



Placemaking, Arts & Culture Workshop Summary

Overview

The community workshop on placemaking, arts, and culture was held on Thursday, June 4, 2026, at the African American Arts and Cultural Center. The workshop brought together residents, community leaders, service providers, and other stakeholders to discuss placemaking, arts, and culture priorities in the Fillmore and Western Addition neighborhoods. The event began with a brief presentation from City staff and representatives from the District 5 Supervisor's Office. Participants were then invited to place a dot on their top three placemaking, arts, and culture strategies. Following this activity, attendees were invited to join one of six small groups based on their topic of interest, divided into: Neighborhood Identity & Placemaking, Recreation & Public Space, Recreation & Public Space, Transit & Neighborhood Access, Public Safety, and Future Opportunities on Key Sites.

Participants received a handout outlining priority areas and strategies, developed from past community engagement, reports, and input from City agencies and community members. During group discussions, participants were asked to affirm these strategies, identify any gaps, and share which strategies would have the greatest impact for the neighborhood. Below is a summary of the comments, key themes, and top priorities that emerged from these discussions.

Feedback by Priority Area

Arts & Culture

Supporting and investing in Black artists and cultural institutions

- Strong desire to restore funding to revive jazz in Lower Fillmore, honoring its origins and cultural value.
- Many felt Strategy A should be paired or merged with Strategy B because funding and spaces must work together.
- Community wants accountability for investments and quicker action

Expanding dedicated cultural spaces and venues

- Expand programming and funding for the Fillmore Heritage Center.

- Demand for a stronger local performance pipeline to bring back regular acts and revive the neighborhood's cultural vibrancy.

Expanding arts education, workforce pathways, and youth development

- Strategy C strongly resonated due to its educational focus, seen as foundational for long-term success.
- Need for early, ongoing arts education, mentorship, and guidance for youth.
- Participants highlighted a lack of awareness about existing arts-related jobs and training programs; better communication and pathways are needed.
- Art should be used as a youth engagement tool, supported by welcoming third spaces where young people feel they belong.

Building relationships with long-standing Fillmore creatives

- Community members noted a disconnect between legacy Black artists and City government. They emphasized bridging this gap to ensure opportunities are inclusive rather than feeling reserved for primarily White artists or artists that are not local to the Fillmore or have no historical connection to the community.
- Preservation of jazz culture is a priority: teaching youth, supporting intergenerational knowledge, and modeling successful partnerships like India Basin.
- Recognizing and involving long-time Fillmore creatives is seen as key to authentic placemaking.

What's Missing

- Promote Fillmore as a cultural and tourist destination—bring global attention to its history and arts.
- Build a stronger directory or network to know who local artists are and stay connected.
- Improve positive media/press coverage to elevate the Fillmore's reputation and cultural offerings.
- Recreate the Fillmore's historic "cool vibe" through more events, night markets, vendors, and cultural activations.
- Improve outreach and marketing (for example, people haven't seen Juneteenth flyers or other promotional materials).
- Openness to emerging technologies as tools for creativity and cultural expression.

Neighborhood Identity & Placemaking

Cultural Preservation and Community Identity

The community expressed a strong desire to restore the Fillmore's cultural vibrancy, noting that the neighborhood has lost much of its color, pride, and historic character. Residents emphasized the importance of preserving and expanding cultural assets such as murals, public art, legacy projects, storytelling spaces, and landmark institutions like the AAACC and the Heritage Center. They want more culturally led festivals, music and arts events, comedy clubs, and public gatherings that bring back the neighborhood's magnetism, along with more opportunities to celebrate and teach local history. Concerns about cultural displacement and erasure were captured in sentiments such as "You want my culture but not me," underscoring the need to protect both the culture and the community that created it.

Actions Discussed:

- Create more murals and public art
- Preserve and enhance spaces like AAACC and the Heritage Center.
- Organize more festivals, including R&B festivals, art/music events, and comedy nights.
- Develop a dedicated space to display photos and tell community stories.
- Establish legacy projects and cultural exhibits that celebrate neighborhood history.
- Promote public gatherings and culturally centered events that rebuild magnetism.

Youth Programs, Learning, and Development

Youth development was identified as a core priority, with community members calling for programs that nurture academic, cultural, and economic growth. Residents want to reestablish breakfast programs similar to the Black Panther Breakfast initiative and expand literacy, financial education, AI literacy, and digital learning opportunities. Youth employment and teen-focused spaces were emphasized to ensure that young people have supportive environments beyond the school day. Partnerships with organizations like Black Girls Code and Big Brothers Big Sisters were encouraged to strengthen mentorship and skill-building opportunities.

Actions Discussed:

- Create breakfast programs for children before school.
- Expand literacy, financial education, and AI learning programs.
- Create teen-focused educational and economic resource centers.
- Develop culturally relevant, screen-free youth activities.

- Connect youth to groups like Black Girls Code and Big Brothers Big Sisters.
- Launch a mobile book bus serving housing sites during summer.
- Increase youth employment opportunities in cultural and community spaces.

Community Spaces, Safety, and Connectivity

Residents stressed the importance of maintaining and improving community spaces that foster safety, connection, and cultural expression. Strengthening places like Hamilton Rec Center and preserving key sites for activities such as gardening, music, storytelling, and recreation were seen as essential for rebuilding community bonds and maintaining neighborhood stability.

Actions Discussed:

- Improve Hamilton Rec Center and make it more welcoming.
- Preserve Ella Hill Hutch as a key neighborhood resource.
- Develop safe gathering spaces for gardening, music, and cultural activities.
- Recruit volunteers to support rec centers and youth swim programs.
- Create more public spaces for community gatherings and celebrations.

Economic Empowerment and Opportunity

Economic revitalization was seen as essential to the neighborhood's future. Residents called for support for Black-owned businesses, stronger local hiring, and the creation of an economic and learning center for youth and adults—potentially located in the old Kaiser Building. Community-led cultural tours, events, and festivals were viewed as opportunities to generate local income while reinforcing neighborhood identity. Teaching AI skills and digital literacy was highlighted as a pathway to economic mobility.

Actions Discussed:

- Support and invest in Black-owned businesses.
- Encourage businesses to hire local residents.
- Develop an economic and learning center at the old Kaiser Building.
- Create community-led tours to support the neighborhood and generate income.
- Partner with AI education organizations to teach digital skills.
- Strengthen digital resource access through programs like Black Girls Code.

Inclusion, Belonging, and Equity

Community members emphasized the importance of ensuring the Fillmore's revitalization is inclusive and welcoming to people of all races. Residents stressed that rebuilding the

Fillmore should bring everyone together and that civic engagement, including voting, is vital to protect the community's interests and cultural assets.

Actions Discussed:

- Promote inclusive planning processes where all residents feel welcomed.

Public Institutions and Infrastructure

The community expressed a need for stronger partnership with public institutions and greater clarity around services. The library was identified as an underutilized resource that could play a larger role in youth programs and community learning. Residents also requested a desire for more protected spaces such as landmark spaces and access to the Muni substation at Fillmore and Turk.

Actions Discussed:

- Involve the library more deeply in community education and youth programming.
- Provide access to the Muni substation at Fillmore and Turk.
- Protect and maintain landmark spaces important to neighborhood identity.

Recreation & Public Space

Sustainable Funding and Youth Support

The community emphasized that reliable funding is essential for maintaining active, safe community spaces and delivering meaningful youth programming. Sustainable financial support—public and private—is seen as the foundation for long-term activation and multigenerational use of neighborhood spaces.

Actions Discussed:

- Secure stable funding from public and private sources.
- Fundraise within the community and pursue matching donors.
- Prioritize consistent youth programming and guidance to resources.
- Ensure safe, multigenerational environments for youth and elders.
- Build government trust in community-led youth programming.

Improving and Activating Existing Public Spaces

Residents stressed that existing parks and public spaces need significant improvements before new expansions are considered. Priorities include better lighting, maintenance, safety enhancements, and more frequent community-centered activation.

Actions Discussed:

- Activate Fillmore Mini Park with events, improved lighting, trash cans, brush removal, and a public restroom.
- Improve lighting along the Buchanan Mall walkway and add public restrooms.
- Enhance child safety at Margaret Hayward Park by sectioning young-child areas.
- Restart programming at the Margaret Hayward Park Clubhouse
- Explore special event permitting for activities like concerts in parks.

Local Economic Participation

Residents expressed the need for stronger support for neighborhood entrepreneurs and cultural vendors as part of public space activation and programming.

Actions Discussed:

- Increase opportunities for local entrepreneurs and cultural vendors.
- Integrate vendor participation into public space programming.
- Build on progress already underway in the Buchanan Mall improvements.
- Expand neighborhood access to basic goods such as groceries and toiletries.

Transparency and Communication

Community members want clearer, more accessible information on program planning and public engagement opportunities.

Actions Discussed:

- Provide updates on programming and RFPs for sites like Ella Hill Hutch.
- Clearly share where surveys and public engagement notices are posted.

Transit & Neighborhood Access

Residents expressed a need for safer, more reliable, and more intuitive transportation options that support seniors, families, youth, people with disabilities, and pedestrians. There is a strong desire to balance transit improvements with parking needs, address safety, and ensure the neighborhood's mobility systems feel designed for the people who live here.

Key Points by Strategy

Strategy A: Creating safer and more comfortable walking conditions

- Sidewalk repair is a high priority. Residents want cracks, lifted sidewalks, and tree-root damage fixed—not just marked.
- Add more curb ramps for accessibility, especially benefiting seniors and people with disabilities.
- Pedestrian safety concerns include fast-moving bikes and scooters that do not stop at lights, creating fear for walkers.
- Geary Blvd at Steiner, Fillmore, and Webster feel unsafe because there's many merging lanes and cars are turning on some of these. It feels dangerous to navigate.
- The Geary/Fillmore underpass is a historic barrier that divided the neighborhood and remains as a symbol of disconnected infrastructure.

Strategy B: Maintaining and enhancing the service quality, reliability, and comfort of bus and transit programs

- Crowding on the 22 Fillmore is an issue.
- The 38 is essential for connecting to Masonic and downtown—its importance should be acknowledged and protected.
- Concerns about ramps and bus accessibility were raised, especially for seniors and people with disabilities.
- Youth safety on buses is a recurring theme. Residents want an “ambassador program” on transit to support youth and improve safety.
- Families often require multiple transfers to reach destinations, which is burdensome.
- Lack of parking sometimes forces people to take transit, but then they receive citations. This creates frustration and financial risk.

Strategy C: Partnering to design community-led biking initiatives that reflect Fillmore needs

- Many feel current bike and micro-mobility planning doesn't reflect the habits of Fillmore residents.
- Suggestion: reroute fast-moving bike traffic (on Steiner St.) to reduce conflicts with pedestrians and transit.
- Residents are concerned about scooters and bike-share riders who don't follow traffic rules.
- Some residents bike and depend on shared bikes—but still feel it's awkward to ride at the speed of traffic or slow cars down. Bike share is widely noticed, but its benefits feel unevenly distributed.
- Residents feel bike lane planning sometimes excludes actual users—many seniors and long-time residents don't bike, so lanes may feel designed “for someone else.”

Strategy D: Balancing new mobility with parking and vehicle access

- Residents emphasized real-world needs: families with several children attending different schools, seniors with mobility limitations, and people managing groceries and daily errands.
- Strong desire for parking passes for seniors. They are concerned with attacks or muggings while using transit.
- Development without parking is viewed as unrealistic for families already facing mobility barriers.
- Desire to reduce ticket burdens and better balance car access with transit and micro-mobility.
- Congestion is an issue—Fillmore streets “don’t have the width” to comfortably support competing mobility types.

Additional Community Needs & Issues Raised

Access to Goods & Services (Land Use)

- Residents are grateful for transit that connects them to groceries and pharmacies—but want more services inside the neighborhood to reduce dependency on travel.
- Desire for a more walkable “everyday errands” neighborhood.

Economic Equity in Mobility Planning

- Call for an RFP process that prioritizes neighborhood residents—ensuring mobility investments create local opportunities.

Public Safety

Community-led Safety, Violence Prevention, and Trust

- Residents want community-rooted violence prevention and crisis response programs—not policing approaches that label the neighborhood or overlook local expertise.
- Community members are already doing safety and violence prevention work without city funding; they feel unseen and unsupported.
- Current ambassadors are viewed as ineffective or even mistrusted due to lack of training and community grounding.
- Desire to replace or reimagine ambassadors with trauma-informed, de-escalation-trained peers, including young adults and women.

- Concerns that existing city programs lack strong Black representation, weakening trust and cultural alignment.

Reimagining Crisis Response (Strategy A-aligned feedback)

- The old “Big Homie” model no longer works; community wants structured training pipelines for young adults to become peer leaders, crisis interventionists, and harm-reduction workers.
- Residents emphasize the need for community members who know the neighborhood and have lived experience to be hired, trained, and resourced.
- Crime statistics don’t reflect interpersonal or “unseen” violence; solutions must address deeper trauma, not just visible crime.

Youth Investment and Early Support

- Youth want consistent, meaningful programs: computer literacy, workshops, and education starting early.
- Messaging and communication need improvement—youth should feel programs are for them.
- Stable funding is needed; inconsistent funding cycles disrupt programs and weaken trust.
- Past programming was less restrictive and more accessible—current structures feel overly burdensome.

Safety Through Community, Culture, and Physical Environment

- Lighting upgrades along corridors (already agreed upon) remain unimplemented, raising frustration and skepticism about city follow-through.
- Residents ask why improvements with committed funding have seen “no action in over two years.”
- There’s concern that physical projects like Buchanan Mall outreach felt dismissive, top-down, and reminiscent of redevelopment or gentrification, rather than community-led.
- Violence **intervention**—not just prevention—is missing. Former groups (SVIP, CALLES, CJRN) once filled this gap; residents want those roles restored and community defined.

Coordination, Governance, and Equity (Strategy D-aligned feedback)

- Strong call for cooperation—not competition—between local organizations.

- Current funding structures and fragmented developer-led programs pit groups against one another and create scarcity.
- Residents say the City contributes to this competitive dynamic and is underfunding key community safety roles.
- Desire for better access to philanthropy and more unified, community-driven coordination.

Community Identity, Representation, and Positive Narratives

- Safety is tied to cultural pride: residents want more Black families, Black businesses, and activating programs to rebuild a sense of belonging.
- Media representation is overwhelmingly negative. Residents want positive stories about Black Fillmore, shared by the Mayor’s office and other institutions.
- Residents want to “see ourselves beyond the violence.”

Short-Term Wins & Creative Solutions

- Celebrate Black Fillmore high school and college graduates with a parade or ceremony to build pride and visibility.
- Create a youth media cohort (proposed by the Steering Committee) trained to make and share positive content about Fillmore across cultural districts and City channels.

Future Opportunities on Key Sites

Restore and Revitalize Black Cultural Spaces

- Strong desire to preserve what remains of Black cultural life in the Fillmore, including historically significant sites (AAACC, former Fulton site, Fillmore Heritage Center, cultural centers near McDonald’s).
- Community members want these spaces to remain active, culturally rooted, and truly representative of the Black community.
- Deep concern about losing cultural anchors and a repeated emphasis on holding on to what’s left of Black Fillmore.

Bring Back Music, Arts, and Cultural Programming

- The Fillmore Heritage Center is central to community vision—people want it returned to the community with music (jazz, R&B), arts training, youth programming, and shared space for multiple groups.
- Music is seen as critical to reviving the neighborhood’s identity and drawing visitors back.

- Desire for vibrant public activations: summer activities, jazz at Fillmore & O’Farrell, plaza programming, African diaspora cultural gatherings.

Support Youth Education, Skill-Building, and Creative Workforce Pathways

- Community wants year-round youth programs: media, maker spaces, cooking, poetry, technology, “learn it and earn it” models.
- Desire for institutions like a “Randall Museum for the Fillmore” that support youth education, creativity, and exploration.
- Emphasis on creating pathways that connect young people to cultural identity, economic opportunity, and community leadership.

Strengthen Local Businesses and Essential Services

- Need for practical neighborhood amenities: grocery/co-op, bakery, pet store, spaces for seniors and ADA needs, coworking spaces.
- Concern about losing essential services (e.g., Safeway redevelopment) and desire to bring more Black businesses and entrepreneurs into vacant spaces.
- Interest in creating destinations that support tourism and local commerce, leveraging Fillmore’s cultural history.
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Beautification, Public Realm Improvements, and Safer Gathering Spaces

- Desire for improved streetscapes and beautification similar to Folsom.
- Requests for permanent spaces for chess/checkers, improved plazas, consistent funding for activations, and safer conditions for public events.
- Emphasis on security as a supportive presence for community programming.

Historical Recognition and Memory

- Calls for acknowledging overlooked histories—e.g., lack of memorial for Jonestown victims, contributions of Black San Franciscans at Portsmouth Square.
- Desire for visible markers, storytelling, and recognition of Black cultural legacy throughout the Fillmore.

Community Governance, Stability, and Accountability

- Concern that key cultural buildings have been underutilized, mismanaged, or allowed to decline.
- Community wants qualified, stable leadership and opportunities to influence decision-making for key sites.

- Desire for collaboration (“we do better when we pool resources”), transparency, and respect for community knowledge.

Top Priorities Shared at the Workshop

Based on the dot exercise, the **top three strategies** are:

1. Tie for the 1st priority strategy:

Strategy 1A

Support and invest in local cultural institutions and Black artists, strengthen capacity for Black creatives, and elevate arts and culture as a driving economic engine for the neighborhood.

Strategy 1C

Expand education, training, and workforce pathways in the arts and creative industries to support long-term career opportunities for Black residents.

2. **Strategy 2A**

Expand cultural programming and strengthen neighborhood identity by supporting opportunities for local art, public performances, festivals, and community-led cultural events that celebrate and sustain the neighborhood’s Black identity and traditions.

3. Tie for the 3rd priority strategy:

Strategy 1B

Expand dedicated spaces, venues, and cultural platforms for creative expression where Black creatives can present, perform, gather, learn, and collaborate on creative expression.

Strategy 4B

Create safer and more comfortable walking conditions throughout the neighborhood to ensure all residents — especially youth, seniors, and people with disabilities — can easily reach community services.