

UBC Social Ecological Economic Development Studies (SEEDS) Sustainability Program

Student Research Report

Identifying Gaps and Opportunities in UBC's Arts and Cultural District for Non-Campus Populations

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Executive Summary

The UBC Arts & Culture District (the District) provides many events and services to people both affiliated and not affiliated with UBC. This research project aims to understand how people who do not work, study or live at UBC use the District. Many people not affiliated with the University attend cultural events in the District – from museum nights at the Museum of Anthropology to world-renowned musicians at the Chan Centre for Performing Arts. In partnership with UBC SEEDs, the UBC School of Community and Regional Planning (SCARP) and the Arts & Culture District, this research project was guided by the following three key objectives:

1. Identify what compels or prevents people who are not affiliated with UBC to stay on campus before or after events.
2. Identify the barriers and motivations that exist for non-affiliated visitors in terms of attending nighttime events at UBC.
3. Provide recommendations for the barriers and gaps identified.

From January to March 2019, the researchers (SCARP students) conducted a literature review, non-participant observations, intercept interviews, and pop-up engagement to reach the research objectives. The researchers attended two events (at the Museum of Anthropology and the Chan Centre). There they utilised pop-up engagements and one-on-one interviews as the primary data gathering techniques.

Approximately 60 participants were engaged in total. The two major themes that emerged from the participant data were related to *transportation* and a *lack of information and amenities*. Participants faced barriers with regards to parking, distance from home, and transportation options. Additionally, many participants were unaware of services in the District or felt that there was a lack of options. Lastly, the researchers provide recommendations to build place-based and targeted awareness about the renowned events and services offered in the Arts & Culture District at UBC.

I. Research Objectives

This research project hopes to further understand how the District is used by people who do

not work, study or live at UBC. This group of people includes visitors and tourists. The research project was guided by the following three key objectives:

1. Identify what compels or prevents people who are not-affiliated with UBC to stay on campus before or after events
2. Identify the barriers and motivations that exist for non-affiliated visitors in terms of attending night-time events at UBC
3. Provide recommendations for the barriers and gaps identified

The objectives and scope of this research project was guided by the expressed needs of the partner organization, as determined by ongoing communications between the researchers and partner.

II. Methodology

This research utilized multiple methods: Literature review, non-participant observations, intercept interviews and pop-up engagement. The literature review was conducted in collaboration with other research groups. The review conducted by Group 1.3 is in the section below. Non-participant observations were conducted individually by researchers observing the design and use of the District during the day and night.

The interviews and pop-up engagement boards were implemented simultaneously. Utilizing boards as a visual communication tool to attract attendees, we invited participants to partake in short verbal interviews. During this interview, we asked participants basic questions to understand if they were visitors, what they were doing on campus before or after visiting the venue, and what they would like to see more of on campus.

Visual communication tools were used to engage participants. Of the three engagement boards, two boards had maps for participants to interact with. The first map was of Metro Vancouver and invited participants to use stickers to identify where they were from. The second map, of UBC campus, asked participants to locate anywhere they were aware of for nearby activities, events, or places they could visit on campus before and after events. This second map was used to employ techniques of cultural asset mapping. At the most basic level, cultural asset mapping provides an inventory of current cultural resources in the area.

The third engagement board invited participants to answer two questions on sticky notes. The questions were:

- What would encourage you to stay on campus for longer before and/or after cultural events?
- What barriers do you face to stay on campus longer before and/or after cultural events?

Participants were incentivized by entering to win a \$50 gift card supplied by SEEDs. Consent forms

were available for participants to ensure their willingness to participate in the research. When engaging with the participants, student researchers wrote notes in notebooks to understand common narratives and themes. Sticky notes were important tools for recording information as participants were actively participating in the field note taking process.

III. Literature Review & Observations

The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the practices and initiatives occurring in the District to increase the awareness and access for visitors to other types of amenities before and after cultural events. The literature review and observations were conducted concurrently, combining an understanding of written marketing and awareness initiatives with place-based observations. Additionally, this section provides information about the opportunities for improvement identified during this process and good practices that other Arts & Cultural Districts are implementing to address these issues.

Wayfinding

Wayfinding helps insure ease and efficiency when attendees are at events, shows, and concerts. As attendees make their way to a location at night, wayfinding can contribute to the safety and security of visitors attending night-time events. Wayfinding is determined by personal decision making, architecture, signage, and other communication strategies of geographical location.

Physical Wayfinding (on UBC Vancouver Campus)

When an attendee encounters signs along their journey, this contributes to the individual's confidence in direction and well-being. Attendees who are arriving from outside campus would begin their journey at a UBC bus loop, parking lot, or by alternative transportation. At the major hubs of arrival (bus loops and parking lots), there is a lack of signage for almost all campus buildings, amenities and services. The signage pointing to District venues is not present. Additionally, there are very few signs pointing to restaurants or bars in the UBC Campus area. Furthermore, the District does not have specific wayfinding or signage that communicates the boundaries of the area. Even if physical signage was added to campus, particularly in the hubs of arrival, inclusionary and accessible signage and communication of direction does not exist. Wayfinding must consider those who have special vision needs, among others. Signage and communication of geographical location of Arts District must accommodate those users. See Appendix A for photographs of wayfinding and site observations.

Online Wayfinding

See: <https://welcomecentre.ubc.ca/>

With widespread access to computers for many attendees of District events, the first stage of wayfinding often occurs in their home by researching directions and more information online. Google Maps is an excellent resource for attendees to view how to walk, drive, transit, or bike to their destinations. Attendees may also conduct research on UBC affiliated websites. The UBC Alumni Centre

website is advertised as the 'Welcome Centre' for the University, however on this website there is no wayfinding information available regarding the District.

Potential Wayfinding Opportunities

- Inclusion of more accessible signage and communication for wayfinding purposes to accommodate those in need of more diverse forms of wayfinding
 - See *Accessible Signage Guidelines of Canada*:
http://www.brailleliteracycanada.ca/CMFiles/Accessible_Signage_Guidelines_BLC-PrintFormatted.pdf
- Addition of wayfinding signage for District venues, restaurants and other services at major arrival hubs (i.e. bus loops, parking lots)
- Include advertisements and wayfinding materials on UBC Welcome Centre website

Marketing

Marketing informs attendees of the productions, events, and venues available in the District. Attendee education through marketing should engage and provide relevant information in a clear, concise, and easily digestible manner. The following section will review the existing marketing materials used by the District and identify gaps.

Social Media

The District is using the following social media platforms to engage with possible attendees: Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and Youtube. These are relevant and popular social media platforms. Priority should be given to Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter as they are the most used social media platforms¹.

Online Website

See: <https://www.arts.ubc.ca/artsandculture/>

The District website is hosted by the UBC Faculty of Arts website domain, providing information on all District venues, and links to in-depth information on shows and performances. However, the website does not provide a map of the District or information about nearby restaurants, amenities, and services.

Radio and Newspaper

The District and its venues have been featured in several university radio broadcasts and local newspaper publications. Both the UBC CITRadio and the *Ubyyssey* Newspaper publication have covered shows, performances, and hours of operation at relevant District venues. Wider Vancouver publications

¹ Statista (2019). *Most popular social networks worldwide as of January 2019, ranked by number of active users (in millions)*. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/>.

such as the *Vancouver Straight* have also written about happenings at the District². This wider Vancouver marketing and publication is important in drawing attendees from outside of UBC.

Community Group Outreach and Publication

See: <https://www.myuna.ca/venue/ubc-arts-and-culture-district/>

Local community groups and associations are important liaisons to distributing marketing information to potential attendees. The University Neighbourhood Association website includes a page dedicated to the District. This page has details about upcoming events. There is no inclusion of nearby amenities such as restaurants and bars.

UBC Print Publications

The following print publications were provided to the project team by our partner, Deborah Pickman.

Outdoor Art Tour Brochure - A Walking Tour of 24 Artworks on the UBC Campus:

This brochure covers public artwork present within the District and has a map explaining the history and meaning of each piece.

Museum of Anthropology Brochure:

This two-page, non-glossy brochure appears to be meant for an audience that is very unfamiliar with the UBC and Vancouver areas. This brochure could be specifically for tourists coming from major tourist hubs like YVR airport or cruise ships. The brochure offers general information on how to get to MOA by transit or car. It also makes clear that MOA is wheelchair accessible.

UBC Explore - Attractions Guide and Map:

This guide includes all of the District venues, as well as the UBC Farm and Botanical Gardens (which are outside of the scope of the District). This brochure is one of the only print materials that mentions the food and services available on campus.

2018/2019 Calendar Publications for UBC Opera, UBC Theatre and Film, UBC Music, Chan Centre for the Performing Arts:

These four separate calendar publications cover similar current performances and showtimes for each arts organization. The Opera publication is the only document to include information about food services on campus, including the collaboration between Sage restaurant and the District.

Potential Marketing Opportunities

- Mention nearby amenities and services on the District website to inform attendees of restaurants and bars they can access on campus before or after events. Marketing materials could mention discounts such as the Sage Restaurant collaboration.

² The Georgia Straight (2018). *70 things to do in Metro Vancouver on Saturday, September 22*. Retrieved from <https://www.straight.com/life/1137576/70-things-do-metro-vancouver-saturday-september-22/>

IV. Engagement: Site Selection and Participants

Sites for our engagement events were established as venues within the District. Two sites on two separate dates were selected, based on events occurring at these times. The sites, times, and events were as follows:

- Museum of Anthropology. Thursday, February 14th (6:00pm - 7:00pm)
 - Only day of the week where regular hours are open after 5:00pm
 - Approximate number of participants engaged: 15-20
- Chan Centre for the Performing Arts. Saturday, February 16 (5:15pm - 7:00pm)
 - Bobby McFerrin concert
 - Approximate number of participants engaged: 30-40

All attendees during the periods of research were invited to participate in the intercept interview and pop-up engagement. The data most pertinent and within the scope of this project involved those who do not live, work, or study at UBC.

IV. Data & Analysis

This section of analysis is based on observations and collected data from the two events mentioned above at the the Museum of Anthropology (MOA) and the Chan Centre for Performing Arts. During each event, the demographics varied significantly. At the MOA, respondents were mostly couples and families with children who were tourists visiting from outside of Canada. Respondents at the Chan Centre were primarily older (50 plus) locals who lived in the Lower Mainland. Collectively, the research team interviewed over fifty people during these two periods. The following images show the responses to the map-based questions for both groups combined.

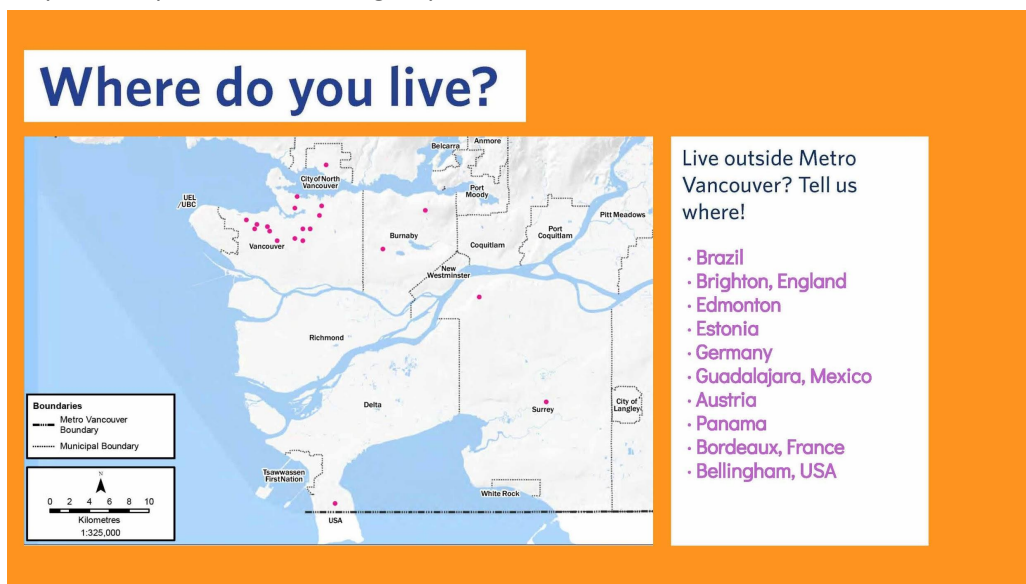


Figure 1

The second engagement map asked participants to pinpoint additional places on campus that they visit. Most of the locations identified were close to events within the District, such as the Rose Gardens and Belkin Art

Gallery. The most frequented places were food and drink destinations, such as the University Centre and Sage restaurant. It is worth noting that during the engagement sessions, participants seemed confused by this question which resulted in limited responses. If we had additional engagement sessions, we would have adapted the research and re-worded this question.



Figure 2

The following images (Figure 3) show a visual representation of the most common answers to our engagement board questions.

- What would encourage you to stay on campus longer before and/or after cultural events?
- What barriers do you face to stay on campus longer before and/or after cultural events?

The two major themes that emerged about barriers and incentives to spend more time on campus were related to *transportation* and a *lack of information and amenities*.



Figure 3

Transportation

Participant feedback about transportation can be grouped into two sub-themes: distance to campus and parking on campus. Participants expressed that the location of both the MOA and Chan Centre are not convenient for people who live far from campus as the commute time was a major concern. Furthermore, the timing of events made it difficult for people to stay late on campus. This was typically because attendees had commitments such as work the next day and wanted to get home. Respondents also expressed that parking and access to public transit were barriers to spending more time on campus. Many participants cited the high cost of parking as a reason they would not stay longer, although at least one participant advised it was the low cost of parking that encouraged him to drive to campus for that trip. Because the bus stops are approximately 20 minutes from the Chan Centre and there are no visible signs directing people to the stops, accessibility to public transit was a concern among people who were not familiar with campus. One researcher observed a family of tourists receiving instructions to take the 99 bus route back to their accommodation from the MOA, after failing to reach a taxi company to take them home. This involved significant effort from a MOA staff member who had trouble describing the route. Another researcher noted that many attendees could not participate in the survey because they needed to catch a bus or their parking was about to expire. Overall, the data showed that the time and cost related to transportation were large factors in preventing participants from exploring more of campus before or after an event.

Lack of Information and Amenities

Feedback around the lack of information and amenities as a primary barrier can also be divided into two sub-themes: knowledge of and options for amenities on campus, and understanding the MOA and the Chan Centre's location within campus. Many participants did not know what else was available on campus and suggested that more information would help them spend more time on campus. Most of

the people interviewed did not know the nearby amenities and services available on campus (destinations in the District, restaurants and bars on campus). This finding was reinforced by the lack of responses seen on Figure 2, which attempted to show the use of other amenities and attractions on campus.

Many participants noted the limited food options at UBC and specifically mentioned the lack of healthy and quality dining options open during dinner time. Some participants noted Sage restaurant as a dinner destination, but expressed a desire for further options. Additionally, many participants said that if there were more dessert or drink options, they would be encouraged to stay on campus after events.

Most participants did not realise that the MOA was a part of the larger UBC campus, suggesting that individual destinations within the District were not understood as being associated with one another. One researcher observed two participants, who had completed the survey and were waiting on their bus, sit inside the MOA for an extended period of time (20-30 minutes) rather than exploring other nearby amenities. Overall, the data showed that many participants did not seem to consider the campus as a whole and were travelling for a single destination event. In other words, they did not conceive of campus as a place to spend a large quantity of time.

V. Limitations

The research methods for this project had various limitations. First, the time limit of the project resulted in a smaller sample size. Ideally, researchers would have attended more events to gain a larger sample size from a diversity of venues in the District. Secondly, due to the dates, times, and type of events chosen, demographics of participants varied. Hosting engagement during a 6-7 PM hour block may have altered the perceptions of food and services answers, as this is the prime-time for participants to have been eating a meal. Third, the style of the pop-up engagement and short interviews did not provide in-depth discussion and analysis between researcher and participant. The nature of this research style provided more for a basic understanding of the participants knowledge and awareness of UBC amenities and events. Furthermore, the researchers captured each question in isolation. Responses for all answers were not grouped for each respondent. This provides limitations for cross-tabulation in data analysis. Finally, the study engaged with participants who were already attendees of the events. This would have left those who are non-UBC affiliated and not attending events in the District as an unavailable study group.

VI. Recommendations

The recommendations align with the needs of the District partners and provide a framework to benchmark the gaps that were identified during the research process. The research team considered the current capacity, resources and feasibility of the proposed actions to draft these recommendations. Moreover, the team strived to provide recommendations that could be implemented in the short term and do not require significant investments or additional workloads for the District team.

1. Build Strong Partnerships

- The District already focuses on developing strong partnerships with other businesses and nearby organizations. During the interviews at the Chan Centre, many respondents suggested they had been to the Sage restaurant before the event. There is a collaboration between Sage and the Chan Centre, providing a discount at Sage for attendees at the Chan Centre. The District could continue to build strong partnerships with organizations such as Nitobe Garden, Koerner's Pub, Mercante and The Gallery, and provide deals or incentives for attendees of cultural events.
- There is opportunity for the District to partner with a car share program, such as Evo, to receive a discount code for attendees. This partnership would provide attendees with more travel opportunities that may reduce some transportation barriers.

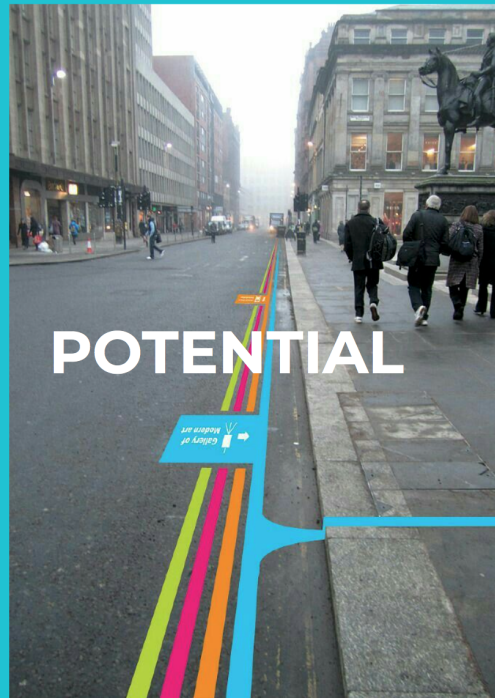
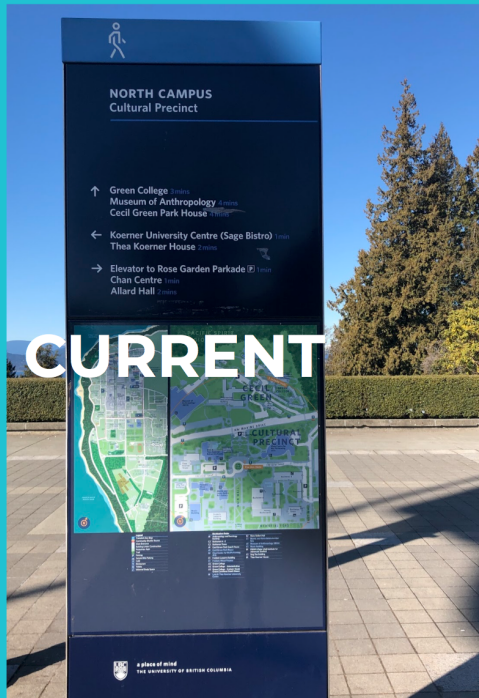
2. Marketing & Communications

- The Literature Review & Observations section above highlights some opportunities for improving the marketing and communication material of the District. Furthermore, the District could provide direct communication and targeted incentives for attendees. If someone buys a ticket online, the attendee could receive an email with relevant information about car share opportunities, discounts and deals, and other events occurring on campus that evening.
- For the users to understand where they are and how to get around the area, the District could implement specific place-based branding. The District has strong, bold and colourful online and print branding. There is opportunity to bring this colourful brand to the District itself. This would add a sense of place to the District, providing passersby an understanding of their locale. The wayfinding could also highlight the most accessible and direct path for non-able bodied.

3. Placemaking & Public Space Activation

- From our observations and interviews, we concluded that there is a lack of awareness about the existence of the District. On the ground, there are limited ways to know you are in an Arts & Culture District. The wayfinding suggestions above would help users understand where they are. Another way to activate the public space would be to host pop-up pilot projects. The District could host a night-time event with food trucks, lighting and music. These pop-up events could be aligned with more formal events occurring in the District.

Overall, we hope these recommendations will be useful for the District to build place-based and targeted awareness about the renowned events and services offered in UBC's Arts & Culture District.



Appendix A - Photographic Record

Museum of Anthropology (MOA): Public Engagement



The Chan Centre for the Performing Arts: Public Engagement



Wayfinding and
Site
Observations:

