

## **FAIRFAX COUNTY MASTER ARTS PLAN: FACILITIES**

“Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success.”

– Pablo Picasso

"The arts are not a frill. The arts are a response to our individuality and our nature and help to shape our identity. What is there that can transcend deep difference and stubborn divisions? The arts. They have a wonderful universality. Art has the potential to unify. It can speak in many languages without a translator. The arts do not discriminate. The arts can lift us up."

– Former Texas Congresswoman Barbara Jordan

“The arts cannot be approached as something nice to do... The arts are integral to self-expression. To identity. To culture. To quality of life. And need to be integrated in all of that... [they] reinforce a sense of cohesion and cultural identity. I think that’s more important now than ever, given the growing diversity of America. There are lots of artistic expressions, cultural expressions, that need to be seen and heard and performed and experienced...”

– Congressman Gerry Connolly, Virginia Eleventh District  
(Former Chairman, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors)



*Wolf Trap Children's Theater In The Woods*

## Acknowledgments

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## **Master Arts Plan: Facilities**

### **I. Background**

#### **Purpose and History**

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors adopted the Visual Arts and Performing Arts Comprehensive Plan Policy Amendment in May 2010 following comprehensive community engagement. That process was headed by Alan Merten and generated the “Merten Report.” The amendment to the Comprehensive Plan was based on its conclusions. The Plan Amendment’s stated objectives and related policy goals for arts venues were identified in the [2017 Edition of the Policy Plan - Visual and Performing Arts \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#) Objective 2; Policy g (page 4):

Develop a countywide cultural arts master plan which locates and specifies existing and planned arts facilities to address current and future needs for performance venues for music, dance and theater, community arts centers, exhibition space, media based arts space, artist studios, rehearsal space, classrooms, and conference space. The cultural arts master plan should consider:

- Recommendations from the report of the Commission on the Future of the Arts and other studies on museum and amphitheater space in the county;
- Creation of arts district(s) and appropriate related incentives;
- Options for provision of a large performing arts space containing at least 1,500 seats; and
- Locations for multi-use community-based arts centers each containing up to 500 seats.

To advance County policy regarding arts venues, the Comprehensive Plan Policy for Visual and Performing Arts states in Objective 3 (page 4):

Mitigate the impact of new (or, in some cases, renovation of) arts facilities on surrounding land uses, environment, transportation, and public infrastructure.

- Policy a. Design arts facilities to promote and enhance community identity.
- Policy b. Design arts facilities which are architecturally and environmentally appropriate.
- Policy c. For private development, design, and construct arts facilities and ancillary uses to achieve green building third party basic certification such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) or a higher rating as specified in the Area Plans.
- Policy d. For new, renovated, or expanded arts facilities and ancillary uses (excluding adaptive re-use of historic structures) undertaken by the county or public-private ventures, design and incorporate green building features to attain green building third party certification consistent with the county’s policy on sustainable development for public facilities.
- Policy e. Plan and locate larger arts facilities in proximity to mass transit or within reasonable access to major transportation routes.
- Policy f. Encourage public-private partnerships that would provide mass transit to major arts facilities.
- Policy g. Consider shared use of large parking garages to support evening and weekend arts events.



In furtherance of these adopted Objectives and policy prescriptions, ArtsFairfax (formerly the Arts Council of Fairfax County) established a Master Arts Plan Task Force (Task Force) to develop the “Cultural Arts Master Plan.” The Task Force members included a wide range of volunteer stakeholders from ArtsFairfax, Fairfax County Government, arts organizations, and other representatives from interested sectors. Upon its creation, the Task Force identified its purpose and vision:

#### *PURPOSE*

To expand community access to and engagement in arts and culture by planning cultural facilities and public art throughout Fairfax County that reflect its diversity, consider existing facilities, and respond to future growth.

#### *VISION*

Fairfax County’s Cultural Arts Master Plan promotes the intersections between community, creativity, the arts, economic vitality, and cultural diversity in Fairfax County; where:

- Arts facilities reflect the distinct personalities of our diverse communities.
- Public art enhances our special places and enriches our daily lives.
- Residents explore their creativity in environments that inspire them.
- Artists create, perform and live.

The Task Force members determined that it would first establish a Master Arts Plan for Facilities and then a Fairfax County Public Art Master Plan as separate components of the Cultural Arts Master Plan. From 2011 through 2021, the Task Force worked in collaboration with Fairfax County Government to provide the following services:



*RCC Lake Anne Jo Ann Rose Gallery*

- Studied benchmark communities (facilitated by the Economic Development Authority.)
- Assessed needed arts facility types.
- Researched consultant services feasible for conducting an arts venue market study and needs analysis.
- Interviewed Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and County Executive team members for additional input and perspective.

Additionally, the Task Force worked with County agencies as development and redevelopment continued in key County locations such as Tysons, Reston and South County. In that context, the Task Force:

- Inventoried cultural assets and developed a mapping tool that provides venue information in a public-facing format to be used by arts practitioners, planners and audiences. (The map is located on the County website here: [Fairfax County GIS](#))

[Interactive Maps: Performing and Visual Arts Venues](#). This map incorporates both Fairfax County-located venues and the arts venues in surrounding jurisdictions.)

- Provided facility and public art information to County agencies investigating needs in the context of Tysons redevelopment.
- Created a public art tool for gathering public feedback about the arts with interactive public art installations.
- Supported Fairfax County Government in negotiations for a proffer establishing a significant performing arts venue as an outcome of the Capital One project in Tysons.
- Surveyed existing County-located arts venue operators (as well as those in the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church) with respect to strategic plans regarding capital facilities. (Cities' venues were included for the practical reason that arts programs in these cities are available to County residents and their arts facilities are a very present reality in the total assets available to County arts groups.)
- Surveyed the strategic planning outlooks of the Fairfax County Park Authority and Fairfax County Public Schools.



*Reston Town Center*

With completion of these Task Force activities, the need to conduct consultant work to assess market conditions and detailed needs analysis remained. The Task Force worked with Fairfax County Government to fund that work and issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) to obtain qualified consultant services. The consultant team was selected in 2017. AMS Planning & Research Corporation (based in Southport, CT) was chosen from two qualified firms. Washington, DC-based Shugoll Research subcontracted with AMS to provide surveying expertise.

The consultant team was charged with conducting a comprehensive market survey and needs analysis to describe the drivers in audience attendance behavior, as well as to assess the needs of existing venue operators and/or content providers with respect to facilities. Their work began in January 2018 and continued through delivery of a final report in May 2019. The consultant team performed these activities:

- Conducted extensive interviews with arts, Fairfax County and community leaders (32 participants across government, education, arts agencies, community-based arts centers, non-profit arts organizations and business sectors).
- Conducted eighteen phone interviews with minority residents of Fairfax County who had also attended a professional arts or cultural event within the preceding two years (30-minute interviews).
- Conducted a needs survey of arts producers and venue operators; 220 public, nonprofit and commercial enterprises (including venue users and operators) were solicited and 58 responded.
- Produced a Situation Analysis, providing documentation of the state of Fairfax County's visual and performing arts infrastructure.
- Utilized a "panel" group of County residents that was statistically-valid and demographically-aligned to respond to a survey regarding preferences for arts and culture content, styles, and venues.
- Conducted an open survey (same questionnaire as received by the panel) to broaden opportunity for participation in the survey itself.

From the "Fairfax County Market & Needs Analysis – Performing & Visual Arts Final Report / May 2019," the key findings were (emphases added):

1. The market is presently white-collar, diverse, affluent, and growing, with many family households. **The demographic and economic characteristics of the County point toward a high likelihood of engagement in arts activity.**
2. **Residents are enthusiastic for quality programs, more information, and key location features.** Arts consumers have strong beliefs in the value of arts and cultural opportunities – yet they expressed concern that they do not have, or know how to find, information about current offerings. As for location, consumers emphasized convenience in terms of both proximity to home or workplace, and availability of parking near arts activities.
3. **Residents say it is very important for the County to offer high quality arts events, but they are not highly satisfied with the quality (or quantity) of existing offerings.** A significant number also 'do not agree' that existing events reflect the cultural diversity in the County. Resident feedback revealed a gap between the desired quality, quantity, and diversity of programming and what is presently perceived to be available.
4. **Arts facility users define 'venue' broadly and perceive difficulty in accessing space.** The communities within and around Fairfax County have a flexible approach to activating arts space. As inventories and mapping tools continue to be developed, they should be expanded to reflect the many types of venues in use or that offer potential for use.
5. **Availability of venue data is in preliminary stages and can be greatly expanded.** Efforts to collate and publish venue information, both for arts venue users and for the general public, have gathered critical data points (such as parking availability, seating capacity, type of programming offered, and the kind of site where venues are located, e.g., school campus, community center, etc.). The tools should be more user-friendly and branched

to answer questions for prospective users who need technical specifications to pursue venue use opportunities or for attendees who wish to see more detailed information regarding activity and pricing.

6. **Financial constraints impact anticipated growth of the arts sector.** Programmatic growth is forecast by many arts stakeholders who responded to the venue user survey. However, as discovered in the in-depth interviews, financial constraints may limit the extent of the future growth potential of arts organizations.
7. **Public sector support for the arts is perceived to be a low priority.** Leadership interviews and qualitative feedback received through our surveys suggest that public sector support for, and engagement with, the arts sector is minimal. Notwithstanding the presence of several mature, publicly run arts venues in the County, this perception is widely held.
8. **Partnerships are key to successful facility development and operation.** Current and prospective arts venue users described partnerships as essential to successfully developing and activating facilities. Respondents to the needs analysis survey indicated that partnerships, broadly, would provide needed capacity to support the development process for any new facility. Arts providers would seek to partner with mission-aligned organizations (in the public or the private sector) to jointly pursue facility development scenarios if there was an opportunity to do so. Online public survey respondents suggest that residents strongly prefer development of arts venues through funding by private developers rather than using taxpayer money to build venues.
9. **Upcoming projects may accommodate some disciplines and users.** New and renovated facilities slated to become usable within the next five to 10 years will accommodate varied types of users, activities, and prospective audiences. Three new venue projects are committed; others are pending. Both in and near the County, a handful of new projects have announced specific, upcoming development milestones. These projects all represent private sector initiatives with some degree of public financing or other support.

In addressing the overall objectives of the Task Force, the consultant team presented a “gap analysis” in the final report. That analysis revealed four focus targets – Information, Arts Sector, Venues and Public Sector. To address those issues, the consultant team shared 10 observations. (The findings presented here are provided verbatim from pages 7 and 8 in the Final Report, emphases added.)

#### *Information Gaps*

**Information gaps affect all County stakeholders** – from elected officials, who may have a limited understanding of the positive impact of arts and culture, to arts attendees who lack information on where and how to find arts activities in the County.

1. **A significant portion of County residents feel underserved.** Their expectations for the quality, quantity, and diversity of arts and cultural events are not met based on the survey data.
2. **Interest in the arts is strong, but a lack of information on activities and venues prevents consumers from learning about the full breadth of offerings.**



### *Arts Sector Gaps*

Arts sector gaps affect the capacity, cohesion, and coordination of the arts and culture community that lives and/or works in the County. While some organizations have robust programming, capacity to advocate for their work in the public sphere, and the resources to develop and operate facilities, a majority of arts content creators and providers in the County work within tight margins, small budgets, and have limited ability to grow, absent larger, sector-building initiatives.

3. **Capacity-building support is needed** to assist arts sector leaders and advance organizational development.
4. **The market desires more arts offerings and offerings that are more ‘well-known’ than they perceive to be currently available in the County.** More insight is needed to understand underlying forces in a regional context that may limit artist availability or other content constraints.
5. **Residents have a strong aspirational preference for living in communities with robust, high quality, and diverse arts and culture offerings** but are not fully aware of the offerings in Fairfax County.

### *Venue Gaps*

Venue gaps exist, such as information and arts sector gaps, more at the systemic level than at an ‘ad hoc’ or specific neighborhood level. Past studies have suggested that a single comprehensive County performing arts facility was not desired by arts organizations and that more neighborhood-serving facilities would better address community needs. This study revealed that there is now a role for central performing arts centers to deliver larger, more popular programming, (Tysons, other urbanizing areas), but that venues serving communities could be various and tailored to the attributes of those communities and the desires of their residents. Attention to specific local needs, coupled with sensitivity to private sector priorities and resource allocation, is strongly suggested to address the gaps below.



*The Boro at Tysons*

6. **The County's approach to developing venues across Districts should be responsive to the needs and desires of individual communities and local populations.** This may require investing in a variety of venue types rather than adopting a “one size fits all” strategy across districts.
7. **Existing and potential venue users experience difficulty accessing certain public facilities,** due to a lack of information or other barriers such as cost, calendar availability, or venue policies.

8. **The available information on venue safety and quality does not align with consumers' top priorities** - safety, convenient access and parking. Patrons are not aware of currently available information and therefore the range of venues and programs available in the County are not recognized.
9. **Improvements to community-serving venues, complemented by improvements, and better access to the County's premier venues will better serve expressed needs.**

#### *Public Sector*

Fairfax County government and sector leaders embrace the value of a robust arts and culture scene in delivering the lifestyle proposition the County wants to present across its various communities. The challenge, as in all goals of local government, will be in developing strategies that best leverage limited financial resources, development opportunities, and arts organization partnerships.

10. **Advocacy for increased arts support from all sectors (public, private, educational and organizational) is needed** to improve awareness, capacity, and engagement with the County's communities.

Having identified those focus areas and related findings, the consultant team recommended an action plan that considers the County's status quo and how to move toward development of new venues for arts audiences and arts content providers alike. That plan describes the progressive and overlapping roles of community awareness and attachment, community-based funding, and capacity-building – whether related to content delivery, administrative stability or venue development.

With Board of Supervisors acceptance of the *Fairfax County Master Arts Plan: Facilities*, County staff will have a tool to connect the aspirations of the County's Comprehensive Plan Policy, the goals and objectives of the Countywide Strategic Plan and One Fairfax, and the practical opportunities that present themselves over the next 20-year time horizon of development in Fairfax County.

### **Further Evidence – Countywide Strategic Plan Development**

The research results described by AMS Consulting from its market and needs analysis study have been largely affirmed by the extensive research, data review and inclusive community engagement used to develop the first-ever Countywide Strategic Plan. As the planning teams reached out to county stakeholders (residents, businesses, county employees and community leaders), 10 Community Outcome Areas were identified that represented the areas of greatest importance to Fairfax County.



*Tephra ICA Gallery*

Most relevant to the *Master Arts Plan: Facilities* is the *Cultural and Recreational Opportunities* outcome area, which envisions a future where all residents, businesses and visitors are aware of, and able to participate in quality arts, sports, recreation and culturally enriching activities. This vision will be

achieved through a sustained focus on access, overall community satisfaction, and the awareness, appreciation and representation of diverse cultures; these elements were reinforced repeatedly over an 18-month community engagement period as detailed below:

**COMMUNITY VOICES PROVIDING INPUT**

**22,881**

**1,419** Strategic Plan Overview Video Views

**1,585** Strategic Plan Podcast Plays

**SURVEY LANGUAGES**

**8** English Korean  
Spanish Vietnamese  
Arabic Farsi  
Chinese Urdu

**675** Community Outcome Area Video Views (English, Spanish, and Vietnamese)

**269** Virtual Event Attendance

**IN-PERSON EVENT PARTICIPATION**

**COMMUNITY CONVERSATION ATTENDEES**

**722**

**EMPLOYEE SESSION ATTENDEES**

**352**

*Plus 100+ additional employees involved in planning teamwork*

**COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUP ATTENDEES**

**433**

*Transportation, childcare and translation services offered for community focus group participants*

**STAKEHOLDER SESSION ATTENDEES**

**157**



**INNOVATION**

Survey provided at vaccination sites using a QR code while residents are waiting the required 15 minutes after receiving their vaccinations

**SAMPLE OUTREACH CHANNELS**

- |                                  |                                 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| WUST Spanish Radio               | Young Professional Groups       |
| Postcards to All County ZipCodes | Channel 16                      |
| Fairfax Connector Bus Cards      | Golden Gazette                  |
| Public Libraries and Schools     | Social Media                    |
| WTOP "Live Reads"                | Local Businesses                |
| Multicultural Advisory Council   | GMU / NVCC                      |
| Clergy Leadership Council        | Spotify Streaming               |
| Philanthropic Organizations      | PSA Movie Theater Videos        |
| NewsCenter / Newswire / Newslink | Community and Board Newsletters |
|                                  | Community Events and Fairs      |



**II. Baseline Arts Facilities Considerations and Conditions**

As reflected in Section I, the primary objective of the Master Arts Plan Task Force was to develop a countywide cultural arts master plan focused on current and future arts venues. Since the Task Force began its work, two significant considerations that affect future facilities planning have arisen: how planning for facilities intersects with the County's strategic planning efforts and how planning must consider the impact of COVID-19.

## Countywide Strategic Plan

Starting in 2019, the county embarked on an intensive process to develop its first-ever Countywide Strategic Plan. The goals of the plan were to develop a clear, long-term vision for the county over the next 10-20 years; integrate and align related countywide plans; prioritize shorter-term county initiatives over the next 3-5 years; and to provide a mechanism to communicate measurable outcomes to the community. The proposed plan was first presented to the Board of Supervisors in February of 2020, but the onset of COVID required a temporary pause in the public process. Ultimately, the Board adopted the plan in October 2021. It is focused on Ten Community Outcome Areas and related indicators of success:

<b>CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES</b>	All residents, businesses and visitors are aware of and able to participate in quality arts, sports, recreation and culturally enriching activities.
<b>ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY</b>	All people, businesses and places are thriving economically.
<b>EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT GOVERNMENT</b>	All people trust their government responsibly manages resources, is responsive to their needs, provides exceptional services and equitably represents them.
<b>EMPOWERMENT AND SUPPORT FOR RESIDENTS FACING VULNERABILITY</b>	All people facing vulnerability are empowered and supported to live independent lives to their fullest potential.
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>	All people live in a healthy, sustainable environment.
<b>HEALTH</b>	All people can attain their highest level of health and well-being.
<b>HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD LIVABILITY</b>	All people live in communities that foster safe, enjoyable and affordable living experiences.
<b>LIFELONG EDUCATION AND LEARNING</b>	All people at every stage of life are taking advantage of inclusive, responsive and accessible learning opportunities that enable them to grow, prosper and thrive.
<b>MOBILITY AND TRANSPORTATION</b>	All residents, businesses, visitors and goods can move efficiently, affordably and safely throughout the county and beyond via our well-designed and maintained network of roads, sidewalks, trails and transit options.
<b>SAFETY AND SECURITY</b>	All people feel safe at home, school, work and in the community.

[Reference: Pages 9-10 of the [countywide strategic plan 10 2021.pdf \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#)]

In addition to the over-arching goals and Ten Community Outcome Areas, the Countywide Strategic Plan has the following specific drivers that are directly related to the *Master Arts Plan: Facilities*:

- **Equity: Apply a racial and social equity lens to engagement efforts and strategy development.**



The Task Force recommends that proposed facilities be focused on serving Fairfax County's diverse communities by meeting the requirement "to address the arts in a decentralized and community-oriented approach as well as on a 'macro basis County-wide'." This is a complex issue that will require careful consideration as the *Master Arts Plan: Facilities* is implemented. Serving various communities within distinct areas of the County will require consideration of the demographic makeup and resource requirements of those areas.

- ***Inclusive Engagement: Create multiple avenues for community, stakeholder and employee engagement.***

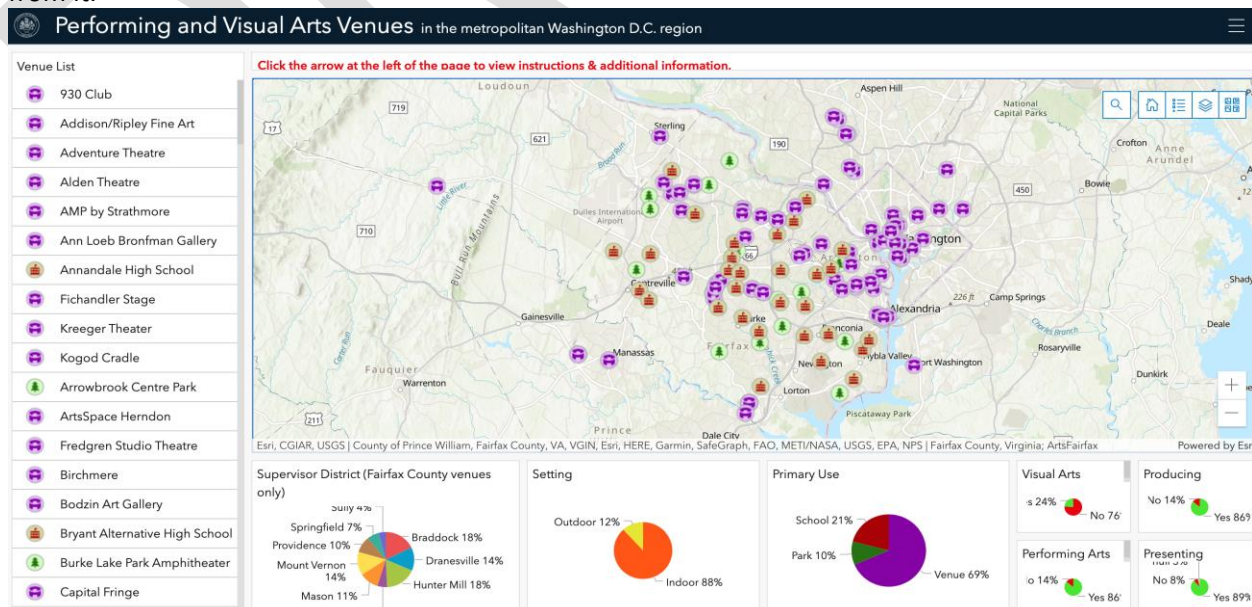
This was a driving consideration throughout research and planning activities as evidenced by the combination of quantitative and qualitative surveying efforts. Extensive analytical data was collected through interviews and personal discussion with a wide range of arts and community leaders, as well as residents of both majority and minority ethnic or racial makeups. In addition, stakeholder operators' strategic outlooks reflected their existing priority of improving the representation of minorities on boards and in leadership positions, and a desire to present more diverse content to audiences.

- ***Community Outcomes: Define community-focused outcomes and strategies (versus government-centric).***

The 2013 Task Force report describing the need for new arts facilities noted "Existing County assets...should be *considered and strengthened* [italics added for emphasis]." The report further described "The County's assets that support the arts – specifically those operated by the Fairfax County Public Schools and the Fairfax County Park Authority – should be key components." The assets controlled by those two entities are uniquely positioned and resourced to facilitate greater access to arts and culture in County neighborhoods.

- ***Data: Use data-driven insights and evidence-based strategies.***

The statistical and analytical validity of the AMS project is substantial; the recommendations were thoroughly grounded in the data and background research within the reports generated from it.



Performing and Visual Arts Venue Map



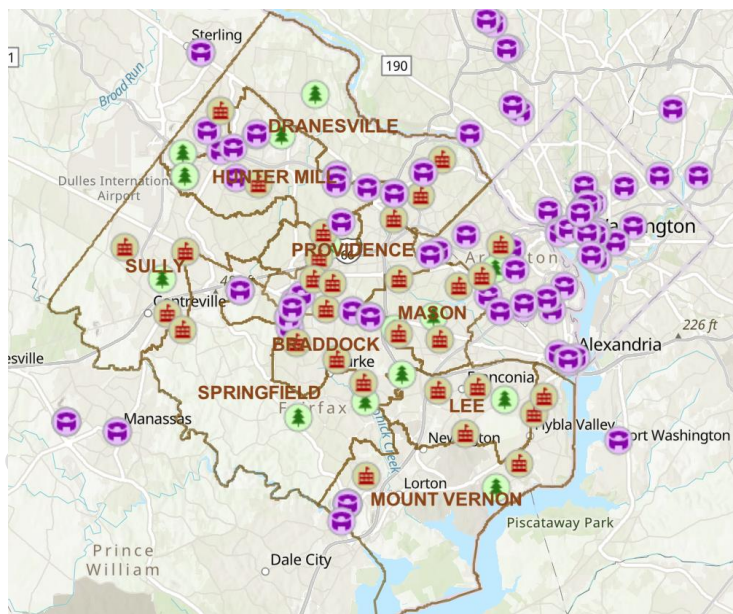
## COVID-19

As existing facilities are renovated and new facilities are built, consideration should be given not only to operations in a pandemic environment but also to how the pandemic – and the recovery from it – may affect the timing of projects' progress, development, or redevelopment. This applies to use of facilities as community resources (e.g., arts centers, community centers) and the operational changes needed for audience safety (e.g., virtual presentations, reduced capacities, changed layouts). Arts and culture activities are important assets that provide people with support, reassurance, and a sense of community in an otherwise turbulent environment. They play a critical role by supporting positive mental health and offering public education to the community which may ease stress caused by lockdowns or other public health directives.

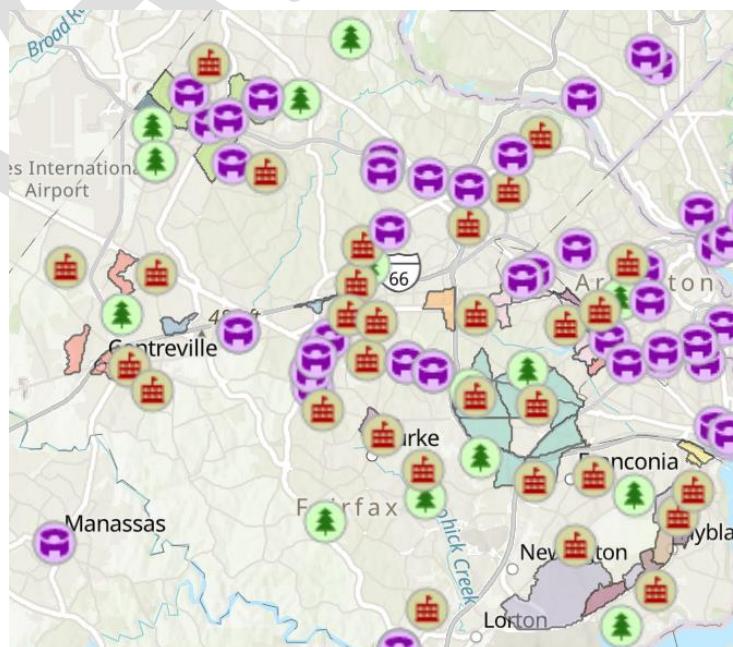
Building the resilience of arts venues and organizations will be critical to their long-term sustainability. As venues are built and renovated, consideration of features like HVAC systems, box office and seating functions, amenities design (e.g., lobbies, restrooms, offices) and how people might function during a pandemic in these buildings should all be considered during planning phases.

### Current Arts Venues: Strategic Planning Outlooks

Existing conditions and facility development planning are foundational to the Plan. Several existing venues anticipate renovations or building within five to ten years. Current approved development projects across the County include new arts venues and/or public gathering locations that are intended to support arts activities; these projects have time horizons extending from one to 20 years. This section describes the status of arts facilities in 2020 and is based on



*Performing and Visual Arts Venue Map by District*



*Performing and Visual Arts Venue Map: Opportunity Neighborhoods*

data collected from venue operators in 2014 and subsequently updated in 2019. COVID-19 could well alter the trajectory of those planned endeavors.

## Existing Arts Venues

Fairfax County and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church contain many arts venues, presented here in these categories:

1. Publicly Funded – Organized as public agencies or land with substantial funding derived from government resources.
2. Private Nonprofits – Organized as IRS 501(c)3 entities and receive a combination of both private and public funding support.
3. Incorporated Cities/Towns – City of Falls Church, City of Fairfax, Towns of Herndon and Vienna.

The information provided in the table is condensed and based on content provided by the respective operators. Additional detail is available on their respective websites. The highlights provide key data points that influence the facility-related future planning of each entity. Like other private and public capital projects, the planning outlook for arts venues has been impacted adversely by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in a loss of momentum, revenue or fundraising activities.



*South Lakes High School Theater*

### Publicly Funded – Organized as public agencies or land with substantial funding derived from government resources.

NAME (Asterisk indicates a venue name)	FUNDER(S) (Excluding earned revenue)	TYPE (Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Both)	OUTLOOK HIGHLIGHTS
Fairfax County Public Schools <i>17 high school venues</i>	Local Government, State	Both	FCPS continues to operate arts venues that focus on academic requirements, highly limiting the access to the facilities by local arts organizations. Additionally, FCPS facilities have some technical limitations. Arts partnerships could prove productive.
Fairfax County Park Authority <i>16 venues; 10 series (2019) Projected additions via development.</i>	Local Government	Both	Venues are located throughout Fairfax County. Expansion is tied to proffers; Tysons plans include many outdoor entertainment options to be operated by the FCPA. Current summer concert offerings are funded through private contributions. Arts Education offerings provided at FCPA RECenters. RECenter funding model anticipates near full cost recovery through fees.
George Mason University <i>*Center for the Arts</i> <i>*Harris Theater</i>	State, Local Government; private sector giving, including corporate and foundation	Both	GMU has ambitious plans for renovations to their two primary performing arts venues; the smaller, Harris Theater, reopens in January 2022 with expanded lobby and backstage spaces. The Center for the Arts renovation is currently in a study phase. Rentals, while welcome as calendars permit, will not be a primary business line.

* Gillespie Gallery of Art *Buchanan Hall Atrium Gallery			The GMU Visual Arts have an increasingly active public exhibition program in two main galleries on the Fairfax campus, produces a series of large-scale mural projects and has established a strong digital presence.
McLean Community Center *Alden Theater MCC Hosts: *McLean Project for the Arts in the Emerson Gallery *Atrium Gallery	Small Tax District (No. 1)	Both	Substantial renovations to McLean Community Center were completed in 2019, but those didn't include program space dedicated to arts activities. Small District 1-based organizations are provided rental access. A professional touring artist season is presented. MCC will be exploring arts pop-ups, placemaking and events in the community in the coming years. MCC is working closely with the Dolly Madison Library to create joint programming and with the Fairfax County Park Authority to support the development of an arts campus that will connect MCC, the library, and McLean Central Park; the effort will make this community area accessible physically with pedestrian paths and offer coordinated programming to strengthen a joint vision for arts, literacy, and culture to be celebrated and enjoyed.  McLean Project for the Arts (a local non-profit) provides visual arts programs and exhibits. They are exploring additional venue development in conjunction with Fairfax County Park Authority.
Northern Virginia Community College *Richard J. Ernst Community Culture Center *Verizon Gallery	State, Local Government	Both	Both the College's programming and local rentals are accommodated. State funds are restricted to use for student-only purposes; therefore, direct costs for the arts venues must be recovered in full. Some fundraising is anticipated to further develop facility improvements. Local arts organization use comprises about 70% of activity; resulting rental fees provide revenue to offset direct costs.
Reston Community Center *the CenterStage *Community Room *Jo Ann Rose Gallery	Small Tax District (No. 5)	Both	Small District 5-based organizations are provided rental access. A professional touring artist season is presented in addition to the locally produced performances. Visual arts classes are offered by RCC, and exhibits are mounted by local artists, RCC students/teachers and local visual arts organizations. RCC anticipates exploring options for new venues in conjunction with the Reston Silver Line corridor development.

**Private Nonprofits – Organized as IRS 501(c)3 entities with some public funding; except Capital One Hall which is uniquely funded by Capital One Bank but is included here as it is a private operating entity.**

NAME	FUNDER(S) (Excluding earned revenue)	TYPE (Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Both)	OUTLOOK HIGHLIGHTS
1 <sup>st</sup> Stage	Private sector giving; Government grants	Performing Arts	The organization is currently located in The Spring Hill Business Center and uses 12,000 square feet of flex office space converted into a unique 110-seat theatre, office and library. Anticipates becoming the resident organization in

			the proposed new development project <i>The View</i> in the planned 199-seat venue.
BalletNova Center for Dance <i>*Fredgren Studio Theatre</i>	Private sector giving; Government grants	Performing Arts	BalletNova Center for Dance hosts in-house and rental performances in its 175-seat black-box theatre. Designed with features specific to dance performance, the Fredgren Theater offers a 50' x 27.5' performance space with 14' ceiling; wood-sprung, Marley-covered flooring; state-of-the-art professional theatrical lighting and sound systems; black traveler and two sets of legs on each side; and studio space/green room options. Hosts in-house and rental performances.
Capital One Hall <i>*The Main Hall</i> <i>*The Vault</i> <i>*The Perch</i>	Unique private sector funding from Capital One Bank	Performing Arts	Capital One Hall has moved from “anticipated” to a completed and operating status as of 2021. It provides access to its calendar for Fairfax County arts non-profits via a unique proffer to the County.
Tephra Institute of Contemporary Art (formerly Greater Reston Arts Center)	Private sector giving; Government grants	Visual Arts	Tephra Institute of Contemporary Art leverages partner relationships to provide a major arts festival annually (Northern Virginia Fine Arts Festival); professional gallery exhibits; major public art installations; arts education activities. Future expansion is dependent on Reston Town Center developer interest.
McLean Project for the Arts <i>*Emerson Gallery</i>	Private sector giving; Government grants; in-kind resident status at MCC	Visual Arts	McLean Project for the Arts is hosted by the McLean Community Center; it offers both exhibits and visual arts education services. They are interested in expanding facility operations to additional McLean/Tysons location, dependent on fundraising (capital campaign). A possible partnership with the Fairfax County Park Authority is being discussed.
NextStop Theatre	Private sector giving; Government grants	Performing Arts	NextStop is currently operating a warehouse-type venue in Herndon. It anticipates the potential to relocate to a “Herndon Arts Center” if that project materializes in a fashion that offers a more suitable space for the theatre’s work.
Pozez Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia <i>*Smith-Kogod Cultural Arts Center</i> <i>*Chaiken Auditorium</i> <i>*Pozez JCC Bodzin Art Gallery</i>	Private sector giving; Government grants	Both	Recently completed renovations provide enhanced performance space. Both rental and presented performances are accommodated. Further facility improvements are anticipated (Chaiken Auditorium). Parking limitations present challenges. Visual arts are accommodated with both exhibits and education offerings in the 3,600 square foot renovated historic property. Storage, loading dock and other “back of house” features remain a challenge of the property.
Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts <i>*Filene Center</i> <i>*The Barns at Wolf Trap</i>	Private sector giving; in-kind support; government grants	Performing Arts	Wolf Trap is America’s only National Park for the Performing Arts. Its relationship to the National Park Service (NPS) offers substantial benefits, but the Foundation remains largely responsible for the capital projects related to campus facilities. NPS facilities (Filene Center, Children’s Theatre in the Woods) will require substantial private fundraising to realize the capital investments required by their age and to adapt to

<p><i>*Children's Theatre-in-the-Woods</i></p>			<p>changing production and audience needs. Current renovation projects are being completed for audience amenities. Future capital projects are contemplated as part of a Master Planning process currently underway with the NPS. The competitive context for the Wolf Trap offerings is of critical importance to its success; it depends on its regional draw and reputation as a premier presenter of nationally and internationally recognized artists. Wolf Trap also supports a nationally recognized "early childhood learning through the arts" resource for educators and has a longstanding partnership with Fairfax County Public Schools to deliver these programs in early learning classrooms across the County.</p>
<p>Workhouse Arts Foundation  <i>*Workhouse Arts Center Campus (with 12 galleries)</i>  <i>*W-3 Theatre</i>  <i>*Rizer Pavilion</i>  <i>* Lucy Burns Museum</i></p>	<p>Government grants; in-kind support (Fairfax County government); private giving</p>	<p>Both</p>	<p>The Workhouse Arts Center is an historic redevelopment and repurposing of the former District of Columbia prison. On a 55-acre campus, it is now the home to approximately 85 artists and associate artists who maintain working art galleries open to the public. It also has a large and upgraded public Quad supported by a very large fixed-tent (the Rizer Pavilion) suitable for concerts and other performances. In addition to the artists' individual galleries, the Workhouse runs three centralized major galleries used for exhibits and performing arts. Art-focused educational classes are run year-round throughout many campus buildings, along with a summer arts camp for children. The Workhouse runs a grant funded Workhouse Military in the Arts initiative to maximize the healing powers of the arts to veterans and their families. The campus also supports many community events such as fireworks, Brewfest, the annual Art 'Collect' celebration and haunted trails during Halloween, among others. Several community markets are sponsored on the weekends, and many Workhouse facilities are also available as rental opportunities for private events. While the Workhouse is challenged by location, zoning, historic preservation and redevelopment cost constraints, it came through the pandemic on a strong footing and pivoted during the pandemic to offer many virtual and safe-distanced programs and opened the Lucy Burns Museum with private funding. The museum celebrates the American Suffrage movement and the history of the Lorton prison. Following the pandemic, the Workhouse is poised to return to normal activities under the leadership of a newly appointed President and CEO. The Workhouse and Fairfax County also have a County/Workhouse Steering Committee aimed at promoting and further energizing the campus. Concurrent with renovating two buildings fronting on Rt. 123, the County is developing a master plan for further enhancements at the Workhouse. In the future, the Workhouse hopes to further explore and activate a music amphitheater on campus, as the renovated Music Barn.</p>



**Incorporated Cities/Towns – Falls Church, City of Fairfax, Towns of Herndon, Vienna**

NAME	FUNDERS	TYPE (Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Both)	OUTLOOK HIGHLIGHTS
City of Falls Church <i>*Creative Cauldron</i> <i>*Falls Church Arts</i>	Government grants; private giving	Performing Arts  Visual Arts	The Creative Cauldron venue provides a home for its own producing/presenting/rental functions. Space/facility constraints include the small house size of the theatre (92 seats). Falls Church Arts has a dedicated gallery that is used for regular exhibits and classes. It is located at 700-B West Broad St. in Falls Church, VA.
City of Fairfax <i>*Sherwood Community Center</i> <i>*Old Town Hall</i> <i>*Historic Blenheim</i> <i>*Veterans Amphitheater</i> <i>*Fairfax High School</i> <i>*Lanier Middle School</i>	Government funding for facilities (City); government grants; private giving largely via funding to user groups	Both	The City of Fairfax is the operator for these venues; however, there are challenges to their use. Performance space in the venues is not dedicated; simultaneous functions occur frequently. Historic property has limitations to technical support. Each performing area of the venues is not associated with dedicated technical systems and support space (curtains, lighting, dressing rooms, storage, etc.) so added rentals occur for those purposes. Plans include possible collaboration with George Mason University and expansion of City of Fairfax support for arts purposes.
Town of Herndon <i>*Herndon Community Center</i> <i>*ArtsHerndon Center</i>	Government funding (HPRD); Town also makes an allocation that supports ArtsHerndon. Private fundraising as well.	Both	Herndon Parks and Recreation Department offers instruction in performing and visual arts topics at the Herndon Community Center.  ArtsHerndon operates ArtSpace for the benefit of visual and performing arts organizations, audiences of those and sponsored activities. Rentals are a business line as well.
Town of Vienna <i>*Vienna Community Center</i> <i>*Town Green</i> <i>*Bowman House Arts and Crafts Center</i>	Government funding from the Town of Vienna via the Parks and Recreation department funding and capital projects; private giving (limited)	Both	Recent (2017 onward) renovations improved the auditorium capabilities. The roof of the Bowman House Arts and Crafts Center will be replaced in conjunction with the adjacent Police Department roof.  The Parks and Recreation department envisions expanding summer outdoor events. The Town's Parks and Recreation department provides arts education options.

## Arts Venue Gaps – AMS Study Results

As a function of its 2019 work for Fairfax County, AMS Consulting conducted a survey of arts organizations and arts venue operators. The survey revealed three kinds of facilities needed to fill current gaps in resources:

- Performance and storage spaces – followed closely by rehearsal space.
- Presentation/exhibition space – art galleries, other types of art display venues.
- Specialized space – e.g., recording and digital media studios, maker spaces.



*ArtSpace Lofts in NE, Washington, DC*

Another key finding noted that “Cost is the primary consideration for arts organizations when selecting a venue.” More than 35 facilities not intended for arts programming (e.g., churches, private schools, parks, community centers) were used by arts presenting organizations due to cost and calendar availability. Further, arts organizations in Fairfax County often use facilities located outside the County (e.g., Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center at Northern Virginia Community College in Alexandria, VA.)



*Mamalogues at 1st Stage*

In addition to the difficulties related to facility availability and cost, arts organizations and presenters confront information sharing challenges that must be addressed in tandem with efforts to develop both existing and new arts infrastructure. Successfully marketing the arts must address both specific events and communicating the intrinsic value of arts facilities’ presence in the County’s arts landscape or the arts organization that is presenting the event. These requirements are cost-labor-time intensive and drastically

underfunded. Broad community awareness of arts organizations, opportunities and venues is a precursor to successful fundraising, program expansion and new facility development.

Successful placemaking strategies and the Fairfax County vision for its communities of the future include arts infrastructure that enlivens newly built mixed-use projects, and that make arts experiences more universally accessible. These experiences should be both intentional (purchasing a ticket to go to an event) and accidental (happening upon public art or a free performance in a park).

The desire for these venues by the public and private sectors is evidenced in the array of developer-proffered or privately developed arts venues (as of 2020). Anticipated venues in varying stages of approvals and plans are described in this table:

## Planned New Venues

PROJECT/LOCATION	VENUE(S)	TYPE (Producing, Presenting, Rental, Combination)	NOTES
<p><i>*Capital One Hall</i>, Tysons Capital One campus.</p> <p><i>*The Hall</i></p> <p><i>*The Vault</i></p> <p><i>*The Perch</i></p>	Includes the Hall a 1500-seat main hall for music and other performances, the Vault a 250-seat black-box theatre, and the Perch outdoor rooftop amphitheater.	Hosts in-house Capital One activities, presenting (professional touring artists) and dedicates 15% of the calendar for community use in fulfillment of its proffer obligations.	Opened October 2021
<i>City of Fairfax</i>	Planning underway to incorporate a new arts center within development focused on the downtown area.	Anticipates presenting, producing and perhaps rentals; current planning contemplates an 800-seat traditional proscenium venue and a black-box type of venue. Possible collaboration with GMU.	No fixed date yet for projected opening. Potential relationships across a variety of fronts; could involve state, city and county resources.
<p><i>*The Floris Conservatory</i></p> <p>Northeast corner of the intersection of Centerville and Ox Roads; adjacent to Fairfax County Park Authority property.</p>	Teaching studios, conference center, professional recording studio, 300-seat recital hall, outdoor amphitheater, ancillary spaces/uses.	Focus on arts education. Rental options. Related profit-making enterprise options.	Land privately purchased October 20, 2017. Initial plan approved by the Board of Supervisors June 6, 2017. Challenge: Construction funding. Projected opening TBD. Could be a hybrid (private/nonprofit) enterprise.
Town of Herndon Proffer from COMSTOCK to provide 18,000 square feet of developable space for an arts center.	A visual and performing arts venue that might serve Herndon-based nonprofits such as NextStop Theatre and the current ArtsHerndon programming.	Visual and performing arts; arts education; rentals.	Plans remain in development (2022); Fairfax County government has made a total contribution/commitment of \$6.2M to the project.
<p><i>The View</i></p> <p>At the intersection of Route 7 – Leesburg Pike – and Spring Hill Road in Tysons.</p>	Black-box theatre (199 seats); 12 outdoor performance areas; public art	Proposes housing the <i>*1<sup>st</sup> Stage Theatre</i> , a producing professional theatre. Requires the tenant provide the buildout.	Anticipated theatre completion date: unknown. Note: The landowner has not yet filed plans, nor has financing been established.
<p><i>Reston Town Center (aka Reston Gateway)</i></p> <p>Adjacent to the touchdown site of the Silver Line Reston Town Center Metro Stop.</p>	Block J; Up to 60,000 square feet of developable space for a performing arts center.	Must be community-serving. Community demand exists for a 500-seat venue supporting large footprint music, dance, theatre; visual and	The County must notify the owner a maximum of four years (48 months), from the proffer approval date of July 27, 2018, of its desire to accept the proffer. That date has

		digital arts; school-produced arts events.	been extended by six months to January 30, 2023.
City of Falls Church <i>Creative Cauldron</i> New home in the Broad & Washington project proffered by Insight Property Group.	5,000 square foot black box theater and classroom space.	Producing Theatre and Educational Programs; Presenting Concert Venue.	Estimated occupancy 2024.
<i>Original Mount Vernon High School</i>	The Original Mount Vernon High School (OMVHS) is a county-owned facility located at 8333 Richmond Highway on a 22-acre property. The overarching vision of Phase I is to leverage the former high school facilities for optimum support to the goals for community development.	Must be community serving – objective is to build communities of opportunity, create career pathways, connect different generations and support residents' economic success. The theatre facility is envisioned to be integral to social and community-supporting activities and events.	The County has funding in the CIP FY22-26 for \$86.5M for renovation and adaptive reuse; anticipated completion in Fall 2024.  Request for Interest process was initiated in April 2022 and closed on May 30, 2022, for potential users of the theatre. RFP pending.
Sully District: Chantilly Arts Hub <i>Westfields Development</i>	Black box theatre suitable for dance/music performances.	Community-serving	In discussion; Sup. Smith is leading the conversation with the developer.

### III. Relationship to Countywide Strategic Plan and *One Fairfax* Objectives

#### Fairfax Countywide Strategic Plan

The availability of arts, sports, culture and recreation are foundational to the overall quality of life and well-being of Fairfax County residents and visitors, and they contribute significantly to our community's social connectivity and health. These programs also play a critical role in supporting the regional economy, through the sale of goods and services, employment, and events revenue.

Despite reduced demand for large, in-person events during the pandemic due to social distancing requirements, arts and cultural opportunities have experienced a dramatic resurgence, as residents and visitors eagerly returned to a sense of normalcy and renewed community connections. Throughout 2020 and much of 2021, parks and other outdoor spaces served as invaluable community resources for safe gathering, exercise, and promoting overall health and well-being in spaces that also featured public art. However, the financial impact on arts and culture persists, and county programs and community organizations must come together in new ways, building on long-standing partnerships among economic development entities, community groups, schools, and private businesses. It will be necessary to ensure that these collective efforts reflect the diversity of the community, which includes many different languages and cultures.

The proposed strategies in the Countywide Strategic Plan seek to sustain forward momentum, with a focus on the need for well-maintained spaces and programs and services that constantly adapt to the

needs of county residents and visitors. The recommended approaches in the plan focus on quality programming, equitable access, and broad inclusion and awareness of the many arts and cultural opportunities that are available throughout Fairfax County.



*Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts*

The *Master Arts Plan: Facilities* provides recommendations that align with the Countywide Strategic Plan's Ten Community Outcome Areas and Indicators of Success, and the AMS Consulting market and needs analysis of the County arts ecosystem. These recommendations are primarily concentrated within the *Cultural and Recreational Opportunities* outcome area, but also touch on several others, including *Economic Opportunity, Housing and Neighborhood Livability, and Lifelong*

*Education and Learning.* Multiple strategies within the plan include consideration of existing venues, near-term development-related opportunities, and focused activities to ensure that “all residents, businesses and visitors are aware of and able to participate in quality arts, sports, recreation and culturally enriching activities.”

## **One Fairfax**

Equally important is making explicit arts connections to the objectives of the Fairfax County *One Fairfax* policy. This policy is fundamental to redressing inherent inequities of resource allocation that have been precipitated by historical structural racism as manifested in land-use, education, human services and other key components of government activity that intersect with human potential. As the County endeavors to address and correct the deficiencies created by discrimination, the arts community can provide important resources to those endeavors. These are critical to realizing more robust near-term arts activity and connections to people in underserved neighborhoods in Fairfax County.

By better activating Fairfax County's existing public facility assets with arts uses, both the neighborhoods served by those assets and the arts ecosystem will benefit. Greater public awareness and audience growth can occur. These outcomes will be essential to recovery from the devastating impacts of COVID-19 to arts organizations. Similarly, involvement in arts activities provides healing and revitalizing support to youth.

Equity and diversity goals should be paramount in the development of venues that will support arts activities from ethnically diverse perspectives and approaches. Textiles, culinary arts, artisan experiences and encountering those are visual arts experiences with strong connections to culture.



Wherever communities have developed groups or outlets for these, audiences can be encouraged in facilities that are adapted or built to showcase them.

Families with young people involved in arts education feel stronger bonds with their community and academic success is typically enhanced. The expanded role of creative endeavors in providing support to school communities during the pandemic illustrate the power of the arts to address a crisis of that magnitude. Expanding arts connections to the County's *One Fairfax* policy goals will build resiliency and offer outlets for achievement.

### Near-term Arts Venue and Activity Potential



*RCC Crafternoons – Collaborative Program with Opportunity Neighborhood Reston*

The current map of arts venues ([Arts Venue Dashboard](#)) can be used to view correlated mapping of economically disadvantaged areas of Fairfax County ([Aligning Efforts for Success: Economic Inclusion](#)) to see how or where underserved populations might be connected to more arts opportunities. The following recommendations identified in the Countywide Strategic Plan describe the key approaches needed to assure that there will be a focus on transforming islands of disadvantage (areas where residents face economic, educational, health, housing and

other challenges)– into **communities of opportunity**, where access to arts and culture can be equitably represented:

- **Understanding Opportunity and Vulnerability:** Using data and analytical tools to better understand the dynamics of opportunity and vulnerability within Fairfax County.
- **Targeting Interventions to Build Opportunity:** Promoting the development of targeted, strategic interventions in low-opportunity areas to build and reinforce critical support structures for residents and businesses.
- **Targeting Interventions to Connect to Opportunity:** Intentionally connecting low-income and other marginalized residents to existing opportunities.
- **Encouraging the Development of an Inclusive Economy:** Building on Fairfax County's strong economy through expanding opportunity for broadly shared prosperity, with a focus on people who face the greatest barriers to advancing their own success.

[Reference: Page 6 of the [countywide strategic plan 10 2021.pdf \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#)]

Among the existing public assets and agencies where a stronger arts presence can be established are the key facilities and program initiatives of Fairfax County Public Schools, Neighborhood and Community Services and Fairfax County Park Authority.

### *Existing Fairfax County Facilities and Programs – Opportunities for Arts Connections*

#### *Fairfax County Public Schools*

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) operates a total of 22 high schools, 23 middle schools, and 3 secondary schools with (primarily) performing arts venues and arts features for the benefit of its students and families. These facilities are equipped with lighting and digital sound systems. The calendaring process for use of these venues is committed first to the advancement of the individual schools' curriculum goals (primarily rehearsals, performances and exhibits), testing needs of the individual schools, and special activities such as guest lectures or school-wide programs.



*Fairfax High School*

In addition to this first tier of priorities for FCPS facilities, “community use” rentals of their theatres by outside entities is arranged by the school in conjunction with a central FCPS office. There are challenges to these rentals for outside nonprofit arts organizations. The main difficulties they encounter are:

- The opportunity to schedule the space is usually too late in an organization’s planning cycle to be useful.
- Outside organization dates are not secure from being removed from the schedule should the school decide that it requires the venue.
- Weather decisions are dictated by FCPS for the entire County regardless of local conditions that may be less severe and amenable to a performance occurring.
- In order to utilize the performing arts equipment, 1-2 student technicians must be hired and funded. The number of technicians and hours are dependent on the needs of the event. Organizations may not operate technical equipment; a FCPS student technician or faculty supervisor, who have been trained on the equipment, must be obtained.
- Technical capabilities of each of these venues are subject to FCPS repair and maintenance schedules, available technician support, equipment being detailed to other parts of the school and other factors that can adversely impact the quality of the presentation.

To make the arts a more integrated aspect of the County’s varied communities, FCPS venue use policy and procedures should be evaluated for ways to improve connections to nearby arts organizations and bring the arts more robustly into the non-curricular school calendar. This work must be done in concert with the overarching curriculum goals of the school system. Of note, there are many examples of integration throughout the country that can serve as models. [see also:

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2019/02/12/new-evidence-of-the-benefits-of-arts-education/>; <https://www.bpsarts.org/bps-arts-expansion.html>; <https://www.ingenuity-inc.org/creative-schools-fund/>; <https://www.artsaccessinitiative.org/>]

A local example of how a high school facility and its curricula can intersect with arts and culture interests can be found in the Fairfax Academy for Communications and the Arts, which is housed in Fairfax High School (FHS). The Academy offers outstanding opportunities for high school students with career interests in fine and performing arts, design and communications. Advanced career elective courses, in eleven academic areas, incorporate current industry technology and instructional techniques. Advanced arts elective courses include Dance, Fashion Careers, Music and Computer Technology, Musical Theatre

and Actor's Studio, Professional Photography Studio, Television and Media Production. Four additional classes, in the language fields of American Sign Language, Arabic, Chinese and Korean, provide accelerated language instruction.

Students attending Fairfax Academy explore college and career options in arts and communications fields, develop marketable career skills for entry level work, and build an academic foundation that prepares them for success in college. The high school enjoys the positive benefits of a special relationship between Fairfax City and Fairfax County School Boards. Approximately 35 percent of FHS students live in the City of Fairfax, while the other 65 percent reside in Fairfax County. The school also serves as a community center for the City of Fairfax; it's the venue of choice for many evening and weekend community programs. In 2007, a significant \$54M renovation provided new capabilities to integrate community enjoyment of the events hosted at the school while maintaining the academic requirements for the student body.

Many FCPS high school auditoriums are utilized by local faith communities for worship services. These specialty facility spaces foster partnerships that serve diverse community members and needs.

#### *Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services: Opportunity Neighborhoods*

There are other ways to integrate FCPS facilities within larger County efforts for enhancing services to the communities within which they are located. There are distinct advantages of FCPS sites with respect to equity considerations. Key elements that can make these sites useful to advancing arts integration are:

- Facility proximity to neighborhoods allowing for ease of access to the venue.
- Established trust between the school and families (whose situations may include poverty, immigration challenges, or other barriers) can encourage and support participation in neighborhood and community arts and culture activities.
- The facilities have features to support childcare and supplemental nutrition as components of arts or culture events.
- Opportunities can be created for students to participate in and present activities and performances that showcase their families' ethnic and cultural traditions. These can in turn become rich resources for arts organizations seeking to expand content and participation.

Fairfax County leadership in human services and education should work cooperatively to advance connections that serve the above objectives within the structure of the County's "Opportunity Neighborhoods" (ON) programming. [see also: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/neighborhood-community-services/prevention/opportunity-neighborhoods>] Opportunity Neighborhoods have been established in key areas of the County (Annandale, Bailey's Crossroads, Mt. Vernon and Reston/Herndon) to facilitate "collective impact from collaborative effort" among the County school system, human services system, local nonprofit sector, local business community and local faith communities, working alongside community members. As this program evolves, more ON projects are likely to be initiated. Fundamental to the success of those initiatives is centering the needs and voices of residents in the design and oversight of services provided.

Opportunity Neighborhoods respond to the key attributes of each designated service area and its residents. The existing ON programs could expand integration of arts and culture within the context of each neighborhood. In all the ON areas, schools are integral to the work of boosting the academic and social success of youth and families. As an example, in the RestON program, because of the longstanding commitment of the larger Reston community to integrate the arts in daily life, there are many arts

options for youth and families. Visiting artists perform in the local middle and high schools. Fee waivers are available for Reston Community Center arts education offerings and professional artists' performances. Arts elements are included in the neighborhood-based special events established by RestON.

Similarly, the Original Mount Vernon High School (OMVHS) campus is anticipated to include a range of programming: theatre, childcare, employment services, workforce training, business (perhaps including food service) incubators, nonprofits' co-location, and government services in a comprehensive and integrated facility. The report from the 2015 OMVHS Task Force examined how to repurpose the campus and established the priority to create a "Mt. Vernon and Lee Community Center." As noted in that report, [<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/topics/sites/topics/files/assets/documents/pdf/mount-vernon-hs-task-force-report.pdf>] the center would be "a destination for local residents to gather and enjoy performances in the auditorium, educational classes and seminars, and possibly catered events in the library or the commercial cafeteria that could be transformed into a coffee house/bakery with guest artists performing in the evenings." (page 4 of the report)

Strengthening and accelerating the renovation associated with the OMVHS project will be critical to fulfilling these goals. The campus can become a cultural magnet in the Route One corridor and greatly enhance the sense of community. The existing theatre in this complex should build capacity within the Route 1 corridor with support for the following types of activity:

- Arts education activities for youth – specifically performing arts and visual arts activity zones including performances and exhibits.
- Venue management and technical support to facilitate safe and high-quality rental options to local arts organizations.
- Technical capabilities that will support touring artist events, lecturers, film screenings and other cultural activities.
- Connecting the venue and related activity zones to job training (catering, teaching, craft sales, etc.)

While the Opportunity Neighborhoods (ON) initiative is still evolving and expanding, further connecting those programs to nearby arts resources is recommended. That connection would advance greater access to, knowledge about, and participation in arts and culture by residents and audiences who may previously have felt unwelcome or uncomfortable engaging. The County should support and encourage outreach to the non-profit arts sector by ON leadership. Involvement from arts organizations can broaden arts programming content as well as the arts organization staffs and leadership. Ultimately, forming new and mutually supportive relationships can lead to positive change and growth within both communities and arts organizations.

Keys to success will be the willingness of all parties to be flexible, to disrupt any likelihood of privileged access and to seek funding for sustainability of new relationships. Dismantling hierarchies and systemic exclusion patterns will be challenging, particularly in places where resources have been scarce. Expanding access and building partnerships can overcome these barriers. Because schools are a primary means for families to advance their children's success, linking arts and culture to ON and local schools is essential. Beyond the obvious benefits to the constituency directly served by ON, benefits to the surrounding communities include enhanced integration, more arts and culture offerings and greater appreciation for the County's diversity.



As a nationally and internationally recognized park system (National Recreation and Park Association four-time Gold Medal winner), the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) mission is “...to enrich quality of life for all members of the community through an enduring park system that provides a healthy environment, preserves natural and cultural heritage, offers inspiring recreational experiences, and promotes healthy lifestyles.” [see: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/>] Established in 1950, FCPA



*Fairfax County Park Authority: Art in the Parks*

now includes 427 parks on more than 23,000 acres of land.

Within this vast system, FCPA operates 17 venues with connections to arts and culture and presents 11 summer entertainment series (2021). These presentations are underwritten by private sector contributions and are presented in every Fairfax County magisterial district. Like

the school system assets, FCPA assets are managed at the neighborhood, community and regional levels to offer recreational and cultural amenities to all County residents as equitably as possible. In some cases, the summer entertainment series events can be easily accessed with public transportation options, in others private vehicle transportation is needed.

Fairfax County Supervisors take a keen interest in FCPA offerings and work with the Park Foundation to assure that the series entertainment experiences are offered free of charge to residents and visitors. The FCPA Performing Arts Manager oversees scheduling, contracting and administration of the series. Artists and arts organizations can access an application [here](#) to be considered. Existing park locations have varying degrees of technical accommodations to support performances.

FCPA is currently involved in the development of high-density, mixed-use areas such as Tysons, Reston and the Embark Richmond Highway Corridor and will champion the inclusion of park settings suitable for performances in development projects located there. As these development conversations and negotiations continue, the following issues should be included within the proffer processes associated with the projects:

- Situating performance-hosting amenities where light/shade are considered; particularly taking care to design the space such that artists and audiences are not subjected to unreasonable glare or heat.
- Including shelter needs, runoff management and cooling stations to manage heat exposure.
- Assuring that accessory amenities such as restrooms, artist changing areas, storage for props or costumes are included in planning.
- Including technical considerations when planning for power service that provides for sound and lighting performance at optimum levels.
- Including options for food and beverage consumption.
- Assuring inclusion of attractive and useful wayfinding signage to help audiences navigate to and within the venue.

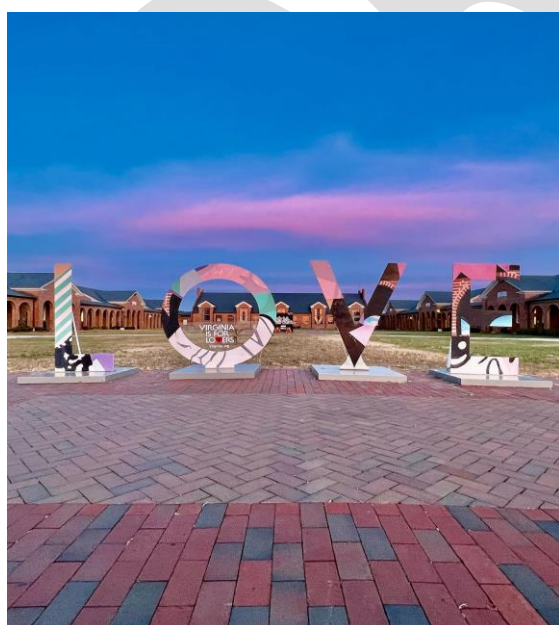


- Anticipate and plan for robust funding to underwrite performances in new and existing park assets.

FCPA represents county interests in discussions regarding proffers for parks and similar features for these development efforts. For Tysons, FCPA and the Fairfax County Department of Planning and Development (DPD) have elicited proffered commitments for more than 90 different assets, most of which contemplate formal or informal arts-anchored experiences being enabled by their architecture. As these new amenities are built, with the expectation that they will be activated with arts content, it will be important to assure that there is funding for free or low-cost delivery of such experiences. For amenities in Tysons, the County should encourage the Tysons Partnership (described in detail in Section IV) and other private sector partners to provide significant financial and operational support.

In addition to the summer performances calendar, the FCPA offers a variety of other arts education options at nine FCPA Recreation Centers. A comprehensive menu of recreational options – focused largely on health and well-being – include a significant number of arts education programs that are provided to communities surrounding them. These programs are offered within the FCPA revenue recovery model of direct costs being offset by fees collected. Partnerships between FCPA and local non-profit arts organizations for mutual benefit and broader public awareness should be thoroughly explored.

Future planning for FCPA is considering partnerships that will support activities with a visual arts focus. McLean Project for the Arts is involved in discussion with FCPA to create a dedicated, visual arts facility in conjunction with a park location. Additionally, the FCPA [Cultural Resource Management Plan \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](http://fairfaxcounty.gov) outlines how cultural and historical assets are identified, inventoried, evaluated, preserved and managed. Often these require visual arts exhibits and multi-media displays. They may also offer craft or artisan gift shops. Particularly in the context of the FCPA Resident Curator Program, partnerships are integral to their success in managing historical and cultural assets.



*Workhouse Arts Center*

#### *Fairfax County – Workhouse Campus*

Another example of public-private partnerships as a catalyst for growth in arts and culture amenities is the Workhouse Campus (Workhouse Arts Center). Since 2008, Fairfax County has worked with the Workhouse Arts Foundation (WAF) to renovate historic buildings at the Workhouse Campus to provide space for juried artists, performing arts, exhibitions, community events, arts education and a Workhouse prison museum for the benefit of the public.

In 2014, WAF, in cooperation with Fairfax County, initiated a new and expanded phase of the Workhouse Campus in which arts programming, performances and large public events have occurred. The Lucy Burns Museum in Buildings W-2 and W-2A of the Workhouse Campus has been privately funded and renovated. This success has engaged the community and served as a

catalyst for economic growth and development in the area.

For future development opportunities, the Workhouse should be emphasized as one of three anchors in South County, along with Mt. Vernon and Woodlawn. Particular attention should be given to building a strong relationship with the Museum of the Army that opened in 2021 following its completion in 2020. A synergistic relationship should be fostered between the Workhouse Military in the Arts initiative and the Museum of the Army.

The County should continue to actively solicit proposals from private sector entities that can contribute to the ongoing success of the Workhouse Campus and keep the arts and culture focus that is core to its identity. Per the County's Planning and Development pages devoted to the Workhouse Campus:

*The overarching vision for the Campus is to establish a unique, widely recognized destination of choice, providing dynamic and engaging arts, cultural, educational, and community building experiences with unique economic development opportunities.*

The Workhouse Arts Center is undergoing a master plan process that began in April 2022 and anticipates completion by the end of 2022. New redevelopment at Liberty (formerly the Laurel Hill Adaptive Reuse Area) and this master planning will contribute greatly to the success of the site's arts venues. Because the arts and culture focus of the Workhouse Arts Center serves as a current and future magnet for residents and visitors, continued support of the arts mission of the site is both critical and will serve to improve chances of success.

### **Facilitating Planning and Project Successes**

#### *County Arts Committee*

The County Arts Committee (established in 2009) serves to connect local arts non-profits and related County agencies. Within the County Arts Committee, discussions among County agencies responsible for schools, parks, libraries, etc., and ArtsFairfax, should engage in a deep examination of systematic approaches that could broaden and strengthen the intersections among public agencies and the County's artists and non-profit arts sector. These efforts can and should be undertaken with overarching consideration for the Countywide Strategic Plan and *One Fairfax*, and where those goals and strategies intersect with arts and culture.

The Fairfax County Arts Committee can also serve as a productive vehicle for advancing County arts venue planning across the public, private for-profit and private nonprofit sectors, in conjunction with supportive programming by ArtsFairfax. The interests of Fairfax County residents can be furthered by providing support to the renovation, expansion and new facility planning for arts venues in the County. These projects are described in the Table on pages 29-30. They are organized below based on their status in 2020.

The table provides a listing of the near-term venue development opportunities for Fairfax County Government to encourage, support and/or fund as extensions of the current arts infrastructure and development of new venues that could arise between 2020 and 2030 and beyond. As the economic, social and operational challenges of the COVID-19 lockdowns are absorbed, it will require commitment and diligence to move forward arts venue renovation, expansion and development sustainably. The County Arts Committee should play a vital role in those efforts.

Venue Operator	Renovation Planning	Expansion Planning – Existing Venues	New Venue – Building in Progress	New Venue – Planning in Progress
1 <sup>st</sup> Stage at The View				X (Tysons development)
City of Fairfax				X
City of Falls Church in conjunction with <i>Creative Cauldron</i>				X
<i>The Floris Conservatory</i>				X
George Mason University	X ( <i>Center for the Arts</i> )	X ( <i>Harris Theater, Visual Arts Facilities</i> )		
McLean Project for the Arts in partnership with Fairfax County Park Authority		X (at Clemyjontri Park)		X (Possible other location)
Northern Virginia Community College	X ( <i>Ernst Theater and Verizon Gallery</i> )			
Original Mount Vernon High School	X (Campus Theatre; as well as related areas)			
Pozez Jewish Community Center	X			
Reston Community Center; perhaps other organizations				X (Block J – Boston Properties proffer)
Town of Herndon; possibly with NextStop Theatre and Herndon Arts Foundation				X (Downtown Herndon Development)
Workhouse Arts Foundation	X (Building renovations underway)	X		X
Wolf Trap Foundation	X	X		

For each arts facility project, the capabilities of the renovated or new arts venue to address the County’s strategic plan goals and *One Fairfax* policy should be a primary consideration when determining the size and scope of the County’s contributions. The County Arts Committee should assure that the *Master Arts Plan: Facilities* is championed when development opportunities arise. Similarly, the County Arts Committee should assure that the County’s strategic plan and equity goals are reflected in both public and private endeavors that add to Fairfax County’s arts and culture vibrancy.

There are several ways that Fairfax County can support facility development endeavors. Recommended strategies are:

- **Invest in the venues owned by or affiliated with Fairfax County.** The investments might be financial, organizational or both. Comprehensive assessment of current County facilities whenever renovations are contemplated should be done to examine the potential for arts activities (e.g., schools, libraries, etc.)
- **Encourage expansion and renovation of nonprofit facility operators with monetary investment.** Contributions could be one-time in nature with specific goals related to achieving County Strategic Plan priorities or could be made over a specified period to incentivize private contributions.
- **Offset the costs of new arts venues with capital funding.** Funding could be one-time or more robustly offered by means of bonding or other financing mechanisms.
- **Support non-capital investments related to enhancing access to, knowledge and enjoyment of and participation in the arts.** Investments should be made in key areas:
  - Robust marketing and public information support to increase awareness of arts venues and opportunities throughout the County.
  - Analysis and funding to support more arts education opportunities that can be incorporated in public schools and other settings where such opportunities are lacking.
  - Analysis and funding to support public transit and ticket subsidies that can serve to provide greater access to arts events provided throughout the County for residents lacking necessary resources.
  - Integration of arts partners within the framework of Opportunity Neighborhood endeavors.

These approaches will be critical to the success of projects already underway or planned. For each arts facility project, the capabilities of the renovated or new arts venue to address the County's strategic plan goals and *One Fairfax* policy should be a primary consideration when determining the size and scope of the County's contributions.

#### IV. Incorporating Arts and Culture Facilities in Creative Placemaking and Revitalization Strategies



*Ballet NOVA Center for Dance*

In addition to the above, Fairfax County has various placemaking and revitalization strategies underway to spur economic vitality and a sense of place in its older commercial districts and urbanizing centers. Mixed-use developments planned for many of these areas have begun to include arts and culture as part of their “creative placemaking” strategies.

Research regarding the outcomes of efforts on the part of communities and jurisdictions, most notably from the Urban Institute and the

National Endowment for the Arts, provides support for these kinds of strategies. It suggests that multiple critical ingredients of an economically healthy community and region can be addressed through thoughtful, funded and effective creative placemaking that spurs livability, housing growth and regional tax revenue. For example, the North Station area of Baltimore, Maryland, with engagement and public funding to support creative placemaking, showed these positive patterns of change:

- Arts-related employment increased substantially.
- The local housing market became much more active.
- The number of “rehabilitation” permits increased significantly, indicating an increased interest in redevelopment in general.
- The number of college degrees per capita increased.
- The incomes of homeowners increased relative to the city as a whole.

### Arts and Culture Districts

An arts and/or culture district is a demarcated geographic area, in or near a city center, intended to create a hub of cultural consumption, e.g., art galleries, theatres, art cinemas, music venues and public environments for performances. These can not only contribute to the vibrancy and tourism of the district and surrounding region but also can help drive economic and housing growth more generally. Such areas are typically encouraged by public policymaking and planning, but sometimes occur spontaneously or by private and arts sector initiatives. When the establishment of arts and culture districts is coupled with monetary incentives (e.g., tax abatements for artist live/work apartment studios), their success can be achieved more rapidly. With the resulting concentration of arts activities, allied service-industry sectors like food service and retail are also established. Arts enclaves may occur spontaneously, but they are typically enabled by low rent and vacant space (e.g., 1970s SoHo in New York).

Americans for the Arts (AftA) defines the following types and examples of cultural districts:

- **Cultural Compounds:** "the oldest districts, primarily established in cities prior to the 1930s. They were built in areas somewhat removed from the city's central business district and have large, open green spaces between buildings. They often comprise major museums, large performing halls, theaters and auditoriums, colleges, libraries, planetariums and zoos." AftA provides [Forest Park \(St. Louis\)](#) as an example.
- **Major Cultural Institution Focus Districts:** "anchored by one or two major cultural institutions, such as a large performing arts center, which then attracts smaller arts organizations around it. These districts are located close to central business districts, near convention centers or other large tourism sites." AftA provides the [Pittsburgh Cultural District](#) as an example.
- **Downtown Area Focus Districts:** "encompass the entire downtown area of a city. Designation is often tied to a tourism focus and common in small cities with walkable downtowns." AftA provides the [Cumberland, Maryland, Arts and Entertainment District](#) as an example. NOTE: Fairfax County likely doesn't have analogous geography for which this would be appropriate.
- **Cultural Production Focus Districts:** "comprised primarily of community centers, artist studios, and educational arts centers and media facilities and often exist in areas with affordable housing and commercial space. These districts create a cultural hub and enhance city livability for residents of a neighborhood rather than attracting tourists." AftA provides the [Warehouse Arts District, Tucson](#) as an example.
- **Arts and Entertainment Focus Districts:** "include more popular culture and commercial attractions and include more modest size buildings with a bohemian feel. They include small



theatres, movie houses, private galleries, restaurants, and other entertainment venues." AftA provides [The District \(Nashville\)](#) as an example. NOTE: Annandale communities may have particular suitability for this type of "focus district" establishment around food/dining and ethnic cultural features.

- **Naturally Occurring Focus Districts:** "usually are rooted in community-based cultures and identities building on asset-based strategies. They are holistic and are highly diverse and led by local empowered leadership. Generally, they are neighborhood-based and artist-driven." AftA provides [St. George, Staten Island](#) as an example.

## Business Improvement Districts (BIDS)



*Capital One Hall in Tysons*

A Business Improvement District (BID) is a defined area within which businesses are required to pay an additional tax or levy to fund projects within the district's boundaries. The BID is typically managed by a nonprofit organization, funded primarily through the levy and may also draw on other public and private funding streams. For the most part, BIDs focus their activities on strategies that will enhance the attractiveness of the area – a focus that is vital to creative placemaking strategies. BIDs may go by other names, such as Business Improvement Area

(BIA), Business Revitalization Zone (BRZ), Community Improvement District (CID), Special Services Area (SSA) or Special Improvement District (SID).

BIDs typically fund services, which are perceived by some businesses as being inadequately performed by government with existing tax revenues, such as cleaning streets, providing security, making capital improvements, construction of pedestrian and streetscape enhancements, and activating and marketing the area. This targeted attention to enhancing the appeal of a given area supports growth and development and increases tourism more generally, thereby increasing economic growth and tax revenue for the greater region. The services provided by BIDs are supplemental to those already provided by the jurisdiction.

BIDs exist in most of the 50 largest cities in the United States, including Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, Philadelphia, Atlanta, San Francisco, Seattle and Washington, DC. BIDs are common in DC and Arlington, covering areas like downtown DC, Golden Triangle, Rosslyn, and Crystal City. Dupont Circle launched a BID in 2018, and new BIDs are under consideration in Brookland, Congress Heights, H Street NE, Shaw, and MidCity (covering the area around 14th and U streets.)

These organizations perform a proactive role in their communities. [NoMA's BID](#) (located in Washington, D.C.) is building new parks and commissioned a study to redesign part of the Metropolitan Branch Trail. Rosslyn's BID is building a parklet to demonstrate how to create more public open space, while the Downtown DC BID is advocating for zoning that would allow vacant office buildings to become apartments.

## Creative Placemaking

One of the key themes identified in the Countywide Strategic Plan is Placemaking, the important work of creating environments where people can thrive, where members of the community happily gather, and where businesses want to locate and grow. Cultural districts can be instrumental in achieving creative placemaking goals for Fairfax County.

According to the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), creative placemaking projects help transform communities into lively, beautiful and resilient places. Creative placemaking can happen when artists, arts organizations, and community development practitioners deliberately integrate arts and culture into community revitalization work by including the arts in land-use, transportation, economic development, education, housing, infrastructure and public safety strategies. Creative placemaking is a critical ingredient for enhancing quality of life, increasing opportunities and accessibility, increasing creative activity and creating a distinct sense of place and community. These outcomes support the ultimate goal of increasing economic growth.

There are varying definitions for creative placemaking. According to [Gadwa and Markusen](#), creative placemaking is when “partners from public, private, non-profit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, city, or region around arts and cultural activities.” Several publications from the American Planning Association (APA) have provided definitions of creative placemaking, including a [PAS Memo](#) on creative placemaking, which states “creative placemaking is a new way of engaging creative people and activities to address social and economic issues in communities.” Additionally, the [PAS Report 590](#) describes creative placemaking as the use of “arts and cultural activities to rejuvenate public places.”

Successful creative placemaking highlights unique community characteristics. Projects can focus on connecting local history with the present, spotlighting existing cultural influences and creating new traditions. It builds connections between people and places by encouraging collaboration and visualization. Such projects can be short term and temporary, or long-term permanent installations and changes. Successful creative placemaking activates public spaces and creates opportunities for residents to engage in arts and culture experiences.

While creative placemaking processes result in changes to physical spaces, they can also be an opportunity to build relationships between diverse partners. A key element is to have stakeholders, including artists, engaged early in the effort or project. This provides opportunities to evaluate community challenges in a more holistic and effective manner, gathering ideas and determining actions inclusive of multiple perspectives.

Examples of creative placemaking strategies can be seen in and involving Fairfax County, including the establishment of the [NOVA Arts and Cultural District - The Town of Occoquan \(occoquanva.gov\)](#), Herndon Arts District and Mount Vernon Tourism Task Force. In Fairfax County, collaborations have been established to reinforce any existing arts and culture presence in an area or to develop new ones. These may well develop into self-funded BIDs. Current efforts are briefly described here:

- The **NOVA Arts and Cultural District** mission is to create a cohesive arts and culture region comprised of the Workhouse Arts Center, the Town of Occoquan and the Occoquan Regional Park to serve as a compelling draw for visitors and tourists. Further, the identification of the

region as an arts and cultural district will solidify cooperation through shared identity, furthering the success of each of the three entities.

- The Town of Herndon established the **Herndon Arts District** in downtown Herndon to increase awareness and support for the arts, and to provide incentives for qualifying arts businesses to remain, expand and locate in the district. Qualifying businesses include arts instruction, arts offices, media arts, museums, performing arts, performing arts venues, visual arts creation and visual arts. Incentives provided include waiver of fees related to permitting and planning, reduction in fees for water or sewer availability, annual rebate of property taxes, among others.
- The **Mount Vernon Tourism Task Force (TTF)**, established in 2019, works to tell the story of the Mount Vernon and South County region, create synergy between historical, cultural, recreational and ecological venues, provide new employment opportunities, and overall, enhance visitors' experiences. Throughout 2019-21, the TTF strengthened the bonds and communications between tourism sites, created cross marketing opportunities and brought partners together to tell an integrated story. In 2022, the TTF launched the branding and logo for *Potomac Banks – Explore Fairfax South*.
- The **Tysons Partnership** engaged with state and local government, landowners, and other stakeholders to ensure that the overarching goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan for Tysons are achieved. Fairfax County government and Tysons Partnership engaged to redesign the mechanism to pursue their shared goals resulting in the **Tysons Anchor Organization**, a new nonprofit community organization designed to serve as a catalyst for the transformation of Tysons into an inclusive, vibrant, and globally attractive urban center. It is anticipated that recurring annual funding for the organization will be included as part of the County budget process. The organization envisions a set of four core operational initiatives and programs, including Communications and Place Branding; Research Planning and Economic Development; Placemaking, Activation, and Management; and Transportation and Mobility. The organization will be a publicly chartered, private, non-profit corporation to serve as the entity for implementation of the Comprehensive Plan for Tysons. It will be governed by a Board of Directors consisting of 35-40 voting members, including members of the private and public sectors, and residents of Tysons. The Board will also feature a smaller executive committee as the lead set of decision makers, again balanced among the private sector, public sector, and residents. The core areas of focus are land use policy, placemaking, member engagement and events, marketing, and transportation.

In addition to the above established endeavors in Fairfax County, there are examples of similar efforts provided by the NEA in 78 case studies of grant-funded projects; those can be found in [Exploring Our Town](#) and they illustrate the varied contexts and strategies that can be employed. Commonalities among those strategies are partnerships between the arts and other sectors and transformation of local economic, physical, and social constructs.



*Original Mount Vernon High School*

Thus, arts, culture and design activities:

- Bring new attention to or elevate key community assets and issues, voices of residents, and local history or cultural infrastructure.
- Inject new and greater energy, resources, activity, people, or enthusiasm into a place, community issue or local economy.
- Envision new possibilities for a community or place - a new future, a new way of overcoming a challenge or new approaches to problem-solving.
- Connect communities, people, places and economic opportunity in physical spaces or new relationships.

Most importantly, the combined impact of all of these is to ignite the economic activity of the area and improve its social and economic performance for the people there and the County tax base.

To achieve the most productive outcomes for Fairfax County, and to support the *One Fairfax* policy, effort should be focused on the intersections between creative placemaking and the parts of the County that are under-resourced or in need of significant public investment to achieve revitalization goals. By targeting these areas and providing a full spectrum of arts programming and arts amenities, both residents and commercial entities will reap social and economic benefits.

Fairfax County has identified “Opportunity Zones,” a designation derived from the Federal Government program for tax incentives tied to under-resourced areas. There are nine such areas in Fairfax County: North Hill, Hybla Valley, Mount Vernon Woods, South County Center, Willston Center, Bailey’s North/Glen Forest, Skyline Plaza, Herndon South and Lake Anne (in Reston). The goals of the Fairfax County *Master Arts Plan: Facilities* and the Countywide Strategic Plan point to the critical need to incorporate arts and culture components in development associated with these Opportunity Zones. These nine Opportunity Zones and other **areas where revitalization efforts are needed, will benefit greatly from partnering with arts and cultural facilities and organizations.** Arts facilities and cultural activities can bolster income potential, increase social cohesion and offer community resources missing from these areas.

### **Additional Arts and Culture Facilities**

Beyond what are traditionally characterized as “major arts venues,” the County needs multiple other support facilities and spaces to complement existing arts venues. These support facilities are a key element in a thriving arts ecosystem and provide economic stimulus to the areas in which they are located. Such additional facility types include:

- Residential and functional facilities – live/work artist spaces, maker spaces, arts and culture support spaces (storage, shops, studios, offices).
- Natural and cultural heritage assets – historic buildings, parks and cemeteries, public art and local monuments provide additional opportunities for activating spaces.
- Creative industries and occupations – publishing, architecture, design studios, digital media and broadcasting disciplines are all allied fields deeply connected to arts and culture. These should be incorporated in promoting/branding neighborhoods and districts.
- Arts education venues – studios with capacity for student learning in visual arts, dance, music, video/digital arts.
- Smaller venues like bars, restaurants or bookstores designed to include occasional presentations or arts-related gatherings.

- Temporary use of vacant facilities for arts production and community engagement.

ArtsFairfax has established a [Creative Spaces Toolkit](#) for arts organizations and artists to use when seeking space for their programming and operations. The *Creative Spaces Toolkit* also provides a step-by-step introduction for artists and arts organizations seeking new or interim space in existing commercial developments. The County's goals and the needs of arts organizations can be facilitated by close coordination between ArtsFairfax and the applicable County departments, and/or private developer proffers (cash or improvements), to assure greater access to space and successful use by arts organizations and artists.

Since the leasing of vacant space can be complex, a liaison/broker with both arts and commercial real estate expertise is recommended to maintain databases of available spaces and artists/groups in need of space, and to promote opportunities through inquiry (Requests for Proposals, Requests for Information, etc.). With added funding, ArtsFairfax can establish such a position to match interested parties and track results, or this function could be supported within the purview of the County Arts Committee.



*McLean Community Center Gallery*

Examples of places in Fairfax County where the creative place-making and arts uses could create positive results are listed in the table below. Some areas have existing land-use master plans that include significant creative placemaking priorities. (This list is also not all-inclusive as any region can benefit and grow economically from an increase creative placemaking initiatives and activities.)

**These examples are general suggestions and would need to be further developed and vetted for both impact and feasibility in collaboration with communities affected and County agencies.**

#### ***Possibilities to Consider***

<b>Opportunity/Revitalization Zone (Magisterial District)</b>	<b>Location Assets</b>	<b>Possibilities</b>	<b>Goals</b>
Richmond Hwy. (Mt. Vernon)	Cultural Trail: Gum Springs, Woodlawn, and other historic assets, proximity to breweries. South County and Bus Rapid Transit branding efforts.	Establish a Cultural Trail with connections to existing cultural assets. Activate with small performance/food venues, store front galleries, public art, streetscape and multimedia (and virtual reality). Combine with related efforts of the	Connect museums/historic sites to neighborhoods; establish critical mass for a "destination" experience, with wayfinding and educational and promotional materials.



		Tourism Task Force, Bus Rapid Transit Station branding/character, and Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation.	
Route 50/66 (Springfield)	If Fair Oaks Mall is considered for redevelopment, it may offer sufficient size to establish critical mass for an arts/food/festival focus.	Redevelop with clustering of arts uses such as studios, exhibit space, food hall/festival space design, “maker” spaces, live/work housing for artists.	Activate per County goals and with lifestyle assets that are compelling. Unique arts retail and event nexus that could support “festival” programs.
Springfield Commercial Revitalization District and Transit Station Area (Franconia)	Former nightclubs (no longer operating); may have “good bones” – near restaurants, transit, NoVa CC, Kaiser Permanente.	Music venues (profit or non-profit); teaching studios. Artists live/work studios/apartments, or arts production spaces.	Create an active and easily accessed cluster of arts-related amenities in a “Town Center” setting.
Annandale, Baileys, Seven Corners, Lincolnia (Mason)	Empty big box stores; Rich with ethnic communities: Korean, Hispanic, North African; Restaurants (The Block Food Hall has hosted “markets” for crafts/art items.)	Placemaking partnerships that take advantage of the strong ethnic traditions available. Opportunities for street vendors, pop-up arts.  Other facility options for “messy space” – e.g., rehearsal, storage, artmaking, scene shops, etc.  Textile artisans, culinary arts may be particularly suited to these kinds of environments.	Provide cultural outlets and enhance the vibrancy of the area; use large vacant spaces for both market-style vendor options and events.  ArtsFairfax/County coordination through Creative Spaces Toolkit.
Downtown McLean (Dranesville)	Many strip centers, downtown County park, library and McLean Community Center.	Artist studios, dance studios – arts education focus; Arts and Culture District	Provide a sense of “place” and a more unified “downtown” environment per the updated Comp Plan for the area.
Merrifield (Providence)	Further develop an already arts-focused district to achieve critical mass; activate warehouse space.	Street level galleries, pop-up events, live music venue or dance focus venue; Arts and Culture District	Enhance the growing reputation of Mosaic as an “arts district” or “destination.” Connect to Edens (property developer) and/or Greater Merrifield Business Association for implementation.

Reston Transit Stations/Lake Anne (Hunter Mill)	Boston Properties proffer; current vacant store fronts at Lake Anne Plaza, which has RCC, Reston Historic Trust and restaurants.	New arts venues in Reston Town Center; serve performing, visual, digital arts. (Existing galleries, non-profits, festivals, Reston Community Center.) Artist live/work studios/apartments.	Arts and Culture Destination; enhance the live-work-play ethos of Reston; provide access and support to diverse ethnic communities in Reston/Herndon.
Areas surrounding GMU and the City of Fairfax (Braddock)	Proximity to the University; retail storefronts.	Arts purposes or venues in strip malls; enhanced connections to education and arts management programs. Encourage arts-related retail: supply stores for all disciplines.	Strengthen the arts footprint of the GMU assets, create strong and lasting connections to the surrounding communities.
Chantilly (Sully)	Miles of strip malls facing Route 50; industrial flex spaces.	This area of the County has the highest population of school-age children; create arts connections with family-oriented programming and experiences; connect to schools.	Establish thriving arts layers to FCPS and FCPA assets; provide robust options to families in the area; activate strip malls with fading retail performance.

Opportunities in other Fairfax County commercial areas may be equally compelling; these are examples recommended for each district that can serve a host of planning and policy objectives. Similar efforts can be made in a variety of secondary retail commercial strips or industrial areas where vacancies could be activated with interim arts uses. **The following strategies are recommended to encourage creative reuse of vacant commercial property:**

- Developing approaches that will connect property owners with vacancies to potential arts users. Assure that property owners are aware of the benefits of doing short-term arts-related leasing or projects to ignite interest in under-performing commercial properties.
- Underwriting “pop-up art experiences” and “capacity-building” grant programs to add to the ArtsFairfax existing grant programs.
- Support the ArtsFairfax Creative Spaces Toolkit implementation.

Just as for new and/or expanded arts venues, the County Arts Committee and ArtsFairfax should advance these strategies and creative placemaking options to support revitalization, activating areas with arts and culture features, and using the County’s economic development tools to incorporate the arts in underserved and/or poorly performing parts of the County’s landscape.

## **V. Financing the *Master Arts Plan: Facilities***

Fairfax County Government has an enviable reputation as a soundly managed and fiscally responsible jurisdiction. It is triple-A rated for its bonds. The county’s triple-A bond ratings lower the county’s borrowing costs. The policies of rapid debt retirement and strong debt management serve to keep debt per capita and net debt as a percentage of estimated market value of taxable property at low

levels. Since 1978, the county has saved over \$990.47 million on bond and refunding sales because of the triple-A ratings when compared to industry benchmarks of other municipal bond issuers: [Bonds: Frequently Asked Questions | Bond \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#).

The County can employ various funding strategies to confront the challenges of replacing aging infrastructure, employing environmentally sound capital project standards, and addressing the need for new housing and infrastructure for a growing population. For the County to achieve success in several theme areas of the Countywide Strategic Plan, new attention to arts and culture activities and facilities is critical. As has been the case elsewhere, new resources for funding arts venues in concert with new CIP implementation strategies, offer solutions to create more successful facilities that will be better equipped to deliver services to Fairfax County communities.

Overarching principles to consider when implementing financing or other strategies to realize arts and arts-related facilities include:

- Combining or “braiding” funding sources.
- Using funds available from other government initiatives such as revitalization, historic preservation and public-private partnerships.
- Considering the goals of the *One Fairfax* policy and Countywide Strategic Plan.

By examining the options for new or renovated venues described in this plan in the context of these principles, the most apt set of financing strategies should align with individual projects.

## Financing Tools and Strategies for Implementation

### *Capital Project Funding – Government*

- **Bond Referenda:** Typically, Fairfax County addresses facility requirements with bond questions that identify the department using the bond sales to fund capital projects. This remains a path for individual projects, but it will be more efficient and cost-effective for the County to begin considering consolidated bond referenda that can be more flexibly used to meet immediate construction needs which intersect with multiple County departments. Similarly, Fairfax County facilities should be consistently planned with co-location of services and assets in mind; it should seek opportunities to co-locate arts and culture facilities and/or features with traditional public assets as schools, parks, recreation or community centers, and libraries.

### **Implementation Considerations:**

- Proposed projects to be included in the County’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and out-year bond referenda category to be sold as general obligation bonds. All current and proposed capital projects are reviewed annually as part of County’s annual general obligation bond limits, and debt ratios with an emphasis on affordability and capacity.
- Language for bond questions on the ballot is written broadly by category rather than project specific, and subject to legal review.
- Sample bond referenda schedule of events:
  - February – proposed fall referenda included in the CIP as part of the County Executive’s Advertised Budget.

- March – Board of Supervisors Budget Committee discussion on proposed County or School bond referenda as part of the upcoming fall election.
  - April / May – project included as part of Budget Adoption.
  - June – Board of Supervisors approval of resolutions for fall bond referenda.
  - July – Circuit Court enters order for referenda to be placed on the ballot.
  - Late summer / fall – County provides project information via County website, social media, and mailing of bond pamphlets.
  - November – election.
- **Proffers:** *Proffers* are voluntary commitments (which may be monetary or otherwise) from landowners and developers to reduce or eliminate negative impacts of new development on neighboring properties and the County. In 2016, the Commonwealth of Virginia revised how jurisdictions may use proffers in certain areas. Of the previously listed near-term time horizon arts venue projects, three have been made or might be made possible largely because of a landowner proffer: *Capital One Hall*, *The View* and the Boston Properties offer of 60,000 square feet at *Reston Gateway* (now known as *Reston Next*.)

It is likely that realizing the full effect of these, or other arts facility-related proffers, may require County contributions to the projects as well. Working with developers in the context of new mixed-use projects and/or community revitalization efforts can generate powerful shared funding streams to support the creation and installation of ambitious arts and culture amenities, essential for economic success.

**Implementation Considerations:**

- Developer activity; geography.
  - Degree to which other funding will be needed.
  - Voluntary on the part of the developer in coordination with larger mixed-use projects in preferred geographic areas.
  - Considered as part of the land use entitlement process.
  - Relationship to other County issues, e.g., parks, schools, libraries.
- **Taxes:** A growing tax base can provide new funds from the general property tax receipts to support arts and culture endeavors. Also, with the April 2020 session of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia, counties achieved long-sought authority to implement other taxes to reduce dependency on property taxes. Of these, an entertainment tax could be used to establish a “capital projects sinking fund” where monies would be dedicated to arts facilities and accessed to underwrite related capital project planning and construction costs.

**Implementation Considerations:**

- Economic impacts (e.g., COVID-19 had outsized negative impact on entertainment venues making that taxing mechanism unlikely to be useful for several more years.)
  - Requests for new initiatives are driven from Board of Supervisors Budget Guidance and follow-on feedback as part of the adoption of the Strategic Plan.
  - Revenue growth continues to be monitored closely, and available funding faces competing demands from both the County and Schools for additional budgetary needs.
- **Tax Districts:** A special tax district is an independent unit of local government organized to perform a single governmental function or a restricted number of related functions. These

special districts usually have the power to incur debt and levy taxes. In Fairfax County, special tax districts provide for the operations and other costs of McLean Community Center, Reston Community Center and Burgundy Village Community Center.

**Implementation Considerations:**

- Community engagement processes to provide the basis for the request.
  - Requires majority landowner support, which would most easily be achieved via petition.
  - Review with the Supervisor in the proposed district and Board of Supervisors as part of a committee meeting, to be followed by approval of a resolution or public hearing and adoption of an ordinance.
  - Tax rate for the district to be included as part of the County’s annual budget.
  - Financial due diligence required prior to any issuance of bonds to determine debt capacity and out year district tax rate impact.
  - Proposed debt issuance schedule similar to that described with bond referenda for voters residing within the district.
- **Community Development Authority (Tax Increment Financing):** Although these instruments are typically designed to support overarching and major infrastructure costs related to revitalization and redevelopment, they also provide options for a broad variety of facilities that could include arts venues. Fairfax County established a Community Development Authority (CDA) for the purpose of financing the infrastructure needed in the mixed-use Mosaic District in Merrifield, which includes robust arts and culture components. Tax Increment Financing (TIF), which utilizes the incremental growth in real estate values in the CDA, serves as a revenue source for repayment on the Mosaic CDA bonds. A similar mechanism has been proposed for the Springfield Business District.

**Implementation Considerations:**

- Subject to due diligence from County and advisors to determine financial, development, and legal risk.
  - CDA/TIF financings are typically sold as non-investment grade bonds (e.g., no bond rating) and carry high costs of issuance, both of which translate to high debt service.
  - Project briefing as part of the Board of Supervisors Economic Initiatives Committee.
  - Requires a petition to the Board of Supervisors from at least fifty-one percent of landowners, although best practice in Virginia is to have all landowners join in the petition.
  - Followed by a public hearing and subsequent adoption of an ordinance by the Board of Supervisors.
- **Fairfax County Economic Development Authority:** To carry out its purposes of promoting industry, developing trade, and promoting the safety, health and welfare of the inhabitants of Virginia, the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority (FCEDA) has the authority to issue revenue bonds to be used in financing the acquisition, construction or equipping of various types of facilities. To qualify, a facility must be one of the following: (1) a non-profit 501(c)(3) entity; or (2) a for-profit “manufacturing facility,” as defined by the IRS Code.

**Implementation Considerations:**

- Financial and legal due diligence required on the part of the issuer and respective Boards.



- Fairfax County has used this option to finance select County facilities and regional transportation projects.
  - County EDA projects would be subject to annual CIP review as part of County's debt ratios with an emphasis on affordability and capacity.
  - Briefing to either Board of Supervisors Budget Committee or Economic Initiatives Committee.
  - Does not require voter approval but does require approval from the Board of Supervisors and FCEDA.
- **Federal Recovery Programs; Federal Tax Credits, State Tax Credits:** Given the devastation to the arts sector resulting from the closure of arts venues due to COVID-19, whatever funds are provided to Fairfax County through federal and state recovery programs related to capital project funding should be considered to support strategic arts and culture objectives.

The Federal and state governments also have a variety of tax incentive programs (such as historical restoration and preservation projects, or low-income housing specific to artist live/work studios) where funds can be delivered to advance County projects. Examples of County success with these credits include the Workhouse Campus and Original Mount Vernon High School.

**Implementation Considerations:**

- To date, there hasn't been any County stimulus funding received either from the federal or state government earmarked for arts capital project funding. The County has utilized its RISE and PIVOT grants to provide financial assistance to local businesses, including the arts community, impacted by COVID-19.
  - Pursuit of either state or federal tax credits will require outside financial and legal advisors, and the private and non-profit sectors are well versed in this process.
  - Most recently in 2018, the Workhouse Arts Foundation entered into a lease agreement with the Board of Supervisors to receive State Historic Tax Credits for construction of the Lucy Burns Museum. The credits awarded were in addition to those received during construction in the late 2000s for similar historic buildings on campus.
  - The Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (FCRHA) has the statutory authority to form the legal structure necessary to allow the County to take advantage of state tax credits for historic rehabilitation projects. This requires a series of approvals by the FCRHA and Board of Supervisors, and is the approach being used in preparation for the planned construction at Original Mount Vernon High School.
- **One-time Year-End Balances (General Fund):** In some years, Fairfax County's carryover process provides for one-time expenditures on out-of-cycle capital projects or initiatives. Non-recurring costs are ideal for the expenditure of unspent funds since they don't carry out-year obligations.

**Implementation Considerations:**

- Available year-end funding is subject to yearly fluctuations in the local economy and County operational expenditures.
- Priority funding is given to maintaining the County's reserve levels and allocations to the County's Capital Sinking Fund.
- Additional requests from the Board of Supervisors for earmarking portions of year-end balances is expected to be discussed at future Budget Committee meetings.

- Board members can make requests through Consideration Items as part of their review process at Carryover.

### Capital Project Funding – Public/Private Fundraising

- **Combined Contributions:** More typically in the past, arts facilities have been funded through private, nonprofit capital campaigns targeting major donors, legacy gifts, crowd-sourced contributions and government donations. Those fundraising layers combined with increases in facility construction costs, can be daunting and time-consuming. Nonetheless, this is the path pursued by the remaining projects on the list of significant arts venues described in this plan, including renovations at George Mason University’s Center for the Arts and Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts.

Fairfax County government can support these campaigns with one-time contributions. Similarly, state and federal funds may also support these endeavors. Further, the efforts undertaken by Fairfax County to support ongoing facility development combined with private funds at the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton have contributed to the growing vitality of this important South County asset.

- **Private Donations/Revenue Streams:** In some cases, private funding may be the only resource for a new venue. The Floris Conservatory and the Pozez Jewish Community Center both rely on funding from private donations, investment and underwriting. Naming opportunities (often the staple of capital campaigns) and sub-leases to create ancillary revenue streams are private-funding mechanisms that can be used.

### Recurring County Financial Support

There are numerous opportunities for Fairfax County to advance the long-term viability of arts facilities in the County and create more effective connections to underserved and under-resourced communities. Recurring ongoing support with subsidies, staffing and advocacy will be critical to sustaining a robust arts ecosystem.

- **County Arts Committee:** The County Arts Committee should coordinate the links between cultural opportunities and economic development, neighborhood livability, lifelong learning and other key aspects of the Countywide Strategic Plan and *One Fairfax* policy endeavors. The County should continue to vest this group with the power and capacity to assure that capital arts facility projects are considered, incorporated and executed in multiple contexts. This unit would also coordinate with ArtsFairfax to provide an effective conduit for the County’s grant-making objectives, marketing campaigns and capacity-building for the arts sector.
- **Subsidies for Tickets, Transportation:** As arts and culture organizations become more integral partners in Opportunity Neighborhood programs, funding to offset ticket and transportation costs to visit arts and cultural sites or attend arts and culture events can be a vital tool to connect families who lack resources to participate. It would be especially vital to connect public transportation hubs and routes to arts venues such as Wolf Trap and The George Mason Center for the Arts.



As the County pursues the different phases of this project, the County Arts Committee can provide support and feedback regarding:

- Program elements to project architects/designers.
- Connecting job training, community arts development, arts education to support a full menu of theatre presentations, arts education opportunities and job training related to the culinary arts and catering.
- How feedback from and involvement by neighboring communities can be integrated into planning and execution.
- Establishment of “Requests For Interest” or “Requests for Proposal” processes to determine what organizations, content providers, teachers, artists or businesses may be included in operations plans.
- Operating goals for the theatre, and related arts and culture components.

With submission of RFI materials, the County can refine objectives and issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) with more detailed obligations, financing elements and similar issues treated in the Scope of Work.

#### *Boston Properties – Block J Proffer*

Reference Web Page: [# \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](#) [Item 24, page 20 “Feasibility Study for a Performing Arts Center”]

Between January and June 2022, the County worked with Reston Community Center to complete the studies required for the County to respond to this proffer opportunity. The County Arts Committee can provide support and feedback regarding:

- Broad awareness of community engagement opportunities for both residents and arts content providers, including outreach to underserved communities.
- County agencies’ interests for arts and culture program elements, e.g., school use, Opportunity Neighborhood connections, community development opportunities.
- Competitive context for other arts and culture enterprises within a prescribed radius of the proposed location.
- Funding issues and opportunities.

Once the County has a response to the Boston Properties proffer option, the County Arts Committee can help advance the milestones called out in that response if it affirms an arts venue is desired and achievable.

#### *Chantilly Arts Hub*

As yet, there is no established project page or web link to reference. This undertaking is in early stages and may or may not become a possible proffer outcome in the Westfields environment. The County Arts Committee can assist the Sully District Supervisor’s office in exploring the possibilities by providing support and feedback regarding:

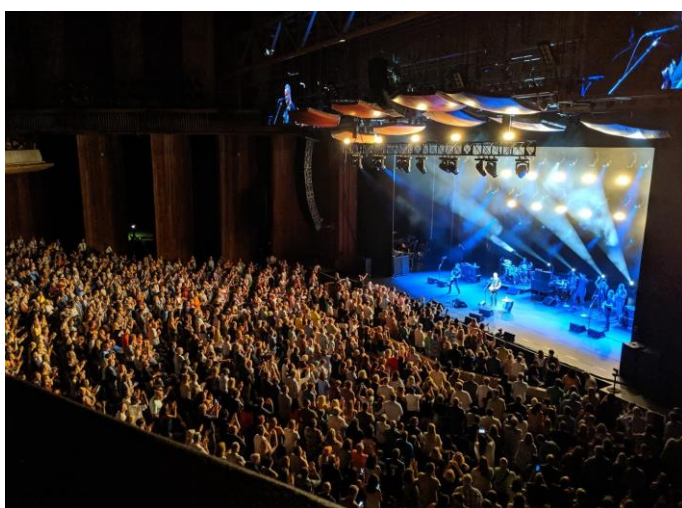
- Program elements that a possible venue should contain; specifically, what performing and visual arts elements (and related dimensions), major technical systems issues, schedule or calendar footprint considerations.
- Identifying community arts content providers within a defined radius of the potential location and creating avenues for their engagement should the proffer become a reality.

- Connecting appropriate County agencies, e.g., Neighborhood and Community Services, Fairfax County Park Authority, with operational and/or programmatic issues.
- Funding issues and opportunities.

If a proffer develops, the County Arts Committee can help advance the related outcomes.

These are just a sample of current projects where valuable coordination can occur in the County Arts Committee and assure that broad interests defined by Fairfax County's plans and initiatives are managed collectively rather than on an agency-by-agency or piecemeal basis. Work plans and results can be documented and accumulated for future efforts to consult. The kind of collaboration envisioned by the 2021 Countywide Strategic Plan is embodied in this approach.

## VIII. Conclusion



*Wolf Trap: Filene Center*

Fairfax County has recognized that the arts and culture play a vital role in the lifestyle proposition needed for a thriving, economically diversified and dynamic county. People want to experience the arts close to home and to see themselves reflected in the offerings of the County's arts and culture menu. Achieving this will require joint efforts across both the public and private sectors.

The full range of funding and support mechanisms must be activated concurrently to ensure a vital and strong arts sector in Fairfax County that contributes to positive economic growth and personal fulfillment.

Growing the awareness of existing arts amenities and increasing access to them is fundamental for expanding program offerings to Fairfax County communities. Establishing the expectation that arts and culture are made available to all families in the County will reinforce the community connections that are foundational to the success of the County's equity initiatives. Growing the arts sector assets through new construction will increase awareness of and excitement about the arts, thereby energizing and activating future growth and revenue in and for the County.

The decade ahead holds promise. There are sufficient resources to meet this moment if effective and collaborative planning is combined with innovative funding approaches – and if Fairfax County places a high priority on the arts, arts venues, and arts events as essential ingredients for both thriving and resilient neighborhoods. Those regions across the nation that have found the best success, have incorporated a priority of supporting the arts sector as a vehicle to increase regional prosperity, grow human contentment, attract new businesses and residents, and grow tourism. The arts are an essential component of Fairfax County's lifestyle proposition to employers, visitors and residents – it is time to marshal the will and the wherewithal to make that promise a reality.