

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

EastHUB Organization Update — EastHUB will provide an update on their organization’s work to support arts and culture on the Eastside.

Mac Cummins, Director, 452-6191

Jesse R. Canedo, Assistant Director, 452-5236

Scott MacDonald, Arts Community Manager, 452-4852

Community Development Department

Ray Cullom, CEO, EastHUB, 203-752-6050

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL**INFORMATION
ONLY**

Tonight’s Study Session will provide Council with an update on EastHUB’s organizational model, their vision and goals, and collaboration with the City of Bellevue.

RECOMMENDATION

N/A

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

This item will provide the Council with an update on EastHUB’s organization and how their initiatives, including those they are currently or planning to provide, will support the Eastside’s arts and cultural ecosystem.

EastHUB, a nonprofit community development organization, describes itself as a “catalyst for collaboration between local governments, regional businesses, arts and cultural organizations and our diverse Eastside population to create an accessible, cross-cultural ecosystem of community gathering places across our region.”

Formed in 2020, EastHUB was created to address the growing need for affordable space for arts and cultural activity while working to capitalize on the tremendous development potential in Bellevue and across the Eastside. This is accomplished through partnership between developers, EastHUB, cities and arts and cultural organizations. Their model of working with developers, plus their long-term management and ownership of the spaces built, seeks to ensure the affordability and access of spaces well into the future.

The rapid growth of Bellevue has been accompanied by an increasing desire and demand for more access to arts and culture. Survey work and analyses have shown that residents, workers, and visitors attracted to Bellevue are active in the arts and more eager for access to creative education, experiences, and organizations. However, the City has a limited ability to deliver facilities and services independently, making partnerships with private entities and non-profits essential to meet the needs of our growing community.

To that end, the Arts Program is working collaboratively with EastHUB to advance and deliver some of the community’s requests and develop plans to meet long term needs. Early partnerships include

developing an Eastside arts and cultural events calendar, something local organizations have long requested but the City has not been resourced to deliver. The City is also in conversations with EastHUB on their potential management and production of an Eastside musical and performance showcase either as part of Bellwether or as a new standalone event. A special component to this potential work would be sponsorship development and building awareness. In each of these examples, EastHUB's involvement expands the scope of City initiatives where without public-private partnerships like these, the City is limited by budget, staff expertise and capacity. Staff recognizes that in order to realize an active arts and cultural sector, engrained in Bellevue's brand, most of this work needs to come through public-private partnerships. These two collaborations are considered test cases for future growth of partnership work, with EastHUB and other groups.

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

EastHUB has the potential to further policies and strategies included in several plans. Specific impacted plans include Bellevue's Comprehensive Plan, Cultural Compass, Economic Development Plan, Destination Development Plan and the Grand Connection Framework Plan.

Comprehensive Plan: Policies in the Arts and Urban Design, Economic Development, Land Use, and Neighborhoods Elements illustrate the connection between what the community has envisioned for Bellevue's future and the work EastHUB is working to accomplish.

Highlighted policies include:

- **UD-15.** Support and encourage the development of a wide array of cultural facilities throughout the City and the Eastside through local and regional strategies.
- **UD-19.** Support artists and arts groups working in the community through City programs and private partnerships.
- **UD-20.** Support and encourage the development of affordable space for artists and arts groups to practice, create, teach, perform, and present their art.
- **ED-14.** Recognize the economic development benefits of City and private sector investments in urban amenities like arts and culture, open space and recreational facilities, and high-quality urban design. Strengthen the City's assets in these areas as an explicit component of the city's economic development strategy.
- **LU-30.** Recognize the placemaking value of arts and cultural facilities and work to site them throughout the City as a means to enhance neighborhoods.
- **N-5.** Promote community connections that strengthen the social fabric of neighborhoods, including support for local neighborhood associations, community clubs, community centers, school organizations and non-profits that invest in building community.

Cultural Compass: The Cultural Compass includes eight goals that work to position Bellevue as the cultural hub of the Eastside. Of those, EastHUB's planned development aligns with the goal to "develop a mix of flexibly designed, quality visual and performing arts spaces to serve Bellevue and Eastside organizations, artists, and residents (Goal 5)." Also, within the plan are goals to promote the art and cultural expression of Bellevue's diverse population and other goals that EastHUB's work could support.

Economic Development Plan: EastHUB’s work could potentially provide a broad benefit to a number of the focus areas within the plan. Their work has potential to directly relate to strategies that support the Creative Economy and Tourism. These include developing built infrastructure needed for further establishment of the BelRed Arts District (CE-2), increasing the number of events, festivals, product-offerings, activities and performances that take place in Bellevue (CE-3, T-1), and expanding the number of visitor-related facilities (T-2).

Destination Development Plan: EastHUB’s work, especially larger venues like the potential Playhouse, could be a significant tourism driver. Additionally, their work has the potential to support both the Culture, Performing Arts and Entertainment, and the Events and Festivals Action Plans detailed in the Destination Development Plan.

Grand Connection Framework Plan: While potential development of arts and cultural spaces by EastHUB isn’t limited to the Grand Connection and adjacent areas, they recognize the potential of the Grand Connection as a cultural corridor and have been working to form partnerships with companies and developers located along the corridor. Their initial Playhouse development, currently in planning, will be located a half block off the Grand Connection and will be an important cultural facility if constructed.

OPTIONS

N/A

ATTACHMENTS & AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS

A. EastHUB: Culture Creates Community

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

Comprehensive Plan

Economic Development Plan (adopted 2020)

Grand Connection Framework Plan

Cultural Compass

Destination Development Plan