

Cultural Facilities

Goals

The City will:

- Foster the development of a performing arts school.
- Foster the development of an independent cultural arts center that is accessible by highway and transit.
- Foster the development of satellite cultural arts centers.
- Foster international cultural exchanges.



Overview

The City's cultural and artistic endeavors are coordinated under the Chesapeake Fine Arts Commission. The Fine Arts Commission serves as a vehicle for educating the public about the significance of the arts. The Commission also ensures that the arts are accessible to citizens and are reflective of the City's ethnically and socially diverse constituencies. The Commission operates under the auspices of the Department of Economic Development because of perceived congruencies in their respective roles relating to improving economic, social, and cultural opportunities in the City. These objectives lead to improved overall quality of life and to the perceived attractiveness of the City as a place to live, work, and play.

As the City continues to grow and mature, the presence of cultural facilities/amenities will become increasingly important. The 2026 Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement affirms this, stating that "As the City continues to grow, it will be a progressive community of vibrant residential and commercial neighborhoods...each with their own identity yet interconnected culturally, economically, politically, and physically." International cultural exchanges between the City and other communities around the world have been occurring for a number of years and should continue. These exchanges are good for facilitating awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity and also augment economic development efforts.

As the City looks to the future in providing adequate cultural facilities that contribute to the overall quality of life, certain planning standards should be kept in mind. According to the Development Impact Assessment Handbook published by the Urban Land Institute, there should be 23.6 full-time municipal employees devoted to health/welfare/recreation/culture activities for municipalities between 200,000-299,000. Chesapeake's projected population in 2026 will be nearly 265,000.

Issue One: Need for Cultural Facilities

The typical suburban-style development pattern that has characterized growth in Chesapeake over the past several decades has not been conducive to the maintenance and enhancement of cultural facilities in the City. The ability to interact on a human scale is important to the social fabric of a community. As Chesapeake matures, it should continue to view itself as not just a bedroom community, but as a city in its own right, complete with cultural and artistic diversity. Critical to this transition is the presence of accessible public gathering places, as well as recreational and leisure activities that give people opportunities to congregate.

Future land use planning decisions and development review processes should, to the maximum extent feasible, promote the expansion of cultural facilities throughout the City.

Strategies:

- A variety of funding options should be explored for the provision of cultural facilities.
- Cultural diversity could be fostered by devoting a segment of the City to creating specialty/ethnic restaurants and eateries, with outdoor dining as appropriate.
- Art and culture can be a vital tool to address the needs of these children, by providing them with outlets to express themselves (e.g. public murals), thereby building self-esteem and pride in their community.
- The City may consider accepting cultural facilities or sites or funding for such facilities that may be proffered by developers.

Issue Two: Need for Performing Arts Center in Chesapeake

The City does not have a dedicated performing arts/cultural center to serve Chesapeake residents. A small to mid-size performing arts/cultural center would be a tremendous asset for the City, both from a quality of life standpoint and for economic development purposes.

The City will continue to study the feasibility of establishing a performing arts/cultural center in Chesapeake, including building public support and identifying proposed funding mechanisms.

Strategies:

- The City should continue the pursuit of the development of an Arts Education Center. A study to assess the feasibility of constructing an arts performance center, to research locations, and to provide conceptual drawings has been initiated.

- Satellite performing arts centers should be considered for other areas of the City. These venues would primarily host community-based programs.
- Opportunities to co-locate cultural facilities with other facilities should be considered as a means of reducing overall costs. For example, opportunities to combine the City's cable channel, WCTV-48 with the performing arts facility should be explored.

Issue Three: Provision for Public Art

Chesapeake suffers from a shortage of public art in its public spaces, office buildings, parks and other community venues. More public art in parks, public spaces, road medians, and in front of public buildings would contribute to the City's cultural identity.

The City will strive to expand the use of public art in a variety of settings throughout Chesapeake, utilizing public, private, and public/private mechanisms.

Strategies:

- The City should explore the feasibility of placing thematic public art at strategic locations around Chesapeake, which could contribute to a sense of unity and common community. Public art can and should be promoted in all areas of the City, not just urban areas.

