

What We Heard: Brooklyn
5/31/17

EQUITY AND ACCESS FOR AUDIENCES

In regards to entrance fees, there are institutions where it's cost-prohibitive to attend. It's voluntary, but it doesn't feel voluntary.

Suggested donations, if you're not knowledgeable, you'll just pay the fee. A lot don't know that it's the law and it's what's required.

DCLA: The average donation at The Met is \$5. IDNYC has been a cool way to introduce spaces to 10Ks of people. But it's not just about whether it's free, but is it for me? Libraries are understood to be free. We need to get word into communities that these are also their places.

It starts in schools. We don't see ourselves in these institutions and don't think they're for us. My kids were raised with access, but others don't feel like they have access.

DCLA: Cool Culture example.

There's another issue. A lot of cultural institutions are under pressure to increase their earned income. Ticketed exhibitions, which limits who can attend. Paid programming. In part because of a mega deficit for decades, we need to be more efficient. It has a real impact on families feeling pressured to contribute. It's not just that people don't know, but a real pressure to increase earned income.

3. If I don't have \$25, how do you feel about \$1, and stigma attached to that is real. IDNYC has been a way to do that, a good equalizer.

Does the DCLA have a calendar?

We have Facebook and Instagram.

PUBLIC HOUSING COMMUNITIES

Brooklyn Museum has been struggling for a while to bring arts to outside groups. What's going to happen now that NYCHA community centers have been closing?

DCLA: NYCHA has their laser focus on repairing physical structures, centers previously run by fed/state. DCLA is thinking about ways to work with public housing residents.

FUNDING AND DISTRIBUTION

Steve Levin, City Council: A lot of the concern was that we want to take from x and give to y. Has there been consideration as to whether arts and culture is getting a fair share of the overall City budget?

DCLA: We have the biggest arts and culture budget in the country (but smaller per capita than San Fran). Barcelona the same budget for arts and culture as NYC, with 1.5M people! We have \$150 million for capital. Cultural plans are often advocacy documents. I'm not up here to denounce our budget, but you can all do it.

Administering important programs comes with deficit. We need more funding for programs consistently serving community. And what in the plan is a part of that accountability system, to maintain adherence to the plan over the next 10 years?

DCLA: [On the issue of small orgs positioned relative to CIGs,] CIGs are wide and diverse, organizations like Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning. Also fund CIG orgs that are focused on underserved communities. The city is going to adopt the plan. Promote cultural diversity within grantee organizations, looking at different propositions to make that a more active effort. Diversity in orgs isn't as diverse in the city, the least is curators. What's effective? An example, CUNY Cultural Corps.

Funding for small orgs. Along with citywide coordination to free up resources, we also need more funding available. Do you anticipate by FY17?

DCLA: A proposal on multi-year funding for organizations. We fund 500 organizations at under \$250. To ask them to play by the same rules as large organizations is problematic. One way to address this is by working with the borough arts councils.

Charlotte Cohen, Bronx Arts Council: If you are living in Brooklyn, you should know about us. We regrant money from the city and state. Consider ourselves to be the introduction to the grantmaking process...graduate from us to city or state. You don't have to be a 501c3, either.

More money is needed, which is a fact. We're clear that money will make a difference for all culture, big and small. We're hoping that the administration and council does its share, plus more. Back to Steve's shifting dollars question, was that intentionally not answered?

DCLA: There is value in those big institutions, but they're also seeing cracks in their business model. Support for middle class, union jobs with pension. Can we find additional funding, share power and resources? For example, Board sharing/swapping.

I'm interested in history programs, museums, public history. It's a part of the cultural community that is overlooked. Making sure those voices are heard. CUNY Cultural Corps is a wonderful proposition. I'm just concerned that there isn't as much funding for those historic centers, which falls into the "smaller organizations" argument.

DCLA: There's Museum of the City of New York, New-York Historical Society, Brooklyn Historical Society and others, but conversations often revert to art. There's also the Trust for Historic Homes, which is under Parks department, Have you been to Poe Cottage? Iteracy collaboration.

AFFORDABILITY FOR ARTISTS

Affordable workspaces for artists, without using them to gentrify neighborhoods?

DCLA: How can you make sure that studio spaces are built for people to thrive in place? Spaceworks develops low-cost studio space, which have been particularly effective for performing arts and music because so many people can use them. Artists are not just MFAs, spaces that can also service public housing residents.

Chris Carroll, Cultural Plan Citizens Advisory Committee. I represent Associated Musicians of Greater New York. One issue we want addressed is making sure that people can make a living. It's not arts and culture. The arts are *in* our culture. Making people more aware. Grants to artists, but what are other ways that musicians, artists, dancers, writers can continue to live in one of the most expensive cities in the world?

DCLA: Two sides to affordability. Costs depend on what you're making. Artist need to get paid. Understand how to do it without hurting the small cultural. Some artists don't get paid at all. Artists have to pay to play at a bar, then get tips. How do you scale it to the size of the organization?

PUBLIC SPACE

With the 24-hour nature of the city, working in the afterhours, are there ways to use underutilized spaces with timesharing? People would die to have access to a public library.

DCLA: There's a long standing proposal to look at using school auditoriums. It has to be meaningful for the school as well. It's expensive, there are union rules, but we're going to try it. [From a library rep present,] having the doors open is a huge issue, we've gotten more funding to be open 6 days a week, and would like the Central Branch open 7 days. There's also consideration of the night mayor, like in London and Amsterdam, a liaison. Enforcement on one hand and nightlife on the other.

CITYWIDE COORDINATION

The Citywide Coordination section has one of the fewest number of recommendations. How can DCLA better partner with other agencies? Jon Hawkes cultural policy analyst, wants us to think about sustainable development from 3-pillar to 4-pillar, bring arts and culture into the standards of development. How are we partnering with other agencies toward this goal?

DCLA: Want to create a cultural cabinet, with parks, DOE, but also Sanitation (which is just exemplary). The way to do it is not to prescribe, but to have a regular time to sit with agencies and talk about it. That's a big deal to city government.

EDUCATION

The #1 recommendation heard was an increase in arts education. How do you see that playing out with funding? Partnering with DOE?

DCLA: DOE as a larger budget, helping them form their arts and culture policy. Part of education happens in schools, other things are after school hours and lifelong. Half of CDF goes to work that includes arts education. Chicago added \$1M to arts and culture budget for education.

HEALTH OF THE FIELD

What has developing the plan taught your team about identifying the biggest barriers to inclusion and diversity for organizations and institutions? If money isn't the problem, what are the obstacles?

DCLA: Pipeline, unions, lack of imagination on behalf of employers. Have you ever seen diverse work that didn't have a diverse audience? 1. Large orgs have the largest capacity for personnel. We don't want to stop large organizations, that's cutting jobs. Also increase diversity baked into the DNA, for better capacity to hire. 2. Small orgs explicitly support low-income communities but can't support their staff. 3. When we speak to organizations, they express concern for investment in personnel as people, people knowing that someone is investing in them to move on and not be bunched up at the lower rung of the organization. With small orgs, you have a leader and small administrative team.

IMPACT AS AN ARGUMENT TO INCREASE FUNDING

But looking at the draft, a lot is wonderful, but I saw a lot that requires money. One item that caught my eye was convincing corporations to do more. It's easier to do more with more.

DCLA: If there was more money in the budget, the city would flourish. The People's Cultural Plan asks for \$750M more money than the current budget. So how do you operationalize these things, how can you get money to pay for particular aspects of the plan?

Steve Levin, City Council: We couldn't triple the budget over a few years. The document is a good blueprint/agenda, something to point to that says, "These are the needs." De Blasio has four more budgets, then there's a new mayor. This is a long term question that has to be in front of every mayor. There needs to be a document to point to.

Absolutely true, an advocacy document. But every dollar helps.

1. I worked for over 10 years in urban development and planning. For some reason, the departments compete, which has less than positive results. Other agencies have a huge role in culture. Are there more effective ways to work across those budgets? 2. About a year ago, a Columbia professor spoke of humanities and how undervalued they are. STEM industries feed into corporations. Cultural workers make 1/10 of the income, but still have to participate in the same services (like day care).

DCLA: What came out of the survey was that people do care about culture, 95% which is within margin of 100%. How do you monetize that?

SOCIAL IMPACT

Many people get upset about drafters being real estate consultants. Are you trying to draft this plan in a way that functions to economic development? What value is quantifiable and what's not...most is not quantifiable.

DCLA: One strategy for polls is to get people to read. For the planning team, Hester Street is a community development group. And other planning partners are real estate consultants, not developers. Real estate is an important thing to understand. To some degree, development is important, like jobs. What's most quantifiable is tourism, which is important, but the SIAP study found that having the presence of arts and cultural assets in lower income communities led to better incomes. Art and culture has a bigger impact in low-income communities. And heart and soul, which we feel, is not quantifiable.

Has there been any direct focus or knowledge in terms of arts and culture in youth development, using arts and culture as resurrection, changing mindsets? Should be a firm pillar of the plan.

Administration for Children's Service, getting agencies to understand the value. Arts and culture are a human right, just like housing and food.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

SIAP study. Are there action words on research and supporting the impact of the arts? Impact investing and measuring.

Most of plan is concentrated on neighborhood character. DCLA has commission these research processes, SIAP and diversity survey. It'll convince you that you can't have a healthy community without arts and culture. Department Health believes that its part of mental health.

PLANNING PROCESS/PLAN ACCOUNTABILITY

Among the most problematic things that my community has talked about regarding the feedback process: We think the design of the polls are not the best way. Summing up felt like a faux pas.

I'm with the group involved with DIY Spaces. A few concerns: 1. This is not exactly a draft. What is the extent of the commitment? There is no mention about the how. 2. How do we enact some of these? 3. Are there specific ways that we can help to advocate to make this a meaningful document?

DCLA: Non-specific is common. There's a lot behind the proposals that will be enacted in the short and medium term. Committed through regularly reporting structure, like city council hearings, also cultural plan advisory committee. The specifics will roll out right after the plan. On a quarterly basis, breaking off pieces of it. Commitment to pursue all parts. You, as advocates, have the opportunity to lobby the city council and mayor that this is what the people of NYC want.

To what confidence did you reach your goals of reaching both cultural workers and residents?

DCLA: Culling together groups, partnering with organizations, reaching out to community boards, street fairs, Make the Road, attending existing events to reach constituents where they are. Several community members hosted their own events using our toolkit, street fairs, Public opinion survey samples New Yorkers in general.

What's the plan to measure the success of the plan?

DCLA: Eddie brought a mechanism from Rockefeller Foundation. Track commitments at levels: 1. Outcomes. Tracking annually...have you moved the needle? 2. Month to month work plan, which is reported to the commissioner and mayor's office. How are goals determined to track? Continuing to develop that. In the document, increasingly supporting low-income residents and artist, among others.

GENERAL THEMES AND QUESTIONS

- What is the commitment from DCLA?
- How will these recommendations be achieved?
- How is CreateNYC an advocacy document? How can we as the arts and cultural community coordinate to shift the mindsets of others at a larger scale by rallying around the cultural plan?
- CreateNYC recommendations require money and coordination by other agencies? What's next? Can any of this be accomplished?
- Arts are in our culture. Make this clear!

EQUITY & INCLUSION

- What are the major obstacles to diversity and inclusion in the cultural sector? If money isn't the answer, then what barriers have DCLA identified and what do you plan to do to address through CreateNYC?

- Inclusion is missing from the Equity section. Provide definition of inclusion and then make recommendations that speak to this issue. A label isn't enough.
 - Inclusion factors into diversity of staff, leadership, content of what is funded, the ability to access (or feel comfortable accessing) all types of cultural spaces.
 - Institutions with diverse staff have diverse audiences – we need to fix the problem from inside the sector. Pipeline support and professional development.
- What accountability do CIGs in low-income communities have to their surrounding communities? How will this be tracked, monitored?
- City needs to do a better job communicating that all cultural institutions are for all New Yorkers.
 - Cool Culture is a great model to support this education to the whole family. Start being engaged in arts practice, cultural participation at a young age.

SOCIAL & ECONOMIC IMPACT

- #1 Increase access to and opportunities for students interested in pursuing careers in arts and science.
 - There are many models in the field besides CUNY Cultural Corps. Call out and support the existing successes – Brooklyn Museum and Studio Museum in Harlem as precedents.
- How will DCLA leverage private investment for arts and culture? And at what cost?
- SIAP Study – be sure to balance economic development and community development. If economic development is the primary gauge, community development will be stifled to the point of collapse.
- Arts and culture's social impact, specifically related to community wellbeing (reduced crime, improved educational outcomes) is very real. We would like to see this emphasized in the work the cultural plan hopes to achieve. (Marcy Houses NYCHA Resident)

AFFORDABILITY

- The musicians union and union members would like to see stronger emphasis and commitment to artists of all types (visual artists, musicians, writers, dancers, sculptors) to support their making a living that allows them to survive (and thrive) in NYC – one of the most expensive cities in the nation.
- Access to underutilized space is a good start – but we would like to see 24/7 use. There are so many spaces that artists would use during times that they sit vacant – over summers, holidays, 3am. (NYC Artist Coalition – Olympia)

CITYWIDE COORDINATION

- State funded NYCHA Studio program was defunded. Why? Can DCLA help to bring back arts and culture to NYCHA developments?
- Cultural Cabinet is a great idea – use this platform to not only coordinate, but to leverage other agencies' budgets to directly support arts and culture / provide resources.

HEALTH OF THE CULTURAL SECTOR

- Multi-year support is essential, but so is increased funding. Every level of the cultural sector is struggling. We need to advocate for shared resources (board sharing, space, HR, admin services) but also shared funding.

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

- How will cultural asset mapping and future research be tracked? What is the impact you expect? What are you aiming for? What are your indicators across and between communities?