

# **NORTH MECKLENBURG CULTURAL ACTION PLAN**

PREPARED BY HYPERION ASSOCIATES ON BEHALF OF  
THE ARTS & SCIENCE COUNCIL  
AND  
THE TOWNS OF CORNELIUS, DAVIDSON AND HUNTERVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

June 2004

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	3
Introduction.....	5
Methodology.....	6
Executive Summary.....	7
North Mecklenburg’s Three Towns.....	12
Findings of the Interviews, Small Groups, and Town Meetings.....	17
Findings of the Telephone Survey.....	21
Findings of the ASC Affiliate Survey.....	24
Recommendations.....	27
I. Create a regional office of cultural development.....	27
II. Form a regional public/private partnership to develop cultural facilities in North Mecklenburg... 30	30
III. Undertake joint marketing and public communication.....	32
IV. Nurture artists, cultural workers and cultural organizations.....	34
V. Advance philanthropic development by creating a mechanism for donors to come together.....	37
VI. Advance the coordination of cultural parks and recreation programs.....	38
VII. Increase cultural program offerings, strengthen the quality of those offerings, and ensure access for residents.....	41
VIII. Strengthen targeted partnerships to fill gaps in cultural programming.....	46
IX. Advance regional identity.....	48
X. Advance intercultural unity.....	50
XI. Build a coordinated approach to historical preservation and programming.....	52
XII. Enhance lake access thereby creating opportunities to use the lake as a cultural venue.....	54
XIII. Enhance faith, civic, neighborhood, and social organizations’ involvement in cultural activities..	55
XIV. Utilize cultural activities to enhance downtown development.....	56
Participants.....	58

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Community cultural planning is a collective work, and the consultants would like to acknowledge those who lent their hands, their minds, and their resources to the process. We express our gratitude to the Arts and Science Council board and staff in general. We are especially thankful to the Arts and Science Council Planning Committee and its Chair, Dan Prickett for their generous gift of time, interest and guidance. Robert Bush, Vice President for Planning has distinguished himself as a wise, creative and highly skilled collaborator. Office Assistant Randy Penninger has conscientiously tracked the thousand details that make for successful meetings and schedules.

In addition, we were well supported in undertaking this effort by the Towns of Cornelius, Huntersville, and Davidson. Former Mayor Carson Cato of Cornelius, Mayor Randy Kincaid of Davidson, and Mayor Kim Phillips of Huntersville were the local leaders who first engaged the planning partnership offered by the ASC. Mayor Gary Knox of Cornelius has picked up the leadership baton without missing a beat. Many town commissioners contributed important perspectives through interviews and meeting participation. Town staff, at both the administrative and the Parks and Recreation Department levels, have served us as expert liaisons and their intimate knowledge of municipal affairs has been an invaluable resource. In particular, we express our gratitude to those who served as Town Liaisons to this effort including Gayle Roberts, Special Projects Coordinator and Paul Herbert, Parks and Recreation Director, Cornelius; Dawn Blobaum, Assistant Town Manager, Davidson; and Greg Ferguson, Assistant Town Manager and Betty Fentress, Parks and Recreation Department Director, Huntersville.

This planning effort was led by a Steering Committee consisting of a member of the ASC board and five citizens from each of the three towns who were appointed by their mayors. The Steering Committee quickly evolved into a dedicated, insightful, energetic, good-humored group and a model of inter-town cooperation. Generosity, good will, and hospitality can be found everywhere in North Mecklenburg. We thank our Steering Committee colleagues

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Commissioner Hank Kahn	Dana Pianowski	Ruth Held
Kim McCullogh	Sherry Malushizky	Pam Royal
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In undertaking this plan, many residents, local businesses and civic organizations made generous contributions. Their gifts were important to this planning process, and we thank them, as well. Individual participants, who contributed their ideas, are listed at the close of this document.

### *Cultural Summit Sponsors*

Town of Cornelius  
Town of Davidson  
Town of Huntersville  
Baja Fresh Mexican Grill, Huntersville  
Chick-Fil-A at Northcross, Huntersville  
Eastern Federal Theatres  
Ferrucci's Old Tyme Italian Market,  
Cornelius  
Knead-It Bakery/Café, Davidson  
Lowe's Foods, Cornelius  
Papa John's Pizza, Huntersville  
Pepsi Cola Bottling Co. of Charlotte  
Starbuck's Coffee, Cornelius  
Winn-Dixie, Huntersville

### *Refreshments*

Ruth Held  
Joanne Rowe

### *Door Prizes*

A World of Good  
Bank of America  
Carolina Creative Events, Inc.  
Charlotte Museum of History  
The Charlotte Symphony  
Children's Art Project  
Christa Faut Gallery  
Community School of the Arts  
Davidson Community Players  
Discovery Place  
Friends of the Arts at Davidson  
Historic Latta Plantation  
The Icehouse Center  
Loch Norman Highland Games  
The Mint Museums  
North Carolina Dance Theatre

### *Entertainment*

The Schoolhouse String Band: John  
Wertheimer, David Conner & Cameron  
Swallow  
The Huntersville Brass: Torrance Banks,  
Eric Knight, Richard Spangler, Al Sudduth,  
& Sam Waymouth  
Jazz Pianist Bill Ward  
Heather Stamper accompanied by Janet  
Doles, lyrics by Karen Doyle

### *Video*

Steve Rutherford, Production 13 Films  
Belle Banks  
John Foster  
Michael Manganelli  
Scotty Nicholls

### *Elected Officials' Reception*

Christa Faut Gallery  
Wachovia Corporation

### *Consultant Lodging*

Davidson Village Inn  
Econolodge, Cornelius

### *Meeting Space*

Icehouse Center  
Lake Norman Convention and Visitor's  
Bureau

## INTRODUCTION

### *The Genesis of the Plan*

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

Recently, the ASC adopted a cultural facilities master plan that articulates a vision for the next 25 years of facility development in Mecklenburg County. Phase I includes facility plans for a number of major cultural institutions and the development of community cultural facilities. A priority is placed on community cultural facility or facilities in North Mecklenburg. This recommendation is broad in nature, and could mean one large, or several smaller, facilities. One of the key questions underlying the North Mecklenburg Cultural Action Plan, then, is to refine the understanding of the area's cultural facility needs, giving a clear answer to the question of regional versus local community cultural facilities. In that way, the two plans are linked.

### *Edge Towns*

The North Mecklenburg Cultural Action Plan addresses cultural development in three municipalities that can be regarded as edge towns, in the sense that although they began as quite separate entities from both Charlotte and from one another, they are being redefined by population growth. Today, their proximity to each other and to Charlotte impacts every aspect of community life. Taken together, these towns reflect many of the classic characteristics of edge towns. They

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

## METHODOLOGY

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

- Researching census data, local history, Mecklenburg County cultural plans from previous time periods, the ASC Cultural Facilities Master Plan, the ASC grants history in North Mecklenburg, ASC donor patterns, area needs assessments, physical planning documents, economic development documents, background information on many local cultural organizations, and municipal capital and operating budgets;
- Conducting physical tours of each of the subject towns under the guidance of public employees and interested citizens including key cultural facilities, neighborhoods, municipal facilities, parks, malls, and downtowns;
- Securing a telephone survey, conducted by UNCC's Urban Institute and testing public attitudes and preferences in cultural affairs;
- Conducting a written survey of ASC affiliate organizations testing their plans for services in the North Mecklenburg area;
- Conducting interviews with municipal employees and town and county elected officials;
- Conducting interviews with area residents from all walks of life;
- Providing opportunities for citizens to submit comments via a web site;
- Conducting small group meetings with area artists, business leaders, community activists, parents and educators;
- Conducting town meetings held at the Ada Jenkins Center and Cornelius Town Hall;
- Commissioning Production 13 Films to produce a brief video to document public opinion; and
- Convening a Cultural Summit drawing together residents and cultural organizations from the region.

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

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS AND RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS

### Key Findings

- ▶ *In North Mecklenburg, the clear majority of residents favor local public funding for the arts (63.1%) sciences (67.7%) and history (63%). Residents have a high level of interest in cultural activities, and yet many are unserved. No infrastructure exists to address this problem.*
- ▶ *There is a stark shortage of cultural facilities and programming is being constrained as a result.*
- ▶ *Most residents of North Mecklenburg are willing to travel 15-30 minutes to attend or participate in cultural events, or to provide for their children to do so.*
- ▶ *Residents report very different*

### Related Recommendations

#### I. Create a regional office of cultural development.

Strategies include developing a satellite office of the ASC, called ASC Lake Norman, to lead cultural development and coordinate cultural expenditures in the region; establishing a local advisory board; hiring a staff person; sharing costs among the towns and the ASC; and creating appropriate funding mechanisms for ASC Lake Norman itself as well as the local cultural organizations it serves.

#### II. Form a regional public/private partnership to develop cultural facilities in North Mecklenburg.

Strategies include forming a leadership group to develop a public/private partnership for cultural facilities, developing accessibly placed, regionally managed cultural centers, and developing a regional performing arts and large meeting venue facility.

#### III. Undertake joint marketing and public communication.

*experiences with regard to the ease or difficulty of learning about cultural programs.*

- ▶ *Artists and cultural organizations often have difficulty reaching their audience or developing their markets.*
  
- ▶ *Creative workers living in North Mecklenburg describe isolation and difficulty finding professional or amateur peers.*
  
- ▶ *North Mecklenburg has yet to evolve formal or informal mechanisms through which philanthropists can convene to shape their own participation in the regional cultural development agenda.*
  
- ▶ *Municipal Parks and Recreation Departments are key players in the delivery of cultural programs. Formalizing efforts to jointly plan cultural programs could improve their reach and enhance their quality.*
  
- ▶ *There is a lack of cultural programs for*

Strategies include creating a mechanism for joint calendaring and marketing, exploring shared registration for a wide variety of public and not for profit cultural programs, and providing a central contact point for organizations offering cultural outreach programs.

#### **IV. Nurture artists, cultural workers and cultural organizations.**

Strategies include exploration of shared services and creation of an on-going program of technical assistance for local cultural organizations, identifying a dedicated space for visual artist's groups meeting and working needs, and advancing the creation of studio spaces for individual artists.

#### **V. Advance philanthropic development by creating a mechanism for donors to come together.**

Strategies include convening appropriate leadership groups to discuss philanthropic development needs and preferences, creating and implementing a strategy to meet those needs, and engaging leaders in sustaining cultural systems and services.

#### **VI. Advance the coordination of cultural parks and recreation programs.**

Strategies include creation of municipal Departments of Parks, Recreation, and Culture; development of an inter-town Staff Cultural Team; articulation of programs, services, enrollment and scholarship functions; strengthening program quality; defining partnerships with local cultural organizations; and co-sponsoring summer camps.

#### **VII. Increase cultural program offerings, strengthen the quality of those offerings, and**



*13-18 year olds, and indications that youth need pro-social recreation options abound.*

- ▶ *Seniors lack access to cultural programs.*
- ▶ *Low-income residents lack access to cultural programs.*

- ▶ *Many residents express interest in tour bus/group outings to Charlotte-based cultural programs.*

- ▶ *Two working farms are likely to come available for purchase in North Mecklenburg in the very near future. There is interest in maintaining these farms as sustainable agricultural demonstration farms to honor the agricultural heritage of the area.*

- ▶ *Municipal leaders and residents agree that a much-needed regional identity is*

#### **ensure access for residents.**

Strategies include development of portable music and art programs, cultivation of partner agencies to assist in the identification of participants appropriate for scholarship support, expansion of the Connie Company, development of a cultural service plan for seniors, exploration of sequential curriculum in cultural offerings, increased programming for teens and adults, provision of culturally balanced programs, development of arts/science/history interdisciplinary programs, and development of partnerships with area libraries.

#### **VIII. Strengthen targeted partnerships to fill gaps in cultural programming.**

Strategies include working with area cultural organizations to increase the number of outreach programs offered in North Mecklenburg, assessing the need for local children's learning centers and developing partnerships to support their creation, exploring partnerships with science and history organizations in purchasing a working demonstration farm or farms, and stimulating increased group marketing and tours to Charlotte-based cultural programs.

#### **IX. Advance regional identity.**

Strategies include creating and implementing a comprehensive ASC Lake Norman public

*only beginning to emerge.*

- ▶ *Opportunities exist for cultural amenities, stable special events, and public art to enhance regional identity.*
  
- ▶ *North Mecklenburg is becoming more diverse, and the change is rapid. Cultural programming has not yet been tapped as a means of advancing inter-cultural understanding or communication.*
  
- ▶ *North Mecklenburg's historic properties could become significant anchors in the areas' cultural life.*
  
- ▶ *The lake has the potential to serve as a critical venue for special cultural events and on-going environmental education, yet there are serious barriers to public access.*
  
- ▶ *Low-income residents, including seniors, adults and children, lack access to cultural*

relations plan, developing a website documenting and promoting Lake Norman area cultural activities, developing cooperating municipal public art programs, and developing a system of support for on-going regional festivals.

#### **X. Advance intercultural unity.**

Strategies include working with Spanish-speaking residents to learn more about their cultural resources and needs, fostering cross-cultural events including participation by historically black and white churches, providing teen programs targeted at drawing diverse participants, and insuring representative balance in the design of historical programs.

#### **XI. Build a coordinated approach to historical preservation and programming.**

Strategies include exploration of shared programs, marketing, and management; linking history programs to school curricula and local libraries; creating a North Mecklenburg History Trail, and archiving local family papers.

#### **XII. Enhance lake access thereby creating opportunities to use the lake as a cultural venue.**

Strategies include creating a united regional position on public lake access, forwarding that position through public advocacy, and creating special shoreline events that support tourism within the context of shoreline access gained.

#### **XIII. Enhance faith, civic, neighborhood, and social organizations' involvement in cultural activities.**

*activities. Barriers include language, geographic location of resources, cost, and familiarity.*

- ▶▶ *Each town faces serious downtown development issues and each has small storefronts that could be developed as boutique shopping areas including galleries and storefront art centers if rail stops are located nearby.*

Strategies include convening faith community leaders in dialog around shared cultural programs; exploring shared spaces and events; creating a mechanism for continued development of shared cultural activity; working with civic organizations to help them identify a role in cultural affairs; and providing civic and neighborhood organizations with assistance to reduce unplanned competition between events.

#### **XIV. Utilize cultural activities to enhance downtown development.**

Strategies include investing in public art, wayfinding systems, and streetscape amenities; creating more pedestrian-friendly spaces; siting cultural facilities carefully; using special events to encourage inter-town human traffic; enhancing rail stops; and creating a public lecture series on the role of the arts in downtown development.

## NORTH MECKLENBURG'S THREE TOWNS

### *Cornelius*

Cornelius, a century-old former mill town, shows the effects of the sharp rise in population that characterizes North Mecklenburg. The damming of the Catawba River in 1963 by Duke Power to create Lake Norman was as influential as the cotton industry to Cornelius' development and growth. The lake provides the area with recreational opportunities, choice residential properties, and a source of hydroelectric power.

Cornelius is a community of 11,969 people and, like many rapidly growing edge communities, is divided by an interstate connector to a major city, in this case I-77. The older part of the town lies east of the highway, while much of the newer development has taken place to its west. The Peninsula is the signature neighborhood of the west side, with large and opulent homes that border Lake Norman. Westside residents are mainly professionals, and many are self-employed or executives of Charlotte's largest companies. The area is served by an upscale shopping center, Jetton Village, which at the time of our study had a number of vacancies. Eastside neighborhoods include the traditionally African-American Smithville Park and an ethnically diverse area recently named Old Mill Village in recognition of the houses built for mill workers in the early part of the century. While the owners of a few of these houses are making efforts to preserve their character, none have yet been designated as landmarks. Old Mill Village also contains a cluster of homes built by Habitat for Humanity, a high proportion of rental properties, and many elderly and longtime residents. Cornelius has a growing population of new Spanish-speaking residents who are only just beginning to be integrated into community life.

The Town Hall and Police Department dominate Cornelius' small downtown area along Catawba Ave. No clearly defined commercial center exists, and foot traffic is minimal. Turnover among the shops along Catawba is common. However, the nearby public library is a source of pride and a possible anchor for cultural uses.

The town administers seven parks, gardens, and playgrounds, including a community garden. Also within the town limits are three lakefront parks operated by Mecklenburg County. County regulations prohibit swimmers from entering Lake Norman from the shores of these parks, effectively limiting swimming to those who own shoreline property or have access to watercraft. These regulations constrain the area's potential as a tourist destination.

Cornelius has several strengths that point to successful cultural development. The Parks and Recreation Department is committed to expanding cultural programming. The Parks and Recreation

staff, while short-handed in the extreme, includes leadership with a high level of understanding of, and commitment to, cultural programming. The department provides preschool, afterschool, and adult classes in the arts, many through a partnership with the Children's Arts Project. It also plans and implements a variety of special events, including festivals, symphony appearances, black history month activities, outdoor movies, and children's summer camps that include art themes.

The new mayor is energetic, influential, and understands the economic benefits of such programming and amenities. While infrastructure needs are pressing, the town's elected leadership also appears to understand the key role of culture within the larger docket of public needs. An active Historic Preservation Commission is focusing on landmarking some turn-of-the-century structures, most of which are residential. The town has a small artifact collection that is now displayed in cases in City Hall. Recently, the Historic Preservation Commission was granted jurisdiction over this collection.

Cornelius faces some challenges, however. Its cultural development is severely hampered by the absence of a community center or dedicated indoor space for classes, performances, exhibitions and related activities. Like its neighboring communities of Huntersville and Davidson, Cornelius is just beginning to develop skills in intergovernmental cooperation. In undertaking this work, staff-level cooperation between parks and recreation departments is one of the most successful models. Although the Cornelius Parks and Recreation Department has an ambitious master plan that includes cultural programming, there appears to be a lack of commitment in the capital budget to advance identified plans for the parks. Finally, the bifurcation of the town by I-77 requires constant attention in order to provide social connectivity and tax equity for all. Programming community-wide events on both sides of the divide has been a successful strategy in Cornelius, as it has elsewhere.

The chief concern of Cornelius' appointees to the North Mecklenburg Cultural Action Plan Steering Committee was to establish a cultural center and to ensure its accessibility to all residents. They also directed planners to find a means to showcase the history of the area.

### *Davidson*

With 7,100 residents, Davidson is the smallest of the three North Mecklenburg towns. It has not experienced the same growth spurt as Huntersville and Cornelius, which town officials attribute to its minimal Lake Norman shoreline (although it borders the smaller Lakes Davidson and Cornelius) and to its more stringent regulations governing development, which include an affordable housing requirement.

The town is home to Davidson College, a nationally recognized, highly selective independent liberal arts school founded in 1837 that today enrolls approximately 1,600 students. Until relatively recently, virtually every family in the town had at least one member affiliated with the college. The school was generous in making its performance spaces available for outside groups. Now, however, its own ambitious programming fills the campus venues nearly full time during the academic year. In particular,

the growth of the Davidson Community Players, a respected community theatre that performs on campus, is constrained because it has access to theatres only during college breaks and in the summer.

Davidson has an attractive Main Street directly across from campus, with restaurants, a coffee shop, a bookstore, and other small businesses. The street does, however, have some long-vacant storefronts. Exacerbating retail turnover, the Davidson College student union duplicates many of the shops and services that would bring students across the street.

While many of the residents of Davidson are employees of the college, the town is also home to people who value its good schools and the ease of small-town life. However, because of its deliberately slow growth, housing prices are rising. Davidson is adjacent to I-77, which connects it with Charlotte. The traditional African-American community is on the west side, a neighborhood in which the Davidson Housing Coalition has built a number of well-designed, attractive, affordable homes. Low-income residents throughout Davidson take advantage of the Ada Jenkins Center, which houses social service agencies and Head Start and sponsors afterschool tutoring and enrichment programs.

People who live in Davidson acknowledge their relative wealth of cultural opportunities. The town hosts a number of well-loved events, including “Christmas in Davidson” and a summer concert series on the town green. The Davidson Community Players attracts sold-out houses and provides a satisfying experience for some 300 people a year who participate in its productions. Connie Company is a theatre for young people, which is an arm of the Players. Less available, however, are opportunities for people to engage in participatory cultural activities. The recent opening of the Icehouse Center, which offers classes and workshops in ceramics and woodworking, was a positive step in remedying this. A not-for-profit gallery helps support its non-profit educational mission. A steady increase in enrollment demonstrates the need for such a facility. Davidson is also home to a number of professional visual artists who work in isolation and have few exhibition opportunities. The next phase in the Icehouse Center’s development is live/work space for artists, which could stimulate the growth of a lively creative community.

Sporadic cultural programming by Davidson’s Parks and Recreation Department can be attributed in part to the lack of suitable facilities. A recently adopted master plan for the 200-acre Fisher Farm Park includes an amphitheatre and passive-use amenities.

Davidson’s representatives on the North Mecklenburg Cultural Plan Steering Committee placed importance on the questions of an eventual cultural facility in terms of questions of mission, location, programming and intergovernmental cooperation. They also directed the planners to address ways to add public art to their townscape, both permanent and ephemeral. They expressed interest in learning what kinds of cultural opportunities will energize the community and how existing activities can be nurtured and grown.

## *Huntersville*

Covering 63 square miles and with a population of 35,000, Huntersville is the largest town in North Mecklenburg. Primarily a farming community in its early years, as Huntersville grew larger, so did its business community. A cotton mill encouraged the development of a "mill town" on the east side of the railroad tracks, and a brickyard provided the bricks for many local buildings that can still be seen today in the older section of town. The historic town center has lost traction and definition in recent years, with its traditional functions being challenged by major malls. Main & Maxwell Park near City Hall is home to a farmer's market, a shelter, and a historic caboose and is the venue for large-scale events and celebrations throughout the year. It is adjacent to a row of attractive older storefronts, which have had trouble supporting business activity over the long term. The anticipated return of rail service to the historic downtown area provides new opportunities for reinventing the downtown based on an expectation of increased foot traffic and commercial and cultural viability.

Athletics play a large role in the town's leisure activities. Its parks are mainly given over to sports, and there is citizen pressure for more playing fields as the number of young families moving into the area grows. The Huntersville Aquatics Center is a state-of-the-art facility that has imposed a great financial burden on the municipality. New management approaches are reducing the burden on taxpayers, but constraining public access through a relatively costly membership and fee structure.

Huntersville's population can be roughly divided into three categories, according to how long they have been residents. Longtime landowners live in the older, more traditionally laid-out sections of town. The last ten years have seen an explosion of subdivisions characterized by cul de sacs. Most recently, younger families and singles have been attracted to new urbanist developments like Vermillion and Birkdale, which also includes an upscale destination shopping center for the entire area. Typical of rapidly growing edge communities, newer residents identify more with their immediate neighborhoods than they do with the municipality. Through its Community Plan, the town has committed itself to an "internal road network that efficiently delivers citizens to local facilities," and "connectivity" is a word used frequently by town officials.

Huntersville has a number of significant cultural resources. Reflecting its agricultural beginnings are Rural Hill Farm, Historic Latta Plantation, and the Carolina Raptor Center (the latter two are ASC affiliates). Other historic sites, such as Hopewell Presbyterian Church, reflect the area's role in the Revolutionary War. The Children's Arts Project is an energetic private nonprofit organization with its own small facility in which it offers classes for young children, preteens, and adults. The town's Parks and Recreation Department offers sporadic classes that are mainly conducted at the Arts and Cultural Center, a 1,200 sq. ft. one-room facility that was formerly a branch library. In its effort to expand services throughout the county, Charlotte's Discovery Place is piloting a series of science camps that will be held at the Arts and Cultural Center this summer. Central Piedmont Community College North Campus hosts a community choir that is important to the region.

As a municipality, Huntersville faces challenges to its cultural development. Its growth has outpaced its municipal infrastructure. As a consequence, cultural programming has been inconsistent because of a lack of both space and personnel to develop and implement ongoing activities. With the exception of the small and rather tired Arts and Cultural Center, there is no indoor facility in which to hold arts programs. Finally, it is unclear whether the town's appointed Cultural Development Committee is mandated to generate ideas for projects that will be carried out by staff, or whether the committee members are themselves responsible for carrying out their own ideas. This lack of role clarification, particularly in the context of an already understaffed Parks and Recreation Department, frustrates progress and discourages the advancement of cultural issues.

Huntersville's appointees to the North Mecklenburg Cultural Action Plan Steering Committee are aware that the success of a community cultural plan depends on broad citizen ownership, and contributed ideas and efforts to guarantee breadth of participation. They directed planners to develop recommendations to help North Mecklenburg's cultural amenities to receive recognition by the broader community, thereby stimulating the area's economic development. Finally, confirmed the need to learn whether there should be a single cultural center for the whole Lake Norman area and, if so, how the three towns should cooperate to administer and fund it.



## **FINDINGS OF THE INTERVIEWS, SMALL GROUPS, AND TOWN MEETINGS**

### *Public Communication*

Residents report very different experiences with regard to the ease of learning about cultural program availability and schedules. While local papers carry some information on arts and cultural events, accuracy and completeness remain issues. In addition, these listings focus on opportunities for residents to attend and do not include as much information with regard to opportunities for participation programs. No single source of coordinated information is regularly named in either the print or the electronic media.

### *Communication Among Artists and Creative Workers*

Creative workers living in North Mecklenburg describe isolation and difficulty finding professional or amateur peers. Many market their work outside of the area. At one focus group of artists, participants were so eager for connectivity, they decided to launch an artists' group.

### *Regional Identity*

Municipal leaders and residents agree that a regional identity is only beginning to emerge. Often, residents have a stronger identity with their homeowners associations than with the town in which they live. Leaders believe the emergence of a Lake Norman identity would lead to better planning decisions, more unity of action, and a more broadly accepted civil society agenda. Similar cooperative efforts are already underway regarding economic development and development of a Convention and Visitors Bureau. There is acknowledgement that cultural amenities could enhance regional identity.

### *Public Art, Cultural Facilities, and Municipal Development Policies*

Housing development continues apace in North Mecklenburg. There is interest among municipal leaders and residents in developing public art for beautification, wayfinding, historical demarcation, and advancing regional identity. Cultural facilities, which are in critically short supply, have not historically been on the table as developers' concessions. Models in which developers have provided athletic fields or small parks, however, exist. Prospects for enrolling developers in meeting cultural facility needs at the neighborhood level warrant exploration.

### *Participation and Access for Low-Income Residents*

Low-income residents, both adults and children, lack access to cultural activities. Barriers include language, geographic location of resources, cost, and familiarity. An estimated 60% of the Latino community (of perhaps 5000) is non-English speaking. Local cultural groups and the Parks and Recreation Departments of each town do offer some outreach programs and scholarships for this

segment of the community. Discovery Place has an interest in developing a permanent children's program site in North Mecklenburg. The North Carolina Blumenthal Performing Arts Center is testing the interest of the area's residents in increased outreach programming. These ASC affiliates, in addition to others, have participated in meetings with the Steering Committee, and their organizations may help enhance access for all.

### *Participation and Access for Senior Citizens*

Seniors lack adequate facilities for even the most basic social programming. Transportation barriers limit their access to cultural offerings both locally and in Charlotte. Careful assessment of senior's program preferences is warranted, particularly in terms of programs to be offered in an eventual North Mecklenburg Cultural Arts facility.

### *Transportation to Charlotte-based Cultural Offerings*

Many residents express interest in tour bus/group outings to Charlotte-based cultural programs. Affiliate organizations have not, in general, explored group sales in North Mecklenburg and few group outings are arranged. Municipal Parks and Recreation departments might find this area rich for exploration.

### *Intercultural Connections*

North Mecklenburg is becoming more diverse, and the change is rapid. New Latino residents in particular often face profound social isolation. Cultural programming has not yet been tapped as a means of advancing inter-cultural understanding or communication. Conversations with diverse groups and inclusion of their interests is critically important to cultural and community development.

### *Demonstration Farms, Community Gardens, and Sustainable Agriculture*

Two working farms are likely to come available for municipal purchase in North Mecklenburg in the very near future. There is interest in maintaining these farms as sustainable agricultural demonstration farms, both for public education uses and to honor the agricultural heritage of the area. Discovery Place has an interest in developing a working farm, and connections between these interests and the towns should be nourished. Cornelius has established a community garden, and prospects for programs associated with the garden are of interest to Park and Recreation leaders there.

### *Downtown and Commuter Rail Stop Development Opportunities*

Each of the participating municipalities faces serious downtown development issues, as malls siphon off traditional downtown commercial and hospitality traffic. Each has small storefronts that could be developed as boutique shopping areas including galleries and storefront art centers. The prospects for success of any such redevelopment may depend on rail stop location decisions that will, of course, drive the level of commercial traffic in downtown areas.

### *Lake Norman as Venue and Anchor*

Lake Norman is the star recreation resource in North Mecklenburg. All discussions of the development of tourism in the area hinge on the lake, as do local ideas about regional identity. The lake has the potential to serve as a critical venue for special cultural events and on-going environmental education, yet there are serious barriers to public access. Efforts to reduce these barriers through participation in the Catawba-Wataeree Relicensing Project could help make the lake and its shores more widely available for cultural and recreational uses.

### *Philanthropic Leadership*

Like many other suburban areas, North Mecklenburg has yet to evolve formal or informal mechanisms through which philanthropists can convene to address their own participation in a civic agenda. While there is certainly giving taking place, it is generally either Charlotte-focused or very modest in scale. Cultural development of the area will require cultivation of communication mechanisms for and with local philanthropists, linking them to the regional cultural development agenda.

### *Incubation and Stabilization of Special Events*

North Mecklenburg loves special events. Attendance and volunteerism are generally quite high, and many area artists, elected officials, business owners, and residents see these events as critical both to recognition of the area's cultural resources and to the overall quality of life. Yet, many of these special events have come and gone over time, almost always because a single, critical volunteer can no longer be the anchor for the event. Clearly, some institutionalization of a support system for special events would provide for their stability and growth over time.

### *Promotion, Development, and Coordination of Historic Resources*

North Mecklenburg's historic properties are rich in programming possibilities. Citizen and volunteer interest is high. Municipalities, the ASC, private citizens, and the county are contributing to their support in a patchwork fashion. These properties could become significant anchors in the areas' cultural life if appropriate program articulation, leadership development, marketing and resource levels could be accomplished.

### *Articulation of Parks and Recreation Offerings and Resources in the Arts*

Municipal Parks and Recreation Departments are key players in the delivery of cultural programs in North Mecklenburg. Their capacities and foci vary. They often deliver services to residents from each other's towns. There are currently no policy-based, structurally supported efforts to jointly plan recreation services, to articulate program offerings, or to define roles among these departments. Such efforts could lead to a broader set of cultural offerings for area citizens, and more stable operations for the individual departments.

### *Programming for Teens*

The dearth of cultural programs for 13-18 year olds is reflected by emerging suburban gang activity, loitering at shopping centers, and an increase in malicious property destruction. Teenagers should be brought to the table to ensure relevance in program and facility planning. Recently, some new Lake Norman Economic Development Committee efforts have begun, supported by United Way and the Salvation Army, to invigorate the Davidson Boys and Girls Club.

## FINDINGS OF THE TELEPHONE SURVEY

### *Description of the Survey*

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

### *Methods and Reliability*

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

### *Public Support for Cultural Activities*

Asked "Do you support local government funding for arts programs?" 64% of the residents of Cornelius, 60% of the residents of Davidson, and 60.4% of the residents of Huntersville answered "yes." In addition, another 4% of those in Cornelius, 26.7% of those in Davidson, and 6.3% of those in Huntersville answered "depends." This reflects strong public sentiment in favor of such funding.

Asked "Do you support local government funding for science programs?" continued high levels of support are reflected. Fifty-seven point seven percent (57.7%) of the residents of Cornelius, 80% of the residents of Davidson, and 62.5% of the residents of Huntersville answered "yes." In addition, another 3.8% of those in Cornelius, 6.7% of those in Davidson, and 2.1 % of those in Huntersville answered "depends."

Asked "Do you support local government funding for history programs?" similar sentiments are reflected. Fifty percent (50%) of the residents of Cornelius, 80% of the residents of Davidson, and 62.5% of the residents of Huntersville answered "yes." In addition, another 7.7% of those in Cornelius, 6.7% of those in Davidson, and 2.1 % of those in Huntersville answered "depends."

In North Mecklenburg as a whole, the clear majority of residents favor local public funding for the arts (63.1%) sciences (67.7%) and history (63%). This is true among both males and females, with females

having a higher percentage of support for arts expenditures (68.8%) than males (58.1%). The highest rates of support for local public arts funding are found among residents having lived there for 6-20 years (68.3%) and those having lived there five years or less (65.9%) and those between 24 and 54 years of age. Slightly higher approval rates (approximately 1-7% variance) can be seen among homeowners as compared to renters. Married residents are slightly more likely to approve of local public funding for arts, science, and history programs ranging for a low of 57.9% (never married, approving of history funding) to a high of 68.4% (married, approving of science funding). Educational attainment has a dramatic impact on the likelihood of approving of local public cultural funding, with twice as many respondents (80.3%) with high levels of education (16+ years) supporting arts funding as those with the lowest levels of attainment (41.8% approval for those with 12 years or less of schooling). Approval for arts, science, and history funding is highest among those residents who are neither Caucasian nor African American (arts 68.8%, science 80.4%, and history 70.6%). Caucasians are the next most likely to support such expenditures (arts 64.7%, science 67.5%, and history 62.8%). For respondents with incomes over \$40,000/year, the higher the income the more likely is support for local public art and science expenditures. Support for these expenditures is, however, higher among those earning under \$20,000 per year than for those earning \$20,000-39,999. Support for history expenditures falls into a different pattern with lowest levels of support in the \$20,000-39,999 category and the \$100,000 and up category.

### *Importance of Arts Education to Academic Attainment*

Asked "How important do you think arts programs in the schools are in helping children to do better in other academic subjects?" 59.9% of North Mecklenburg resident answered "very important" and an additional 30.7% answered "somewhat important." In each of the towns, at least 85.7% of respondents consider arts education either "very" or "somewhat" important to their children's academic success.

### *Satisfaction with Arts in the Schools*

Asked "On a scale of 1-5, with 1 very satisfied and 5 being not satisfied at all, how satisfied are you with the arts instruction your children receive through their school?" opinions vary across the three towns. In both Huntersville and Davidson, respondents are equally divided between those being either "very" or "somewhat" satisfied with arts instruction in the schools. By comparison, 85.8% of respondents in Cornelius are either "very" or "somewhat" satisfied.

### *Adult Participation and Attendance*

Asked "Would you prefer participating in hands-on arts and cultural activities or attending arts and cultural events?" North Mecklenburg respondents showed a higher overall all rate of interest in attending, participating or both (90.1%) than the county as a whole (87.5%). The Towns of Huntersville (94%) and Davidson (93.3%) had extremely high combined forms of interest, while Cornelius' respondents fell below the aggregate rate (80.8%). Within these aggregate figures, adults in

North Mecklenburg and each of the three towns preferred attending events (60-62.6%) to participating in events (11.5-26.7%). Between 6.7% and 7.7% prefer both attending and participating.

### *Child Participation and Attendance*

Asked “Is it more important for your children to be able to participate in hands-on arts and cultural activities or to be able to attend arts and cultural events, the pattern changes. Not surprisingly, there is greater interest in participating and in having both forms of exposure for children. Here, too, some sharper distinctions between the towns emerge. Countywide, 32.2% of respondents chose the answer “both.” In Davidson, that answer was selected by 66.7% of respondents, more than double the countywide rate. By contrast, Huntersville (30.8%) was close to the county rate, and Cornelius (12.5%) far below. Cornelius, however, had the highest rate of respondents (65.5%) choosing “participate.” No respondents in Davidson or Cornelius believed that neither participating or attending was important, while 12.5% of Cornelius residents answered “neither.”

### *Willingness to Travel*

Asked “How many minutes would you be willing to travel to participate in an arts or cultural activity of your choice, such as a community theatre group or a photography class?” 66.2% of North Mecklenburg’s residents would travel up to 15-30 minutes. Asked “How many minutes would you travel to attend an arts or cultural activity of your choice, such as a concert, art festival, or theatre performance?” 88.7% would travel 15-30 minutes.

Asked “How many minutes would you travel for your children to be able to participate in hands-on arts or cultural activity of your choice such as a dance class, a nature camp, or an afterschool arts program?” 92.3% of North Mecklenburg’s parents would travel up to 15-30 minutes. Asked “How many minutes would you travel for your children to be able to attend a hands-on arts or cultural activity such as a concert, an art festival, or a theatre performance?” 89.8% of North Mecklenburg’s parents would travel up to 15-30 minutes.

### *Availability of Leisure-Time Activities*

Asked “Which of the following leisure-time activities are not available in your community?” and given a variety of arts, science, history, athletic, and entertainment options to choose from, those most frequently selected by North Mecklenburg residents were “age appropriate social clubs/nightlife for teens” (41.3%) and history/heritage programs (33.7%). Also not available to at least 25% of respondents were “gardening and landscaping classes,” and “nature, environmental, and science programs” for the categories young children, teens and adults.

## FINDINGS OF THE ASC AFFILIATE SURVEY

### *Affiliate Survey Results*

As a part of the planning process, ASC affiliate agencies were asked to respond to a survey describing their current and future plans for programming in the Cornelius, Huntersville, Davidson and Matthews. Sixteen (16) affiliate organizations responded:

### *Services Provided in the Towns*

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

Programs offered represented a variety of disciplines including vocal and instrumental music, science, dance, visual arts, environmental studies, history, and theatre. The overwhelming majority of these events were one-off programs (including outreach and promotion events) or arts education activities of a relatively short duration. Two (2) respondent organizations are located in Huntersville; none is located in any other town studied.

### *Target Audiences and Numbers of Residents Served*

These combined programs target preschool through adult audiences/participants. In the past 18 months ten (10) of the twelve (12) organizations that provide services reached aggregate audiences/participants of 8395 people in the northern towns.

In the Northern towns, Davidson was home to the greatest relative concentration of participants, with one participant for every 1.5 residents. Cornelius hosted the fewest (one participant for every 16.2 residents). Huntersville (1:8.9) fell in the middle. It is important to note that residents from these three towns often avail themselves of services in the broader region without regard for specific town borders, and participants cannot necessarily be assumed to reside in the town where services were reported. In addition, severe facility pressures tend to force some kinds of services to one or another of a handful of locations. In this regard, the apparent concentration of activity in Davidson appears to be in part influenced by the college facilities there, and in part influenced by a higher rate of the community's response to offers of hosting events off campus.



*Aggregate Number of Residents Served by ASC Affiliate Organizations in the Northern Towns  
during an 18 month period in 2002 and 2003*

	Davidson	Cornelius	Huntersville	Total
Total Participants	4843	740	2812	8395
% Regional Participation	58.7%	8.8%	33.5%	101%
Population	7139	11,969	24,960	44,068
% Regional Population	16.2%	27.2%	56.6%	100
Residents/Participant	1.5	16.2	8.9	5.2

*Venues*

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

*Co-sponsors and Hosts*

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

*Future Plans for Serving the Towns*

Twenty-four (24) activities were planned in the northern towns in the 18 months following the survey date. Twenty-four services are also planned within the next three years. In general, respondents foresee maintaining a similar level of programming in the subject towns during the next three years and only two (2) contemplate significant new program development. Some organizations mention fiscal constraints as the key barrier to increased service in the towns. One organization reported a poor response to an experimental offering as the basis for discontinued interest in serving the northern towns.

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

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

	Davidson	Cornelius	Huntersville	Total
This 18 months	9	4	7	20
Next 18 Months*	8	6	10	24
Next 3 Years*	9	7	8	24

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, on suggestions gathered from over 175 North Mecklenburg citizens attending the Cultural Summit, and on the work of the Steering Committee, the following recommendations are made. In each case, regional recommendations are followed by a set of town-specific recommendations that identify activities for each town to undertake in support of the regional plan and also those necessary to capture opportunities particular to each community.

### **I. Create a regional office of cultural development.**

#### *Purpose*

The towns should partner with the ASC to create an office of cultural development office (called ASC Lake Norman) in North Mecklenburg. Charge ASC Lake Norman with leadership and cultural development in North Mecklenburg, including serving as lead agency for the implementation of this plan.

#### *Structure*

Structure ASC Lake Norman as a branch office of the ASC. Create a North Mecklenburg advisory board (structured as a subcommittee of the ASC board) with equal representation from the towns of Cornelius, Davidson, and Huntersville and the ASC to guide overall Lake Norman area efforts. Include representatives of underserved populations. Hire a professional community arts development administrator to be stationed in the North Mecklenburg Office.

### *Funding*

In the first year, the towns should provide administrative space and support, a 50% contribution toward salary and benefits, and an annual special projects budget of \$5,000/town. ASC should provide 50% of salary and benefits, staff supervision and training, information resources, and staff support from its general functional areas (grants, artists services, technical assistance, public art) as needed.

Funds awarded by the ASC for implementation of this plan (\$20,000/town) along with any matching funds and/or funds allocated by the towns for arts, science, or history purposes except those funds budgeted for Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Departments should be allocated by the ASC Lake Norman Advisory Board. The Advisory Board will determine an appropriate public/private/ASC partnership to sustain the Office's efforts over time.

ASC should work to create a fundraising mechanism to appropriately support existing and emerging cultural organizations in North Mecklenburg.

The ASC should reframe its Community Cultural Connections program to provide on-going funding for ASC Lake Norman. The new funding structure should recognize that there currently are mature, mid-sized associate organizations that need operating support. In order to accomplish these goals while maintaining project support for emerging organizations, the ASC should seek to increase dollars available for the overall community arts development effort.

### *J. Town Recommendations: Create a regional office of cultural development.*

#### *Cornelius*

1. Work with the ASC to create a letter of agreement concerning the organizational structure and workplan for ASC Lake Norman, based on this plan.

#### *Davidson*

1. Work with the ASC to create a letter of agreement concerning the organizational structure and workplan for ASC Lake Norman, based on this plan.

#### *Huntersville*

1. Work with the ASC to create a letter of agreement concerning the organizational structure and workplan for ASC Lake Norman, based on this plan.

2. Appoint representatives to the ASC Lake Norman Advisory Board.
3. Partner in funding the first year operations of ASC and in the funding continuation plan developed during the founding year.

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**II. Form a regional public/private partnership to develop cultural facilities in North Mecklenburg.**

*Leadership and Purpose*

ASC Lake Norman should form a North Mecklenburg leadership group to develop a public/private partnership charged with creating (1) accessibly placed, regionally managed cultural centers for a variety of cultural classes and activities, **and** (2) a regional performing arts and large meeting venue facility. Both these directives are of equal importance and should be pursued simultaneously.

*Local Centers*

Consider focusing each accessibly placed cultural center on a different discipline while allowing for flexible and mobile programming. Include a children's learning center (mini children's museum) in one or more centers.

*Performing Arts Venue*

Maximize the occupancy rate of the regional performing arts and large meeting venue facility by working with other organizations in a shared-use model (for example, senior centers, banquets and trade shows). Take accessibility to transportation into consideration in selecting a site. Take economic development impacts into consideration in selecting a site. The site should provide capacity for future expansion into a fully-fledged, interdisciplinary cultural center as necessary and feasible.

***II. Town Recommendations: Form a regional public/private partnership to develop cultural facilities in North Mecklenburg.***

*Cornelius*

1. Participate in cultural facilities development planning and fund-raising.

*Davidson*

1. Participate in cultural facilities development planning and fund-raising.

*Huntersville*

1. Participate in cultural facilities development planning and fund-raising.

2. Place priority on cultural facilities specified in this plan in capital budgeting.
3. Determine and implement appropriate mechanisms for developers to participate in providing cultural amenities; e.g., through a cultural impact fee, givebacks of scattered-site classrooms, contributions to public art fund, etc.
4. Consider an ordinance to require that commercial spaces vacant for longer than a given period be made available for non-profit uses

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4. Consider an ordinance to require that commercial spaces vacant for longer than a given period be made available for non-profit uses

### III. Undertake joint marketing and public communication.

#### *Joint Calendar and Marketing*

Expand access to the ASC website calendar to include listings of North Mecklenburg non-profit arts and cultural offerings, community events and the cultural offerings of each town's Parks and Recreation Department. In addition, ASC's communication staff and ASC Lake Norman should work with the Convention and Visitors Bureau (particularly in considering the role of a redesigned "Drift" publication) and the Economic Development Commission to convene interested North Mecklenburg cultural organizations for the purpose of assessing joint marketing economics of scale and options, developing a plan that could include direct mailing of calendars, identifying one lead regional cultural calendar publisher, subscription e-mail calendars for interested households, and the like. Subsequently, ASC Lake Norman and appropriate partners should implement the plan.

#### *Shared Registration*

ASC Lake Norman and the Staff Cultural Team should explore the potential benefits of a shared registration mechanism for Parks and Recreation programs, local cultural events and classes, and a central contact for traveling and outreach programs seeking sponsorship and/or opportunity to present in North Mecklenburg.

#### *III. Town Recommendations: Undertake joint marketing and public communication.*

##### *Cornelius*

1. Establish mechanism for linking town offerings to ASC website and vice versa.
2. Create links from local cultural organizations

##### *Davidson*

1. Establish mechanism for linking town offerings to ASC website and vice versa.
2. Link Davidson College and local cultural

##### *Huntersville*

1. Establish mechanism for linking town offerings to ASC website and vice versa.
2. Create links from local cultural organizations



to town website.

3. Provide opportunity for ASC Lake Norman to produce a regular column for town newsletter.

organizations to town website.

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to town website.

3. Explore the use of the caboose as an information center open during farmers markets and special events at adjacent park.

#### IV. Nurture artists, cultural workers and cultural organizations.

##### *Shared Services*

ASC Lake Norman should explore the prospects for providing shared administrative, financial management, marketing, and development services among North Mecklenburg's non-profit cultural institutions. This exploration might lead to the development of a cultural incubator or to the provision of needed services on a fee-for-service basis to participating entities.

##### *Nurturing Cultural Organizations*

In order to strengthen already existing not for profit organizations, ASC Lake Norman should work with area cultural organizations to determine what forms of technical assistance might help them achieve their missions. Calling on the larger ASC staff and knowledge base, it should arrange an on-going program of consultation, training, and technical assistance as warranted.

##### *Visual Artists' Space*

ASC Lake Norman and the Staff Cultural Team should work to make a space for visual artists to meet and/or work together on a regular basis. Explore the Huntersville Cultural Center, a dedicated room in Cornelius city hall, and any other public facility options. Also consider available private spaces. The artists' group might be asked to pay a guild-type fee for access to the shared space.

##### *Studio Space*

ASC Lake Norman should work with the towns and the Lake Norman Chamber of Commerce to explore the creation of low-cost studio space for individual artists. This exploration should include the identification of extant resources, encouraging the adoption of zoning codes friendly to live/work spaces, consideration of the prospects for locating studios for resident artists at or in conjunction with local cultural centers, and the intentional redevelopment of underutilized properties for studio spaces.

*IV. Town Recommendations: Nurture artists, cultural workers and cultural organizations.*

*Cornelius*

1. Create partnership between Chamber of Commerce, local merchants, developers and the Economic Development Council and local artists to create a vacant storefront art program that increases the desirability of spaces by displaying local artists' work in empty shop windows.
2. Explore with business owners the feasibility of exhibiting local artists' work office buildings, clinics, etc.
3. Identify a citizen volunteer to manage a series of 2-3 art exhibitions per year in city hall. Include hallways and public meeting spaces. Provide assistance in secure wall mounting and related small features. Determine status of work vis a vis municipal insurance program; provide appropriate coverage. Host modest opening reception in conjunction with Town Commission meetings.

*Davidson*

1. Create partnership between Chamber of Commerce, local merchants, developers and the Economic Development Council and local artists to create a vacant storefront art program that increases the desirability of spaces by displaying local artists' work in empty shop windows.
2. Explore with business owners the feasibility of exhibiting local artists' work office buildings, clinics, etc.
3. Identify a citizen volunteer to manage a series of 2-3 art exhibitions per year in city hall. Include hallways and public meeting spaces. Provide assistance in secure wall mounting and related small features. Determine status of work vis a vis municipal insurance program; provide appropriate coverage. Host modest opening reception in conjunction with Town Commission meetings.

*Huntersville*

1. Create partnership between Chamber of Commerce, local merchants, developers and the Economic Development Council and local artists to create a vacant storefront art program that increases the desirability of spaces by displaying local artists' work in empty shop windows.
2. Explore with business owners the feasibility of exhibiting local artists' work office buildings, clinics, etc.
3. Identify a citizen volunteer to manage a series of 2-3 art exhibitions per year in city hall. Include hallways and public meeting spaces. Provide assistance in secure wall mounting and related small features. Determine status of work vis a vis municipal insurance program; provide appropriate coverage. Host modest opening reception in conjunction with Town Commission meetings.

4. Link the current program of outdoor movies to a Homemade Movies Night, giving area amateur and independent film makers and opportunity to show their works.
  5. Dedicate one room of City Hall to exclusive use by area visual artists, providing for the continuous set-up of related materials. Test alternate approaches to inform eventual Community Cultural Center program formats.
  6. Remove any zoning barriers to artists' ability to maintain in-home studios and to conduct in-home sales.
  7. Adopt inclusionary zoning regulations to insure an adequate stock of low-income housing. Make sure provisions allow for live/work spaces for artists.
4. Adopt inclusionary zoning regulations to insure an adequate stock of low-income housing. Make sure provisions allow for live/work spaces for artists.
4. Expand farmers market to include locally produced arts and crafts.
  5. Remove any zoning barriers to artists' ability to maintain in-home studios and to conduct in-home sales.
  6. Adopt inclusionary zoning regulations to insure an adequate stock of low-income housing. Make sure provisions allow for live/work spaces for artists.

*V. Advance philanthropic development by creating a mechanism for donors to come together.*

*Civic Dialog*

Developing a sustainable cultural funding eco-system requires the creation of an intricately balanced pool of earned and unearned income including public and private contributions. For North Mecklenburg, this means developing the leadership and the commitment necessary to come to the table as full partners within a countywide system. ASC Lake Norman should convene a discussion including local mayors, lead ASC donors from the region, estate planners and trust officers, corporate leaders, the Lake Norman Chamber of Commerce leadership, the Economic Development Office, and local civic groups. This discussion should address the need for a civic leadership mechanism in North Mecklenburg for presenting and vetting philanthropic issues. The discussion should be advisory in nature, and ASC Lake Norman should be responsible for translating the discussion into an action plan.

*Cultural Funding Opportunities*

Utilize the leadership mechanism developed based on the above plan to seek additional investment in the activities enumerated in this plan including sustaining local cultural organizations, creating scholarship support for program participants, supporting regional programs, and developing appropriate cultural facilities.

*V. Town Recommendations: Advance philanthropic development by creating a mechanism for donors to come together.*

*Cornelius*

1. Provide strong mayoral support for the development of a North Mecklenburg philanthropic forum.
2. Engage town commissioners in the philanthropic forum development work.

*Davidson*

1. Provide strong mayoral support for the development of a North Mecklenburg philanthropic forum.
2. Engage town commissioners in the philanthropic forum development work.

*Huntersville*

1. Provide strong mayoral support for the development of a North Mecklenburg philanthropic forum.
2. Engage town commissioners in the philanthropic forum development work.

## VI. Advance the coordination of cultural parks and recreation programs.

### *Departments of Parks, Recreation, and Culture*

Each town should recreate its Parks and Recreation Department as a department of Parks, Recreation, and Culture. Parks and Recreation advisory boards should be restructured to include citizens knowledgeable in cultural affairs. Over time, staffing should balance cultural and athletic expertise as warranted by the balance of programming.

### *Inter-Town Staff Cultural Team*

To coordinate inter-town systems of cooperation regarding cultural activities offered by the various Parks and Recreation departments, ASC Lake Norman should establish an inter-town Staff Cultural Team. Its goals should include coordinated programming, scheduling, marketing, and public communication. Consideration should be given to ways in which the towns could invest in shared approaches to communicating their calendar of offerings including use of the ASC electronic calendar, which can be linked to town websites, to local cultural organizations' websites, and to a joint publication.

### *Articulating Fee Structures and Sponsorships*

In order to improve access to the towns' cultural offerings, the Staff Cultural Team should establish a shared fee structure, shared systems of contracting with instructors, and shared definitions of "sponsorship" of cultural offerings. In addition, the Team should seek methods of standardizing and publicizing scholarships or fee remissions available.

### *Partnering with Non-Profits*

In order to recognize the critical role local cultural non-profit organizations play in Parks and Recreation programs, ASC Lake Norman and the Staff Cultural Team should develop recommendations for formalizing recognition and partnership where mutually beneficial. Partnerships might be defined in terms of access to municipal resources, rates of compensation for program and technical assistance, priority use of municipal cultural facilities, favorable rental costs, and so forth.

### *Strengthening Program Quality*

In order to improve the quality of cultural offerings provided by Parks and Recreation Departments, ASC Lake Norman should develop training programs to orient the Staff Cultural Team to resources available to the field including opportunities for grant support, programming by local cultural organizations, artist listing resources, services available through affiliate and associate organizations, and program models. This training should include site visits to other Parks and Recreation programs with especially successful cultural offerings, introductions to community residency programs, informational resources, and the like.

### *Cultural Summer Camps*

ASC Lake Norman and the Staff Cultural Team should explore the model now employed by the various Parks and Recreation departments to provide jointly sponsored summer sports camps in designing and delivering jointly sponsored cultural summer camps. This approach could also include participation by local non-profits offering cultural content.

## *VI. Town Recommendations: Advance the coordination of cultural parks and recreation programs.*

### *Cornelius*

1. Adopt a resolution committing the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Culture to supporting the work of the Cultural Staff Team (see Regional Recommendations).
2. Recreate Parks and Recreation Department as a Department of Parks, Recreation, and Culture.

### *Davidson*

1. Adopt a resolution committing the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Culture to supporting the work of the Cultural Staff Team (see Regional Recommendations).
2. Recreate Parks and Recreation Department as a Department of Parks, Recreation, and Culture.

### *Huntersville*

1. Adopt a resolution committing the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Culture to supporting the work of the Cultural Staff Team (see Regional Recommendations).
2. Recreate Parks and Recreation Department as a Department of Parks, Recreation, and Culture.

3. Recreate the Parks and Recreation Board as a Board of Parks, Recreation, and Culture; ensure that at least 1/3 of appointments are people with experience in cultural programming.

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3. Terminate the Cultural Development Committee in favor of seating an appropriate number of its members on the newly created Parks, Recreation, and Culture Board.

4. Recreate the Parks and Recreation Board as a Board of Parks, Recreation, and Culture; ensure that at least 1/3 of appointments are people with experience in cultural programming.



## VII. Increase cultural program offerings, strengthen the quality of those offerings, and ensure access for residents.

### *Portable Programs*

In order to increase accessibility of programs, ASC Lake Norman and the Staff Cultural Team should explore the options for developing and delivering a shared system of mobile programs for delivery in parks, residential facilities for special populations, and in neighborhood settings. Programs could include mobile art and music offerings, a traveling stage for mobile children's theatre or puppetry, backyard science learning programs, micro-history explorations, etc. These programs might constitute a sort of sampler to market new and on-going offerings as well as a means of outreach for publicizing scholarship relief available to eligible residents.

### *Scholarship Partners*

The Lake Norman ASC and the Staff Cultural Team should develop a list of partner agencies to assist in the identification of children and families with interests in cultural programs who might benefit from scholarship assistance or fee remission. These partners could include neighborhood associations, the Lake Norman YMCA, the Lake Norman Community Development Council (LNCDC), the Ada Jenkins Center, faith community music directors, and public and private school art teachers. Appropriate annual training and materials to support these nominators should be developed and provided.

### *Davidson Community Players*

The Lake Norman ASC, the Staff Cultural Team, and Davidson Community Players (DCP) should explore methods to support expansion of DCP's the Connie Company. This discussion could include working together to support program enrollment, to provide appropriate practice and performance spaces, and to define a mutually beneficial partnership.

### *Seniors*

The Cultural Staff Team should develop a specific plan for serving seniors. They should consider the possibilities of drop-in activities, mobile programs, traditional arts activities, historical projects that rely on seniors as information resources as well as audience members, and specific day-trips and group outings to both North Mecklenburg and Charlotte area cultural events. Tours in particular might provide a great opportunity for inter-generational activity. At such time as local cultural centers come on line, the Cultural Staff Team should ensure the development of programs of interest to seniors in particular.

### *Teens*

In addition to the cross-cultural activities recommended above, the Cultural Staff Team should give careful consideration to building its overall, combined schedule of class offerings on a sequential curriculum basis. This approach would have the benefit of allowing classes to be leveled for beginners, intermediate practitioners, and advanced practitioners. By engaging children as young beginners and having a place for them as they progress, teens might be more likely to continue engaging.

While teens have successfully driven the planning of their own programs in some locales, the actual experience of the Lake Norman YMCA is that programs structured by adults for teens have been more successful locally. ASC Lake Norman should work with staff at the YMCA to learn more about this issue and to devise programming strategies accordingly. Suggestions for teen programming heard often during this planning process included digital arts (acoustic and visual), traditional photography and darkroom activities, vocal and instrumental music, and ceramic arts (which might well be provided through partnership with the Icehouse).

Additionally, teens present specific marketing challenges. In general, they have very different patterns of reliance on publications and media for information. ASC Lake Norman and the Cultural Staff Team should work with the ASC Communication Office to explore the success of different marketing vehicles in reaching teens, such as the current efforts of the LNCDC. Planners should not underestimate the power of word of mouth information in drawing this age cohort.

### *Casual Opportunities for Adults*

The various Parks and Recreation Departments, the Children's Arts Project, Davidson Community Players, and the Icehouse all have considerable experience in programming for adult participants. They have wisdom to share with regard to how far in advance adults commit to participation, what schedules of events draw users, the length of commitment adults are likely to make, and so forth. ASC Lake Norman should convene a discussion among these groups and reduce their collective wisdom to a simple written report. This report should serve as a basis for making program design decisions. It should identify a program delivery format (or formats) likely to succeed. Using this format information as a guide, the group should work together to plan an increase in programming activity. The successes and failures of these activities should be carefully documented to provide programming guidance at the local cultural centers when they come on line.

### *Balanced Program Offerings*

Utilize the Cultural Staff Team to scrutinize program offerings in order to insure a balance of programs for adults of various cultural traditions and interests, ages, teens, families, and young children. Analyze these offerings in terms of both program and location.

### *Interdisciplinary Programs*

In planning festivals, classes, and outings ASC Lake Norman and the Cultural Staff Team should consider programs that look at arts/science/history hand-in-hand. Such programs provide opportunities to build new partnerships among cultural organizations and to cross-fertilize their mutual audiences. In fact, these links could go beyond the humanities and reach into athletics or other program areas. For example, a workshop for photographers could be held at an historic site needing to document its collection, or a painting class could focus on the life of a community garden, or a performing arts tour program could be scheduled for a night during a meteor shower and pause at a dark sky location for a related lecture on the way home. The combinations are endless.

### *Partnering with the Library*

Libraries are key players in the cultural life of North Mecklenburg. ASC Lake Norman should explore prospects for increased programming at the libraries and on their grounds. These events could include science, history, and literary arts as well as outdoor visual art exhibitions and musical concerts.

*VII. Town Recommendations: Increase cultural program offerings, strengthen the quality of those offerings, and ensure access for residents.*

*Cornelius*

1. Establish at least two consistently programmed park sites with weekly art, science, or history activities for families during the summer.
2. Expand the role of the community garden in Robbins Park to include seasonal science and arts programs.
3. Re-examine the role of Jetton Village and Jetton Park in cultural programs and special events.

*Davidson*

1. Establish at least two consistently programmed park sites with weekly art, science, or history activities for families during the summer.
2. Partner with the Town of Davidson to determine whether or not visual art sales might be added to the Concerts on the Green.

*Huntersville*

1. Actively manage the Arts and Cultural Center as an artist/hobbyist gathering place. Consider open mike events, poetry slams, informal group singing, writers' groups, visual artists' discussion, professional development workshops. Test alternate approaches to inform eventual Community Cultural Center program formats.
2. Establish at least two consistently programmed park sites with weekly art, science, or history activities for families during the summer.
3. Explore use of Aquatic Center as an occasional art fair site in conjunction with sports events; for example, juried work on a sports theme to complement national competitions.
4. Work with the Business Park to develop cultural events and installations on their grounds.

5. Work with the Vermillion neighborhood to learn from the success of their neighborhood art fair. Test replication in other neighborhoods.

## VIII. Strengthen targeted partnerships to fill gaps in cultural programming.

### *Outreach and Touring Programs*

ASC Lake Norman should provide regular opportunities to ASC affiliate and associate organizations and other local cultural programs to present their outreach programs to the Cultural Staff Team for consideration. In addition, it should serve as a central contact point for other, independent cultural touring and outreach programs interested in the Lake Norman Area. Its work in this area should be focused on achieving an increased number of locally (both publicly and privately) sponsored outreach and touring programs being made available to North Mecklenburg's residents.

### *Children's Learning Centers*

The Cultural Staff Team should work with the ASC and its affiliate and associate organizations and other local cultural programs to determine the level of demand for children's learning centers in North Mecklenburg. As envisioned these learning centers would target children aged 0-6 and their parents and caregivers in interdisciplinary, hands-on discovery activities including the arts, sciences, history and heritage. As the partnership matures, information gained can be used to determine the viability of providing a permanent space for a satellite children's learning center in the region, either in conjunction with a local cultural center (or centers) or otherwise.

### *Educational Farms*

ASC Lake Norman should work with Discovery Place, other interested entities, and appropriate representatives of the towns to consider acquisition and programming of one or more of the area's remaining farms. Program possibilities include historical farming practices, preservation of historic plant varieties, sustainable agriculture, live animal husbandry demonstration, ecologically sound land use, and community gardening and landscaping activities.

### *Group Sales and Bus Tours*

ASC, the Cultural Staff Team, and ASC Lake Norman should work together to stimulate increased group sales marketing of Charlotte-based cultural events to North Mecklenburg residents. These group sales activities would require related bus-tour development in North Mecklenburg. Offering appropriate packages could help meet the expressed needs of North Mecklenburg residents while increasing earned income for participating cultural organizations.

*VII. Town Recommendations: Strengthen targeted partnerships to fill gaps in cultural programming.*

*Cornelius*

1. Explore the mutual benefits of linking the resources of local cultural organizations to Parks and Recreation offerings in exchange for municipal services, materials, marketing assistance, etc.
2. Work with the ASC Public Art staff to develop a plan to enhance the exterior of City Hall.
3. Continue to explore partnerships with all interested ASC affiliate and associate organizations and other local cultural programs.

*Davidson*

1. Explore the mutual benefits of linking the resources of local cultural organizations to Parks and Recreation offerings in exchange for municipal services, materials, marketing assistance, etc.
2. Explore feasibility of a sculpture park along Griffith St. in collaboration with Davidson College and its Alumni Association. Give consideration to both permanent and temporary installation of works. Seek assistance from the ASC Public Art staff.
3. Initiate program to link Davidson College Office of Community Services to local cultural organizations and event coordinators to increase student participation.
4. Continue to explore partnerships with all interested ASC affiliate and associate organizations and other local cultural programs

*Huntersville*

1. Explore the mutual benefits of linking the resources of local cultural organizations to Parks and Recreation offerings in exchange for municipal services, materials, marketing assistance, etc.
2. Invite Latta Plantation, Carolina Raptor Center, Hugh Torrance House and Store, and Rural Hill Farm to participate in special events and to co-sponsor activities/courses offered through Parks and Recreation.
3. Continue to explore partnerships with all interested ASC affiliate and associate organizations and other local cultural programs

## IX. Advance regional identity.

### *Public Relations Plan*

ASC Lake Norman should work with the ASC communications staff to develop and implement a comprehensive public relations plan to announce its creation and role. This plan should include printed materials, media strategies, a speaker's bureau strategy, mailing list development and maintenance, and so forth. This plan should identify specific organizations and individuals to be reached with information during the critical founding years including artists, cultural organizations, elected officials, minority advocacy leaders and organizations, faith community leaders, civic and merchant organizations, neighborhood and homeowners organizations, business leaders, and educators and educational institutions.

### *Public Art*

ASC Lake Norman should work with each of the three towns to develop and implement a public art ordinance. While these ordinances may differ from town to town, taken together they should hold open the prospects for collaborative approaches to regional themes and inter-town projects such as historic trails demarcated with public art and coordinated rail stop installations.

### *Web Site*

Develop a special section of the ASC website for ASC Lake Norman, where its activities can be documented and promoted. Include information on each of the towns, their histories, and their key cultural resources. Link web site design and content to regular e-mail alerts to drive interest and use. Establish an independent url.

### *Regional Festivals*

ASC Lake Norman should develop a support system for planning, scheduling, developing, marketing and implementing regional festivals and coordinating and supporting local festivals. Consider developing a festival team incorporating designated staff from each town's Parks and Recreation Department, the Lake Norman Chamber of Commerce, the Convention and Visitor's Bureau, and downtown development organizations. Develop a listing of available festival equipment held by the towns, document available festival site specifications, create a volunteer recruitment program, and implement a volunteer database. In planning regional festivals, include leadership from underserved populations to insure diversity of appeal and offerings.



Consider regional festivals to include a Jazz Festival at Jetton Park, a Kite Festival at the Flying Field featuring ornamental kites as well as traditional combat and exhibition kites, a Storytelling Festival focusing on regional history topics, a Roots Festival focusing on traditional music and dance forms, and a major visual arts festival with both juried and open exhibition portions.

*IX. Town Recommendations: Advance regional identity.*

*Cornelius*

1. Work with the ASC Public Art staff to craft an appropriate local public art ordinance compatible with the county approach. Adopt and implement.

*Davidson*

1. Work with the ASC Public Art staff to craft an appropriate local public art ordinance compatible with the county approach. Adopt and implement.

*Huntersville*

1. Work with the ASC Public Art staff to craft an appropriate local public art ordinance compatible with the county approach. Adopt and implement.

## X. Advance intercultural unity.

### *Engaging New Residents*

ASC Lake Norman should work with the Lake Norman YMCA, Ada Jenkins Center, and First Baptist Church-Huntersville to make connections with Spanish-speaking residents. Engage these residents in a specific dialog about their cultural interests, making sure they are included as artists, as consumers, and as volunteers.

### *Cross-Cultural Events*

ASC Lake Norman should explore cultural events that have as a specific purpose bringing together historically black and historically white churches, as well as First Baptist with its Spanish-speaking congregants, in festival settings, choral events, or visual and theatrical art exhibitions. Program these events to create opportunities for building personal relationships through shared efforts. Naturally, planning for such activities can best be accomplished when led by inter-cultural groups of volunteers.

### *Teen Programs*

ASC Lake Norman, LNCDC, and Parks and Recreation Departments should work together to identify teen programs likely to appeal to the cross-cultural groups of participants. Consideration should be given to contemporary music and video recording and production activities that can be accomplished with modest investments in digital technology. Testing this, and other programming options now could help identify continuing programs for community-based cultural centers as they come on line.

### *Inclusive History Programs*

In working to advance history programming, which is addressed in detail below, attention should be paid to presenting a comprehensive view of local history including all population groups having roots in the area. In collecting oral histories, care should be taken to identify inclusive groups of interviewees.

*X. Town Recommendations: Advance intercultural identity.*

*Cornelius*

1. Appoint representatives of underserved populations to all committees involved in cultural affairs.
2. Address the need for geographic balance and accessibility in cultural programming decisions.
3. Design special community events that have program components in both the east and west parts of town, with shuttles to take people back and forth.
4. Monitor cultural offerings for balance in relevance among various demographic groups.

*Davidson*

1. Appoint representatives of underserved populations to all committees involved in cultural affairs.
2. Address the need for geographic balance and accessibility in cultural programming decisions.
3. Design special community events that have program components in both the east and west parts of town, with shuttles to take people back and forth.
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*Huntersville*

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2. Address the need for geographic balance and accessibility in cultural programming decisions.
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3. Monitor cultural offerings for balance in relevance among various demographic groups.

## XI. Build a coordinated approach to historical preservation and programming.

### *Shared Programs and Services*

Historical programming and site management is under strain all across Mecklenburg County. Many under-resourced sites are struggling with limited ability to engage in proper preservation and documentation or to program for the public. Similarly, marketing is weak. In this regard, North Mecklenburg's problems with historical site resources reflect a broader issue. ASC should take a leadership role in bringing together the various public and private owners and managers of the area's historic sites and organizations and begin a frank discussion of the prospects for shared programs, services, management, and marketing, including discussion of any potential mergers.

### *Linking History Programs to School Curriculum and Libraries*

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

### *A North Mecklenburg History Trail*

ASC Lake Norman should facilitate area historical resource managers to work with the county and the towns in creating a North Mecklenburg History Trail. Plan long-term to make the trail pedestrian and bike-accessible. Consider improving the trail and increasing interest by siting public art along the route. Support the trail with appropriate publications, marketing, and educational programs.

### *Archiving Local Family Papers*

ASC Lake Norman should support the public library and Davidson College Library in their efforts to gather and conserve significant collections of local resident's family papers. These family papers might be housed in Davidson College archives as well as the Public Library's North Carolina Room.

This work might well include preserving oral histories collected by students from both UNCC and Davidson, by community volunteers, and by area scholars.

*XI. Town Recommendations: Build a coordinated approach to historical preservation and programming.*

*Cornelius*

1. Work with ASC Lake Norman and the North Mecklenburg Historical Society to advance the development of a North Mecklenburg History Trail. Target the development of a continuous trail that is bike and pedestrian friendly. Use as a test for advancing bikes as forms of regular personal transportation.
2. Design signage to highlight entrance to historic Old Mill Village.
3. Partner with Discovery Place and others to secure at least one working farm for continued public use an educational and historic resource.

*Davidson*

1. Work with ASC Lake Norman and the North Mecklenburg Historical Society to advance the development of a North Mecklenburg History Trail. Target the development of a continuous trail that is bike and pedestrian friendly. Use as a test for advancing bikes as forms of regular personal transportation.

*Huntersville*

1. Work with ASC Lake Norman and the North Mecklenburg Historical Society to advance the development of a North Mecklenburg History Trail. Target the development of a continuous trail that is bike and pedestrian friendly. Use as a test for advancing bikes as forms of regular personal transportation.

**XII. Enhance lake access thereby creating opportunities to use the lake as a cultural venue.**

*Uniting for Access*

Each of the towns and the Lake Norman Chamber of Commerce and Convention and Visitor's Bureau should adopt an official position urging increased public access, especially to swimming, in Lake Norman. This position should be pursued by the three towns' participating in the Catawba-Wateree Relicensing process to reach a goal that includes both access and supporting infrastructure for public uses. In addition, the towns should coordinate an advocacy approach to the County, working with them to eliminate the ban on swimming from county owned park shorelines.

*Assessing Opportunities*

Once public access has been improved, ASC Lake Norman and the Staff Cultural Team should undertake an assessment of opportunities for shoreline art fairs, Venetian boat parades, special events with cultural components, and arts marketing to tourist interests consistent with the access secured.

***XII. Town Recommendations: Enhance lake access thereby creating opportunities to use the lake as a cultural venue.***

*Cornelius*

1. Participate aggressively in Catawba-Wateree re-licensing process in pursuit of increased public access, including swimming access, to Lake Norman.
2. Prioritize negotiating a change in county prohibitions regarding public swimming access in county parks.

*Davidson*

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2. Prioritize negotiating a change in county prohibitions regarding public swimming access in county parks.

*Huntersville*

1. Participate aggressively in Catawba-Wateree re-licensing process in pursuit of increased public access, including swimming access, to Lake Norman.
2. Prioritize negotiating a change in county prohibitions regarding public swimming access in county parks.

XIII. Enhance faith, civic, neighborhood, and social organizations' involvement in cultural activities.

*Faith Community*

ASC Lake Norman should convene a meeting of faith community leaders to determine their collective interest in creating dialog around shared cultural programming. This might include shared spaces, joint performances, co-sponsorship of outreach events and special programs, or the like. If interest is sufficient, ASC Lake Norman should facilitate the creation of a mechanism for continued sharing. Determine interest in sharing spaces with the broader community for cultural programming and provide a means for doing so as warranted.

*Civic and Neighborhood Organizations*

ASC Lake Norman should include civic organizations in its leadership development activities and work with them to understand and implement means of supporting both on-going and special cultural events as may fit their interests and capacities. Activities could include sponsoring events, raising scholarship funds, providing blocks of volunteers for cultural events and purposes, providing group ticket sales opportunities to their memberships, and contributing leadership and guidance to local cultural organizations.

*Scheduling Assistance*

ASC Lake Norman should assist civic and neighborhood organizations in scheduling their events by providing access to calendaring systems. This assistance, needed to help avoid unintended competition between events, can help assure good use of special event resources locally.

*XIII. Town Recommendations: Enhance faith, civic, neighborhood, and social organizations' involvement in cultural activities.*

*Cornelius*

1. Provide assistance to ASC Lake Norman in identifying local civic, neighborhood, business, professional, and property owners associations, and in meeting with their representatives.

*Davidson*

1. Provide assistance to ASC Lake Norman in identifying local civic, neighborhood, business, professional, and property owners associations, and in meeting with their

*Huntersville*

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representatives.

#### XIV. Utilize cultural activities to enhance downtown development.

##### *Downtown Amenities*

The towns and ASC Lake Norman should work together to strengthen each downtown through public investment in public art, streetscape, parking art and pedestrian-friendly amenities that will encourage private investment and pedestrian traffic. Consider this goal in locating and siting arts and cultural centers.

##### *Connecting the Downtowns*

The Cultural Staff Team should work together to plan inter-town connections such as events designed to encourage movement from one downtown to another. For example, the Team might create a weekend event with Saturday morning in Huntersville, Saturday afternoon in Cornelius and Saturday night in Davidson. Rail stops could be related by type but individuate by specific design. Wayfinding systems from rail stops to downtown amenities might be similar.

##### *Local Learning*

ASC Lake Norman and the Lake Norman Economic Development Corporation, the Lake Norman Chamber of Commerce, and the Lake Norman Convention and Visitor's Bureau should co-sponsor an educational series that features lectures and field trips for all the towns elected and merchant leaders addressing the relationship between downtown development, economic development and the quality of life.

#### *XIV. Town Recommendations: Utilize cultural activities to enhance downtown development*

*Cornelius*

*Davidson*

*Huntersville*



1. Commission artist-designed, signature street amenities such as benches, lights, and signage to define downtown. Fund through newly created public art program.
2. Evaluate the feasibility of developing Catawba Ave. as the cultural center of Cornelius, including special events at the library, small boutique shops and cafés with artist live/work spaces. Coordinate with rail stop site development.
3. Explore inter-town approach to rail stop design, using unique public art to distinguish stops, with some thematic elements to link stops in the Lake Norman region. Fund through newly created public art program.

1. Commission artist-designed, signature street amenities such as benches, lights, and signage to define downtown. Fund through newly created public art program.
2. Explore inter-town approach to rail stop design, using unique public art to distinguish stops, with some thematic elements to link stops in the Lake Norman region. Fund through newly created public art program.

1. Commission artist-designed, signature street amenities such as benches, lights, and signage to define downtown. Fund through newly created public art program.
2. Protect storefront row along rail corridor to position it for redevelopment as a boutique arts district.
3. Explore former Anchor Mill site for cultural uses.
4. Explore inter-town approach to rail stop design, using unique public art to distinguish stops, with some thematic elements to link stops in the Lake Norman region. Fund through newly created public art program.

## PARTICIPANTS

The North Mecklenburg Cultural Action Plan reflects the aspiration of the citizens Cornelius, Davidson, and Huntersville to more fully integrate cultural activities into the civic fabric of North Mecklenburg. It is the result of a community-wide conversation that began in July 2003 and will continue as the plan proceeds through its stages of implementation. This appendix recognizes the hundreds of people who participated in the process through staff support, meeting attendance, individual interviews, interest-group meetings, town meetings, and a Cultural Summit on March 2, 2004 at the Palace Theatre.

### Arts and Science Council Participants

#### *Board of Directors Planning Committee*

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

#### *Staff*

Robert Bush, Vice President – Planning  
Regina Smith, Vice President – Grants & Services  
Jean Greer, Vice President – Public Art  
Bob Halbruner, Vice President – Communications  
Terri Marshall, Assistant Vice President – Development  
Randy Penninger, Administrative Assistant

### ASC Affiliate and Associate Liaisons

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

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

## GROUP INTERVIEWS

### Children's Activities

Lynn Andrus  
 Sharon Connor  
 Rob Dixon  
 Terilynn Knox  
 Andrea Visser  
 Joy Warner

### Davidson College

Bill Lawing  
 Karen Martin

### Community Perspectives

Lawrence Fulleir  
 Esty Kurty  
 John Probst  
 Joyce Probst  
 Tanya Rivens  
 Darnita Sistrunk

### Business

Ken Baesler  
 Christa Faut

John Foster  
 Bob King  
 Kit King

Denise Palm-Beck  
 Bill Russell  
 John Woods

### Parks and Recreation Staff

Paul Herbert, Cornelius  
 Chad Cauble, Cornelius  
 Brianna Murphy, Cornelius  
 Pam Royal, Huntersville

Steve Fraher, Davidson  
Angie Bradshaw, Davidson  
Sharon Lamm, Davidson

**Artists**  
Marilyn Dix  
Jill Kitamura  
  
Cynthia Lawing

Agnes Manganelli  
  
Scotty Nicholls  
Valerie Tan

Susanne Miles  
Susan Montague

## INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Sally Ashworth  
Belle Banks  
Rupert Barber Jr.  
Lorna Bishop  
Chris Brumlow  
Tracey Boy Buthoon  
Steven Burke  
Former Mayor Carson Cato,  
Cornelius  
Jane Cain  
Chad Cauble  
Varva Collins

David Dunn  
Georgia Harris  
Rev. Raphael Hernandez  
Ted Holland  
Verna Ikner  
Bill Johnson  
Juile Kasak  
Mayor Randy Kincaid,  
Davidson  
Mayor Gary Knox, Cornelius  
C. Barton Landess  
Terry Laney  
Rev. Jeff Lowrance  
Bob McIntosh

Don Morris  
Mayor Kim Phillips,  
Huntersville  
Commissioner Jim Puckett,  
Mecklenburg County  
Anthony Roberts  
Ruth Shaw  
Duane Smith  
Commissioner Thom Tillis,  
Cornelius  
Miriam Whisnant  
Commissioner Margo Williams,  
Davidson

## TOWN MEETINGS

Michael Archer  
Nancy Archer  
Sally Ashworth  
Rupert Barber Jr.  
Mary D. Barker  
Teresa Bishop  
Amy Blackwell  
Mikal Bortzman  
Ron Bowen  
Misty Brown  
Barbara Bryan  
Fay Bynum

Ava Callender  
Hugh Candell  
Mella Candell

Gary Cangelosi  
Garfield Carr  
John Cherry  
Adrienne Collins  
Craig Collins  
John Collins  
Debbie Curry  
Keith Curry  
George Ellis

Linda Engleman  
Mathias Engleman  
Heather Faulkner  
Jim Faulkner  
Bob FautChrista Faut  
Kim Freeman  
Mimi Gallagher

Bob Harm  
Ed Harris  
Terri Haskett  
Morenga Hunt  
Lois Ingld  
Pat Jackson

Abigail Jennings  
Bill Johnson  
Hank Kahn  
Barbara Kincaid  
David King  
Jill Kitamura  
Gary Knox  
Angela Lanham  
Luann Laubsher  
Connie Lyon  
Alisa MacDowell  
Rick Mack  
Robert Mahood  
Kim McCulloch  
Mark McGoldrick  
Gene Medlin  
Linda Medlin  
Susan Medlin  
Matt Merrell  
Suzanne Miles  
Don Morris  
Brianna Murphy  
Melissa Nacey  
Melissa Ohlman-Roberge  
Kim Phillips  
B. Bohall Prestigiacom  
John Probst  
Jeff Pugliese  
Cindy Rice  
Greg Robinson  
Thurman Ross  
Bill Russell  
Mario C. Shinn  
Brian Sisson  
Dennis Spring  
Jim S. Tate  
Bill Tiemann  
Thom Tillis  
Delainia Walker  
Fountain Walker

Paula Watt  
Brooke Weihe  
Jack Wilson  
Howard Wolfe  
Joyce Wynes

## CULTURAL SUMMIT

### *Exhibitors*

Ada Jenkins Center  
Afro-American Cultural  
Center  
Carolina Raptor Center  
Carolina Voices  
Charlotte Children's Choir  
Charlotte Museum of History  
Charlotte Writers Club  
Children's Arts Project  
Community School of the Arts  
Davidson Community Players  
Discovery Place  
Families with Children from  
China  
Historic Latta Plantation  
Historic Rosedale  
Icehouse Center for Creativity,  
Craft & Design  
Martha Connerton/Kinetic  
Works  
McColl Center for Visual Arts  
NC Blumenthal Performing  
Arts Center  
North Carolina Dance  
Theatre  
Opera Carolina  
Queen Charlotte Chorus  
RibbonWalk Conservancy  
The Light Factory

### *Attendees*

Carlos Amaya  
Kim Amaya  
Lynn Andrews  
Michael Archer  
Nancy Archer

Betty Arko  
Sally Ashworth

LeeAnn Bannerman  
Rupert Barber  
Mary D. G. Barker  
Jim Bensman  
John Bisson  
Amy Blackwell  
Ron Bowen  
Marty Brennan  
Misty Lee Brown  
Barbara Bryan  
Lee Burger  
Jay Butler  
Fay Bynum  
Robert Callender  
Ava Callender  
Terri Cangelosi  
Gary Cangelosi  
Tony Capranice  
Mr. & Mrs. Hugh Caudill  
Jennifer Chaffman  
Nancy Conrad  
Laurene Cullender  
Debbie Curry  
Robert Dearman  
Alan Demas  
Jalari Edwards  
Damany Edwards  
Jacqueline Edwards  
Linda Engelmann  
Mark Engelmann  
Heather Faulkner  
Jim Faulkner  
Christa Faut  
Bob Faut  
Greg Ferguson

Charlotte Fletcher  
Florence Flowers  
John Foster

Linda Fox  
Shirley Garrison  
Sherry George  
Kitty Giese  
Andrew Grant  
Lisa Gray  
Lewis Guignard  
Will Hager  
Catherine Hamilton  
Sarah Sue Hardinger  
Bob Haupt  
Paul Herbert  
John Hettwer  
Dana M. Hicks  
Rhonda Hollingsworth  
Chris Houck  
Tracey Howell  
Neal Howes  
Casey Jacobs  
Donna Johnson  
Anne Kahn  
Hank Kahn  
Sharon Keiser  
Barbara Kincaid  
Gary Knox  
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Laurie Loomer  
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Rick Mack  
Robert Mahood

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Alan Martin  
Michelle McGowan  
Susan Medlin  
Matt Merrell  
Susan Miller  
Mary Charles Montgomery  
Don Morris  
Ron Mortenson  
Marie Mosley  
Ted Mosley  
Sandy Muelles  
Briana Murphy  
Melissa Nagy  
Scotty Nicholls  
Michelle Nicoulin  
Melissa Ohlman-Roberge  
Vickie Payne  
Kim Phillips  
Dana Pianowski  
Laura Pianowski  
Terri Piselli

Winton Poole  
Myron Prescott  
John Probst  
Joyce Probst  
Jim Puckett  
Jeff Pugliese  
Kristin Quinn  
Kathy Ridge  
Sandi Ries  
Gayle Roberts  
Greg Robinson  
Billy Roddey  
Lucy Roddey  
JoAnn Rodgers  
Jimmy Rodgers  
Tressa Rogers  
Thurman Ross  
Kathleen Ross  
Robert Rowell  
Pamela Royal  
Bill Russell  
Pat Sailstad

Kelly Sapp  
Jefferson Sims  
Brian Sisson  
Judith Slee  
David Sorenson  
Jennifer Spence  
Heather Stamper  
Mark Stephens  
Emily Stephenson-Green  
Angela Swett  
Delainia Walker  
Jeff Walkington  
Joy Warner  
Donna Warren  
Woody Washam  
Sharon Washam  
Brooke Weihe  
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