
History

Background

In 1988, the City Council in Richmond, California, appointed nine city residents to serve on a volunteer Arts & Culture Commission. The Commission was formed, in the words of its enabling ordinance, to:

- Advise the City on public policy relating to the arts
- Cooperate with existing public and private agencies to develop programs to further the development and public awareness of the fine and performing arts reflecting the cultural diversity and historical resources of the City
- Facilitate communication and cooperation among art groups
- Develop funding and resources for the arts in City
- Disseminate information concerning the arts and cultural programs
- Serve as liaison between residents, artists, arts organizations, and City government

In 1989, in its first year of organization, the Arts and Culture Commission completed a Cultural Needs Assessment to lay the groundwork for development of a Cultural Master Plan. A participatory planning process commenced in 1993 to develop a comprehensive Cultural Master Plan; the planning process was designed to gather input from the community and bring a “focus” to the City’s overall activities and programs related to arts, culture, and heritage. The City’s first Cultural Master Plan was ultimately adopted by City Council in 1994.

Since adoption of the Cultural Master Plan in 1994, the Arts & Culture Commission has made great strides towards furthering the City’s arts, cultural, and heritage environment. (A discussion of the Commission’s accomplishments is found in the following section). Now with a full-time professional staff member (Cultural Arts Coordinator) and a track record of success in implementing objectives from the 1994 Cultural Master Plan, the Commission determined it was time to set a new agenda for cultural development through an update of the 1994 Plan.

During the same period, many of the city’s community-based arts groups also made important advances in programs and activities which served the community and helped put Richmond in the Bay Area’s “cultural destination” map. Many of the achievements of the city’s non-profit arts groups are also noted in a subsequent section of this document; additional supporting data can be found in the Appendix.

History (cont.)

The 2002 Plan Update

In the summer of 2001, the Arts & Culture Commission convened a day-long meeting of current and former Commissioners, past and current members of the City’s Public Art Advisory Committee, and other “stakeholders” such as executive directors and board members of cultural institutions in the city and members of City staff. With facilitation provided by AMS Planning & Research, the consulting firm that created the 1994 Plan, the groundwork for this Cultural Master Plan 2002 Update was laid.

A subsequent planning session was held later during the summer to review a draft of this document and provide additional detailed implementation guidelines for the specific objectives of the Cultural Master Plan Update. The second planning session involved additional representatives of the city’s arts and cultural groups in addition to Arts & Culture Commission members, city staff, and other “stakeholders.” Participants in the second planning session voted on a group of priority objectives (in Goals A, B, and C) which are noted throughout the text with a “star” bullet (★). These priorities represent the “external” functions of the Arts & Culture Commission in its role serving the city’s arts, cultural, and heritage organizations and the general public.

Subsequent planning sessions by the Arts & Culture Commission resulted in another set of priority objectives – “internal” action steps contained under Goal E. These objectives represent an “advancement agenda” for the Commission itself. It is the intent of the city’s Arts & Culture Commission that implementation of both “external” and “internal” objectives will proceed simultaneously, based partly on available resources, new opportunities, and a continued emphasis on making this vision a reality for the City of Richmond.

History (cont.)



The Cultural Master Plan 2002 Update is intended to serve as an overall guideline for the work of the Arts & Culture Commission during the next 3-5 years.

It has been created based on input from a broad variety of “stakeholders” in Richmond’s cultural future, including Commissioners, artists, representatives of arts, cultural, and heritage organizations, city staff, and citizens of the region.

As always, the Richmond Arts & Culture Commission welcomes input from the community. Its regular meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of every month at 7:00 p.m. in City Hall (please call to check specific meeting dates, times, and locations).

For additional information on how you can get involved in implementing Richmond’s “culture future,” please contact the City’s Division of Arts & Culture at (510) 620-6797.



Arts & Culture Commission Accomplishments 1994-2001

Since the original Cultural Master Plan in 1994, the Arts & Culture Commission has continually tracked its progress and recorded its accomplishments. A series of documents including monthly staff reports and annual Commission reports to City Council list a myriad of specific program accomplishments and activities undertaken. At the planning retreat in June 2001 participant input was sought concerning the Commission's visible successes – the services, programs, and activities which collectively served to raise the stature of the Commission (and its professionally-staffed Division) within the community. Broadly speaking, participants noted the following successes:

- ❑ **Public Art** – From colorful murals on several main arteries to the nationally-acclaimed Rosie the Riveter memorial or the grass-roots Community Columns project, the enactment of a Public Art Ordinance in 1997 has resulted in “visual prominence” for the city's numerous public art installations.
- ❑ **Working Partnerships** – The Arts & Culture Commission and Division have spearheaded an on-going collaborations between representatives of the city's cultural institutions, together with each other and with other community-based entities (such as the city's Chamber of Commerce)
- ❑ **Neighborhood Programs** – From 1996 to 1998, the Commission's sponsorship of the Neighborhood Arts Mini-Grant program resulted in better communication between Commissioners and neighborhood residents, and, ultimately, recognition for two years in a row from the national service organizations Neighborhoods USA
- ❑ **Programming** – Sponsorship of programs for the community, such as concerts by the East Bay Symphony, helped to draw people from outside Richmond to the city and served to brighten the lives of city residents
- ❑ **Exposure** – Continuing efforts by the Commission and Division have led to increased exposure for the city's cultural programs, through its World Wide Web site, and continual presence and leadership at statewide organizations such as the California Assembly of Local Arts Agencies (CALAA)

(See addendum for a complete listing of accomplishments)

Arts & Culture Commission Accomplishments 1994-2001 (cont.)

- ❑ **Education** – Arts & Culture Commission assistance with community-based arts education programs, such as Richmond Art Center and East Bay Center for the Performing Arts school-based programming (e.g., the Art in Public Education Project) has resulted in a supportive environment for inter-disciplinary cooperation and planted the seeds for a long-term impact on the lives of young people in the community
- ❑ **Accessibility** – Many participants in the Plan Update process commented that the City's arts volunteers and staff members invite and welcome public input and involvement, qualities not always associated with leadership in this field.
- ❑ **Support for Community Initiatives** – It was also noted by participants in this planning process that the Arts & Culture Commission is supportive of community-based initiatives; that it indeed goes beyond the expected to assist community arts organizations with independent programs (e.g., such as the Coat of Many Colors project).
- ❑ **Commission Infrastructure** – A major recommendation of the 1994 Cultural Master Plan, the Commission has continued to improve its ability to deliver services and programs through hiring a paid staff person (first as a contract position and later as a full-time staff position in the Parks & Recreation Department) and by adhering to set of formal procedures concerning recruitment, diversification, training, and planning
- ❑ **Implementation of the 1994 Plan** – Overall, a majority of the recommended objectives from the original 1994 Cultural Master Plan have been implemented or, at the very least, some initial progress has been made toward their realization.

The following sections of this document contain a series of new policy, service, and program initiatives being proposed for the Arts & Culture Commission's next 3-5 years of operation.

Richmond Arts Organizations 1994-2001

Since the original Cultural Master Plan in 1994, several cultural organizations based in the City have charted their achievements on a range of artistic and community outreach activities. This section of the Plan Update summarizes the wide range of accomplishments reported by the community-based arts groups. (More detailed descriptions of the individual groups can be found in the Appendix).

- ❑ **Richmond Art Center** – This gallery-studio-classroom complex is a premier Bay Area showcase for contemporary visual art, and a community educational center serving thousands of kids and adults in classes and workshops each year. RAC sponsors on-site teen residencies featuring artist-led tours and hands-on after-school arts activities. With a staff of 10 and hundreds of artists employed as contract teachers, RAC collaborates with community-based groups.
- ❑ **East Bay Center for the Performing Arts (EBCPA)** – The EBCPA provides multi-cultural arts training and classes for all ages in music, dance, theater, and film/video production and represent the cultural traditions of Africa, Mexico, Laos, the Caribbean, Europe and contemporary U.S. EBCPA also hosts a community performance series and after-school programs in the West Contra Costa Unified School District.
- ❑ **National Institute of Art & Disabilities (NIAD)** – NIAD’s mission is to provide an art program for people with developmental disabilities that promotes creativity, independence, dignity and community integration. Founded in 1982, this award-winning non-profit art studio and gallery in Richmond serves adults of all ages from diverse cultural, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds year round.
- ❑ **Richmond Museum of History** – The Museum was founded in 1954 to promote the history of Richmond. It is housed in the city’s historic 1910 Carnegie Library building. Periods of Richmond’s early growth are depicted in permanent exhibitions in two gallery spaces and public programs and events are offered throughout the year.
- ❑ **Quilt of Many Colors** – The Quilt of Many Colors believes that communities and individuals are empowered by art that reflects their lives and struggles, promotes cross cultural interactions, and are essential to a healthy community. QMC creates exhibitions in the waiting areas of county health and social service centers, providing programming and touring exhibitions to these sites.
- ❑ **Masquers Playhouse** – A volunteer non-profit community theater that produces affordable plays and other live theatrical events for the entertainment and cultural enhancement of the greater Bay Area.

Richmond Arts Organizations 1994-2001 (cont.)

**Please refer to the addendum for additional information
on the arts non-profit organizations.**

RACC's Effectiveness and Stature

Rationale

The Richmond Arts & Culture Commission is proud of its track record in implementing objectives from the 1994 Plan during the past seven years. The Commission, as well as its professionally-staffed Arts & Culture Division (of the Parks & Recreation Department) finds itself at a crossroads in having grown its program and service commitments beyond the abilities of its one person staff (and part-time clerical support).

Several key partnerships have contributed to RAAC's accomplishments, chief among them the Arts Forum (formerly Richmond Arts Administrators Group or "RAAG"), consisting of executive staff from each of the city's cultural institutions. Spearheaded and staffed by the City's Division of Arts & Culture, the regular gathering of arts administrators serves as a foundation for collaborative programming and information exchange. Other "external" partnerships, involving arts/cultural groups with education, human service, public safety, and other agencies, represent an array of strategic opportunities for the arts to play a key role in community problem-solving. The following objectives address ways to improve and augment collaborations among and with the city's cultural organizations and recommendations to improve the effectiveness, visibility, and success of both the volunteer Commission and professionally-staffed City Division.

Objectives

- Augment the staff of the Arts & Culture Division to include a Public Art Coordinator (or, on a project-by-project basis, a contract position), full-time Administrative Assistant, and contract Project Coordinators as needed
- Work with City staff to revise the non-profit grants program application procedures and review process; the Arts & Culture Commission and Division should develop and oversee a peer review process for the city's grants to arts and cultural organizations

RACC's Effectiveness and Stature (cont.)

Objectives (cont.)

- Work closely with Parks & Recreation department staff to create on-going “synergy” between Department interests and the city’s arts/cultural community agenda (e.g., collaboration on after-school programs, use of community centers, etc.)
- Propose changing the name of the Parks & Recreation Department to Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services to acknowledge the inclusion of the Arts & Culture Division among the Department’s primary activities
- Continue to develop new local leadership for membership on the Arts & Culture Commission
- Ensure Arts & Culture Division involvement in planning for and implementation of community festivals and special events
- Continue to provide professional development opportunities for members of the Arts & Culture Commission and Division of Arts & Culture
- Strengthen Arts & Culture Commissioners’ roles as “citizen advocates” through on-going liaison activities with City department heads (to monitor opportunities for advancing the cultural community’s agenda through other forums and venues, such as the Police Activities League, Library, Redevelopment Agency, and other city activities)
- RAAC and the Division staff should work closely with the City Manager’s Office, other Parks & Recreation Department staff, and other city departments to develop appropriate programming and use strategies for the city’s community centers

RACC's Effectiveness and Stature (cont.)

Objectives (cont.)

- The Division of Arts & Culture should continue to convene and staff Arts Forum meetings and pursue new joint projects, which might include:
 - ✓ Cooperative marketing materials (e.g., brochures)
 - ✓ An initiative to document arts impact on the community
 - ✓ Collaborative funding applications
 - ✓ Creation of a comprehensive artists database
 - ✓ Other more advanced “shared services” approaches such as a united arts fundraising campaign, incubator project, technology upgrade, joint earned income enterprise, etc.

Community Impact

Rationale

Across the nation local arts councils and cultural advocates are seeking to document the myriad ways in which the arts contribute to the local economy; to community development, education, and overall quality of life. Economic impact studies and more sophisticated advocacy campaigns are some of the products of these efforts. In Richmond, perhaps more so than in many other cities, arts and cultural activities (from murals to youth arts programs) have a real and direct effect on the daily lives of many citizens. This goal proposes a process to study and document the ways in which Richmond's cultural ecology impacts the community; ultimately, a better understanding of these contributions can result in better-informed citizen advocates and access to more "creative" funding approaches.

Objectives

- ☞ Conduct a citywide research effort (e.g., a "Cultural Wellness Study") to document the impact of arts and culture on the City of Richmond, paying particular attention to health and "wellness" indicators and programs. Commence this effort by working closely with the Richmond Arts Forum to gather existing data and identify information gaps. Incorporate new measurement and "valuation" scales to better define terms for understanding arts and cultural impacts on learning, civic dialogue, and other community needs.
- Work with appropriate city departments and community-based groups (such as EBCPA) to visually document community arts and cultural programs (e.g., public art projects, grass-roots arts activities, etc.) through photo- and videography, in order to create an archives of material illustrating arts "impacts"

Audience Development

Rationale

The 1994 Cultural Master Plan contained a goal devoted to raising the “visibility” of the City’s cultural organizations, particularly through education and outreach activities. Certain recommendations in the 1994 Plan included audience development components intended to expand participation with, and support of, the City’s non-profit arts groups. For instance, while the award-winning Neighborhood Arts Mini-Grant program was designed as a community “point-of-entry” into local arts experiences, it was also meant to be followed up with membership solicitations and direct marketing approaches from the city’s arts organizations. Recognizing that since the 1994 Plan, great strides have been made in re-positioning the City as one rich with arts and cultural resources, this goal establishes the *imperative to better communicate* Richmond’s arts opportunities to the general public.

Objectives

- ☞ Undertake a comprehensive marketing and audience development campaign, targeting Richmond residents, citizens of the Greater East Bay and Marin county, and art aficionados from throughout the Bay Area, through a mix of approaches including:
 - ✓ On-going research with current and potential visitors and audiences
 - ✓ “Branding” of City-funded arts programs
 - ✓ Development of communication vehicles and direct marketing materials (e.g., mail, e-mail, web-based)
 - ✓ Sponsorship of “shared services” marketing efforts among the Arts Forum members
 - ✓ One-on-one and group sales solicitation with schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, faith-based communities, civic and social clubs, and other community “touchstones”
 - ✓ Weekday “lunch and learn” programs sponsored by the city’s arts groups at local corporate offices

Educational Programs & Partnerships

Rationale

At the time of this Plan's development, the US Ad Council (responsible for notable public relations campaigns for Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the Partnership for a Drug Free America, and other national advocacy organizations) is readying a national initiative in support of arts education, titled "Ask For More!" In Richmond as across the country, recognizing the importance of the arts in educating children and adults is a "front and center" agenda item. These objectives address opportunities to further incorporate arts, culture, and heritage into local education offerings.

Objectives

- Assess ways to further support arts education in the public schools, through special programs (e.g., community-wide student recognition concerts), accessing targeted funding (e.g., Healthy Start), expanding existing partnerships between schools, city departments, and community arts groups, and working with WCCUSD to develop a policy on arts enrichment
- Work with appropriate "Healthy Start" participants (e.g., State of California, West Contra Costa Unified School District, Contra Costa County Social Services agencies, etc.) to incorporate arts, historical and cultural activities, utilizing the services and staff of the City's cultural organizations
- Consider participating in and/or hosting a national youth arts festival
- Pursue opportunities to provide inter-disciplinary and/or inter-generational arts programming for the city's youth and senior populations
- Pursue opportunities to provide adult arts education opportunities for the city's residents, through community-based education providers (e.g., WCCUSD, UC Extension, etc.)

Funding

Rationale

As noted in the Accomplishments section, the Richmond Arts & Culture Commission (RACC) has initiated a number of programs and services of which it has great reason to be proud. However, as is often typical with non-profit organizations, while “pilot program” funding may be available from foundations, corporations, or government agencies, dollars to *continue* (and sustain, through on-going operating support) successful programs are much harder to come by. This goal addresses the need to continue, leverage, and augment RACC’s initial successes. Any new program, research effort, or initiative to sustain current arts activities will require some infusion of monetary support. This Plan Update recognizes that arts initiatives come at a cost, and new sources and approaches for support should be identified.

Objectives

- ☞ The Arts & Culture Commission, together with Parks & Recreation staff and participants in the Richmond Arts Forum, should fully inventory funding and facilities needs of city cultural programs and city-based arts/cultural organizations to establish fundraising goals. After an initial assessment, a funding strategy should consider:
 - ✓ A possible “community arts endowment”
 - ✓ A possible united arts fundraising campaign
 - ✓ Access to social/human service and education funds for community-based arts programming (with special and target populations)
 - ✓ Use of redevelopment or other public funding sources for expanded support of arts and cultural organization operating and project costs (modeled on Oakland’s successful redevelopment funding)

Funding (cont.)

Objectives (cont.)

- ✓ An annual “Urban Arts Demonstration Program” prize to generate publicity for Richmond’s trend-setting approach to “culture as urban solution” (modeled on World Food Prize and other annual international recognitions)
- Resurrect the nationally-acclaimed Neighborhood Arts Mini-Grant program through a commitment of city funds (to match potential State and/or Foundation dollars) and by identifying “implementation” partners from among Richmond’s arts and cultural organizations to undertake staff responsibilities (or, alternatively, the hiring of an independent contractor on a city contract position)
- Identify maintenance needs of the City’s Public Art collection and seek a funding commitment from City dollars to provide for on-going maintenance of the collection
- Based on research proposed in this Plan, utilize results to develop a sophisticated advocacy campaign aimed at increased per capita funding
- Pursue a percent-for-arts ordinance covering private development, positioned as a benefit (not a penalty) of doing business in Richmond, with funding not limited to permanent incorporations of visual art; but rather, with recommended opportunities for business support of the city’s cultural organizations and/or “purchase” of performing arts programming