

PIERCE COUNTY ARTS AND CULTURAL PLAN

Developed for the Pierce County, Washington
Division of Arts and Cultural Services
Department of Community Services

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Pierce County Division of Arts and Cultural Services, part of the Department of Community Services, identified the need to develop a plan to guide the work of the Division for the coming decade, building on prior planning documents. Changes in the arts and cultural sector, as well as growth in Pierce County and the economic recession set the stage for creating a new roadmap for the effective use of resources and assets. This planning process was designed to involve many voices from the community and to result in information of benefit to county government, arts and cultural entities, and the larger community.

THE PROCESS - DEVELOPING A TEN-YEAR PLAN

- ➔ Work started in October, 2009 and was completed in April, 2010. A team of three consulting firms, **WolfBrown**, **AdvisArts** and **BERK & Associates**, was selected through a national RFP process.
- ➔ An **Arts and Cultural Plan Steering Committee** of twenty county leaders and representatives from business, education, recreation, social services, municipal government and the arts was assembled to advise the full process.
- ➔ More than 90 individuals participated in **community leadership interviews** and five **focused meetings** held throughout the county. Relevant county, and local, regional, and national information sources were reviewed.
- ➔ The fact-finding assessment resulted in a **Critical Issues Report** which was the focus of a public meeting with over 40 participants, as well as review by the Steering Committee. This was the basis of draft **goal and strategic opportunity statements** that were reviewed by the Steering Committee.
- ➔ **Seven goals, twenty-three strategies** and an **Arts and Cultural Asset Map** were part of the draft **Pierce County Arts and Cultural Plan** that was reviewed by the Steering Committee and in a public meeting in March 2010. The revised final plan was prepared for presentation to the County Council and the community in April.



KEY FINDINGS

- Pierce County has an **extraordinary mix of cultural assets** – nationally respected professional organizations, extensive amateur arts entities, noteworthy historic and heritage organizations and sites, dynamic ethnic and religious arts activities—that **exceeds assets available in comparable counties**.
- There is a clear county-wide need and desire to **strengthen and maximize coordination of these assets** and there **are important opportunities to strengthen partnerships and collaborations** between the arts and cultural groups and between those groups and the business sector, education institutions, and others.
- County arts and cultural groups desire access to more **effective mechanisms for convening arts and cultural groups, and seek coordinated access to information resources**. Whether they are well established arts programs in cities and towns or grassroots and emerging efforts in unincorporated parts of the county, they tend to function in “silos” and it is difficult for them to make connections and network with one another.
- Connections and efficiencies are possible that can bring more **constituent-desired services to unincorporated areas** using entities that already reach broadly into the county (for example, through the Library System or Parks and Recreation)
- Arts and cultural activity is recognized as **a significant, if currently underutilized, partner in economic development** including its critical impact on the hospitality industry, the creation and retention of creative economy jobs, and as a component of healthy and safe communities. Some communities in the county are successfully leveraging arts and culture as part of community vitality.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The goals and strategies in the Arts and Cultural Plan are informed by the full body of research conducted by the consultants and have been reviewed by the Steering Committee and in community sessions. The strategies propose solutions that will engage both the public and private arenas, since they are inextricably linked. Tactical approaches to each strategy are outlined in the full report. The plan is designed to address two distinct arenas:

1. Pierce County government, to inform its functions and services in the arts and culture.
2. The larger arts and cultural sector that includes a diverse range of public and private entities and individuals. Over 25 entities from multiple sectors are identified as potential community participants in implementing various strategies, although their mention is not meant to suggest a commitment on their part.



The plan emphasizes a priority role for the Division of Arts and Cultural Services as a convener, facilitator, and information clearinghouse, in addition to its important existing programs that should be continued.

GOAL 1

TO BUILD A MORE COHESIVE AND INCLUSIVE NETWORK OF ARTS AND CULTURAL LEADERSHIP ACROSS THE COUNTY.

Strategy 1.1

Consolidate in a single division all of Pierce County government functions that relate to arts, culture, public art, heritage and historic preservation.

Strategy 1.2

Articulate priority roles for the Division of Arts and Cultural Services as those of convener, facilitator, and information clearinghouse.

Strategy 1.3

Identify and foster “arts champions and cheerleaders” in leadership positions throughout the county.

GOAL 2

TO BUILD AND SUPPORT EFFECTIVE LONG-TERM COLLABORATIONS WITHIN THE ARTS AND CULTURAL SECTOR AND BETWEEN IT AND OTHER SECTORS IN PIERCE COUNTY.

Strategy 2.1:

Develop mechanisms to convene the constituencies of the arts and cultural sector to address their priority issues and concerns.

Strategy 2.2

Create tools and targeted initiatives that strengthen and facilitate collaborations and partnerships between arts and culture and other sectors.

Strategy 2.3

Identify public and private sector options for co-location of arts and cultural activities and services as part of existing or planned capital projects in communities seeking additional cultural facilities.

GOAL 3

TO DEVELOP AND STRENGTHEN THE OPERATIONAL CAPACITY OF ARTS AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS AND ARTISTS IN PIERCE COUNTY.



Strategy 3.1

Support the creation, formalization, or strengthening of private or public sector local arts and cultural agencies, especially in the county’s unincorporated areas.

Strategy 3.2

Inventory and supplement technical assistance opportunities for the staffs and boards of cultural organizations and artists to create coordinated and ongoing options for quality professional development throughout the county.

GOAL 4

TO BUILD AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF ARTS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES TO THE LIVES OF COUNTY RESIDENTS AND THE COUNTY’S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL VITALITY.

Strategy 4.1

Develop an online interactive arts and cultural asset map that builds on the work conducted as part of this project, partnering with one or more leadership entities with a mission to reach throughout Pierce County.

Strategy 4.2

Develop an annual “State of Arts and Culture” report and share it at an annual celebratory and informational event.

Strategy 4.3

Develop targeted initiatives to link hospitality and tourism interests with the arts and cultural sector based on shared goals and values.

Strategy 4.4

Improve municipal and County government’s promotion, usage and support of local arts and culture.

GOAL 5

TO INCREASE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR ARTS AND CULTURE IN RECOGNITION OF ITS ROLE IN THE COUNTY’S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND QUALITY OF LIFE.

Strategy 5.1

Conduct research and work towards creation of a voter-approved guaranteed stream of funds for County distribution for cultural initiatives.

Strategy 5.2

Identify the potential of HB 1386 monies to be used for a broader range of cultural and heritage functions within the County.



Strategy 5.3

Modify or create County policies to encourage the inclusion of arts or heritage components in new or renovated private development through favorable tax or permitting fees.

Strategy 5.4

Pursue national and international funding opportunities based on the unique arts, cultural, historic, and heritage characteristics of Pierce County.

GOAL 6.

TO DEVELOP A COUNTY-WIDE ARTS EDUCATION EFFORT TO POSITION PIERCE COUNTY AS A STATE AND NATIONAL LEADER IN ARTS-INFUSED LEARNING.

Strategy 6.1

Convene county-wide arts education leaders to set a shared vision and goal for the county and to share information and strengthen networks.

Strategy 6.2

Share solutions and best practices with school principals, district superintendents, school board members, and other education decision-makers to assist them in providing students with the benefits of an education that fully includes the arts .

Strategy 6.3

Strengthen the opportunities for arts professional development for PreK-12 teachers.

Strategy 6.4

Develop more effective and expanded ways to bring cultural experiences to school children especially in unincorporated Pierce County.

GOAL 7.

TO PROVIDE ENHANCED OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONAL CREATIVE EXPRESSION AND ENGAGEMENT FOR ALL RESIDENTS.

Strategy 7.1

Promote innovative opportunities for personal creative expression using existing operating and administrative systems.

Strategy 7.2

Build access to and expand the range of cultural and creative activities at community centers and colleges for county residents.

Strategy 7.3

Integrate, encourage, and showcase local arts and cultural expressions in community activities and celebrations throughout the county.



NEXT STEPS

Implementation of this plan over its ten-year course will require a commitment from a range of civic and government leaders in Pierce County. The role of the County is generally one of “facilitator” or “convener” of initiatives that would likely involve partnership with other community entities. There are a few initiatives that require more involved County action and those could be addressed as soon as possible.

To oversee the long-term implementation process, a sub-committee of the Arts Commission would be established, called the “Arts and Cultural Plan Implementation Committee.” The Committee would be charged with, among other things, reviewing this planning document and setting broad priorities for implementation (with a particular focus on the first two years) and identifying potential participants in implementation for those priority areas. The Committee should hold an annual public meeting to report to county residents on the progress of implementation.

This community-infused planning process has revealed a county rich in arts and cultural assets. Some of these are well established and celebrated, while others are less obvious but grow from commitments to the personal, social, and economic benefits of arts and culture. The roadmap that is revealed in this plan provides opportunities for action on all these fronts.



Cribbage Benches, 2007
by Paul Sorey
Stainless steel, concrete, wood
East County Maintenance Facility,
Bonney Lake
Pierce County 1% for Art Program

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Appendix A: List of Participants
Appendix B: Details of Best Practice Research

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Images: courtesy of Pierce County Arts & Cultural Services Division, unless otherwise noted.



PART I

INTRODUCTION

In September, 2009, Pierce County's Arts and Cultural Services Division of the Department of Community Services contracted with WolfBrown, AdvisArts Consulting, and BERK and Associates to conduct a county-wide arts and cultural planning process. The first phase of that arts and cultural plan and community needs assessment process got underway in October 2009. Since that time, the consultants have:

- ➔ Reviewed materials about Pierce County and its arts and cultural sector, both in hard copy and on the web.
- ➔ Conducted a series of meetings with the Arts and Cultural Plan Steering Committee to gather input and to review various planning documents.
- ➔ Consulted with the staff of the Division of Arts and Cultural Services at all stages of the process.
- ➔ Facilitated a series of community meetings in various locations in Pierce County involving over 60 participants to gather input.
- ➔ Conducted a series of in-person and telephone interviews with 64 individuals who provided details about Pierce County in general and its arts and cultural sector in particular.
- ➔ Developed several consultants' reports, including the Emerging Themes memo and the Critical Issues Report that provided an arts and cultural needs assessment for Pierce County.
- ➔ Conducted best practices research on comparable programs in regions, counties, or cities nationally to inform the goals, strategies, and tactics of this plan.
- ➔ Gathered data for and designed and revised an "Arts and Cultural Asset Map" that provides a conceptual framework portraying the range of arts and cultural assets in Pierce County.
- ➔ Drafted a preliminary cultural planning report for review by County staff, the Steering Committee, and at a community meeting in mid-March.
- ➔ Drafted and submitted a final arts and cultural planning report, revised to reflect comments from Steering Committee members.

The consultants wish to thank the staff of the Division of Arts and Cultural Services and the members of the Steering Committee for the effort and attention they have given this process over the past months. Without their on-going engagement, this planning document would not reflect the county as well as it does.



WHAT IS IN THIS REPORT ?

The Preliminary Cultural Planning Report is designed to synthesize and expand all of the consultants' previous reports. It has several sections:

- ➔ **Part I** is an **introduction** to the report and includes background on the planning process and its context in Pierce County.
- ➔ **Part II** presents a **description of the key findings of the consultants' research**. It has been informed by the thoughtful review of an initial consultants' memo by over 65 people from throughout the county.
- ➔ **Part III** offers a description of the “arts and cultural asset map” along with half-size illustrations of it.
- ➔ **Part IV** provides the **values and a ten year vision** for arts and culture in Pierce County developed with the Steering Committee.
- ➔ **Part V** offers **seven goals** and related **strategies** that grow out of the consultants' findings as well as a range of **implementation tactics**.
- ➔ **Part VI** offers a discussion of **next steps** to shift the process from planning to implementation.

In addition, there are several appendices to this report. They include:

- ➔ **Appendix A**, which includes a complete listing of individuals who have participated in this process, including those who have served on the Arts and Cultural Plan Steering Committee.
- ➔ **Appendix B**, which provides background and additional details of the comparative research component that has informed many of the strategies and tactics in this plan.

THE CONTEXT FOR ARTS AND CULTURAL PLANNING

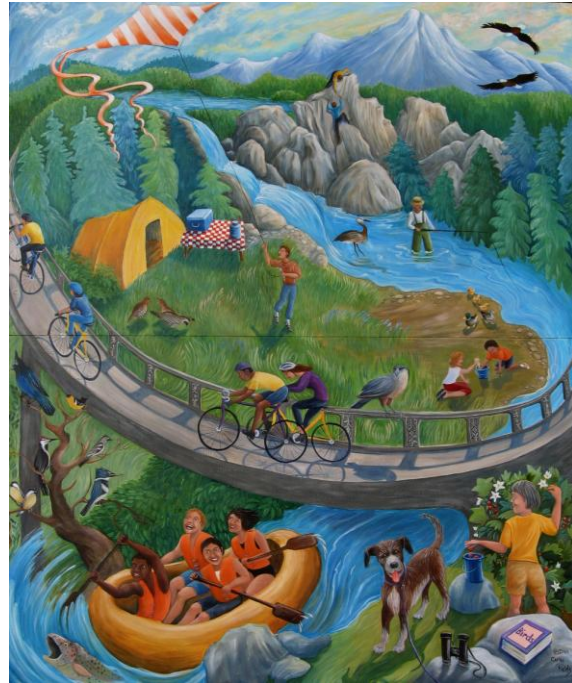
ABOUT PIERCE COUNTY

Pierce County includes 22 cities and towns spread across a remarkable range of terrain, from islands and extensive waterfront to the towering Mt. Rainier, and including both the major urban center of Tacoma and considerably smaller communities in rural settings, some of which are isolated. Of the county's 2009 population of 813,600¹ approximately 75 percent lives outside of the City of Tacoma, in both incorporated and unincorporated parts of the county. Population has increased in the past year in both the unincorporated and incorporated parts of the county and is expected to continue to grow.

¹ Data on population from the Washington State Office of Financial Management.



Over the past few decades Pierce County has seen the development of an increasingly varied arts and cultural sector. It has drawn international attention with the opening of the Museum of Glass and the new Tacoma Art Museum, among other assets. There have been a number of projects and reports that have documented this growth and looked towards ways to build on it for the future. “The Arts in the 21st Century,” an insightful study, was conducted in 1999 and sponsored by The Greater Tacoma Community Foundation and the Cultural Council of Greater Tacoma. The Arts and Cultural Services Division contributed to that report and followed up with a report focused specifically on County services called “Future Directions for the Division of Arts and Cultural Services.” Both of these reports provided valuable background for the efforts of this arts and cultural planning process. This process has been designed to pay particular attention to Pierce County beyond the City of Tacoma and to investigate arts and culture in unincorporated parts of the county. It has also been conducted with the awareness that the current economic downturn and the state of the arts and cultural sector necessitate new directions and approaches. This report is intended to be responsive and proactive regarding these changing conditions.



Active R & R, 2008, by Cathy Fields
Stairwell mural, acrylic on panel
County-City Building, Tacoma

ABOUT THE VALUE OF ARTS AND CULTURE

Regions, states, counties, and cities have focused increasing attention on the value of a dynamic and interdependent creative sector in fostering the economic and social vitality of our communities. Washington State continues to be fertile ground for the creative sector, based on national indicators tracking community participation and arts-related employment. For example, according to the *Washington State Creative Vitality Index 2009 Update*², recently published by the Washington State Arts Commission, Pierce County has been one of this state’s counties to experience positive growth in its creative sector, measured in Workforce Development Areas, with an increase of approximately 10 percent, from .76 to .84. (See the figure on the following page, which is an excerpt from the above-mentioned report.)

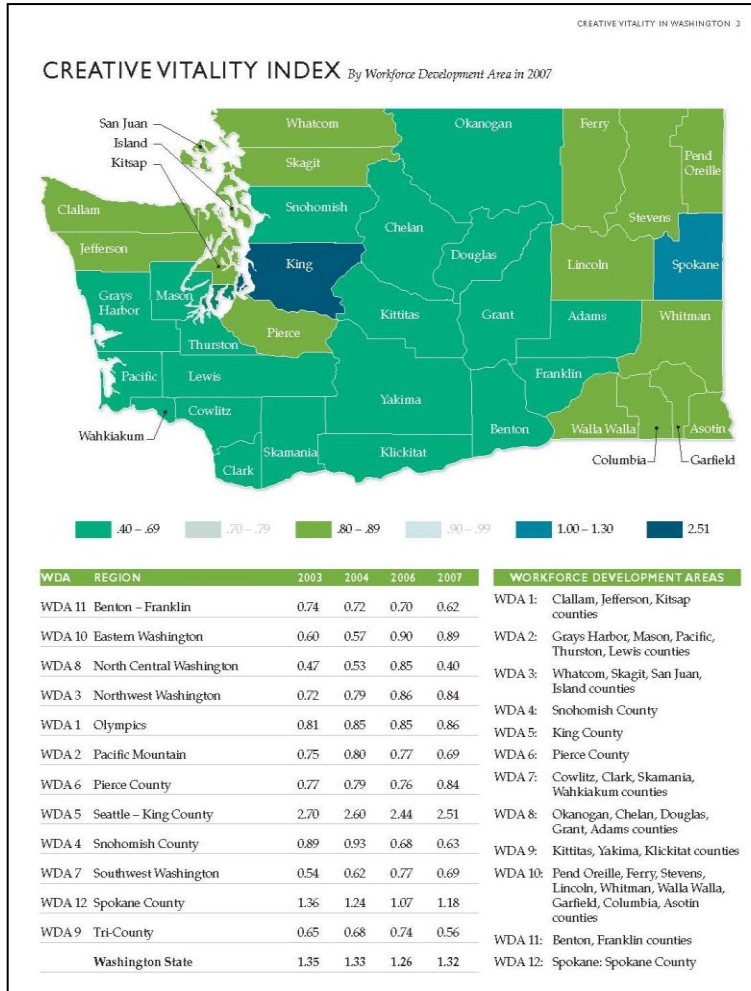
² First developed in Washington State, the Creative Vitality Index is an annual measure of the health of the creative economy including arts related jobs, nonprofit giving, book store sales, and other data related to arts participation. More information is available on the Washington State Arts Commission website at www.arts.wa.gov.



Nationally, the nonprofit arts and culture industry generates \$166.2 billion in economic activity every year—\$63.1 billion in spending by organizations and an additional \$103.1 billion in event-related spending by their audiences.³ The impact of creative industries, both not-for-profit and for profit, are significant nationally. While this report does not directly examine such impact, there is strong reason to believe that Pierce County follows these national trends.

Late in 2009, Americans for the Arts released the first National Arts Index⁴. Using 76 indicators, the report collected a wide range of data over an 11-year period to track activity and chart trends in both nonprofit and for-profit arts and cultural sectors. The national index fell 4.2 percentage points in 2008, reflecting losses in charitable giving and declining attendance at larger cultural institutions. This important research report provides a national perspective on trends seen around the country. For example, the report shows demand for arts education is up, particularly among college-bound high school students. In addition, the way the public participates in and consumes the arts is expanding – personal arts creation (making art, playing music, and such) is growing steadily. These findings are reflected in this report and its goals and strategies.

A broad definition of culture -- one that includes but is not limited to the “fine arts”-- is increasingly used for planning purposes, and this process reflects such an approach. This broad definition of arts and culture is intended to be inclusive of expressions of customs, beliefs, and traditions, as well as history and heritage, and public spaces, landmarks, parks, and the built environment.



Excerpt from Washington State Arts Commission’s Creative Vitality Index Report, 2009. Courtesy of WSAC/arts.wa.gov

³ Economic data from Americans for the Arts’ studies, *Arts & Economic Prosperity* and *Creative Industries*.
⁴ Go to http://www.americansforthearts.org/information_services/arts_index/001.asp to download the full report



PART II

KEY FINDINGS

In this section of the report, the consultants provide details of what they have learned about the current state of arts and culture in Pierce County. It reflects a synthesis of all the research conducted for this planning process and is organized into issue areas:

- ➔ Organizations, Events, and Artists
- ➔ Creative Learning and Arts Education
- ➔ Collaboration and Communication
- ➔ Awareness, Leadership, and Resources.⁵

ORGANIZATIONS, EVENTS, AND ARTISTS

PIERCE COUNTY IS RICH IN ARTS AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS AND EVENTS AND, WHILE TACOMA CONTINUES TO PLAY A CENTRAL ROLE IN THE COUNTY’S ARTS AND CULTURAL LIFE, SEVERAL SMALLER CITIES ARE DEVELOPING SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL IDENTITIES.

- ➔ There is a rich mix of arts, cultural, history, and heritage events and organizations in Pierce County. In many ways, these organizations are finding their footing and becoming more sophisticated in both programmatic and administrative initiatives, even in a challenging economic environment.
- ➔ Some communities, notably Puyallup, Sumner, and Gig Harbor, are using local arts and cultural assets to enhance their quality of life and economic vitality. Nevertheless, Tacoma remains the county’s arts and cultural hub, home to an



*Around Town, 2008, by Cathy Fields
Stairwell mural, acrylic on panel
County-City Building, Tacoma*

⁵ A more complete discussion of these findings is included in the consultants’ earlier “Critical Issues Report” and is available on the Division of Arts and Cultural Services’ web site.



energized community of arts and cultural organizations and artists, augmented by a substantial community of artists residing in the Gig Harbor and Key Peninsula area.

- ➔ While some communities have vibrant, volunteer-driven arts and cultural activities, there are opportunities in others (especially in unincorporated areas) for more arts-based activities, beyond what is available in local libraries, recreation centers, or through educational outreach initiatives.
- ➔ There are few mechanisms that aid communication and networking between and among communities, organizations, and artists to foster partnerships or collaborative opportunities.
- ➔ Most of the major venues for visual and performing arts are located in Tacoma and it can be difficult to find appropriate sites for arts and cultural activities outside of the city, including both performing and visual arts spaces. In general, parks, recreation, school, and library spaces are most commonly used, although often there is little coordination or centralized access to information about availability, including rental or shared usage of space. The desire for improved facilities is tempered by the challenges of developing, constructing, and sustainably operating them.

THERE IS A VIBRANT AND GROWING COMMUNITY OF ARTISTS, ALTHOUGH EARNING A LIVING REMAINS A CHALLENGE.

- ➔ More than many counties of a similar scale, Pierce County has a tremendous number of artist-initiated activities going on at “street level.” This grassroots, independent, entrepreneurial, do-it-yourself spirit is strong, especially among younger artists and within the City of Tacoma.
- ➔ Artists are attracted to Pierce County because of the comparatively low cost of living, the availability of suitable and relatively low-cost working spaces, the presence of institutions of higher learning, and because of the creative energy that is emerging in Tacoma and throughout Pierce County.
- ➔ Artists who live outside of Tacoma find it difficult to find local opportunities and audiences and are unclear how to create links to Tacoma artists. In particular, it is difficult for artists to learn about school-based opportunities for teaching artists. Initiatives that specifically benefit individual artists – including those of the Pierce County Arts Commission and the Tacoma Arts Commission-- are acknowledged as valuable.



HISTORY AND HERITAGE PLAY A KEY ROLE IN PIERCE COUNTY'S CULTURAL LIFE.

- ➔ There is increasing attention paid in Pierce County to the historic preservation of buildings and districts and a growing appreciation for preservation's aesthetic, cultural heritage, and economic development value for communities.
- ➔ Heritage organizations in Pierce County range from the huge State Historical Society in downtown Tacoma to considerably smaller, community-oriented groups. Yet, just like many of the smaller arts groups, many heritage groups are challenged to find adequate volunteer staff and board members to invest the necessary time to keep these groups afloat.
- ➔ Heritage activities, as opposed to arts activities, are often more accessible in suburban and rural communities. In rural areas there is enthusiasm for and a need to capture the history and cultural legacy as the economy shifts away from earlier extraction industries.

THERE IS INCREASED AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF ARTS AND CULTURAL PROGRAMMING FOR DIVERSE CONSTITUENCIES, ALTHOUGH SOME POPULATIONS REMAIN UNDERSERVED.

- ➔ There is concern that some residents have limited access to arts, heritage, and cultural opportunities, based on geography, ethnicity, or income level. Without access to these experiences it is unlikely that residents will enjoy the benefits that arts and culture add to their lives. Many ethnically specific organizations have limited audiences outside of their specific ethnic community, while a few seek to share their arts and cultural traditions broadly through vehicles such as festivals.
- ➔ While culturally specific organizations and activities often have strong participation by their targeted cultural community, the arts and cultural sector in general serves a preponderance of white and middle-class participants. Some organizations are undertaking initiatives to build a stronger base of participation among other sectors of Pierce County's population. Support – both funding and technical assistance – for culturally specific or low income populations or projects is very limited.

CREATIVE LEARNING AND ARTS EDUCATION

THERE ARE FLAGSHIP ARTS EDUCATION EFFORTS IN PIERCE COUNTY, THOUGH SCHOOL DISTRICTS HAVE LIMITED CAPACITY TO PROVIDE ARTS EDUCATION OR TO INTEGRATE ARTS LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM AND SCHOOLS RELY HEAVILY ON ARTS AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS.

- ➔ With some notable exceptions, there is a lack of support and resources for providing arts education in the public schools, from pre-kindergarten through high school. Many



teachers feel unprepared to integrate the arts into their teaching and there are limited numbers of certified arts teachers, and those are primarily in music and the visual arts. There is strong interest in the role that arts learning can play in developing students' capacity to be creative problem solvers and thinkers as a basis for strengthening Pierce County's 21st century workforce.

- Partnerships with arts and cultural organizations are a key component for student arts education experiences, primarily for those schools able to access the arts institutions in Tacoma through field trips. Such partnerships have generally relied on initiation from arts entities that have limited resources.
- Other partnerships include opportunities for teacher training. While there are some successful and sustained partnerships, they appear not to be distributed throughout the county and access is often driven by the initiative of a particular individual (often a principal) or geographic proximity. At this time, there is little systemic incentive to include the arts in schools so such action rests on individuals who value the arts and are willing and able to take action.

CREATIVE LEARNING EXTENDS BEYOND SCHOOLS AND MANY COMMUNITIES ARE INTERESTED IN PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL AGES AND SKILL LEVELS.

- Creative exploration and mastery of the arts is taking place in both formal and informal settings throughout Pierce County. Such activities are most available in cities and individuals in smaller towns or unincorporated areas have less access. In some cases, arts learning and creative personal expression are taking place as part of social or human services or are targeted to youth as a productive form of engagement and learning.
- Higher education provides a range of cultural and artistic learning opportunities and is playing a larger role in arts and cultural life in some communities. Community college programs include opportunities for life-long learning in the arts in addition to degree programs. Universities in the area also provide learning opportunities through exhibitions, workshops, lectures, and performances and occasionally work as program partners with arts and cultural groups.
- Parks and recreation departments and libraries often provide basic experiences in art, craft, dance, and other disciplines. However, there is limited knowledge in the community that they offer such programs and that they are free or very low cost. Often these programs are developed by staff with limited arts background and few opportunities to access larger cultural networks.



GROWING INTEREST IN PERSONAL AND LIFE-LONG PARTICIPATION IN CREATIVE PURSUITS IS CRITICAL TO PROVIDING A RICH MIX OF ARTS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN THE COUNTY.

- ➔ There is increased emphasis on active, engaged participation in arts and cultural experiences – as opposed to an older model that involved participants in a more passive role. It includes participation in such activities as book groups, community theatre, church choirs, scrapbooking, various dance traditions, garage bands, or maintaining personal websites or blogs, and others.
- ➔ This mix of activities supplements the impressive range of Pierce County’s mid-sized and larger arts, cultural and heritage institutions. It is sustained primarily through the volunteer efforts of residents, and the efforts of these volunteers are central to the vitality of the arts and cultural sector, even among larger organizations.

COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION

THERE HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONS AND THERE ARE UNTAPPED POSSIBILITIES, BUT IMPLEMENTING COLLABORATIONS IS CHALLENGING WITHOUT ENTITIES TO FACILITATE THEM.

- ➔ The Broadway Center’s Kennedy Center arts in education program and the joint marketing arrangements among three downtown Tacoma museums are examples of successful collaborations. While these initiatives indicate that Pierce County arts and cultural organizations understand the value of partnerships and collaborations, there is much that stands in the way of implementing them more readily.
- ➔ A significant part of the difficulty is the lack of the organizational capacity of arts and cultural organizations in the region to facilitate the collaborative process. This, coupled with the limited staff and board capacity of most arts and cultural organizations, makes it hard for arts groups to sort out the details of collaborative arrangements and build them so that they are cost-effective and sustainable. There is a need for tools, process facilitation, and a better understanding of the range of available options.
- ➔ Many interviewees point out that there are numerous untapped collaborative possibilities among and between arts and cultural organizations. Possibilities also exist between the arts and cultural sector and local and regional businesses (including sport and other recreational interests) or non-arts nonprofit agencies (including human and social service organizations).
- ➔ One area that holds significant potential for increased and ongoing collaboration is between arts and culture and tourism and hospitality. In many areas – ranging from



Mount Rainier to Tacoma's downtown – tourism and the arts may be able to strengthen mutually beneficial relationships.

COMMUNICATION AMONG ARTISTS AND ARTS AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS AND BETWEEN THE ARTS AND CULTURAL SECTOR AND THE LARGER COMMUNITY IS ADAPTING SLOWLY TO NEW APPROACHES.

- Developments in communication, especially electronic communication, have created new opportunities to foster important connections within the arts and cultural community. There is still a general lack of knowledge about what is going on locally, even among individuals who are active in the county's arts and cultural scene.
- Local newspapers are seen as important partners although their effectiveness relative to raising the visibility of arts and culture varies. In many communities, print media represents the critical – and in some cases, only – local communications link. And while there is much complaining among arts groups about media coverage, there is no comprehensive strategic approach, even though some media leaders are seen as likely supporters of such an effort.

AWARENESS, LEADERSHIP, AND RESOURCES

UNDERSTANDING OF THE VALUE OF ARTS AND CULTURE VARIES AMONG CIVIC LEADERS AND THE CIVIC ROLE OF THE ARTS AND CULTURAL SECTOR IS NOT AS GREAT AS IT MIGHT BE.

- Awareness and visibility of arts and culture is unevenly distributed across Pierce County. In Tacoma and a few smaller communities arts, culture and heritage have a strong presence. But for many communities across the county, arts and culture is simply not on the radar. There is a belief that Tacoma and the county are poised today to have a strong arts and cultural identity but that it will require an intentional, strategic, and collaborative effort to take the next step.
- Those communities where elected officials and other civic leaders have a strong interest and belief in the contribution of arts and culture are reaping benefits. These benefits include a more energized and cohesive community, stronger community identity and pride, increased tourism, as well as increased arts and cultural opportunities for their residents. The existence of an active public commission or a strong community group that champions and coordinates the arts and cultural sector appears to be a key component in how arts and culture is valued in a community.
- Even when elected officials and civic leaders appreciate the value of arts and culture, they often do not see a cohesive sector and have not had a compelling case made in a consistent manner in support of the role of arts and culture in fostering community



priorities such as economic development, tourism, community cohesion and public safety, or quality of life. The arts and cultural sector is not currently united to foster awareness or visibility.

LEADERSHIP IN THE REGION’S ARTS AND CULTURAL SECTOR IS DIFFUSE AND ARTS COMMISSIONS, OR SIMILAR ENTITIES, CAN BE CRITICAL GAME CHANGERS IN BUILDING SUCH LEADERSHIP.

- ➔ Communities with vibrant and engaged arts commissions, or that have arts and cultural leadership that participates in civic groups, are building stronger and more cohesive arts and cultural sectors. Communities that do not have such leadership entities or individuals express an increased sense of fragmentation and lack of ability to coordinate or galvanize the sector.
- ➔ Communities without such entities see the value of creating such a body but often lack the knowledge or resources to take action to develop a commission or council. There is interest in finding more systematic ways to identify and nurture arts and cultural leadership within the sector and to serve as bridge builders and arts and cultural sector champions in the larger civic arena.
- ➔ Support for ongoing professional development of arts commissioners, staff, or other local arts and cultural leaders is rare although there are resources and information that exist at the state and national level, as well as among local and regional peers.

LIMITED FUNDING AND STAFF RESOURCES HAVE MADE IT DIFFICULT FOR THE PIERCE COUNTY ARTS AND CULTURAL SERVICES DIVISION TO BUILD AWARENESS OF ITS ROLE AND FUNCTION.

- ➔ There is significant support for Pierce County government’s efforts to develop a stronger and more strategic approach to the arts and cultural sector, and for expanding information on the Arts and Cultural Services Division’s functions. Its public art and grant-making roles are highly valued in the community and serve to raise the visibility of art and serve to leverage additional funding.
- ➔ The Pierce County Arts and Cultural Services Division has an opportunity to raise its profile in the arts and cultural community and there is a great deal of interest in its work and potential . Those people who are familiar with the Division are aware primarily of its grant making function. There is also a perception in the community that the Pierce County Arts Commission is not as active as similar entities in other counties or cities.
- ➔ In addition to its important public art, grant-making, and education-based programs, relationship building is seen as critical to fostering county-wide networks for information, support, media coverage and advocacy. Sector constituents voice interest in seeing the Division take on such a role and reach out to strengthen the connections in



the arts and cultural sector. Serving as a link to bring people together and to facilitate or support those interactions is seen as a highly valued potential role for the Division.

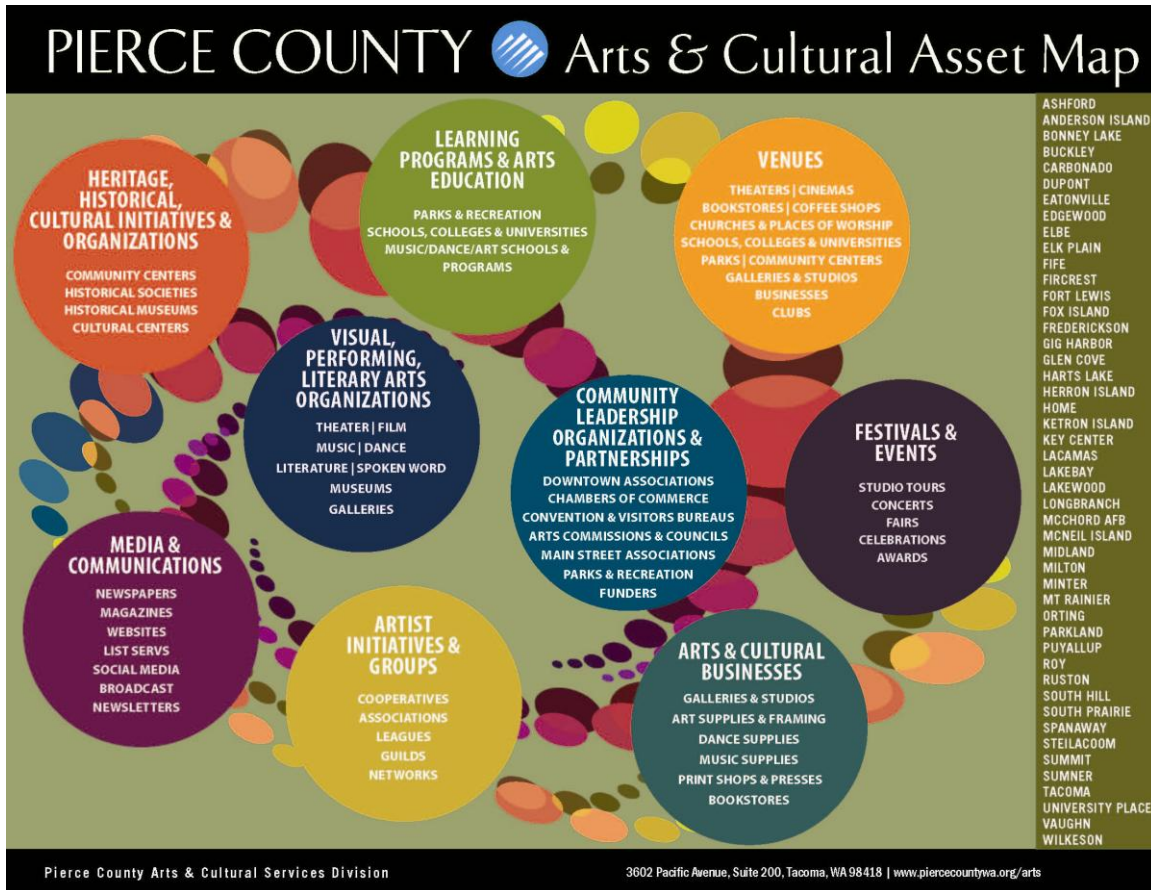
THE ARTS AND CULTURAL SECTOR FACES THE MOST CHALLENGING ECONOMIC SITUATION IN THE PAST FIFTY YEARS.

- ➔ Lack of financial resources represents a significant problem for most arts and cultural organizations in Pierce County. While the current economic downturn has made the situation especially difficult, the problem is deeper and of longer standing.
- ➔ There is concern that resident arts and cultural spending is declining, having an impact on earned income in the arts, especially in terms of sales of art work and ability of residents to pay ticket costs or class fees. This situation also impacts artists and may influence their ability to make their home in Pierce County. Small arts and heritage groups, especially those without longstanding community roots, are particularly vulnerable in this economy.
- ➔ The economic downturn has, however, spurred creative entrepreneurial and collaborative approaches at all levels of the sector, including joint marketing among major institutions, cooperative studio arrangements, increased use of non-traditional and online sales venues and fundraisers, and exploration of new relationships or alliances with social and human services or business.
- ➔ There are efforts underway to establish long-term sources of support for arts and culture, including the Prosperity Partnership initiative which has developed a Cultural Access Fund proposal for arts and cultural organizations in Washington State, and which has strong Pierce County arts and cultural leadership involvement. This effort, while potentially of major importance for arts and cultural institutions, is not on the immediate horizon.
- ➔ There is strong reliance on volunteer resources to fuel the sector, which includes volunteer boards of directors. In general, there is continued enthusiasm and resilience and the economic situation is seen as a temporary hurdle that can not, and should not, eclipse the forward motion of arts and cultural endeavors.



PART III THE ARTS AND CULTURAL ASSET MAP

As part of this project, the consultants developed a comprehensive strategic and conceptual “map” of arts and cultural assets in Pierce County. The asset map is designed to help tell the story of the county’s arts and cultural landscape. By examining what is listed (note that the map is presented here at one-half actual size), the viewer gains insight into the richness of Pierce County’s arts and cultural sector. At the same time, it is a useful tool to identify potential areas for further collaboration and new initiatives. Such mapping provides a way to understand the complex relationships within the cultural sector across the not-for-profit, private, and public spectrum.





To build the asset map, existing lists of arts organizations, media, events, and venues were reviewed. In particular, the TacomaArts listserv provided much information about cultural activities both in Tacoma and throughout Pierce County. The list of assets was augmented by additional research as well as comments and suggestions from Steering Committee members and other community members.

Using the findings of the arts and cultural needs assessment, conducted as part of this project, the consultants developed various ways to categorize the many assets in Pierce County. An initial draft of the map was reviewed by the staff of the Division of Arts and Cultural Services, members of the Steering Committee, and participants at a community forum. Several rounds of revisions were made based on those sessions.

The cultural asset map is a colorful portrait of arts and culture in Pierce County and, although extensive, it is by no means complete. It can serve as the starting point for on-going updates and inventorying of assets, as described in greater detail in Strategy 4.1 in Part V of this report. Both pages of the asset map are provided above at about one-half size. The full-sized map is available on the Division's web site.



PART IV

STATEMENT OF VALUES AND VISION

The following is intended to serve as a guide for Pierce County’s arts and cultural development over the next ten years. It was developed by the community Steering Committee of the 2009-10 arts and cultural planning process undertaken by the Pierce County Division of Arts and Cultural Services which involved extensive community input.

As noted earlier, the term “culture” is used to refer to the sum total of customs, beliefs, and traditions and includes, but is not limited to, the “fine arts.” This includes ethnic, racial, and cultural expressions; the history and heritage of Pierce County; public spaces, landmarks, parks; and the built environment.

VALUES

In Pierce County we recognize and value:

- ➔ arts and culture, broadly defined, as a key indicator of a healthy community.
- ➔ the contribution of dancers, musicians, actors, writers, poets, media and visual artists to our communities.
- ➔ historic legacy, landmarks, and landscape preservation.
- ➔ arts education and creative experiences for all school age children.
- ➔ the existing or potential artist in every home and at all stages of life.
- ➔ public art because it improves the quality of our public spaces.
- ➔ collaboration and partnership among individuals, organizations, and government.
- ➔ economic and cultural vitality as a result of these collaborations.
- ➔ the unique range of arts and culture in Pierce County, from grassroots activities to established institutions.

VISION - AN ASPIRATIONAL LOOK FORWARD

In 2020, ten years after the Pierce County Arts and Cultural Plan was drafted, the arts and cultural landscape of the county is imagined to be strengthened and transformed. While the process began well before the plan was undertaken, it has facilitated a transition in how arts



and culture are viewed and experienced county-wide. Key elements envisioned for accomplishment over the coming decade are:

➔ Residents, businesses, and visitors identify Pierce County as a place with **a strong arts and culture identity**. This identity brings pride to those who live here and the county's wealth of creative opportunities reflects its distinctive character and environment.

➔ The business community views arts and culture as an **important source of and partner in creating economic vitality and a significant contributor to the county's quality of life, making it attractive to existing and potential employers and employees**. Visitors and tourists recognize Pierce County for its range of arts and heritage opportunities in tandem with its extraordinary natural assets including Mt. Rainier National Park, abundant waterfront, rural landscapes, industrial history, and energized cityscapes.

➔ The public, private, and not-for-profit sectors share a commitment to **creating meaningful access and opportunities for life-long arts learning and cultural experience**. Residents of all ages and at every stage of life are enriched through meaningful and sustained involvement with the arts and culture, from personal expression and creation to audience participation.

➔ Engagement in the arts is supported in both **familiar venues and in unexpected places** so that arts and cultural experiences are part of the fabric of life in the county. Pierce County is the site of nationally-recognized arts and cultural institutions as well as strong grassroots arts and cultural activities.

➔ Arts, heritage, and cultural **entities communicate effectively with each other and work together** to build and strengthen their impact across the county.

➔ School age children in Pierce County are considered fortunate since they have **access to a school curriculum that includes and sustains the arts as an equal and valued part** of their education. This is augmented by ongoing creative partnerships with arts organizations that ensure that all students have the opportunity to benefit from "creative moments" and that every 6th grader receives 2 free tickets to a major arts and cultural event.



Naches Pillars (detail), 2005
by Douglas C. Granum
Basalt columns and benches
Heritage Park, South Hill, Puyallup
Pierce County 1% for Art Program



- ➔ The county's attention to the past, the present, and the future is reflected in its approach to arts and culture. The region's **rich historic legacy is well documented and preserved** by a coordinated effort linking committed individuals and organizations. The heritage and cultural **traditions of present residents are shared and celebrated** across the county.
- ➔ **High levels of participation and engagement** in a variety of arts and cultural activities are sustained across the county. Individual artists see Pierce County as a great place to live affordably and work. Their contributions are recognized and supported. Arts and cultural organizations and businesses operate in an environment that supports their efforts through funding, participation, volunteerism and a supportive operating environment.

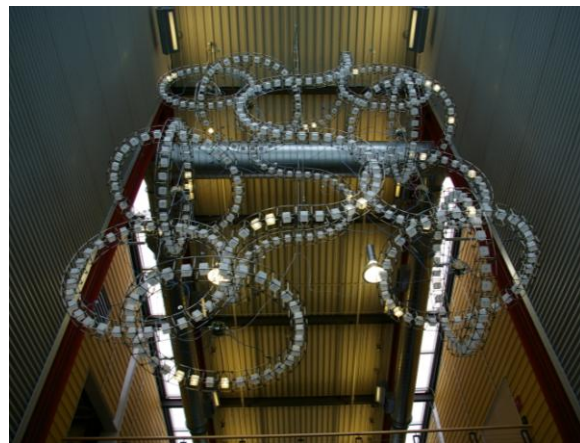


PART V

GOALS, STRATEGIES, TACTICS

In this section of the report, the consultants provide an overview of seven goals, related strategies, and tactical approaches to implementation of the cultural plan. The goals and strategies were developed by the consultants with significant input by the Arts and Cultural Plan Steering Committee. Implementation tactics reflect the research and input from all aspects of the planning process.

For each of the 23 strategies, the consultants have described a potential role for the County and have noted other public, private or governmental organizations and entities that might play key or additional roles in implementation. These designations reflect information and suggestions gathered through the planning process but are not meant to suggest commitment at any level by the parties named. They are provided here as a catalyst to implementation and should not be interpreted as committing those mentioned to any specific course of action.



Roadworks, 2008, by Paul Sorey
Steel, LED lights, computer processor, plastic
Central Maintenance Facility, Spanaway
Pierce County 1% for Art Program

Additionally, it should be noted that this planning process was envisioned as providing information of value in two important arenas.

- ➔ The first arena is Pierce County government, to inform its functions and services in the arts and culture.
- ➔ The second arena is the larger arts and cultural sector that includes a diverse range of public and private entities, and individuals.

These two arenas are inextricably linked to provide a dynamic and vital community for county residents. The goals, strategies and tactics described here seek to address both these arenas and their opportunities for intersection. It should be kept in mind that the strategies have been designated under a single goal to improve clarity, but many strategies have implications or relationships that may relate to more than one goal.



GOAL 1. TO BUILD A MORE COHESIVE AND INCLUSIVE NETWORK OF ARTS AND CULTURAL LEADERSHIP ACROSS THE COUNTY.

Leadership is at the heart of building a more effective arts and cultural sector. Within the county there are public and private sector initiatives that can provide the knowledge, inspiration, and connections to help strengthen Pierce County's arts and cultural sector, and can provide guidance and support to individuals who wish to play such leadership roles in their communities. Some arts and cultural efforts are isolated and have limited access to the skills and support of peers and best practices in the field. This is especially true in the unincorporated areas of Pierce County and with grassroots efforts that would benefit from ways to link with experienced and professional colleagues. The purpose of this goal is to look holistically at the sector and to build the network so that it includes the broadest spectrum of communities, linking emerging and established strengths and interests.

Strategy 1.1

Consolidate in a single division all of Pierce County government functions that relate to arts, culture, public art, heritage and historic preservation.

Currently these functions are dispersed among a number of Pierce County departments, including Community Services, Planning and Land Services, and Parks and Recreation. National experience suggests that such dispersal is not cost-effective, often resulting in duplication, fragmentation, and inefficiencies. It limits County government's ability to enhance or support the arts and cultural sector and build networks. National best practices indicate that consolidating these functions and integrating their management creates greater efficiency and effectiveness in serving constituents. It is also likely to improve information sharing and policy development across County programs. It is essential that such consolidation reflect staffing and budget allocations to undertake the scope of duties assigned as well as those stemming from the implementation of this plan since the existing staffing levels of the Division of Arts and Cultural Services are inadequate.

Tactical Approaches

Establish a task force with representation of all departments and/or divisions that contain functions related to arts, culture, public art, heritage and historic preservation to address the most efficient and cost-effective consolidation. Forward consensus recommendations to the County Executive and ultimately County Council for approval. If approved, develop a strategy and timeline to implement the consolidation. It will be important to develop benchmarks to measure the effectiveness of the new arrangements.

Pierce County's Potential Role

Formation of a consolidated division within one of the departments cited above, with clearly designated roles and structure, and appropriate staff and budget.



Potential Community Participants

None.

Strategy 1.2

Articulate priority roles for the Division of Arts and Cultural Services as those of convener, facilitator, and information clearinghouse.

The roles of convener, facilitator, and information resource, when provided by Pierce County, serve the full county and will be especially beneficial in the unincorporated areas. These are roles that support community and constituent-based efforts, and align with other roles of County government by providing the framework and fundamental tools for local endeavors and linking them within a county-wide network. The demand for these functions represents one of the most clearly-stated unmet needs encountered during this planning process and there is a strong belief among participants that the Division is uniquely positioned to fill these roles.

Tactical Approaches

Senior staff of the Department of Community Services and the Division of Arts and Cultural Services should conduct a targeted organizational review to refine and articulate the priority roles of the Division based on this planning process. Such review should examine how these roles can effectively intersect with fundamental public art (percent for art) and grant making functions. Once defined, it will be important to focus the Division's programmatic initiatives within the purview of the new priority roles.

In support of this clarification of the Division's role, an effort should be made, within the context of County procedures, to fill the vacancies on the Pierce County Arts Commission. Conversations with County decision-makers would be helpful to simplify the process by which candidates are identified and confirmed so that it is easier to obtain full county representation. County Arts Commissioners should be given the necessary tools and a focused agenda to strengthen their role in local communication and engagement in cultural activities within their district and the county.

Pierce County's Potential Role

Definition and designation of such roles; alignment with management and appropriate Pierce County staffing.

Potential Community Participants

Possible advisory role for representatives of the arts and cultural sector as part of defining roles and scope.



Strategy 1.3

Identify and foster “arts champions and cheerleaders” in leadership positions throughout the county.

Sectors that are effective in bringing their voice into decision-making bodies are better equipped to serve the community as well as their own priority needs. This is recognized by the arts and cultural sector and, while there is some political support in municipal and County government, there is a desire to strengthen such representation with a greater voice for the concerns of the sector. In general, the arts and cultural sector has not thought strategically about how it might support, inform, and cultivate leadership that is more aware of the value of arts and culture, but many individuals understand the importance of such work in the years ahead. Leadership is beginning to emerge on a local level, both in grassroots and professional arts and cultural spheres that can benefit from a more coordinated and intentional approach to maximize impact.

Tactical Approaches

Begin by identifying existing arts and cultural leaders currently holding office who may have unrecognized interests or relationships to arts and culture and build ways to connect and support their efforts, and to keep them informed. Additionally, efforts should be made to identify individuals who would consider running for municipal office and community leadership positions (including city or county councils, school boards, library boards or others) and build support for their candidacies. Experienced arts leaders can mentor emerging leaders in the unincorporated areas and outlying communities, and should encourage representation from culturally-specific communities. Candidate forums and survey checklists that identify key sector issues will be useful to assess the degree of support for arts and culture of any individual running for municipal and county positions. These efforts can be further expanded to include annual meetings to quiz candidates on priority items on the “arts and culture agenda.”

It is critical to work with existing organizations, in particular the Washington State Arts Alliance (WSAA). Building its membership in Pierce County will make it easier to more fully deploy the resources of that organization within the county and to strengthen its fledgling Pierce County monthly meetings to bring in guest speakers and build bridges between and among county arts organizations.

Pierce County’s Potential Role

None.

Potential Community Participants

Washington State Arts Alliance; Arts and Cultural Executives of Pierce County; ArtsEd Washington; local public and private sector arts agencies; arts and cultural associations and networks.



GOAL 2. TO BUILD AND SUPPORT EFFECTIVE LONG-TERM COLLABORATIONS WITHIN THE ARTS AND CULTURAL SECTOR AND BETWEEN IT AND OTHER SECTORS IN PIERCE COUNTY.

There are a number of excellent examples of arts and cultural organizations that have been successful at building effective collaborations and partnerships, but it is often harder than it should be to build and sustain those relationships. There are several reasons for this, most importantly that there is no entity that has a priority mission to facilitate the development of such work. It is also hindered by the lack of organizational capacity among arts and cultural groups in the region. The purpose of this goal is to build that “connective tissue” that simplifies the process of bringing together interested parties both within and outside the arts and cultural sector.

Strategy 2.1: Develop mechanisms to convene the constituencies of the arts and cultural sector to address their priority issues and concerns.

This should be done in ways that build relationships and encourage stronger information sharing and coordination to maximize existing resources. Such mechanisms should include forms of facilitation that empower participants (who may include artists, arts and cultural organizations, and commissions, among others). In that way, participants can build on these convenings and continue them under their own power, requiring little additional administrative or organizational management.

Tactical Approaches

To convene constituencies within the arts and cultural sector, it will be necessary to identify existing materials and programs, including regularly scheduled meetings, to see how additional tools (such as facilitation and coaching) can work to solve shared issues or build collaborative endeavors.

Efforts should begin by convening facilitated conversations within the cultural sector based on issues raised in this planning process. Subsequent convenings can expand to include representatives from other sectors, as described in Strategy 1.2 below.

Pierce County’s Potential Role

Convener and facilitator, especially for an initial or a clearly defined and limited set of meetings.

Potential Community Participants

Arts and cultural groups, organizations and businesses can provide facilities to host convenings or use their contacts to reach out to appropriate constituencies, or as future conveners of emerging efforts.



Strategy 2.2

Create tools and targeted initiatives that strengthen and facilitate collaborations and partnerships between arts and culture and other sectors.

Tools that can serve as roadmaps, based on best practices, might include checklists of potential models, guidelines, and vetted articles that can be used by interested parties from the arts and cultural sector as well as others. Targeted initiatives might be based geographically or with a particular sector or focused type of business or service, including such diverse entities as restaurants, galleries, senior centers, public schools, or health care facilities.

Initiatives might also focus around a specific upcoming event, such as major sporting events or a regional or national attraction like Mt. Rainier. There is a particular need to provide coordination to build sustainable relationships between arts and cultural organizations and schools to assist in providing young people with sequential arts educational experiences.

Tactical Approaches

It will be important to begin to engage representatives of other sectors by developing a list of existing local and regional resources for successful collaborations. Arts and cultural groups can initiate discussions with local businesses to begin to build bridges that can lead to shared promotion, attention, and community benefit. A single point of entry would be of particular benefit for school districts or individual schools looking for information and coordination so that both short-term and long-term partnerships with arts groups can be developed and sustained. Information online and in print, as well as workshops can support successful collaborations, partnerships, joint ventures, or alliances.

Collaborations can be explored with recreation interests, including trails and outdoor recreation sites, with which one-time events or permanent elements might be explored, or local business associations, with which shared promotion can provide community benefit. Farmer's markets across the county offer another possible arena for collaboration as do sports-oriented activities, especially those that can provide mutually beneficial collaborations that engage the many residents who attend youth sporting events.

Pierce County's Potential Role

Assist in researching and/or developing selected materials and tools and provide an online home for these resources; convene; provide assistance for selected targeted initiatives that dovetail with other important Pierce County targets and priorities.

Potential Community Participants

Pierce County Libraries; Pierce County Parks and Recreation Department; Tacoma Arts Commission; Metro Parks Tacoma; Tacoma Libraries; the Nonprofit Center; Chambers of Commerce and other local business entities; Tacoma Regional Convention and Visitors Bureau; school districts; sector-specific organizations or networks such as hospitality, social service, recreation, housing, etc.



Strategy 2.3

Identify public and private sector options for co-location of arts and cultural activities and services as part of existing or planned capital projects in communities seeking additional cultural facilities.

The construction or renovation of libraries, recreation facilities, conference or meeting spaces, educational facilities and other sites provides an important opportunity to consider how the co-location of arts and cultural spaces (and the partnerships required to sustain them) might create win-win situations for all parties. Such collaborations could yield long term benefits for all participants but require that such opportunities be identified and considered well in advance of construction. Making this evaluation process a formal part of the planning of capital projects can yield opportunities for multi-use integration of arts and culture, even in communities with limited facilities.

Tactical Approaches

Building multi-use facilities will require significant advance planning. Begin by identifying and inventorying traditional and non-traditional facilities throughout the county, including school facilities, that can accommodate performances, exhibitions, readings, and other cultural activities and clarify issues of access and use.

At the same time, work should begin to build effective collaborations with potential co-location partners, including the Pierce County Library System and various social service organizations and others, so that plans for cultural components can be designed into new and renovated facilities as the capital improvement process moves forward. A timely example might be exploring the development of on-going arts and cultural components that can benefit residents of Pierce County in the planned National Park Visitor Center at Mt. Rainier.

Pierce County's Potential Role

Support exploration of such co-location through permitting processes and related policies. Consider whether future Pierce County building or renovation projects might be appropriate for such co-location, including housing and County service spaces.

Potential Community Participants

Other county, state and federal entities that use or build facilities, especially Pierce County Library System; community centers, youth and recreation programs such as YMCAs or Boys and Girls Clubs; convention and hospitality interests; K-12 and higher education; developers.



GOAL 3. TO DEVELOP AND STRENGTHEN THE OPERATIONAL CAPACITY OF ARTS AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS AND ARTISTS IN PIERCE COUNTY.

Information, training, and ongoing professional development are the foundations of effective and sustainable operations for both individual artists and cultural organizations. Organizations – including all disciplines, budget sizes and locations – as well as individual artists, require access to training and information about their local, regional, and national operating environment. But these are not uniformly available in the county and are especially lacking in the unincorporated areas. Arts and cultural organizations and artists often have the necessary creative skills, though they frequently need a stronger set of operating tools. The purpose of this goal is to strengthen those tools and systems to help arts and cultural providers operate with efficiency and with enhanced skills to deliver arts and cultural services to both residents and visitors.

Strategy 3.1

Support the creation, formalization, or strengthening of private or public sector local arts and cultural agencies, especially in the county’s unincorporated areas.

National and regional experience indicates that communities that have local arts agencies are able to develop and sustain arts and cultural opportunities more cost-effectively, and to benefit from a broader range of funding and collaborative resources. And these agencies are frequently well situated to help build the operational capacity of the arts and cultural sector. The possibility of creating local arts agencies exists in many places in the county, but often requires technical assistance (especially in the form of facilitation and information-sharing) to take it to the next step. The formation of such groups can increase access to arts and culture, especially in more sparsely populated parts of the county.

Tactical Approaches

Begin by identifying existing fledgling efforts, especially in unincorporated areas, and provide technical assistance so that they may take the next steps towards formalization. It will be helpful to work with representatives from communities with established arts and cultural agencies to provide advice and support to those in other areas of the county with similar ambitions.

Build the skills available to existing and newly established groups by developing a series of programs, trainings, or forums for members of municipal arts commissions or other local cultural agencies on common issues, challenges, and to inform arts commissioners about their role and how they can be most effective. Provide information on the value of having such bodies reflect the communities cultural diversity and develop tools for building and tracking such representation.



Pierce County's Potential Role

Convening and facilitation around formation; providing access to information, resources and networks for fledgling groups.

Potential Community Participants

Local ad hoc arts and cultural groups that emerge from the convenings mentioned in strategy 1.1 above; Washington State Arts Alliance; Washington State Arts Commission; Arts and Cultural Executives of Pierce County; local funders; Americans for the Arts; Western States Arts Federation.

Strategy 3.2

Inventory and supplement technical assistance opportunities for the staffs and boards of cultural organizations and artists to create coordinated and ongoing options for quality professional development throughout the county.

Classes, workshops, and other relevant resources are offered by a variety of sources including community colleges, libraries, and nonprofit or business service entities. These resources, while quite extensive in the region, are often difficult to locate and may or may not be targeted specifically towards the needs of the arts and cultural sector. An initial scan is needed to identify what already is available. This should be followed by an assessment of other areas of need and the development of additional opportunities to provide the essential skills to build and strengthen the work of organizations and individuals (including paid staff, volunteers, board members, and individual artists) involved in the arts and cultural sector. Entry point opportunities for teaching artists (professional artists who wish to work with students in the schools) should be strengthened.

Tactical Approaches

Begin by inventorying relevant training programs for arts and cultural nonprofit organizations and artists currently offered by organizations, educational institutions or public entities. At the same time, survey potential participants (perhaps through Strategy 2.1 convenings) to identify priority areas of need for technical assistance, including such areas as marketing (including web-based and social media marketing), promotion, grant-writing, communicating and advocating with decision makers.

Training opportunities should employ existing resources if available. For example, board training might be conducted using the services of ArtsFund, the Nonprofit Center, or other regular and rigorous culturally-oriented board training. Explore the development of a County and municipal employee “loaned expertise” pool to provide technical assistance to arts and cultural organizations, focusing in particular on the needs of culturally-specific organizations. Regional and national events can also provide important technical assistance, including for example, the Washington State Arts Alliance’s annual Cultural Congress or events sponsored by Americans for the Arts. Programs such as Arts Impact or the Teaching Artist Training program, TATLab, can provide professional development and skill building training sessions for Pierce County artists who wish to develop their teaching skills.



Pierce County's Potential Role

Assist with an inventory of relevant technical assistance programs and resources; provide or identify a suitable online vehicle for sharing and updating such information with the field. Partner in organizing a cycle of key professional development programs for the sector.

Potential Community Participants

Washington State Arts Commission; ArtsFund; Washington State Arts Alliance; Tacoma Arts Commission; Nonprofit Center; Shunpike; Artist Trust; Arts Impact; ArtsEd Washington; TATLab; Americans for the Arts; community colleges; libraries; small business programs.

GOAL 4. TO BUILD AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF ARTS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES TO THE LIVES OF COUNTY RESIDENTS AND THE COUNTY'S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL VITALITY.

Arts and culture is part of the lives of many, if not most, county residents, be it through participation in a church choir, a garage band, or digital photography, or through attendance at professional or amateur exhibitions, performances, or events. This active arts and cultural component is part of the social fabric of communities and is intertwined with the economic role of arts and culture, reaching across the county and driven by visitors as well as residents. Often the scope and scale of arts and cultural activity is underestimated or not clearly visible, yet it is a powerful tool in building healthy and sustainable communities. This has been well demonstrated by a number of Pierce County municipalities that have made arts and culture a vibrant component in bolstering the image and vitality of their locale, seeing social as well as business benefits. The purpose of this goal is to ensure that arts and culture is more visible in Pierce County to enhance its economic and social impact.

Strategy 4.1

Develop an online interactive arts and cultural asset map that builds on the work conducted as part of this project, partnering with one or more leadership entities with a mission to reach throughout Pierce County.

The asset map developed through this planning process reveals a wealth of professional, business, and grassroots arts and cultural entities and activities in the county. Response to this initial tool indicates that there is considerable interest in making this information available as a way to visually portray the extraordinary range of arts and cultural offerings in Pierce County. It can also serve as a catalyst to expand the identification of new and emerging assets. Representatives of a number of organizations have indicated a willingness to explore using their county-wide access tools as a platform for developing such an effort. Interactive technologies have the potential to serve audiences from parents looking for music lessons or vacation arts camps to artists exploring opportunities, visitors looking for festivals, or residents planning an engaging night out.



Tactical Approaches

In order to build the use and value of the interactive features of the map, begin talks with interested leadership entities with county-wide reach to assess the feasibility of using existing technologies and systems to host this function. It would work initially in a non-interactive form but would build toward interactivity. At the same time, it will be important to design a simple tool to regularly update the asset map listings collected to date and continue to gather information about other arts and cultural assets that might be included on future iterations of the map, or a broader tool.

Pierce County's Potential Role

Convener of key parties to begin the process; providing data and overseeing the updating process.

Potential Community Participants

United Way; Pierce County Library System; Arts and Cultural Executives of Pierce County; Tacoma Arts Commission and other local arts commissions; CityArts Tacoma and other media; contributors of information from all parts of the county, including public and private arts and cultural entities.

Strategy 4.2

Develop an annual “State of Arts and Culture” report and share it at an annual celebratory and informational event.

The creation of an annual report and an event to release it will focus attention on the accomplishments, issues, and priorities of the arts and cultural sector. Many individuals and entities want to enhance their ability to share information on the significant role arts and culture plays locally, regionally, and nationally. Much research is being conducted nationally to document the role of arts and culture in addressing community priorities. Developing such a report can serve to benchmark progress related to the goals and strategies of this plan. It can also align talking points using current data and developments in the sector, and help to build awareness and knowledge. Designating a committee with appropriate expertise to develop such a report will offset the dangers of ad hoc research and analysis.

Tactical Approaches

A committee of existing arts and cultural leaders could be convened by the Division of Arts and Cultural Services to oversee and coordinate both the development of the report and the logistics of establishing an annual, high visibility event to share the data widely. Sub-committees should be established for each of these related but distinct tasks.

The group working on the report might include academic researchers and should review existing regional and national research on the impact of arts and culture on community priorities, including the recent National Arts Index, a collection of indicators of cultural vitality produced by Americans for the Arts (c.f., page 3 of this report), as well as the work conducted by the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance. Using these studies as guidelines, develop a limited number of metrics to track for Pierce County, linking with the community



indicators efforts of the United Way. This group should also identify and develop annual talking points on issues of current relevance regarding arts and culture in the county.

The findings should be announced at a major annual event that brings together arts and cultural entities and supporters with municipal and county elected officials, including Pierce County Council members, in coordination with Washington State Arts Alliance. The report should also be circulated broadly using local and county-wide print and electronic media.

Pierce County's Potential Role

Convening initial research committee, and providing relevant Pierce County data.

Potential Community Participants

Arts and Cultural Executives of Pierce County; Washington State Arts Alliance; United Way; Washington State Arts Commission; ArtsFund; ArtsEd Washington; Greater Tacoma Community Foundation; Tacoma Arts Commission; League of Education Voters; Americans for the Arts; institutions of higher education with relevant research functions in Pierce County.

Strategy 4.3

Develop targeted initiatives to link hospitality and tourism interests with the arts and cultural sector based on shared goals and values.

In many communities around the world, arts and culture is one of the key drivers of vibrant hospitality and tourism industries. Pierce County, with its extraordinary natural assets, including Mt. Rainier, can be more effective in how it uses its arts and cultural assets by teaming its tourism and arts and cultural sectors. The combined power of these sectors can yield significant impact, through joint marketing and promotions if deployed strategically over time.

Tactical Approaches

Establish a standing committee with representatives of the hospitality and arts and cultural sectors to develop and increase shared approaches and to identify upcoming opportunities to work together. Improved communication tools will assist in promoting awareness of the connections between and the intersection of visitor interests and Pierce County's arts and cultural resources. Ultimately joint projects can be implemented, and might include strategic use of festivals throughout the year, an annual county-wide contest and campaign for a song or artwork about Mt. Rainier, or projects such as developing walking and driving tour routes of historic and cultural sites throughout Pierce County, which might be augmented with printed maps and structured cell phone call-in opportunities at selected sites for detailed, narrated information.

Pierce County's Potential Role

Convener and facilitator; participate in planning process; link to other appropriate County offices as appropriate.



Potential Community Participants

Tacoma Regional Convention and Visitors Bureau; local and state tourism and hospitality entities; Arts and Cultural Executives of Pierce County or other arts and cultural leadership; business associations including chambers of commerce; municipal economic development offices; arts and cultural agencies and groups.

Strategy 4.4

Improve municipal and County government’s promotion, usage and support of local arts and culture.

Using local musicians at a groundbreaking, having a city logo designed locally, or having local youth present a dance performance at a community celebration are all ways to help strengthen both the community and the arts and cultural sector. Such a “buy local” approach can benefit communities in many ways, especially if local decision makers (such as an arts council or commission) leads such a process. It builds local creative capital – both in dollars and in social dimensions – while strengthening community identity and cohesion.

Tactical Approaches

Developing and employing “use your local creative assets” checklists and inventories of available fine and commercial art talent, will make it easier for County and municipal governments to employ local artists, musicians, dancers, and others as needed for entertainment at community celebrations and other events. These resources can also assist municipalities in using artwork and cultural activities as part of their identity, with a particular emphasis on including public and visible art work at key gateway points to communities.

Create mechanisms that promote and highlight the accomplishment of student arts programs to the general public and elected officials. Such efforts might include inviting school arts programs to participate in a municipal information campaign, or including student displays and performances at municipal and county level governmental meetings and other sessions.

In addition, municipal and County design guidelines should be developed or amended to improve signage for arts, cultural, history, and heritage sites, including permanent signs both on and off major highways, as well as banners or other changing signage to highlight temporary arts and cultural activities.

Pierce County’s Potential Role

Provide this function for Pierce County government and encourage efforts in municipalities by providing checklists. Review and alignment of relevant signage policies and procedures.

Potential Community Participants

Local municipalities, arts councils and commissions; local arts and cultural programs and artists; local schools.



GOAL 5. TO INCREASE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR ARTS AND CULTURE IN RECOGNITION OF ITS ROLE IN THE COUNTY’S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND QUALITY OF LIFE.

Funds, both earned and contributed, are essential components of a healthy and dynamic nonprofit arts and cultural sector. The rewards of a vibrant cultural sector are broadly dispersed – from a new creative business that chooses the county as its home to young students who are engaged and on track to graduate in part due to their experiences with the arts in school. Earned income and budgetary belt-tightening are important parts of building the financial health of the sector and should be bolstered wherever feasible. However, it is critical that contributed financial support be found to ensure the health of the sector and its accessibility to all county residents. The current economy has exacerbated existing challenges but also helps to identify the importance of efforts to create a fertile environment for future financial support.

Strategy 5.1

Conduct research and work towards creation of a voter-approved guaranteed stream of funds for County distribution for cultural initiatives.

In Pierce County, there are a variety of existing approaches and potential opportunities that can yield financial support for arts and culture. While implementing such funding mechanisms will require much time, thought, and planning, it is important to begin that process as soon as possible. The City of Sumner has allocated a per resident allocation to fund its active arts commission and there are county-wide options to consider sales tax credits related to the lodging tax in ways that might collectively benefit the cultural sector. The Puget Sound Regional Council has developed a Cultural Access Fund that would direct significant funds to the County for distribution, although the relevant bills in Olympia have yet to move forward..

Tactical Approaches

Various options for funding sources should be explored, including a small percentage of property-tax revenue, a portion of the lodging tax or of various registration or filing fees, private developer impact fees, an admission, seat, or entertainment fee, or other mechanism to provide a guaranteed revenue stream for arts and culture. Plant the seeds for a “quiet” campaign to build support for the concept among business and civic leaders throughout Pierce County.

Existing initiatives, such as the proposed Cultural Access Fund of the Prosperity Partnership should be supported as a means to increase arts and cultural funding in the county, and for its potential operational impact on the Arts and Cultural Services Division. The City of Sumner’s per capita allocation in support of arts and culture should be explored by other municipalities.

Pierce County’s Potential Role

Convene initial discussion; provide guidance; respond to proposals.



Potential Community Participants

Puget Sound Regional Council Cultural Access Fund; Washington State Arts Alliance, Arts and Cultural Executives of Pierce County; Washington State Arts Commission; senior leaders of arts and cultural organizations and agencies; interested residents.

Strategy 5.2

Identify the potential of HB 1386 monies to be used for a broader range of cultural and heritage functions within the County.

According to Washington State law HB 1386, the funds collected from certain filing fees are broadly earmarked for heritage-related usage, with allocation at the discretion of the relevant county council. In Pierce County these funds are currently directed to the Department of Planning and Land Services and allocated to historic records preservation. The current situation does not work well for coordination of efforts that clearly overlap in the cultural arena, including issues of preservation of other aspects of Pierce County's cultural heritage.

Tactical Approaches

Determine the legal usages of this funding to assess the feasibility of using some of it for the broader range of functions of a consolidated division, as described in strategy 2.1 above. Coordinate funding, as designated by law, in tandem with other county allocations of funds, staff and volunteers for culture and heritage to maximize impact.

Pierce County's Potential Role

Align related functions as per strategy 2.1. Clarify intent at state and county level and designate and direct cultural funds accordingly to benefit county residents, especially those in unincorporated Pierce County.

Potential Community Participants

None.

Strategy 5.3

Modify or create County policies to encourage the inclusion of arts or heritage components in new or renovated private development through favorable tax or permitting fees.

County permitting, zoning regulations, and incentives can all have an impact on the vitality of the cultural sector in the county. Such policies can either encourage or impede the growth and sustainability of cultural facilities, arts and culture businesses, artists' live/work options or other facets of the cultural sector. National examples abound of the ways that policies have been shaped to encourage desirable and innovative arts and cultural activity to benefit communities.

Tactical Approaches

Examine County zoning and other regulations and incentives for their impact on arts or heritage usages in private developments. In particular, explore possible options that would



increase the availability of reasonably-priced live/work space for artists. In addition, it would be beneficial to coordinate and simplify the process of permitting for cultural festivals and events and temporary public art projects at both the County and municipal levels.

Pierce County's Potential Role

Identify current policies with potential impact on the cultural sector and develop proposals to mitigate or encourage activities based on best practices in other counties.

Potential Community Participants

Developers; Artspace; municipal agencies; urban planning, architecture, heritage, arts and built environment entities.

Strategy 5.4

Pursue national and international funding opportunities based on the unique arts, cultural, historic, and heritage characteristics of Pierce County.

Cultural, heritage, and natural history assets in the county provide opportunities for support that may come from national or international sources that have not yet been tapped. Sister city relationships, industry-related foundations, or national funders with focused missions may provide funding sources beyond the usual regional players. Arts and cultural efforts, perhaps in tandem with other sectors, might build support if such opportunities are identified and pursued by a consortium or alliance of groups with a common interest.

Tactical Approaches

Research opportunities to approach national or international funders based on the role of arts and culture in the “case” for the region, its connection with sister cities, innovative arts education initiatives, etc. Employ the services of a grant writer to pursue such funding cooperatively among relevant local arts and cultural groups, and other partners..

Pierce County's Potential Role

Potential partner in larger initiatives or efforts; support for temporary research and grant-writing, and convening of potential partners..

Other Potential Participants

Sister city associations; arts and cultural organizations; tourism and business organizations

GOAL 6. TO DEVELOP A COUNTY-WIDE ARTS EDUCATION EFFORT TO POSITION PIERCE COUNTY AS A STATE AND NATIONAL LEADER IN ARTS-INFUSED LEARNING.

A number of leadership programs currently bring arts into the schools in various parts of the county. These include district-specific efforts to infuse arts into the curriculum as a powerful teaching tool, school partnerships with leading arts organizations with ties to national partners, and intensive professional development programs that inspire and enhance teachers' capacity. These efforts set the



stage for a potential county role as a hub of innovation and leadership in strengthening pre-K through high school education with the arts as a key component. The arts are increasingly recognized as a critical tool in developing creative problem solvers who are engaged and ready to enter the work force or continue their education. Current arts education is distributed inequitably across the county, but there is interest and potential to develop more cohesive, innovative, and effective experiences for students throughout the county and to garner support and attention for bold programs. The purpose of this goal is to build on the existing strengths and initiatives that will put Pierce County in the forefront of providing the arts in education.

Strategy 6.1

Convene county-wide arts education leaders to set a shared vision and goal for the county and to share information and strengthen networks.

Much is going on already and there are many players who have the capacity to contribute information and planning skills. They can contribute to a bold but realistic vision that would benefit students throughout the county. Several meetings have been convened by the Greater Tacoma Community Foundation and Arts Impact. They can provide a starting point to identify and expand thinking on how to use current conditions and this cultural plan as a catalyst to explore next steps. Such an endeavor must broaden the discussion beyond just school districts to reach more deeply into the county. It will require strong coordination and leadership over time and should include both in-school and out-of-school players.

Tactical Approaches

Build on previous efforts by convening a leadership group to work on developing a broad county-wide framework for improving arts education in Pierce County. The framework should identify the benefits to all county residents in creating a national model of excellence in preparing students for the 21st century workforce and outline a series of policy changes and educational initiatives that support systemic change. This body should address the importance of building support for an increase in the number of certificated teachers in music, visual arts, theatre, and dance in the county's schools to better meet Washington State-mandated learning requirements, and the growing interest in and need to integrate the creative arena of digital media and techniques.

Pierce County's Potential Role

Participant or initial convener.

Potential Community Participants

Arts Impact; Greater Tacoma Community Foundation; Philanthropy Northwest; ArtsEd Washington; ArtsFund; Washington State Arts Commission; Broadway Center (with the Kennedy Center); Arts and Cultural Executives of Pierce County; school district leadership; teaching artists; and arts organizations.

Strategy 6.2

Share solutions and best practices with school principals, district superintendents,



school board members, and other education decision-makers to assist them in providing students with the benefits of an education that fully includes the arts .

Recent research provides a wealth of data and information on how the arts help schools and districts achieve student learning goals and provide a complete education for all students. Education leaders in Pierce County can benefit from a coordinated effort to help them stay current on issues, opportunities, and tools for implementing an education in which the arts are an important aspect of learning. There is a need to develop clear materials and timely ways to share such information with key PreK-12 education decision-makers. In addition to disseminating such information, it is important to provide clear avenues to take action by linking emerging interest to opportunities.

Tactical Approaches

Begin by establishing an “Arts in Education Information working group,” that can identify needs and options for reaching relevant decision makers. Representatives should bring together the knowledge and networks to plan and develop succinct and targeted presentations or materials. Their efforts should focus first on ways to inform decision-makers’ by building awareness and knowledge of relevant issues, options, and resources for implementation. Additionally, the value of this group’s work can grow by developing and coordinating ways to share such information more broadly to parents and communities. Sharing information about the full range of potential career paths in the arts and creative sectors can also help decision-makers, students, and parents understand the value and opportunities aligned with such education in tomorrow’s economy

Pierce County’s Potential Role

Assist in providing information.

Potential Community Participants

Arts education programs and arts organizations; regional educational organizations and convenings; school districts; Arts Impact; ArtsEd Washington; principals’ networks; Running Start program and participating colleges; Washington State Arts Alliance.; teacher training programs at Washington colleges and universities; Washington State Arts Commission; Americans for the Arts; The Kennedy Center.

Strategy 6.3

Strengthen the opportunities for arts professional development for PreK-12 teachers.

Schools and districts with teachers who are ready for building additional arts skills are often stymied by barriers to identifying resources and training and covering their costs. Earmarked funding, especially when based on a multi-year initiative, is likely to have a significant impact in schools where there is a commitment to increasing the arts in the classroom. Coordination and alignment among arts organizations and other providers, can also contribute to a more effective array of professional development opportunities for teachers in the county, including programs that can reach schools with less access to resources in Tacoma.



Tactical Approaches

Improve information-sharing about existing resources and opportunities for professional development for non-arts classroom teachers that address ways to integrate the arts into other aspects of the core curriculum. Develop initiatives to increase access for individual teachers and for whole-school or grade specific cohorts. Provide certified and specialized arts teachers with access to advanced summer training programs, mentoring by master teachers or artists, and other approaches that acknowledge their expertise and stimulate their interest, while building information networks. Work with programs that train teaching artists to see how artists can be part of these efforts in the classroom, in the school community, or as mentors to individual teachers or students.

Pierce County's Potential Role

Information resource.

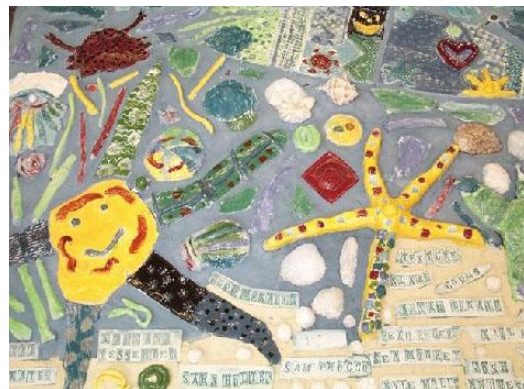
Potential Community Participants

Arts Impact; ArtsEd Washington; Greater Tacoma Community Foundation and other local and regional funders; school districts; teacher training programs at colleges; teaching artist programs; arts organizations; higher education.

Strategy 6.4

Develop more effective and expanded ways to bring cultural experiences to school children especially in unincorporated Pierce County.

Students in schools and districts throughout the county receive widely varying levels of access to arts and cultural experiences. This variation is based on proximity to cultural assets, available partnerships, school priorities, and available resources for field trips and in-school programs. Technology expands the ways schools can access cultural resources without transportation costs and can enhance, or in some cases, provide cultural experiences. Increased information about opportunities, improved coordination, or special initiatives for technology or in-person access can work to minimize existing inequities.



A mosaic created by the students at Mt. Meadow Elementary School in Buckley with artist Barb Kates.

Tactical Approaches

Increase the use of web sites and other technology tools to improve the utility of school-day trips to cultural sites by providing stronger preparation before and follow-up after the visit. Other approaches that can occur when school-day bus trips to cultural activities and sites are not an option should be examined including in-school programs by regional arts groups, or distance presentations through technology, such as live-feeds of performances.



Pierce County's Potential Role

Information sharing and convening regarding coordination or special initiatives.

Potential Community Participants

Arts organizations providing school programs; teaching artists; educator organizations; school districts; technology sector; education funders; libraries and community centers.

GOAL 7. TO PROVIDE ENHANCED OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONAL CREATIVE EXPRESSION AND ENGAGEMENT FOR ALL RESIDENTS.

Creative activities can be deeply rewarding for county residents at every stage of life and play an important role in making vibrant, engaged communities. National research shows, and is echoed in Pierce County accounts, that an increasing number of Americans are participating in regular amateur-level activities with a creative component and doing so in their homes and throughout the community. Participation as an audience member can also be engaging and often complements personal creative interests. There are many potential vehicles for providing additional opportunities to explore, develop, and expand creative interests and skills that can enrich individual lives, build community cohesion and increase life skills. The purpose of this goal is to strengthen personal creative expression in order to maximize the personal and community benefits.

Strategy 7.1

Promote innovative opportunities for personal creative expression using existing operating and administrative systems.

Opportunities to increase skills or work with others who share an interest or passion in an art form can develop significant rewards for county residents and their communities. The growing engagement of county residents in personal creative expression can be supported through providing introductory workshops and classes, or informal opportunities to share information (in such areas as scrapbooking, crafts, digital photography, and hip hop DJ'ing, among others) in a wide variety of settings. Programs that are targeted to older teens and young adults, or for seniors are generally less available in some parts of the county but may reflect appropriate target audiences.

Tactical Approaches

Explore how a broad range of organizations, agencies and entities, might enhance opportunities for personal creative expression within the context of their existing program. In addition, organizational leaders could direct employees to explore how art or artists might be integrated into their ongoing programs. Such activities might be focused internally on employees or externally on constituents or the larger community. This might involve fostering the development of avocational arts and cultural engagement by encouraging or expanding such activities as book groups, jam sessions, handcraft clubs, ethnic dance and music classes, DIY (do it yourself) craft circles, memoir writing groups, culinary arts, or spoken word contests.



Existing programs that can link community members with arts events that inspire individual creative expression can be included. For example, the “Art Pass” program offers passes to area museums through the County Library system. There may be ways this program or other efforts could be expanded to include additional cultural institutions in the county and to broaden the range of artistic disciplines accessed.

Pierce County’s Potential Role

Information, convening and facilitating.

Potential Community Participants

Pierce County Library System; Pierce County Department of Parks and Recreation; public and private community and recreation centers; community colleges; arts and cultural organizations; K-12 schools; individual artists; guilds and artists associations; a broad range of county businesses.

Strategy 7.2

Build access to and expand the range of cultural and creative activities at community centers and colleges for county residents.

Community centers and colleges have the potential to reach deeper into the county and many already have some cultural and creative programming. Existing programs in some communities, however, suffer from lack of exposure or outreach to potential participants. Some individuals are unaware of the fact that many performances, exhibitions, lectures, and even workshops or specific classes may be open at low or no charge to the public at area colleges. Community centers or other multi-purpose venues are often not recognized for their arts and cultural program offerings. Some venues and programs may benefit from information and resources to expand or improve their cultural programming and their branding as arts and culture providers.

Tactical Approaches

Improve the network for sharing information about and expanding awareness of community college and community center arts classes and programs, especially for young adults and seniors. Encourage local arts agencies and media to create information campaigns to highlight such programming and to help these entities expand their direct email or other information lists. In order to build on student experiences in high school, build opportunities for recent graduates who participated in the arts during their high school years to continue their connection to the arts at community colleges or community centers through expressive creative opportunities, public service, mentoring, and other means.

Pierce County’s Potential Role

Information, resources, convening and facilitating.

Potential Community Participants

Higher education; community centers, local newspapers and other media; local arts councils and commissions and related agencies.



Strategy 7.3

Integrate, encourage, and showcase local arts and cultural expressions in community activities and celebrations throughout the county.

The work of local artists, grassroots and community arts projects and informal arts activities bring energy, joy, and pride to county residents. Finding ways to acknowledge and encourage the work of these individuals and groups can be affirming both for the creators and for the community. Local parades and performances, informal music gatherings at places of worship or coffee shops or stores, exhibitions of children’s art in local businesses are examples of ways that communities can signal the value of their residents’ creative endeavors.

Tactical Approaches

Historic milestones (such as town centennials, anniversaries, and other events) can be employed as catalysts to encourage and showcase creative activities of local residents. To engage residents more fully in programming, county arts and cultural organizations can develop advisory forums for audience members to advise on the content and format of programs.

Develop simple, local mechanisms to connect individuals who live in relative proximity and share similar creative pursuits so that they can share information and learn from one another. In addition, lists of visual and performing artists, dancers, poets, and writers living in the local area can be used to establish informal, local artist “showcases” for artists, particularly those who are interested in serving as teaching artists in public schools, recreation centers, senior centers, and other community venues.

Pierce County’s Potential Role

Information, including listings of artists, and convening.

Potential Community Participants

Local business associations; municipal governments, arts councils or commissions; libraries, artists; community associations.



PART VI NEXT STEPS

Over the past seven months, this arts and cultural planning process has engaged numerous people in all parts of Pierce County and a broad range of sectors of the county. With the completion of this planning document, the focus of the process must begin to shift from *planning* to *implementation*. In this section of the report, the consultants provide guidance on these next steps in the process.

It is important to note that, first and foremost, implementation of this plan over its ten-year course will require a commitment from a range of civic and government leaders in Pierce County. While this plan has been sponsored by the County, implementation can be the responsibility of no single entity and many groups must play key roles. That said, the importance of an initial convener and facilitator cannot be overstated. The consultants believe that role must be undertaken by a consolidated Division of Arts and Cultural Services as the leader in partnership with other key governmental, business, and nonprofit entities.

This plan presents a wide range of strategic and tactical initiatives and suggests many entities that might be partners in their implementation. The form of that implementation will vary depending on the role of these partners and there are three likely scenarios:

- ➡ When the County is the **sole participant** involved in initiating action.
- ➡ When a **partnership** is required between the County and one or several community entities to initiate action
- ➡ When **one or several community groups** can initiate action on its own.



Birds and Leaves (detail), 2008
by Garth Edwards
Brushed aluminum relief on panel
Sound View Building, Tacoma
Pierce County 1% for Art Program



In the section below, the consultants provide their recommendations for each of these scenarios, understanding that priorities for implementation will likely be driven by the opportunities that are available at that time.

INITIAL STEPS FOR PIERCE COUNTY

In many cases in this report, the County is cast as “facilitator” or “convener” of initiatives that would likely involve a partnership of other community entities. In these cases, the County’s role is to bring together interested parties and provide some initial administrative support to allow the partners time to establish any necessary formal working mechanisms. Such a role is central to implementation over the ten-year planning period. But while Pierce County is identified as a participant in facilitating implementation of many of the strategies in this plan, there are only two that are critical for the County to undertake on its own.

- Strategy 1.1, which proposes consolidating arts and cultural functions into a single County division or department.
- Strategy 1.2, which proposes defining the County’s priority roles as facilitator, convener and information clearinghouse.

While there are few, they are central to the success of many of the plan’s strategies and they reflect internal changes to County administrative structures and operating priorities. For that reason, they must be addressed as soon as possible. A small working group of County staff could come together, including senior representation of departments with cultural programming components (including Community Services, Planning and Land Services, and Parks and Recreation), to begin this conversation. **This working group could be charged with defining the most effective method of implementing Strategy 1.1 and providing a tentative timeline for its completion.** As part of its work, it could formalize the priority roles for the consolidated entity, articulate the budgetary implications of this new structure (especially recognizing the need for adequate staffing levels), and propose benchmarks to assess the effectiveness of the new arrangement. This body could complete its work within three to six months of when it is established.

In addition, the County should begin planning for an annual convening to focus on sharing this planning document and designed to retain the interest of those involved in this process and galvanize others to become involved. It could be planned in coordination with the existing Margaret K. Williams Arts Awards ceremony.

INITIAL STEPS FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

A review of each strategy’s section entitled “Potential Community Participants” indicates the extensive range of potential partners who might be involved in some aspect of the implementation of the arts and cultural plan over its ten-year period. In order to ensure the



greatest likelihood that participants can come together, the consultants recommend establishing an “Arts and Cultural Plan Implementation Committee” that reports to the manager of the Division of Arts and Cultural Services (or any successor entity) and is a sub-committee of the Arts Commission.

ARTS AND CULTURAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

This Committee could be made up of a small group of between six and eight senior representatives from key community groups that have an interest in and commitment to the implementation of the arts and cultural plan. This might include representatives from County government, other county-wide nonprofit agencies, funders, business, education, and the public and private arts and cultural sector. The Committee could include members who have served on the Arts and Cultural Plan Steering Committee. The Committee would meet monthly during the first two years of the plan to set priorities and make sure that a few carefully chosen initiatives are moving forward. These initiatives, the “low-hanging fruit” that may have some aspects already in motion, will allow for some early successes that will build support and enthusiasm for the plan’s goals and strategies.

The Committee would be charged with the following duties:

- Reviewing this planning document and setting broad priorities for implementation (with a particular focus on the first two years)
- Identifying potential participants in implementation for those priority areas
- Working with the Division of Arts and Cultural Services to convene initial sessions to develop approaches to implementation
- Tracking and championing implementation efforts
- Sharing information on progress with the Arts Commission at least quarterly.
- Developing an annual status report
- Identifying next steps as their term comes to an end.

The Committee should hold an annual public meeting to report to county residents on the progress of implementation. This might be concurrent with the annual meeting described in Strategy 4.2.

It should be noted that this structure retains the Division’s role in overseeing and coordinating plan implementation but it creates a special committee to advise the Division, as a sub-committee of the Arts Commission, rather than employing the already existing Arts Commission. Implementation of the plan (especially at the beginning) will require the high-level involvement of key civic and arts and culture sector players. The Arts Commission, as currently configured, does not reflect that executive leadership. It is likely that key community representatives will be able to participate on this Committee who would not be able to take on the responsibility of being commissioners.



INITIAL STEPS FOR INDIVIDUAL ORGANIZATIONS

There are many aspects of this report that can be undertaken by one or several cultural, educational, civic, or social service organizations, funders and municipalities, as well as individual artists or grassroots groups working on their own. The most effective process for harnessing this engagement, one that the consultants have seen work effectively in other communities, includes the following steps:

1. An organization can assign an individual board or staff member to review the arts and cultural plan to identify possible initiatives within the plan that align with the organization's mission or existing programmatic priorities. (This might include, for example, an arts organization spearheading a joint marketing initiative or a social service organization integrating additional arts programming into its offerings.)
2. The individual reports back to the organization's leadership about possible initiatives and the organization establishes a small committee to determine whether there are other interested parties and what the next steps should be.
3. Organizations should identify methods to inform the Plan Implementation Committee described above about their relevant plans.

Additionally, on-going work by Steering Committee members can jumpstart such a process. Members of the Steering Committee might each commit to sharing the goals and strategies of the planning process with organizations and associations with which they are affiliated. Such a process can ensure that the results of the plan are distributed more widely, with informed context and credibility. The Plan Implementation Committee should receive reports of such presentations and utilize this information in formulating priorities for action.

Such an opportunistic approach encourages organizations to focus on actions that are in the report and that address priority interests and concerns that can mesh to create a more effective impact throughout the county.



CONCLUSION

This planning process has been an exercise in participation with multiple voices involved in various aspects of its development. There has been a great deal of discussion and many viewpoints expressed. It is unlikely that everyone will agree with everything in this document. But most participants will find some reflection of the comments that they made at various stages in the process. That contributes to the strength of this document – that it reflects an organic growth from community participation. The consultants believe that the months of engaged comment and debate have strengthened this report so that it can better serve as a valuable tool in reaching Pierce County’s arts and cultural potential.

This research has revealed a county rich in arts and cultural assets. Some of these are well established and celebrated, while others are less obvious but grow from commitments to the personal, social and economic benefits of arts and culture. The roadmap that is revealed in this plan provides opportunities for action on all these fronts.



Reemergence, 2008
by Benjamin Moore and Dick Weiss
Hand-blown and leaded glass window, six panels
Emergency Operations Center, Tacoma
Pierce County 1% for Art Program