

# Seattle Office of Arts & Culture

Housing, Arts, & Civil Rights Committee

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Presented by

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# Agenda

- Seattle's Arts & Cultural Districts Program
- Georgetown's Application
- Columbia Hillman Arts & Culture District
- Next Steps



# Seattle's Arts & Cultural Districts

These are geographic areas where the City recognizes and supports the concentration of arts organizations, artists, cultural spaces, and creative businesses

## Existing Districts

Capitol Hill (2014)  
Historic Central Area (2015)  
Uptown (2017)  
Columbia Hillman (2018)

- **Preserve** and strengthen neighborhoods
- **Support** local artists, arts organizations, and cultural communities
- **Encourage** cultural space development and protection
- **Promote** equitable access to arts and cultural participation
- **Build** partnerships between community organizations and City agencies



# Neighborhood Vitality

These districts create a citywide network supporting Seattle's creative economy and cultural diversity

## Community and Cultural Benefits

- **Strengthen** neighborhood identity
- **Support** creative workers and foster collaboration
- **Increase access** to arts programming

## Economic and Place-Based Benefits

- **Encourage** cultural tourism and local visitation
- **Support** small businesses
- **Activate** public spaces
- **Help retain cultural spaces**



# Case Study: San Francisco's Cultural Districts

Districts are strongest when paired with funding and cross-department support

## Cultural Districts

Japantown  
Calle 24 Latino  
SoMa Pilipinas  
Transgender District  
Leather and LGBTQ  
African American  
Castro LGBTQ  
American Indian  
Sunset Chinese  
Pacific Islander

- **10** City-recognized districts
- **Backed by dedicated funding**
- **\$3M** annual support for Cultural District
- Each district creates a **unique plan**



# Georgetown Association of Arts & Culture



# Seattle's Industrial Arts Neighborhood

Georgetown is known for its blend of industrial history, creative production, and DIY culture.

- **Home** to artist collectives, independent artists, design firms, galleries, museums, venues, annual festivals and creative schools
- **Industry and art coexist**
- **Distinctive landmarks**
- **Ideal spaces** for fabrication, studios, and creative entrepreneurship



# Community, History & Cultural Activity

Georgetown is a diverse, historic neighborhood with strong and active arts & cultural scene

## Arts & Culture

Studios

Fabrication Shops

Galleries

Museums

Second Saturday Art Attack

Georgetown Carnival

HonkFest West

San Gennaro Festival

Rainier Days

- Annexed into Seattle in **1910**
- Small residential population, with **37% people of color**
- King County **Community of Opportunity**
- Second Highest Equity Priority area



# Georgetown Arts District Organization

A vibrant, united community ready to elevate

- Organizing **began in 2018**
- Georgetown Association of Arts & Culture (GTAAC) was **formed in 2023** to:
  - Serve as a neighborhood-wide coalition
  - Represent Georgetown
- GTAAC is governed by a working Board of Directors, artists, gallerists, curators, event producers, residents, and creative business owners



# Why Designation Matters Now

Georgetown's arts-driven culture is growing rapidly, with major projects underway:

- **2000+** affordable housing units
- Educational museum and event venue
- Community center development
- Expanding food access

## GTAAC's Role:

- **Advocates** for the needs of the neighborhood
- **Provides** creative opportunities
- **Bolsters** Georgetown's creative economy and **preserves** the neighborhood's cultural identity



# Columbia-Hillman Arts & Cultural District

Rectifying the record

## Council Reconfirmation

- OAC audited City records in preparation for GTAAC
- City Department panel **February 2018**
- Mayor Proclamation **August 2018**

## Origins

- Planning **began in 2016** with partners including the Columbia City Business Association, Hillman City Business Association, and SEEDArts
- A public meeting at The Royal Room drew over 120 artists and supporters



# Columbia-Hillman Arts & Cultural District

Fostering an inclusive creative hub where artists thrive and community connects

- Southeast Seattle is highly diverse with a strong creative workforce.
- 2017 Arts Hackathon & Salon developed protoypes

## Arts & Cultural District Vision

- **Support** artists and arts spaces, encourage new creative enterprises
- **Strengthen** connections between Columbia City and Hillman City
- **Development** of a Creative hub



COLUMBIA HILLMAN  
ARTS & CULTURAL  
D I S T R I C T

# Citywide Vision for Cultural Districts

## Preserve space

Help protect and retain cultural spaces in high-pressure areas with decreasing affordability and place-stability

## Support Coalitions

Provide operating and technical support for district leadership

## Increase Visibility

Strengthen branding, wayfinding, and public-facing activation

## Tie to Planning

Connect districts to equitable development and neighborhood planning

# Next Steps for Cultural Districts

1. Review Georgetown's application
2. Use this process to clarify how the City can better resource district implementation
3. Bring lessons from Georgetown and Columbia-Hillman into the Cultural Action Plan
4. Work with Council and community partners on the funding and policy tools needed for long-term district success

*Greatness Starts Here*  
by Ulises Mariscal



# Thank you

## Questions & Discussion

