



management
services
incorporated

Cultural Plan Update

to: Joe Snook, City of Lee's Summit
from: Duncan Webb, Webb Management Services
regarding: Cultural Plan Update for Lee's Summit
date: March 19, 2016

1. Introduction and Overview

In 2007, the City of Lee's Summit completed its first event cultural plan, authored by AMS Planning and Research. Here is a summary of goals coming out of the plan and notable achievements in the implementation of the plan.

Goal 1: Participation - Involve more people, more often, in more meaningful cultural experiences.

1.1 Work with appropriate entities (e.g., Downtown Lee's Summit Main Street, Library, Longview College, Lee's Summit School District, etc.) to establish information and promotion approaches to developing new audiences for arts/cultural activities.

Notable Achievements

- ✓ LSAC Web Site & Social Media.
- ✓ Reciprocal web site links.
- ✓ Monthly e-newsletter distributed by LSAC.
- ✓ Arts at a Glance Community Calendar.
- ✓ LSAC Monthly Articles to Journal.
- ✓ Arts in Public Places (APP) Program.
- ✓ Connect Organizations and Artists.
- ✓ LSAC hosts annual Arts Summit.

1.2 Consider and integrate specific needs of the senior population in Lee's Summit with regard to attending and participating in arts/cultural activities.

Notable Achievements

- ✓ GCC Artists receptions (visual art rotated quarterly).

building creativity

Empire State Building | 350 Fifth Avenue, Suite 4005 | NY, NY 10118 | t: 212.929.5040 | f: 212.929.5954 | webbmgmt.org

- ✓ Arts classes available (dulcimer, photography, dance).
- ✓ Multiple cultural arts performances annually (theater, music).
- ✓ GCC is accessible through public transportation (OATS, MetroFlex).

1.3 Pursue activities which serve to improve and “extend” the existing fairs and festivals in Lee’s Summit through inclusion of arts/cultural activities, artists, attendance incentive distribution, etc.

Notable Achievements

- ✓ Summit Art Festival is located downtown
- ✓ Summit Art Festival is supported by LSAC through a grant and promotions
- ✓ Current downtown festivals (Oktoberfest, Downtown Days) showcase many cultural arts organizations and performers during their events.
- ✓ DLSMS has incorporated 4th Fridays from Memorial Day to Labor Day which showcase artists.
- ✓ DLSMS hosts music concerts in Howard Station Park each Friday from Memorial Day through Labor Day

1.4 Explore ways in which Lee’s Summit audiences (school groups and general public) can benefit from Kansas City-based arts/cultural groups through innovative approaches such as free transportation, run-out performances, and so on, including a link between the Lee’s Summit Arts Council and Arts Council of Metropolitan Kansas City.

Notable Achievements

- ✓ LS Symphony has performed at the Kauffman Performing Arts Center the past two years and provided transportation via a charter bus for participants to ride.
- ✓ ArtsKC has been a resource for LSAC and vice-versa.

1.5 Support the re-establishment of Lee’s Summit community theater program working with the school district, local theater artists and organizations, and community volunteers, including:

Notable Achievements

- ✓ The STG began productions in 2012 and performs multiple shows each year at multiple locations.

- ✓ The STG is supported by the LSAC through grants and marketing/promotions of group productions.

1.6 Develop and promote new ways to support literary arts programs in the city, which might include:

Notable Achievements

- ✓ MCC-Longview hosts a Literary Fest each year.
- ✓ The Literary Fest is supported by the LSAC through annual grants and marketing/promotions of the event.
- ✓ In 2015 DLSMS hosted the Missouri Poet Laureate on a 4th Friday
- ✓ The Missouri Poet Laureate was supported by the LSAC through a grant/promotions and is a LS resident.

Goal 2: Creativity - Showcase and leverage the city's educational resources and achievements.

2.1 Work with the Lee's Summit public schools on a number of specific initiatives, including:

Notable Achievements

- ✓ LSAC organizes a Mayor's proclamation recognizing National Theater Month each November and is presented to theater students from each R7 High School and SCA.
- ✓ Local art students are showcased at the Summit Art Festival each year.
- ✓ LSAC monthly Journal articles have highlighted R7 art students.

2.2 Work with MCC-Longview to expand ways in which the College's resources (e.g., facilities, faculty, students, staff, etc.) can be involved in the Lee's Summit arts/cultural scene.

Notable Achievements

- ✓ MCC-Longview is the home for the STG.
- ✓ LSAC promotes MCC-Longview cultural arts events on LSAC web site & social media outlets.

- ✓ LSAC promoted the MCC-Longview Faculty Art Exhibit.
- ✓ MCC-Longview currently offers 19 cultural arts classes this spring.
- ✓ Sweet Adelines practices weekly at MCC-Longview.

2.3 Institute community education components of a comprehensive arts/cultural program in the city

Notable Achievements

- ✓ LSAC provided a grant for a “History of Women in Arts” 4 week educational program.

Goal 3: Place - Increase, improve and promote the places in which arts and cultural activities are held.

3.1 Consider establishing a Cultural District in downtown Lee’s Summit which might include promotion, development incentives, dedicated funding, and creation of new performance/exhibit venues.

Notable Achievements

- ✓ The Cultural District has been identified in the Cultural Facilities Master plan from MCC-Longview through downtown to Legacy Park.
- ✓ City Hall is host to 3 LSPR summer concerts each year.
- ✓ The historical post office has been repurposed into the Lee’s Summit History Museum.
- ✓ The Legacy Park Amphitheater is currently under construction and will open in Spring 2016.
- ✓ Howard Station Park is home to the DLSMS Friday night concerts from Memorial Day to Labor Day.
- ✓ DLSMS utilizes all of downtown as a cultural arts space for the 4th Friday events from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

3.2 Consider adoption of an Art in Public Places ordinance to provide 1-2% of public capital improvement project budgets for art, which might include themed sculptures in the downtown area and/or “gateway” markers for the City entrances.

Notable Achievements

- ✓ Research has been completed on possible funding sources for arts and identifies specific sources used by other communities.
- ✓ The LSAC has made this a priority for the next year and plan to make specific recommendations to the City Council.
- ✓ The City has built the first gateway monument and future monuments are planned.
- ✓ The City has recently installed a public art piece in the plaza of City Hall which was donated by LS 150 (also partially funded by an LSAC grant).

3.3 Undertake a feasibility study for the creation of a community cultural center in downtown Lee's Summit, potentially modeled on venues in communities such as Lawrence and Wichita, Kansas, that would feature studios and classrooms for visual art, exhibition space, and possibly small performance space. (This study should take into account the opportunity afforded by the potential sale of the Lee's Summit United Methodist Church in downtown Lee's Summit, and its potential for adaptive re-use as a cultural center).

Notable Achievements

- ✓ A Cultural Facilities Master Plan was completed in February 2012.
- ✓ Emphasized the cultural corridor concept.
- ✓ The plan included recommendations for the following:
 - ✓ A Community Arts & Media Center (350 seat performance space, exhibit space, rehearsal space, media labs, visual arts classrooms, downtown location)
 - ✓ Improvements to Legacy Park Amphitheater
 - ✓ Outdoor Performance/Festival Space (downtown)
 - ✓ Decentralized Program Space
 - ✓ Artist work/sell space
 - ✓ Large performance hall (800+ seats, partnership, MCC-Longview location)

3.4 Consider use of lakes in and nearby Lee's Summit as venues for arts/cultural programs and events. Work with Lee's Summit Parks & Recreation Department, Jackson County Parks & Recreation, Eastland Community Foundation, and other organizations and agencies involved in arts and/or nature programming.

Notable Achievements

- ✓ Legacy Park Amphitheater
- ✓ LSPR programs at Legacy include:
 - ✓ Animal Wonders
 - ✓ Photography
 - ✓ Drawing
 - ✓ Shakespeare Camp
- ✓ Local group performed Shakespeare in the Park (supported though LSAC grant).

3.5 Recognize the New Longview area as an important “cultural node” within Lee’s Summit including MCC-Longview’s new cultural arts center, the Longview Mansion, and other cultural activities and venues in the western portion of Lee’s Summit.

Notable Achievements

- ✓ MCC-Longview is home to the STG.
- ✓ MCC-Longview hosts the annual Kite Festival (supported by LSAC though grants).
- ✓ MCC-Longview host the annual Literary fest.

Infrastructure - To provide financial and human resources to operate a Municipal Division of Cultural Affairs.

Notable Achievements

- ✓ City provides funding for .6 FTE at this time.
- ✓ The LSAC has made the funding of a FT staff position a priority this next year.
- ✓ City provides annual funding to support LSAC programs including grants, Arts summit, and Artist receptions.
- ✓ LSAC hosts annual retreats to develop annual work plan.
- ✓ The LSAC had oversight of the CFMP, conceptual development of the downtown outdoor performance space, and the current CAP update.
- ✓ The LSAC will be working on a policy regarding the donation of public art to the City.

Even with all of these achievements, more work needs to be done to advance the arts and culture in Lee’s Summit. A number of the recommendations from 2007 have not been acted upon, related to building participation, driving creativity and adding places for the arts and culture. In addition, the community is growing and changing, and there

are new forces and trends in the cultural sector. And, most importantly, investments in the arts and culture need to be aligned with the overall direction and vision for the community.

In the following sections we will consider what's going on in the arts sector, the local arts community and then Lee's Summit in order to inform decisions on why Lee's Summit should continue to invest in the arts, where those investments should be directed, and how those investments should be managed and advanced by the City, the private sector and the Arts Council.

2. Forces and Trends

There are a number of national forces and trends in the cultural sector that should be reflected in the cultural plan update. First of all, there are a series of new challenges, including:

- * Traditional performing arts audiences are not growing in terms of who is participating and how often they attend. In fact, some of the disciplines (like classical music) are seeing a steady decline in participation. Most troubling is the fact that declining participation is most apparent amongst younger age groups.
- * We have also observed increasing competition for private sector philanthropy, meaning that arts organizations must now work harder to make the case for support competing with other important causes like healthcare (of increasing interest to the aging population) and environmental sustainability.
- * Finally, there is a major challenge around the increasing fragility of nonprofit arts organizations, due to the lack of productivity gains over time in the way that art is created (there are still four musicians in a string quartet). Without those gains, cost increases are not easily mitigated and arts organizations are forced to raise more money each and every year in order to sustain operations.

At the same time, we see a number of positive trends:

- * Communities are embracing a broader definition of culture, which means going beyond the traditional idea of Western European classical arts to embrace many other cultural traditions, and not just those tailored to those with more wealth and higher levels of educational attainment.
- * Non-arts and culture organizations are increasingly using the arts and culture to help them achieve broader community development goals.

- * People are experiencing arts and culture in less traditional and formal ways and settings, such as festivals, outdoor concerts and public art.
- * We also see growth in active arts participation, meaning that more people are searching for ways to express their personal creativity, whether that means joining a choral group, learning how to paint or participating in the cultural programs reflecting their heritage.
- * Arts programs are under pressure in many schools as budgets come under stress and there is more emphasis placed on academic performance and test scores. But at the same time, there has been tremendous growth of education programs developed and delivered directly by arts organizations and facilities. These programs augment and supplement school-based programs, and play a significant role in improving the vibrancy and sustainability of the nonprofit sector.
- * Finally, it is clear that the sector is doing a much better job at articulating the value of the arts to individuals, communities and society. The key here is that local artists, organizations, facilities and supporters are increasingly able to connect the arts to the core issues and challenges of a community, whether that relates to economic development, downtown revitalization, cultural tourism, workforce development and retention, creative place-making or multiculturalism.

So how should communities respond to these changes?

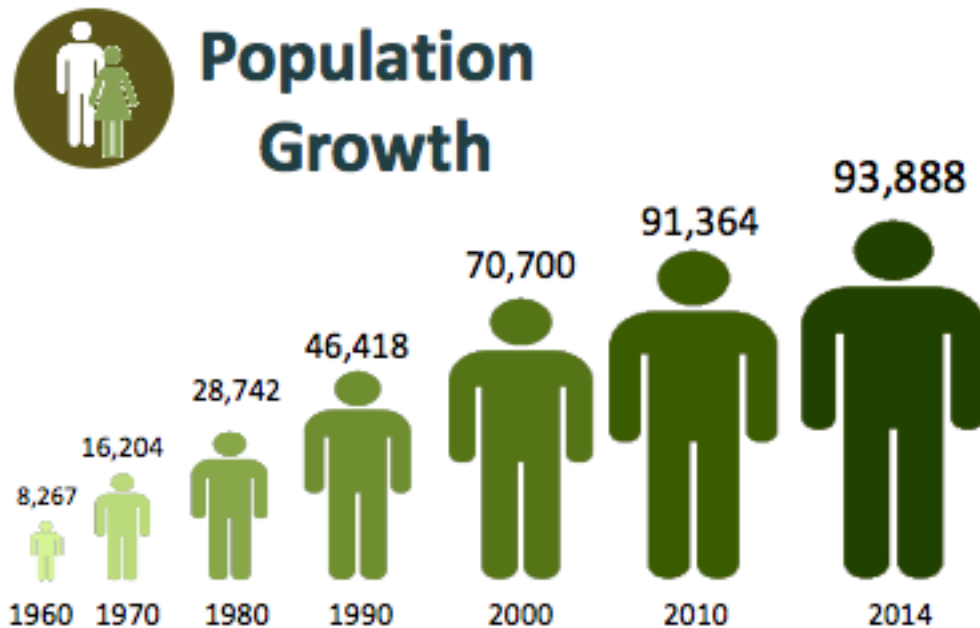
- * **From Friday Night Lights to Community Living Rooms:** The old image of the theater—where the lights come on at 7PM on a Friday night so that fancy people wearing formal attire can attend a performance—is gone. The new image of a cultural facility is that of a community living room—a place that is always open and always active—with informal programming and an atmosphere that is inclusive and welcoming.
- * **Facilitating Active Participation:** Facilities and organizations must support a culture of more active participation in the arts, including engagement of audiences before, during and after a performance. But even more importantly, we must provide more opportunities for everyone in the community to express their own creativity—whatever that means to them.
- * **Cost Structure:** The future of facilities that serve the nonprofit sector depends on their ability to provide ongoing affordable access to nonprofit users, and arrangements that motivate efficient use of space and the maximization of revenues for both user and facility. Facility management organizations must be lean and nimble in their staffing, and embracing of technologies that drive operating efficiencies and economies.

- * **Community Engagement:** Fundamentally, the arts sector must become deeply engaged and connected to the life of their communities. They cannot be seen as something special or exclusive, but rather something fundamental to the life of the community, offering benefits that are understood and embraced by all, whether that means driving economic development, enhancing quality of life, or changing the identity and image of the community.

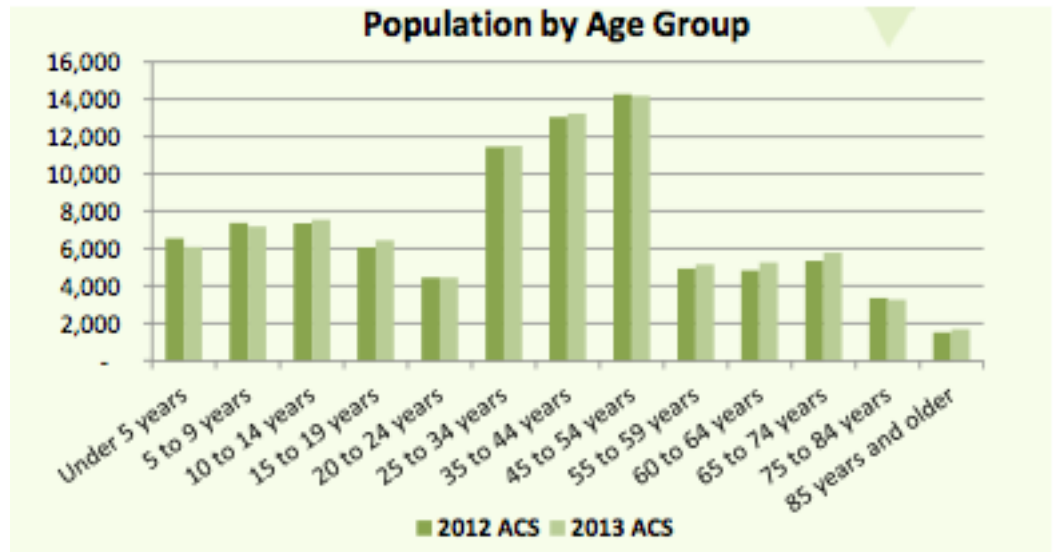
3. Growth and Change in Lee's Summit

The City of Lee's Summit is growing and changing. The 2014 Development Report includes a number of important insights, including:

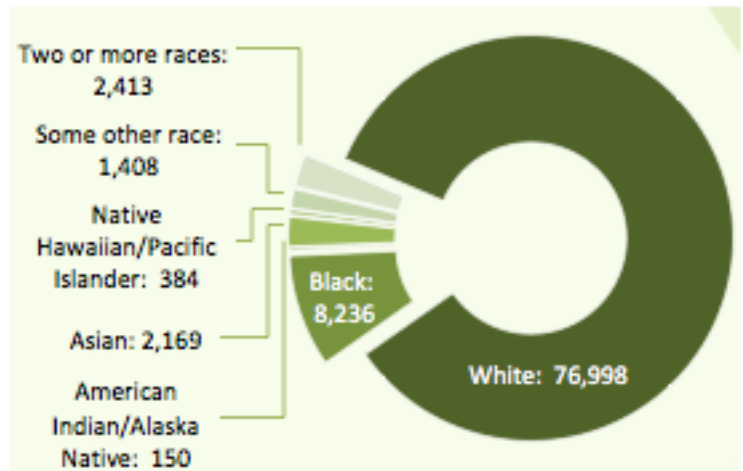
Lee's Summit has a population of 93,888 in an area of 66 square miles. And there has been significant growth in the population in recent years.



Most residents are between the ages of 25 and 54.



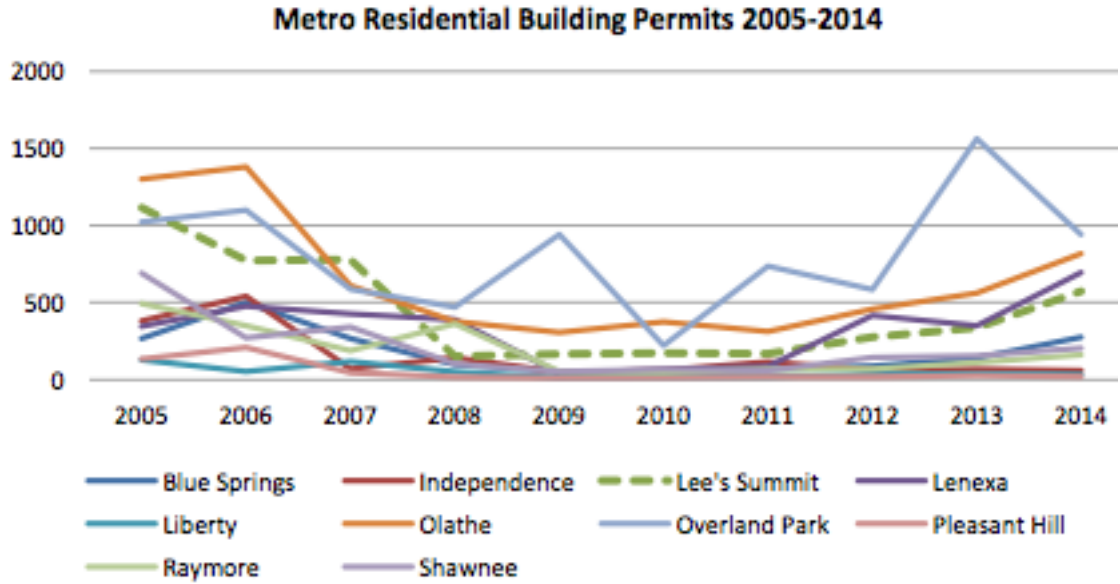
There is limited but growing diversity in the community, most importantly with the African-American community.



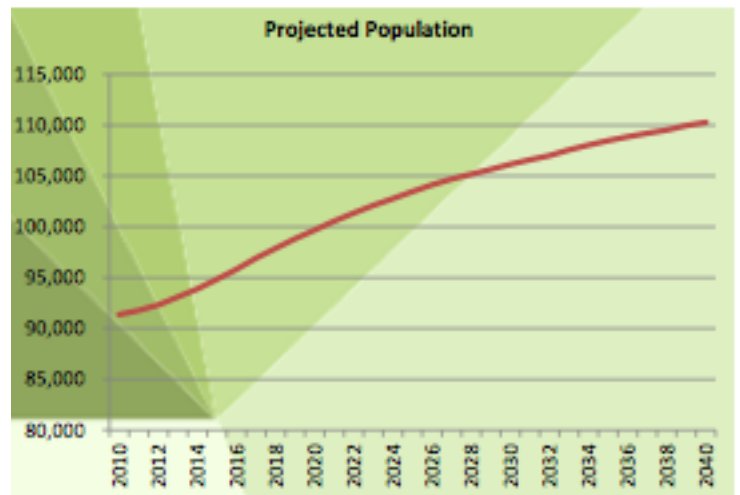
Lee's Summit has high levels of household income, some \$25,000 higher than the median national household income number of \$51,939 in 2013.

Household Income	Number of Households	% Total
Less than \$10,000	1,274	3.8%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	797	2.4%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	2,050	6.1%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	2,351	7.0%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	3,855	11.4%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	5,849	17.3%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	5,311	15.7%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	7,202	21.4%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	3,079	9.1%
\$200,000 or more	1,964	5.8%
Median Household Income	\$77,285	

Growth prospects for Lee's Summit are also positive given regional trends in residential building permits.



And finally, the Lee's Summit population is expected to grow to 110,000 by 2040.



Against all of this good news is the fact that Lee's Summit is close to build-out, meaning that there is minimal open land left for development. This is not in itself bad news, but it means that future growth of the city must come through the redevelopment of existing properties and the pursuit of greater density in the urban core and other key areas.

4. Lee's Summit Planning and Goals

Here are summaries of some of the recent planning work undertaken by and for the City that are relevant to the Cultural Plan Update.

Historic Preservation Plan, 2002

The City of Lee's Summit's last preservation plan was completed in 2002 by Historic Preservation Services, LLC. The plan broadly focuses on the City's "historic resources,"

including not only its buildings, but also its cultural landscapes, rural farmsteads, and prehistoric and historic archaeological sites, providing direction for creating opportunities to develop – through preservation activities – vibrant, sustainable neighborhoods and commercial centers.

The plan resulted in five priority goals:

1. Integrate preservation into the city’s planning, land use, and property management codes and policies
2. Increase awareness of historic preservation
3. Develop and expand appropriate mechanisms for the identification, evaluation, and protection of historic and cultural resources
4. Develop and complete a coordinated effort to update and replace obsolete and decaying infrastructure
5. Encourage the utilization of existing and the development of traditional and nontraditional economic incentives

Certainly the preservation of Lee’s Summit’s historical assets is a key element of cultural heritage, which we support as cultural planners. From a practical perspective, the real opportunity would be to find historical structures that could be restored and adapted for a cultural use. Even more powerful would be the restoration of a set of historic structures as a part of a cultural district for Lee’s Summit.

Old Lee’s Summit Development Master Plan (2004)

The urban planning firm EDAW Inc. developed this plan for the Economic Development Council of Lee’s Summit in 2004. This effort focuses on an action plan for Old Lee’s Summit, looking at market demand, transportation, connections to other areas, the physical connections in the downtown area, standards for future development and an implementation plan with phasing.

The plan’s recommendations included an increased emphasis on incorporating cultural uses in the downtown core to attract more people and create a sense of place and community.

Lee’s Summit 360 – The 2009 Strategic Plan

The last master plan for the City of Lee’s Summit led to a new vision statement for the community:

Lee’s Summit is a sustainable and vibrant city with a dynamic spirit of cooperation among its diverse citizens, businesses, organizations, educational

systems and governments. Through comprehensive community planning and regional collaboration, Lee's Summit enjoys economic independence and a high quality of life as a recognized destination city.

The key performance areas in the plan were Education, Economic Development, Health & Human Services, Local Government, Quality of Life and Transportation. And the goals and strategies expressed in all of these areas included cultural development elements, including:

- * Provide opportunities for quality life-long learning and training.
- * Ensure that Downtown Lee's Summit remains a major focus for redevelopment.
- * Help arts organizations become self-sustaining by promoting their value to our community and region, increasing accessibility to audiences of all ages, and building private sector support. The first step in this process requires support for the Lee's Summit Arts Council's website and calendar initiatives.
- * Attract and support professional artists through incentives, live-work spaces, affordable and accessible studio and exhibition space, and resources for professional development.
- * Develop and promote a network of Metropolitan Kansas City arts organizations that would support the import of arts programming to Lee's Summit and/or support the development of creative transportation solutions to local and regional cultural art opportunities so that all Lee's Summit citizens have access to art and culture in the region.
- * Support the continuation and expansion of the Parks and Recreation Department's cultural arts programming and increase opportunities for community fairs, festivals, and concert series.
- * Conduct a study on the impact of cultural arts on the economic development in Lee's Summit.
- * Create the position of a full-time Cultural Arts Coordinator City Staff person as recommended in the Cultural Arts Plan to assist with oversight, advocacy, action and future planning.
- * Research and establish sources for cultural arts funding.
- * Continue to support the Cultural Arts Plan as adopted by the Lee's Summit Arts Council.
- * Conduct a Cultural Center Feasibility Study to determine the best approach to increase the number of quality cultural art venues, with special attention to the need for performance and exhibition space.
- * Considering results of a Cultural Center Feasibility Study, create a Cultural Arts Facilities Task Force, with special attention to finding a home for the Lee's Summit Symphony.
- * Establish a cultural district downtown and evaluate expanding to define

additional cultural districts throughout the city.

- * Working with community partners, search for innovative locations for cultural arts programs and events.
- * Promote diversity and inclusion through education and community involvement in activities that provide programs of learning and understanding of issues of diversity and inclusion, positive relationship building and community history.
- * Develop an on-going delivery system to educate the community on important issues and trends related to diversity which will, in turn, create opportunities to lessen tensions and promote dignity for all citizens, and respect for all cultures.

The implementation of the master plan is ongoing, but senior staff for the City suggests that there has been good progress and a sense of success across these Key Performance Areas (KPA's), including Quality of Life. In that area, where there has been an active sub-committee, most of the recommendations on cultural development have been taken up through a range of other City planning efforts, including those noted below.

City of Lee's Summit 2013 Citizen Survey

A community survey was completed in October and November 2013 by ETC Institute. This was the third such survey; previous versions were completed in 2004 and 2008. The City of Lee's Summit rated at or above the national average in 50 of the 55 areas that were assessed and rated at or above the Kansas City Metro average in 52 of the 55 areas that were compared, including quality of city services and parks/recreation programs/facilities. There were no specific questions or insights regarding cultural services or facilities.

Cultural Facilities Master Plan (2012)

Webb Management Services developed the Cultural Facilities Master Plan for the City of Lee's Summit in 2012. That plan recommended a series of initiatives for the short to medium term. Specifically:

1. A Community Arts and Media Center
2. Improve Legacy Park Amphitheatre
3. New Outdoor Performance and Festival Space
4. Decentralized Program Space
5. Artist Work/Sell Spaces

For the longer term, we endorsed the idea of developing a larger performing arts center, ideally with an educational sector partner.

Some progress has been made here, specifically the improvements for Legacy Park Amphitheater and various efforts to formalize a downtown location for festivals and events. The need for community arts space has been partially satisfied through the partnership with MCC Longview on access to their Cultural Arts Center.

Downtown Master Plan Task Force Report (2015)

A citizens committee reviewed previous plans and studies on the future of Lee's Summit and developed a list of concepts for 2015 and beyond. The five key recommendations were:

- * Expand the definition of downtown Lee's Summit and adjust zoning accordingly.
- * Improve downtown parking with better signage and education, also the possible addition of structure parking.
- * Build a permanent year-round structure for the farmers market
- * Motivate downtown residential development
- * Improve traffic corridors into and out of the downtown

Council approved the report in the summer of 2015 and is now organizing an implementation group to advance to plan over the coming months. Though the arts and culture are not specifically referenced in the five recommendations, staff believes that the further development of arts and culture in downtown Lee's Summit is integral to the overall plan.

5. The Arts in Lee's Summit

Lee's Summit Parks and Recreation Board: The City of Lee's Summit has developed cultural programs, activities and facilities over many years as a part of the Parks and Recreation Department. There are programs and activities for youth, adults and seniors, from art and dance classes to photography workshops and dulcimer lessons. The Department manages the Gamber Community Center, the Harris Park Community Center and the Legacy Park Community Center. Those facilities all include flexible spaces that can accommodate cultural programs and activities. The Department will also be operating the Legacy Park Amphitheater when it re-opens. In addition, there are public art pieces placed and maintained by the Department both in parks and community centers. Examples include ten sculptures (in various parks) and visual art pieces in public art galleries located in City Hall, Legacy Park Community Center and Gamber Community Center.

The Department has significant resources and competent professional staff, but the arts and culture represent only one small part of what they do. And because of their

perspective as programmers and facility managers, their focus is on arts programs, special cultural arts events and access to facilities, as opposed to some of the broader economic and community development issues that we might address as cultural planners.

The Historical Society of Lee's Summit, active since 1974, has now been given the old WPA Post Office in downtown Lee's Summit, re-opening the space with permanent exhibits in March 2015. Those improvements were funded by the 2013 Cultural Arts Bond. The group is in a strong position to become a cultural anchor and destination for the downtown.

Summit Theatre Group: Lee's Summit's own community theatre organization is doing well, with three of its five annual productions now presented at the MCC Longview Cultural Center. The group is making progress in its efforts to attract a more diverse set of members and audiences, and is looking forward to performing at Legacy Park.

The Lee's Summit Symphony: The mission of the Lee's Summit Symphony is to enhance the local cultural experience by providing high-quality, accessible live performances that inspire, educate and entertain. Musicians come from around the region and most performances are held at Lee's Summit High School. The group is well supported locally and is a source of community pride.

Summit Art: This is a newer local nonprofit resident in the Got Art Gallery that promotes the visual arts in and for the community. Their major event is the annual Arts Festival in October, during which professional artists, amateurs and students from the community are able to publicly display their work.

The Lee's Summit Arts Council: The City established the Arts Council in 2002 as a standing committee appointed by City Council and staffed by the City Administration Department to support the development of the arts and culture in Lee's Summit. In 2008, Lee's Summit Parks and Rec Board was asked to manage the Arts Council via an internal contract based on all departmental expenses covered by the City. The stated function of the Council (per their 2015 Work Plan) is to "act as a clearinghouse for information on opportunities for the arts existing in the community; establish goals for increasing focus on exposure to the Arts (education, programs, festivals, etc.); and, organize and coordinate with agencies or independently for Arts programming".

The Council has a small budget (\$77,500 in 2015), sixty-eight percent of which goes to the Parks and Recreation Department to pay for .6 FTE's to provide staff support for the Council. Most of the balance is re-granted to local arts organizations such as the Theatre, Symphony and Summit Arts.

There are divergent opinions in the community about the purpose and impacts of the Arts Council. Several of our interviewees suggested that the group is largely ineffective for reasons ranging from their limited resources, the lack of full-time staff, the conflict of interests of those involved, the potential for political interference with their work, and a lack of clarity on the part of Council members as to what they should do. Having said that, the Arts Council’s 2015 Work Plan includes the following reasonable elements:

1. Advocate for the Arts, including a visible and sustainable public arts plan and pushing for a role in Sesquicentennial planning.
2. Develop the arts with the update of the cultural plan, reorganizing the Council’s work plan and goals, and restructuring subcommittees.
3. Promote the arts through social media, Lee’s Summit Journal articles and a communications strategy around the Arts Council.
4. Strengthen the arts with more secure funding for staff to advance Arts Council initiatives.

6. Regional Benchmarking and Best Practices

In order to benchmark the City’s programming and resources for arts and culture, we have worked with project leadership to identify three communities to compare to Lee’s Summit. These communities were selected based on their size and/or close proximity to Kansas City and include Independence (MO), Overland Park (KS), and Shawnee (KS).

Benchmarking: Market Characteristics				
	Lee's Summit, MO	Independence, MO	Overland Park, KS	Shawnee, KS
Local Market Size	95,240	117,494	184,525	64,599
Local % Population Hispanic	4.0%	7.7%	6.3%	7.5%
Local % Population Black/African Am.	8.7%	5.6%	4.3%	5.3%
Local Median Income	\$69,768	\$44,038	\$76,519	\$74,992

Our analysis began with an overview of the city arts infrastructure in each community. In all four communities, the city’s Parks and Recreation Department is either totally or partially responsible for city-sponsored arts and cultural programming. In Independence, responsibility is shared with the Mayor’s Advisory Commission on the Visual Arts, a task force charged with “plan[ning], promot[ing], and encourag[ing] public awareness of, accessibility to, participation in, and support for the artistic and cultural development of the city”; and, in Overland Park, the Arts and Recreation Foundation of Overland Park was incorporated by the city to aid in the “development, operation and promotion of the City’s Parks and Recreation Department, and to provide support,

facilities, equipment and financial assistance to the operations, facilities, staff and programs of the Department”.

Within each community’s Parks and Recreation Department, however, the arts are overseen by various entities, as can be seen in the chart below (Benchmarking: City Arts Infrastructure). Although these entities are quite different, it is important to highlight the similarities in their structure (specifically, members appointed by either a mayor or city council). Notably, Lee’s Summit’s Arts Council is the only benchmarked entity with no term limits. In all other overseeing bodies, member terms are limited to one, two, or three years.

Of the communities benchmarked, only Lee’s Summit and Overland Park have invested in some form of arts and cultural planning. The plans undertaken by Lee’s Summit have been expounded on above. In Overland Park, cultural planning efforts have largely focused on public art, resulting in a Public Art Master Plan (2002) and Public Art Master Plan Update (2009). The absence of cultural planning in the remaining two communities could be the result of their proximity to Kansas City and its work developing a cultural plan for the Kansas City region (OneArtsKC).

Benchmarking: City Arts Infrastructure				
	Lee’s Summit, MO	Independence, MO	Overland Park, KS*	Shawnee, KS*
Department	Parks and Recreation	Divided between Parks and Recreation and the Mayor’s Advisory Commission on the Visual Arts	Divided between Parks and Recreation Department and Arts and Recreation Foundation	Parks and Recreation
Arts Oversight	Arts Council	Parks and Recreation: Park Commission	Parks and Recreation: Citizens Advisory Council on Parks and Recreation	Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
Structure	12 members appointed by Mayor w/City Council approval. An application process with renewable three-year terms and unlimited appointments	7 member committee w/2 advisors, created by City Council, applications accepted; Advisory Commission: 7 members serving 1, 2, and 3-year terms	Parks and Recreation: 10 members appointed by mayor and confirmed by Governing Body, 2-year terms; Arts and Recreation: 9 members appointed by president and confirmed by City, serve 1, 2, and 3-year terms	9 members (2 from each ward and one at-large) submitted by Councilmembers and appointed by Mayor, 3-year terms
Cultural Plans	Historic Preservation Plan (2002), Cultural Arts Plan (2007), Cultural Facilities Master Plan (2012), Cultural Arts Plan Update (2016)	-	Public Art Master Plan (2002), Public Art Master Plan Update (2009)	-

*Falls within the jurisdiction of the Arts Council of Johnson County

The second portion of our research considered how each city supports the arts via city-operated facilities, funding, and cultural offerings. Looking first at facilities, we can see that all four cities have community centers that are activated with arts programs and that Lee’s Summit is one of only two communities with a city-operated outdoor performance space. Overall, City of Lee’s Summit supports fewer facilities than its surrounding communities (with the exception of Shawnee).

Benchmarking: City-Operated Cultural Facilities or Facilities with Arts Programming				
	Lee's Summit, MO	Independence, MO	Overland Park, KS	Shawnee, KS
Outdoor Performing Arts	✓✓	✓		
Community Center	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓
Other Government Facility	✓		✓✓	
Historical Facility/Complex	✓	✓	✓	✓

Across the board, the cities benchmarked in this exercise provide very little support to artists and arts organizations in the form of grants. In fact, Lee’s Summit is the only city to offer funding for Programming/Operations. Two grants are available: an annual grant for requests up \$1,000 and a mini-grant for requests up to \$500. Mini-grants are reviewed by the Arts Council monthly.

Benchmarking: City Granting Opportunities for Artists + Arts Organizations				
	Lee's Summit, MO	Independence, MO	Overland Park, KS	Shawnee, KS
Granting				
College Arts Scholarships				
In-Kind Contributions (Space, Services, etc.)				
Programming/Operations	✓			

Finally, the last chart shows the type of cultural offerings provided by the city, followed by the total number of city offerings. At 96, Shawnee provides the most activities; at 36, Lee’s Summit provides the least. Looking at the data more closely, however, we find that, in Independence, 20 of the 38 activities offered are one-day events (as opposed to educational programs or performances) and that the majority of programs offered in Overland Park are for adults. In Lee’s Summit, the biggest programming gaps are found in theatre, museum exhibitions, multi-day festivals, and, somewhat surprisingly, youth educational programs (in all disciplines, except theatre, for which there is no programming, there are more educational opportunities for adults than children).

Benchmarking: City Offerings				
	Lee's Summit, MO	Independence, MO	Overland Park, KS	Shawnee, KS
Theatre				
Education: Youth	✓			✓
Education: Adult	✓			
Performances	✓	✓	✓	
Music				
Education: Youth				
Education: Adult	✓			
Performances	✓		✓	✓
Dance				
Education: Youth	✓			✓
Education: Adult	✓	✓		✓
Performances				
Visual Arts				
Education: Youth	✓			✓
Education: Adult	✓	✓	✓	✓
Exhibition	✓	✓	✓	✓
Public Art	✓		✓	
Museum				
Exhibition + Craft Show		✓		
Festivals (2+ days)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Events (1 day)	✓	✓	✓	✓

In conclusion, the City of Lee’s Summit’s support for the arts is consistent with that of neighboring communities. There is, however, room for improvement, particularly in regards to accessible arts spaces, grants and funding for the arts, and youth education programs.

7. A vision for the arts in Lee’s Summit

The most important question for the City of Lee’s Summit is why investing in the arts and culture is a good use of taxpayers money and a good thing for the community. While those who are active supporters of the arts might quickly embrace the idea, most adults (and thus most voters and taxpayers) are not active attenders of arts events. This suggests that a decision to invest in the arts must be based on a broader set of goals and objectives that can prove that investing in the arts doesn’t just make the arts stronger – it makes the community stronger.

Here then are the components of that vision that should drive investments in the arts and culture in Lee’s Summit.

1. Investments in the arts and culture should be a key part of building a brand and identity for Lee’s Summit as a place where people want to live and visit.
2. Investments should drive additional economic activity in Lee’s Summit, supporting existing businesses, creating jobs, and recruiting additional businesses to the community.

3. Investments in the arts and culture should support the further development of downtown Lee's Summit by enhancing the cultural district and then a cultural corridor that extends from MCC Longview to Legacy Park.
4. Investments in the arts and culture should embrace and celebrate the increasing diversity of the community, encouraging recent arrivals to share their creativity and cultural heritage in the community.
5. Investments in the arts and culture should have a strong educational focus, helping Lee's Summit to maintain its excellent reputation as a place with great schools and excellent opportunities for life-long learning.
6. And finally, investments in the arts should enhance the quality of life of Lee's Summit residents, providing opportunities to attend, learn and participate in the arts to people of all ages and backgrounds.

8. Where to invest in the arts in Lee's Summit

Having confirmed why to invest, we can now move on to the question of how and where to invest.

Public art

Our interviews in the community suggest that there is still widespread support for public art in Lee's Summit, and the experience of other cities has been very positive. Accordingly, we would urge the City to formalize a public art program.

The first step should be the engagement of specialists to develop a public art strategy including funding options, best practices, and then a recommended model for public art driven by the progress of the public sector capital projects in Lee's Summit.

We would also recommend the development of policy and tools related to public art in existing and new private sector projects, considering how the city could use various tools and incentives to encourage the inclusion of public art in private sector developments.

Our research on best practices in the world of public art suggests that there is much to be done in the area of how public art and the area around it can be programmed and animated. Public art should not be considered simply as pieces of sculpture placed in public spaces, but rather as an opportunity to engage the community in something alive and relevant. Therefore, City staff should consider how existing or new public arts projects and programs might be animated with events and other programs.

Support of Arts Organizations

Lee's Summit is home to several key groups that define the community and provide a high quality of life for those who live there. It is important that the City maintains support for those groups in order that they continue to deliver a high level of service to residents and visitors. This means additional financial support for key groups, but also access to facilities and services (like communications and marketing support).

One adjustment we would recommend is that support for the groups should be subject to their ability to demonstrate how their work aligns with the broader goals of the community. And we would also encourage the development of some financial incentives that encourages greater partnering and collaborations in the community.

The City should also support and encourage the development of new programs and groups through subsidized access to facilities, small grants and inclusion in community festivals and events. Here, the challenge is finding these artists and groups and helping them gain the skills and confidence to bring their work out into the community.

Festivals and Events

The City of Lee's Summit has already proven to be an effective producer of festivals and events. We would propose additional investments in people, places, equipment and infrastructure that can host more events, building a reputation for Lee's Summit as an excellent host attracting audiences from throughout the region. The completion of Legacy Park Amphitheatre will support this effort, as will plans for a better downtown location for special events.

Facilities

We would offer several recommendations related to the development and use of facilities.

Access to City Facilities & Schools: First of all, we would encourage the development of new policy and practices that encourages more cultural use of existing City facilities. This will require additional human resources and training of staff on how to support and promote those activities in City facilities, as well as some additional equipment to support small performances and exhibits. There should be a parallel effort to help groups use parks and public spaces for arts and cultural events by streamlining the process by which groups gain access and the proper permitting for their programs and events. And finally, there should be another attempt to improve access to school facilities.

Outdoor Performance and Festival Space: This initiative, which was approved by the voters in 2013 as a part of the Cultural Arts Bond remains a great idea, and is an important project for Lee’s Summit, particularly in support of the festivals and events recommendation above.

The Performing Arts Center: The long-term plan for a larger performance hall is still a good idea. In our minds, the best way to proceed would be to partner with MCC Longview on the development of that larger hall on their campus. They could develop the hall and operate it in conjunction with their other cultural arts facilities. The City and private sector could contribute capital to the project in exchange for guaranteed access to facilities for City programs and local arts organizations. This is a model for performing arts facility development that has been effective in many other communities, and one which should be considered as the way to move forward in Lee’s Summit.

9. How to support and fund the arts in Lee’s Summit

Finally, we come to the question of how the City of Lee’s Summit should support and fund arts and culture in and for the community.

Direct City Support

The development of the arts in Lee’s Summit is largely due to the efforts of the Parks & Recreation Department and their provision of programs, facilities and staff support to the sector. Now, given our suggestion that investments in the arts need be more closely aligned with core City goals, we would suggest as follows:

- A. The City should hire a cultural arts staff-person reporting to the City Manager and working closely with City Council and the Arts Council to direct the City’s investments in the arts and culture. That staff person should have the ability to work across City departments in order to ensure that investments in the arts and culture can be seen as supporting economic and community development goals.
- B. As per our best practices work, there are different approaches that cities can take to directly support the arts. Sometimes there is an Office of Cultural Affairs reporting to the City Manager. Other times, the function is managed by Parks and Rec. And in some cases the arts are supported through an economic development division. In this case, we don’t see that the resources are likely for a full office of cultural affairs. And the priorities we’ve set are neither oriented exclusively to recreation nor to economic development. Hence the recommendation for an individual reporting directly to the City Manager.

- C. The Parks & Recreation Department should still offer arts programs, run community events and festivals and manage community facilities for arts use.
- D. The City should allocate funds to the Arts Council directed to the implementation of this cultural plan and support of local arts groups and programs, but with clearer direction and more accountability as to how those investments should align with City goals.
- E. This operating support should come first through line-item allocations from the City budget. Then, City staff can and should identify and pursue grants from other levels of government as and when appropriate.
- F. The City should include additional investments in cultural facilities in its capital planning, specifically those facilities outlined above.

Partnerships

The City and the Arts Council should help the arts sector build partnerships across other elements of the City, including:

- A. **Schools:** In addition to issues around the level and cost of access to R7 School District facilities, we see more work to be done to connect the arts community to the schools in order to help maintain the high quality arts programs and reputation of the district. The Arts Festival is an excellent example of a program that benefits the schools, the arts community and the City. More programs like this should be developed.
- B. **MCC Longview** has become an excellent partner in recent years, providing access to the Cultural Arts Center and producing events (like the Literary Festival) that are of interest to the community. More such partnerships are possible, the result of either a top-down approach (City and College leaders developing plans) or a bottom-up approach, in which students, faculty, artists, local businesses and other dream something up and make it happen.
- C. **Libraries:** This is a sector in the midst of tremendous change, as libraries are forced to re-invent themselves from book depositories to places of information sharing and learning. There is a greater interest in active programs, maker-spaces, digital media and a range of other creative activities, all of which represent opportunities for artists and arts organizations to get involved.

- D. Healthcare sector:** Another sector in the midst of great change is the health-care sector, and one of the elements of that is the exploration of the relationship between the arts and healing, whether that means teaching dance to Parkinson’s patients, poetry readings for PTSD sufferers or simply having paintings and music present in a place of physical and emotional distress. There are several significant healthcare providers present in Lee’s Summit, and opportunities to begin discussions with each of them should be pursued.

Private Sector Support

The arts have grown and developed in Lee’s Summit largely because of the leadership and strong support of the Parks and Recreation Department and the rest of City government. Now is the time to pursue greater engagement and support from the private sector in the following ways:

- A. Sponsorship training programs for local arts groups and promoters designed to spark new business sponsorship of arts and culture and to build capacity in the cultural sector. This has been an area of increasing frustration for the City and arts groups in recent years, but sponsorship can and should work as a means of bringing greater support to the arts. The training needs to be directed to key local arts groups and community leaders who are committed to the arts such that they can improve their articulation of a value proposition to local businesses.
- B. Success in the development of new sponsorships will also be helped by the development of a new awards program that honors corporations, local businesses and individuals that support the arts.
- C. The arts organizations now active in the City of Lee’s Summit would benefit greatly from training and support relative to their development of private sector support. We would recommend a cultural summit to bring all of those groups together for training and a facilitated discussion on how to build a more collaborative approach to financial sustainability.
- D. Finally, consideration should be given to a mentoring program whereby existing arts supporters, whether businesses or individuals, take on the role of mentors, working with younger funders just starting out as philanthropists. Here again we see the City playing a role as facilitator and convener, working closely with the Arts Council.

- E. The intention with all of these initiatives is to increase private sector support for the arts in Lee's Summit with new money from individuals, corporations and foundations.

The Arts Council

As stated above, we see an important role for the Arts Council in the implementation of the Cultural Plan Update and the further advancement of the arts in Lee's Summit. In another sense, we also see the Arts Council as the bridge between the City and the private sector as it relates to the arts and culture. Following are recommendations on the role of the Arts Council and how they should be organized.

- A. The Arts Council should be the group responsible for the adoption and implementation of the Cultural Plan update, together with all of these recommendations.
- B. The Arts Council should be the group through which direct financial support from the City is distributed. But here we would suggest that the Arts Council develop and advance new funding criteria for the City's Cultural Grant Program, leading to increased support for key organizations able to prove their alignment with the City's goals. As noted above, there should also be incentives for groups undertaking collaborative programs and work with partners outside the arts.
- C. In its role as bridge to the private sector, the arts council should be helping to advance new partnerships, developing those programs aimed at increasing private sector support.
- D. The Arts Council can also play an important role as communicator, helping to improve the level and quality of communications within the arts community, and also promoting the arts in Lee's Summit to the wider community with calendars, newsletters, an online presence and other tools.

In order to provide these services to the community, we would propose a series of structural adjustments to the Arts Council and how it is organized:

- A. First of all, the size of the Arts Council should be increased (from twelve to up to eighteen members over the next five years) in order to build a larger group representing a broader set of skills and interests in the community. Members of the Arts Council need not be artists or experts in the arts, but they should have some understanding of the role and potential impact of the arts on communities.

- B. There should be term limits on how long citizens can and should serve on the Arts Council in order to bring new energy and fresh ideas to the group.
- C. There should be strict limitations on having arts organizations directly represented on the Arts Council. Lee's Summit is still a small community where everyone wears many hats, but a situation where it is perceived that the Arts Council is simply handing out grants to its own members must be avoided.
- D. Individuals should be nominated to join the Arts Council by the Mayor and members of City Council, but not as representatives of individual Council members nor with any direct reporting relationship to those individuals.
- E. There should be a closer operating relationship between the Arts Council and City Council. The key event should be the presentation of an annual report to City Council, made concurrent with a presentation on plans for the coming year and a request for funding to support those efforts. There should also be bi-monthly presentations to City Council by their liaison on the Arts Council. For all of these reports and presentations, the focus must be on how investments in the arts and culture are aligned with the broader goals for the community in areas such as downtown development, economic development and other aspects of community development.
- F. In the long-term, it may be reasonable to consider spinning off the Arts Council to become an independent body with financial support from both the public and private sector. But for the time being, we believe that direct City control of the Arts Council is appropriate as a means to ensure that their work is focused on groups, partnerships and programs that provide direct benefits back to the City.
- G. It may also be appropriate in the long-term to search for a dedicated funding source for the Arts Council and its work, such as a portion of a sales or bed tax. But for the time being the annual reporting and line item budget request is preferred given the need for a more hands-on approach to direct their energies.
- H. For the coming budget year, we would propose that City Council consider funding a full-time arts and culture staff person and related infrastructure, plus another \$30,000 to go to the Arts Council as funds for re-granting. There should also be an indication that funding for the Arts Council can and should increase over time, subject to the Arts Council's ability to invest those funds in ways that advance the core goals of the community, and their ability to demonstrate those positive impacts.

10. Implementation

We have developed the following matrix in consultation with City Staff, showing how additional human and financial resources might be deployed to implement the recommendations of the plan.

Along the left we show all of the recommended tasks and initiatives described in the previous two chapters. Then we show the share of a new person required to implement those recommendations as well as the additional financial resources required for that task.

For example, we are suggesting that in 2018, 10% of the new staffer’s time, plus \$10,000, will be spent identifying and organizing new spaces, people, equipment and other infrastructure with which to increase the production of City-sponsored cultural events.

Lee's Summit Cultural Plan Update	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	Staff (FTE equiv)	Direct Costs	Staff	Direct Costs	Staff	Direct Costs	Staff	Direct Costs	Staff	Direct Costs
Implementation Timing and Cost										
Arts Council structural adjustments	0.1									
Staff person funded and hired (sal. & bens)		\$58,500		\$60,548		\$62,667		\$64,860		\$67,130
Partnerships pursued	0.1		0.1				0.1		0.1	
Development of public art strategy	0.1									
New Arts Council funding criteria in place	0.1									
Direct support for local arts groups	0.1	\$30,000	0.1	\$30,600	0.1	\$31,212	0.1	\$31,836	0.1	\$32,473
Improved facility access			0.1							
Sponsorship training program			0.1	\$2,500						
Implementation of public art strategy			0.1	\$10,000						
Pursuit of private and ed. sector partners					0.1		0.1			
Fundraising training, awards and mentorship					0.1	\$10,000		\$5,000		\$5,100
Development of new programs and groups					0.1	\$10,000		\$10,200		\$10,404
Increased event production resources					0.1	\$10,000		\$10,200		\$10,404
Search for dedicated funding stream							0.2		0.1	
Plans for new Performing Arts Center									0.1	\$25,000
Spin-off the Arts Council into 501c3.									0.1	
Staffing	0.5		0.5		0.5		0.5		0.5	
Direct Costs		\$88,500		\$103,648		\$123,879		\$122,096		\$150,511

Note that we are estimating the total cost of the new cultural staffer (salary and benefits escalating each year), but noting that one half of that person’s time will be taken up by existing initiatives, including support of the Arts Council.