

**Fairfax Cultural Policy Summit**  
**Wednesday, May 25, 2005**  
**8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**  
**Summary and Recommendations**

**Summary**

The Center for Arts & Culture, in partnership with the Arts Council of Fairfax County and George Mason University's College of Visual and Performing Arts, sponsored a summit on Wednesday, May 25, 2005 at GMU's Mason Hall. The summit, "Fairfax County Cultural Policy: A Challenge to Our Community," attracted over 70 attendees. Participants represented a broad cross-section of the county's arts & cultural, political and business community. Organizers were delighted that Gerald Connolly, Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, provided opening remarks. In addition, Ben Cameron (Executive Director of the Theatre Communications Group) offered a stimulating keynote address on the economic vitality of the arts & cultural sector. The summit's panels focused on successful cultural policy lessons learned in the region and on developing partnerships within and beyond the arts and cultural community. During closing break out sessions around diverse topics (including public will; space/facility development; collaborations and partnerships; and trends across the region), participants made concrete recommendations for strengthening Fairfax County's cultural policies and development.

**Recommendations for Fairfax Cultural Policy Development**

- 1) Public Will: What roles do elected officials play?
  - a) *Inventory assets in county budget and line items.* The inventory should include a resource inventory and an organizational/individual inventory. The inventory should work with schools and parks for space identification and expand beyond arts in terms of assets.
  - b) *Develop a collective vision & agreement of where we need to go and how it supports the planning/development of the county.* "We need to know more about their planning."
  - c) *Pursue current opportunities to the next level.* Look at both the short term and long term locally and globally and respond to the challenge of an arts space.
  - d) *Encourage artists and organizations to actively participate in local planning and task forces.* Join your Chamber of Commerce and civic associations.
  - e) Connect elected officials to the arts community and communicate with elected officials.
  
- 2) Solving our Space Issues
  - a) *Create a Cultural Inventory of Visual and Performing Arts*
  - b) *Create a Space Inventory for Visual and Performing Arts:* who is performing where & how do we better serve people? We need to find out who the groups are and what kind of space they need; some community organizations should be in shared spaces (church basements might be okay).
  - c) *Develop incentives (zoning) to think creatively before more buildings go up.*

- d) Big cultural centers are sexy, but *smaller facilities (200-400 seats) should be built throughout the county*. Smaller facilities throughout the County should be developed, similar to Reston and McLean. Plans for Herndon and Springfield are not advancing.
- e) *Develop a task force to move these space recommendations forward.*

### 3) Collaborations and Partnerships

- a) *Develop an Online Arts Events Calendar*: promotional emails to connect to consumers; make wide and inclusive (culturally diverse and many ages); and connect current arts patrons with new ones.
- b) *Define region clearly and enact a marketing campaign*: Fairfax may not be big enough to garner funding for a website and keep it going. Ideas generated include: a hotel tax or website promoting county as tourist destination; partnering with Visitor Center; partnering with concierge at Tyson's Corner; inserting video ads in hotel rooms; combining arts and Convention & Visitor Events Calendar; creating a community calendar with shared databases; including Loudon and Prince William with Fairfax in online calendar (DC and Maryland could have their own sites. Similarly, people in Arlington and Alexandria go to D.C. for cultural participation).
- c) *Establish collaborations in broader ways amongst arts groups*: across disciplines and through joint databases
- d) *Identify public/private partners that would be most helpful*: i.e. Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Center and Corporations
- e) *More coordinated efforts through schools, parks and recreation*, in terms of how the arts are included in the development of the structure of the county.

### 4) Trends Across the Suburbs: Broad Recommendations for Our Region

- a) *Need coordinated and implemented strategic cultural plan* that includes the following topics: facilities, arts education, cultural participation, inventory of artists and arts organizations, access, marketing & advocacy, and demographic study
- b) *Create more friendly environment for the arts*
- c) *Develop a regional calendar*
- d) *Have a seat at the table in any planning or development occurring in the county* (Tyson's Corner, for example)
- e) *Advocate for and garner more funding for arts council and arts organizations*

### **Overarching Recommendations for Fairfax County's Cultural Development**

- 1) Create an *inventory* (of organizations, spaces, and support needs).
- 2) Develop a *larger cultural plan*.
- 3) Create an *online calendar* to increase visibility.
- 4) Reconcile *facilities* debate (Should a large cultural organization be built or should Fairfax take a different route? This might take the alternate route of first looking at existing facilities around the county to see how they can best be used. Or it may also lead to the establishment of smaller, decentralized places for the arts).
- 5) *Funding* is a systemic issue.