

12 Arts and Culture

Purpose

The purpose of the Arts and Culture Element is to communicate the history of the arts and culture development in Rancho Mirage and identify Rancho Mirage's comparative strengths in this important metric of civic achievement. This element also guides the development of partnerships in the arts and culture sector and sets forth creative strategies to achieve associated economic, social, environmental and community goals.

The Arts and Culture Element highlights and strengthens Rancho Mirage's cultural values and preserves its heritage and history. This element serves as a platform to strengthen, diversify, and celebrate Rancho Mirage's character and sense of place, all the while enhancing community engagement and participation in arts and culture events. Finally, this element also seeks to raise Rancho Mirage's arts and culture profile and enhance its economic vitality by fostering the activities of both private and public enterprises. The Arts and Culture Element sets forth goals, policies and programs that optimize the role the City can play in encouraging and facilitating the arts and culture development of the community.

The Arts and Culture Element bears a direct relationship with other General Plan elements, including the [Community Design Element](#) and [Conservation and Open Space Element](#), the latter of which communicates the cultural traditions of the Native Cahuilla and early European settlers of the area. The Open Space and Conservation Element also describes the great value the community places upon its open spaces, wild lands, and natural environment. For example, parks and recreation resources are discussed in the Open Space and Conservation Element, and highlight parkland and associated amenities, including the new Rancho Mirage amphitheater. Other institutions and facilities that communicate Rancho Mirage's and the region's art and culture traditions are addressed in the [Public Services and Facilities Element](#).

Biological resources are also discussed in the Conservation and Open Space Element, and demonstrate the City's ongoing commit-

ment to the iconic Peninsular bighorn sheep and dedication to the preservation of wildlife and habitat as key components of Rancho Mirage's character.

Background

The arts and culture traditions of Rancho Mirage and the Coachella Valley have a long and interesting history of human culture to draw upon, starting with the first people to settle the area to the present day, when Rancho Mirage has emerged as a center for international dialogue, art, and music. These traditions extend from the long and interesting history of the Cahuilla Indians as evidenced in their rock art, pottery, song, and basketry, to the contemporary city with state-of-the-art technologies and communication systems. Awareness of these cultural traditions, both new and old, and of the natural environment, is essential to forming the cultural sensitivity of our community.

Because the City has made a firm commitment to preserve the area's unique character and to balance development with artistic enhancement, Rancho Mirage has become a place for the flourishing recreation, resort, housing, and retail industries. Art has played an important role in the creation of character and image in the city. It crosses all social, cultural, educational, and socio-economic lines, and evokes both intellectual and aesthetic responses in people.

Rancho Mirage has taken the lead among Coachella Valley cities to ensure that its growth respects and complements the natural, built, and social landscape. Public art is one method to guarantee that the visual experience of Rancho Mirage is enriching and engaging. Increasingly, cities and major developments across North America, Asia, and Europe are discovering the power of art to create opportunities for cultural tourism, economic development, and image building in the region.



The amphitheater in Community Park was dedicated in 2015.



Kenaston House (1957) designed by architect E. Stewart Williams

Community Heritage and Culture

Community heritage, including arts and culture, is unique in that it involves members of society from all backgrounds, bringing diversity and dynamic growth to the community. Art and culture are not static, but rather grow and change with the community. Leadership in this movement includes artists, historians, folklorists, librarians, anthropologists, planners, and other community leaders. All play important roles in preserving the history and heritage of Rancho Mirage, as well as increasing community cohesion and encouraging respect for the changing cultural landscape. The understanding, preservation and elaboration of the community's history and heritage can serve as the basis for innovation and advancement. Therefore, resources should be dedicated to preserving meaningful spaces, objects, and other assets that document stories from Native American and other community elders, to record the area's contemporary, cultural practices.

Community Character and Sense of Place

A goal that is highly desirable but sometimes difficult to realize is the development of a community with an enjoyable and unique character and sense of place that attracts residents and visitors alike. Many elements contribute to this sense of character and place, including streetscapes and public viewsheds, architecture, public spaces and neighborhoods, accessibility, functionality, and community involvement. Artistic, cultural, and creative strategies help to reveal and enhance the community's identity.

Rancho Mirage utilizes artistic and cultural inventories, community visioning processes, design guidelines, arts and culture programming, master plans, and public financial investments in urban design and placemaking to further the role and meaning of the arts and culture in the life of Rancho Mirage. As part of this overall strategy, the City continues to explore community context, embrace and nurture community diversity and uniqueness, and build upon and celebrate Rancho Mirage's distinct character. All of these aspects require the consideration of all community interests in key decision-making processes, including the integration of arts and culture resources into the contextual civic framework.

Rancho Mirage Architectural Heritage

Rancho Mirage has a rich and varied architectural heritage that is a showcase for mid-century modern and other styles that are of international renown. Most of the city's important architectural treasures are residential buildings and include such notable examples as Sunylands, designed by A. Quincy Jones, the historic Ranchito Chiquito, and a number of homes designed by such respected architects as William Cody, E. Stewart Williams, William Krisel, Wallace Neff, Donald Wexler, and Richard Neutra. Many of these buildings are included in regular architectural tours in Rancho Mirage.

Community Engagement

Community engagement is an essential aspect of on-going cultural development. This is a process of relationship building that encourages both learning and action, as well as the expression of values and opinions about the role of arts and culture in the community. A high level of community engagement can promote vibrancy and innovation through participation, which results in a strengthened level of public ownership and commitment.

City leaders have continued to actively promote community engagement through a variety of traditional tools, including public opinion surveys, visioning workshops, asset-based planning, town halls, meetings, and public hearings. Aside from the more traditional means of community engagement, and with the rapid evolution of technology, the City has the opportunity to seek out additional means of engagement through arts and culture mediums, which may take the form of festivals, exhibits, and web based applications. These outreach strategies should emphasize receptiveness to input, genuine acknowledgment of feedback, access, and the development, broadening and deepening of relationships.

Nature and Science as Culture

The natural environment has played a major role in shaping the character of Rancho Mirage. The dramatic desert and mountain landscape and the biological diversity of the Coachella Valley and Rancho Mirage have attracted residents and visitors from throughout the world. Just as nature was and remains an integral part of Native

Cahuilla culture, it continues to be a major cultural force affecting the entire community.

Rancho Mirage has been at the forefront of the integration of nature and the human community, identifying with and taking dedicated action to preserve and protect such iconic wildlife as the Peninsular bighorn sheep, and celebrating our native plant community. Rancho Mirage has also been a center for international climate change and environmental policy development, as well as a venue for important social and cultural exchanges. Sunnyslands has played an historic role in these and many other important international affairs.

The Arts and Culture Element also celebrates the region's first naturalists, the Cahuilla, and their ability to adapt to and thrive in the valley's challenging natural environment. Adaptation was the key cultural behavior that allowed the Cahuilla to survive during significant environmental changes, including the desiccation of Ancient Lake Cahuilla about four centuries ago, and then thrive through the identification and exploitation of alternative sources of water, food and fiber. Their relationship to the natural world was also expressed in petroglyphs and other rock art. Many of the cultural traditions handed down to us by the Cahuilla include those associated with life in the canyons, on the mesquite bosques, and in numerous palm oases along valley faults.

The City has also taken steps to promote an understanding of and appreciation for the natural world, including science and technology at such venues as the Rancho Mirage Public Library, the Children's Discovery Museum, Eisenhower Medical Center, the Weil Institute for Critical Care Medicine, and in the area's schools. This commitment to science research, education and application inspired the City to develop a public asset in the form of a community astronomical observatory. This facility at the City's Public Library provides residents and visitors a unique and powerful window to the multitude of spectacular objects in the night sky.

Economic Vitality

There is a growing recognition of the connection between the diverse activities of the arts and culture sector and the economic vitality of communities. By increasing concentrations of creative enterprises and workers, Rancho Mirage could enhance its position, and in

some respects gain a competitive edge, by improving its ability to attract economic activity, and by creating a climate for innovation.

Flourishing arts and culture activities enhance the potential for the recruitment and retention of a skilled and educated workforce. They can also, bring in visitors and attract development. Furthermore, formal and informal training in the arts can facilitate the local development of skills valued in the global economy, including strong oral and written communication skills, precise and high-quality work performance, ease in working in teams and ensembles, comfort in new and innovative situations, and the ability to work well with people from diverse cultures. These are universal characteristics of a culturally diverse community.

Cultural Resources in the City

Art and culture are one aspect of community planning that can focus on an individual community, but can also be appropriately viewed on a valley-wide basis. Residents of Rancho Mirage are able to enjoy cultural resources that have been supported by all valley residents, including the Desert Museum, the Children's Discovery Museum, the Pickford Theatre and Museum, College of the Desert and McCallum Theater, the Coachella Valley Museum and Cultural Center, and the Desert IMAX Theater. While this element focuses on Rancho Mirage and its resources, it also describes the role other arts and culture venues, activities, and events play in enriching the lives of Rancho Mirage residents and visitors.

Sunnyslands

Sunnyslands is the estate of the late U.S. Ambassador to the Court of St. James, Walter Annenberg and his wife Leonore. In the 1960s, the Annenbergs hired well-known architect A. Quincy Jones to design a modern-style residence in Rancho Mirage. Jones brought his signature style to the design of Sunnyslands, using broad overhangs to protect the interiors from the direct sun and allowing expanses of glass to bring the outdoors in.

Leonore Annenberg's deep love of flowers and nature is reflected in the cactus and rose gardens that surround the house and terrace. The home's interior designer was William (Billy) Haines, also an accomplished silent film star, who created blocks of interior



Sunnyslands (1966), designed by architect A. Quincy Jones.



Sunnylands Visitor Center (2011) designed by Frederick Fisher and Partners architects.

space that are intimate but can be aggregated to provide grand spaces for parties and entertainment.

Walter Annenberg hoped that Sunnylands would form a site of international diplomacy, a "Camp David of the West," and the family hosted visitors including nine U.S. presidents and the British royal family. Other guests included entertainment icons such as Bob Hope, Frank Sinatra, Jimmy Stewart, Ginger Rogers, and many others. Transformation of the Sunnylands estate from a private winter home to a high-level retreat center and museum space was accomplished with the adaptive reuse of interior design, architecture, landscape design, and water conservation.

The Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands

In recent years, Sunnylands has hosted a number of visits and summits for the President of the United States, becoming world renowned as a venue for facilitating international agreement and promoting world peace. Its retreats, attracting prominent experts from a variety of fields, are designed to address some of society's most vexing problems. Retreats and meetings have focused on such topics as international relations, negotiations and trade, medical research, education and technology, diplomacy, and arts and culture.

Additionally, the public is invited to learn about the history of the Annenbergs, their philanthropy, and their dedication to architecture and the arts through a variety of educational and community programs as Sunnylands Center and Gardens. For each of the past seven years, for example, a selection of directors whose films were screened at the Palm Springs International Film Festival has gathered at the Annenberg estate to discuss their craft. Sunnylands' annual Films on the Great Lawn and Music in the Gardens series give the public an opportunity to enjoy the arts, free of charge, in a tranquil outdoor setting.

The Sunnylands Collection

The Annenbergs were avid art collectors and assembled one of the finest collections of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings. The "Annenberg Collection" was bequeathed to the Metropolitan Museum in New York, but the balance of this collection continues to reside at Sunnylands so visitors can enjoy the full-range of artworks originally installed at the historic house.

Among the fine art on view are works by Yaacov Agam, Harry Ber-toia, Jean Arp, Emile Gilioli, Pablo Picasso, Jacques Villon, Andrew Wyeth, Romare Bearden, and Jean Fautrier. The Sunnylands Col-lection also includes important works of Chinese porcelain, Meis-sen vases, Chinese cloisonné objects and furniture, Tang Dynasty funerary sculpture, Flora Danica china, Steuben glass, and English silver-gilt objects.

The Annenbergs were also avid collectors of books, owning more than 3,400 volumes, many featuring a signature and/or personal inscriptions to the Annenbergs by presidents, prime ministers, pol-iticians, royalty, celebrities, historians, business leaders, authors, family, and friends. The subject matter ranges from artists, paintings, sculpture, and decorative arts, to journalism, political science, his-tory, and social science. The Sunnylands collection of correspon-dence features letters and cards from presidents Eisenhower, Nixon, Kennedy, Carter, Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Clinton, George W. Bush, Obama, and their families. In addition, the Annenbergs were in close contact with members of the British royal family, evidenced by an impressive amount of intimate correspondence. Correspondence from Colin Powell, Kirk Douglas, and Princess Grace of Monaco, to name but a few, round out this very special and personal collection. The collections are available for academic research purposes.

The Sunnylands Speaker Series, hosted by the Rancho Mirage Pub-lic Library, also brings local and global issues into focus. This series has featured such speakers as writer and producer Norman Lear and photographer Stephen Wilkes on such topics as societal chang-es reflected on television, and Visualizing Climate Change through photos.

Children's Discovery Museum of the Desert

The Children's Discovery Museum, located on Gerald Ford Drive, opened in 1998 and involves children in an interactive discovery process. The museum's exhibits and programs primarily focus on pre-school and early elementary aged children, although it serves children of all ages. With a mission statement of preparing children "to live and succeed in the world of the future, a world defined by change," programs and exhibits encourage parental involvement in their children's learning process. The museum actively collaborates

with other organizations, and provides ongoing exhibits with weekly, monthly, and seasonally special events that emphasize such interests as science, social interaction, dance, crafts and cooking.

Rancho Mirage Amphitheater

The new Rancho Mirage Amphitheater has been added as an integral part of the Rancho Mirage Community Park. The amphitheater includes a 2,000 square foot stage, terrace seating to accommodate 1,000 guests, and new public restroom facilities. It has already been the venue for a City-sponsored, 13-week Music in the Park concert series, and more programming is planned for the coming years. The amphitheater is well suited to be a venue for additional music performances, "Shakespeare in the Park" festivals and other cultural activities and performances.

The Art Affaire

This spectacular annual two-day event is a juried fine art and music festival featuring over 100 award-winning visual artists in a variety of artistic mediums, including painting, sculpture, ceramics, jewelry and other artistic originals. Held each fall at Rancho Mirage Community Park on San Jacinto Drive, the best of Smooth Jazz and other music are also presented on stage each year. Media on display and for sale include such things as paintings (oils, acrylic and watercolors), drawings, sculpture, ceramics, jewelry, glass, apparel and much more. The Art Affaire is also a venue for a wide range of musical performances, including jazz, R&B, pop, hip-hop, gospel, reggae, and rock.

Rancho Mirage Public Library

The Rancho Mirage Public Library is the cultural hub of the community and makes important contributions to the intellectual and cultural life of Rancho Mirage. It has been the recipient of state and national recognition by the American Library Association and the California Library Association. More than 45,000 Rancho Mirage and Coachella Valley residents have library cards, making the Library a welcoming center of intellectual vitality and life-long learning. In addition to offering a wide selection of printed materials, including books and magazines, the library provides access to a wide range of digital media, research materials, e-books, and other resources.

The library also offers instruction on the use of its technology and a wide range of internet resources.

The library is renowned for its full and balanced cultural calendar for all ages. Lectures, concerts, film screenings and special presentations combine for a broad and diverse schedule of events, including programming for children, throughout the Library's busy year. In 2016, the Library celebrated its twentieth year by offering a free lending program of books and audio books, as well as music CDs and more than 14,000 movies on DVD. In addition to its exceptional resources, the Library is also a venue for special permanent and temporary exhibitions, including the Roberson Mineral Collection and the President and Mrs. Gerald Ford Collection.

The library is also the venue of choice for most of the City's Cultural Commission events from November through April. The library is staffed by experts including the Library Director and Principal Librarian, with a schedule that includes an artist's studio tour and an annual motor-coach journey of artistic discovery through the desert.

Rancho Mirage Writers Festival

The library is home to the largest book event of any library in the U.S., hosting more than 1,000 readers with more than 50 authors, including Pulitzer and National Book Award winners, each January during the Rancho Mirage Writer's Festival. This world-class event is an exciting gathering of writers, thinkers, and people contributing to the intellectual vitality of today.

Speaker Series

The Rancho Mirage Speaker Series was established in 2006 to enrich the cultural life in our community through a program where speakers from the political arena, entertainment and literary fields share their opinions and insights. This nationally known program hosts speakers of international renown and importance, including explorer Dr. Robert Ballard, entertainer Rita Moreno, singer Michael Feinstein, journalist Cokie Roberts, writer P.J. O'Rourke, United Nations Ambassador John Bolton, naturalist James Cornett, and many others.



Rancho Mirage City Library forms a cultural hub for the community.



Anna Charles and Eric Charles Jorgenson in ANNAPURNA for the Coachella Valley Repertory Theater.

International Classical Concerts

International Classical Concerts of the Desert was formed as the continuance of the classical concert series that has a 43-year history in the Coachella Valley. The world-class talent that this chamber music concert series brings to the Library includes the Escher and Jupiter String Quartets, cellists Lynn Harrell and Zuill Bailey, and pianists Orion Weiss and Vassily Primakov.

Library Astronomical Observatory

The library is home to a 0.7-meter reflector telescope housed in a 22-foot dome with research-quality telescope mounting and video equipment. Views from the telescope will be transmitted to a large screen inside the library so that large numbers of visitors can share in the experience. A large outdoor observation deck provides room for personal telescopes and will provide space for outdoor star parties and lectures. The observatory will also partner with educational institutions throughout the Valley, including College of the Desert, as a way to promote and celebrate the sciences.

The Future Library

Growing Cultural Hub

The role of the library is evolving culturally, technologically, socially, and organizationally. Emerging library technologies will continue to extend and expand the value of and access to learning and knowledge. As a venue for social interaction, the Library can play an even greater role in encouraging a participatory society.

Coachella Valley Repertory Theater

Inaugurated in 2008, the Coachella Valley Repertory Theater (CV Rep) is a non-profit professional theater whose mission is to present thought-provoking, innovative theater of substance. CV Rep is planning to expand its Youth Outreach program into the local school districts in order to expose students to age-appropriate, culturally relevant, and topically sensitive live theater free of charge.

Valerie Mahabir Academy of Ballet and Performing Arts

Rancho Mirage is home to this highly valued and respected school of dance. This ballet academy plays host to the Desert Youth Ballet (DYB), and is housed in an iconic modern building located near the Rancho Mirage Community Park. The mission of the DYB, which is an outgrowth of the school, is to inspire the boys and girls of the Coachella Valley to become involved in dance, enhance their performance skills, develop self-confidence, and provide a life-long interest in the arts. It is the only dance school in the Coachella Valley certified by the Royal Academy of Dance, one of the world's most influential dance education and training organizations. The Academy and DYB provide professional training and performance experiences by raising funds for scholarships, underwriting performances, and providing community outreach.

Rancho Mirage High School

Rancho Mirage High School (RMHS) is a leader in cultivating the performing and culinary arts of its students and the community. It has also become an important venue for music, dance and other community-sponsored events. The school's Musical Theater University (MTU) produces four main-stage musicals each year in the Helene Galen Performing Arts Center under the banner of "Desert Cities Music Theatre". In the MTU program, students are joined by celebrated actors from Broadway and Hollywood, along with local professional actors, for a professional theatrical experience. In addition, all MTU students participate in informal recitals and performances throughout the year.

One of the more unique offerings at RMHS is their pathways program, which offers specialized training in performing and culinary arts. The Performing Arts Pathway was created to showcase the multiple disciplines of dance, theater, choir, and instrumental music. RMHS welcomes students from across the Palm Springs Unified School District who are interested in these art forms, as well as students who are considering careers in the numerous fields in performing arts, such as stagecraft, lighting, sound, and costume design.

The Culinary Arts Pathway at RMHS initiates students into the art and practical skill of food preparation, and produces graduates who will emerge readily equipped for the hospitality field, or with the necessary prerequisites to pursue further training as chefs or careers in restaurant management. The school's teaching facility features a commercial culinary kitchen and dining classroom.

Tolerance Education Center

The mission of the Tolerance Education Center is to promote tolerance, civility, respect, and understanding by the elimination of atrocities, hatred, and bigotry. Programs, activities and exhibits provide an educational opportunity for the community which aims to reduce prejudice, teach critical thinking, and empower those who visit to take a more active role in creating a more humane society. Activities include adult lectures, films, presentations, and other tolerance-themed programs. The Tolerance Education Center has become an important venue for school field trips, as it exposes children to first-hand accounts of bigotry and hatred told by those who have endured such atrocities.

Richard and Annette Bloch Cancer Survivor Park

This park is a celebration of life and hope, and features eight life-size figures in bronze passing through a maze depicting cancer treatment, and the transition from fear to recovery. A water feature adorns the walking path and offers a setting for meditation, and 14 bronze plaques (four inspirational and 10 instructional) are located throughout the park.

Regional Cultural Resources

The Coachella Valley is rich with culturally significant resources, and the resources in Rancho Mirage which were just described add to this vast network. Although the following resources do not exist inside the boundaries of Rancho Mirage, they play an important role in the promotion and development of arts and culture valleywide, and warrant mention in the context of this element.

McCallum Theatre, McCallum Theatre Institute, and Bob Hope Cultural Center

The McCallum Theatre at the Bob Hope Cultural Center is a 1,127-seat performance facility located on the campus of the College of the Desert. It is acknowledged as one of the finest performing arts centers in the nation. The theatre's dramatic, desert-inspired interiors, designed by Steve Chase, provide a comfortable environment and superb acoustics reminiscent of a European opera house. A wide variety of cultural events are staged at this facility and range from accomplished local theatre and concert performances to similar activities by world-renowned performers and orchestras. It is also an outstanding facility for network television productions, as well as corporate and industrial presentations.

The California Desert Chorale

The California Desert Chorale performs the annual Christmas with the Chorale and Evening at the Pops concerts. Other concerts offer such fare as Beethoven's Choral Fantasy, and works by Hayden and Schubert. As part of its continuing outreach to the community, California Desert Chorale established a "music intern" program, in which several outstanding young musicians are invited and sponsored by the chorale to participate in the concert season. The chorale's scholarship program provides monetary scholarships to local high school seniors and community college students who demonstrate exceptional vocal ability and service to their communities. The chorale performs at the California State University San Bernardino (CSUSB) Palm Desert campus and Community Presbyterian Church.

Desert Symphony

The Desert Symphony offers a series of concerts, recitals, and special events with programs of musical, artistic excellence that entertain, educate, and engage the community. The Desert Symphony performs in a variety of venues, including The McCallum Theater.

Friends of Philharmonic

Since 1974, the Palm Springs Friends of Philharmonic has been providing the community with classical music played by outstand-



Richard and Annette Bloch Cancer Survivor Park.



Desert Holocaust Memorial in Palm Desert's Civic Center Park.

ing orchestras from around the world, some of which include the Cleveland Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony, San Francisco Symphony, Israel Philharmonic, the Royal Concert Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic, Moscow Philharmonic, London Philharmonic, the Russian National Orchestra, Dresden Staatskapelle, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Diego Symphony, the Bolshoi Orchestra, and the National Orchestra of Spain. Performances are at the McCallum Theatre.

The Living Desert Reserve

The Living Desert Reserve is a non-profit education and conservation center located in Palm Desert. Its mission is desert conservation through preservation, education, and appreciation. The Reserve is a 1,200-acre zoological park representing over 150 species including coyotes, bighorn sheep, oryx, zebras, desert tortoises, lizards, cheetahs, and meerkats. The botanical gardens represent 10 different desert ecosystems. The center also features wilderness hiking trails, Native American exhibits and special events and programs throughout the year.

Desert Holocaust Memorial

This outdoor memorial to holocaust victims is centered around seven larger-than-life bronze figures with a circular row of trees representing life outside the concentration camps. It is located in Palm Desert's Civic Center Park and is surrounded by cobblestone and lighting influenced by that at the Auschwitz Extermination Camp.

College of the Desert

College of the Desert, a state community college, actively participates in the fine arts activities throughout the valley. Performing arts include plays, concerts, and operas staged at their Pollock Theatre and Hilb Center, with two yearly performances at the McCallum Theatre. College of the Desert's visual art contributions to public art include shows at the college's Hilb Center, sculptures on the campus grounds, and art shows on the Inez Bragdon Garrow Gallery Wall in the multi-agency library.

College of the Desert's art curriculum includes course offerings that provide a general overview of the discipline, as well as an emphasis

in art history, ceramics, drawing, graphic design, painting, photography, printmaking, three-dimensional design and two-dimensional design. The College also provides arts education and performance classes open to all members of the community; these include several musical performance groups, both vocal and instrumental, in addition to theatre productions and visual arts courses.

Walter N. Marks Center for the Arts at College of the Desert

The mission of the Walter N. Marks Center for the Arts at College of the Desert is to support arts education and enrich the cultural life of students, faculty, and the community. The Center is a nonprofit cultural and educational facility that provides a venue for artistic exploration, experimentation, and research. Traditional formats of painting, drawing, sculpture ceramics, photography, and printmaking are complemented by contemporary applications in papermaking, book arts, performance, and installation arts. The architectural design of the Marks Art Center, with its three galleries, courtyard, and sculpture garden, allows for poetry readings, musical events, and theatrical performances. Guest speakers and professors in art, digital design, poetry, theatre, and literature now have a dedicated facility in which to collaborate on thematic approaches to enhance learning.

California State University San Bernardino, Palm Desert

CSUSB has a campus adjacent to College of the Desert, and is in the process of expanding to a new location near the intersection of Cook Street and Frank Sinatra Drive in Palm Desert. The new campus will offer a 300-seat theatre that will initially "import" productions from the main San Bernardino campus for the Coachella Valley audience, with the potential for Coachella Valley campus-based productions in coming years. The Betty Barker Sculpture Garden is an important venue for emerging artists and cooperation with the Palm Springs Art Museum and other partners.

The CSUSB Palm Desert campus also hosts artwork provided by the Agua Caliente Cultural Museum. The school's unique partnership with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians allows students, staff, faculty and visitors to enjoy the artwork and learn more about

the Agua Caliente culture and heritage. The art is on display in the Rogers Gateway Building lobby outside the Oliphant Auditorium.

Palm Springs Art Museum

The Palm Springs Art Museum is a fine arts museum located in Palm Springs. The museum has a superb art collection that rivals urban metropolitan museums, and also has an excellent collection of art of the American West. In addition to indoor exhibition space and instruction facilities, the museum also has two outstanding sculpture gardens. This facility also houses the Annenberg Theatre, which is the site of a wide array of arts and culture programs ranging from classical and popular music to education programs. The museum's Architecture and Design Center is located in the mid-century modern Edwards Harris Pavilion designed by local architect E. Stewart Williams and is focused on presenting the best in architecture and related design.

Agua Caliente Cultural Museum

The Agua Caliente Tribe is currently planning the development of a tribal museum in Palm Springs, and is the first Native American museum to be part of the Smithsonian Institution Affiliations Program. The Tribe's plans call for a variety of temporary and permanent exhibit areas as well as venues for various art mediums.

Coachella Valley History Museum

The Coachella Valley History Museum is an historical campus which contains the 1925 adobe Smiley-Tyler House, including the Center's main exhibits, the historic 1909 Indio Schoolhouse and the world's only Date Museum.¹

Coachella Valley Arts Alliance

This organization was formed in 1999 as a cooperative among local and regional arts professionals. The Alliance's mission is "to support artists and arts organizations and foster new arts activities to ensure cultural vitality in the Coachella Valley." Membership is comprised of local arts professionals as well as the majority of Coachella Valley cities. One of its goals is to thematically coordinate the I-10 art

corridor in conjunction with the Coachella Valley Association of Governments.

Palm Springs Air Museum

The Palm Springs Air Museum is dedicated to the preservation, presentation and interpretation of the Air Power of World War II, its relevance and significance upon the course of history, and its impact on contemporary life. The museum has one of the world's largest collections of flying World War II warplanes. Exhibits include combat photography, original artworks, artifacts, uniforms, and video documentaries. Regularly featured are flight demonstrations of the museum's collection and visiting aircraft, both historic and contemporary. In addition to flyable and static aircraft, the museum uses permanent and temporary exhibits, related artifacts, artwork, and library sources to preserve and perpetuate American History. Documentaries are shown daily in the Buddy Rogers Theatre.

La Quinta Arts Festival

The La Quinta Arts Foundation is a nonprofit charitable organization dedicated to the promotion and cultivation of the art through education. Located in La Quinta, their annual Spring Festival brings to the Coachella Valley the works of internationally recognized fine artists as well as emerging local artists. The Foundation supports local college-bound students with a scholarship program, and provides innovative outreach programs for school children.

Rancho Mirage City Commissions

Community Cultural Commission

This Commission is comprised of five commissioners and two City Councilmembers who serve as Council liaisons to the Commission. The purpose of the Cultural Commission is to support the development and prospering of the cultural environment of the City and enhance access to cultural amenities for all residents. To that end, the Cultural Commission is responsible for advising the City Council on matters related to the preservation, development, and enhancement of cultural endeavors in Rancho Mirage.



Annual La Quinta Arts Festival in the neighboring city of La Quinta.

¹Coachella Valley History Museum



Rancho Mirage Writers Festival, January 2017.

This Commission has been very successful in providing residents with a wide spectrum of cultural events which highlight Rancho Mirage specific assets (Rancho Mirage Artists Studio Tour), as well as regional assets (High Desert Bus Tour). In addition to facilitating numerous tours, this Commission also coordinates various theatrical performances and musical events, helping to make life in Rancho Mirage as rewarding as possible.

Historic Preservation Commission

The Historic Preservation Commission was established in 2003, by Municipal Ordinance No. 831, to develop a program to provide a way to identify certain structures and sites which represent eras, events or persons important in Rancho Mirage’s cultural, archaeological, social, economic, architectural, and/or political history for the purpose of encouraging the preservation, improvement, and promotion of Rancho Mirage’s treasured properties.

Parks and Trails Commission

The Parks and Trails Commission consists of five members appointed by the City Council. The general purpose of this commission is to encourage the development of a balanced system of parks and trails which meet the recreational needs of city residents. The Parks and Trails Commission achieves this purpose by serving in an advisory capacity to the City Council.²

Speaker Series Commission

The Speaker Series Commission consists of five voting members and two non-voting Council Liaisons appointed by the City Council. The commission was established in 2006 to enrich the cultural life in Rancho Mirage by providing well-rounded programs that often consist of speakers from the political arena, entertainment and literary fields.³ The continued success of the program is a direct result of the overwhelming response received from the residents).

Impact of the Arts on Economy

The arts, humanities, and museums are critical to the quality of life and livability of the community. In 2010, the nonprofit arts and cul-

ture industry generated over \$135 billion in economic activity annually, supports more than 4.13 million full-time equivalent jobs, and generated almost \$87 billion in household income. The industry returned more than \$22.3 billion in local, state and federal taxes in 2010. Government support for the arts generates an average return on investment of more than seven dollars in tax revenues for every dollar that the government appropriates.⁴

The Creative Economy

The creative economy is a new industry cluster based on the businesses and people who produce intellectually protected goods and services generated from aesthetic or cultural content. Creative Enterprises, a set of business ventures and their workers who make up the creative economy, are key participants in the creative economy and engage in a category called Creative Occupations that produce and distribute creative goods or services in any type of creative business.

The arts form an industry that generates jobs and supports the local economy. The presence of art programs and facilities is often acknowledged by chambers of commerce as a community asset and an attractive component when encouraging businesses to relocate or expand within the community. The art are a catalyst for tourism, and encourage growth and creativity in communication, entertainment and technology.

Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourists are defined as visitors who explore a community’s arts, culture, heritage, environment, and history. According to the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, two significant travel trends are expected to dominate the tourism market in the coming years.⁵ A growing number of visitors are special-interest travelers who rank the arts, heritage, and/or other cultural activities as one of the top five reasons for traveling and travel is being tailored to the interests of the individual consumer through a one-to-one marketing strategy. The combination of these two trends is being fueled by technology, namely the proliferation of online services and tools, making it easier for the traveler to choose destinations and customize itiner-

² Resolution No. 2016-034
³ Resolution No. 2006-034

⁴ Americans for the Arts
⁵ NASSA

aries based on their interests. Among the emerging areas of interest that contribute to cultural tourism are the following:

- › Increased interest in the sustainability of communities and the natural environment
- › A search for meaning that many visitors find in nature, heritage, and culture

Opportunities for Cultural and Artistic Expression and Appreciation

Community Museum

Rancho Mirage has been and continues to be a haven for a wide variety of artists, musicians, and people from the film and television industry. As such, Rancho Mirage is home to the depth of resources these residents bring. A community museum could be an excellent venue for the celebration of these resources, serving as a key site for a variety of enterprises that could make it a hub for regional arts, supported by residents and visitors alike. This museum could serve as an important venue, for example, for screenings of new films and documentaries, competitions, and festivals.

Art in Education Programs

An environment that supports arts education encourages high achievement by offering models of excellence that are visible in the community. The arts can reach students who are not otherwise being reached, and in ways they are not otherwise being engaged. They connect students to themselves and each other, and the study of art encourages students to analyze, interpret, and evaluate artworks and to study the work's history and cultural roots. Art In Education programs are interactive and participatory, and encourage students to learn about art while using their imagination in a variety of ways to define how the art makes them feel.

Land Use Planning: An Arts and Culture Strategy

Rancho Mirage Arts District

An important consideration in the cultivation of the arts in the community is the establishment of an arts district, where a concentration of cultural facilities serve as an anchor for the development of a syn-

ergistic mix of uses. Arts districts can have a significant economic impact on the community, attracting businesses, tourists and local residents. It can also serve as a focal point that helps brand Rancho Mirage with a unique cultural identity.

The opportunities for the development of an arts district in the city can develop both organically and synthetically, taking advantage of existing arts and culture resources and building upon these to introduce new uses, venues, and spaces that complement and augment the existing resources. One location where this kind of synthesis could occur has been identified along San Jacinto Drive between Highway 111 and Rancho Las Palmas Drive, where there may be opportunities to aggregate large enough areas to achieve land use efficiencies.

Existing resources along this corridor include the Rancho Mirage Public Library, The River entertainment center, and the Rancho Mirage Community Park. These important places could anchor the development of a pedestrian-based, mixed-use district. The accumulation of underutilized lands in this area for the development of an arts district could include live/work space for artists, studio and gallery space, land uses that would attract makers, and intimate dining venues, all of which could work cohesively to activate this area of Rancho Mirage in a distinct way.

Special development standards could be applied to shape development of the arts district, with a heavy emphasis on walkability. With an existing residential component, a "San Jacinto Arts District" or the like could complement and enrich the living environment that is already enhanced by the park and its amenities, and the highly accessible Library. The City will consider the development of an Arts District Plan for inclusion in the Highway 111 East Specific Plan or a separate document and/or overlay to best fulfill the purpose.

Future Directions

Providing a community with the resources for cultural enrichment gives its citizens exciting opportunities to explore and expand their culture, identity and commerce. It increases community pride and improves quality of life by encouraging reflection, building awareness of new ways of seeing the world, and incorporating beauty into the functionality of everyday life.



The Donors Mural at the Children's Discovery Museum of the Desert.



Thoughtful landscape design and decorative design at the Rancho Mirage Public Library offer an example of successful incorporation of beauty into the functionality of everyday life.

Cultural activities and centers can encourage community spirit and a heightened appreciation for diversity, thereby strengthening community cohesiveness. The relationship of arts and culture to the physical environment is not always tangible, but like economic development, has a decided influence on the quality of life offered in Rancho Mirage.

The City has a history of supporting and providing numerous varied arts and cultural opportunities to the community. Its future endeavors should focus on strengthening its development as a regionally recognized cultural center, an identity which carries both artistic and economic development potential. Efforts should relate to building positive community involvement with and support of the arts as well as encouraging arts-related tourism and commerce.

The goals and policies of the Arts and Culture Element are intended to help sustain and enhance a civic environment where artistic expression and cultural diversity can flourish.

Arts and Culture Goals, Policies, and Programs

GOAL A&C 1

An enriching arts and culture environment in Rancho Mirage.

GOAL A&C 2

An established and strengthened identity for Rancho Mirage as a regionally and nationally recognizable destination market for the arts.

POLICY A&C 2.1

The City shall encourage and promote regional, citywide, and neighborhood arts and culture events, activities, and educational endeavors.

PROGRAM A&C 2.1A

The City shall continue to sponsor and encourage cultural events and programs such as the Art Affaire, Writers Festival, Speakers Series, and others that involve a variety of citizen groups and promote arts and culture awareness as they build community identity.

PROGRAM A&C 2.1B

The City shall continue to actively identify, encourage and sponsor new cultural events and programs which promote artistic and cultural awareness and build community identity.

PROGRAM A&C 2.1C

The City shall encourage, and to the extent practical, facilitate the continuation of non-City sponsored events and programs that promote arts and culture awareness and build community identity.

POLICY A&C 2.2

The City shall encourage corporate, business, and foundation support of arts and culture activities through mutual programs and public-private partnerships.

POLICY A&C 2.3

The City shall encourage citizen involvement in the planning, development and provision of arts programs, facilities, and services.

PROGRAM A&C 2.3A

The City shall develop a comprehensive plan to utilize and develop various avenues of communication, including the development of an arts and culture webpage on the City's website, liaisons with corporate and business partnerships, and existing events and facilities. This effort will focus on

building community awareness, recruiting involvement in existing arts and culture events and programs, and on building support and involvement for the development of new events and programs.

POLICY A&C 2.4

The City shall encourage public events that allow people to gather for the purposes of entertainment, education, and camaraderie, such as art and music festivals, art walks, farmers markets, film screenings, lectures, music, and other performance events.

POLICY A&C 2.5

The City shall increase awareness of the public benefits of art and culture in the community by recognizing and promoting the arts, artists, performing arts, and arts organizations as valuable resources of our community for economic vitality and tourism.

PROGRAM A&C 2.5A

The City shall explore marketing endeavors that cater to the arts community in an effort to effectively attract tourists.

POLICY A&C 2.6

The City shall use destination marketing techniques, which utilize locally recognizable arts landmarks to further establish Rancho Mirage as a community rich in arts and culture.

PROGRAM A&C 2.6A

The City shall consider developing a comprehensive Cultural Tourism Development Plan and Program that will identify and maximize beneficial intersections between the arts and economic development, and position the arts as a good partner in areas such as economic development, tourism, education, workforce development, and transportation.

PROGRAM A&C 2.6B

The City shall develop a webpage to highlight Rancho Mirage’s arts and culture identity.

PROGRAM A&C 2.6C

The City shall establish image gateways and/or arts corridors along major arterials, and at other significant intersections in Rancho Mirage to increase resident and visitor awareness and recognition of Rancho Mirage as an arts and culture community.

PROGRAM A&C 2.6D

The City shall consider the creation of an arts-specific information kiosk in Rancho Mirage’s commercial districts where information on local arts and culture events will be available.

POLICY A&C 2.7

The City shall explore the viability of creating an arts district along San Jacinto Drive or other location in Rancho Mirage.

PROGRAM A&C 2.7A

If a viable location for an art district is identified, the City shall develop an Arts District Plan that will serve as a vehicle that guides the development of the district, and which can be used as a marketing tool for private sector developers.



The City encourages and supports arts and culture events.



Recognizable landmarks, like the Sunnylands Visitor Center and Gardens, show how Rancho Mirage is rich in arts and culture.

PROGRAM A&C 2.7B

The City shall consider unique development standards, land uses, and public street designs in conjunction with the development of an arts district.

POLICY A&C 2.8

The City shall investigate the feasibility of creating an Arts in Education Program which will cater to the community's youth population.

POLICY A&C 2.9

The City shall identify locations for future arts and culture related developments.

GOAL A&C 3

Night sky protection.

POLICY 3.1

The City shall review lighting details for development projects to ensure protection of the night sky.

POLICY 3.2

Development projects within one mile of the observatory shall be subject to additional lighting review and/or restrictions.

PROGRAM 3.2A

Lighting plans for development projects near the observatory shall include details on fixture shielding, lamp spectrum, and amount of light produced.

PROGRAM 3.2B

Additional lighting restrictions near the observatory may include, but are not limited to, fully shielded light fixtures, 90-degree cutoff lenses, alternative lamp types (e.g., low-pressure sodium or narrow-band amber LED), and limitations on output.



A strong arts and culture infrastructure supports communities in multiple ways.

