



City of
SANTA CLARITA

Arts Master Plan Culmination Report

September 2025

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PHOTO BY JUNIOR HIGH STUDENT IN THE YOUTH ARTS INITIATIVE PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

The City of Santa Clarita (City) commissioned the Arts Master Plan in late 2014 to create a new, long-term roadmap for cultural development throughout the community. The Arts Master Plan addresses ten areas of specific interest.

It also builds on the two-phased Cultural Arts Master Plan adopted in 1997 and 1998, as well as other documents created under the guidance of the City of Santa Clarita Arts Commission (Arts Commission).

On March 9, 2016, the City Council adopted the City's Arts Master Plan. Since adoption, the Arts Commission has addressed many of the recommendations in the plan and developed and presented to the City Council eight previous annual Work Plans. The Arts Commission did not create a 2022 Arts Commission Work Plan, instead they updated the Arts Master Plan document, adding 20 recommendations to be addressed before 2026.

This Culmination Report document includes status updates on the 41 recommendations identified in the original Arts Master Plan and the 20 recommendations added in the updated version.

The status updates fall into three categories:

- **Addressed recommendations**, which utilizes **blue text** for the updates, are ones that have been prioritized by the Arts Commission and have reached a point in their development where they are ongoing, completed, or have been explored or have developed plans, even if they have not been fully implemented at this time.
- **Continuing recommendations**, shown in **green text**, are ones that are still early in their development and should continue to be worked on by the Arts Commission and staff.
- **Unprioritized recommendations**, shown in **red text**, are ones that the Arts Commission did not choose to work on and are not currently being recommended to pursue.

PUBLIC ART

RECOMMENDATION 1.1

The City should implement a public art planning and selection process that utilizes peer review and community input during the process to ensure that public art pieces meet the goals of providing enjoyable and attractive public spaces that reflect the character of the community.

The Planning and Selection Process was adopted by the City Council on September 27, 2016, and has been utilized for public art projects since adoption. An updated version of the process was approved by City Council on November 22, 2022.

RECOMMENDATION 1.2

The City should utilize existing neighborhoods to create thematic areas for public art projects, which will allow for a more consistent and cohesive inventory of artworks.

As the public art program was developed it was determined that information about the sites for new art pieces would be included in the call for artists. This approach did not create thematic areas in neighborhoods, but rather allowed for the art to respond directly to the site where it was being located.

RECOMMENDATION 1.3

The City should enact a percent-for-art requirement for all new public capital improvement projects.

The Civic Art Policy was adopted by the City Council on October 24, 2017, and has resulted in numerous art pieces being included in City capital improvement projects..

RECOMMENDATION 1.4

The City should explore extension of the percent-for-art requirement to new private development including commercial, industrial and multi-unit residential projects.

A presentation was made to the Arts Commission on April 10, 2025, about the Los Angeles County private percent-for-art program, which was launched in 2019. The Arts Commission directed staff to continue to monitor the County program and determined further discussion is warranted in the future.

RECOMMENDATION 1.5

The City should consider issuing a Request for Qualifications for an “on call” artist to work with various City departments and the Arts Commission to suggest aesthetic enhancement for small-scale public improvements.

The City has hired three different consulting firms, starting in early 2018. The initial consultants focused on advising the Arts Commission and staff on the selection phase of public art projects. The latest consulting firm, hired earlier this year, are focused on advising during the fabrication and installation phase.

RECOMMENDATION 1.6

The City should create a program of temporary public art.

The City Council approved an annual budget of \$38,000, starting in Fiscal Year 2019-20, for the temporary public art. The program is being updated, with some minor revisions to the program starting in 2026. The details on these revisions are detailed in the 2026 Arts Commission Public Art Report.

RECOMMENDATION 1B.1

The City should expand the temporary public art program to include a broader range of art forms, including assistance for temporary performance art.

The City received a Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture Intern for the summer of 2024 that focused on developing a plan for a mural program as part of the temporary public art program. The mural plan was utilized to revise the program starting in the coming year, with the addition of murals as a component of the program.

RECOMMENDATION 1B.2

The City should update the language in the documents that are part of the public art planning and selection process to ensure that artists of all backgrounds are encouraged to participate in the program.

The language utilized for public art and other documents generated by the Arts Commission are currently in review by the arts consultant hired to address Recommendation 1.5. The review process will be completed by the end of 2025.

OLD TOWN NEWHALL ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT

RECOMMENDATION 2.1

The City should explore taking management of the renovated Newhall Elementary School auditorium and actively program it.

The City Council approved the first agreement with the Newhall School District regarding the Newhall Family Theater for the Performing Arts on March 27, 2018. The most recent agreement was approved on February 25, 2025, to provide \$75,000 annual funding through 2028 to support the venue's operations and maintenance.

RECOMMENDATION 2.2

Begin exploration of a museum in Old Town Newhall.

The Museum and Cultural Center Feasibility Study, developed by M. Goodwin Museum Planning Inc., was delivered in July 2025 for review. The Feasibility Study will be shared shortly with the Arts Commission and the City Council.

RECOMMENDATION 2.3

Explore an ongoing program of public art placement in Old Town Newhall.

The Arts Commission continues to identify opportunities to enhance public art in the Newhall area.

RECOMMENDATION 2.4

Begin development of a creative live/work facility in Old Town Newhall in partnership with private and/or nonprofit developers.

Staff presented an informational report to the Arts Commission on October 10, 2024, which included research and findings on developing live/work spaces. Since the City does not play a primary role in housing projects, the information shared will be utilized when a private development opportunity is identified in the future.

RECOMMENDATION 2.5

Explore providing incentives to create a concentration of art galleries in Old Town Newhall.

An overview on incentives for creative businesses was presented to the Arts Commission on September 12, 2024. The overview included potential mechanisms identified by the Economic Development and Arts and Events Divisions being utilized by other municipalities to provide incentives for art galleries and other creative businesses.

RECOMMENDATION 2.6

Explore development of a film festival drawing on Santa Clarita's heritage and ongoing relationship with the film industry, and utilizing the collection of small venues in and near Old Town Newhall.

The first Newhallywood Silent Film Festival was held from February 14 to 16, 2020. The most recent festival was held from May 23 to 25, 2025. The festival celebrates the vital role Santa Clarita played in the beginning of the film industry in Southern California.

RECOMMENDATION 2.7

Explore development of Santa Clarita Valley historic assets as a collection of attractions including Old Town Newhall, William S. Hart Park, and further development of Mentryville and other sites (Newhall Pass, St. Francis Dam site, golden spike railroad site, and old filming locations).

An overview was presented to the Arts Commission on November 14, 2024, which shared updates on historic assets in the community. This included the involvement of staff with the future planning efforts for the SCV Historical Society, the deeper connection with the Friends of Hart Park organization, the role the City libraries continue to play in restoring and storing archival materials, and the transition of William S. Hart Park from Los Angeles County to the City.

RECOMMENDATION 2B.1

Explore the development of a program that offers pop-up and mobile museum experiences in Old Town Newhall.

A report was presented to the Arts Commission on June 13, 2024, detailing ways that pop-up and mobile museum experiences can be offered in Old Town Newhall in the coming years through the creation of an event developed by the arts community.

Recommendation 2B.2

Create outdoor spaces that can serve as a hub for various arts and cultural opportunities for the community.

The same report for the above recommendation also included recommendations on how outdoor spaces, particularly William S. Hart Park, could be utilized as a hub for artistic and cultural events.

ARTS EDUCATION

RECOMMENDATION 3.1

Convene a Citywide arts education collaborative to assess arts education needs in the schools and identify joint strategies, building on the College of the Canyon's K-12 Consortium. Participants can include the City, school districts, College of the Canyons, COC's K-12 Consortium, CalArts, Masters College (University), arts educators, arts organizations, and the SCV Education Foundation.

The Arts Education Consortium was formed in July 2019. Their first goal was to develop the Santa Clarita Regional Strategic Arts Education Plan (Arts Education Plan), which was presented to the Arts Commission on December 9, 2021.

RECOMMENDATION 3.2

Align the City's arts education programming with needs identified by the collaborative.

The Arts Education Plan was used as guide to develop arts education programming, in particular the Youth Arts Initiative (YAI). YAI is an after school program offered to junior high students from La Mesa and Sierra Vista, held at the Canyon Country Community Center. The program was offered during the summer of 2025 at both the Canyon Country and Newhall Community Centers.

RECOMMENDATION 3.3

Expand the curriculum of arts classes offered for children, youth, and adults through the City's Recreation and Community Services Department, and consider developing more sequential classes that build advanced skills and communities of interest (potential cost of \$5,000-\$10,000 as "seed capital" to experiment with new classes).

Thanks to the diligent work of the Recreation staff, the arts classes offered through the Seasons Magazine have increased significantly in the last few years. In addition, Seasons was redesigned to include an Arts Section to make it easier for community members to find the artistic opportunities being offered.

RECOMMENDATION 3B.1

Begin implementing the Santa Clarita Regional Strategic Arts Education Plan.

The Arts Education Plan serves as the guiding document for arts education efforts by the City of Santa Clarita. Several of the plan's recommendations have begun being implemented, including the development of an arts and social emotional learning program for junior high students, the Youth Arts Initiative, which launched in 2022 and was initially funded by a grant from the California State Library.

RECOMMENDATION 3B.2

Explore programs to offer arts education to all ages, particularly targeting seniors and underserved communities.

The Youth Arts Initiative program was designed to serve youth who would not necessarily be able to participate in fee-based after school arts opportunities. Additionally, many of the arts classes being offered through Seasons are targeted to specific ages and are intended to be affordable for the community.

GOVERNANCE OF THE ARTS

RECOMMENDATION 4.1

Adopt a three-tier process of developing arts grants and public art projects, utilizing outside peer panels.

The City Council approved a three-tier process for the Arts Grants program at their meeting on January 14, 2020, which was incorporated into the next grant cycle. The three-tier approach was adopted for public art projects on September 27, 2016, as part of the Public Art Planning and Selection Process.

RECOMMENDATION 4.2

The Arts Commission should develop an annual arts work plan as a part of the annual goal-setting process, and submit that plan to the City Council for approval.

The Arts Commission has developed work plans each year since the Arts Master Plan was adopted in 2016, except for 2022 when the Santa Clarita Arts Master Plan was updated instead.

RECOMMENDATION 4.3

Conduct an annual joint workshop session with the City Council and the Arts Commission to define priorities and issues, in advance of creating an annual arts program work plan.

The City Council and Arts Commission have met annually for a joint study session to discuss the annual Arts Commission Work Plans and Public Art Reports and to discuss other arts related matters.

RECOMMENDATION 4.4

Consider creating a standing City Council subcommittee for the arts, comprised of two council members, whose role is to provide an ongoing link between the City Council and Arts Commission, and to reinforce implementation.

The annual Joint Study Sessions between the City Council and the Arts Commission have been successful in ensuring that Council members are aware of what the Arts Commission is working on and what they have prioritized for the next year. Additionally, the individual Arts Commissioners communicate with the Council members who nominated them to apprise them of important updates and information, therefore a standing subcommittee has not been needed.

Recommendation 4B.1

The City should develop a new Arts Master Plan for presentation to the City Council in 2026, as this plan's recommendations must be enhanced to fit the changing needs of the community.

Funding was approved by the City Council in the 2024-25 budget to hire consultants to develop a new arts master plan, which will serve as a guiding document for arts and culture for the next ten years. The master plan is anticipated to be presented to the City Council in early 2026 for adoption.

RECOMMENDATION 4B.2

The Stakeholder Committee that was formed during the development of the original Arts Master Plan and was reformulated for the update should be consulted at a minimum of once yearly to be a voice of the community as the plan continues to be implemented. The membership

of the committee should be representative of the diverse perspectives of the community.

The Stakeholder Committee was part of the input process during the development of the new master plan, which will be presented to the City Council for adoption in early 2026. The membership of the committee was reviewed and multiple new members were invited to be part of the group.

CULTURAL FACILITIES, VENUES AND SPACES

RECOMMENDATION 5.1

Develop a plan for an outdoor amphitheater in a park, addressing its optimal focus, location, size, and operating structure.

The City Council was presented with the Amphitheater Feasibility Study, developed by AEA Consulting and John Sergio Fisher and Associates, at their July 10, 2018, meeting.

RECOMMENDATION 5.2

Facilitate private investors to create arts-related businesses, e.g., music clubs, ceramics studios, art galleries, small performance venues, film festivals, etc.

As stated above for Recommendation 2.5, the Economic Development and Arts and Events Divisions identified potential mechanisms utilized by other municipalities to encourage private investors to create arts and other creative businesses in Santa Clarita.

RECOMMENDATION 5.3

Explore future development of a community arts center, oriented to the needs of community-based arts organizations and lifelong learning in the arts.

An Arts and Veterans Center Needs Assessment was developed by the Cultural Planning Group. The assessment describes how the former SCV Senior Center in Newhall can address the identified needs of both the arts and veterans communities. With the recent transfer of William S. Hart Park from Los Angeles County to the City, the former SCV Senior Center is now owned by the City, since it is part of the park property.

RECOMMENDATION 5.4

Explore future development of a larger regional performing arts center.

While there continues to be demand for performing arts venues in the community, the Santa Clarita Performing Arts Center at the College of the Canyons and the various performance sites on school campuses have mostly met the needs for the larger performing groups. Therefore, the effort to begin exploring this option has not yet been prioritized.

RECOMMENDATION 5.5

Include one or more cultural spaces and uses in the planned Saugus Library.

This recommendation was put on hold when the Saugus Library Community Center project was determined to not move forward at this time.

RECOMMENDATION 5B.1

Explore development of an outdoor theater venue with 500 to 750 attendee capacity modeled on the concept in the Rivendale Park and Open Space Master Plan.

The theatre community has begun to develop the concept of a theater center which would include multiple indoor theater venues and an outdoor theater with the approximate capacity suggested in the recommendation. This concept is in the beginning stages of development and should continue to be explored.

RECOMMENDATION 5B.2

Identify a shared space to support the various needs of the arts community (e.g., rehearsal, storage of props, costumes, and administrative space).

The theatre center concept, as currently envisioned, includes spaces to address the arts community needs identified in this recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION 5B.3

Identify a location for performance teachers to present recitals and instruction.

The music instructor community is working with City staff to explore if The MAIN can play a role addressing this recommendation, particularly as it relates to recitals.

SUPPORTING ARTISTS AND ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

RECOMMENDATION 6.1

Increase the total Arts Grants budget (incremental increases to a benchmark of \$144,000 or approximately 9% of total arts organization revenues).

The Arts Grants budget has been increased twice, starting at \$60,000 when the Arts Master Plan was adopted, to the current level of \$100,000 each year. The Community Service Grants budget has also increased to \$100,000. It is recommended that the funding levels for both grant programs be discussed by the Grants Committee at the end of the annual grant cycle.

Recommendation 6.2

Create a new capacity building category of grants for arts and cultural organizations, including assistance for unincorporated and culturally specific groups (estimated cost \$10,000 annually).

In the 2017 Arts Grants funding cycle a new category was created for arts organization capacity building. Currently there are three categories, Community Arts (general programs and projects), Santa Clarita Presents (which supports groups at the Santa Clarita Performing Arts Center at the College of the Canyons), and Arts Organization Capacity (which support efforts that help groups be more successful in the future).

RECOMMENDATION 6.3

Make available business and career training for individual artists, drawing on the resources available in the region and online (estimated costs 10,000 annually).

The City offers a Business for Artists Conference (Conference) each October as part of the ARTober program. The Conference provides information and training for individual artists and for representatives of arts organizations.

RECOMMENDATION 6.4

Explore development of a leadership training and placement program for business people and other community leaders to serve on boards of directors of arts and cultural organizations; this can perhaps be best

accomplished through a partnership with an existing leadership organization in the County (estimated cost \$10,000 annually).

The CREATIVE Connection Leadership Training and Placement program was launched in September 2019 and completed the pilot year in June 2020. The program was held virtually in 2020-21, but has not been offered the last few years. It is anticipated to relaunch in a new format in spring 2026.

Recommendation 6B.1

Explore an increase to the Arts Grants program (and the Community Services Grants program) of \$10,000 each, and expand the Arts Grants to be an Arts and Culture Grants program, which encourages community nonprofits that celebrate Santa Clarita's diversity to apply.

The Community Services and Arts Grants programs increased by \$10,000 each for the 2024 grant cycle, bringing the total annual funding for each program to \$100,000. Research was presented to the Arts Commission at a study session meeting on February 27, 2025, on regional grant programs that serve both the arts and cultural communities.

RECOMMENDATION 6B.2

Evolve the Arts Symposium program into a multiple-day arts conference that serves Southern California and encourages attendees to stay in local hotels.

The Arts Symposium evolved into the Business for Artists Conference in 2022. This year, the conference will be held on October 4, 2025.

RECOMMENDATION 6B.3

Expand the CREATIVE Connection program to target participants that represent Santa Clarita's population. This should result in expanded diversity of representation on local nonprofit arts organizations boards of directors.

Research was done into similar board training programs and particularly on ways to attract younger community members to participate in the program, and to serve on local boards. A revised version of the program will launch in spring 2026.

ARTS FUNDING

RECOMMENDATION 7.1

The City should assist in the formation of an Arts and Business Leadership Council.

The first meeting of the Arts and Business Leadership Council was held on October 22, 2021. California Institute of the Arts President, Dr. Ravi Rajan, and Santa Clarita Valley Economic Development Corporation President and CEO, Ondre Seltzer, currently serve as the co-chairs of the council. The next meeting will be held in early 2026, after the City Council adoption of the new arts plan currently being developed.

RECOMMENDATION 7.2

The City should consider allocating to the arts a portion of the proceeds from the Transient Occupancy Tax, to supplement other sources of funding, such as the general fund and the recommended percent-for-art program.

The City was awarded a Los Angeles County Arts Intern during fall 2024. The intern developed an Arts Funding Models Report, which was presented to the Arts Commission on January 9, 2025. The plan included the pros and cons of various funding models including the use of Transient Occupancy Tax to directly support arts and culture.

RECOMMENDATION 7B.1

Research arts funding models and develop a report on potential mechanisms to expand financial support for the arts community in Santa Clarita. This effort should focus on ways to encourage arts and cultural organizations that celebrate the community's diversity.

An Arts Funding Models Report was presented to the Arts Commission on January 9, 2025, by the Los Angeles County Arts Intern.

CREATIVE ECONOMY

RECOMMENDATION 8.1

Create periodic convenings for Santa Clarita's creative industries based on shared needs, beginning with a high-profile conference or event.

The Arts and Business Leadership Council serves as the mechanism to discuss shared needs in the creative industries community. The Leadership Council has identified program and project goals based on the needs identified through discussions at their meetings.

RECOMMENDATION 8.2

Adapt and provide small business development services for the formation and growth of small creative businesses.

An assessment of current business development services available in Santa Clarita was presented to the Arts Commission at their October 12, 2023, meeting and was shared with the Arts and Business Leadership Council at their meeting on October 18, 2024.

RECOMMENDATION 8.3

Develop a creative industries directory for Santa Clarita that identifies businesses and people in the creative economy, and lists resources and opportunities (estimated cost \$15,000).

A Santa Clarita Creative Economy Report was presented to the Arts Commission at their meeting on September 9, 2021. The report was then presented to the Arts and Business Leadership Council at their inaugural meeting on October 22, 2021, where it served as the basis for the development of the Leadership Council's goals.

RECOMMENDATION 8.4

Consider development of an economic development plan for Santa Clarita's creative economy.

An overview addressing this recommendation will be presented at the October 9, 2025, Arts Commission meeting, which means this item will be addressed before the end of the calendar year.

RECOMMENDATION 8.5

Participate in regional efforts to develop the creative economy.

This has been achieved as City staff have attended various in-person and online workshops and sessions, including the annual release of the Otis College of Art and Design Creative Economy Reports for California and the Southern California region.

RECOMMENDATION 8B.1

Explore ways to expand business development service programs to ensure that participants represent Santa Clarita's diverse community.

The presentation developed to address Recommendation 8.2 above also identified mechanisms to ensure that the development programs are accessible and marketed to diverse small creative businesses in the community.

MARKETING THE ARTS

RECOMMENDATION 9.1

Develop a comprehensive, communitywide arts and cultural marketing program, in consultation with and building on the existing arts marketing resources in the community (\$25,000 annual marketing costs plus potential half-time staff or contract program).

The Arts Marketing Plan, developed by Lundmark Advertising + Design, was presented to the Arts Commission on December 12, 2019. The plan began implementation in 2020 and starting in fiscal year 2021-22, \$15,000 was allocated annually to continue to address the recommendations in the plan.

RECOMMENDATION 9B.1

Increase the arts marketing budget and expand the regional marketing strategies.

The annual allocation of \$15,000 has been integrated with efforts by the Tourism area of the Economic Development Division to expand the impact of the funding. It is recommended that the funding amount be enhanced in the near future to increase the impact the marketing is having on informing the Northern County region about the arts and cultural offerings in Santa Clarita.

RECOMMENDATION 9B.2

Create an initiative that highlights events and programs that celebrate Santa Clarita's diversity on SantaClaritaArts.com.

The SantaClaritaArts.com website, and affiliated City calendars, were updated in summer 2025 to include a category for Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging. This addition allows users to find upcoming events on the calendars that are in this category.

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

RECOMMENDATION 10.1

Create a Diversity and Inclusion Subcommittee of the Arts Commission to promote relevant programming, awareness, and opportunities.

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee was created at the March 10, 2016, Arts Commission meeting. The name of the committee was changed to the Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Committee in 2021.

Recommendation 10.2

Explore projects that address diversity and inclusion through the City's Arts Grants and Community Services Grants.

Research was presented to the Arts Commission at a study session meeting on February 27, 2025. The presentation provided information on regional grant programs that address diversity and inclusion and serve both the arts and cultural communities.

RECOMMENDATION 10.3

Increase culturally diverse programming produced or supported by the City, such as community festivals celebrating cultural diversity and/or a citywide multicultural festival.

The Celebrating Diversity Assessment was presented to the Arts Commission on October 10, 2019. Since that time, several City events have been created to showcase Santa Clarita's vibrant cultural diversity, including the Celebrate Series at the Canyon Country Community Center, the annual FestAbility Festival, and various cultural offerings at The MAIN and as part of the Art Exhibits program.

RECOMMENDATION 10.4

Make available technical assistance services to culturally specific organizations and support their organizational development.

The City ensures that the Business for Artists Conference, produced each October as part of the ARTober program, is marketed to the entire community and has diverse presenters to serve all local artists and organizations

RECOMMENDATION 10B.1

Utilize the Diversity and Inclusion Committee Statement in developing future recommendations and when implementing the existing recommendations.

The statement that was included in the Santa Clarita Arts Master Plan Update, completed in 2021, and served as a guide for the development of several of the added recommendations in the update. During the development process of the new arts master plan, the Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Statement was shared with the consultants to ensure there is continuity for these efforts.

RECOMMENDATION 10B.2

Utilize the Diversity and Inclusion Committee Statement when developing future events or programs, or evolving existing events or programs, produced or supported by the City.

The Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Committee will continue to utilize the statement, included in the 2021 Arts Master Plan Update, when advising about events or programs produced by the City of Santa Clarita in the future.



CELEBRATE: JAPAN EVENT HELD AT THE CANYON COUNTRY COMMUNITY CENTER

CONCLUSION

The Arts Master Plan was intended to serve as a guiding document for the future of the arts and culture in Santa Clarita. Of the 61 recommendations identified in the plan, three have not been prioritized, four are in early stages of their development and will continue to be worked on, and 54 have been addressed.

The City of Santa Clarita Arts Master Plan has been a valuable tool in the development of arts and culture in the community. The resulting new programs, events, venues, and projects have expanded the opportunities for residents and visitors to engage with the creativity that is such an important part of Santa Clarita and its identity.

The Arts Commission looks forward to continuing to partner with the City Council on the implementation of the new arts plan to continue to achieve the vision identified in the Arts Master Plan:

The City of Santa Clarita will be recognized as a “city of the arts,” where the lives of residents, artists, and visitors are enriched through artistic and cultural experiences.

The Arts Commission is very appreciative for the City Council’s support throughout the implementation of the Arts Master Plan. In particular, the Commission would like to thank the City Council for funding the development of the new arts plan. Working together, the City Council, the Arts Commission, staff, and the community will be able to achieve the bold vision described above.

ARTS COMMISSION

Dr. Michael Millar (Chair)
Susan Shapiro (Vice Chair)
Patti Rasmussen
Jeri Serrati-Goldman
Tracey Thompson