



Cultural Core Executive Summary

Re: Cultural Core Year 7 Executive Summary and Year 8 Budget and Plan

Date: June 13, 2024

To: Robin Chalhoub, Community Services Department Director

On June 11, 2024, the Cultural Core Budget Committee met at 201 S Main Street to review and approve the budget and the plan for Year-8 of the Cultural Core Initiative. We are thrilled to announce that the budget was approved and that Year-8 will be a year to hone in and expand on our new programs. We are very excited for the work that lies ahead of us. With that in mind, we seek the Salt Lake County Council's approval for the Cultural Core Year-8 budget and plan. Below is an executive summary of Year-7 (FY 2024) performance and Year-8 (FY 2025) plans.

YEAR-7 Recap: July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024

Summary:

Year 7 of the Cultural Core was a year of growth and learning. The Blocks underwent a rebrand that changed the identity and truly defined the goals of the program. Recently known as "The Blocks, Salt Lake's Cultural Core", the program is now defined as "The Blocks Arts District". This minor change allows us to define the mission to amplify existing arts, curate more arts, and create new art through activations and installations.

Through this change, The Blocks Arts District worked to continuously partner and collaborate with arts organizations throughout the county.

Key Factors:

1. **Steppin on Main**

- This seed year program saw a surplus of visitors to the Cultural Core. This program featured 15 free, Friday nights of performance on the front steps of the Eccles Theater to continue to activate Main Street as the center of the Cultural Core. With over 30 performers and artists hired including Viva Chile Utah hailing from Kearns, and Utah and Academia Mis Raices de Allan Moreno coming into the core from West Valley, The Blocks created a culturally diverse program and provided visibility for these artists in a venue shared by national touring acts.

2. **Co-Create Program**

- The Blocks focused on developing the Co-Create Program, launched on December 1, 2023. With the hopes to provide 8 unique art installations and activations across the district, The Blocks were able to partner and work to produce 4 programs. These one-of-a-kind, never before seen events and installations in Downtown Salt Lake City will help promote other arts organizations and nonprofits. The Co-Create partnership programs range from \$5,000 to \$30,000 for each different artist's unique, creative, and never-before-seen art piece or activation in Salt Lake City. One of the main goals of the program is to encourage and support culturally inclusive programs reflecting Salt Lake's diversity - all ages, backgrounds, abilities, ethnicities, and interests.

- **Bachauer Presents: Key Changes** The first activation titled Bachauer Presents: Key Changes, was unveiled on May 31 at Abravanel Hall Plaza. This activation featured 6 reimagined pianos by 6 artists from across the county alongside a world renowned pianist who is playing for the International Piano Foundation Competition. This installation will be featured on the plaza until

October 31, 2024 and including Forte Fridays with a musician playing on the plaza on the last Friday of each month.

- [KSL](#) | Abravanel Hall plaza is now an outdoor concert hall
 - [KSL RADIO](#) | Plaza art installations features upcycled pianos
 - [ABC 4](#) | Combo of visual and performing arts at Abravanel Hall
 - [DESERET NEWS](#) | Local artists unveil new art installation
- **The Blocks Presents: SLAM Music Festival** The second Co-Create partnership was awarded to the Salt Lake Academy of Music to produce the first ever Youth Music festival titled; The Blocks Presents: SLAM Music Festival. This event will happen on September 7 at the Downtown Farmers Market featuring 5 youth musicians performing original music. This event will coincide with youth entrepreneurship Day at the Market, promoting the youth in Downtown SLC.
 - **Hidden Water Installation** In partnership with Seven Canyons Trust, the *Hidden Waters* installation will celebrate water in our oasis on the edge of the desert. It will provide a series of narratives that highlight Salt Lake City's relationship with its hydrology and the stream that built our city. It will rediscover narratives lost to history, such as the Indigenous Peoples of the Salt Lake Valley, as well as contemporary cultural narratives, such as the Greatest Snow on Earth, the 2034 Winter Olympics as water sports, stream daylighting, the Great Salt Lake, and more. It will build education and stewardship of the hydrology in our city named after water. This installation will be featured along North Temple from State Street to the FrontRunner station through a series of 10 artist designed water droplets. This will be unveiled in October 2024.
 - **Volume Jukebox** is not just a music player, it's a one-of-a-kind experience that will act as an interactive and strategic approach to community engagement, enriching our fan's connection to the city. We will be turning up the Volume on the community's favorite tracks of the month in compiled playlists, allowing fans to discover hot new music while providing insight into what our demographic is currently listening to.
Song entries can be submitted through both a physical pop-up jukebox experience and digitally submitted through socials. The main attraction of Volume Jukebox will be a central hub, free of use and easily accessible by locals. This hub will exist as a projected, digital screen of an array of album covers which locals can interact with by simply holding their phone up to the record they'd like to hear. Utilizing projection mapping, the track will then start playing on their phone!
User-friendly, tech-savvy and innovative in its design, Volume Jukebox is more than just a music player; it's a movement. It invites people to come together, share their favorite tracks and enjoy a communal experience that celebrates diversity and fosters connections. Let's bring Volume Jukebox to our community and watch as the magic of shared music unfolds!

3. **Glow at Gallivan Center**

- In partnership with In Theory Art Collective, The Gallivan Center, The George S. and Dolores Dore Eccles Foundation, and The Blocks produced Glow; an immersive LED-light art experience with over 30 sculptures. The theme to this year's art celebrated Utah's diverse natural, cultural and social landscapes. One of the installations was created in collaboration with Navajo Nation Poet Laureate, Laura Tohe, to write a short poem inspired by GLOW's theme. The result, "You belong to the earth." Other GLOW pieces included Columbine Clusters, one of Utah's native wildflowers; Fauna Illuminata, LED-lit animal sculptures to highlight Utah's endangered species; Treehive, neon hexagons to call attention to the threatened Western bumble bee; and Polychroma, a 16-foot tall arch lit with LED lighting in the colors of the rainbow to acknowledge Utah's LGBTQ+ community. These new pieces were produced with returning art sculptures including Miri the Star, koro loko, Prismatic Portals, and the Crystalline Fantasia. GLOW was free and open to the public which ran from the end of November through the end of February.

4. **Exhibitions on Main / Main Street Kiosks**

- While The Blocks continued to grow their programs, we began to invest in building a larger artist presence through the Main Street kiosks. With the addition of Exhibitions on Main in 2024, The Blocks produced a Call for Artists and had over 17 artists apply. The internal team selected the top 4 artists to display their art on the bottom of the kiosks and we have had tremendous feedback from the community as well as the artists. Every year, The Blocks will do another call for artists and select four new artists to showcase their art with the community.

5. **Marketing and Promotion**

- Marketing and promotion have played a major part in building The Blocks Arts District over the past year. The Blocks continued our partnership with The Salt Lake Tribune through a \$10,000 contribution. With this partnership we aim to highlight all legacy arts organizations including the Opera, the Symphony, and the Museums in Downtown Salt Lake City. Partnerships like these will continue to provide the promotional support set forth in the Cultural Core Action Plan for all arts and entertainment in Downtown. In addition to the Tribune, The Blocks team worked with Love Communications for all media and digital ad buys for promotional support. The team also continued its work on “This week Downtown” a weekly newsletter that highlights all things happening downtown.

YEAR-8: July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025

Summary:

In Year-8, The Blocks is focused on building on the success of Year-7 and creating stronger programs that continue to provide economic vitality, audience growth and curating experiences for all county residents visiting the Cultural Core. We hope to provide more unique activations that bolster the community, advance underutilized spaces, and attract more artisans.

Key Factors:

1. Co-Create

- After launching the Co-Create Program in Year-7 The Blocks are working to continue to bring more uniqueness into Downtown Salt Lake City. In Year-8 The Blocks will work with 3-4 partners to put on one of a kind art installations or activations. After the first year, we realized that we would like to do more with less and really focus on the partnership aspect with these applicants.

2. Exhibitions on Main / Main Street Kiosks

- Exhibitions on Main will be launched in March 2025 and will allow four artists the opportunity to display their art on Main Street for a whole year. The Blocks team will focus on promoting and marketing the artists to amplify their message in Downtown Salt Lake City.

3. Locally Made Locally Played

- This program has provided a pedestal for many performing musicians. In Year-8 the Blocks is working to bring this program to 2-3 different locations across the neighborhood, with the hopes to bring different audiences to different locations. One of the featured locations is in front of the Broadway Centre Cinemas in partnership with Salt Lake Film Society and the other is in partnership with the Downtown Farmers Market and will be featured every second Saturday at the Market. This program will bring between 0-15 days of activation in the Cultural Core.

4. Marketing and Promotion

- The Blocks are focused on promoting existing arts organization programming through the continuation of digital, broadcast, social media and print advertising. Marketing and promotion efforts include a broad mix of internal and external efforts with a variety of partners including the continuation of an innovative arts coverage program with the Salt Lake Tribune and Building Salt Lake. In addition to all of this, we have budgeted to support specific programs and events in the downtown area including:
 - SB Dance and Curbside Theater Presents Tarotville
 - Mixtape presented by the Rose Wagner PAC
 - Utah Blues Festival
 - Make Music Day
 - And many more

5. Busker Program (with Visit Salt Lake)

- Every Main Convention has between 500 and 10,000 people that attend the walls of the Salt Palace. This program focuses on creating a vibrant nightlife to show these visitors that Salt Lake City is diverse and alive. With this program, we will program 10 nights of major conventions (starting on May 18) and putting 5 buskers per night on the streets, from all over the county, to perform their art, whether it be music,

performance or even a dancing robot, we hope people leave Salt Lake City and talk about the surprise and delight they found on the streets.

6. Steppin on Main

- The second year of this program will be larger than ever. The Blocks once again worked in partnership with Salt Lake County Arts and Culture, Eccles Theater and Tin Angel for 12 days of programming on Friday nights from July 12 - September 27. The Blocks are producing 3 of those 12 nights for larger activations including a Mariachi Festival on July 19, the Trash Panda Drum Group on July 26, and the Salt Lake Synth Alliance on September 27.

7. Glow at Gallivan

- The Blocks will continue to partner with In Theory Art Collective and The Gallivan Center to produce Glow; an immersive LED-light art experience. The team will continue to grow the experiential light sculptures but will also work on the accessibility of the program. The Blocks are looking to add QR codes to all sculptures as well as adding headphones to ensure all bodies are able to experience Glow. The program will run from November 2024 to March 2025.

As seen in our budget, general marketing and promotions and programs, projects and event services will be the largest contributor to The Blocks budget for Year-8. Program and event expenses are focused on increasing artist opportunities, supplementing existing arts organization programming, partnering with arts organizations to curate content and offerings, audience development, and providing opportunities for our creative community.. We will continue to measure success through measurable experiences, visitation, artist and arts group participation, and economic impact. The Blocks continues to be a leader in cultivating experiences, placemaking, and promotions. The work completed, investments made and overall impact in year-seven garnered great support from our creative community and has allowed us to build even more in year-8. We are ecstatic to continue building The Blocks Arts District for the next year and continue making Salt Lake City a flourishing place for all the Arts.

Sincerely,

Britney Helmers

Program Director, The Blocks Arts District