



ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
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January 30, 2020

The Honorable Libby Garvey, Chair
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 300
Arlington, Virginia 22201

RE: Arlington Commission for the Arts 2019 Annual Report

Dear Chair Garvey,

It is with great pleasure that I submit this 2019 Annual Report to the Arlington County Board on behalf of the Arlington Commission for the Arts (ACA).

As you are aware, the ACA is governed by the [Arlington County Policy for the Support of Arts Organizations and Artists \(Policy\)](#), which was adopted by the County Board in 1990. This policy recognizes the important role that cultural activities play in determining quality of life and expresses in the following goals:

1. To create a climate within the County that is conducive to the growth and development of Arlington's artists and arts organizations through public and private support.
2. To foster the development of excellence and diversity in the arts insuring that a varied program of cultural activities is available to satisfy the interests of Arlington's citizens.
3. To guarantee to all artists and arts organizations an open and fair policy which assures equal access to County arts resources.
4. To encourage development of a public/private partnership in support of the arts.

As stated in the Commission's Charter, adopted July 24, 2014, the duties of the ACA include assisting the County in the development of cultural policy; undertaking the responsibilities allocated to it in the *Policy* -- which includes distributing County resources available to Arlington artists and cultural organizations for facilities, financial support, administrative services and technical support. In addition, and importantly, the Charter explicitly highlights that it is ACA's responsibility keep County and community leadership apprised of issues and actions regarding the development of cultural policy; support Arlington's artists, arts organizations and programs; and continue the growth and development of the cultural life of the County.

Key Accomplishments for 2019

1. **County Board Adoption of Enriching Lives**
On June 18, 2019, the Arlington County Board unanimously adopted [Enriching Lives: Arlington Arts and Culture Strategy](#), developed by the Arlington Commission for the Arts (ACA) as a culmination of a broader, community-based strategic planning process that included staff of

the Cultural Affairs Department of the Arlington Economic Development Office, artists, arts leaders, other community, business, and education leaders.

2. Community Listening Sessions: Conversations on Priorities for Arts and Culture in Arlington

In order to get community feedback about *Enriching Lives*, especially from the County's artists and arts and culture organizations, the ACA conducted two listening sessions—in September and October 2019—with the goal of learning which of the Enriching Lives goals and strategies were the greatest priorities of this community (see Attachment 1). Thirty-nine people participated in these sessions. The Commission intended these sessions to inform its current and future work. There will be additional listening sessions throughout the FY 2020 fiscal year.

3. Community Arts Advisory Group (CAAC)

For FY 2021 budget preparation, the County Board provided guidance to the County Manager to develop a transition plan for Arlington Community Arts Programs. The County Board asked for a proposed scope of work for the development of alternative management and service delivery models for arts-supporting services (specifically the CostumeLab, Scenic Studio and Mobile Stage) and, in partnership with Arlington

Public Schools, a new scheduling process for joint-use theater space.

The Community Arts Advisory Committee (CAAC) was appointed by the County Manager to lead this effort to develop alternative business models for Scenic Studio, CostumeLab and Mobile Stage and to recommend a new scheduling process for joint-use theater space. The CAAC was led by Arts Commissioner Anika Kwinana, and included representatives from several of the affected organizations and representatives from Arlington Public Schools and the Teen Network Board. Its work was completed in October 2019 and a report was provided to the County Manager for his consideration in the FY 2021 budget preparation process.

4. FY 2020 Arts Grants Recommendations – The Commission received 27 grant applications requesting financial support. Of the \$215,810 available for distribution, the Commission recommended that three Individual Artists receive grants of \$5,000 each. The Commission also recommended that 15 grants were awarded to Arlington arts organizations totaling \$200,810. In making its decisions and recommendations, the Commission followed the guidelines outlined in the *Policy* and oversaw a fair and comprehensive process for the distribution of the County's arts grants resources.

5. Cultural Equity -- The Commission continued its work on cultural equity issues throughout 2019. Activities included working (with CAD staff) on sessions with Quanice Floyd, from the nonprofit, Arts Educators of Color; working with County staff (CAD, library local history office) on a June 4 presentation (moderated by former County Board member Mary Hynes and including Commission Chair Marsha Semmel and Vice-Chair Tina Worden) to the Arlington Civic Federation in conjunction with the County's continuing Challenging Racism project; and inviting Karen Coltrane, CEO of the County's Leadership Excellence program, Clayton Lord, vice

president of Americans for the Arts, to address the Commission and facilitate a discussion on cultural equity and its policy implications.

Activities in 2019

The Arlington Commission for the Arts held 11 regular meetings in 2019. Topics discussed at meetings included the changing dynamics of providing arts and culture services in Arlington, communication about and implementation of strategies in *Enriching Lives*, as well as reviews and approvals associated with various Public Art projects. Marsha Semmel served as Chair and Tina Worden served as Vice Chair.

The work of ACA was organized around four committees -- Executive Committee, Grants Committee, Engagement Committee and Public Art Committee – as well as four task forces – Cultural Facilities Task Force, Youth Ambassador Task Force, County Fair Task Force and Cultural Equity Task Force. Arts Commission members also served on other countywide efforts including the Four Mile Run Valley Arts & Industry Technical Review Panel, Lee Highway Plan and the Shirlington Special GLUP Study.

Public outreach activities included two community listening sessions and participation in the Arlington County Fair.

In 2019, official correspondence with the County Board included expressed support for Cultural Affairs funding in the FY 2020 budget, support for enhanced public art contribution for the proposed Rosslyn Holiday Inn site redevelopment and a statement for the County Board Worksession session on the County Manager's proposed FY 2020 budget.

Looking Forward

For 2020, the Arlington Commission for the Arts has formulated a work plan that will focus on:

1. Continuing to communicate and collaborate with stakeholders, including other County Commissions, about fulfilling the goals of the *Enriching Lives* strategy;
2. Participating in the Arts & Industry Community Group to develop recommendations for arts and industrial district in 4MRV;
3. Identifying areas and actions to address cultural equity in the arts;
4. Developing and advancing Public/Private Partnerships to enhance arts programming and commerce;
5. Continuing to support CAD's efforts to build capacity in Arlington Arts Organizations;

6. Increasing the visibility of ACA members at arts and community events, exhibits and programs;
7. Expanding conversations at Commission meetings by inviting outside experts and arts leaders to inform the Commission on issues and opportunities that affect arts and culture in Arlington;
8. Refining the Arts Grants Program to align with the Enriching Lives strategy; and,
9. Continuing to listen to our community (including youth, artists, arts groups, cultural heritage groups, and community members) about their visions for the arts and culture in Arlington.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with the 2019 Arlington Commission for the Arts Annual Report.

Respectfully,



Marsha Semmel
Chair, Arlington Commission for the Arts

cc: Arlington County Board Members
M. Schwartz
S. Flanagan-Watson
T. Tucker

Arlington Commission for the Arts
Report on Community Listening Sessions: Enriching Lives, Arlington Arts and Culture Strategy
September 14, 2019; October 7, 2019
Theatre on the Run
3700 S. Four Mile Run Drive
Arlington, VA 22204

Marsha L. Semmel, Chair, Arlington Commission for the Arts

On June 18, 2019, the Arlington County Board unanimously *adopted Enriching Lives: Arlington Arts and Culture Strategy*, developed by the Arlington Commission for the Arts (ACA) as a culmination of a broader, community-based strategic planning process that included staff of the Cultural Affairs Department of the Arlington Economic Development Office, artists, arts leaders, other community, business, and education leaders.

In order to get community feedback about *Enriching Lives*, especially from the County’s artists and arts and culture organizations, the ACA conducted two listening sessions—in September and October 2019--with the goal of learning which of the *Enriching Lives* goals and strategies were the greatest priorities for this community. Forty people participated in these sessions, including Arts Commissioners Semmel, Worden, Carlson, Velasquez, (new commissioner) Giron, Patch, (recent commissioner) Hensley, and McFail, as well as County Board member Erik Gutshall.

The Commission intended these sessions to inform its current and future work. There will be additional listening sessions throughout the FY 2020 fiscal year.

In each of the two-hour sessions, Semmel made brief introductory remarks about *Enriching Lives* and other Commission activities. Participants introduced themselves, their organization and/or their connection to --and interest in -- the arts. Semmel, other commissioners, and participants reviewed each of the five *Enriching Lives* goals and related strategies and answered questions. Participants then each received ten colored “adhesive dots” and were asked to use the dots to indicate, in any configuration they chose, which *Enriching Lives* goals and strategies should be prioritized by the Commission (and the County).

At the conclusion of that process, the three top-rated strategies were identified, and participants were divided into small groups. They then spent time suggesting specific ways that these priority strategies might be addressed. Although these group conversations were not recorded, group members were encouraged to write suggestions on post-its, which were captured on the easels. At the close of each session (with more available time at the October session), the three groups reported out to the whole, inviting non-group members to comment and add additional suggestions to each easel.

Interestingly, each group prioritized the same three strategies:

[Infrastructure] Build essential and purposeful venues and other infrastructure that support high-quality arts activity and provide the Arlington community with opportunities to participate in a variety of artistic and cultural options.

[Cross-Pollinate] Encourage partnership and collaboration across art forms, sectors, and the community to grow and deliver strategic investments in the arts and culture ecosystem.

[Public passion]. Create sustainable public will, desire, and support for arts and culture.

The following is a detailed documentation of participants' priorities and suggestions. After each strategy, the numbers in brackets document the number of dots given to each strategy by participants in each session.

Next Steps: The Commission plans to send this report to all participants, staff in the County Manager's Office, and Katie Cristol, the County Board liaison for the Arts Commission. Additional listening sessions are planned for coming months. Incorporating the recommendations of the Community Arts Advisory Committee (October 2019) as well as the findings of last year's report, *A Framework for Arlington's Cultural Spaces* (August 2018), these community priorities and suggestions will ground its near-term work as well as Commission recommendations for the FY 2021 budget.

Goal One: Integrate arts and culture into all aspects of civic and community life.

Strategy One: [Engage] Use arts and culture to create engagement opportunities that reflect and involve Arlington's diverse and immigrant populations and the full spectrum of their creative expressions. [7] [9]

Strategy Two: [Bring together] Leverage the ability of the arts to strengthen community bonds and promote equity and inclusion in civic and cultural activities. [5] [6]

Strategy Three: [Embed] Incorporate the varied and essential civic benefits of arts and culture by considering and including these benefits in all relevant County plans and studies. [11] [6]

Goal Two: Invest in a vibrant, equitable, sustainable and evolving arts and culture ecosystem.

Strategy One: [Infrastructure] Build essential and purposeful venues and other infrastructure that support high-quality arts activity and provide the Arlington community with opportunities to participate in a variety of artistic and cultural options. [28] [33]

Strategy Two: [Risky business]. Value and reward risk-taking for innovative and impactful achievements across the artistic and cultural community. [4] [9]

Strategy Three: [Cross-Pollinate] Encourage partnership and collaboration across art forms, sectors, and the community to grow and deliver strategic investments in the arts and culture ecosystem. [14] [16]

Goal Three: Use arts and culture to facilitate accessible and inclusive opportunities for lifelong learning, health, discovery, and creativity.

Strategy One: [Ageless inclusion] Create opportunities for participatory artistic and cultural experiences for all age groups throughout Arlington's network of neighborhoods. [9] [10]

Strategy Two: [School days]. Encourage partnerships between artists, artistic and cultural organizations and schools to develop new curricular approaches that will enrich academic performance and student growth. [11] [11]

Strategy Three: [Multi-cultural culture] Offer traditional and contemporary artistic and cultural opportunities to foster cross-cultural engagement and understanding. [9] [7]

Strategy Four: [Tomorrow's talent]. Promote arts and culture as critical components of 21st century workforce skills. [3] [10]

Goal Four: Increase the visibility, awareness and prominence of artists, artistic and cultural organizations and programs in Arlington.

Strategy One: [Public passion] Create sustainable public will, desire, and support for arts and culture. [23] [17]

Strategy Two: [Keep it local] Showcase and cultivate local artistic and cultural talent. [12] [9]

Strategy Three: [Shine]. Generate brand awareness of Arlington's artistic and cultural activities and accomplishments. [11] [10]

Goal Five: Establish public spaces that offer opportunities for appreciating and interacting with arts and culture to enhance the daily experience.

Strategy One: [Everyone wins] Deliver civic and publicly accessible spaces that generate economic, environmental and social sustainability benefits for the community. [9] [12]

Strategy Two: [Civic fun] Use artistic and cultural programming to activate public spaces. [6] [10]

Strategy Three: [Art everywhere] Incorporate public art in the design, planning, and building of the public realm. [13] [12]

Breakout Groups' Suggestions for Addressing Three Highest Rated Strategies:

Each group prioritized the same three strategies. The following are the suggestions made on post-its by members of each break-out group.

Goal Two, Strategy 1: Invest in a vibrant, equitable, sustainable and evolving arts and culture ecosystem.

Strategy One: [Infrastructure] Build essential and purposeful venues and other infrastructure that support high-quality arts activity and provide the Arlington community with opportunities to participate in a variety of artistic and cultural options. [28] [33]

[September 14]

Publish maps of where arts facilities are.

- Create downloadable database of arts facilities and put it on website.
- Link arts facilities to transit, neighborhoods, edge cities.
- Assess current infrastructure assets.
- Assess current infrastructure needs.
- Gap analysis.
- Re-visit assets to confirm needs not met (extend asset bundle)
- Imagine outputs to solve for gaps.
- Existing research: schools, rec centers, existing theaters, churches, parks, commercial buildings.
- Develop professional background materials.
- Create reward program for developers if they build art infrastructure a la DC in the 80s.
- Arts infrastructure could be built with the collaboration of the corporate community and perhaps the schools as well, adding an element of education as well.
- Identify county leaders and corporate sponsors to partner with.
 - Joint space with business. Arts—conferences—conventions.
 - Joint use with school/government.
- Identify site for theatre.
- Work with planning commission to develop how and where to place arts facilities.
- Examine facilities availability throughout the county. Concentrate in one area or spread around?
- Identify developer/property owner partner.

- Make sure developers help provide spaces (as happened in the past)
- Direct County funds toward renovating and/or building new spaces for performance or display.
- Identify ambassadors in county to help fundraise.
- Connect with “public passion” group.
- Spread the word: grassroots pressure and knowledge about need for venue.
- Think cross-sector industry integration. Build coalitions and forge artists/industry/developer – connect to cross pollinate.
- Request county provide a specific structure to incentivize the development of a cultural facility (zoning/planning)

[October 7]

- Population growth needs more facilities.
- Small community groups need spaces
- Can we use existing buildings to create new arts spaces?
- Artists unite to ‘hijack’ the urgent care center on Carlin Springs: it’s on the bus line, close to Ballston and Columbia Pike, adjoins Glen Carlyn Park.
- Provide or continue tax incentives to developers to include art venues in their projects.
- More \$\$\$. City government can follow other jurisdictions on how to build arts capacity via loans and repayment forgiveness for providing community services.
- Building could be a partnership with nonprofits and the government.
- Can there be an Arts (performing) strategy for the Planning Commission?
- How can corporations be better supporters?
- How can the government help with equity within infrastructure (people and organizations)?
- Commission facilitate negotiation with major developers about including public arts spaces in large building projects.
- Shared spaces that are multidisciplinary.
- Need large 1,500+ performance venue (tours, opera house)
- How can we get better data around Return on Investment on arts benefits to Arlington?
- Can Amazon developers offer more to the arts?
- Leadership around infrastructure must come from Arlington County.
- Conduct economic impact study across groups.
- Commission to advocate to increase investment in general operating support grants budget.

Goal Two: Invest in a vibrant, equitable, sustainable and evolving arts and culture ecosystem.

Strategy Three: [Cross-Pollinate] Encourage partnership and collaboration across art forms, sectors, and the community to grow and deliver strategic investments in the arts and culture ecosystem. [14] [16]

[September 14]

- Arts in office building lobbies to create streetscape and vibrant use after business hours evening activity.
- Use gallery business space for arts groups—performing and visual arts.
- Put developers and artists together. Make space available. Art gallery—chamber group perform. Dance group perform.
- Put performing groups together with (a) visual artists, (b) other performing groups, (3) space.
- Identify key people or positions that can promote partnerships. Chamber of Commerce. Leadership Arlington. Schools. Civic Federation.
- Arts Commission should have an annual award recognizing a successful partnership. (Shine a light.)
- Encourage collaboration in Metro area. Split a production between Arlington and Silver Spring.
- Arts intersection/connection for business people seeking to connect with arts practitioners.
- Cross-share contacts and list serve for groups.
- County point person to facilitate needs and places to share—(a) looking for space; (b) has space available (A connect to B)
- Inactive posting for business and artists.
- Fund matchmaking posting vehicle for small-ish businesses interested in hosting arts opportunities.

[October 7]

- Create an artists' nonprofit listing and artists operating in Arlington.
- Integrate arts across Arlington commissions and planning bodies.
- Dance Metro DC – model --- in Arlington support new artists and establish
- Third Age—reach out orchestra collaboration = tango dancers and tango singers
- What's happening in Arlington Today? A calendar of events.
- Host a percussion party. Music is a universal language. Bridge the gap: language is rhythm. At any age, someone can create a sound. Percussion is everywhere.
- Host gatherings of directors of nonprofits.
- Match needs of community (directory) to match(ing) artists.
- Weekend of art event (sign up for approximately three events of various art forms)
- ART buses could host mobile art crawls, advertise on the buses!
- Encourage cross-pollination of PR among arts orgs.

- Create a mechanism to promote STEAM in public schools through arts groups.
- Implement scooter use fees to support the arts.
- ARTs transit buses—ads promoting Arlington arts events

Goal Four: Increase the visibility, awareness and prominence of artists, artistic and cultural organizations and programs in Arlington.

Strategy One: [Public passion]. Create sustainable public will, desire, and support for arts and culture. [23] [17]

[September 14]

- Interactive art. Cooperate with private public spaces to display. Create beautiful large art pieces that will become Arlington’s landscape. Combine parks and arts. Free T-shirts about Arlington. Arlington weird(?) Arlington art wear.
- Feature an artists or actor, poet, or musician in ARLNow, a hyper local online newsletter.
- Create articles on the arts (all of them) and include the articles in County documents that go out to the public. Board reports, trash reports, utilities, etc.
- Feature businesses that have given to the arts in Arlington in County newsletters, etc.
- Create a radio show or podcast to promote the arts.
- Miracle STEAM Free attendance start arts/music with the children. Leadership.
- County arts and culture website. Arts center district (creative placemaking).
- Promotion of local arts at CAD level.
- Volunteer art class to senior places. Schools where needed.
- Sponsoring art exhibit in secure public places.
- Get outside of the choir. Grow the Public/Civic Base. Awareness, participation, stronger voice in the community/politics. Awareness, involvement, connection, political voice.
- Banners and signals to make the public more aware. BIDs.
- Communication!!! Articles. Educate. Arlington puts forth the idea it supports the arts. Hold the county accountable to that statement. Build a stronger tie between the business and political government.

[October 7]

- Advocate for County resources to be put towards creating central calendar and communications center.
- Education campaign re diversity of arts in Arlington.
- Education campaign re benefit of the arts to our communities (building on *Enriching Lives* values).
- Pooling and centralizing resources and bargaining power.
- Arlington-focused central calendar of arts events. (Theatre Washington DC, etc.)

- Articles in Arlington Magazine, ARLNow, etc.
- Arlington Independent Media interface with larger network news agencies.
- Negotiating collectively for better advertising rates to help raise visibility.
- Chamber of Commerce to publish request for ads, donations, sponsorships of arts groups.
- ARLNow –AIM to report on Arlington cultural events on ‘broadcast channels’.
- How do we get resources to hire marketing firm and do advertising based on the *Enriching Lives* values?
- Arts Commission work with School Board and PTA’s, neighborhood associations, Chamber of Commerce, etc. to educate and promote [the arts].
- Listening sessions to get input from the larger community about what types of events people want.

Participants September 14

Renata Briggman, KW Metro Center
 Skip Chaples, Music for Life
 Don Hensley
 Dave Kline, Dave Kline Band
 Janet Kopenhaver, Embracing Arlington Arts
 Wes MacAdam
 Miriam Miller, Opera Nova
 Jason Najjoun, Synetic Theatre
 David Ryan, Opera Nova
 Katherine Young, Poet
 Tom Prewitt, Avant Bard
 Laura Ortiz, Los Quetzales Mexican Dance Ensemble
 Tina Worden
 David Carlson
 Felicia McFail
 Jon Hensley
 Robert Giron
 Stan Kang, Education Theatre Company
 Three people came in midway and didn’t sign in.

Participants October 7

Fatima Argun
 Catherine Aselford

Julie Boehler, musician
Maggie Boland, Signature Theatre
Carol Duke, HGA Architects
Sarah Duke, Encore
Erik Gutshall, County Board
Melanie Kehoss, visual artist
Cecelia Kennedy, The Arlingtones
Anna Lipari
George McJewsky
Carol Patch
Rita Rutsohn, Defense Dept
Laura Sherwood
Daniel Manzoni, Festival Argentino
Kendra Slatt, Perfect Point Dance Studio
Helen Chamberlain, Lucy Bowen McCauley
Char Beales
Carlos Velasquez