



**CULTURAL CORE  
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING  
Tuesday, November 20th, 2025**

**Committee Members in Attendance:** Spencer Lawson, Isaac Gonzalez, Seth Brown, Felicia Baca, Matt Castillo

**Committee Members Not in Attendance:** Kathryn Carlisle-Kesling, Mohan Sudabattula, Claudia Lyoaza

**Cultural Core/Downtown Alliance Staff Present:** Lucas Horns, Dee Brewer, Josh Jones, Jessica Thesing

**Guests Present:** Beto Conejo, Dallas Graham, Kelli Freshman

The meeting was called to order at **9:05am**. **Spencer Lawson** initiated the roll. **Seth Brown** made a motion to approve the minutes from September 16th, 2025 and **Isaac Gonzalez** seconded the motion.

**Review of Public Comments**

No public comments to review.

**Current Business**

**COUNTY AND CITY UPDATES**

- **Matt Castillo** updated the board with the status of Abravanel Hall and UMOCA in the context of the creation of the new Sports and Entertainment District
  - Currently in phase 1 (goes through January 15th)
    - Phase 1 is geared towards visualizing how all of the existing entities could be positioned within the district
  - Abravanel Hall getting back of house upgrades
    - Also getting ADA upgrades as well as layout changes

- **Dee Brewer** shared a plan for *Downtown Rising* - a process that focuses on a vision of the downtown that we all want post-Olympics and post-investment in the Sports and Entertainment District
  - Prediction of ~\$10 billion invested in downtown in the next decade
  - This will be a moderated process and the board is expected to share their input
- **Felicia Baca** shared a public benefit agreement with Salt Lake City and SEG to have a portion of ticket sales for sports games go to public art
  - Hoping to have projections for that in January
- **Felicia Baca** also shared upcoming arts and cultural events in SLC
- **Felicia Baca** mentioned that 10 murals have been completed in the Ballpark neighborhood in partnership with the Community Investment Agency, with more to come

#### **BRIEFING AND DISCUSSION: Review Quarter 1 Financials**

- **Jessica Thesing** shared and explained Quarter 1 financials which overall are looking good

#### **BRIEFING AND DISCUSSION: Review Quarter 1 Programming**

- **Kelli Freshman** presented her Co-Create project, *SonderSLC*, to the group
  - Kelli explored the idea that every person on the street has their own story. Using this idea, she created a photography installation in the Vasilios Priskos walkway where her photographs of local residents and their stories are on display
  - **Lucas Horns** added that the unveiling of *Little Stages* also took place at the same day and time of *SonderSLC* unveiling
    - Little Stages is a Co-Create project with the goal of creating little modular stages that would allow for placemaking and activation virtually anywhere in the city
    - The stages were set up on Main Street from 100S to 200S and there were different performances happening on each stage
    - Following the unveiling, these stages were added to The Blocks' asset program and will be available for local arts and cultural organizations to rent at no cost
- **Beto Conejo** presented his Co-Create event which was a Day of the Dead festival that took place inside Fice Gallery as well as on the street outside and in the alleyway behind the building, including:
  - Filling Fice gallery with a photo exhibition of his Mexico mural tour along with Day of the Dead shirts and culturally relevant food
  - Local low rider cars lined 200S outside of the gallery
  - Local artist Emily Nicolosi was hired to display some of her sculptures from GLOW at Gallivan in the FICE alleyway
  - An amazing altar in the alleyway behind FICE gallery
  - Activities such as sugar skull decorating, screenprinting shirts, as well as performances by a local mariachi band, dancers and DJ

- Dallas Graham presented his Co-Create project called [Abstltly Amzng Anmls](#) which was an art installation in collaboration with six medically fragile children
  - Dallas worked with the kids to brainstorm mashups of local animals - one endangered species and one thriving species in order to create new animals
  - The kids drew these new animals, Dallas put it through his artistic filter to make them cohesive, and then created huge versions of them out of wood and installed them on a massive wall downtown
  - The installation has a QR code that you can scan and then send a picture and a positive message to the young artists
  - The unveiling of this installation was in partnership with Creative Mornings
    - Dallas gave a talk about the project with the theme “Blossom” and afterwards, all of the kid artists walked around the corner and saw the installation for the first time with all the Creative Mornings attendees cheering them on

#### **BRIEFING & DISCUSSION: Marketing and Dashboard Reporting for FY26**

- **Josh Jones** shared details about recent Blocks marketing and programming including:
  - A mural walk where Britney Helmers took all of the Downtown Ambassadors on a tour to see and learn about local murals and other public art downtown. Most of the information about the art was given by the actual artist who created the piece(s)
  - Urban Plein Air at the Farmers Market
    - Twice as many artists participated this year
    - Paintings were auctioned off at the market a few weeks later and all proceeds went to the artists
  - Mariachi Festival
    - Took place at Eccles Theater
    - Tickets were free and sold out in 2 days
    - Initial performance took place in the main lobby and on the steps of the Eccles, then other performances took place inside Delta Hall
  - Urban Exploration: Detroit - happening September 2026
    - Lots of public art to see and learn about
- Lucas Goodrich shared that The Blocks is up to over 10,000 Instagram followers
  - Increase of 5% in the last month

With no other business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at **10:29am**.

The next meeting will be January 27th, 2026 at 9:00am