



Dear Members of the Santa Fe Community:

Mayor Javier M. Gonzales issued the call for a citywide cultural plan, which was embraced by the City Council, City of Santa Fe Arts Commission, members of the Working Group and, most importantly, the community. Dr. Estevan Rael-Gálvez of Rael-Gálvez & Associates was selected to lead the process of mapping and assessing our community's abundant cultural assets. Together with the Working Group and City staff, he designed an inclusive engagement process that yielded important insights into our community's cultural values, hopes and perceptions.

This process has resulted in "Culture Connects Santa Fe: A Cultural Cartography," which illuminates this shared belief that culture can connect our community. It makes clear that youth must be engaged in culture because the benefits of this engagement are profound. The Cartography affirms that we must continually strengthen culture as part of lifelong learning. It also upholds the critical importance of continually enhancing the creative economy. In summary, the Cartography presents the opportunity to realize ongoing community transformation through culture.

Drawing on our city's wealth of dedicated cultural institutions, talented creative workers and collective community assets, the Cartography is filled with the promise to enrich equity, build economic capacity and deepen our resiliency. Among its strength is flexible implementation, offering 10 Strategies, 28 Recommendations and more than a 100 Ideas to move forward.

From these, we suggest the following Recommendations as priorities for the first 24-30 months:

- Establish a department focused on culture.¹
- Encourage coordinated and strategic financial investment from a mix of government, foundations and individual donors.
- Expand access to meaningful and relevant cultural experiences for all.
- Incentivize strategic collaboration and partnership.
- Expand cultural workers' access to markets and ways to present work to audiences.
- Develop culturally relevant curriculum and inter-cultural teaching strategies that provide our children with a strong foundation for cultural participation throughout their lives.²
- Encourage the retention of young people.
- Elevate the unique cultural identity and assets of neighborhoods.

The vision of the Cartography is too great for the City alone to accomplish. Collaboration and partnership across the community are fundamental. Organizations within the community are already working in many of these areas; they should must brought into the process early as partners in implementation. We must understand and coordinate with existing resources effectively, including

¹ We support the establishment of a cultural office, but disagree with the interim step of moving the office into Community Services. Further, details of structure, specific functions, staffing, resource allocation, etc. are best determined in conversation with the City Council and Mayor, City Manager, staff and constituents served by the office.

² A citywide cultural education plan must be informed by New Mexico Benchmarks and Standards as well as Santa Fe Public Schools' requirements. An inventory of existing programs/resources, identification of gaps in services and a needs-based assessment developed in full collaboration with the schools and current providers is the first step.

assessing arts and culture policy language at the City level. The Cartography cannot be seen as an “arts-only” initiative. Input and active participation from non-arts/non-culture partners is vital. Further, realistic and appropriate resources, both financial and human, must be allocated to implementation. Without meaningful resource support, the plan cannot be successful.

We are grateful to the over 2,000 community members who engaged in this process. The Cartography is truly a roadmap developed by community, for community, with the vision to deepen our connection by sharing our greatest strength, culture. It is with great pleasure that we bring forward “Culture Connects Santa Fe: A Cultural Cartography,” a sweeping vision for Santa Fe’s cultural future that has the potential to connect us all in profound new ways.

Sincerely,
Culture Connects: Santa Fe Working Group

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