



Cultural Core Executive Summary

Re: Cultural Core Year 6 Executive Summary and Year 7 Budget and Plan

Date: June 12, 2023

To: Robin Chalhoub, Community Services Department Director

On June 2, 2023, the Cultural Core Budget Committee met at Abravanel Hall to review and approve the budget and the plan for Year-7 of the Cultural Core Initiative. We are thrilled to announce that the budget was approved and that we have new and exciting programs that will be rolling out for Year-7. We are ecstatic 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-7 budget and plan. Below is an executive summary of Year-6 (FY 2023) performance and Year-7 (FY 2024) plans.

YEAR-6 Recap: July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023

Summary:

Throughout the year, THE BLOCKS continuously partnered and heavily invested in marketing and promoting arts, culture, and entertainment, in the Cultural Core. Social media, radio, and online/mobile content were our biggest areas of investment over the past year. These efforts resulted in consistent growth of public awareness of offerings. Through our data feed partnership with Now Playing Utah, we prominently display event listings on theblocksslc.org. There are, on average, more than 100 events, programs, and happenings each month that we promote and amplify. Additional amplification and support is lent through our social media and blog efforts. Boosted posts, paid social media, targeting and retargeting are some of the ways we engage a wide demographic. We have seen an increase in social media reach on Facebook and Instagram. TheBlocksSLC Instagram had an increase of 106.7% increase in users over the last year.

Key Factors:

1. Central

- In partnership with the Downtown Alliance, The Block curated the largest free event for NBA All Star, Central. Central was a program that highlighted over 80 performers across Gallivan Plaza and on the Trax in Downtown. It amplified the local talent within Salt Lake City and truly made an impact on a national scale. These activations were enjoyed by many locals, residents, visitors and those employed downtown.

2. Liingo Mural Trail App

- We continue to invest in THE BLOCKS Public Art and Mural Trail app and just recently went through a major facelift for the app, featuring new videos, photos and artist information on all public art and murals within THE BLOCKS. The Mural Trail app has seen major success over the last 30 days with 22 new downloads and the average user session being around 13 minutes, compared to this time last year, it was approximately 3 minutes and 30 seconds.

3. Green Loop - Locally Made Locally Played

- With the new development of The Green Loop, THE BLOCKS recently featured Locally Made, Locally Played artists to showcase local talent every Wednesday from 5:30-7:00 pm. At this event, we have featured a new local musician every week for a 90 minute set and have had an attendance of about 100-150 people every Wednesday. The event has been enjoyed by residents within the area as well as visitors that have stumbled upon the urban forest.

4. IFSC Climbing - World Cup

- Once a year, the IFSC Climbing World Cup is featured in Salt Lake City, attracting over 5,000 people per day and this year THE BLOCKS were able to be a part of this national spectacle. THE BLOCKS highlighted local musicians during the downtime of the Olympic climbers and also featured a large mural that the community collaborated on to paint together. This mural will be featured in the USA Climbing Headquarters, in Salt Lake City.

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

Summary:

In Year-7, The Blocks is focused on creating new programs that provide economic vitality, audience growth and excelling in developing 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 national and local artisans.

Key Factors:

1. Steppin on Main

- Visitation to the Cultural Core has continued to increase and we will only see more throughout the year with our upcoming activations such as Steppin on Main in Partnership with Salt Lake County Arts and Culture and The Eccles Theater. This program features 15 free, Friday nights on the front steps of the Eccles Theater Lobby to continue activating Main Street as the center of the Cultural Core.

2. Co-Create Program

- The Blocks is focused on developing the Co-Create Program which will act as a placemaking initiative to attract more unique activations to happen in Downtown Salt Lake City. We hope to continuously reach our goal of the 75-mile radius of people to attract them to downtown. With this program, The Blocks will create 8 new partnerships through different dollar amounts, to artists that apply through our new, up and coming website. The Co-Create programs will 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. As always 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.

3. Glow at Gallivan Center

- Glow, an immersive light experience, will continue to grow this year and will feature more sculptures than ever. Larger than life, neon, art installations will animate Gallivan Center to delight visitors in the heart of our city. These installations, especially popular during the holidays, are an additional amenity brought to you by The Blocks as part of our larger holiday campaign efforts to welcome audiences to the Cultural Core. These sculptures have been designed by Dr. Emily Nocolosi, an artist and a scientist, from the greater Salt Lake community.

4. Main Street Kiosks

- While The Blocks continues to grow their programs, we will also be investing in building a larger artist presence with the Main Street Kiosks. We are looking to partner with the University of Utah and the ArtsForce program to create a strong sense of visibility for all new up and coming artists. In addition to the University, we will continue our outreach to non-profit organizations to create exposure for them in Downtown.

5. Marketing and Promotion

- Marketing and promotion have played a major part for The Blocks and this year we are excited to continue our partnership with The Salt Lake Tribune. With this partnership we aim to highlight all legacy arts organizations including the Opera, the Symphony, and the Museums. 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.

As seen in our budget, Programs, Events and Event Services will be the largest contributor to The Blocks budget for Year-7. 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 to program through the continuation of various placemaking projects and strategic deployments of The Blocks Truck and assets. We will continue to measure success through visitation, ticket sales, artist and arts group participation, and economic impact. The Blocks continues to be a leader in programming, placemaking, and promotions. The work completed, investments made and overall impact in year-six garnered great support from our creative community and has allowed us to dream big for year-seven. We are thrilled to continue building The Blocks for the next year and continue making Salt Lake City a flourishing place for Arts and Entertainment.

Sincerely,

Britney Helmers, Program Director, THE BLOCKS