

Cultural District Market Study

Summary of Findings and Next Steps

SALT LAKE COUNTY – SALT LAKE CITY – SALT LAKE CHAMBER – DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE

BACKGROUND

HVS International, a leading global hospitality consulting organization based in Chicago, Illinois, has completed a market study on the feasibility of a downtown arts and culture district. The funders of the study – Redevelopment Agency of Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Downtown Alliance and Salt Lake Chamber – will now work to implement a downtown arts and culture district that will enhance Salt Lake’s exceptional cultural assets.

STUDY FINDINGS

The study concludes that sufficient market demand exists in the greater Salt Lake Metropolitan Area for a downtown cultural district (see Table 1). Opportunities for growth are particularly pronounced in the categories of other dance (folk and modern) and non-musical and musical plays.

In keeping with this demand, the report recommends the building of a new main stage theater (2200-2500 seats); confirms the need to renovate the Capitol Theater for improved customer experience; confirms the need to build additional Black Box theaters (100-300 seats) and rehearsal studios, office and production space; and recommends renovating or building a medium stage theater (800-1,500 seats) for chamber and jazz music, other music programming and select dance. The study recommends studying the feasibility of renovating the Utah Theater into this medium-size space because of its central location.

Table 1: Comparison of Measured and Potential Demand (Annual Attendance)

Category	Measured Demand	Demand Potential	% of Potential	Growth Potential
Ballet	70,000	88,200	79%	18,200
Classical music	415,200	516,700	80%	101,500
Musical plays	387,199	498,800	78%	111,601
Non-musical plays	175,368	352,300	50%	176,932
Opera	116,000	123,700	94%	7,700
Other dance	84,758	209,200	41%	124,442

Source: Arts groups, ArtTix, Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County Center for the Arts, and HVS.

The feasibility of a cultural district is strengthened by the Salt Lake area’s rapidly-growing population, strong economy, high level of educational attainment, and regional participation rates in the performing arts that are higher than the national average (See Table 2). The study emphasizes that marketing coordination for the arts will be improved by a unified district in the downtown area similar to what is found in successful arts districts in Denver, Milwaukee and Pittsburgh.

NEXT STEPS

Over the next few weeks, the findings of the study will be shared with elected officials, stakeholders and the public. In addition, the funders of the study will take these implementation steps:

1. **Form a coalition** – Create a coalition to guide implementation options. The Coalition will advance the creation of a downtown arts and culture district by building upon current areas of consensus – the befitting role of downtown as the center for arts and culture in the state, the need to maximize the use and viability of existing cultural infrastructure, and the benefit of broadening the cultural experience to include dining, shopping and other entertainment options. The structure, membership and scope of work for this Coalition will be forthcoming.

2. **Master plan** – Seek funding for the development of a cultural district plan that includes an urban design plan, more detailed plans on options smaller facilities, site and concept planning for a large theater, and a financing plan.
3. **Utah Theatre** – Explore the role Utah Theatre may play in the development of a successful cultural district in downtown Salt Lake City.
4. **Other cultural assets** – Salt Lake City has many other non-performing arts attractions within the proposed cultural district (e.g. Salt Lake Arts Center, Utah Museum of Fine Arts and History, Clarke Planetarium.) We will integrate these assets into the work plan for an arts and cultural district.
5. **Catalyst** – The arts and cultural district concept will be used as a catalyst for a variety of downtown redevelopment initiatives including retail, increased hospitality business, educational offerings and mixed-use development. Figure 1 shows the mix of existing performing arts’ facilities in the downtown area. In addition to these, the LDS Church Conference Center, Assembly Hall, and Tabernacle are part of the mix, as are facilities for other art forms.

Table 2: 2002 Attendance Rates in Performing Arts (Percent of population attending)

Category	National Average	Mountain Region	Regional As a % of National
Ballet	3.9%	4.9%	125.6%
Classical music	11.6%	16.0%	137.9%
Musical plays	17.1%	19.5%	114.0%
Non-musical plays	12.3%	13.6%	110.6%
Opera	3.2%	6.1%	190.6%
Other dance	6.3%	9.4%	149.2%

Source: National Endowment for the Arts

Figure 1: Existing Performing Arts’ Facilities in Downtown



For additional information contact the funders of the *Cultural District Market Study*:

- Salt Lake Chamber or the Downtown Alliance at (801) 328-5072 or see us on the Web at www.saltlakechamber.org and www.downtownslc.org.
- Salt Lake County Community Services at (801) 468-3680.
- Salt Lake City Redevelopment Agency at (801) 535-7240.