



# Cultural Resource Element

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# Cultural Resource Element

## A Community

### discussion

Seattle is a city of communities. Some communities are defined as an identifiable place (neighborhoods) with particular physical conditions, tradition or history. Other communities are not geographically based, but rather are defined by people sharing a common identity, heritage or experience. Within a community, people learn about themselves and customs, and traditions are kept alive.

Communities provide a place for people to meet and share experiences. By exploring the culture, heritage and customs of other communities, people learn how they fit into the larger Seattle community and beyond. Celebrating the diversity of our communities encourages civil behavior among citizens. By teaching tolerance, fueling natural inquisitiveness, and expanding understanding, cultural resources contribute to conditions that make it possible for people from different backgrounds to live together with mutual respect.

### celebrating diversity & strengthening a sense of belonging goals

- CRG1** A city that welcomes diversity; works to raise awareness and understanding of the city and its peoples; and nurtures the ethnic and cultural traditions of its diverse citizenry.
- CRG2** A city where the sense of community is strong, opportunities for people to interact with each other are many, and conditions that contribute to isolation and segregation are discouraged.

### celebrating diversity & strengthening a sense of belonging policies

- CR1** Encourage and support communities in celebrating, preserving, and transmitting their traditions through cultural and heritage activities, the arts, education, publishing and reading, and public events.
- CR2** Involve neighborhoods in public projects, including publicly-sponsored art and cultural events, so that the projects reflect the values of, and have relevance and meaning to, the neighborhoods in which they are located. Encourage projects that are challenging and thought provoking, as well as beautiful, fun and entertaining.
- CR3** Use cultural resources to promote cross-cultural awareness and depict differing points of view in order to foster open and intentional exploration of the issues and conditions that tend to divide communities, so that actions can be taken to confront and overcome these conditions.

### fostering a sense of place goals

- CRG3** A city that values, maintains and enhances the resources that establish the public realm, including schools, libraries, museums and other cultural facilities, streets and public rights-of-way, government facilities and public open spaces, and promotes the use of these places for public gathering and cultural expression.
- CRG4** A city that uses public projects and activities to help define Seattle's identity, especially civic spaces that provide residents and visitors with strong symbols of the city or neighborhood identity.

**fostering a sense of place policies**

**CR4** Continue Seattle's long tradition of providing a rich variety of public open spaces, community gardens, and public facilities to provide residents with recreational and cultural opportunities, promote environmental stewardship and attract desirable economic development.

**CR5** Capitalize on the potential that public projects have for serving as symbols of the city, and for expressing the identity and special character of the area where they are located by encouraging public art and excellent urban design and architecture that:

- respond to local climate conditions, respect the surrounding context, use local building and landscaping materials, emphasize conservation, and draw on the region's cultural heritage;
- communicate the purpose of the project and the identity, history and uniqueness of different places within the city;
- enhance accessibility; and
- integrate art into the design of the project.

**CR6** Capitalize on opportunities for promoting community identity through the design of street space, preserving or encouraging, for example:

- street furnishings that reflect the ethnic heritage or architectural character of the surrounding neighborhood;
- artworks and markers commemorating important events or individuals;

- details that can reinforce community identity and authenticity such as light standards, street name markers, original granite curbing and cobblestone paving or types of street trees; or

- space for landscaping projects.

**using cultural resources to implement the urban village strategy goal**

**CRG5** A city that regards the community-building potential of cultural resources as an integral part of its growth management strategy—the urban village strategy.

**using cultural resources to implement the urban village strategy policies**

**CR7** Promote the development or expansion of cultural facilities, including libraries, schools, parks, performing arts and art exhibition facilities, museums, and community centers, in areas designated as urban villages and urban centers.

**CR8** In general, use the hierarchy of urban village designations to guide the siting of different types of cultural facilities, directing those facilities that attract large numbers of people to urban centers, because these areas: function as major commercial centers and gathering places; have unparalleled regional access through the regional transit system; and will accommodate a substantial amount of the city's growth over the next 20 years. All types of urban villages are suitable for small cultural facilities. The scale of facilities should generally be compatible with the character of the neighborhood in which they are located.



**CR9** Work with neighborhoods and agencies to identify resources of historic, architectural, cultural, artistic, or social significance, especially in urban centers and urban villages. Encourage neighborhood-based efforts to preserve these resources, and apply public resources where appropriate. Identify structures, sites and public views, in addition to those already recognized, that should be considered for protection measures.

**CR10** Foster public life throughout the city by providing open spaces that are well-integrated into the neighborhoods they serve and function as “public living rooms” for informal gathering and recreation, especially in more densely populated urban centers and urban villages.

**B Civic Identity**

**discussion**

Each of us views Seattle from our own experiences and interests. While there is great value in celebrating the identities of the many different communities within the city, it is equally important to maintain a shared identity of Seattle. Identifying ourselves as one community enables us to pull together and support pursuits that benefit the city as a whole.

Some of what defines Seattle's identity is timeless — its spectacular setting amid mountains and water, the terrain and its marine climate. The special relationship between the people of Seattle and this environment has helped shape who we are, and instilled an awareness that our treatment of the environment has direct consequences on us and on future generations.

A large part of Seattle's special identity and civic pride is derived from its heritage. From the Native Americans who first established trading centers along the Duwamish to the continuing waves of newcomers from around the world, all have left their mark.

Over time, Seattle has acquired many features that people have come to identify with the city. Among these are its distinctive neighborhoods and public art, the Space Needle and Seattle Center, the Olmsted network of parks and boulevards, Pioneer Square and other historic neighborhoods, the Pike Place Public Market, the University of Washington, and the downtown skyline, distinguished by landmarks such as the Smith Tower.

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Seattle's identity is also tied to its function as a commercial city, with origins as a frontier port and rail terminus exporting the region's resources. In the past, the city's somewhat isolated location lessened the impact of trends influencing other parts of the country, allowing more of its own identity to show through. More recently, Seattle's position as a gateway to the Pacific, global commercial center and transportation hub has dramatically increased exposure to and influence from the outside world.

Today, Seattle has a distinct and prominent place in the culture of the Puget Sound region. A vibrant arts community and a concentration of cultural institutions within Seattle have given the city a national reputation as a cultural center.

Seattle remains a work in progress. One of the few constant characteristics of this city is that it is always changing. So, in addition to the challenge of defining who we are, we also have the challenge of expressing what we want this city to become.

**providing a sense of continuity & community through our historic legacy goals**

**CRG6** A city that celebrates and strives to protect its cultural legacy and heritage, to preserve and protect historic neighborhoods and to preserve, restore and re-use its built resources of cultural, heritage, architectural, or social significance in order to maintain its unique sense of place and adapt to change gracefully.

**CRG7** A city that preserves the integrity of the cultural resources under City control, including public art and archaeological and historic resources, and fosters in the community a sense of personal responsibility and stewardship for all cultural resources.

**providing a sense of continuity & community through our historic legacy policies**

**CR11** Identify and protect landmarks and historic districts that define Seattle's identity and represent its history, and strive to reduce barriers to preservation. As appropriate, offer incentives for rehabilitating and adapting historic buildings for new uses.

**CR12** Preserve and enhance the City Archives as a unique cultural resource for documenting the human experience in Seattle.

**CR13** Promote partnerships among cultural heritage agencies in City government — e.g., the City Archives, Seattle Public Library, Urban Conservation — and community organizations to develop interpretative and educational programming about Seattle's heritage.

**CR14** Increase awareness of the community's heritage by promoting cultural preservation programs or activities, and by encouraging public participation in documenting Seattle's history, especially the participation of the elderly who provide the most direct connection with the past.

**CR15** Identify and work with others to explore ways to preserve Seattle's archaeological resources. Initiate and support efforts to educate Seattle citizens about these resources.

**CR16** Set an example by maintaining a high standard for the care of City-owned cultural resources to encourage owners of properties having value as cultural resources to do the same.



**defining & advancing Seattle's place in the region & the world goals**

- CRG8** A city that continually builds on the strengths of its cultural resources to advance as an international cultural center.
- CRG9** A city that maintains its place as the cultural center of the region, while participating as a partner in the region's network of cultural infrastructure — universities and educational institutions, libraries, arts and heritage organizations and facilities, and creative individuals and supporters — to sustain this infrastructure and provide greater access for all.

**defining & advancing Seattle's place in the region & the world policies**

- CR17** Promote partnerships among the City and other public and private entities in the region to:
  - provide mutual support for the preservation, maintenance and development of regional cultural facilities where people experience world-class cultural events; and
  - make these resources visible, accessible and integrated with the community.
- CR18** Encourage other jurisdictions in the region to help Seattle sustain and enhance the cultural facilities located in Seattle that serve the region as a whole.
- CR19** Recognize that the city's Major Institutions (universities and hospitals) represent cultural resources for the neighborhoods in which they are located, the region and beyond, and work with these institutions as they develop plans for the future to encourage greater public access and enjoyment of these resources.

- CR20** Because of their central location and historic role as the region's meeting places, and the added benefits that come from having a recognized district of related activities, continue to support the concentration of regional cultural facilities in downtown Seattle and Seattle Center.
- CR21** Promote artistic exploration and exchange worldwide through many avenues, including Seattle Sister Cities Program, and through cultural partnerships with Africa, the Asian Pacific Rim, Latin America, Mexico and other countries represented in Seattle's population.
- CR22** Develop portions of the surplus Naval Station Puget Sound at Sand Point into a multi-purpose regional facility to support the arts and cultural activity.

**developing the economy goal**

- CRG10** A city that utilizes its wealth of cultural resources to promote employment, small business development, trade, and tourism and to attract businesses to the Pacific Northwest.

**developing the economy policies**

- CR23** Document and increase public awareness of the tremendous contributions that cultural resources make to the city's fiscal well being.
- CR24** Foster an urban environment and cultural activities that are true to the values and needs of the city's citizens, because a city that promotes its own identity will, in the long run, sustain its attractiveness to visitors without compromising its integrity.

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- CR25** Recognize the economic value of Seattle's cultural resources in attracting tourism; re-invest a share of the revenue derived from tourism to sustain and expand cultural resources.
- CR26** Promote collaboration among the business community and organizations involved in cultural resources to make cultural experiences accessible to the widest possible public.

## C Learning

### discussion

Cultural resources influence what and how we learn. Participation in creative processes as part of learning teaches people to adapt to change. This is especially important for young people who will need to be flexible to face the challenges of an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world.

Business leaders understand that today's international marketplace demands workers whose education develops their critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, creativity and interpersonal skills — all attributes cultivated by the arts. In Creative America, the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities states: "Educators observe that students develop creative thinking through the arts and transfer that capacity to other subjects. Studies also show that when the arts are a strong component of the school environment, drop-out rates and absenteeism decline."

Seattle has many sources of cultural activity — spanning areas as diverse as grunge music, film, folk dancing, cutting edge theater, opera, and hand-blown glass art. These resources provide personal enrichment and enjoyment, and unique learning opportunities that may also ignite the spark of interest that defines a life's work for many citizens.

### increasing access & opportunities for learning goals

- CRG11** A city that is a laboratory for life-long learning, where people of all ages are afforded opportunities to continually enrich their lives.
- CRG12** A city where cultural resources are learning tools that can help individuals achieve both self-fulfillment and a productive place in the community.



**increasing access & opportunities for learning policies**

- CR27** Encourage informal opportunities for learning and enjoyment through creative ways of presenting cultural resources to the public, such as poetry and graphic art on transit, presentations at major public events, the treatment of information on public flyers and billing statements, and library resources and programming.
- CR28** Take advantage of the opportunities that facilities attracting large numbers of people present for teaching about the community and its history.
- CR29** Work in partnership with artists, arts organizations, ethnic, cultural, musical and community associations, and education institutions to foster opportunities for life-long cultural exploration for all citizens.
- CR30** Encourage schools to make their facilities available to Seattle's neighborhoods for cultural programs, and community services, meetings and gatherings.

**establishing a strong foundation: focus on youth goal**

- CRG13** A city where children are exposed to cultural resources, educated about Seattle's history and various cultures, and have opportunities to explore their own talents and creativity.

**establishing a strong foundation: focus on youth policies**

- CR31** Encourage programs for students to develop their creativity and arts skills as part of their development as confident, well-rounded individuals, both for their lifelong enjoyment and to prepare them for careers in the creative arts or to apply their creative abilities in other professions and pursuits.
- CR32** Encourage public art projects that involve youth in design and implementation.
- CR33** Support cultural programs, especially for at-risk youth, both in schools and in settings outside school, that involve artists and scholars in partnership with cultural organizations and institutions.
- CR34** Create opportunities for Seattle students to be exposed to many cultures in a variety of venues throughout the city, so that their education may be well-rounded.

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## D Creative Expression

### discussion

Each of us has the need to establish our own identity and express who we are. Although individuals must take the initiative to discover and pursue those things that add meaning to their lives, their success depends on an environment that encourages people to engage in these pursuits. Seattle will be a safer, more dynamic community if individuals have access to positive outlets for self-expression. Teenagers and young adults are one group that can especially benefit from these outlets because this is a critical time of life when such experiences will influence the type of adults they will become.

Free expression is the basis of our democratic tradition, and a healthy cultural life is vital to a democratic society. The raising of differing opinions, the coming together for the free exchange of ideas, and finding ways to express new ideas and challenge old ones are all aspects of the democratic process sustained by our cultural resources.

### encouraging individual expression & participation in community life goals

**CRG14** A city that integrates arts and cultural activities into the day-to-day experiences of city and community life and in which cultural resources for individual self-expression are widely accessible.

**CRG15** A city that values and supports the full array of arts, artists and arts organizations, including, but not limited to, written, visual, musical, traditional and performing arts, for their ability to entertain, inspire, challenge and add dimension and enjoyment to the lives of Seattle citizens.

### encouraging individual expression & participation in community life policies

**CR35** Promote partnerships among the City and other public and private entities in the region to:

- continue to refine and articulate roles of City, County and State government as supporters and promoters of cultural expression;
- simplify and coordinate funding processes; and
- promote the development of strong arts and heritage organizations that provide cultural programming.

**CR36** Encourage support for cultural resources through individual and corporate philanthropy; show how contributions will benefit both donor and recipient. Publicly recognize and celebrate gift giving of all types and levels.

**CR37** Increase opportunities for non-professionals and young people to participate in a variety of public events, festivals and projects, because amateur activity enlivens community life and cultivates deeper appreciation and involvement in cultural activities.

**CR38** Reduce barriers to the involvement of people with disabilities in cultural activities.

**CR39** Develop a better understanding of how the city's different arts' communities function. Assess the needs of these communities to better recognize and act on opportunities to support them.



- CR40** Increase opportunities for artists to apply their skills and creativity in the delivery of public services, in the planning and design of capital improvements or in the design and delivery of public information.
  
- CR41** Facilitate volunteer public arts projects, such as community murals, by identifying locations where art is desirable, can be accommodated safely, and will be enjoyed by many people.
  
- CR42** Encourage performances and events in non-traditional settings, such as neighborhood parks, community centers, schools, transit stations, housing projects and public areas in private development, to reach new audiences and increase access for people who otherwise would be unable to attend.