



Date: June 21, 2021

To: Holly Yocom, Director, Community Services

Re: Cultural Core Year 4 Overview and Year 5 Budget and Plan

The Cultural Core Budget Committee has reviewed and approved the budget and plan for Year Five of the Cultural Core Initiative. We seek the Salt Lake County Council's approval for the Cultural Core year-5 budget and plan. Below is an executive summary of year-4 performance and year-5 plans.

YEAR-4: July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021

Though campaign tactics, placement, timing, and format was adjusted due to the pandemic, THE BLOCKS continued to heavily invest in marketing and promoting arts and culture programming in the cultural core. During the pandemic a specific focus was put on digital ads, social media, and online and streaming content. These efforts resulted in consistent growth of public awareness of cultural offerings, THE BLOCKS programming, and drove a 525,000 increase in total campaign impressions year over year. Total campaign impressions in year 4 came in at 24,841,816.

Success was validated with data collected through our website, media partners and social media channels as well as feedback from the creative community, the Cultural Core Arts Advisory Committee, and venues. THE BLOCKS worked hard to highlight the people, spaces, places, and opportunities to engage with the arts during the closure of key venues. Video shoots at UMOCA and Fice Alley that were then shared online, increased physical banners across our city, and highlighting artists and arts groups that were reimagining programming during the pandemic, increased brand awareness and gained market share for THE BLOCKS.

THE BLOCKS invested in placemaking, programming and partnerships to reinforce downtown as the cultural core of the intermountain west. We continued to invest in THE BLOCKS Public Art and Mural Trail app with videos, photos and artist information on over 60 pieces of public art and murals within THE BLOCKS. We recently added County venues to the app and are working to add additional venues as well as place QR code stickers in all cultural core venues. These efforts resulted in a 25% growth of new and returning users to our app. We invested in street pole banners to promote organizations producing programming within the cultural core and partnered with the Utah Cultural Alliance on a campaign aimed at reigniting visibility for arts, culture, and entertainment.

As venues shuttered and programs and events were cancelled or postponed we quickly repurposed our Main Street Kiosks. These kiosks provide more than \$80,000 in advertising value each year for cultural core programmers. Rather than keep the windows bare, we created Exhibitions on Main, an opportunity for artists to showcase their bodies of work. This was an opportunity to increase the visibility, quality and quantity of visual art in our city. This new program featured artists from across Salt Lake County. Year over year we doubled the number of direct artist support to over 200 artists, makers, and creators creating content downtown.

Last Hurrah, an annual legacy event was reimagined as a hybrid event with in person and online participation opportunities. Over 600 attendees in person and 3000 viewers from across Salt Lake County and beyond tuned in via YouTube. Going forward we hope to keep the online streaming component to more broadly share the opportunity. Locally Made, Locally Played, a new partnership with KUAA radio to feature local musicians was created. This program, airing twice a week, reached viewers internationally, nationally, and throughout our state. More than 40% of listeners came from outside of Salt Lake City, but within Salt Lake County. Large scale art installations were brought to the Gallivan Center. These installations were especially popular during the holidays. Combined efforts with downtown holiday lighting drove audiences to the cultural core. Finally, Open Streets was piloted in the fall. The closure of Main Street, creating a pedestrian promenade and allowing businesses to expand their premises to safely serve additional customers was a huge success. THE BLOCKS programmed heavily during the event and were proud to not only feature the breadth and depth of our creative community, but to provide an opportunity for artists from across the county to showcase their talents. For a majority of them this was their first paid performance since the pandemic broke out.

We continued our outreach and engagement with arts and culture stakeholders and identified needs within the creative community so that we may provide targeted marketing and promotion support and programming and event support. This outreach also enabled us to shore up our physical assets so that programmers and organizations have the needed materials to produce events and programs. Utah Arts and Museums was very helpful in connecting us with additional local arts agencies across Salt Lake County that previously had not engaged with THE BLOCKS.

Year-5: July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022

Though programming within Salt Lake's Cultural Core was significantly impacted due to COVID-19, reactivation is quickly taking place. Continued investment in the individuals, organizations, and venues programming in the core continues to be a priority. We will focus efforts on building audiences and growing awareness of the vast arts, culture, and entertainment opportunities in THE BLOCKS.

Not only is it vital to the creative community and the substantial legacy of world class offerings, it is crucial to the economic vibrancy of our City, County, and entire state. Throughout the pandemic, the creative community showed their ability to innovate, reimagine offerings, and find impactful and meaningful ways to ensure the rich artistic and cultural heritage is maintained. These efforts will continue to be supported by THE BLOCKS in year 5 and beyond.

In year 5 THE BLOCKS will focus on promoting existing arts organizations' programming and investing in placemaking throughout the cultural core. Our marketing and promotion strategies will continue to target audiences across the County, State, and Intermountain west. As more and more organizations recognize the viability of online content and virtual programming we will continue to invest in photographic and video assets. This will ensure not only a rich asset bank for use in our ongoing promotions and marketing campaigns, but will help THE BLOCKS and the creative community have a greater online presence.

Program and event expenses are focused on increasing artist opportunities, supplementing existing arts organization programming, working closely with arts organizations to curate content and offerings, audience development, and providing opportunities for our creative community to program through the continuation of various placemaking projects and strategic deployments of the BLOCKS Truck and assets.

THE BLOCKS emerged out of this pandemic better than when we went in. The last 18 months required us to reimagine much of what we do. The work completed, investments made and overall impact in year four of THE BLOCKS have had great support from our creative community stakeholders, Cultural Core Budget Committee Representatives, downtown businesses and audiences. THE BLOCKS reach, brand awareness, and overall impact continues to grow and the implementation of the Cultural Core Master Plan is on target. The partnerships that have been forged will continue to strengthen and grow, creating exciting opportunities for Arts and Culture to flourish and guide THE BLOCKS over the coming years. Thank you for your support.