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CAST Announces Culture Compass Map  
New Interactive Online Tool Increases Knowledge about San Francisco’s Cultural Assets

San Francisco, CA – Community Arts Stabilization Trust (CAST) is pleased to announce the launch of its data-driven mapping tool, Culture Compass. Culture Compass is part of CAST’s efforts to contribute to the stabilization of and investment in the arts and culture sector of San Francisco. The initiative was created in collaboration with Stamen Design and through the generous support of the San Francisco Arts Commission, the San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development, Grants for the Arts, and National Endowment for the Arts.

Culture Compass is the first map of its kind to represent a holistic picture of over 450 of San Francisco’s nonprofit arts and culture organizations and over 1,000 locations and workspaces against a backdrop of rapid urban development. Presently free to use, this city-wide map plots existing and potential spaces for nonprofit arts and culture activities in San Francisco alongside demographics, zoning, transit, and real estate development data. Using dynamic and interactive technology and key information that could help influence investment, policy, property acquisition and occupancy, and grant making decisions, the map serves as a tool to assist urban planners, funders, policy makers, artists and arts organizations to quickly and effectively make place-based decisions related to San Francisco’s nonprofit arts and culture sector. The map also integrates community input by offering a suggestion function that invites users to contribute.

“The vision for this project grew out of the realization that it takes significant time and resources to understand the complex, interwoven web of San Francisco’s arts ecosystem,” said CAST Executive Director Moy Eng. “We hope that Culture Compass can serve as a unique, interactive tool for those interested in exploring the City’s arts and culture landscape through the lens of creative placekeeping, urban planning, and community development.”

Each asset profile contains useful organizational details for each nonprofit, including founding dates, funding, leasing or ownership, utilized and/or available square footage and links to the organization’s website for further learning. Seen in tandem with City-recognized cultural districts and its respective demographics, users can better understand a specific neighborhood’s cultural heritage, strengths, needs and overall individuality within the City’s arts and culture landscape.

“The San Francisco Arts Commission is proud to have partnered with CAST on this groundbreaking new tool, which will enable the City to be more strategic as we devise solutions to help artists and arts organizations navigate today’s affordability challenges.” said Director of Cultural Affairs Tom DeCaigny.

Culture Compass is a prime example of multi-sector collaboration; an essential strategy in tackling the complex issue of displacement and steep rents in the Bay Area.
“San Francisco’s arts and cultural institutions are critical to the success of our City, providing a significant economic impact and supporting the vibrancy of our neighborhoods,” said Joaquín Torres, Director of the Office of Economic and Workforce Development. “OEWD is proud to partner with CAST to help cultural organizations make data-driven, informed decisions to ensure that the arts are sustained and continue to thrive in San Francisco.”

Beyond educating on the cultural front, Culture Compass has the potential to shape the city’s landscape from a development perspective. The map’s transit filter, which shows the nearest public transportation and bike routes to each nonprofit facility, could allow for accessibility gaps to San Francisco’s cultural hubs to be more easily identified. Additionally, the map provides a glimpse into surrounding real estate development through zoning and land use data, one that could offer investors a necessary platform for intersectional collaboration and community development.

"We worked closely with CAST to find the right balance of what to show and not to show on this first version of the Culture Compass Map," said Eric Rodenbeck, CEO of Stamen Design, which designed and built the map. "Lots of maps show real estate developments in town, and other maps show where the art is, but not many are focused on the intersection between the two. The project should give CAST and others the ability to more easily identify opportunities to leverage real estate to continue to support the arts in the City that we love."

With the rising costs of real estate affecting many arts and culture organizations, Culture Compass contextualizes the issue by putting these San Francisco institutions on the map, adjacent to potential real estate opportunities that could help to serve as solutions to their space challenges.

Culture Compass is a program of Community Arts Stabilization Trust, in partnership with Stamen Design, the San Francisco Arts Commission, the San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development, and the San Francisco Planning Department.

Data partners include the San Francisco Arts Commission, the San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development, the San Francisco Planning Department, the Bay Area Census, United States Census Bureau, SFMTA, DataArts, and Stamen Design.

A public launch event debuting the map will be held at SPUR Urban Center, San Francisco on Friday, February 8 from 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM. CAST Executive Director Moy Eng will present the map in conversation with San Francisco Director of Cultural Affairs Tom DeCaigny, with a brief Q&A and interactive demonstration to follow. Registration for this event is free and first-come, first-served--RSVP required.

Explore the map at culturecompass.org.

CULTURE COMPASS MAP LAUNCH

Friday, February 8
11:30AM – 12:30PM
Morning refreshments provided.

RSVP HERE

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ABOUT COMMUNITY ARTS STABILIZATION TRUST (CAST)
Community Arts Stabilization Trust was established on the belief that the arts drive dynamic, vibrant, and diverse communities. Founded in 2013, CAST is a nonprofit that creates long-term solutions to acquire, develop, and provide safe, affordable workspaces for artists and arts organizations in San Francisco, Oakland, and other urban settings. Bringing together technical assistance, real estate expertise, and innovative financing vehicles, CAST leverages public-private sector partnerships to execute its mission and goals. For more information, go to cast-sf.org.