

In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre 2016 Avalon Community Survey Summary

In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre (HOBT) offered an online survey to community members from May through July of 2016. HOBT leadership sought to better understand HOBT's value to community relative to the importance of continuing operations based out of HOBT's home in the Avalon Theatre. The survey was administered through the online survey tool Survey Gizmo, and 341 community members submitted complete responses.

Responses suggest that individuals rate the importance of HOBT's program offerings higher than they rate the importance of HOBT staying in the Avalon Theater. HOBT vacating the Avalon would have significant social, economic and safety implications, as HOBT's identity is woven into the fabric of these neighborhoods. The community generally supports HOBT in making prudent fiscal decisions that allow the organization to stay in the area and continue the legacy of art and social justice in the heart of the Powderhorn and Phillips Communities.

Here are the questions we asked:

1. Which HOBT activities are most important to you?
2. What HOBT activities do you see as most important to the neighborhoods served by HOBT? This includes Midtown Phillips, East Phillips, Powderhorn Park and adjacent neighborhoods.
3. For the activities you listed as important to you and/or to neighborhoods, how important is it that these activities are connected to the Avalon Theater?
4. For the activities you listed as important to you and/or to neighborhoods, how important is it that these activities are located in the neighborhoods currently served by HOBT? This includes Midtown Phillips, East Phillips, Powderhorn, and adjacent neighborhoods.

1. MAYDAY PARADE and FESTIVAL

MAYDAY PARADE and FESTIVAL	Importance of Activity	Importance of activity to best serve the area	Importance of connection to Avalon Theater	Importance of activity to be located in area neighborhoods
Not at all important	.3 %	.3 %	13.2%	n/a
A little important	2.8 %	.8 %	35.2 %	2.3 %
Fairly important	6.2 %	4.3 %	29.7 %	16 %
Very important	90.2 %	93 %	17 %	80.3 %
No opinion	.5 %	1.6 %	4.9 %	1.4 %

2. ON-SITE PERFORMANCES

ON-SITE PERFORMANCES	Importance of Activity	Importance of activity to best serve the area	Importance of connection to Avalon Theater	Importance of activity to be located in area neighborhoods
Not at all important	1.8 %	1.1 %	10 %	.9 %
A little important	16.5 %	7.8 %	31.1 %	11.5 %
Fairly important	38.2 %	38 %	36.1 %	41.5 %
Very important	42.6 %	49.3 %	18.3 %	43 %
No opinion	.8 %	3.8 %	4.4 %	3.2 %

**In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre
2016 Avalon Community Survey Summary**

3. SATURDAY PUPPET SHOWS FOR KIDS

SATURDAY PUPPET SHOWS FOR KIDS	Importance of Activity	Importance of activity to best serve the area	Importance of connection to Avalon Theater	Importance of activity to be located in area neighborhoods
Not at all important	10.1 %	1.3 %	11.3 %	1.4 %
A little important	24.5 %	4.9 %	36.5 %	8.3 %
Fairly important	33.1 %	27.2 %	30.9 %	39.8 %
Very important	27.9 %	59 %	13.8 %	44.1 %
No opinion	4.4 %	7.5 %	7.5 %	6.3 %

4. SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY RESIDENCIES

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY RESIDENCIES	Importance of Activity	Importance of activity to best serve the area	Importance of connection to Avalon Theater	Importance of activity to be located in area neighborhoods
Not at all important	8 %	3.8 %	25.4 %	4.9 %
A little important	18.1 %	10 %	36 %	15.1 %
Fairly important	33.1 %	28.6 %	18.7 %	32.6 %
Very important	34.6 %	47.4 %	8.9 %	40.6 %
No opinion	6.2 %	10.2 %	10.9 %	6.9 %

5. RENTAL SPACE

RENTAL SPACE	Importance of Activity	Importance of activity to best serve the area	Importance of connection to Avalon Theater	Importance of activity to be located in area neighborhoods
Not at all important	28.9 %	8.9 %	19.9 %	14.4 %
A little important	30.5 %	25.9 %	30.7 %	23.6 %
Fairly important	19.9 %	27.8 %	16.3 %	21.8 %
Very important	8.3 %	18.1 %	9.7 %	20.1 %
No opinion	12.4 %	19.4 %	23.3 %	20.1 %

Open-ended comments:

We received 185 responses to the question, **“Do you have any other comments about the importance of HOBT operating in the Avalon or in these neighborhoods?”** Below is a sampling of responses:

“As a resident living on Bloomington Avenue for the past seven years, I have experienced the power of community the HOBT in Avalon Theater has been able to accomplish in this neighborhood. It has united people from diverse backgrounds and provided an opportunity for neighbors to work together to support the arts in unique capacities. I would be very devastated if HOBT left it's current location and worry it would have a negative economic effect on the area as a whole.” - *Katie Dudley*

In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre 2016 Avalon Community Survey Summary

“For me, HOBT being located in Phillips/Powderhorn is completely essential. I can't imagine any of Hobt's work with the theater's home being in any other part of the cities — the rootedness, the place-oriented activism, the work of both bringing art HERE and mobilizing the creativity endemic to this area — that's ESSENTIAL to everything that Hobt is about in my mind.

“That said, the importance of the Avalon building itself, though delightful and steeped in history, pales in comparison to the overall neighborhood location. Phillips/Powderhorn? A must. Avalon building? Could take it or leave it. In addition to Hobt's neighborhood-oriented work, I also really really value Hobt's role as a magnet for national and international puppetry and theater, and really value that continuing to be prioritized. Whatever a future space looks like, I would like it to be something that continues to offer (or maybe increases) Hobt's magnetism for as a hub of traveling work.” - *Sarah Larsson*

“Please do not remove yourselves; you and your physical heart as embodied in Avalon at that exact spot are so damn important to our neighborhood.” - *Lisa Holt*

“HOBT appears to serve as an incredible anchor to the neighborhood and seems to provide an important space, energy, focus, and series of opportunities. There would be a hole if it weren't there. However, I do not live in that neighborhood, nor would I want to see HOBT chained to a space that doesn't permit its full-fledged development. For me, the growth, strength, and persistence of the creative spirit of HOBT overrides the need to be in the Avalon. It would surely be a transition that should be acknowledged, if a move were to occur, however. I also would want to caution HOBT in debt or investment processes; it's an area where I also have no experience, but I wouldn't want to see the organization's demise or diminishment to carry financial burdens. There is a strong community behind HOBT and these many events; use us to your advantage, and use us to ensure your survival far into the future.” (*anonymous*)

We received 135 responses to the question, **“Do you have any stories about In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre that you'd like to share with us?”** Below is a sampling of responses

“I got to go in the Avalon shortly after it was purchased, original seats (with a pair of handcuffs still on one) YUCK! and the old movie projectors upstairs. I helped Lucinda remove salvage materials from the Young Quinlivan store, and noticed the big divider that's now the short wall in the back of the performance space. I remember when the neon got restored. It's a beautiful old space, but the air quality sucks meaning my allergy prone wife can't really attend shows like we used to, and there's not much room to grow or use for more multi-purpose activities like the MayDay workshops. As much as I care about HOBT, I also care about the Avalon, and would love to see it stay in 'our' community, if at all possible. I've been to punk rock shows and memorial services for my best friend there, and its future is 'almost' as important as HOBTs.” (*anonymous*)

“I am involved as both a Community Partner and an individual donor, arts patron and supporter. I think the fact that HOBT is located in Midtown Phillips, versus (even Powderhorn) or slightly more resourced Southside neighborhoods is CRUCIAL for arts access, neighborhood identity and so much more. HOBT stakeholders must unite to help raise the capital funds to improve and sustain the Avalon theater for HOBT.” (*anonymous*)