



CITY OF KIRKLAND
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MEMORANDUM

To: Kirkland City Council

From: Kirkland Cultural Council

Date: March 5, 2008

Subject: Kirkland Strategic Plan for the Arts and Culture

Recommendation

It is recommended that the City Council endorse the efforts of the Cultural Council to prepare a Strategic Plan for the Arts and Culture.

Background

The Kirkland Cultural Council would like to thank the City Council for their consistent support, including their recent allocation of funding for public art. We are initiating the percent for art policy, and are coordinating with the project manager and architect to select an artist to integrate art into the City Hall Annex. We are committed to ensuring that the City's money is spent wisely and with the greatest benefit to the community.

Art plays a defining role in the character and image of the City of Kirkland. Our City is well-known for its outstanding arts institutions such as fine art galleries, an independent bookstore, Studio East, a premier performing arts center, the Kirkland Arts Center and a number of organizations devoted to arts and culture. The community prides itself on this image—what we call the Kirkland Factor. The Kirkland Factor distinguishes our community as a vibrant, beautiful place to live and visit.

Kirkland's standing as the center for arts on the eastside is being challenged by a number of forces. These challenges include the changing arts scene with the loss of Summerfest, leadership transition at the Kirkland Art Center, Bellevue and Redmond's major investments in the arts, and recent gallery closures in downtown. Along with these challenges, new opportunities have arisen with the new Kirkland Artist Studio Tour, the continued strength of the programming at the Kirkland Performance Center, and the recent neighborhood investments in sculpture. Now is the time to look strategically at these opportunities and challenges and prepare a plan to guide the future of arts and culture in Kirkland.

In light of these challenges and needs, the Cultural Council is preparing to initiate a strategic plan – the 20/20 Vision for the Arts and Culture for Kirkland. This effort will be guided by a broadly representative Steering Committee and will include extensive community involvement. Their

involvement is critical, because the success of the plan will ultimately be measured by community support for its implementation. The Cultural Council would like to appoint the members of the steering committee representing the following sectors of the community: 1 member of the Kirkland City Council, 2 members of the Kirkland Cultural Council, 2 members of the business community, 2 members of arts organizations, 2 artists, and 3 community members.

It is important to note that we are not requesting additional funding to complete the plan. Rather, we plan to invest a significant portion of the initial \$50,000 in funding allocated by the Council to prepare the plan.

If approved, Kirkland will join the ranks of many other cities in Washington and across the nation that are recognizing that an initial investment in strategic art planning can payoff in countless ways. One important way is that a strategic plan can identify possible future revenue opportunities. Portland completed its plan in 1991. By 1998 their arts director reported that private funding for the arts had doubled. By starting now, we hope to have a consultant in place by June of this year, with the plan completed by June of 2009.

The 20/20 Vision for the Arts and Culture: A significant investment in Kirkland's future

It's important to spend the time and money to evaluate future opportunities and address future growth issues, and how they impact the cultural and arts infrastructure of our community.

- A strategic plan that involves the community will ensure that the Cultural Council's work and the City's plan for its new public art funding is responsive to the needs of residents, artists and local art agencies.
- A strategic plan for the arts that works together with the City's plan for economic growth will enhance the quality of life for both residents and visitors. In the year 2000, \$40 million in business activity was pumped into the local economy by the spending of Eastside arts patrons, programs and cultural organizations. Only 47% of each dollar spent went to tickets; 37% was spent on meals and other entertainment, and the rest was on souvenirs, gifts, and lodging.
- Strategic planning creates a roadmap for future cultural development by highlighting existing strengths and assets as well as identifying and prioritizing gaps and opportunities for growth.
- With greater vision and strategy, the City can take an active role in art acquisitions rather than a reactionary one; working toward a long term vision rather than responding in a piecemeal fashion.
- The Cultural Council has worked hard to encourage developers to integrate art into their projects, working together with the planning department, the design review board, and individual developers; hiring an artist for the Totem Lake mall; and designing a video presentation to be given to all potential builders at the first contact. Strategic planning can enhance these private/public partnerships.

What Will We Get for this Investment?

The expectation is that the investment in this plan will yield these outcomes:

- A plan to guide City investment in the arts and culture
- Increased communication and cooperation among arts organizations, local schools, and the community
- Economic growth strategy that takes full advantage of what the arts and culture have to offer
- A community discussion of what Kirkland values in the arts and what it is willing to support
- Cultural Council programs with broader community reach
- Increased resources for the arts – public, private, monetary, in-kind
- A public art program strategy that attracts more private involvement
- Broad participation by culturally diverse groups in the community
- An aesthetic, vibrant community