



## 2017-2022 Strategic Visioning Plan

### **MISSION**

Centro de Artes is an institution dedicated to telling the story of the Latino<sup>1</sup> experience in the U.S. with a focus on South Texas through local and regional art, history and culture, and dedicated to sharing the transnational experience of Latinos in the U.S.

### **BACKGROUND**

On December 18, 1997, City Council authorizing a 25-year lease with the Centro Alameda Inc. (CAI) for the Centro de Artes Building (Ordinance No. 87148) to house The Museo Alameda. The Museo Alameda opened its doors in April, 2007, as an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institute, with a mission to tell the story of the Latino experience in America through art, history, and culture. The City provided initial operational funds paid out of the Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) of \$184,390 to the Museo Alameda in FY07 (Ordinance No. 2007-10-18-1096). The City continued to provide HOT funds, increasing the amount to \$359,000 per fiscal year beginning October 1, 2009.

On April 1, 2010, City Council amended the CAI Lease, suspending its requirement to pay utilities, maintenance and security through October 1, 2011 and covering these expenses out of the Market Square Enterprise Fund. This amendment was extended through September 30, 2012, when CAI relinquished its Centro de Artes lease to the City as the CAI were unable to continue the responsibilities and costs related to the operation, programming and management.

On October 1, 2012, the City commenced a lease agreement with Texas A&M San Antonio (TAMU-SA) for the Centro de Artes building to create an Educational and Cultural Center. TAMU-SA's commitment was to tell the story of the Latino experience with a focus on San Antonio and South Texas through local and regional art, history and culture with a strong educational component. For three years, the City annually allocated \$150,000 in Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) funds for programming as well as \$300,000 in Market Square Enterprise funds for building operations, utilities, and repairs. For FY16, Market Square Funds were reduced to \$150,000. TAMU-SA terminated their lease in September 2016.

In September 2016, the Department of Arts & Culture began temporary management of exhibits and programming within the Centro de Artes Gallery. This space remains dedicated to telling the story of the Latino experience with a focus on San Antonio and South Texas. Exhibits will showcase local and regional art, history and culture with San Antonio and regional Latino artists and Latino-themed artworks. The gallery is currently open to the public free of charge Tuesday – Sunday, 11AM – 6PM, and closed Mondays.

<sup>1</sup> In this document, the term “Latino” will be used to represent all genders and orientations.



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### **PROCESS**

Utilizing San Antonio-based facilitator, Linda Ximenes, the City of San Antonio Department of Arts & Culture and City Council District 1 Councilman Roberto C. Treviño held strategic visioning and implementation sessions on September 20, 2016, October 3, 2016, and November 3, 2016.

Approximately one hundred participants convened to consider priorities for the next six months through five years to ensure the facility continues to honor its original mission and purpose as a center for Latino arts and culture. Nearly twenty of the visioning session participants – including leaders of arts organizations, artists, scholars, curators, arts patrons, and others – committed to assisting in the development of key strategies and action steps to achieve the vision. As a result of this process, the following Strategic Visioning Plan has been developed.

### **VISION**

Participants identified the following requirements for future Centro de Artes programming:

- Professionalism and quality
- Education & professional development
- Multidisciplinary approach
- Inclusive community access & engagement
- Equitable financial sustainability
- Local oversight and governance

### **CHALLENGES**

Participants identified the following challenges that could impact achieving this vision:

- Lack of vision by leadership
- Lack of leadership support for the arts
- Unwillingness to compromise
- Failure to be inclusive

### **SUCCESS INDICATORS**

Two key strategies were identified to achieve this vision and within each of the strategies participants developed success indicators that should be in place within five years if the vision is achieved.

Strategy #1: Advocate for Financial Equity

Success Indicators:

1. Line item for Centro de Artes in City's annual adopted budget
2. Develop and implement a five-year comprehensive programming plan
3. Establish a highly effective (high-functioning) working balance of committee members with clear term limits



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4. Strong and organized network of advocates that will support Centro de Artes
5. At least one successful, highly visible marketing campaign completed to increase attendance at the center
6. Alignment of marketing between merchants association of El Mercado and Centro de Artes

### Strategy #2: Organize for Inclusiveness

#### Success Indicators:

1. Diverse Latino demographic representation (gender, sexuality, and ethnicity) including selection of artists and curators, as well as attraction of a diverse audiences
2. Launch at least two visible marketing campaigns between collaborating organizations to increase attendance and visibility of the city
3. Consistent and sustained activities that promote interaction between artists and organizations
4. Open/public presentations, press releases and open calls (with “how to apply” instructions)

### **PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS**

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In an effort to achieve the five-year vision for the Centro de Artes, Implementation Session participants identified initial action items aimed at achieving these success indicators.

1. Create an oversight/advisory committee that is intergenerational, diverse and represents the Latino community in San Antonio
  - a. The role of this committee would be reviewing programming and curatorial planning
  - b. Committee would ensure inclusiveness and quality
  - c. Multiple voices should be represented at committee meetings to ensure vision aligns with action
  - d. Half of this committee should be selected by Latino organizations
2. Establish a funding line item for Centro de Artes in the City’s annual adopted budget
3. Create a long term strategic plan (5-10 years) for sustainability
4. Engage qualified, experienced and visionary team to oversee the facility
5. Utilize an open call for artists/curators selection and utilize a diverse outreach method for artists and curators
  - a. The space should include San Antonio and South Texas-based artists, scholars and curators as a main focus
  - b. International artists/curators and partnerships with other cultures should also be included, so long as there is a connection to the Latino community
  - c. Utilize an open call for artists and curators that include diverse outreach methods
  - d. Selections must ensure equity for all: multi ethnic (ex. Afro-Latino), ages, abilities/disabilities, sexual orientations, genders, and gender identities.
6. Develop a marketing strategy aimed at diversifying Centro de Artes audiences and engage the community through:



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- a. At least one highly-visible marketing campaign to be completed in the first year including new marketing strategies to diversify audiences through a multi-outreach approach to both locals and tourists
- b. Artist social mixers held regularly
- c. Improved transparency and communications between Latino arts communities and the general public
- d. Collaborations with other entities such as City's Office of Diversity and Inclusion, local arts organizations, LGBTQIA service organizations, and multi-disciplinary Latino focused arts organizations
- e. Develop an ongoing, mutually beneficial marketing between the merchants at El Mercado and Centro de Artes

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

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#### **Oversight/Advisory Committee**

Staff recommends that the San Antonio Arts Commission (SAAC) create an ad-hoc committee for the oversight of Centro de Artes. The committee would host meetings on a monthly basis that are open to the public. This committee would be responsible to establish a 5-year curatorial program; recommend approval of artists and curators through the open call selection process that ensures quality and inclusiveness; and approve a cooperative plan for arts agencies use of space.

In accordance with the SAAC bylaws, two City Council appointed commissioners would sit on the committee and one of those commissioners would be the chairperson. Up to nine additional members could be nominated by the local Latino organizations, staff, or other commissioners; with the SAAC approving the members. All members would serve for an initial two-year term and would be eligible for reappointed for additional terms.

This committee would be staff supported by the Department of Arts & Culture's Division of Cultural Events & Exhibits. The Department of Arts & Culture's Division of Cultural Events & Exhibits would manage the programming of the space with oversight and guidance from the Centro de Artes Committee.

#### **Open Call for Artists and Curators**

Staff recommends issuing an open call for artists, scholars and curators that will focus on San Antonio and South-Texas based applicants. International artists and curators, as well as partnerships with other cultures should also be included, as long as submitting artists and curators maintain connectivity within the Latino community. This open call would be advertised through newsletters, social media, traditional media and San Antonio Latino Arts & Culture serving institutions/agencies.



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The selection process would be developed using best practices and managed by the Department of Arts & Culture. The Centro de Artes committee will oversee and approve the selection process and may invite scholars and experts as additional advisors. Curators will be allowed propose artists outside of the open call process in order to realize curated exhibits that require the selection of specific artworks or commissions. The open call would also include opportunities for mentoring relationships that pair emerging artists and curators with experts from the field.

### **Open Call for Local Arts Agency Partners**

Latino arts non-profit organizations will be provided with an opportunity to manage a portion of the facility on a rotating basis. Initially, organizations will submit plans for 5-6 month programming and oversight of the second floor. The Centro de Artes committee will determine appropriate cooperative use and/or rotation of the space based on the mission and vision for the facility, the programming plan, and within guidelines that will be developed by the Department of Arts & Culture and approved by the Centro de Artes committee. If the cooperative use of space is determined to be an effective process, the committee may determine more space needs to be dedicated to programming and oversight by qualified local Latino arts agencies.

### **Funding & Sustainability**

In FY 2017, Centro de Artes was allocated \$150,000 in Market Square enterprise funds for security and facility maintenance, as well as an additional \$150,000 in Hotel Occupancy Tax funds for artistic programming. The HOT funds are included in the operating budget for the Department of Arts & Culture. Staff develops future City funding requests based on actual FY 2017 costs and proposed exhibits developed with the oversight of the Centro de Artes committee. Staff recommends that the Centro de Artes should be included as a line item in the City's budget to ensure these funds are dedicated to the institution.

After an analysis of the oversight costs involved in renting out space, staff has determined that the break even daily rate for rentals would far exceed the market's ability to pay those fees. Staff recommends reserving the facility for use at either no cost or for a nominal fee by non-profit Latino organizations and allied organizations for special events only, similar to the City-operated Culture Commons space at Plaza de Armas.

### **Marketing & Community engagement**

Staff recommends developing a dedicated webpage for Centro de Artes that is maintained with updated programming and information, in addition to promoting activities and events in the department's online newsletter, and social media. The Department's Marketing Division will develop a full marketing plan



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that will be reviewed by the Centro de Artes Committee. This plan will include at a minimum: partnering with institutions and agencies to enhance marketing efforts and cross-promote events, such as Visit San Antonio, the merchants at El Mercado, La Familia Cortez, and the Tricentennial Office and its media partners. Additionally, the Department can utilize its existing media buys to promote the institution and its programs, as well as provide press releases and press conferences to induce excitement and interest.

The Department will work with the Center City Development & Operations Department, which oversees Market Square, to leverage additional opportunities that target the Market Square audiences. We will engage with the City's Office of Diversity and Inclusion to develop a statement on Cultural Equity that is inclusive of all races, cultures, genders and identities. Finally, exhibit openings, coupled with artist and scholar talks held regularly at Centro de Artes will activate the space and connect to the arts community.

### **Facility**

Staff recommends to install adequate signage that clearly articulates the name and purpose of the building, and to work with the local designers and/or architects to develop way-finding concepts that help passers-by in locating the main entrance. The City will review opportunities to make the building more inviting from the exterior.

The community envisions Centro de Artes as an institution for San Antonio that offers an interdisciplinary performance space, as well as housing museum-quality exhibits that conform to American Association of Museum (AAM) standards. The facility does not currently meet the standards for AAM Certification; however, a feasibility study could be commissioned to determine the steps needed, as well as the cost, to attain the AAM standard. Staff is currently evaluating the facility's configuration and design in order to determine the most appropriate and effective use of the facility in terms of future programming and budget planning. There are office spaces in the facility that are currently occupied. These office spaces will be reassessed as leases are terminated.

The existing configuration is designed for visual arts with a small video room to show films. The space has the capacity for workshops and educational programs that focus on visual arts engagement, however the building has poor quality acoustics for sound and its floor does not meet standards for dance and performing arts. In order for the facility to be suitable for professional quality performing arts such as dance and music, the building would require extensive renovation. The City is committed to assisting with the development of a suitable venue for performing arts accessible to local Latino arts organizations, even if that venue is outside of Centro de Artes.

Staff recommends that the first floor gallery space be dedicated to professional quality exhibits (excluding the video room) and the second floor space and the video room be made available for use by local Latino arts organizations.