

**Shunpike**  
**Report to the City of Tacoma on contracted activities**  
**2009 – 2010**

## Introduction

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Shunpike's mission is to strengthen the Seattle arts community by partnering with small and mid-sized arts groups to develop the business tools they need to succeed.

Founded in 2001, Shunpike is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping small and mid-sized arts groups better manage the business of art. Our aim is to create a vibrant and diverse arts community where groups of all sizes can thrive. We work toward these goals in 4 primary ways:

- **Back-office services and support.** Shunpike partners with arts groups and projects to offer financial processing, administrative support, fundraising guidance and fiscal sponsorship. We currently have more than 100 active sponsored groups throughout Washington.
- **Consultation and training.** Through our capacity building program for arts groups, Shunpike provides business clinics, workshops and customized training in areas like Board development, fundraising and strategic planning.
- **Public events.** Our Arts Leadership Lab (ALL) convenes arts leaders through: Creative Conversations – panel forums on arts issues; ALL Out networking events; Accountability & the Arts seminars in best practices; and Innovation in the Arts, an annual mini-conference for regional arts leaders.
- **Special projects.** Our unique operating model has allowed us to assemble partnerships quickly that can serve a greater community need. In two pilot programs just getting underway now – Spaceworks Tacoma and Storefronts Seattle – Shunpike is partnering with city and business leaders to bring artistic activity to empty storefronts in the downtown cores.

Through a contract with the City of Tacoma and a grant from the Greater Tacoma Community Foundation, Shunpike opened a satellite office in Tacoma in 2009 that allows us to deliver our programs directly to Tacoma arts groups.

## Report on Activities

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In our first active expansion beyond Seattle, Shunpike maintained a regular presence for all of its programs in Tacoma within the last 12 months. Since July 2010, we have operated a satellite office space and directly served artists, arts leaders and arts administrators in Tacoma.

In that time, Shunpike has actively recruited participants in all of our program services and has maintained regular hours on site and in our main office for drop-in, appointment and telephone consultation, technical assistance, administrative support and training. We have recruited several groups to our fiscal sponsorship and back-office service program, provided several public seminars on best practices in arts administration and have invited many different groups and projects to meet with us and explore their needs, questions and concerns as arts businesses and nonprofit organizations. Finally, we have presented and appeared on behalf of the arts community to explore outreach and partnership opportunities.

### Seminars and events

As a part of our work in Tacoma, Shunpike produces and participates in a series of seminars and events to provide opportunities for Tacoma arts leaders and producers to convene, learn and discuss issues related to best practices and community organizing in the arts.

To date, Shunpike has provided four events, with 105 total attendees.

- 9/17/2009 *Starting a New Organization*
- 10/8/2009 *S'PIKEd – a networking event for arts leaders*
- 11/14/2009 *Financial Management: budgeting and bookkeeping tips for small arts organizations* (at the Art at Work Symposium)
- 11/14/2009 *Fundraising: understanding your support base and building your own fundraising voice* (at the Art at Work Symposium)

These seminars and other past events are also available as podcast downloads on our website. Since these seminars, Shunpike has delayed further public events until the new Arts Leadership Lab program is underway, expected to resume public programming in August of 2010. Details on this expanded leadership development and public events program series are outlined further below.

### Office, Arts Business Clinic and Outreach

Shunpike has maintained a dedicated office presence at least 43 days in the last 12 months, with more than 120 hours reserved and announced publicly for individual consultation appointments. We also held interviews and informational sessions with several larger arts organizations, community groups and funders in order to inform them of our services and assess community need. Through this, we spoke with more

than 60 individuals representing 37 different groups of varying size and discipline. (A partial list is included as Attachment A)

Beyond our clinic consultations, Shunpike offers a list of more advanced training and consultation sessions at an affordable rate for institutions, including sessions on Board Basics, Board Recruitment, Reading Financial Statements, Budgeting, Fundraising, Grantwriting, Strategic and Business Planning, Evaluation and Human Resources. We have used some of the templates and tools from these sessions in our informal consultations, and delivered our first full strategic retreat in Tacoma for the Grand Cinema. We expect to actively grow and promote these services in the coming year.

### **Advocacy and Appearances**

The beneficial effects of a well-organized and well-supported arts community are difficult to determine and report, primarily because they are often poorly represented. In addition to providing direct consultation services, administrative support and community events to arts administrators, leaders and artists, Shunpike serves as a great advocate and representative of the arts community and creative sector to governments, businesses and individual citizens.

In Tacoma, Shunpike has taken every opportunity to emphasize and represent our otherwise muffled constituent base of small and mid-size groups. The following are some examples of appearances made to represent the arts and announce our presence in Tacoma:

Business Matters (11/1/09 – 11/15/09), TV Tacoma

Cityline (11/5/09), TV Tacoma

Tacoma Chamber Luncheon, 10/9/2009

Tacoma City Council Economic Development Committee, 3/9/2010

## **Community Needs Assessment**

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Besides providing technical assistance, support and consultation to the groups in their own operations and planning, Shunpike has used this opportunity to collect informal information about the needs and opportunities within Tacoma's arts communities, especially it's small and mid-sized institutions and businesses.

This report includes a brief synopsis of the information that we collected, along with an outline of several recommendations for the City of Tacoma and next steps for Shunpike's work therein.

The arts and greater creative sector are difficult to survey and support. Shunpike relies upon our regular meetings and conversations as a constant source of evaluation data on the small and mid-size arts organizations and the greater community of audiences and businesses that surround them. In Tacoma, we have interviewed many arts groups and projects and have begun to respond to needs particular to Tacoma.

Generally, Tacoma is home to a large number of individual artists working especially in industrial and commercial visual arts. Musicians, dancers, actors, directors and other performance-focused mediums are less prevalent compared to other regional urban areas but also maintain a presence in local culture, especially around youth activities and education. Particularly at the small and mid-size level, arts businesses reflect this breakdown as well, with a small number of theater, dance and music companies relative to the galleries, studios and collectives.

### **Collective Physical Resources**

With the focus on the individual artist comes less formal community structure, leading to limited programming around services and resources for artists and small arts businesses and organizations. Formal programs in Tacoma are mostly run and supported by the city as opposed to community organizations led and funded by private citizens.

Instead, artists have informally and semi-formally collectivized to obtain and manage certain resources, especially space for creating and displaying their work. Tacoma is home to many arts collectives around living spaces, working spaces, display spaces, ceramic kilns, bronze foundries, glass-blowing ovens, and the like. An example of this is Tacoma Art Place, which combines display and workspace resources to many artists and arts businesses in a bazaar-like center.

### **Limited Service and Information Resources**

While costly physical resources have been extensively collectivized in Tacoma, the same is not true around professional resources, with a limited number of accountants, lawyers, health care providers, technology professionals and the like providing programs specifically for Tacoma artists. While outside programs from Seattle and

elsewhere, such as Artist Trust and Washington Lawyers for the Arts, have included Tacoma in their outreach, very few programs and services have been built or adapted specifically for Tacoma or for the arts. Nonprofit Center exists to provide support for nonprofits of all varieties, but reports a similar challenge as other nonprofit capacity builders in reaching the majority of arts groups.

For this reason, Tacoma's arts community has room for growth in dedicated capacity resources in the following: administrative, legal, managerial, financial, human resource, communications and branding, marketing and audience development, technology and information management and fund development.

Aggregation and collectivization, whether formal or informal, has served well in absence of other direct professional resources. Collectives and roundtables are the main method for sharing information as well as resources. The ACEs roundtable (Arts Center Executives) is a strong example of informal information sharing. Also, the main mid-sized performing arts presenters are aggregated around the Broadway Center for Performing Arts. And finally, several grassroots events take advantage of a high interest in convening by programming opportunities for networking and information exchange such as Pecha Kucha Tacoma and 100<sup>th</sup> Monkey Tacoma.

### **Analysis**

Organically developed and consistently active grassroots communities such as Tacoma's are rare and have great promise for productivity and continued evolution. They have relied upon very little formal resource and usually have an extensive decentralized base of support and participation. On the other hand, they often suffer from informality with underdeveloped presentation quality, limited emphasis on audience development and very little formal public relations or advocacy, leading to the continued limits on resource development. From Shunpike's limited interactions to-date, these issues are all present in Tacoma.

The City of Tacoma has a number of great opportunities in and around the arts and could benefit greatly from the expanded presence of service programs that provide and build capacity within and around artists and small arts groups. The community has a very strong sense of ownership and identity, takes pride in its output and method and is particularly efficient and productive in short-term planning and implementation around the use of resources. It also tends to react cautiously to outsiders and outside agencies, both in terms of audiences and services.

With more emphasis on advocacy, public relations and audience development, Tacoma's artistic and cultural assets could significantly expand tourism and community engagement. Education and youth programs currently active and developing in Tacoma could be studied and modeled in other areas of the state and country with similar demographics. Tacoma neighborhoods, businesses and property

owners could see some increased and sustained value on their investments. But it will also require continued investment in arts and culture.

With the grassroots, individual-focused nature of Tacoma's arts community, that investment cannot be simply financial, as the resources will quickly disperse throughout the wide, shallow constituency of individual artists. Instead, it will require commitment towards long-term planning, long-term funding and equity-building within the community. It will require strategic thinking, strong governance and long-term commitment to building capacity within individual organizations. And it will require local brands and programs that are built by and for the community.

Recommendations:

- 1. Invest in audience development and joint marketing of the arts.**
  - a. Professionalize and collectivize audience development and marketing efforts by supporting and encouraging joint initiatives between organizations, groups and individuals.
  - b. Invest in signature events that draw audiences from around the region and state while showcasing local talent and work.
  - c. Invest in the Tacoma Culture brand and/or other community-wide brands that bring visibility to the city as a hub for viewing and experiencing arts and culture.
- 2. Create more visibility around programs and services that emphasize Tacoma as a city for artists to live and work.**
  - a. Expand the brand and presence of citywide 'Art at Work' program in order to provide more access for state and national service-providers, speakers, funding programs, audiences and artists into the cultural scene of Tacoma.
  - b. Build Tacoma-specific service programs with Artist Trust, Shunpike, Theatre Puget Sound, ArtsFund, ArtsEd Washington and other state and regional service providers so that the local community better benefits from existing structures while individualizing those structures to the community.
- 3. Better integrate artists and arts community with overall civic infrastructure.**
  - a. Find more public applications for cultural programs. Develop programs with other city departments, businesses and local organizations that use art, cultural programming and artists to creatively address public issues such as youth violence, vacant retail space, public space and transportation. Extend the percentage for art to include active programming, not just permanent installations.
  - b. Create a better advocacy toolkit. Invest in resources to activate and empower the city and county arts commissions, as well as other organizational boards, in their ability to engage, support and promote among other city departments, sectors and industries.

- c. Establish a Cultural PDA/CDA to actively integrate the needs of artists and arts businesses with other sectors in economic, community and facility development processes.

## **Shunpike Next Steps**

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### **Spaceworks**

Already well underway, a partnership between the City of Tacoma, Shunpike and the Tacoma Pierce County Chamber of Commerce has developed a new program to place artists, art displays and arts businesses in vacant downtown retail space. Spaceworks Tacoma has already placed 24 artists, groups or companies temporarily in spaces throughout downtown. We expect to continue and expand the partnership, further bringing the creative communities into partnership with the city and commercial communities. Pending additional fund support, Spaceworks could develop into an ongoing program that activates vacant streetscapes downtown and elsewhere in the city with vibrant and destination-quality displays and events. The information in this report does not generally include the results of the Spaceworks program.

### **Expanding services**

Shunpike has already worked with our first temporary part-time Tacoma employee and hopes to establish a permanent position to staff our satellite office. With additional funding support from the city and private citizens, Shunpike hopes to extend the service hours and active outreach into Tacoma's communities, leading to continued growth in our business clinic and support programs. In the next 12 months, we expect to tour our business clinic sessions to other neighborhood community centers to increase access. Eventually, we also hope to operate a more developed creative "incubator" space that actively houses new arts groups and projects in the same way that our back office service program provides a business framework for small or emerging companies now.

### **Arts Leadership Lab**

In April 2010, Shunpike recruited a Core Team steering committee of Emerging Arts Leaders to help us assess community need and opportunity in order to program a series of public events. Beginning in August 2010, Shunpike's Arts Leadership Lab commences in Tacoma, providing regular public forums and networking events for the creative community to gather and discuss policy, opportunity and collaboration in the arts. Arts Leadership Lab Tacoma is part of a regional program run by Shunpike which includes a Core Team in Seattle and should culminate in a yearly regional mini-conference dedicated to "Innovation in the Arts".

## Budget/Resource needs

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|                       | 07/09 – 06/10<br>Budget | 07/09 – 06/10<br>Actual | 07/10 – 06/11<br>Budget |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>INCOME</b>         |                         |                         |                         |
| Individual Donors     | 2,439                   | 2,450                   | 5,000                   |
| Foundations           | 7,000                   | 7,500                   | 15,000                  |
| Government            | 20,000                  | 20,000                  | 10,000                  |
| Program Fees          | 13,900                  | 2,954                   | 7,500                   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>          | <b>44,339</b>           | <b>32,904</b>           | <b>37,500</b>           |
| <b>EXPENSES</b>       |                         |                         |                         |
| Staff Expenses        | 31,289                  | 25,643                  | 30,200                  |
| Contract Expenses     | 2,500                   | 430                     | 450                     |
| Transportation        | 3,900                   | 1,682                   | 1,250                   |
| Occupancy             | 3,600                   | 3,000                   | 3,000                   |
| Licenses and Taxes    | 250                     | 88                      | 100                     |
| Other Operating Costs | 3,800                   | 2,061                   | 2,500                   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>          | <b>44,339</b>           | <b>33,908</b>           | <b>38,500</b>           |

As shown in the above budget report, Shunpike has engaged in much less fee-based work than expected in Tacoma within our first year, focusing much of our effort on the low- or no-cost clinic consultations and public workshops. In 2010, we have re-calibrated our projections in fee-based service, but still project growth in this area.

Because program fee sources remain limited and the individual donor base in the South Puget Sound is growing slowly, additional institutional funding will be required to sustain Shunpike programs in their initial stages in Tacoma. The city has already pledged and begun paying on an additional contract to support Shunpike's work on the Spaceworks Tacoma effort, but this income will not fully subsidize the space, personnel, program and administrative costs of our efforts.

## Attachments

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Attachment A – List of groups and organizations reached