

MATTHEWS CULTURAL ACTION PLAN

PREPARED BY HYPERION ASSOCIATES
ON BEHALF OF

THE ARTS & SCIENCE COUNCIL
AND
THE TOWNS OF MATTHEWS, NORTH CAROLINA

December 2004

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Community cultural planning is a collective work, and the consultants would like to acknowledge those who lent their hands, their minds, and their resources to the process. We express our gratitude to the Arts and Science Council board and staff in general. We are especially thankful to the Arts and Science Council Planning Committee and its Chair, Dan Prickett for their generous gifts of time, interest and guidance. Robert Bush, Vice President for Planning has distinguished himself as a wise, creative and highly skilled collaborator. Planning and Research Associate Katherine McAlpine provided reliable support in communications, event preparation, and research. Office Manager Randy Penninger conscientiously tracked the thousand details that make for successful meetings and schedules. And ASC Vice Presidents Jean Greer, Public Art; Regina Smith, Grants and Services; Bob Halbruner, Communications; and Terri Marshall, Development, have all contributed their crucially important perspectives to this plan.

In addition, we were well supported in undertaking this effort by the Town of Matthews. Mayor Lee Myers' leadership in moving forward was critical. Commissioner Paula Lester's service on the Steering Committee and generous help in understanding Matthews' history helped ground and advance the work. Town staff members have been very open and helpful, and their intimate knowledge of municipal affairs has been an invaluable resource. In particular, we express our gratitude to Hazen Blodgett, Town Manager, for helping us get started and managing administrative links, and to GERALYNN TRELUE, Director of Parks, Recreation, and Culture and ALICIA CRADDOCK, Cultural Recreation Specialist who served as municipal liaisons to this planning process. GERALYNN'S intimate understanding of arts and cultural affairs in Matthews and her commitment to serving the public were critical to this work.

This planning effort was led by a Steering Committee consisting of a member of the ASC board and a group of citizens appointed by the mayor. The members of the Steering Committee are

Patty Turner, Chair	Rachael Baksa	Ron Paschal
Paula Lester, Commissioner	June Bayless	Cynthia Persin
Kevin O'Hara, ASC Liaison	Harvey Boyd	Moirá Quinn
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		Sharon Schwenk

Individual participants, who contributed both their precious time and many wonderful ideas, are listed at the close of this document. In undertaking this plan, many residents, local businesses and civic organizations made supporting contributions. Their gifts were important to this planning process, and we thank them as well. Thanks in that regard to:

Cultural Summit Sponsors

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Downsize: Fitness and Weight Loss for Women
Guild of Charlotte Artists
The Light Factory
Martha Krauss
Matthews Chamber of Commerce
Matthews Playhouse
Merle Norman
Omimeo Mime Theatre
Opera Carolina
Prudy Weaver
Susan Daul Folk Art
Town of Matthews

Video

Steve Rutherford, Production 13 Films

Elected Officials' Reception

Raucci's on East John Street

Consultant Lodging

Courtyard by Marriott of Matthews

INTRODUCTION

The Genesis of the Plan

The Arts & Science Council of Charlotte-Mecklenburg (ASC) is Mecklenburg County's local arts agency. One of its key roles is to conduct regular cultural planning. Its most recent countywide cultural plan includes a recommendation that the ASC begin to craft more thoughtful relationships with the six towns in the county and their residents. This plan helps fulfill that recommendation by addressing cultural development in the Town of Matthews. It is a partnership between the town and the ASC. Together, they have hired Hyperion Associates, a consulting firm based in Madison, Wisconsin, to undertake the planning work reflected here.

Edge Towns

The Matthew Cultural Action Plan addresses cultural development in a community that can be regarded as an edge town, in the sense that although it began as an independent community separate from both Charlotte and from neighboring towns, it is rapidly being reshaped by population growth. Today, Matthews' proximity to Charlotte and other South Mecklenburg towns impacts every aspect of community life. Matthews reflects many of the classic characteristics of edge towns. They

- Face profound infrastructure pressure;
- Experience changing community expectations for services based on changing demographics;
- Find public communication more demanding as traditional systems are outgrown;
- Experience increasing levels of demand on elected officials and public servants as the civil system professionalizes to address more complex issues;
- Experience tension as historic patterns of social exchange are challenged;
- Face difficult questions of regionalization, complicated by inter-community rivalries and distrust;
- Have enormous pools of new and "undiscovered" or "unconnected" talent, volunteerism, and civic energy but lack systems for harnessing that resource; and
- Must find new ways to experience and express core community values.

METHODOLOGY

In undertaking this plan, the consultants have relied on the assistance of the Matthews Cultural Action Plan Steering Committee. Within the frame of their guidance, a wide range of information has contributed to the formation of this plan. These include:

- Researching census data, local history, Mecklenburg County cultural plans from previous time periods, the ASC Cultural Facilities Master Plan, the ASC grants history in South Mecklenburg, ASC donor patterns, local physical planning documents, background information on local cultural organizations, and municipal capital and operating budgets;
- Conducting physical tours of the town under the guidance of public employees and interested citizens, including key cultural facilities, neighborhoods, municipal facilities, parks, malls, and the downtown;
- Securing a telephone survey, conducted by UNCC's Urban Institute that tests public attitudes and preferences in cultural affairs;
- Conducting a written survey of ASC affiliate organizations testing their plans for services in the South Mecklenburg area;
- Conducting interviews with municipal employees and town and county elected officials;
- Conducting interviews with area residents from all walks of life;
- Providing opportunities for citizens to submit comments via a web site;
- Surveying residents of the area in written format;
- Conducting a small-group meeting with area artists;
- Attending a meeting of downtown merchants;
- Conducting a town meeting at the Community Center;
- Commissioning Production 13 Films to produce a brief video to document public opinion; and
- Convening a Cultural Summit drawing together residents and cultural organizations from the region.

Each of these sources of information has had a critical role in shaping the recommendations contained in this plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key Findings

To strengthen cultural programming in Matthews, the advisory board should broaden its engagement with current and emerging cultural development issues.

A strong majority of residents favor the use of local tax dollars for the arts and culture

Visual artists need more opportunities to display their work.

Cultural programs for teens are in short supply and programming is not always accessible to low-income and Spanish-speaking residents.

Related Recommendations

I. Reshape, rename, and empower the Matthews Arts Advisory Board to serve as the nexus for municipal engagement with cultural development issues both at the Matthews Community Center and in the community at large.

Strategies include changing its name to the Matthews Cultural Advisory Board, restructuring its membership to avoid conflicts of interest and to include a diverse group of individuals with specific cultural expertise, giving it broader fiscal and policy-making responsibilities, and charging it with monitoring progress toward the goals of the cultural action plan.

II. Create a lively, highly utilized Community Center that serves as a hub for local arts and cultural affairs.

Strategies include marketing efforts to emphasize the Center's role in arts and culture; exhibiting individual and group-made works in the building; creating a welcoming space for drop-in socializing; increasing programming for teens, low-income residents, and Spanish-speaking residents; creating programs to encourage life-long learning and participation in cultural activities; and creating a Facility Representatives Group to study use issues and recommend policies that will increase the availability and functionality of the Center's spaces for resident groups and town-sponsored programs.

Residents feel that the municipality should take steps to preserve and enhance the town's beauty.

The high density of traffic on Trade St. is a longstanding problem.

There is strong citizen and business interest in developing a public art program.

ASC staff and its affiliates are interested in exploring Matthews' needs for outreach and other programming.

Many residents expressed interest in increasing the number of cultural tour bus outings to Charlotte.

Matthews residents take pride in the community's historic identity.

III. Use cultural resources to enhance public spaces.

Strategies include creating a Mayor's Gallery and Mayor's Purchase Award, relocating the Selma Burke sculpture to a more prominent location, strengthening landscaping requirements, exploring aesthetically pleasing traffic-calming devices, and working with the ASC to design a Public Art Program directed at new private development and municipal capital projects

IV Support and utilize existing cultural resources.

Strategies include improving Matthews' access to information about area cultural programs and services via regular meetings between town liaisons and ASC staff, and its affiliates and associates, formalizing guidelines for municipal support of special civic events, and facilitating bus tours and group ticket purchases to area cultural programs.

V. Strengthen local history programs.

Strategies include preserving an undocumented slave cemetery within Matthews' borders, participating in a county-wide ASC-initiated effort on management of historic artifacts and sites, linking history programs to school curricula and the local library, and creating festivals with an historic focus.

Creative workers living in Matthews describe isolation, difficulty finding professional or amateur peers, and marketing their work.

Matthews faces serious downtown development issues.

Downtown merchants are interested in creating a vibrant street presence.

Artfest has growth potential, and Matthews Alive! can create more market options for artists.

The business community is interested in recruiting galleries, studios, and arts-related merchandizing in the downtown.

Decisions about the use of Tourism Tax dollars are currently made without specific regard for

VI. Support local artists.

Strategies include creating an artists' registry; bimonthly opportunities for local artists to socialize, network, and problem-solve; and increased municipal support (including zoning accommodations) for property owners and developers interested in creating artists' live/work space or stand-alone studios.

VII. Engage cultural resources in enlivening downtown Matthews.

Strategies include finding opportunities for citizen-made projects throughout the downtown, raising the standards for exhibitors at Artfest and Matthews Alive!, installing pedestrian-friendly streetscape amenities, adding traditional and home-arts related sales to the farmer's market and partnering with the ASC to include Matthews in an economic impact study, include Matthews' cultural events on its web-based calendar, and involve Matthews in a cultural marketing study.

VIII. Secure additional resources for local cultural activities.

long-term cultural development.

The Department of Arts, Recreation, and Culture is the key player in the delivery of the town's cultural programs and the management of its facilities.

Matthews has yet to evolve mechanisms through which philanthropists can convene to shape their participation in town's cultural development agenda.

Strategies include creating funding mechanisms for cultural programs and facilities using ASC funds and proceeds from the Tourism Tax; identifying an on-going source of municipal support for cultural development; creating a formal Cultural Grants Program; providing appropriate staffing to the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Culture, reconsidering expectations for earned revenue from the Community Center, and working with the ASC to convene a forum of individual and corporate cultural philanthropists from Matthews to enhance private participation in sustaining local arts and cultural resources.

THE TOWN OF MATTHEWS

Background

Matthews was settled in the early 1800s by farmers who called it “Stumptown,” in recognition of their thorough land-clearing efforts. The first rail stop in what is now Matthews was called “Fullwood.” In about 1850, a nearby settlement originally called “Tanktown” and now known as the Crestdale neighborhood, became the state’s first African-American settlement. In 1874, the Carolina Central Railway Company laid tracks through the town, which renamed itself in honor of Watson Matthews, one of the railroad’s directors. As a stop on the rail network that linked cotton farms to the mills and markets, by 1900 Matthews had developed a flourishing commercial area centered at Trade and John Streets. Even today, these streets remain two of the town’s main traffic arteries. Acknowledgment of the railroad’s importance to local history can be found all over the town: at the newly renovated Seaboard Station that houses an exhibition of railroad artifacts, at an historic caboose, in a mural and an architectural installation at the library, in the town seal and in the town’s mascot – a bear sporting overalls and a trainman’s cap.

The area’s farmland gave way to business and residential development after World War II. Matthews’ year 2000 population stood at 22,127. It is the headquarters of two major corporations, Family Dollar and Harris Teeter, and the site of the Levine Campus of Central Piedmont Community College. Like the rest of Mecklenburg County, Matthews is experiencing record growth, accompanied by rising residential and commercial real estate prices and pressure on the schools. As an example, a new public high school, Butler, opened in 1997 and was already overcrowded on its first day. City planners now project a maximum build-out capacity of 45,000 residents in the town’s 13 square miles. Although only 20 minutes from downtown Charlotte, Matthews’ residents place a high value on the self-contained, familiar character of their town. They consider it a safe, attractive, and fulfilling place to raise children.

Never losing sight of its identity as a family-friendly place, Matthews leads Mecklenburg County’s other edge communities in the maturation of its municipal commitment to cultural development. Cultural activities are administered by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture. Matthews loves large outdoor events and is home to several longstanding, well-attended festivals. Its signature is Matthews Alive!, a Labor Day Weekend celebration that attracts 150,000 people and features arts and crafts booths, food, the largest parade in the Southeast, games, rides, and free entertainment. Revenue from the festival is distributed to local nonprofits, whose volunteers staff the festival booths. In the last 12 years, more than \$400,000 has been returned to these local non-profit organizations. Artfest, a juried art fair held later in the fall, is a fundraiser for the Chamber of Commerce. The Hometown Holiday Festival is another event that draws large crowds. Each of these events has the potential to grow and be shaped to enhance Matthews’ role as a cultural center for South Mecklenburg County. Movies

and concerts are held throughout the summer and early fall in Stumptown Park, a .9 acre parcel with a bandstand/stage in the center of town. Stumptown Park's central location makes it the natural venue for a variety of activities.

The pride of Matthews' cultural scene is the Matthews Community Center. A recently renovated 1907 brick school, it has been designated a Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmark. Its facilities include a 362-seat auditorium, five classrooms, two art studios, a banquet/meeting space, and a kitchen. Its primary tenant is the Matthews Playhouse, which conducts classes and produces children's theater and, under the name Theater Matthews, musicals and plays designed to appeal to adults. The Community School of the Arts holds band and orchestra classes there, and a for-profit dance school also rents space. Other classes (such as yoga, flower-arranging, drawing, and painting) are taught by teachers on a contract basis. It is the site of day camps during the summer. Reflecting Matthews' interest in history, the center displays a charming, loaned collection of antique toys and household objects.

Cultural Opportunities in Matthews

Although programming at the center is expanding, the facility is not yet programmed to capacity and is only beginning to serve as the true hub for the area's cultural life. A fuller roster of programs could progress from beginning to advanced levels for children, teen, and adult learners in a system of classes and workshops that are curriculum-based. Teens, the area's growing Spanish-speaking citizens, and low-income residents are currently underserved. Partnerships with the town's current cultural service organizations can be enhanced. And the Center can grow to become not just a programming entity but a vital focal point for communitywide arts development issues.

Likewise, local history programs, which are off to a good start, should be strengthened. While collections exist and are exhibited in the Seaboard Station, Town Hall, and the library, there are few related participatory programs. More work is needed to properly preserve and display the artifacts and photos. Of special note is an undocumented slave cemetery currently on private land; an exploration of the prospects for preserving this site could make an important contribution to the community's historic holdings.

As with most rapidly growing suburban communities, preserving the viability of the downtown is a cause of continuing concern. On the one hand, a group of local businesses is in place and some thrive. On the other, problems of high traffic volume on the Trade Street make both driving and walking the downtown difficult. Competitive pressure from malls is a real factor, as residential development flees farther from the heart of town. Vacant storefronts are a reality. Recently, a Downtown Merchants Group was formed to address downtown vitality on a continuing, cooperative basis. This group, in cooperation with the Town, is already using cultural events and partnerships to draw traffic to the downtown. In addition, many residents and business owners recognize the value of enhancing public spaces with art, including gardening and landscaping projects. Because the downtown will thrive mainly

as a corridor of specialty shops, restaurants, professional offices, and cultural institutions (the Community Center, the Library, and the Seaboard Station/Caboose), the prospects for including a considerable presence for art galleries, interior designers, art supply specialty stores, and arts related commercial business is very real. Indeed, there is local interest in creating artists' live/work or studio spaces in some downtown buildings.

Matthews has created a good beginning infrastructure to meet the cultural needs of its citizens. It is poised at an important moment in its cultural development. With focused citizen action, Matthews can fill its Community Center with the joy of expression and learning; enliven its downtown; strengthen public access to cultural services; and maintain its strong identity as a family-friendly, independent, and beautiful community.

FINDINGS OF THE INTERVIEWS, SMALL GROUPS, AND TOWN MEETING

Community Identity

- Many informants commented that Matthews' history is accessible to residents, even new residents. They enjoy the community's historic identity.
- Many people affirmed Matthews' view of itself as a friendly, family-oriented community and emphasized the need for continuing the tradition of family programming, especially through special events. Overall, residents have high levels of satisfaction with Matthews' cultural offerings. There are, however, unmet needs and opportunities for advancing cultural life and improving accessibility to all residents.

Municipal Issues

- A strong majority of residents favor the use of local tax dollars for the arts and culture.
- The Matthews Arts Advisory Committee has, to date, focused on the Community Center's facility issues. In order to grow and strengthen programming, the Committee will need to broaden its engagement with cultural development issues.
- The town has an excellent history of cooperation with cultural events, and should be proud of its flexibility in accommodating community functions. However, as venues and events increase in number, the absence of a policy guidance addressing how and when the municipality will contribute time and resources is beginning to emerge as an issue.
- Matthews uses its Tourism Tax revenues for a variety of things including cultural programs, but decisions are made without a specific regard for long-term cultural development.
- The Matthews Community Center is a beautiful facility, and members of the public take pride in it. However, because it is an historic facility, there are some limitations imposed on its current occupancy that frustrate some artistic uses. In particular, activities that are messy (painting, ceramics, metal fabrication, photography, digital arts, etc.) and/or are best served through permanent dedication of spaces and permanent equipment installation are not easily accommodated.
- The Depot could become an attractive information nexus for cultural activities, but it needs further development (longer hours, more activity, better collections protection) in order to realize its full potential.

- Historical artifacts now located in cases near City Hall's front door need protection from sunlight, or they will suffer damage.
- The Town should explore the slave cemetery (a very valuable historic resource) that exists within its borders, and make further efforts to document and preserve it.
- Because residents of Matthews are concerned that the town retains its character, the municipality should take steps to protect its beauty.
- Residents rank landscaping, gardening, ecological, and nature programs for adults, teens, and young children as being in short supply.

Special Events

- Matthews' cultural events and resources are not always well marketed.
- Both Matthews' business and cultural communities are interested in increasing the number of non-Matthews residents attending Matthews' special events.
- Artfest is a staple attraction in Matthews and it has the potential to become a more prestigious, larger-draw event.
- Matthews Alive! Holds a special position in Matthews' community identity, and it could be mined as an opportunity to create more market options for individual artists of all kinds.
- Conducting economic impact assessments of both Artfest and Matthews Alive! could provide a strong basis for marketing sponsorship of those events to local businesses.

Individual Artists

- Individual visual artists have difficulty marketing their services.
- Residents believe that studio/gallery tours or an annual Gallery Night, could help increase public awareness of local artists while providing an enhanced income stream for local working artists.
- Independent, professional musicians have difficulty connecting with employment opportunities. One approach might be to create a local musician's registry, for use in planning both public and private events.
- Visual artists need more opportunities to display their work.
- Matthews needs dedicated spaces for visual artists (painters, sculptors, photographers, drawers) to work. The town is well-positioned to become home to a regional center for visual arts that offers studio resources, curriculum-based pre-professional programs, and professional development.

Accessibility, Quality, and Diversity

- Cultural programming is not always accessible to low-income residents, and information about scholarship opportunities is not sufficiently accessible. Transportation and information are the two key barriers.
- Links between arts and cultural organizations and the schools should be strengthened with a goal of infusing arts instruction throughout the curriculum.
- Decentralized cultural programs that reach into new and established neighborhoods, parks, schools, early childhood centers, CPCC, and malls are needed.
- Residents of Matthews enjoy communitywide, participatory programs.
- There is strong interest in developing a local public art program, both as a tool for enhancing downtown Matthews and as a way of enhancing neighborhood life.
- While most Charlotte-based organizations are likely to continue to provide similar levels of one-off or short-term outreach programs, there are opportunities to recruit more outreach programs to Matthews.
- Many residents express interest in increasing the number of cultural tour bus outings to Charlotte.
- Discovery Place is engaged in a planning process to place early learning centers in some of Mecklenburg's suburban communities. Matthews is well positioned to become such a site, and could pursue a partnership.

Teen Programs

- Cultural programs for teens (as well as other recreational and educational programs) are in extremely short supply and there is a high level of demand for such services from parents. The development of appropriate cultural opportunities for teens is seen as a critical component of any comprehensive set of options for teens.
- A municipal partnership with the Siskey YMCA might provide an excellent vehicle for teen programming. Other options could include working with local cultural organizations to form apprenticeship positions or youth companies and/or creating new teen programs in jazz, dance, media arts, and so forth.

Downtown Development

- The business community is interested in recruiting and developing galleries, artist's studios, and art-related merchandizing for downtown Matthews. In fact, there are privately held properties very suitable to these uses and at least one new arts and design business is already opening its doors.

- The farmer's market could be expanded to include on-going sales of handmade arts and crafts products. Careful quality controls would help make the "farm and arts" pairing work.
- Downtown merchants are interested in creating a vibrant street presence. There is interest in creating a street artists program to attract foot traffic.
- Downtown signage and design standards should be reviewed and updated in a manner that supports long-term aesthetic and functional goals.

Local Civic Leadership

- Currently, local philanthropic participation in community affairs is determined in small networking efforts by a few leaders on a case-by-case basis. While generous givers abound, Matthews does not yet have a forum where longer-term integration of philanthropic participation in the civic agenda can be discussed. Such a forum could be a tool for recruiting newer residents and businesses into the pool of givers, and help focus leading philanthropies on Matthews' needs.
- Many residents expressed the need for broadening civic leadership and participation in the community in terms of age, length of residence in Matthews, inclusion of a more economically diverse group of leaders, and inclusion of newer residents and businesses in the area.

FINDINGS OF THE TELEPHONE SURVEY

Description of the Survey

Annually for the past 24 years, the UNCC Urban Institute has conducted a Charlotte-Mecklenburg telephone survey. In 2003, the ASC commissioned the inclusion of certain questions concerning arts and cultural ideas and preferences of Mecklenburg County residents.

Methods and Reliability

The 2003 sample contained 853 residents randomized by age and gender. Calls were made between October 7th and November 6th, 2003. Data was cleaned and analyzed using methods and software broadly accepted in the field. Reliability for those questions answered by all 853 respondents is +/-4% at a 98% confidence level. Reliability declines as sample size lessens. African Americans (21.7% of respondents compared to 27.9% of county population) and Hispanics (1.7% of respondents compared to 6.5% of county population) are under-represented in the sample. Financial constraints did not allow for bilingual administration of the questionnaire. Respondents were identified by zip code and results described here for Matthews are based on those codes.

2003 Urban Institute Annual Telephone Survey

Matthews Cultural Questions Responses

1. Would you prefer participating in hands-on arts and cultural activities or attending arts and cultural events?

	Mecklenburg Cty.	Matthews
Participate	15.3%	23.4%
Attend	59.7%	55.3%
Both	12.4%	10.6%
Neither	12.5%	10.6%

2. How many minutes would you be willing to travel to PARTICIPATE in an arts or cultural activity of your choice, such as a community theater group or a photography class?

	Mecklenburg Cty.	Matthews
None	21.2%	33.3%
Less than 15 minutes	7.3%	8.3%
15 to 30 minutes	38.5%	29.2%
31-45 minutes	14.8%	16.7%
46-60 minutes	6.5%	8.3%
60+ minutes	11.9%	4.2%

3. How many minutes would you travel to ATTEND an arts or cultural activity of your choice such as a concert, an art festival or a theater performance?

	Mecklenburg Cty.	Matthews
None	11.2%	12.5%
Less than 15 minutes	5.3%	6.3%
15 to 30 minutes	33.2%	29.2%
31-45 minutes	17.5%	16.7%
46-60 minutes	11.8%	25%
60+ minutes	21%	10.4%

4. Is it more important for YOUR CHILDREN to be able to PARTICIPATE in hands-on arts and cultural activities or to be able to ATTEND arts and cultural events? *(Asked only of participants with children 18 or under in the home.)*

	Mecklenburg Cty.	Matthews
Participate	44.2%	61.1%
Attend	22.3%	16.2%
Both	32.2%	22.2%
Neither	1.4%	.5%

5. How many minutes would you travel so that your CHILDREN could PARTICIPATE in an arts or cultural activity of your choice such as a dance class, a nature camp, or an after-school arts program? *(Asked only of survey participants with children 18 or under in the home.)*

	Mecklenburg Cty.	Matthews
None	1.4%	0%
Less than 15 minutes	5.9%	5.5%
15 to 30 minutes	41.1%	44.4%
31-45 minutes	20.9%	27.8%
46-60 minutes	8.7%	16.7%
60+ minutes	22%	5.6%

6. How many minutes would you travel so that your CHILDREN could ATTEND an arts or cultural activity such as a concert, an art festival, or a theater performance. *(Asked only of survey participants with children 18 or under in the home.)*

	Mecklenburg Cty.	Matthews
None	2.1%	0%
Less than 15 minutes	5.6%	5.6%
15 to 30 minutes	33.5%	38.9%
31-45 minutes	22.3%	22.2%
46-60 minutes	11.1%	27.8%
60+ minutes	23.3%	5.6%

7. On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being very satisfied and 5 being not satisfied at all, how satisfied are you with the arts instruction and activities your children receive through their school? *(Asked only of survey participants with children 18 or under in the home.)*

	Mecklenburg Cty.	Matthews
Very satisfied	32%	57.1%
Somewhat satisfied	20.9%	14.3%
Neutral	25%	7.1%
Somewhat dissatisfied	13.5%	7.1%
Very dissatisfied	8.6%	14.3%

8. How important do you think arts programs in the schools are in helping children to do better in other academic areas? *(Asked only of survey participants with children 18 or under in the home.)*

	Mecklenburg Cty.	Matthews
Very important	72.4%	67.4%
Somewhat important	19.1%	21.7%
Neutral	4.8%	2.2%
Somewhat important	1.8%	2.2%
Not important at all	1.9%	6.5%

9. Which of the following leisure-time activities are not available in your community?

	Mecklenburg Cty.	Matthews
Age-appropriate social clubs/nightlife for teens	58%	33.3%
History/heritage programs	51%	29.2%
Gardening & landscaping classes	49.3%	16.7%
Nature, environmental, science programs for adults	45.7%	22.9%
Nature, environmental, science programs for teens	41.5%	16.7%
Nature, environmental, science programs for young children	39.3%	16.7%
Arts & cultural programs for adults	34.6%	8.3%
Arts & cultural programs for teens	35.5%	8.3%
Arts & cultural programs for young children	34.3%	8.3%
Bars, clubs, & nightlife	26.3%	16.7%
Sports programs for adults	23.4%	10.4%
Sports programs for teens	17.3%	14.6%
Sports programs for young children	16.4%	14.6%

10. What types of art have you observed in either indoor or outdoor public places?

	Mecklenburg Cty.	Matthews
Murals/paintings/mosaics	56.5%	58.3%
Sculpture	43.8%	37.5%
Statues/monuments	19%	22.9%
Ceramic works	8.2%	10.4%
Fountains	6.1%	8.3%
Light/neon exhibit or installation	2.8%	4.2%
Rocking chairs	2.7%	2.1%

11. Do you support local government funding for arts programs?

	Mecklenburg Cty.	Matthews
Yes	63.7%	64.6%
No	31%	31.3%
Depends	5.3%	4.2%

Do you support local government funding for science programs?

	Mecklenburg Cty.	Matthews
Yes	65.9%	68.8%
No	31.2%	29.2%
Depends	2.9%	2.1%

Do you support local government funding for history programs?

	Mecklenburg Cty.	Matthews
Yes	61.6%	61.7%
No	34.1%	34%
Depends	4.3%	4.3%

FINDINGS OF THE WRITTEN SURVEY

Survey Demographics

Number of responses: 154

Respondent age categories:

14-18	7.1%
19-24	3.2%
25-34	10.3%
35-44	30.5%
45-54	21.4%
55-64	18.1%
65+	5.1%
Unknown	2.5%

56 respondents had children under 18

1. Ranking of Adult Preferences

Respondents could indicate more than one preference; therefore, percentages do not add up to 100%

(a.) Cultural events adults would like to SEE most

Music Theatre (73%)
 Non-Music Theatre (65%)
 Instrumental Music (64%)
 Dance (47%)
 Vocal Music (47%)
 Science & Nature Programs (46%)
 Historical Programs (43%)

(b.) Cultural activities adults would like to PARTICIPATE IN most

Visual Arts (27%)
 Fabrication Arts (26%)
 Science & Nature Programs (26%)
 Textile Arts (24%)
 Literary Arts (21%)
 Vocal Music (20%)
 Graphic Arts (19%)

2. Minor Children's Preferences as Reported by Adults

56 adults reported at least one child under 18 living at home. More than one preference could be indicated; therefore, percentages do not add up to 100%.

(a.) Cultural events children would like to SEE most. (b.) Cultural activities children would like to PARTICIPATE in

Music Theatre (61%)

Non-Music Theatre (61%)

Science & Nature Programs (46%)

Fabrication Arts (45%)

Literary Arts (45%)

Media Arts (38%)

Science & Nature Programs (57%)

Visual Arts (54%)

Ceramic Arts (50%)

Fabrication Arts: (41%)

Music Theatre (36%)

Non-Music Theatre (34%)

3. Top 5 Adult Preferences for Formats or Settings for Cultural Activities

Special Community Events (fairs, festivals, parades, events in parks) 50%

Community Facilities (community centers, libraries, neighborhood centers) 46%

Classes (several sessions at a set time) 43%

Major Cultural Facilities (museums, theatres, galleries, historical sites) 38%

Workshops (one longer session at a set time) 36%

4. Top 5 Children's Preferences for Formats or Settings for Cultural Activities

Special Community Events 55%

Classes 52%

As Part of Ongoing Schooling 50%

Community Facilities 46%

Major Cultural Facilities 38%

5. Satisfaction with aspects of cultural offerings currently available in Matthews.

(Respondents were asked to rank criteria as poor, not so good, okay, pretty good, or great.)

Criteria	Ranked “pretty good” or “great”
Quality: How good are activities?	82%
Diversity: How broad are the choices available?	67%
Affordability: How affordable are the activities?	80%
Location: How accessible are the activities to you?	83%
Scheduling: How convenient are the times activities occur?	74%
Information: How easy is it to learn about cultural events?	62%

6. What kinds of activities would bring people to downtown Matthews more frequently?

In order of preference:

1. Concerts
2. Festivals
3. Food Festivals
4. Art Fairs
5. Garden Shows
6. Arts & Crafts Demonstrations
7. Street Artists
8. Seasonal Nature Programs
9. Children’s Museum
10. Public Dances
11. Ethnic Festivals
12. Storytellers
13. Historical Programs
14. Talent Shows/Open Mike Events

FINDINGS OF THE ASC AFFILIATE SURVEY

Background

As a part of the planning process, ASC affiliate agencies were asked to respond to a survey describing their current and future plans for programming in the Cornelius, Huntersville, Davidson and Matthews. Sixteen affiliate organizations responded:

1. Actors Theatre of Charlotte
2. Carolina Raptor Center
3. Charlotte Children's Choir
4. Charlotte Museum of History and Hezekiah Alexander Homesite
5. Charlotte Repertory Theatre
6. Charlotte Symphony
7. Children's Theatre of Charlotte
8. Discovery Place
9. Historic Latta Plantation
10. McColl Center
11. North Carolina Blumenthal Performing Arts Center
12. North Carolina Dance Theatre
13. Opera Carolina
14. Second Ward High School Alumni Foundation-Museum
15. The Light Factory
16. The Mint Museums

Findings

Services Provided in the Towns

During an 18-month period in 2002-2003, nine (9) of these organizations provided programs in Davidson, four (4) in Cornelius, seven (7) in Huntersville, and seven (7) in Matthews. One respondent organization gathers and curates artifacts countywide; two (2) target areas broader than the county in their planning. Three (3) responding organizations offered no programs in the subject towns.

Programs offered represented a variety of disciplines including vocal and instrumental music, science, dance, visual arts, environmental studies, history, and theatre. The overwhelming majority of these events were one-off programs (including outreach and promotion events) or arts education activities of

a relatively short duration. Two (2) respondent organizations are located in Huntersville; none is located in any other town studied.

Target Audiences and Numbers of Residents Served

These combined programs target preschool through adult audiences/participants. In the past 18 months ten (10) of the twelve (12) organizations which provide services reached aggregate audiences/participants of 11,608 with 8395 of these participants being served in the northern towns combined and 3213 in Matthews. Two (2) respondents did not provide specific numbers served.

In the southern part of the county, Matthews experienced a relative concentration of one participant for every 6.89 residents. In the Northern towns, Davidson was home to the greatest relative concentration of participants, with one participant for every 1.5 residents. Cornelius hosted the fewest (one participant for every 16.2 residents). Huntersville (1:8.9) fell in the middle.

Aggregate Number of Residents Served by ASC Affiliate Organizations in the Town of Matthews during an 18 month period in 2002 and 2003

	Matthews
Total Audience	3213
Population	22,127
Residents/Participant	6.89

Venues

Services were provided in a variety of settings including churches, schools (especially private schools), Davidson College, town halls, community centers, and municipal buildings, private galleries and arts studios, libraries, malls, parks, and private clubs.

Co-sponsors and Hosts

Some services did not have local co-sponsors or hosts with the providing affiliate assuming costs for services (often including facility rental) as a part of their ongoing budget. Others were hosted or sponsored by schools, Davidson College, churches, municipal government, businesses, or public libraries. Two organizations described clear plans to cultivate specific, ongoing partners in the towns. While others may be engaged in such activities, they were not described.

Future Plans for Serving the Towns

Thirty-two (32) specific services in the four towns studied are anticipated by ASC affiliate organizations in the next 18 months. Of these, twenty-four (24) activities are planned in the northern towns and eight (8) in Matthews. Thirty-one (31) services are planned within the next three years. Most respondents foresee maintaining a similar level of programming in the subject towns and only two (2) contemplate significant new program development. Some organizations mention fiscal constraints as the key barrier to increased service in the towns. One organization reported a poor response to an experimental offering as the basis for discontinued interest in serving the northern towns.

In general, but with certain clear exceptions, responding affiliates do not appear to have explored or pursued the county's edge towns as critical parts of their target audience. Responses suggest that barriers to such development may include lack of information about the towns, absence of group sales efforts within the towns, facility constraints, and the scarcity of venues for cultural programming.

Numbers of Affiliates With Services Planned in the Subject Towns in the Next 18 Months (2003-2004) and the Next Three Years

	Davidson	Cornelius	Huntersville	Matthews	Total
This 18 months	9	4	7	7	27
Next 18 Months*	8	6	10	8	32
Next 3 Years*	9	7	8	7	31

*Respondents are included in these counts in the case that any programming interest or possibility exists, hence these are very generous interpretations of the possibility of programming. For example, respondents indicating that their program offerings include, but do not specifically target the towns, is counted. On balance, these responses are unlikely to indicate a pattern of anticipated aggregate growth in services to the towns.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, on suggestions gathered from the many Matthews residents participating in this plan through surveys, interviews, town meetings, and electronic and paper correspondence, and on the work of the Steering Committee, the following recommendations are made.

1. Reshape, rename, and empower the Matthews Arts Advisory Board to serve as the nexus for municipal engagement with cultural development issues both at the Matthews Community Center and in the community at large.

A. Change the name of the Matthews Arts Advisory Board to the Matthews Cultural Advisory Board.

B. Increase the number of members of the board to nine, including the **Mayor's appointee** to the **Arts & Science Council Board** and **eight citizens** who reflect Matthews' diverse population and who are broadly representative of various arts disciplines, sciences, historic affairs, and arts education. The board should include appointees who can help develop and maintain critical partnerships with the educational, commercial, and civic sectors. A minimum of seven of the nine appointees should be citizens of Matthews; non-citizen members should be required to have Matthews as a primary place of business. The Director of Parks, Recreation and Culture should serve as an ex officio member of the Board and should provide staff support. The purpose of this recommendation is to provide enough board membership to increase both the expertise and the partnership linkages required to implement this, and subsequent, cultural action plans. In addition, it provides for broad enough cultural expertise in a variety of disciplines to allow the board to make wise recommendations for resource allocation and program development.

C. Create a conflict of interest policy that prohibits Community Center tenant companies and their staff and board members and/or the staff and board of organizations applying for municipal cultural grants from serving on the Board. (See E, below)

D. Charge the **Cultural Advisory Board** with developing and implementing an annual work plan that includes program planning and evaluation, developing and maintaining policies governing exhibitions in public facilities, overseeing community cultural development activities, nominating new board members, developing and maintaining facility use policies, and conducting budget development and review.

E. Delegate responsibility for reviewing and recommending all cultural funding requests made of the town to the **Cultural Advisory Board**. Require the Cultural Advisory Board to review recommendations in the context of criteria that test the degree to which each request advances the

objectives of this, and subsequent, cultural action plans. The purpose of this recommendation is to insure that municipal expenditures for local cultural activities meet appropriate standards for quality and are coordinated with the overall public agenda for cultural development. (See VII. A., below)

F. Require the **Department of Parks, Recreation, and Culture** to develop its annual budget request to the town with the advice of the **Cultural Advisory Board** and to evaluate that request in light of its ability to advance the objectives of this, and subsequent, cultural action plans. This budget should include Community Center operations and programs, participation in community events and festivals, and local cultural development initiatives.

G. Establish a **Facilities Subcommittee** of the **Cultural Advisory Board**. Charge the subcommittee with recommending facilities policy and approving rental fee waivers within an annual budget for that purpose established by the town.

H. Charge the **Cultural Advisory Board** with developing and presenting a slate of nominees for its own membership annually to the **Mayor and Board of Commissioners**. The Board should be required to identify needed skills and linkages, to seek candidates who meet those needs, to interview candidates concerning their willingness and suitability to serve, and submit the slate of nominees for town approval.

I. Charge the **Cultural Advisory Board** with the annual review of rental policies as they are impacting cultural users of the facility. The goal of this review should be determination of policies that contribute to the solvency of the Center, the solvency of the resident organizations, and fairness.

J. The **Cultural Advisory Board** and **Matthews Playhouse** should work together to determine whether or not a fee-for-service arrangement might better stabilize both the Playhouse's operations and the Center's theatrical offerings. Fee-for-service agreements acknowledge the role of an organization (in this case the theatre) in providing a public benefit. A fee agreement is reached for those services. Any such arrangement should be designed to regularize and simplify the calculation of dollars exchanged by the two entities, and to promote mutual stability. In a general sense, fee-for-service arrangements parallel the relationship between the Center and its independently contracted instructors.

K. Charge the **Cultural Advisory Board** with the annual review of fee structures as they impact resident and non-resident participants enrolled in Center programs. The goal of this review is to determine a balance that accurately reflects the greater contribution of Matthews residents, through their taxes, to operating the Center. The Board should balance this goal with the role of the Center's offerings in bringing out-of-town commercial traffic to Matthews. Some market testing of higher non-resident fees appears to be warranted.

L. The **Cultural Advisory Board** should define a scholarship policy. The Center's annual budget request should include a specific amount for scholarships to be provided in terms of fee reduction to eligible enrollees. The Board should work to supplement the amount provided by the town with private sector fund raising.

M. Require the **Cultural Advisory Board** to report, at least twice annually, to the **Mayor and the Town Commissioners**. These reports should contain specific commentary on accomplishments of objectives associated with this, and subsequent, cultural action plans. In addition, these reports should be posted to the town's website for public information purposes.

N. Add the **Cultural Advisory Board**, its agendas, and minutes to the town's website, so that citizens become more aware of its existence and its role.

II. Create a lively, highly utilized Community Center that serves as a hub for local arts and cultural affairs.

A. The Board of Commissioners should add a tagline to the Matthews Community Center name to emphasize its role in arts and culture, for example, by calling the Center the **Matthews Community Center - for Arts, Science, and Civic Life**.

B. The **Cultural Advisory Board** should bring the Community Center to life by

1. Placing signage on Trade Street that allows the Community Center to promote its events and offerings. Signage should be artist-designed, appropriately lighted, and allow for changing information. This recommendation is made with the understanding that local signage controls require street-front ownership as a precondition for on-street signage. The **Cultural Advisory Board** should seek either land exchange with the **Matthews Elementary School** for a small connector strip to a sign footing, or negotiate a shared approach to signage in order to accomplish this recommendation.
2. Redesigning the vending room (or another room in the facility) for use as a **Town Parlor**, a place for drop-in socializing and eating. Explore the feasibility of enhancing food service through either an upgraded vending or non-vending food service contract. Furnish the room with coffee shop style seating and conversation areas. These groupings might include two or three comfortable chairs and a small side table and lamp. Local artists could be encouraged to create or ornament the furnishings, emphasizing whimsy. If space permits, a small play area for very young children would be a welcome addition.
3. Filling the halls and community room with **Hands On Art**, lively displays of 2-D works of art. This will require adding picture rails, ceiling anchors (for banners and mobiles) providing secure wall-mounted display cases, and providing appropriate insurance against theft or damage. Displays should change monthly. They should feature wall-

mounted work products of activities created at the Center or by its participants. In the new wing, brightly colored Velcro panels should be added in hallways and on room walls to allow for the easy display of unframed children's art. In order to accomplish exhibitions of high quality, seek curatorial assistance as may be required through partnerships with the **Light Factory, the Mint Museums, Discovery Place, the Afro-American Cultural Center, and other area cultural institutions.** In addition, consider using **CPCC gallery management students** to help shape and execute exhibitions.

4. Sponsoring a series of artist-led workshops, called **All Hands on Deck,** to create group works of art (like the community quilt) for permanent display in the Center. This could include mosaic murals, found object sculptures, group-made books of original writing or images, etc. Particular workshops could be targeted at particular age or interest constituencies and some could draw on local history themes.
5. Charging the **Center's reception staff** with actively greeting each party entering the Center and making sure they have been personally welcomed and know where they are going.
6. Using an artist-designed **Today in the Center** display board to let people know of special events or activities in which they might be interested.
7. Conducting quarterly **Heart of the Arts** tours of the Center for targeted audiences such as **faith community congregations, neighborhood or homeowners associations, Girl and Boy Scouts, Spanish-speaking** residents, etc. These tours could include both historically-focused tours, as are currently offered, and contemporary-use sponsored tours emphasizing current program offerings. In the alternative, both topics could be merged into single tours.

C. Increase cultural programming for teens, low-income residents, and Spanish-speaking residents.

1. **The Cultural Advisory Board** should convene a work group to plan teen cultural programming. This group should include **arts educators, staff from the Siskey Y, successful teen group and activity leaders, interested teens, and the parents of teens.** This group should collaborate to design a series of cultural programs for diverse populations of local teens. Early offerings should be considered building blocks and test programs, and participant evaluation should help finalize program designs. Consideration should be given to
 - **Arts Lock-Ins,** in which teens would spend the night locked into the Community Center working with a resident artist on a group art project.
 - **A Living Earth Corps** of teens interested in engaging in ecological service activities to improve the local environment. The National Wildlife Federation has a school-based model that might help shape such a program.

- **Band and Poetry Slams**, in which teen audiences choose winning local bands or poets in live competition.
 - **Youth Works**, a group of clubs, workshops, classes, apprenticeships, and/or mentoring arrangements. Trips, tours, and formal and informal performances, publications (print or web-based) and exhibitions should all be considered.
 - **A Hope Troupe** consisting of teens with performing arts skills designing and executing their own short plays, reviews, or mini-performances in parks, at the farmer's market, on the green, in neighborhood settings, in residential living facilities, and at community events. These performances might be built around the unique talents of the participants and could include skills like acting, dance, juggling, unicycle riding, mime, puppetry, and vocal and instrumental music.
 - **Back Beat**, specialized musical ensembles such as jazz, traditional music, vocal ensembles, swing choirs, string quartets, etc.
2. The **Community Center** should display its scholarship policies prominently in both English and Spanish. Notice of scholarship enrollment opportunities should appear on all printed program announcements and on the Matthews website. Annually, **local schoolteachers** should be made aware of both the Community Center's offerings and the availability of scholarship enrollments.
 3. The **Community Center** should work with **local schools, faith community institutions, cultural organizations and employers** to identify Spanish-speaking residents with interests or skills in the arts. Interested members of the Spanish-speaking community should be asked to provide guidance or serve as instructors for activities of interest to the broader **Spanish-speaking community**. In addition, they should be asked to assist in making the Community Center's general programs better known to, and utilized by, Spanish-speaking residents.

D. The **Cultural Advisory Board** should create a program of life-long learning and participation in cultural activities at the Community Center by

1. Taking **Community Center staff and board** on three field trips to other community cultural centers in the region to explore other models for programs and services. The **ASC** should assist the board in identifying other centers of interest.
2. Working toward building a system of classes and workshops that is curriculum-based, and progresses from beginning to advanced levels for child, teen, and adult learners. Utilize information resources at the **ASC, its affiliates, and its associates**, to identify teachers or organizations working in a curriculum-based approach. Partner with them as appropriate. The Center should work with **CPCC** to promote the availability of its adult art education programs to Center users, since they offer a more advanced level of instruction than most current Community Center offerings.

3. Becoming proactive in adding program options. Systematically test for interest in various cultural programs by offering several performances and workshops in a specific discipline. Determine the interest of participants in additional programs in that discipline. Work toward forming advisory groups, clubs, or organizations to continue programming efforts in cases where no local or partnership organization exists. Begin by considering landscaping and gardening, history, ecology, jazz, and traditional arts.
4. Being vigilant concerning inclusiveness in programming choices, print materials, and decor, in order to embrace the diverse beliefs and traditions of the residents of Matthews and to welcome all residents equally.
5. Including all cultural programs offered at the Community Center in the town's related public announcements, advertisements, publications, and electronic and print calendaring without charge.
6. Offering **Take Two**, a program of paired activities for parents and small children. For example, offer a music program for preschoolers at the same time a singing class is held for parents. Offer these pairings twice a day at least two days a week, at regular times and during school hours so that at-home parents become accustomed to building the activity into their schedules.
7. Testing the interest of **early childhood education and care centers** in music, movement, and visual arts enrichment classes. Develop the approach to service delivery together.
8. Testing the interest of the new **Senior Center** in program partnerships. Explore in particular the development of performing arts bus tours to Mecklenburg County events, programs linking seniors as mentors to younger learners in the traditional arts, and uses of the Community Center's dedicated spaces for senior studio hours.
9. Assigning the **Director of Parks, Recreation and Culture** to work with the **ASC** in creating and participating in an on-going training program for **Mecklenburg County's community cultural development leaders**. This program should be designed as a regular professional group of those leaders and provide opportunities for sharing ideas, approaches, and challenges.
10. Seeking program opportunities, such as lawn and garden tours, or oral history-gathering projects that provide opportunities for the Community Center to reach outward into the community and invite broad participation.

E. **The Cultural Advisory Board** should work to increase the availability and practicality of spaces for Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture sponsored programs.

1. Investigating the potential for partnerships between the Center and **CPCC and Butler High Schools**. Officials of both these entities have expressed interest in making their dedicated arts spaces and equipment available to help meet the programming needs of the community, particularly in disciplines where specialized facilities are required. Any partnerships undertaken should be viewed as building blocks for moving Matthews toward serving as a regional center for visual artists who are serious amateurs, emerging professionals, and professionals.
2. Instituting a “no take-down” policy, so that renters of the Center must work around displays and set-ups of city-sponsored uses and the uses of resident organizations. The purpose of this recommendation is to decrease the high staff cost associated with complex set-up and take-down for shared use rooms, and to allow for a greater variety of cultural programs to be offered.
3. Optimize the use of public and non-profit facilities for community and public meetings by convening a **Facility Representatives Group**, including the **Seaboard Station, the Senior Center, Reid House, the Women’s Club, the Town Hall, the Library, and the Public Safety Building**. The purpose of this group is to assess overall meeting spaces available, to create a referral network which directs users to the most suitable space for their meetings, and to consider articulation of rental fees. This work supports cultural programming by relieving some meeting use pressure now being experienced by the Community Center. In addition, it provides a greater opportunity for rental uses (and revenue) in the Seaboard Station and Town Hall, and may provide greater earned income opportunities for local non-profits with suitable facilities. This recommendation is made with the understanding that in some cases shifts in staffing facilities during the evening hours could be necessitated and directs the Facility Representatives Group to consider how that might be best accomplished.
4. As soon as practicable, and after relocating some public meeting uses to allied facilities and effecting partnerships with appropriate organizations, dedicating spaces within the Community Center to discipline-specific activity. In particular, painting activities at the Center are limited by the need to leave each space as it was found. Supply storage, drying spaces, and set-up all constitute real limits on programs. Similarly, a dedicated electronic arts studio and computer lab would allow residents to learn electronic music creation and editing, photo manipulation, and video editing and production. The decision to dedicate a particular space should be made based on clear indications of high levels of user demand.
5. Upon completion of the work of the **Facility Representatives Group** and the implementation of appropriate partnerships with **CPCC and Butler High Schools**, and after the first full year of implementation, evaluating available cultural spaces for adequacy. In particular, this evaluation should explore the difficult question of whether

the Community Center can continue to serve as a mixed-use community and cultural center, or whether cultural programming demands for dedicated spaces (kilns, dark rooms, media rooms, rehearsal spaces, etc.) require non-cultural community uses to be accommodated elsewhere. Should that be the case, the **Mayor and the Board of Commissioners** should work with the **Cultural Advisory Board** to identify or develop additional community-use spaces. It is probable, based on the interviews conducted in the course of this planning effort, that Matthews might find itself well-positioned to become the home of a regional center for the visual arts, a combined studio and exhibition facility with dedicated capability for ceramics, fabrication arts, painting, and fiber arts.

6. Immediately addressing noise and traffic issues in the Community Center by installing double doors outside the theater to minimize noise from the hallways penetrating the theatre itself and exploring ways to reroute access to the backstage area so that performers and technicians do not have to pass through the multi-purpose room to reach the backstage.
7. Increasing the efficiency of Community Center operations by delegating authority to sign standard, conforming rental agreements for Community Center spaces to the **Director of Parks, Recreation, and Culture**.

III. Use cultural resources to enhance public spaces.

A. The **Cultural Advisory Board** should create the **Mayor's Gallery**, an exhibition program in Town Hall providing for four shows per year featuring the work of local artists. The Mayor should initiate a \$500 **Mayor's Purchase Award** for one work per year from these exhibitions. The town should place the purchase award works in municipal offices and public buildings and honor the recipient with an appropriate ceremony. Selections for the purchase award should be made by a qualified juror, selected by the Cultural Arts Advisory Board.

B. The **Cultural Advisory Board** should work to relocate the town's **Selma Burke** sculpture in a more prominent location (perhaps the main entrance area at Town Hall), befitting its importance as a work of art. If and when a **Crestdale Park** is created, an enlarged replica of the work should be located there, in acknowledgement of the artist's expectations at the time of gifting the original work to the town.

C. The **Appearance/Tree Board** and the **Board of Commissioners** should review local landscaping requirements for public land and private developments. Strengthen as may be required to insure the beautification of the community and its stock of plant life.

D. The **Planning and Public Works Departments** should investigate using center island narrowings (median chokers) with ornamental plantings as traffic-calming devices. Utilize **local volunteer gardeners** to care for median chokers in their neighborhoods.

E. The **Cultural Advisory Board** should work with its **gardening and landscaping participants** and the **Environmental Advisory Committee** to create **Flower Power**, a community rain garden initiative designed to reduce harmful runoff. The program should include a public education component designed to enhance public awareness of runoff as an environmental problem.

F. The **Planning Department** and the **ASC** should cooperate in designing a **Public Art Program** for Matthews. It is likely that such a program would be most advantageous if directed both at new private development and at municipal capital projects. The **Town Manager** should evaluate the wisdom of purchasing public art program management services from the **ASC** on an on-going basis.

IV. Support and utilize existing cultural resources.

A. Designate the **Director of Parks, Recreation, and Culture** as the Matthews liaison to the **ASC** and its affiliate and associate members including **Arts Teach**. The **ASC** should work with the Matthews liaison to provide access to information on available programs and services.

B. The **Director of Parks, Recreation, and Culture** should work with the **Town Manager** and other appropriate **municipal staff** to frame guidelines for town participation in special civic events. Guidelines should be flexible, but should place priority on events occurring on public grounds and serving a broad range of community members. The intention of this recommendation is to distinguish between cases in which the town provides free services in support of a public good and those cases in which private, for-profit entities offering promotional events should be asked to offset municipal expenses.

C. The **Community Center staff** should develop relationships with those area cultural resources that interest Matthews residents. It should arrange a program of bus tours and group ticket purchases to facilitate Matthews' residents' access. These programs might be targeted to families, seniors, or teens as appropriate to the particular outing planned.

D. The **Community Center staff** should regularly investigate the outreach programs of **ASC affiliates and associates**, especially their access to artists with expertise in school and community programming. The staff should consider these resources as may be appropriate in selecting offerings for the community. These resources include the **Mint Museums, the Light Factory, Discovery Place, the North Carolina Blumenthal Center for the Performing Arts, the Raptor Center, the Afro-American Cultural Center, and many others**.

E. The **ASC** should develop a mechanism that brings town liaisons together with its **affiliates and associates** on a regular, semi-annual basis. This approach might include linking town liaisons to showcasing events conducted by **Arts Teach**. The purpose of this recommendation is to create greater awareness on the part of the towns of available outreach and partnership resources, while giving affiliates and associates a clearer idea of venues and partnership options at the town level.

V. Strengthen local history programs.

A. There is an undocumented **slave cemetery** in Matthews, currently on privately held lands but protected through established conditions associated with rezoning. The town should work with resident **Harvey Boyd** to identify the cemetery's location and to evaluate the prospects for protecting and documenting the site. The **ASC** should serve as a convener to explore funding and possible partnership opportunities with the county's **Historic Landmarks Commission and the Afro American Cultural Center** for preserving the site.

B. Historical programming and site management is under strain all across Mecklenburg County. Many under-resourced sites are struggling with limited ability to engage in proper preservation and documentation or to program for the public. Similarly, marketing is weak. In this regard, the status of Matthews' historical sites reflects a broader issue: collections exist but conservation and display are spotty, and related programs are few despite citizen interest. The **ASC** should take a leadership role in bringing together the various public and private owners and managers of the area's historic sites and begin a frank discussion of the prospects for shared programs, services, management, and marketing, including discussion of any potential mergers. These discussions should include consideration of the best conservation, uses, and management of the historical artifacts now on display in **Matthews Town Hall, the Matthews Library, the Lester Collection at the Community Center, and the Seaboard Station and Caboose**. Discussions should also address the recognition and preservation of historic area such as Crestdale and the historic downtown. In addition, the **Matthews Historical Foundation** should be party to discussions by virtue of its ownership of the **Reid House**.

C. A part of the work of bringing historical sites to full use is finding ways to connect **educators and school children** to them in a meaningful way. **ASC** should work with **historical sites and resources** to find a mechanism to promote their programs to student tours and to articulate their offerings with standard curriculum in North Carolina history. Similarly, the **library system's** offerings could be articulated with local historical resources by hosting related collections at their various sites and by being engaged as co-programmers.

D. Historical interest in Matthews is high, and an annual **Once Upon a Time Festival** featuring traditional regional home, farm, and fine arts might prove very popular. The **Cultural Advisory Board** should explore this program idea, identifying appropriate partners. Such a festival could include traditional arts demonstrations, traditional dress fashion shows and costume competitions or parades for children, traditional dance and musical forms, traditional foodways, showcases for heritage variety plants, railroad songs and stories, and traditional fiber and fabrication arts. Care should be taken to continue to provide an inclusive portrait of local history. This idea could be developed as either a stand-alone festival or a special component of Matthews Alive!

VI. Support local artists.

A. The **ASC** should create an **Artist's Registry** for Mecklenburg artists working in all disciplines and mediums. This registry should be accessible to artists through links to Mecklenburg County's town websites, and websites associated with a wide range of cultural organizations. The registry should be designed to help the public locate artists for employment/commissioning purposes and to allow individual artists and cultural organizations to find one another. A partnership with the **library system** may be appropriate to enhance citizen and artist access.

B. The **Cultural Advisory Board** should host **ArtNet**, a bi-monthly social gatherings of area artists. These gatherings should be designed to allow artists to get to know one another. If interest is high, participants should be challenged with forming their own local artists guild. In addition, if interest warrants, participants should be encouraged to establish an annual gallery and studio tour event.

C. The **Planning Department** should support the efforts of **local property owners and developers** interested in creating artists' live/work or stand-alone studio spaces. Zoning accommodations allowing for live/work spaces should be crafted and put in place in appropriate locations.

VII. Engage cultural resources in enlivening downtown Matthews.

A. The **Downtown Merchants Group** should work with the **Town Manager and the Cultural Advisory Board** to create an **I Brake for Art** campaign. This campaign is designed to assist with pedestrian crossing problems in the downtown area and to emphasize the presence of local art and design resources. Affix artist decorated "quivers" to light poles at downtown intersections on opposite sides of the Trade Street Fill quivers with blaze orange, artist-decorated pedestrian flags. Instruct pedestrians to take a flag when they need to cross the street to signal passing cars to stop. Flags are deposited in the opposing quiver after crossing. Support with a public education campaign conducted through handouts and signs in shops, municipal communication vehicles, and the media. Create and distribute artist-designed "I Brake for Art" bumper stickers.

B. The **Downtown Merchants Group** should work with the **Town Manager, the Cultural Advisory Board**, and area middle, high, and post secondary **art educators** to create a **Chalk the Town** event in which teams of students design and execute temporary chalk murals on downtown sidewalks and streets, including the circle around the green.

C. The **Chamber of Commerce** should build on **Artfest's** solid base by raising standards for juried admission to the festival each year. The goal of this effort should be to develop a destination festival drawing in attendance from neighboring counties and states. The **ASC** should help local festival managers identify information resources to assist in developing a plan for advancing the festival. Similarly, **Matthews Alive!** could begin a process of jurying entries to a select exhibition area with a high quality standard and special identity such as ceramic sculpture (as opposed to vessels) or artist-designed clothing.

D. In implementing a public art plan, the **Mayor and the Board of Commissioners** should consider downtown needs for landscaping and amenities that make the streetscape more pedestrian friendly by encouraging people to stroll, sit, gather, and shop. This could include special pavement and sidewalk treatments, signage, benches, lighting fixtures, landscaping, handrails or fences, fountains, sculpture, etc. Artists should be incorporated into municipal design planning early in its capital projects process to achieve the best results.

E. **The Downtown Merchants Group** should work with **local property owners, developers, the town, and area artists** to advance the development of artists' live/work or studio spaces in the downtown area and to create studio/gallery tour events.

F. **The Downtown Merchants Group** should work with the **Farmers' Market** to explore developing a permanent traditional and home arts-related sales opportunity. This **Farm and Art Market** might include local clay arts, ironworks, fiber arts, value-added farm food products, etc. Consideration should be given to the feasibility of placing the art-related sales at scattered sidewalk locations in the downtown, to draw traffic to the merchants there.

G. The **ASC** should create partnerships to include Matthews (and Mecklenburg's other towns) in its next **Economic Impact Study**. Results of the study should be presented to the **Town of Matthews, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Downtown Merchants Group** and made available to local cultural organizations. Information should be considered in shaping the Town's economic and cultural development agenda and in shaping requests to the donor community.

H. The **ASC** should include cultural events conducted in Mecklenburg County towns on its **Cultural Calendar**, a web-based calendar of cultural events. Links to town websites should be created.

I. When the **ASC** next conducts a **Cultural Marketing Study** it should include **the towns** through partnership agreements. Local cultural organizations and enterprises should be trained in the application of the information to their own marketing efforts.

VIII. Secure additional resources for local cultural activities.

A. The **Board of Commissioners** should work to develop a dedicated stream of public support for cultural development in Matthews. When debt service on the community center is retired (2014 or sooner), tourism funds currently used to retire that debt should be confined to use for cultural programs and facilities consistent with a current cultural action plan. This recommendation is designed to provide a policy mechanism through which the Town maintains its level of effort for arts and cultural programming. In light of the Town's projected growth, identifying these dollars for cultural programming and development now will serve as a helpful fiscal planning tool and will protect the community's investment in cultural affairs.

B. The **Board of Commissioners** should provide appropriate staffing to the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Culture. Failure to provide adequate staffing will compromise the Town's ability to carry out this plan.

C. The **Board of Commissioners** should create a formal **Cultural Grants Program**. This program should be funded with a combination of **ASC** funds and Town of Matthews Tourism Tax dollars. The Town should match the **ASC** with two local dollars for every **ASC** dollar. Cultural applicants in Matthews accustomed to seeking Tourism Tax grants should be redirected to the Cultural Grants Program. The Cultural Advisory Board should be given the authority to review and make recommendations for the Cultural Grants Program's awards. The Cultural Advisory Board should evaluate proposals on the basis of their quality, feasibility, need for funding, and consistency with this cultural action plan (and, over time, subsequent plans). In its initial year, the Town should commit \$40,000 from Tourism Taxes and the **ASC** \$20,000 to establish this fund. The purpose of this recommendation is to create a continuing partnership between the **ASC** and the Town of Matthews through which local decision-making can support local cultural programs. Once the debt service on the Community Center is satisfied, the town should consider negotiating an increase in **ASC** participation based on an increased level of municipal contribution to the program, based on the same matching formula.

D. The **ASC** should develop a mechanism for helping associate organizations meet operating expenses. The **Cultural Advisory Board** should encourage **eligible organizations** in Matthews to seek **ASC** associate status as a matter of course.

E. The **Board of Commissioners** should be prepared to reconsider its expectations for earned revenues from the Community Center. As cultural uses of the facility expand, meeting uses (and related rental fees) will decline. In this regard, there is a policy balance between expecting earned revenue and keeping cultural programs affordable to the community. It is common for municipalities to pay the operating and administrative staff costs of such facilities and rely on user fees exclusively to pay for instructors and materials costs.

F. The **Mayor** should work with the **ASC** to convene **individual and corporate cultural philanthropists** from Matthews to initiate a **Cultural Participation Forum**, a discussion of how additional donors could be recruited and how current levels of support could be brought to scale. This meeting should also consider how best to establish an on-going stream of communication among not-for-profit cultural organizations and the business community.

PARTICIPANTS

The Matthews Cultural Action Plan reflects the aspirations of the citizens of Matthews to enhance and expand their current cultural resources and to more fully integrate cultural activities into the civic fabric of the town. It is the result of a community-wide conversation that began in October 2003 and will continue as the plan progresses through its stages of implementation. This appendix recognizes the many people who participated in the process through staff support, meeting attendance, individual interviews, interest-group meetings, town meetings, and a Cultural Summit on September 18, 2004 at the Matthews Community Center.

Arts and Science Council Participants

Board of Directors Planning Committee

Dan Prickett, Chair	Dorlisa Flur	Claude Lilly
Tim Arnoult	Ruffin Hall	Mark McGoldrick
Steven Burke	Parks Helms	Mike Mitchell
David Dooley	Harry Jones	Kevin O'Hara

Staff

Lee Keesler, President & CEO
Bill Halbert, COO
Robert Bush, Vice President - Planning
Regina Smith, Vice President - Grants & Services
Jean Greer, Vice President - Public Art
Terri Marshall, Vice President - Development
Bob Halbruner, Vice President - Communications
Katherine McAlpine, Planning and Research Associate
Randy Penninger, Office Manager

ASC Affiliate and Associate Liaisons

Actors' Theatre of Charlotte, Dan Shoemaker
Afro-American Children's Theatre, Dawn Womack
Afro-American Cultural Center, Vikki Beckwith Graham
Arts Teach, Heather A. Parusel

Carolina Raptor Center, Alan Barnhardt
 Carolina Voices, Scott McKenzie
 Charlotte Children's Choir, Kelly Hopkins
 Charlotte Civic Orchestra, Juliette Shelley
 Charlotte Museum of History, Mariruth Leftwich
 Charlotte Philharmonic Orchestra, Albert E. Moehring
 Charlotte Repertory Theatre, Andy Lawler
 Charlotte Symphony Orchestra, Susan Miville
 Charlotte, Trolley, Inc., Lisa Gray
 Children's Theatre of Charlotte, Valerie Rhymer
 Community School of the Arts, Dennis Jewett
 Discovery Place, Debbie Curry
 Historic Latta Plantation, Duane Smith
 Historic Rosedale Plantation, Karen McConnell
 Levine Museum of the New South, Robin Morris
 McColl Center for Visual Arts, Suzanne Morrison
 Mint Museums, Cheryl Palmer
 Moving Poets Theatre of Dance, Till Schmidt-Rimpler
 North Carolina Blumenthal Performing Arts Center, Morenga Hunt
 North Carolina Dance Theatre, Amber Emory-Maier
 Opera Carolina, Teresa Robertson
 Second Ward High School National Alumni Foundation, Vernelle Diamond Ely
 The Light Factory, Charles Thomas
 Theatre Charlotte, Dee Ardullah
 Wing Haven Gardens & Bird Sanctuary, Dia Steiger

INTERVIEWS, CORRESPONDENCE AND SMALL GROUP MEETINGS

Susan Adken	Cynthia Haack	Mayor Lee Myers
Kenneth Alexander	Kathi Ingrish	Bill Rhyne
June Bayless	Janet Johnson	Brenda Riggins
Harvey Boyd	Jim Johnson	Sharon Schwenk
Mary Bracken	Joe Judge	John Sharp
Leslie Carter	Lee Kindberg	Linda Stewart
Kevin Dean	Ginny Martin	Tone Stitt
Randy Liebowitz Dean	Augustine Martinez	Prudy Weaver
Michael Everitt	Willa McNeill	Anaa Lisa Whatley
Suzanne Gully	Cheri Morrow	Tina Whitely

CULTURAL SUMMIT AND TOWN MEETING

Cultural Summit Exhibitors

Afro-American Cultural Center	Matthews Chamber of Commerce
"Buffalo Soldiers" Greater NC Chapter	Matthews Historical Foundation
Charlotte Children's Choir	Matthews Town Band
Charlotte Repertory Theatre	Omimeo Mime Theatre
Community School of the Arts	Opera Carolina
Discovery Place	The Light Factory
Everitt Foundation/The Art Box Kids	Town of Matthews
Guild of Charlotte Artists	

Attendees

Harvey Boyd	Carolanne Gooley	Les Rinehart
Janet Anderson	Tom Gooley	Joel Ritchie
Channing Ashbaugh	Lena Gordon	Martha Ryniak
Debbi Ballard	Caitlyn Hathcock	Rich Ryniak
Randy Ballard	Kate Kaplan	Roy Schumacher
Hazen Blodgett	Marty Kelso	Rolande Sowers
Michell Brown	Marcie Kelso	Jamie Speice
John Carmenga	Larry Lester	Chris Trainor
Leslie Carter	Susan Martin	Jeffrey Turr
Jim Carter	David Martin	Barbara Van Patten
David Christian	Marcia Merrill	Jamey Varnadore
Mary Ciminelli	Oliver Moore	Melissa Verch
Clyde Durr	Cheri Morrow	Richard Watkins
Chris Edmonds	Lilsa Overby	Rosalia Weiner
Jeff Faw	Jody Pinion	Lisa Wilker
Joyce Fisher	Geroge Pinion	
Anne Gilland	Jenifer Register	



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