

San Jose Museum of Art

Strategic Plan: 2010-2014

Executive Summary

January 2010

SAN JOSE MUSEUM OF ART



1. Introduction

In April 2009, the San Jose Museum of Art (SJMA) engaged Lord Cultural Resources to lead the Board and staff in the creation of a Strategic Plan to set clear parameters and goals for the museum's next phase of development. The Strategic Plan will guide the SJMA for its next three to four years (2010-2014) and shape the museum for years to come.

As part of the strategic planning process, extensive external and internal research was conducted. The following key steps were taken as part of the strategic planning process:

- Extensive consultation with Board and senior staff
- Interviews with external key opinion leaders
- Individual interviews with Board members
- Staff workshops
- Community workshops
- Organizational review
- Stakeholder survey
- Board retreat

Each process represented a different dynamic, ranging from anonymous surveys to workshops to confidential personal interviews. This diversity of approaches ensured the mitigation of bias within the final results.

This document presents a Strategic Plan that addresses the critical issues that were identified as facing San Jose Museum of Art in the near future. The Strategic Plan describes precise goals identified by the Board and the specific steps and tasks needed to be undertaken in order to push forward the process of reaching these set goals. Executing these assigned tasks will ensure that the San Jose Museum of Art will strengthen its position and enable it to face future issues with greater certainty and sense of purpose. This document reflects a truly collaborative effort between the consultants and museum staff.

2. San Jose Museum of Art 2010-2014

The San Jose Museum of Art is the South Bay's leading art institution. In the next three to four years, SJMA will focus on strengthening its regional position by creating an utterly unique voice that clearly differentiates it from other art museums. The exhibitions and education programs at SJMA have always been rooted in the belief that art is a central form of human communication, inspiration, and cultural expression and that artists play a vital role in a creative society. In its next phase of development, the museum will add emphasis on global perspectives and multidisciplinary breadth, fostering cross-disciplinary thinking and innovative collaborations that expand SJMA's capacity and reach. The principal strategic outcome of the planning process has been the assertion that SJMA should link its programmatic focus to distinctive regional attributes — cultural diversity, global perspectives, transformational creative thinking, incubating new ideas, and a belief in the social power of innovation.

In the coming years, SJMA will step forward to play a leadership role on multiple levels: in the activation of downtown San Jose; in the greater San Jose cultural and educational community; in the creative, leisure, and professional pursuits of Silicon Valley's highly educated workforce; and in the national and international contemporary art world. SJMA will build momentum to sustain its new positioning through continual innovation and excellence.

SJMA will spend the next three to four years focusing audience-development efforts on the large and highly educated populations of San Jose and Silicon Valley. San Jose is projected to grow by nearly one-third — over 1.3 million people — by 2035, with the largest age groups being 20-30 year olds and seniors. The population will be more diverse and there will be fewer children. SJMA will work to attract broader and deeper segments of current devoted audiences *and* respond to the evolving demographic climate. This will be done by providing experiences that appeal to an extremely educated and sophisticated population; engaging a racially and ethnically diverse population in meaningful and lasting ways; diversifying learning and providing a range of experiences that will serve a range of ages; providing social spaces — physical and notional — that appeal to “young cosmopolitans.”

As is the case with cultural institutions across the country, the Board and staff at SJMA have been actively navigating through a severe financial crisis, which will continue to challenge this period of institutional growth. To overcome these conditions, SJMA will strategically develop earned and contributed incomes streams and bolster the endowment and program funds. The focus will first be on financial stability, then growth. At present, the Board includes an incredible group of long-term devotees who have nurtured the institution, and newer members that share their belief that SJMA can continue to evolve and better serve the community. In the coming years, SJMA will continue to actively build support by reaching further and deeper into the San Jose and Silicon Valley communities.

Consensus that the true identity of SJMA must be linked to the unique region in which the museum exists by promoting experimentation and exploration has led to the identification of priorities. Most importantly, an updated mission, vision, and statement of curatorial intent will guide the organization as it moves forward. The strategic plan also yielded four broad organizational goals that support the mission and vision. The vision will become a reality through the implementation of an action plan, a series of objectives and specific tasks that create the roadmap for achieving the goals. The action plan was developed by the staff at SJMA and identifies how multiple departments will address each of the strategic goals. Key to the action plans are assignments of personnel, due dates, outcomes and defined performance measures that will allow leadership to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the plan over time.

The SJMA of 2014 will be a leading force in the region – enriching downtown San Jose through collaboration and experimentation, providing new paths for public access and engagement, and playing a vital role in the contemporary art world regionally, nationally, and internationally.

3. San Jose Museum of Art Foundation Statements

The mission and vision for the San Jose Museum of Art that are presented below emerged from the planning process. The mission statement identifies who and/or what the San Jose Museum of Art is as an institution. The vision describes what the San Jose Museum of Art strives to become and how it will continue to play a role in the local as well as broader community.

Mission

The San Jose Museum of Art reflects the diverse cultures and innovative spirit of Silicon Valley. Through its exhibitions, programs, scholarship, and collections, SJMA connects the present and the past, and the art of the West Coast and the world. The Museum fosters awareness of artists' broad contributions to society: it engages audiences with the art of our time and the vitality of the creative process.

Vision

The San Jose Museum of Art will be the preeminent modern and contemporary art museum in Silicon Valley. SJMA will enrich its communities through inviting, innovative programs and creative, interactive experiences. It will provide dynamic learning opportunities for adults as well as vital educational services for youths and families, to encourage inquiry and visual thinking. As a consequence, SJMA will be recognized internationally for high-quality programs, fresh collaborative endeavors, a distinctive permanent collection, and adventurous approaches. The Museum will connect art and life; work across cultural boundaries; and promote deeper awareness, enjoyment, and knowledge of modern and contemporary art, architecture, and design. SJMA will be a cultural hub for the residents of the region, a space for personal reflection, a gathering place for creative thinkers, and a source of vibrancy for the city center.

4. Goals 2010-2014

The following list of goals were agreed upon and selected by the Board. The aim of the goals is to clarify the direction that the San Jose Museum of Art will be striving to move toward over the coming three to four years. Each goal has a sub-list of objectives that represent the different steps needed to be taken in order to accomplish the goal. Chapter 5 contains a set of action plans detailing specific tasks attached to each objective.

Goal 1. Achieve greater excellence, distinction, and focus in exhibitions, programming, collections, and scholarship.

Objective 1: Develop and implement an exciting, focused, and esteemed exhibition program that highlights diversity and diverse curatorial voices, cross-disciplinarity, innovation, collaboration with other organizations, and California art in an international context.

Objective 2: Develop and implement an exciting, high-quality education program that amplifies exhibitions; highlights diversity, cross-disciplinarity, and the creative process; and fosters institutional collaborations.

Objective 3: Align collecting activities with strategic priorities; maximize use of collection.

Objective 4: Maintain accreditation from the American Association of Museums.

Objective 5: Establish an active, compelling roster of educational programs for young professionals and adult audiences.

Goal 2. Grow revenue to support an operating model that is sustainable and scaled to SJMA's mission and commitment to quality.

Objective 1: Expand donor base, to increase general operating support.

Objective 2: Strengthen Board and its fundraising capacity.

Objective 3: Develop funding initiatives and sources of support for new programs.

Objective 4: Increase earned income.

Objective 5: Ensure SJMA's staff is supported and fairly compensated; that staffing is properly structured to both support programs and ensure budget flexibility; and that part-time hourly and outside contractors are engaged as appropriate.

Objective 6: Ensure fiscal transparency, timely and accurate financial reporting, benchmarking, financial acumen of staff, and ongoing analysis.

Goal 3. Promote a unique brand and position for SJMA, regionally and nationally.

Objective 1: Develop and implement a clear, distinctive brand and graphic identity that communicates the revised mission/vision.

Objective 2: Define and penetrate optimum target markets locally, regionally, and nationally.

Objective 3: Increase attendance and attract new audiences.

Objective 4: Build marketing capacity and expertise.

Goal 4. Establish SJMA as a centerpiece of the South Bay cultural community and leading advocate for the arts.

Objective 1: Play a leadership role in downtown San Jose and the greater region.

Objective 2: Become a social hub: "THE" place to be.

Objective 3: Optimize use of facility and central-city location.