greatly from early involvement of artists.

Redesign Station Area Plaza — The open space around the light rail station is proposed to be significantly enhanced. The existing triangular park to the east of the station, historic monuments, public art, and Oak trees in this space would be retained. The asphalted road to the east of the station is proposed to be redesigned a paved plaza. The extended plaza provides a fertile canvas for public art.

Parklets — A series of parklets are proposed to be distributed throughout Mission Street. The Parklet could be a venue for public art and could complement the art in Mission Street Galleries and Studios. Rotating public art installations could be designed by artists whose works are featured in the galleries on Mission Street.

Orange Grove Park Public Art Walk — The reconstruction of the sports fields at Orange Grove Park following the construction of the new Community Center presents a wonderful opportunity to improve sight lines into the park, to make the park and adjacent areas safe and more inviting, and provide a wide linear public art walk along the park edge.

Gateway Public Art — Mission Street and Fair Oaks Avenue are proposed to be redesigned to facilitate safe and comfortable experience for pedestrian and bicycles. The corner of Mission Street and Fair Oaks Avenue is gateway into Mission Street and the core areas of the Downtown. A public art feature at the intersection would identify entrance into downtown and inspire people to collectively reimagine and reinvent the public space at this core downtown intersection. Public art would enhance both public spaces and private businesses surrounding the sites. Installations should be scaled for both pedestrians and drivers, and incorporate maintenance considerations and be resistant to vandalism.

POLICIES AND ACTIONS

Creative Prosperity

P9.X Creative businesses have places to work, live, gather, and promote their art in Downtown.

A9.X Work to ensure South Pasadena's creative sector has adequate and inviting spaces to create, sell their products, and network.

A9.X Develop and market spaces for artists including studios, affordable housing, and live/work studios.

A9.X Explore building an Arts Center that offers physical and virtual space for South Pasadena's creative sector to connect, create, and promote their art.

A9.X Establish an arts incubator/accelerator spaces to provide office space, management assistance, technology, and access to funding opportunities.

P9.X Facilitate use of vacant retail space by arts and cultural groups.

A9.X Facilitate artists' temporary and opportunistic use of such spaces and venues as vacant walls, storefronts, empty buildings, open spaces, etc.

A9.X Provide building owners with tax incentives, grants, loans, and streamlined permitting process to renovate buildings that can be used as live/work spaces by artists.

A9.X Work with the owners and the developers to put a variety of pop-up art events, exhibits, performances, and temporary retail in their empty spaces will enliven the street.

Cultural Tourism

P9.X Develop effective tools to promote arts, cultural, and heritage attractions in Downtown.

A9.X Coordinate marketing so visitors and local can readily find information about downtown arts, heritage and cultural attractions/events. Create a master calendar and post events and attractions on local and regional travel websites, travel apps, and social media sites.

A9.X In the short-term, locally designate downtown as a Cultural District. In the long-term, pursue, state-level Cultural District designation.

A9.X Partner with local businesses to showcase the art of talented, emerging artists in downtown cafes, restaurants, and boutique stores.

P9.X Leverage the Gold Line Metro Station and the potential Metro Bike Share Center at the Station to promote creative attractions/events.

A9.X Partner with Metro to advertise Downtown events and attractions to riders.

Public Art

P9.X Integrate public art into the development review and capital improvement program.

A9.X Embed artists in planning projects and initiatives in City agencies, such as Planning, Public Works, and the Community Services Departments.