VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

INTRODUCTION

Fairfax County is a community that values the arts. Its arts reflect the County's diversity and are celebrated and valued as integral to its quality of life. A strong, dynamic, and diverse arts presence in the County provides economic, social, and educational benefits. The arts are expressed in a variety of forms such as dance, creative writing, choral and instrumental music, theater arts, film and new media, as well as two and three-dimensional visual art in traditional and contemporary cultural settings. The County's passion for the arts is demonstrated through public policy in partnership with businesses, educators, arts organizations, artists, and residents.

In 2008, the Board-sponsored Commission on the Future of the Arts in Fairfax County released its final report containing findings on the current state of the visual and performing arts as well as recommendations for strengthening the arts as an important component in the overall quality of life and economic vitality of Fairfax County. The establishment of an arts policy provides strategic direction and framework for the advancement of the arts in Fairfax County. At the direction of the Board of Supervisors, an inter-agency arts committee was formed to promote and implement recommendations from the Future of the Arts final report. The Arts Council of Fairfax County (Arts Council) plays a leadership role on this arts committee. Through partnerships with schools, corporations, individual artists, and other cultural and community organizations, the Arts Council creates and supports programs, activities, and policies that integrate the arts into the lives of Fairfax County residents. The Arts Council ensures that the arts thrive in Fairfax County by providing vision and leadership through advocacy, grants, education, and services.

Planning for the future of the arts is viewed within the changing character and demographics of Fairfax County and in relationship to existing arts venues within the County and region. Fairfax County is an established county in the sense that it has been largely built out, particularly from a traditional residential perspective. Significant redevelopment and expansion of commercial centers, however, will continue. The demographics of Fairfax County are shifting significantly. Given the size and diversity of Fairfax County, residents tend to associate themselves with their communities and these communities have varying arts opportunities. From an arts venue perspective, the District of Columbia (Kennedy Center, Smithsonian, Corcoran, etc.) and Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts serve as "bookends," providing performing and visual arts of international stature. The Center for the Arts at George Mason University provides additional programming of national and international quality, as well as an educational arts environment. The Lorton Workhouse is a major arts venue in the County, with facilities for working artists, performing groups, and exhibitions. Increasingly, the Workhouse will become not only a Fairfax County asset, but regional and national in scope. Smaller local arts venues in the County include among others Alden Theatre at the McLean Community Center, Center Stage at the Reston Community Center, the James Lee Community Center Theater, ArtSpace in Herndon, Greater Reston Arts Center, and the McLean Project for the Arts. Four amphitheaters of varying sizes are located in Fairfax County parks and nature/historic sites including Burke Lake Park, Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, Mason District Park, and Lee District Park. Other parks also support cultural performances such as Nottoway, Ossian Hall, Royal Lake, Lake Accotink, Grist Mill, and Frying Pan Farm Park. Fairfax County Public Schools, a recognized national leader in arts education, has middle and high schools with performance spaces that can be made available for community use based on school schedule activities. Historic sites in public ownership such as Sully, Colvin Run Mill, Historic Centreville Park and others offer excellent opportunities as supporting arts venues. Gum Springs Community Center and Baileys Community

Center are examples of neighborhood venues that promote the County's rich heritage and sustain its cultural life. While there are a number of arts venues in the County, the majority of arts events are held in multi-use spaces that do not meet the basic needs of user groups.

From an arts policy perspective, this context suggests the following should be considered in the planning and programming of the arts. Given the significant changing demographics of Fairfax County, arts planning and programming in the County should be diverse and inclusive. Diversity is defined through the expression of various art forms that should be located throughout the County and should be reflective of the County's multi-cultural heritage to ensure that the arts are accessible to everyone. With respect to arts facilities, the principal focus should be community based. Lorton, McLean, Vienna, Herndon, Great Falls, and Reston are examples of communities that have arts venues and have a continued commitment for performing and visual arts. Venues should be established in other communities of the County. With George Mason University's Center for the Arts the *de facto* major year-round arts venue in Fairfax County, collaboration with respect to arts opportunities should be encouraged. As major commercial areas of the County are redeveloped or expanded, developers should be encouraged to incorporate potential arts venues and public art in their plans. Public art should also be considered for all new and renovated County facilities and parks. In summary, the time has come for the County to develop a comprehensive cultural arts plan for arts facilities that meets the needs of the County residents.

The following goal, objectives and policies provide Countywide guidance in support of the visual and performing arts. This guidance should be considered along with Area Plans recommendations on the arts for specific sites. Optional use of voluntary proffers through the development review process in support of the arts should be considered within the context of other goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS GOAL

Visual and Performing Arts – Fairfax County should encourage a dynamic and diverse arts presence by supporting the works, participants, and audiences in the areas of dance, creative writing, choral and instrumental music, theater arts, film and new media, two and three-dimensional visual art in traditional and contemporary cultural iterations, but also in the ways that these areas may overlap and interact with new and emerging technologies.

Objective 1: Support opportunities to display art in public places, private development, and public-private ventures and encourage investment in existing and new arts facilities.

Policy a. Incorporate a visual arts component into the planning, construction, or renovation of all County facilities, as deemed feasible.

Policy b. Incorporate art in the design and architecture of buildings and garages through the use of attractive and interesting forms, façades, features, textures, and colors.

Policy c. Consider use of natural art and beauty through the preservation of trees, waterways, and other environmental features.

Policy d. Create distinctive landmarks and incorporate art in major commercial and mixed-use developments.

Policy e. Locate large-scale art installations and displays in highly visible and accessible places such as gateways, plazas, pavilions, parks, and Metro stations.

Policy f. Create an urban visual arts experience through a public-private initiative by adapting and retrofitting former uses in revitalization areas.

Policy g. Consider the provision of multi-use interior and exterior space for rotating exhibits.

Policy h. Support the development of arts venues as potential catalyst for revitalization and reinvestment in older established communities of the County.

Policy i. Encourage public, private, and non-profit partnerships in planning and development of arts facilities.

Policy j. Engage the community and arts groups in the planning and development of future arts facilities and in support of on-going programs and initiatives.

Policy k. Engage the Arts Council to facilitate a public process that includes the community and arts groups in the selection of public art.

Policy l. Consider the cost of and responsibility for maintenance in the selection of public art located on public land.

Policy m. Develop a public art master plan for the County and specific plans for subareas of the County.

Objective 2: **Provide for a variety of arts venues to accommodate audience and performance space needs and technical capabilities.**

Policy a. Incorporate arts spaces and facilities into development and redevelopment proposals.

Policy b. Consider ancillary uses such as restaurants, cafés, coffee shops, gift shops, and living space for resident artists during planning and development of larger arts venues to create arts destination places.

Policy c. Consider the co-location of larger performing arts spaces with retail, office, and residential components.

Policy d. Consider the co-location of arts venues with new, expanded, or renovated community centers and other public facilities, as deemed feasible.

Policy e. Consider spaces for public art and performances in urban parks. Incorporate such uses when developing urban park plans.

Policy f. Encourage culturally diverse venues in neighborhoods to promote the County's rich heritage and sustain its cultural life.

Policy g. 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 center, 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 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 center each containing up to 500-seats.

Objective 3: 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.