

# CREATIVE PLACEMAKING



Exploring a Concept

convened by  
The Merced County Arts Council

September 21, 2011

facilitated and reported by  
Dr. Jackie Ryle

Staci Santa, Executive Director of the Merced Arts Council, welcomed the participants and thanked them for being present and participating. She described the trend toward and interest in Creative PlaceMaking and the arts as similar to the evolution to a “Green Society” as a legitimized context which evolved from a time when environmentalists were not taken seriously and were ridiculed for their stance on the environment. Staci noted this process is an outgrowth of recent visit by Rocco Landesman, National Endowment for the Arts, who indicated there is funding for this Valley, currently focused on planning process for Creative PlaceMaking. She said it is essential to figure out where we are and where we are going - our goal.

She expressed the hope that in this session there can emerge definition, commitment and role in the possibility of seeking planning dollars through “Our Town” grants.

The process was described by example as one of asset mapping to find out where artist are; identify strengths; and determine what they can and will bring to the effort. In the example cited, a significant data base was created.



It was emphasized that the grant is open, so it is possible to create something that is tailored to this place.

As the participants introduced themselves, they were asked to share what brought them to this session, and what they hope for as outcomes from the overall process.

### ***WHAT BROUGHT US HERE:***

- Arts and economics background
- Interest in how cultural and social entrepreneurship in Merced can lead to economic development
- Connection with Staci; and it makes sense to bring theater into the process as part of the re-introduction of theater into Merced
- It's an interesting opportunity
- Being new to Merced, responding to Staci's e-mail
- The opportunity to be part of a start-up creating something from nothing
- Interested in creation of a more uniform center for the arts; more of an Artists's community in downtown Merced
- Interest in beautiful public spaces for people to gather and enjoy
- Interest in continuing to work toward galvanizing art to stimulate economic development and community well being
- Personal interest in engaging the public and education in art as a priority
- Continuation of interest in the arts and in communication and collaboration
- Information and seeing the possibilities
- Planning is an art; attracted by the name Creative PlaceMaking (innovative eco-system)
- Integration of artistic perspective/involvement in South Merced Plan (reference made to availability of CalTrans Sensitive Justice Grant for Safer Environment)
- Hearing the community's interest so can propose to the NEA what the community wants

## ***HOPES FOR OUTCOMES FROM THIS PROCESS:***

- The re-integration of arts into everyday lives
- Art becomes more a natural part of people's lives here
- More quality of life; more respect for what artists are doing for society
- Something more for students and youth in the arts > legitimacy
- Ideas for cultural and social entrepreneurship can lead to economic development
- Artists bring economic development to downtown; a community of artists will do that
- Establishing theater as a destination with community buy-in
- A regional effort that takes advantage of existing resources; the whole thing is more robust and touches all youth
- Putting together all the pieces to go in the same direction to build a thriving creative community
- Improved communication and collaboration in the arts community
- U.C. Merced as a conduit for source and transfer of information; share their information; and collaborate
- Finding what the art community voice can provide in land use development as artistic canvas
- Artists advisory in/to the Planning Document for South Merced
- An expanded group with more diversity in all areas

## ***INTERESTS OF THE PRESENT STAKEHOLDERS SUMMARIZE AS:***

Economic development

Workforce attraction and retention

Professionalizing artists

Legitimacy

Recognized for talent and contribution

Paid accordingly

Pathway to/for artists (both professional and supporters)

Establish communication and collaboration networks

Beautiful public places

Regional Growth



**WHO IS REPRESENTED AT THIS SESSION:**

Education                      Artists                      Local government  
Health care                    Arts advocates            Economic development professionals  
Researchers                  Arts organizations      Professional fund raisers  
Downtown business

**WHO ELSE NEEDS TO BE INVOLVED?**

Multiple media> social  
Traditional and non-traditional leaders - key influencers  
Artists from emerging communities (age, ethnic, art form, etc.)  
Churches, faith community (Al Schaap)  
Business leaders (i.e. Chamber of Commerce)  
Targeted education: elementary; high school; Merced College

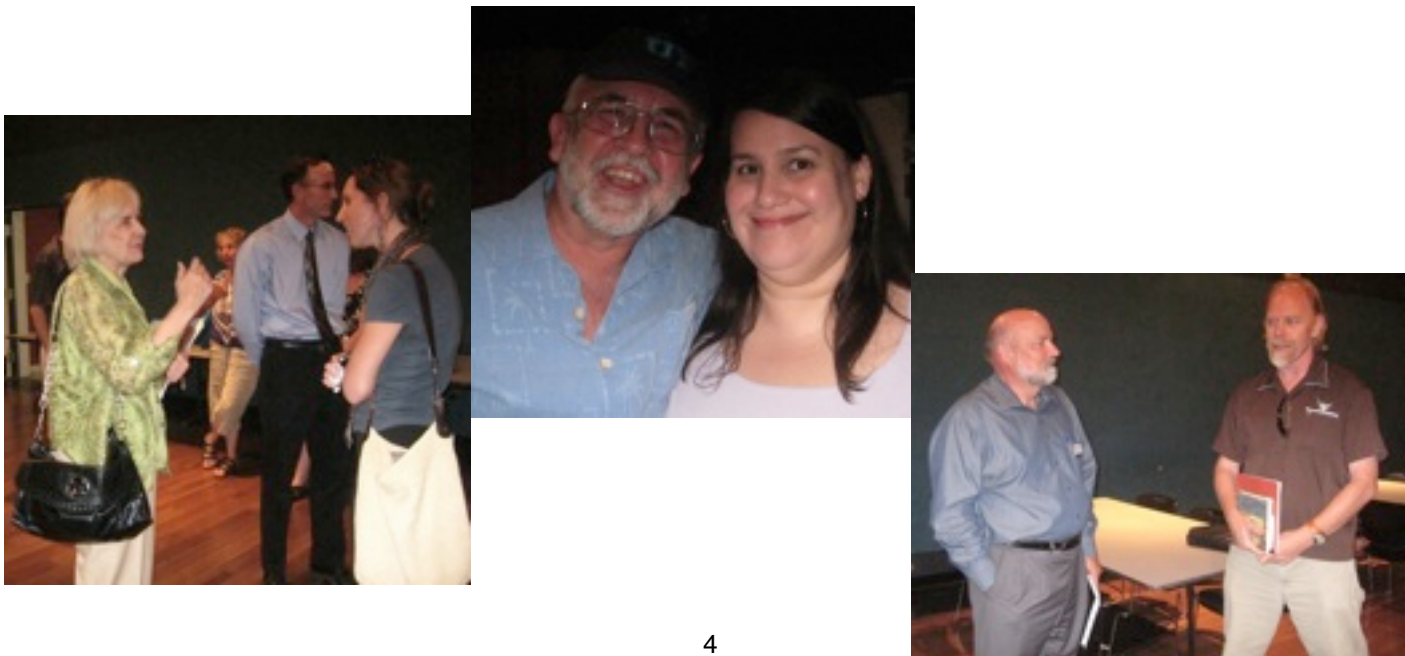
**CONVERSATION ON COMMUNICATION:**

Internal communication defined as what we are having right now, which leads to collaboration which in turn identifies and fosters opportunities to work together. This transforms competition into working and creating together, resulting in increased involvement in all forms of art; and identifies who artists are who have the skills for whatever is presented

Broadcast communication let's people know what the opportunities are; reaches out to people from a central communication point; what is being done and who is doing it; a thoughtful plan to transmit information, ideas, opportunities, people, etc. which, again, brings about opportunity for collaboration and engagement.

And....this all can lead to commercial/economic development

The importance of follow through communication to keep people informed and connected was emphasized; through each of us informing our individual networks



## **NEXT STEPS:**

Internal asset mapping to see what all is going on that can be tied in to

Write up of this session to share with the stakeholder base; Staci will place on website and disseminate.

Continue the dialog, with or without the grant, to access other resources. Staci expressed the feeling that the indication at this session makes pursuing the planning grant relevant and viable. She indicated the proposal is due in early December, and estimated it will take about 40 hours of professional preparation time, including input by nonprofit and government agencies. Begin with budget and timeline for buy-in into the concept. Staci and Carole will develop the initial timeline and keep stakeholders informed. Memo and Alan will serve as readers, as needed

For outreach, contact Julie for advice and assistance; look to the BHC for on line space, which is available and for which no permission is needed

If non profits needed, U.C/ Merced Foundation, Theater Foundation and Healthy House can be involved.

Need to know who wants to put time and resources into writing of application in order to have a number of proposals going out and a number of projects coming in and being funded; this will be done by contacting the stakeholder base

Schedule another session around mid-November to review the draft; in the meantime, keep the stakeholder base informed.

This may link back to partnering with NEA, HUD, DOT and EPA; also, there may be opportunity for the City to loop back and access some funds

## **PARTICIPANTS:**

Staci Santa, Executive Director, Merced County Arts Council

Julie Sterling, City of Merced Planning

Bill King, City of Merced Planning

Carole Richard, U.C. Merced

Memo Keswick, World Folk Dance/Healthy House

Alan Schoff, Merced County Arts Council Board

David Hosley U.C. Merced

Heike Hambley, Merced Shakespearefest

Roger Wyan, Photographer

Gail Benedict, U.C. Merced/ artist

Geneva Mello, Artist

Paul Fontaine Merced Theater

Monica Berrnardo, ACRD

David Burke, Community Activist

Shannon Essig, Arts Council Enrichment Center