

SWOT ANALYSIS:

**SUMMARY OF INPUT ON
THE STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES,
OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS
FACING THE ARTS AND
CULTURE SECTOR IN
THE MARICOPA REGION**

PREPARED FOR:

Maricopa Regional Arts and Culture Task Force

SUPPORTED BY:

Flinn Foundation

Margaret T. Morris Foundation

J. W. Kieckhefer Foundation

The Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust

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Technology Partnership Practice

Battelle Memorial Institute

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KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FACING MARICOPA COUNTY

In order to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the Maricopa region's arts and culture institutions, Battelle interviewed more than 40 civic and business leaders, members of the arts and culture community, educators, and representatives of the philanthropic sector. Battelle also conducted five focus groups attended by more than 70 civic leaders, young professionals, and

Old But New: Some of the Maricopa Region's Arts and Culture Milestones

1920 Phoenix Little Theatre
 1929 Orpheum Theatre
 1929 Heard Museum
 1937 Taliesin
 1938 Desert Botanical Garden
 1948 Phoenix Boys Choir
 1948 Phoenix Symphony
 1949 Phoenix Art Museum
 1962 Phoenix Zoo
 1964 Grady Gammage Auditorium, ASU
 1967 Arizona Commission on the Arts
 1971 Arizona Opera
 1972 Arizona Theatre Company
 1972 Gilbert Fine Arts Association
 1972 Symphony Hall
 1973 Arizona Humanities Council
 1975 Scottsdale Center for the Arts
 1975 Xicanindio Artes
 1977 Childsplay
 1977 Mesa Southwest Museum
 1980 Arizona Museum for Youth
 1980 Mesa Arts Center
 1984 Arizona Science Center
 1985 Ballet Arizona
 1986 Actors Theatre
 1989 Chandler Center for the Arts
 1989 Valley Youth Theatre
 1989 West Valley Fine Arts Council
 1995 Burton Barr Central Library
 1999 Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art
 2001 Del E. Webb Center for the Performing Arts, Wickenburg
 2005 Mesa Performing Arts Center
 2006 Tempe Performing Arts Center

members of the arts and culture community and held three community dialogues open to the public and attended by more than 150 people. The interviews, focus groups and community dialogues were designed to answer the following questions:

- What are the **key strengths** of the Maricopa region's arts and culture sector?
- What are the **key weaknesses** of the Valley's arts and culture sector?
- What are the **opportunities** on which to build a stronger arts and culture sector that would support the region's economy?
- What are the primary **challenges** facing the region's arts and culture sector?

This report summarizes the input obtained in the interviews, focus groups, and community dialogues. It should be noted that in some cases perceptions are included in this analysis, whether accurate or not, since they reflect the climate within which progress can be made in building arts and culture in the region.

STRENGTHS OF THE MARICOPA REGION'S ARTS AND CULTURE SECTOR

Maricopa County has a diverse and growing arts and culture base with several nationally recognized groups.

Maricopa County's arts and culture community has grown substantially over the years and offers activities across the entire arts and culture continuum from traditional arts and culture organizations, such as performing arts centers and museums, to grass roots organizations working with children to cutting edge

performances that appeal to young professionals. Today, approximately 300 organizations offer a wide variety of performances, festivals, lessons, and programs.¹ Several of the Valley's arts and culture organizations, such as the Heard Museum, Phoenix Boys Choir, Childsplay, and the Desert Botanical Garden, are recognized as nationally excellent in their areas. Interviewees and focus group participants also indicated that Maricopa County has excellent theater offerings including avant garde, regional and professional companies.

Maricopa County's municipalities and citizens support the development of the arts and culture community and have committed funding for new arts and culture facilities.

City and tribal governments fund a variety of arts and culture programs in Maricopa County. Seven local arts agencies have been designated by local governments to manage arts and culture programs, funding, initiatives, and, in some cases, facilities. Phoenix, for example, distributes city dollars in grants, but that approximately \$900,000 is dwarfed by the funds devoted to facilities such as Symphony Hall, Orpheum Theatre, and Herberger Theatre, which are managed by the Theater Division of the Civic Plaza Department. Another way in which local governments have supported the arts is by providing financing for performing arts centers and other arts and culture facilities. Chandler has a performing arts center, and Mesa's is expected to open in 2005. Tempe will unveil its center on Town Lake in 2006. Another facility is in the works for the Southwest Valley. During the last five years, residents of Phoenix, Mesa and Tempe have approved more than \$220 million in bond funding for performing arts venues. (See Table 1.)

Table 1: Recent Voter Approved Investments in Performing Arts Venues

Venue	Investment (millions of dollars)
Phoenix Arts and Culture Bond (2001 voter approval)	\$66.3
Mesa Performing Arts Center (1998 voter approval)	\$94.0
Tempe Performing Arts Center (2000 voter approval)	\$61.0
Total	\$221.3

New residents moving into Maricopa County often come from places with vibrant arts and culture bases and recognize the importance of arts and culture to the community.

Maricopa County continues to grow at very rapid rates fueled, in part, by the flow of new residents into the state. Only about a third of the residents of the Phoenix MSA were born in Arizona and 22 percent of the population of the metro area moved across state lines between 1995 and 2000. This growth means that more people with a greater variety of interests continue to come to the region. The interviewees and the participants in the focus groups and dialogues suggested that many of the people moving into the region come from regions with long established and well supported arts and culture sectors. Involving these newcomers in arts and culture will help to build the region's audience and contributor base. In addition, these new residents, many of whom are young retirees, bring expertise and could be tapped to serve on Boards of Directors and as volunteers.

¹ Morrison Institute for Public Policy. *A Place for Arts & Culture: A Maricopa County Overview*, September 2003.

There are some encouraging signs of arts and culture organizations in Maricopa County demonstrating an increased willingness to collaborate, and the civic community is interested in encouraging such collaboration.

The Phoenix Arts Commission, Scottsdale Cultural Council, Mesa Arts and Cultural Division, Tempe Cultural Services, West Valley Fine Arts Council, and Chandler Cultural Foundation work together on projects, such as the recently completed economic impact study conducted as part of the Americans for the Arts project. In particular, the West Valley Fine Arts Council has been an innovator by focusing on a region instead of one city. This membership organization seeks “to develop, enhance, and promote quality arts opportunities and arts education of everyone in the West Valley”. The Council works with the cities of Litchfield Park, Avondale, Goodyear, Buckeye and Tolleson. In the last year, the council organized some 30 events that attracted an estimated 35,000 people. For many years the business community, through a vehicle called COMPAS (Combined Metropolitan Phoenix Arts and Sciences) worked to promote the cultural, artistic, and scientific environment of the region. Started in 1967 and active until about 2001, COMPAS donated more than \$8 million to the Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix Symphony, Heard Museum, Desert Botanical Garden, and Phoenix Zoo. In 1996, the list of beneficiaries was expanded to include other arts and science organizations.

The fact that the region’s philanthropic community has come together to create the Maricopa Regional Arts and Culture Task Force is a positive step that should lead to further collaborations and partnerships. In addition, with support from the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust, a new collaborative effort, Alliance for Audience, has been initiated. The Alliance, which includes 40 arts and culture organizations, will seek to better market and promote arts and culture experiences in the Valley.

Maricopa County’s communities are leaders in public art.

Cities throughout Maricopa County have vibrant public art programs that seek to create a sense of place and communicate what is important to local culture. Chandler, Glendale, Mesa, Phoenix, Scottsdale, Tempe, and the Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community sponsor public art and “percent for art” programs, whereby a percentage of city capital expenditures are set aside for public art. In FY 2002, Phoenix, Tempe, Chandler, Mesa and Gilbert, spent more than \$9 million on public art projects.² See Table 2.

Phoenix and Scottsdale have been cited nationally as leaders in “art in infrastructure.” Artists often participate on design teams with engineers and architects to help create a bridge, freeway, or waste water treatment plant. Artists, at the same time, provide new features for parks, public buildings, and fire stations. With this approach, public art becomes part of the urban fabric instead of “decoration.”

² Given the town’s fiscal situation, the Gilbert Town Council voted to suspend funding for public arts projects indefinitely as of November, 2003.

Table 2: Public Arts Program Funding in Maricopa County³

Public Art Program Name	City	2002
Phoenix Arts Commission Public Art Program	Phoenix	\$7,122,000
Arizona State University Public Art Program	Tempe	\$600,000
City of Chandler, Chandler Arts Commission	Chandler	\$225,000
City of Mesa Public Art Program	Mesa	\$956,000
City of Tempe Culture Services, Public Art Program	Tempe	\$149,820
Gilbert Public Art Program	Gilbert	\$400,000
Total		\$9,452,820

Source: Americans for the Arts Public Art Survey, 2002.

ASU is a strong resource both in terms of the arts and culture events it offers and the fact that it is home to one of the nation's leading schools for the study, practice and development of the arts.

ASU's Herberger College of Fine Arts' programs are highly ranked nationally. Its masters of fine arts program is ranked 13th in the nation, its printmaking program is ranked 3rd, photography is ranked 5th and ceramics is ranked 14th by *US News and World Reports*. The school not only attracts gifted artisans and performers but offers a wide array of arts and culture offerings and interdisciplinary arts experiences, resources and services for children and adults in the Maricopa region. ASU has an active Public Events Cultural Participation Program that takes the performing arts into the community and its Gammage Auditorium hosts Broadway plays and performances by national and international groups. The young professionals who attended one of the focus groups felt strongly that ASU is a significant resource that could play an even larger role in arts and culture in the region.

The Maricopa region is an attractive location for artists and has a base of talented artists, writers, and performers.

At both the focus groups and the community dialogues, participants reported that the Maricopa region has a very talented base of artists, writers and performers but that they aren't recognized locally. It was suggested at one of the community dialogues that "ASU has artists who have national and international visibility and reputation, but their visibility is limited locally." Interviewees and participants in the focus groups and dialogues indicated that the Valley is an attractive place for artists because of its amenities, affordability, and access. Artists particularly like the desert setting, lighting and weather of the Valley. There is a growing base of artists and an emerging arts district around Roosevelt Street in downtown Phoenix. Many graduates of ASU's Herberger College of Fine Arts reside in the region providing a talent base on which to build. Indeed the number of independent writers, artists and performers increased by 50 percent between 1998 and 2001 increasing from 184 to 282.⁴

³ Glendale, Peoria, and Scottsdale did not participate in this study. However, Scottsdale reported separately that 34 public art projects were conducted between 1998 and 2002 with a total value of \$2,051,844. This value reflects contracts with artists, rather than the entire cost of the projects or their construction.

⁴ U.S. Bureau of the Census, County Business Patterns, 1998 and March 2003.

The arts and culture sector is a strong contributor to the Maricopa region's economy.

The arts and culture sector has become an important component of the regional economy. Data from *Vital & Valuable: Impact of the Valley Nonprofit Arts Organizations and Their Audiences* showed that nonprofit arts organizations had a total economic impact on the region of \$344 million in FY 2000. State and local governments received at least \$34 million in tax revenue from arts spending. Approximately 4,000 people were employed directly by arts organizations and another 7,000 jobs were related indirectly. These figures only relate to nonprofit arts organizations. If major cultural establishments and for-profit arts and culture establishments are added to the mix, the impact of arts and culture would be significantly higher.

Arts and culture organizations in the region generally receive strong support from volunteers.

The interviewees indicated that many of the arts and culture organizations in the Maricopa region are fortunate to have a large number of outstanding volunteers. According to the Americans for the Arts economic impact study, more than 15,000 Valley residents volunteered more than 900,000 hours to the arts in operations and performance-related tasks in 2000. In addition, the Desert Botanical Garden counts 500 active volunteers, while the Arizona Science Center depends on 150 unpaid workers. Approximately 1,500 volunteers serve the region's historical museums and societies. Together these residents provide thousands of hours of service to institutions that would be hard pressed to continue without them.

Additional strengths noted by interviewees and focus group and dialogue participants include:

- As the Maricopa region's economy matures, the number of wealthy residents who are a potential set of arts and culture patrons and benefactors, continues to grow.
- The citizenry has strong expectations for arts and culture.
- There is a growing base of outreach programs in arts and culture to underserved populations, including children.
- The region's arts and culture organizations are tenacious and creative in solving resource problems.
- The region has a convenient and efficient airport that easily accommodates business and leisure travel activities.
- The region's cultural tourism offerings reflect a wide variety of interests that include Native American culture experiences, vibrant nightlife with casinos, ethnic restaurants, art and culture centers, sports, and lectures, film screenings and guest speakers sponsored by universities, community colleges, foundations and nonprofit organizations.

WEAKNESSES OF THE MARICOPA REGION'S ARTS AND CULTURE SECTOR

While Maricopa County has a growing and diverse base of arts and culture organizations and a number of strengths on which to build, the arts and culture base has weaknesses as well that will need to be addressed in order for the region to compete with those regions that have developed, and are known for, their vibrant and world-class arts and culture sectors. The following

weaknesses will need to be addressed for Maricopa County to greatly improve the stature, breadth and quality of its arts and culture sector.

Arts and culture organizations have faced resource constraints, limiting their ability to expand, grow, or improve quality.

A universal refrain among arts and culture groups and organizations, their boards and volunteers, is that the Valley has underinvested in, and limited the capacity and vibrancy of, its arts and culture assets. This resource constraint is cited time and again as the underlying cause of most of the weaknesses and challenges facing the Valley and its organizations. Organizations feel they spend more time trying to survive at the expense of growing to meet citizen expectations. Audience bases are changing, and more competition with for-profit entertainment enterprises makes it more difficult to attract, retain, and expand audiences. To address this, many organizations have changed their ticketing packages, but find that customers make more last minute purchases, are less likely to buy season tickets, and can be swayed at the last moment as to whether to attend, view, or participate. The challenge is to keep and grow an audience base in face of increased competition for these buyers.

There is no recognized common vision for the future of arts and culture in the Maricopa region.

The individual jurisdictions in Maricopa County are pursuing arts and culture development within their communities, but there is no comprehensive regional vision of what the arts should be for the entire metropolitan area. The region has not reached a consensus around focus and niches. Interviewees and focus group participants suggested that the region's population lacks civic pride and responsibility. Nor is there a sense of common identity and community within the arts and culture sector.

The Maricopa region needs clearly identified and nationally recognized signature arts and culture organizations, programs, and events, as well as local and regional arts and culture programs and events.

While the Maricopa region has some signature arts and culture organizations as described above, the region needs to develop more areas in which it excels. Interviewees indicated that the region needs more top level performances that can generate excitement in the community. A participant in one of the community dialogues stated "The Valley lacks a large international arts and culture destination: something that would be unique in the U.S." Developing such attractions will require choosing a few areas in which to build stature, scale, scope, and size of production to create signature organizations, programs and events.

Maricopa's arts and culture community is generally considered by most observers to be fragmented/balkanized, characterized by competition and self-interest.

Interviewees indicated that the region was built on civic competitiveness and as a result the arts and culture community is fragmented and in some cases is characterized by extreme competitiveness among the various arts and culture organizations. This may not be surprising given that Maricopa County is made up of 24 cities and towns, three tribal communities, and unincorporated communities spread out over 9,222 square miles. With citizen expectations up, each self-contained community is attempting to address these needs and increasing the supply of venues for visual, performing, literary, and other arts and culture experiences. The interviewees

and focus group and dialogue participants indicated that there are insufficient collaborations and connections among the arts and culture groups in programming, planning, and handling administrative functions. In addition, the state's administration of sales tax distributions encourages inward orientation by jurisdictions rather than a regional orientation. Public funding organizations focus on those organizations with addresses (not always headquarters) in their city and may indirectly discourage regional efforts. It should be noted, however, that there are new collaborations, which are in the early stages of development that will seek to address this issue.

Maricopa County has a dispersed population and lacks a strong downtown base around which to concentrate regional arts and culture across the region.

Unlike eastern cities, there is no single strong downtown Phoenix core. There also is no single arts district that combines many of the amenities that appeal to younger workers such as entertainment, restaurants, festival marketplaces, arts, culture, and entertainment. Indeed, this was one of the key issues raised in the young professionals' focus group: the lack of an informal arts and culture street scene with music venues, restaurants and art galleries. The lack of anchor venues in downtown Phoenix and restaurants in proximity to arts and culture venues was also noted.

It was suggested by others, however, that given its dispersed population base, the Valley must offer arts and culture across the region, not just in one location. As discussed earlier, more than \$220 million has been committed to construct venues in the cities of Mesa, Tempe, Chandler, and elsewhere. The challenge is to offer arts and culture access throughout Maricopa County without the traditional hub and spoke configuration; perhaps with a ring or circle approach. Because the Valley's population growth has outstripped its ability to meet citizen expectations, this weakness can be turned into a real opportunity.

Funding for arts and culture is very limited and the Valley's arts and culture organizations have a weak financial base.

Interviewees and participants in the focus groups and dialogues expressed the opinion that the region does not have a history of individuals contributing to the arts. In part, this is due to the fact that the region has many part-year residents who may still contribute to the arts in the communities they come from but who have not begun to contribute in Maricopa County. Also unlike older, mature regions, the region has no legacy of wealth and "old" money supporting arts and culture. Too often the same donor base is tapped time and again, and there is an increased multiplicity of fund raising events for arts and culture, which increasingly are facing competition from those in the health and medical research arenas. The Maricopa region lacks a dedicated funding source that would help support arts and culture in its many cities and towns, as well as in unincorporated areas although Mesa and Tempe devote a portion of city sales tax to arts and culture facilities. Mesa's quality of life sales tax increase of one-half percent, for example, is providing capital and operating support for the Mesa Arts Center. Maricopa County government, beyond its role in public libraries, does not contribute to arts and culture organizations.

For their part, many of the arts and culture organizations are fairly new and lack experience in fund raising. Many of the region's existing arts and culture organizations were established without endowments and few have endowments in place today. Substantial deficits threaten the financial stability of some major organizations. For a number, many sources of income are down, forcing fundraising goals up and making cuts in operations necessary.

The business community and potential benefactors/patrons are not fully engaged, and it is difficult to access corporate support.

Interviewees reported that today, there are relatively few corporations in Maricopa County that are supporting the arts. This may be due, in part, to the fact that the corporate base is limited due to the dominance of branch plants and the fact that Phoenix has few corporate headquarters. It also is most likely due to the current downturn in the economy.

In addition, participants in the focus groups and dialogues suggested that the business community, while aware of the necessity of arts and culture, does not assign it the same importance as such competing areas as K-12 public education or transportation. Arts and culture do not appear as a priority on the agendas of most business associations in the County. Part of the challenge is to be able to better measure and document how arts and culture investments, programs, and facilities contribute to the Valley's economy.

Political support for arts and culture has been mixed.

While on the one hand, communities and voters in the Maricopa region have supported the development of performing arts centers and public arts projects, participants in the focus groups and community dialogues indicated that there is little support for arts and culture in the legislature and local support may be declining as evidenced by the decision in Gilbert and other communities to suspend funding for public arts projects. Participants in the community dialogues talked about parochial politics having a negative impact on arts and culture in the region and suggested that leadership may need to come from a regional organization.

The Maricopa region's arts and culture base lacks diversity and is challenged by the region's changing demographics.

Maricopa County is characterized by major population growth and large increases in the number of Hispanic and foreign-born residents. Between 1990 and 2000, the Hispanic population has grown by 90 percent. "Maricopa County's population is transient and the region is undergoing increasing urbanization. The population includes large numbers of young people as well as aging boomers or retirees. This results in a fragmented and uneven demand for culture amenities, with an ethnically and socially diverse youth market on one end and older people more interested in traditional arts and culture on the other end."⁵ Outreach, particularly by the larger, more established arts and culture organizations, to the large and growing Latino population in the region has been limited. Interviewees also indicated that it is difficult to keep talent as professionals from minority groups leave because of the lack of diversity in the region.

Lack of funding has resulted in cuts in arts education in the region's public K-12 education systems.

Interviewees and focus group and community dialogue participants expressed concern that cuts in funding for arts education in the public schools will have a long-term negative impact on the region's workforce and its economic base. It will also negatively impact future arts and culture audiences and awareness of the importance of arts and culture to the community and its economic future. While arts and culture organizations reached 300,000 youth in 2002, this is down from 389,000 in 2000, due to funding cut backs and increased costs.

⁵ Adrian Ellis, Joe Hill, and Jeanne Bouhey, *The Arts in Arizona*, AEA Consulting, October 2002.

The region's arts and culture organizations have limited marketing budgets and rarely collaborate in their marketing efforts.

Interviewees suggested that the arts and culture community does not have a strong track record of being able to market itself, in part due to efforts to survive with limited resources. Limited market research is available and the various arts and culture organizations do not share marketing data. There are no comprehensive sources of information on arts and culture activities that could help inform residents, particularly new residents, of available performances, festivals and other cultural activities. Nor are there any calendars, comprehensive data bases or easily accessible common web/internet sites that local residents and tourists can access to find out what arts and culture activities are available. The need for a comprehensive source of information on what is available was echoed by the participants in the young professionals' focus group who said that they did not know what is available. They suggested that a comprehensive listing of arts and culture events and programming should be made available both on-line and in print.

Related to the marketing issue, interviewees and focus group and dialogue participants indicated that there is a general lack of media coverage and support of arts and culture. This is important because the media can play a critical role in educating the public as to the importance of arts and culture. Increased media visibility could play an important role in informing both the business community and the general citizenry of the social and economic benefits of arts and culture. Interviewees, and focus group and community dialogue participants indicated that too often the media treat arts and culture in the same breath as entertainment while featuring entertainment more.

The region does not have an image or identity around arts and culture.

Many communities are known for their arts and culture attractions. Mention Austin, Texas and most people will think of their unique music and culture scene. Mention San Diego and people think of the world-class San Diego Zoo. When people think of Phoenix, they generally think about golf and outdoor recreation or the "sun". The interviewees believe that the region is not known for its arts and culture attractions either within or outside the state. The region has not yet taken advantage of its distinctive heritage although there is much upon which to build. The region could potentially become known for its Southwest culture, for Latin music or for its desert living.

The region lacks sustained strong advocates for arts and culture and citizen engagement is limited.

Arts organizations have not advocated strongly for the arts nor have they been able to mobilize an arts support community except for specific bond issues or other short-term opportunities. After these efforts pass, there is limited ongoing coordination, connectivity, or communications. The one instance of when the Phoenix community was successfully mobilized was in support of the Science Center/library/arts bond issue. This mobilization, however, was temporary.

Top Ten States Visited by Historic/Cultural Travelers

- California
- Texas
- New York
- Florida
- Pennsylvania
- Virginia
- Illinois
- Tennessee
- North Carolina
- Georgia

Source: Travel Industry Association of America
Smithsonian Magazine

The travel and tourism industry historically has not linked its efforts or given cultural tourism a prominent role in its marketing/atraction/programming efforts.

Cultural tourism is a growing industry nationally and many regions of the country are promoting arts, culture, heritage, and historical attractions to encourage tourism. A study conducted by the Travel Industry Association of America and Smithsonian Magazine shows continued and growing interest in travelers' desire to experience culture, arts, historic and heritage activities. According to the study's findings, 81 percent of U.S. adults who traveled in 2002, or 118 million, are considered history/cultural travelers. The study found that many of these travelers agree that trips that include culture, arts, historic or heritage activities or events are more enjoyable to them (39%) and that they prefer to visit destinations that have some historical significance (38%). Three in ten (29%) said that it is important that the trips they take for vacation or leisure provide cultural experiences. It should also be noted that cultural travelers spend more money on historic/cultural trips compared to the average U.S. trip (\$623 vs. \$457 excluding the cost of transportation) making historic/cultural travelers a lucrative market for destinations and attractions.

The interviewees expressed the opinion that people are looking for diverse programs based on heritage and that they do not either exist or it is difficult to find and locate in the Maricopa region. Scottsdale and several other organizations have undertaken interesting and novel programs to address this, such as Culture Quest and a Native American effort. To date, travel and tourism has continued to play on its historical record of sun, weather, and golf to attract the traveler. Focus group and community dialogue participants and interviewees feel that there is an opportunity to develop a cultural tourism initiative in Maricopa County focused around the region's desert base.

While in general the region has a large number of arts and culture venues, the West Valley has limited performing and fine arts facilities.

While, by and large, there was a great deal of agreement regarding the issues facing the arts and culture sector in the Maricopa region, the one regional issue that surfaced in the community dialogues was the need for performing and fine arts facilities in the West Valley. People, however, viewed the lack of facilities as both a weakness and an opportunity.

OPPORTUNITIES

Despite the challenges that Maricopa County faces in developing its arts and culture sector, the interviewees and focus group participants also identified a number of opportunities around which to build a more vibrant regional arts and culture community. Key opportunities include:

- *Increasing awareness, education and outreach of arts and culture to better take advantage of existing resources as well as to market new products and develop new markets so as to expand audiences, participation rates, and the vibrancy of arts and culture in the Valley.* Efforts should be undertaken to better educate and inform both residents and tourists of the arts and culture offerings that are available to them. This

- could be accomplished by using technology to reach more people. Technology could be used to enable the arts and culture community to conduct common ticketing, share databases and calendars, undertake collaborative marketing, and other shared or collaborative efforts that respect the integrity of each group's specialization and niche, but takes advantage of economies of scale in administration, management, logistics, and other services. Efforts are underway through the newly created Alliance for Audience to move in this direction.
- The *development of light rail transportation* in the Greater Phoenix area can have a major impact on the business and social culture of the region and will facilitate attendance at various arts and culture venues that will be served by the system.
 - The *creation of arts and culture districts* made up of galleries, artists studios, music venues and cafes to attract and retain creative workers and provide arts and culture experiences for local residents. The region could capitalize and expand on existing events, such as Scottsdale's ArtWalk and Phoenix's First Fridays.
 - *Developing a national and regional identity in arts and culture around which the various cities and communities in the region can build niches.* It may be possible to build on existing and emerging art districts such as Scottsdale for art sales, Tempe for young nightlife, Glendale for antiques, and Phoenix for engaging artists, around a regional theme of Southwest Culture and the Arts or another vision developed by the Task Force. The Valley's art and culture landscape will then include signature museums, performing and visual art organizations/facilities, as well as regional and locally-focused programs taking advantage of dispersed facilities throughout the region.
 - *Bringing arts and culture groups and organizations to the table to think, act, and invest in terms of the entire valley or region, rather than simply in terms of each local jurisdiction or organization.* In other words, "the whole can be greater than the sum of its parts" for arts and culture in Maricopa County. This will create increasing choices for citizens while maintaining the integrity of each group, and enable sophisticated business techniques to be employed for the benefit of the arts and culture sector in need of intelligent market research, major marketing promotions and campaigns, internet-based web sites, and one-stop ticketing.
 - *Ensuring the growth of the region's educated and skilled workforce by extending and expanding arts and culture to youth and schools.* The region has an opportunity to produce workers with the skills needed to compete in a technology economy. It is important to note, however, that just having arts and culture available is not enough. High quality arts and culture experiences that are accessible and ongoing throughout a student's life will be needed.
 - *Building on the investments that the region's various cities, municipalities, and neighborhoods have made in arts and culture venues and programming.* These investments need to be leveraged and linked through collaborative efforts in order to ensure maximum impact on both participation as well as economic development while minimizing the costs of production, transport, and other logistics and administrative costs.

- *Building on the region's unique heritage rooted in both its history and environment.* Consideration should be given to developing cultural tourism venues based on the unique assets of the region's cultural heritage, including its history as a Native American epicenter, an Old West settlement, and its modern day desert environment. Signature art and culture "anchors" should take advantage of and build or expand from this heritage or from emerging cultural strengths.
- *Developing the region as a center of Latino music and culture.* As the Latino population continues to grow at a rapid rate in the Valley, new programming and activities rooted in the Latino culture should be explored in order to meet increasing demands by the region's newer residents as well as to increase overall participation. In addition to meeting the expectations of the existing residents, such offerings could also attract cultural tourists interested in Latino culture.
- *Taking advantage of the number of new performing arts venues constructed or being constructed* to offer community-based performances and offerings, specialized program tours, and performances targeted to citizens' interests. These new facilities could provide space for newer companies and young artists or to take museum exhibits on the road and out of storage, enabling the region to expand the breadth and depth of its arts and culture offering, increasing audience participation and involvement.
- *Taking advantage of the fact that Maricopa County is a rapidly growing, innovative dynamic region,* which offers tremendous opportunities for developing a vibrant, arts and culture environment. In addition, the region's rapid growth is providing opportunities for innovative urban design and architecture.
- *Capitalizing on the region's resident strengths and interests,* ranging from its investments in Public Arts to its educational infrastructure at Arizona State University. These unique strengths need to be capitalized on in order to best leverage the region's comparative advantages and thereby provide the best opportunity to develop world-class excellence.
- *Encouraging greater participation and support of the arts by both long-time and new residents.* As has been pointed out, the Maricopa region does not lack in either the size of its population or the net worth of many of its residents. However, the region has not yet been able to capitalize fully on these assets in order to benefit arts and culture. Focus needs to be given to engaging its newer residents who have chosen to relocate to the region due to the climate to become more involved in creating an overall vibrant culture.
- *Engaging the community's civic leaders, both public and private, to empower visible advocates and ensure community support for the development of the arts and culture sector.* The Maricopa Regional Arts and Culture Task Force has created momentum around developing a strategy for arts and culture in the region. Care must be taken to capitalize on this momentum and build support at both leadership and grass roots levels. The opportunities of the region are not simply to build signatures and world class differentiators, but also to address regional and local arts and culture opportunities for the residents of the Valley. But someone needs to take responsibility for championing a vision, maintaining connectivity for its achievement through collaborative incentives, and measuring progress and impact.

THREATS

While there are multiple opportunities for developing the arts and culture in the Maricopa region, there are threats as well. Interviewees and focus group and dialogue participants identified the following threats:

- *Too many performing arts groups may mean that none will have sufficient resources to meet minimum quality standards unless ways are found to differentiate and complement efforts.* In addition to being concerned about the lack of resources to support all of the region's arts and culture organizations, some of the participants in the community dialogues expressed the opinion that there are too many organizations doing the same thing. In areas such as arts education, for example, there are many programs but they must compete for funding and, in some cases, they may be duplicating each others efforts.
- *Arts and culture will have to compete with entertainment and other leisure time options.* Citizens increasingly have other outlets to be exposed to arts and culture than just attending a performance, ranging from the Internet and DVDs to distance learning. Arts and culture organizations will face increased competition for audiences and will have to develop new ways of delivering arts and culture in light of rapidly advancing technology.
- *Fragile funding situation affecting arts and culture may make it difficult to attract talent and knowledge workers to the Valley, adversely affecting the region's economic future.* Lack of a sustained arts and culture base could dissuade talent from moving to the Valley or staying in the Valley.
- *Failure to work together on the part of the arts and culture sector could lead to mediocrity in facilities and programs.* Unless institutions and communities work together in common directions, the region will be unable to maximize its potential.
- *Changing demographics may lead to reduced interest and participation in arts and culture unless the region's arts and culture sector is able to offer a more diverse array of offerings.*
- *Ideological viewpoints of some legislators may adversely affect the public sector's role in providing support for arts and culture and state and local fiscal situations may limit resources they can provide and the priority they can give to arts and culture.*
- *The region's arts and culture organizations may not be able to retain talented employees if sufficient resources are not available to offer competitive salaries and if employment opportunities in arts and culture aren't available.* Participants in the focus groups and community dialogues suggested that the region is an "exporter" of arts and culture talent as many graduates of ASU's Herberger College of Fine Arts leave the region after they graduate because of limited employment opportunities in the region.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Maricopa County is fortunate to have a growing arts and culture community with attractions throughout the region. Local governments are generally supportive of arts and culture and are making investments in new arts and culture facilities. But the arts and culture sector also has

some major weaknesses that must be addressed. Among these are the need to create an identity for the region's arts and culture sector, to develop nationally recognized signature arts and culture attractions while at the same time continuing to support regional and locally-focused programs, and to generate greater support for arts and culture from wealthy members of the community. The arts and culture community is fragmented and there is no clear vision for arts and culture in the region. Funding for arts and culture is limited. If Maricopa County wishes to grow its technology economy and produce the highly skilled and educated workers demanded by today's economy, the region must seek to fully develop its arts and culture assets.