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# DC

## CULTURAL

# PLAN

An aerial photograph of a large, diverse crowd of people at an outdoor event. The ground is painted in vibrant shades of pink and blue. People are seen walking, talking, and interacting. In the background, there's a white canopy tent and a black SUV parked on a street. The overall atmosphere is lively and community-oriented.

# ABOUT THIS PLAN

The Cultural Plan was initiated by the DC Council through the Cultural Plan for the District Act of 2015, which directed the DC Office of Planning to develop the Plan in consultation with the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities and the DC Office of Cable Television, Film, Music and Entertainment with support from an interdisciplinary consulting team. Throughout the planning process, more than 1,500 community members and cultural stakeholders provided input that informed the Plan's strategies and recommendations. The Cultural Plan establishes a framework to inclusively grow the District's cultural community informed by the Office of Planning's experience in community development, land use, systems planning, public facilities and infrastructure. This Plan's implementation will be guided by the multi-sector Implementation Steering Committee required by the Cultural Plan for the District Act of 2015. The Mayor will work in collaboration with the Steering Committee to develop partnerships and initiatives to realize the Plan's vision for building cultural equity.

# LETTER FROM OUR MAYOR

Dear Washingtonians,

As Mayor of Washington DC, I am pleased to share with you our first-ever Cultural Plan, highlighting our many investments with an acute focus on arts, heritage, and innovation. Individually, these areas are all important to the overall health of our nation's capital, but collectively, they are critical to our work to create a fair shot for all Washingtonians.

Our cultural economy today supports more than 150,000 jobs across all eight wards generating \$12.4 billion in wages. And today, ranging from programs to facilities and infrastructure, DC makes some of the nation's largest per capita public sector cultural investments. This Plan's recommendations will take this further, by maximizing the impact from these investments and forging stronger connections between artists and existing programs such as affordable housing and small and local business development.

My Administration has worked to ensure that DC's local economy remains one of the strongest in the nation. Washington, DC has changed in many ways since I grew up in North Michigan Park, but one thing that has not changed is the creativity of our residents! From go-go and street art to murals and jazz, we know that DC has always been – and will always be – a leader in the arts.

As part of our strategy surrounding arts and our cultural economy, we formed 202Creates, a citywide effort showcasing Washington, DC's diverse and vibrant creative community. Through a month-long array of events each September, 202Creates promotes the artists, tastemakers, and entrepreneurs who contribute to our thriving creative industries throughout the year. 202Creates also features important conversations with innovators, residents, and businesses with the goal of furthering engagement between government and the creative community.

Shaped by conversations with more than fifteen-hundred residents, cultural creators and consumers, our Cultural Plan lays out a vision and recommendations on how the government and its partners can build upon, strengthen, and invest in the people, places, communities, and ideas that define culture within DC. It also reinforces our position as a national cultural policy leader among cities such as New York and Chicago.

Throughout the strategy development process of this Plan, we asked not only what the DC government could do to advance culture here, but what we can do together – government, artists and cultural entrepreneurs, residents, and community institutions to further that goal as well. And we did this through an innovative engagement approach that emphasized public dialogue between stakeholders and decision-makers.

I want to thank the many individuals, community leaders and organizations who shared their expertise and ideas to help create this Cultural Plan. Together, we will strengthen DC culture and the ongoing discussions in our communities to provide a path forward for inclusive cultural innovation.

I am #DCProud to state that the future of DC's culture is bright!



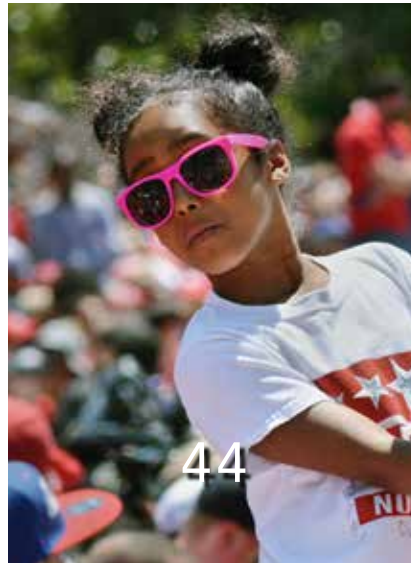
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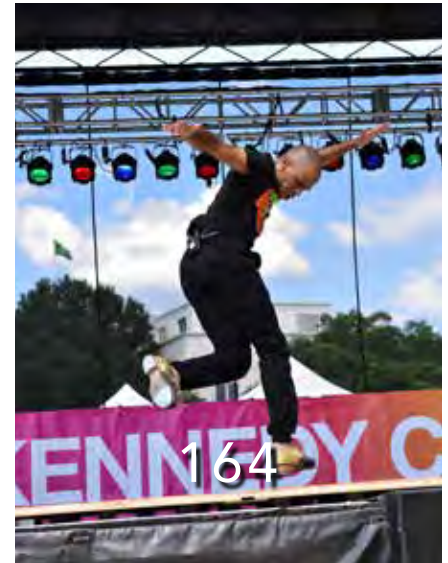
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## CULTURE BRINGS US TOGETHER

" [The Culture Plan] lays out a vision and recommendations on how the government and its partners can build upon, strengthen, and invest in the people, places, communities, and ideas that define culture within DC."

- *Mayor Muriel Bowser*

The District's culture is the city's collective soul – it reflects individuality, heritage, interests and aspirations. It is what makes us different and brings us together. The composition of cultural practices from all residents and cultural organizations is Washington, DC culture.

DC's culture is go-go and the Smithsonian; marching bands and gospel choirs; visual arts and language arts; heritage and counter culture. Over the past decade, the District has experienced profound changes that have altered the city's cultural geography and practice. This Plan is a guide for culture to grow diversely, inclusively and accessibly with firm foundations in heritage.

The Cultural Plan strengthens arts, humanities, culture and heritage in neighborhoods across the city by increasing cultural participation, supporting artistic skill development, stimulating cultural production and informing decision-making. It lays out a vision and recommendations on how the government and its partners can build upon, strengthen and invest in the people, places, communities and ideas that define culture within the nation's capital.

This Plan introduces innovative models built on emerging best practices to empower creators and cultural organizations with approaches to

thrive in a growing and increasingly high-value city. It strengthens the cultural community by creating new resources and programs to help build cultural organizations that succeed with new funding models that reach more consumers. It also supports and expands social, informal and formal cultural space across the city. The Plan lays out programmatic alignments that better connect and integrate support resources for cultural organizations in the short-term, while introducing innovative programs that will help cultural creators transition to new business models in the mid-term.

Washington, DC has evolved from a low-value to a high-value real estate market, altering cultural geography and cultural business models in the process. Cultural geography is the distribution of cultural facilities serving cultural activities throughout the city. Business models are the revenue and customer relationships that define the shape and function of each cultural organization. These changes have

# INVESTING IN SOCIAL INNOVATION



"...my Administration remains focused on preserving our history and culture, ensuring we remain diverse and inclusive, and giving more Washingtonians the opportunity to participate in our city's prosperity. "

-Mayor Muriel Bowser



increased the costs for cultural creators and organizations, including the need for higher wages that keep up with the cost of living and increased costs for space in the competitive real estate market. Cultural equity has been impacted as many creators and organizations have difficulty securing sufficient funding from limited sources.

This Plan builds on the District government's experience catalyzing innovation in fields, such as affordable housing, environmental protection and public facilities. The Plan has a three-part catalytic framework that includes: shared stewardship, organizational innovation and leveraged funding that will enable cultural organizations to evolve and thrive as the District continues growing. These approaches support sustainable cultural practices that reflect the city's diversity by transforming access to cultural financing; increasing access to cultural production and presentation spaces; and increasing connections to cultural consumers.

This is an aspirational plan that will inform agency work, partnership approaches and foundational legal documents, such as the Comprehensive Plan.

**Shared Stewardship**—all residents and cultural stakeholders will collaboratively support the city's culture with regular investments of time and resources.

Although many stakeholders already contribute, this Plan helps focus and grow cultural investments by building new partnerships and leveraging new resources.

The District government has invested billions of dollars in public facilities with cultural uses including schools, libraries and recreation centers. Additionally, annual programmatic funding for technical assistance, grants and promotion supports a wide range of creators, spaces and consumers. Furthermore, on a case by case basis, the District has also provided seed funding that helped renovate and establish cultural spaces across the city including THEARC and Lincoln Theatre. All of these investments are supported by equity building programs, including affordable housing, healthcare and business development that empower all residents within the cultural sector and beyond.

Nongovernmental cultural stakeholders have provided free and low-cost space in addition to financial support. Residents share their commitment to creators through a wide range of events including the Anacostia River Festival. By expanding cultural stewardship, the city's cultural practices will become increasingly representative of all Washingtonians, their heritage and traditions.





The private sector has also contributed to shared stewardship of the city's culture through support including space and financial assistance for cultural institutions, such as the Woolly Mammoth Theatre. There are numerous opportunities for the private sector to partner with other cultural stakeholders to achieve win-win solutions.

Shared stewardship will elevate the city's cultural traditions that celebrate who Washingtonians are and who we have been while providing fertile ground to develop who we will become.

**Organizational Innovation**—the city and its foundation partners will help cultural organizations refine their business models to be more sustainable through strategic planning, partnership and stronger connections to cultural consumers. These refined business models fill market segments with a high-opportunity for growth between traditional charitable nonprofits and commercial for-profits. To maximize the opportunities of these segments, the District will help nonprofit and for-profit organizations adapt for success

in the growing city.

**Leveraged Funding**—helps all types of cultural organizations develop a base to thrive by making more efficient use of existing funding to access new resources from foundations and impact investors. Impact investing is an emerging practice that directs large amounts of value and mission-oriented funding from pensions, foundations, and private individuals to achieve publicly beneficial impacts. The District will be a leader in developing innovative approaches to cultural funding focused on partnership and impact. These techniques will help the city and its partners to meet demand for increased financial support, cultural space and organizational development while freeing critical resources to support increased cultural programming.

This catalytic framework supports cultural organizations and creators across the city with funding to thrive in a changing environment. The framework is designed to equitably maintain, create and activate social, informal and formal cultural spaces that enable communities to better reflect residents' cultures.



## DC CULTURAL PLAN PRINCIPLES

The Plan will be implemented by a multi-sector, interdisciplinary Steering Committee that will use the following eight principles to shape the investments, programs and initiatives recommended in this Plan.

### AFFIRM

that existing cultural practices, heritage and organizations are important to the District.

### ALIGN

and expand programs that support creators.

### DEPLOY

grant funding strategically to incubate creators.

### CREATE

programs that support innovation in cultural funding.

### FORM

stronger linkages between real estate development and cultural space production.

### PROMOTE

the District's cultural opportunities to local, regional, national and international audiences through partnerships.

### BUILD

partnerships with local and federal cultural organizations that increase cultural access for District residents.

### INVEST

time and resources collectively through shared stewardship with every resident and stakeholder to support and lift-up cultural expressions.



# PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND THEMES

The Office of Planning (OP) collaborated with the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities (CAH) and the Office of Cable Television, Film, Music and Entertainment (OCTFME) with support from an interdisciplinary consulting team to develop this Plan.

Per the Cultural Plan for the District Act of 2015, the DC Council directed OP to develop a comprehensive Cultural Plan for the District to better understand the city's cultural needs and guide cultural investments. The Council's legislation also calls for a multi-sector implementation committee to develop partnerships and initiatives that build on this Plan's recommendations to achieve lasting results.

The planning team analyzed the District's cultural resources, programs and economy. The team then hosted a series of community conversations called INTERMISSION DC where all District residents and cultural stakeholders were invited to take a break from cultural practice and share their experiences, concerns and perspectives. Based on the research and input, the planning team developed three mutually reinforcing strategies for cultural creators, space and consumers that converge with a funding roadmap for both existing and potential programs.

The team developed this Plan with the premise that ***all infrastructure is a stage and every resident is a performer***. This approach recognizes that every resident has cultural practices that take place in social, informal and formal spaces across the city. It is a broadly inclusive notion designed to push beyond conventional ideas of culture by providing platforms that empower creators to express themselves. Linking infrastructure to cultural space is a core aspect of this Plan. It means that culture is for everyone, and it is everywhere.

It means that culture on the sidewalk is just as important as culture in the theater. It means that we all have the freedom to express ourselves and connect with others. Through this approach, the Cultural Plan will help build a broader, more equitable base to support diverse and inclusive culture that provides increased opportunities for District residents including professional creators of all types.

This Plan was grounded by a review and analysis of economic and cultural organization data. The planning team's research shows constrained cultural funding, increasing costs, and changes to cultural practice in the District. An economic impact analysis found that the cultural economy is an important part of the District's economy employing more than 150,000 people, contributing more than \$30 billion annually in spending and more than a \$1.1 billion in taxes. The cultural economy includes people and organizations that produce cultural works directly, businesses that provide goods and services to those organizations, and jobs distributed throughout the broader economy generated by spending from those individuals and businesses in the first two categories.

This Plan has been shaped by a new engagement approach called 'flat' engagement designed to give each stakeholder unstructured open-ended opportunities to discuss their perspectives with decision-makers. 'Flat' engagement infuses this Plan with rich, cross-cutting input from 1,500 stakeholders that shaped its recommendations.

During the engagement process, many creators







"...the District has been inspired to incorporate culture as our fourth sustainability pillar joining social, economic, and environmental sustainability."



conveyed their constant struggle to find space for both production and presentation, while others shared broader issues with higher costs of housing and transportation. However, the concerns reached far beyond transactional issues, with a palpable concern that the District's culture, particularly Black culture, is being lost to growth.

Throughout these conversations, stakeholders shared a wealth of perspectives on the strengths of District culture and opportunities to build on. They identified the District's heritage as a national cultural epicenter, and particularly as a historic center of Black culture. Many suggested emphasizing locally rooted practices such as jazz, go-go, food and fashion. The value of youth engagement and education were also emphasized, including opportunities for increased programming and partnership with schools, libraries and recreation centers. Other attendees highlighted the District's colleges and universities as critical cultural anchors that could facilitate partnerships with both cultural creators and consumers.

Stakeholders prioritized both public space and facilities for many different types of cultural practices because they are affordable and accessible. Many people highlighted opportunities to streamline the application and permitting processes for using these facilities. There was also broad interest in building on innovative models, such as *Monroe Street Market* and the *Brookland Artspace Lofts*, to create cross-subsidized cultural space in new real estate development projects. Some participants encouraged the Plan to support more incubators and cooperatives that help cultural creators develop and refine their cultural practices to become viable businesses.

Throughout the planning process the team held dozens of focus groups with stakeholders including cultural funders, leading federal institutions, local institutions, individual artists, youth and community leaders. These conversations provided deep insight that informed the Plan's strategic approach.

These discussions highlighted that the District is home to some of the world's leading cultural organizations including the Smithsonian Institution, National Gallery of Art and Library of Congress. Each of these organizations engage District residents; some, including the Kennedy Center, are undertaking innovative new approaches that bring their practices into communities while remixing traditional forms of culture with popular culture to increase connection points for cultural consumers.

Balancing cultural and economic needs is one of the most challenging issues of our time. Cities around the world are working to strengthen cultural systems as they experience intense growth pressures. To build on the experiences from peer cities, the District has joined the United Cities and Local Governments Culture 21 initiative, a global network of cities working collaboratively to lift-up culture as a core value. Culture 21 builds on Agenda 21 for Culture, a document that guides cultural development worldwide with a commitment to human rights, cultural diversity, sustainability, participatory democracy and peace. By joining Culture 21, the District is tapping into a wealth of experience from cities around the world that have introduced culture as a core pillar of sustainable development.

Through Culture 21, the District has been inspired to incorporate culture as its fourth sustainability pillar joining social, economic, and environmental sustainability. This approach means the District will develop strategies that harness opportunities that align all four pillars to maximize the benefits and sustainability of economic development. Actively maintaining and growing the District's cultural fabric will help the city grow inclusively by creating new cultural opportunities while reinforcing connections to the city's heritage. These solutions take a little more effort to develop, but they produce particularly durable results.

This Plan marks a pivotal moment in District culture. For decades, culture has filled underutilized spaces and anchored community reinvestment. Now it is time to evolve toward a new model of "culture everywhere" facilitated by shared stewardship, implemented through organizational innovation, and driven by funding innovation. This approach will help maximize the cultural opportunities the District has by creating fluid relationships between cultural infrastructure and the city's growth.



# VISION

## For Cultural Equity

Culture in the District embodies the city's heritage, diversity and opportunity. It is an inclusive reflection of the District, celebrating and interweaving diverse subcultures and counterculture with symbols of democracy. All stakeholders will help create spaces, tools and support for every resident to aspire, test and scale their ideas. All residents will have opportunities to develop and share cultural practices by using public spaces and facilities as platforms for creativity. The Plan increases social, informal and formal cultural spaces, facilitating cycles of creation and consumption that inspire and empower every resident to find their cultural voice and share it. Through this Plan, the District will build upon foundations of heritage and diversity to foster thriving and equitable culture.





# GOALS

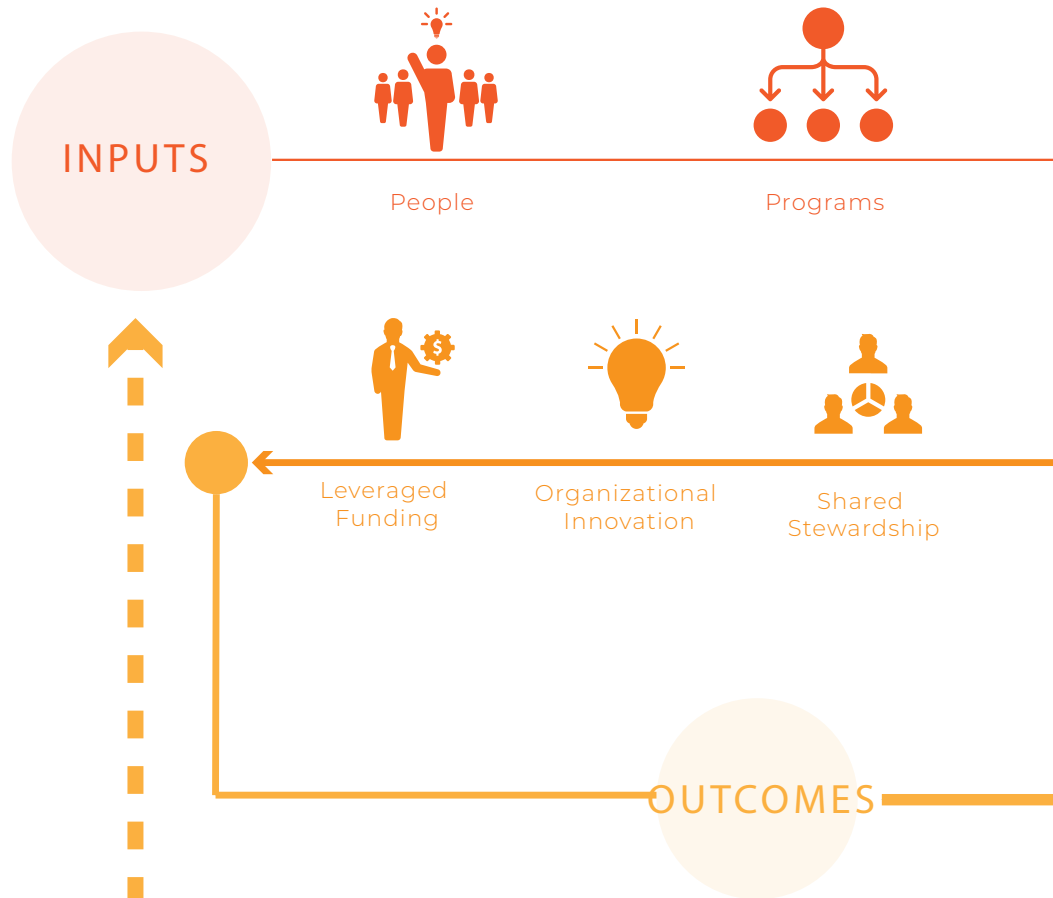
The Cultural Plan lays out a series of strategies and tools to achieve twelve goals. These aspirational goals are the leverage points that the Plan will change to make DC culture more sustainable and inclusive and equitable.

<b>01</b>	<b>CULTURAL CREATORS</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural Creators will develop their practice with the support of aligned educational and technical assistance resources.</li> <li>• Cultural Creators will have increased access to affordable housing.</li> <li>• Cultural Creators will have increased access to affordable production space.</li> <li>• Cultural Creators will be empowered to build careers as creators.</li> </ul>

<b>02</b>	<b>CULTURAL SPACES</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural Space in the public realm and in public facilities will be platforms for expression.</li> <li>• Cultural Space will be more accessible.</li> <li>• Cultural Space will be increased and maintained as community anchors.</li> <li>• Cultural Space creation will be linked to the city's growth.</li> </ul>

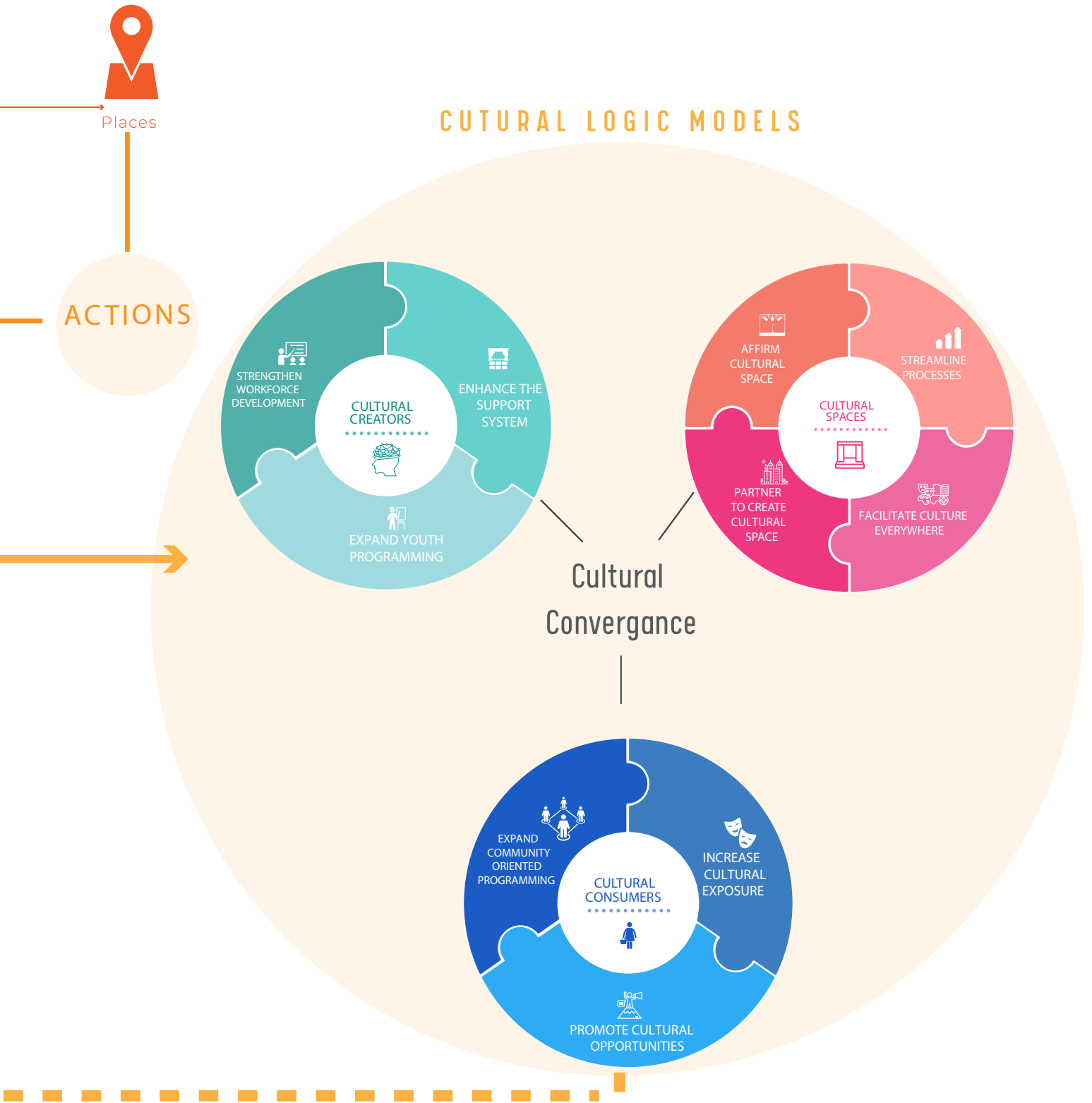
<b>03</b>	<b>CULTURAL CONSUMERS</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural Consumers will have more information about cultural events in the city.</li> <li>• Cultural Consumers will have access to a broader and more diverse range of cultural practices.</li> <li>• Cultural Consumers will have inclusive access to cultural spaces and practices.</li> <li>• Cultural Consumers will experience culture in every community.</li> </ul>

# ASPIRATION FOR CHANGE



The Cultural Plan provides a framework to build cultural equity by leveraging the city’s prosperity. The framework affirms the value of diverse and equitable culture by reflecting on the city’s history and looking ahead to its opportunities. The framework builds on this core value by aligning the people, programs and places that support culture across the city to solidify the city’s foundation for cultural growth. From this foundation, the Cultural Plan’s recommendations facilitate three types of catalytic actions: shared stewardship, organizational innovation, and leveraged funding. These actions are operationalized through the Plan’s strategies for Cultural Creators, Cultural Spaces and Cultural Consumers, which are linked by recommendations for Convergence. Through Convergence, the Cultural Plan’s framework facilitates culture that is equitable and sustainable in a growing city.

# "Build Cultural Equity by Leveraging the City's Prosperity"



Kristina Noell

# STRATEGIC APPROACH



The District will leverage new partnerships to create opportunities for more cultural space in communities across the city. Over time, leveraging new funding sources will enable the District to dedicate more of its cultural funding for programming, which will increase support for diverse cultural practices unique to the city. This Plan establishes a framework for growing District culture to be equitable and sustainable by partnering and increasing the efficiency of the District's investments. The Cultural Plan achieves its goals with three interlocking strategies for cultural creators, cultural spaces and cultural consumers that provide mutually reinforcing recommendations that are tied together by convergence recommendations. This approach increases outlets for cultural producers, entrepreneurs and organizations while creating more opportunities for cultural participation among residents and visitors.

# CULTURAL CREATORS

Cultural creators are the people and organizations that produce cultural expressions. Creators are students in school, hobbyists, artists, cultural entrepreneurs and anyone who creates. The Plan offers opportunities for creators ranging from individuals to large organizations. The strategy aligns and expands opportunities for cultural expressions with a series of pathways for creators to develop their practice. [See 'Appendix of Recommendations' for more information]

## CULTURAL CREATORS Recommendations

### Launch a Center for Cultural Opportunities

- Align cultural creators with small business programs

### Increase access to affordable housing

- Produce a Cultural Creators Affordable Housing Toolkit
- Produce a Cultural Tenants' Toolkit

### Increase youth programming

- Continue strengthening Pre-K-12 arts and culture programs
- Leverage the *Any Given Child* and *Turnaround Arts* Programs
- Increase out-of-school cultural programming for youth

### Support local cultural identity and traditions

- Continue supporting culture through historic preservation

### Support innovation in local culture

- Reinforce *The Labs* at DC Public Library
- Continue to implement and refine DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities grant programs
- Develop innovative operating models for cultural incubators and collective production space

# CULTURAL SPACES

Cultural spaces are the social, informal and formal places where creators engage consumers. Spaces include libraries, recreation centers, school auditoriums, theaters, galleries, bars, coffee shops, parks, street festivals and block parties. The Plan introduces strategies that leverage public and private sector resources to sustain cultural spaces and create new ones. These tools form a continuum of cultural space by maximizing public space and facilities, while generating private space through linkages to real estate development and creating opportunities for cultural organizations to purchase spaces or secure long-term leases. [See 'Appendix of Recommendations' for more information]

## CULTURAL SPACES Recommendations

### Affirm civic identity and community heritage through space

#### Use innovative tools to daylight cultural heritage

- Continue incorporating culture into community planning
- Deploy experimental strategies for infusing culture in public space
- Increase options for cultural expression in public space
- Conduct a review of the city's noise ordinances
- Conduct educational outreach to public space presenters
- Align Comprehensive Plan Policies
- Leverage the Capital Budgeting Process through partnerships

#### Promote a range of cultural spaces throughout the city

- Implement a Festival Streets program
- Leverage District assets to create affordable cultural space
- Develop partnerships for behind the scenes cultural spaces

### Maximize Access to Public Facilities for Cultural Presentation

- Increase evening and weekend access to cultural spaces
- Create a standardized price schedule for public facilities and services
- Reduce insurance and security costs for cultural events

### Streamline permitting for cultural uses

#### Encourage affordable ground floor space for cultural organizations

- Support low-cost, long-term cultural space leases
- Develop cultural space purchase assistance programs
- Encourage temporary cultural use in vacant commercial space
- Encourage cultural space in Planned Unit Developments

### Create a portfolio of cultural incubators and collective production spaces

- Pursue public-private-partnership opportunities to create cultural space
- Establish a cultural space consortium
- Partner with banks to target Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) investments



# CULTURAL CONSUMERS

Cultural consumers are the District's residents and visitors. The strategy offers new ways to promote the city's cultural assets and programming to local and regional residents as well as visitors. These promotions will increase support for creators and cultural space in communities citywide while strengthening the District as a national and international cultural destination. [See 'Appendix of Recommendations' for more information]

## CULTURAL CONSUMERS Recommendations

### Promote cultural events to residents

- Utilize inclusive outreach strategies
- Work with community-facing partners to promote culture
- Collect feedback from cultural consumers

### Market local cultural events to regional residents and national visitors

#### Launch a targeted international campaign promoting the District's local culture

- Partner with embassy public diplomacy programs

#### Expand community-oriented cultural programming

- Expand cultural programming in public facilities to serve diverse consumers
- Leverage universities as cultural anchors

### Increase cultural awareness through a permanent oral history program

- Highlight community heritage

### Build stronger connections between local cultural creators and consumers in federal cultural space

#### Strengthen youth exposure to culture

#### Support art in transit





# CONVERGENCE

The cultural creators, spaces and consumers strategies converge as a system that empowers individuals and organizations. These strategies form synergies to grow the city's cultural community by aligning, leveraging and promoting District culture and creativity to increase equity, diversity and innovation. The convergence recommendations establish links that connect the cultural creators, spaces and consumers strategies to form a cohesive cultural strategy for the entire city. [See 'Appendix of Recommendations' for more information]

## CONVERGENCE Recommendations

### Promote a comprehensive, inclusive and healthy cultural community

- Strengthen the nexus between traditional culture and nontraditional culture
- Strengthen culturally underserved communities
- Support residents' ability to use public space for cultural activity
- Consolidate mural programs
- Encourage shared parking agreements for cultural spaces
- Establish an arts & culture planning position
- Strengthen Boards of Directors

### Form bridges to new cultural models

- Advance a collective contribution-shared stewardship model
- Transform capacity-building
- Develop a heritage business program
- Leverage the District's Public Space Stewardship Guide

### Nurture the link between culture and equitable development

- Partner with Culture 21
- Customize Culture 21 to local context
- Institutionalize culture across the city

# CULTURAL INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK

Currently, the city’s cultural organizations are constrained by funding availability. By implementing this Plan, the District is poised to lead the way toward new organizational and funding approaches that will significantly increase opportunities for cultural growth by adapting innovative approaches from fields such as housing, environmental protection and public facilities. These approaches incorporate emerging international best practices to develop new cultural funding models that will enable more cultural creators and organizations to thrive as the District continues to grow. These funding models will help organizations secure spaces that better meet their needs and offer increased revenue opportunities. Most importantly, they move cultural space within reach for more cultural creators, increasing the equity and diversity of the District’s culture. These models will infuse communities across the city with spaces that

reflect its many communities creating a stronger sense of place in the process. Ultimately, these approaches will increase growth and exposure for cultural practices and cultural communities that have been historically under-resourced.

The Plan’s investment framework identifies catalytic opportunities where the District can use its resources to create cultural opportunities that extend beyond existing markets and programs. The investment framework maximizes unique roles the public sector can take as a major property owner and multi-sector investor while establishing key alignments with other funders and cultural stakeholders. This framework will help create cultural space, increase creator capacity, support cultural programing and facilitate cultural resilience.

The investment framework systematically expands cultural creation with four approaches:



Targeting investment in public facilities to increase access to space for cultural production, presentation and consumption.



Creating a Cultural Facilities Fund to help cultural organizations secure facilities through purchase, renovation and long-term leases.



Implementing new organizational capacity grants funded by multi-sector partnerships to help both nonprofit and for-profit organizations build capacity for adopting new cultural funding models.



Creating a Cultural Innovation and Entrepreneurship Revolving Loan Fund to help cultural organizations develop new practices and scale-up proven concepts.





# SOCIAL IMPACT INVESTING

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Social impact investing is investment in organizations and funds to generate measurable and beneficial social impact alongside a financial return. Social Impact Investment is a funding model that offers scalable financial resources to nonprofit and for-profit companies that produce measurable social impact while utilizing high standards of financial planning and management.



## "...all infrastructure is a stage and every resident is a performer..."

This Plan strengthens cultural uses of the city's community facilities with targeted investments and partnerships to increase their utilization for cultural activities. The District's networks of libraries, recreation centers and schools reach every community across the city. These facilities have dance studios, arts spaces, kitchens, computer labs and presentation space. Some facilities go even further by offering recording studios, woodworking, glass making, and pottery facilities. The District will continue investing in these spaces and seek programming partnerships to support a greater breadth of cultural opportunities. Additionally, when new facilities are constructed or existing facilities are renovated, the city will work to ensure that the opportunities for cultural space are maximized.

A new series of capacity building grants will help existing nonprofit and for-profit cultural organizations build capacity to adopt new funding models. These grants will help cultural organizations adopt updated business models through strategic and financial planning assistance.

This investment framework has the potential to increase cultural funding by using public investments as leverage for larger private investments to increase and improve cultural space. These models use the District's funding for cultural space and innovation more efficiently to achieve greater impact while enabling more public cultural funding to eventually shift toward programmatic investments that will benefit creators and consumers.

The District will build on its experience with public-private-partnerships to create both a Cultural Innovation and Entrepreneurship Revolving Loan Fund and a Cultural Facilities Fund. These funds will help cultural creators unlock social impact funding.

The Cultural Innovation and Entrepreneurship Revolving Loan Fund will help cultural creators grow by providing smaller short-term loans that support innovation and growth opportunities. For example, the fund can help a cooperative grow its business by financing the purchase of new equipment. In other cases, the loans can be used to finance merchandise that generates profit for touring musicians. The revolving fund will offer lines of credit that enable cultural organizations to sustainably absorb costs including payroll during slow periods. Providing affordable short-term financing will increase capacity and resilience for nonprofit and for-profit cultural organizations in the District.

The Cultural Facilities Fund will help sustain, modernize and increase the District's cultural infrastructure as the city continues to grow. For example, it can help establish a portfolio of cultural incubators that provide bridges to cultural innovation and growth. The Cultural Facilities Fund will provide tools for organizations to secure long-term spaces through lease or purchase as well as financing for modernizations.

The investment framework removes many of the constraints that restrict cultural growth. There are substantial resources available that can increase cultural equity and capacity by ensuring that viable organizations are supported. The District government will work to better coordinate technical assistance, support programs, grant programs and regulatory processes. These approaches will form stronger connections between creators and consumers that will grow the cultural support base enabling more people and more communities to contribute to the District's culture.

# RECOMMENDED INVESTMENTS

- ☑ Expand capacity building grants through partnerships
- ☑ Create a Cultural Innovation and Entrepreneurship Revolving Loan Fund
- ☑ Create a Cultural Facilities Fund
- ☑ Institute a Cultural Space Tax Credit Program
- ☑ Create a Cultural Navigator Position for the Center for Cultural Opportunity
  - o Create an online storefront through the Made in DC Brand
  - o Create a web-based Center for Cultural Opportunity platform
- ☑ Create a Community Event Security Fund
- ☑ Expand *The Labs* at DCPL
- ☑ Invest in marketing





## LOOKING AHEAD

Culture is important. It reflects who we are and where we have come from.

This Plan is a roadmap for sustainable and inclusive culture in the District that harnesses the forces changing the city. It is a new approach that recognizes cultural investments and organizations will need to evolve through shared stewardship, organizational innovation and leveraged funding. This Plan will help the District to infuse the city with culture everywhere by creating accessible opportunities for cultural creators, spaces and consumers.

The Plan's success will be measured by increased cultural production and participation by residents as well as utilization of the city's cultural infrastructure. This means more residents will be engaged in the production of cultural works; more people of all ages will partake in arts and cultural learning. Theaters and other performance venues will only go dark for maintenance; libraries and recreation centers will be widely used as community cultural centers; cultural expressions will be common in public and private spaces. Simply put, this Plan will be successful if culture is everywhere and it is representative of Washington, DC's residents and the city's heritage.

## HOW THE PLAN WORKS

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Culture is multifaceted, which is why this Plan is designed to support a wide range of people and organizations. The following are a few examples of how the Plan's strategies will converge to support a range of cultural stakeholders.

### GRAPHIC DESIGNER

An aspiring graphic designer learns design techniques and skills at the DC Public Library Studio Lab and hones their techniques using library computers and software. Once they refine their skills, the designer develops a logo for a friend who refers them to another. As the aspiring designer starts to earn money for their work, they seek options to grow their business by visiting the Center for Cultural Opportunity. The Center connects the designer with a mentor to help develop a business plan. In addition to working with a mentor, the designer enrolls in classes to learn about business finance and organization. After a few mentoring sessions, the designer has a business plan and forms a Limited Liability Company (LLC). The designer joins a networking group through the Center where they exchange techniques, experiences and build professional relationships with other creative professionals.

Initially, the designer has a day job while doing design work in off-hours, but their business plan is designed to grow the graphic design business into a full-time occupation that will serve as their primary income. However, the designer is concerned that their income will not be enough to cover their apartment's increasing rent. The Center for Cultural Opportunity notices that the

designer's income is less than 80% of the Area Median Income and encourages the designer to apply to the Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD) Affordable Dwelling Unit programs. It takes a few tries, but eventually the aspiring designer is selected for an affordable apartment with rent that will remain affordable indefinitely. Securing this apartment ensures that the designer's cost of living will remain manageable.

With secure housing and some savings built up, the designer starts working full-time from home. As their business grows, they join a coworking facility where they have meeting space and office support facilities. Eventually, the designer builds relationships with a few other designers from the coworking space and the networking group, and together they form a graphic design firm.

They return to the Center for Cultural Opportunity where they develop a new business plan with guidance from a mentor. They form a new LLC and acquire office space and grow their business. The business grows, and they decide to expand by hiring additional staff. They take out a short-term low interest loan from the Cultural Facilities Fund to support their expansion.



**A DESIGNER'S  
JOURNEY  
TO BUILDING  
A BUSINESS**



**LEARN**

Accesses computer software & training at the DC Public Library Studio Lab.



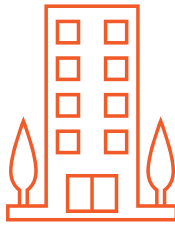
**SKILLS**

Takes freelance jobs to refine design skills and earns money for the work.



**VISION**

Visits the Center for Cultural Opportunity, which helps the designer develop a business plan through a mentorship program.



**HOUSING**

Applies for an Affordable Dwelling Unit through DHCD, which provides manageable and predictable housing costs.



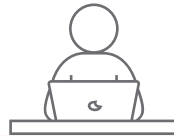
**MOMENTUM**

... While working full time job ...



**FORM**

Incorporates the business as an LLC based on guidance from the Center for Cultural Opportunity.

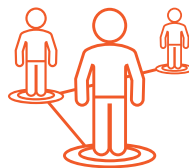


Builds savings to start working in the business full time



**CO WORKING**

Joins a co-working facility for access to meeting and production facilities. At the co-working facility the designer builds a partnership with other designers.



**PARTNER**

Develops a new joint business plan with partners and then they merge their businesses to form a larger firm under a new LLC.



**EXPAND**

Expands by leveraging the firm's working capital to make strategic investments for growth with a low-interest loan from the Innovation & Entrepreneurship Revolving Loan Fund.

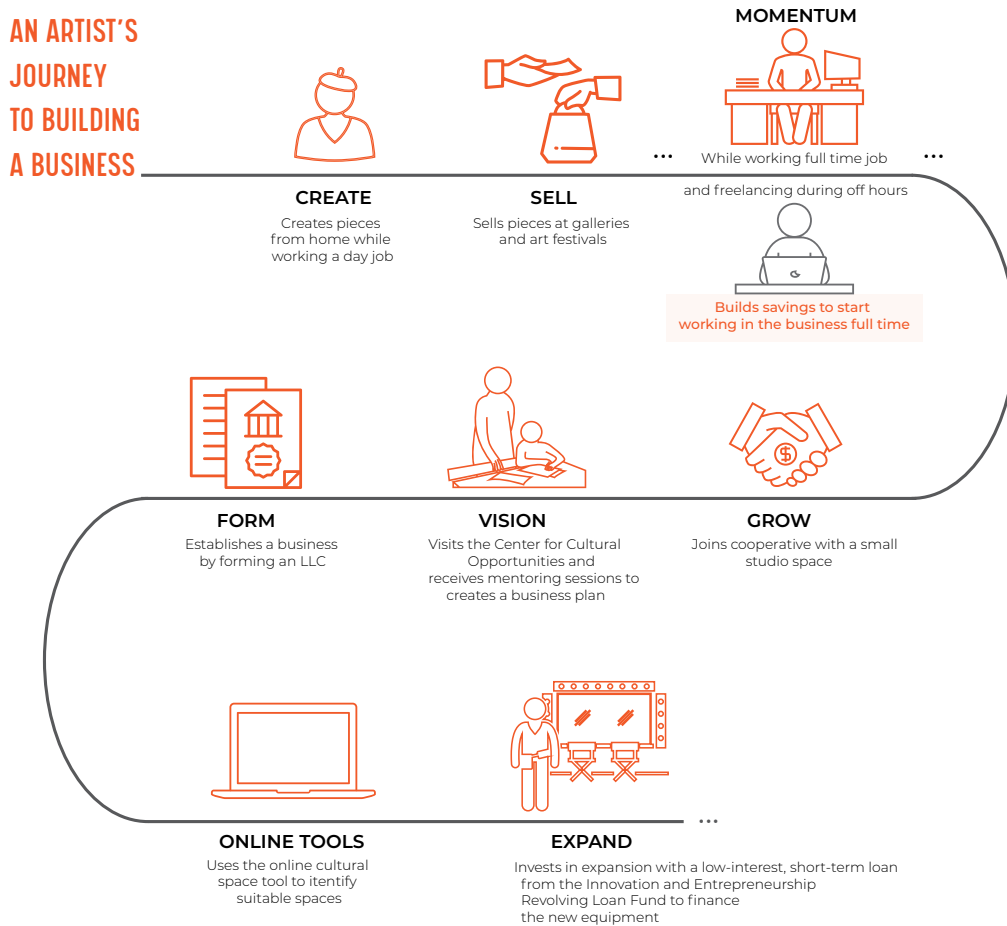
**INDIVIDUAL ARTIST**

An individual artist starts creating pieces at home while working a day job. The artist begins selling their work in gallery shows and art festivals. As the artist's practice begins to grow, they seek dedicated studio space where they can produce more ambitious work with the aspiration of becoming a full-time artist. The artist networks with other visual artists and finds an artist cooperative with an opening for a small studio space. The artist applies and is accepted for the studio space where they successfully grow their practice.

Through the cooperative, the artist reduces costs by purchasing supplies in bulk and gains inspiration and mentorship from other members. Established artists at the cooperative recommend visiting the Center for

Cultural Opportunity, where the artist learns business finance skills and forms a LLC. These tools and techniques enable the artist to better manage expenses and reduce their tax burden.

However, a few years later, the cooperative's building owner seeks to sell the building, threatening the continued existence of the cooperative. The cooperative uses the online cultural space tool to identify an available cultural space. The space was set aside by the developer of a mixed-use planned unit development. The cooperative applies for and receives a credit guarantee from the Cultural Facilities Fund to secure a ten-year lease with two five-year options, which provides the cooperative long-term stability.



## THEATER

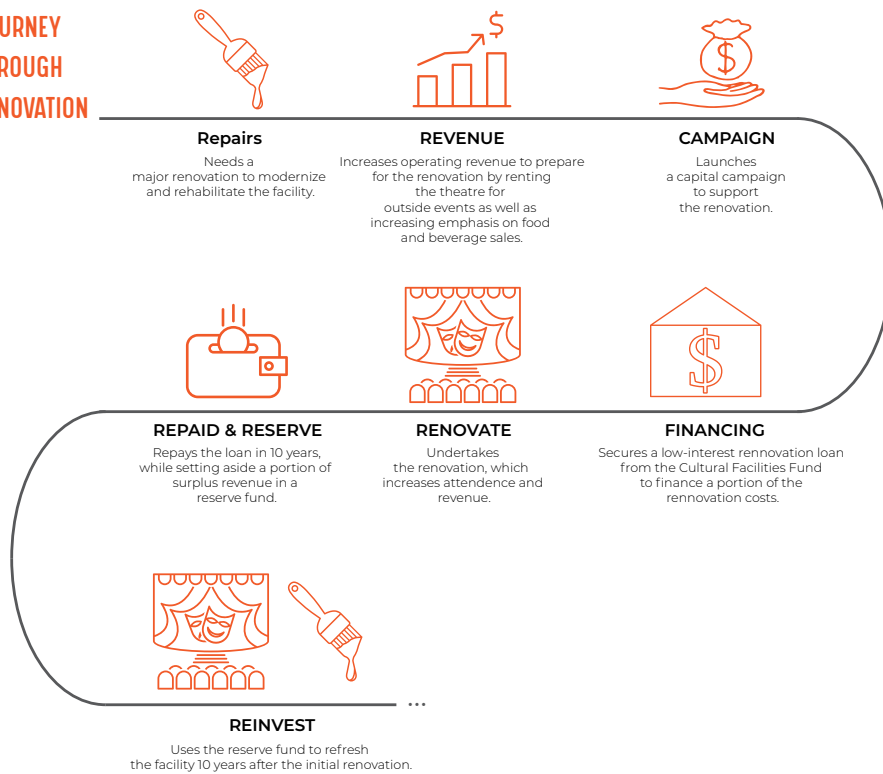
An established theater needs a major renovation. It relies on a base of philanthropic and donor support to supplement a significant gap between ticket sales and operating costs. Their donor base might be capable of fully funding the renovation, but the development director received feedback that a larger capital campaign would diminish regular fundraising for operations support.

To address this challenge, the theater updates its business plan to generate more revenue with their facility by renting it to outside presenters and events. Additionally, the theater increases programming before and after events to increase revenue from food and beverage sales. Building on the increased revenue generated from the updated business plan, the theater plans a capital campaign for the renovation. The campaign is designed to raise half of the funding needed for the renovation upfront and finance the remaining half with revenue produced by the revised

business plan. Following a large gift, the development director is able to raise the remaining funds over the following year. With funding from the capital campaign, the theater applies to the Cultural Facilities Fund for a long-term, low-interest loan to finance the remaining costs that are paid for by the organization's increased earned revenue over time.

The theater undertakes the renovation and continues to bring higher levels of revenue. The theater repaid the renovation loan in ten years while setting aside small surpluses in a reserve fund. After the loan is repaid, the theater continues to save half the loan payment in a reserve fund and invests the other half in new programming. In ten more years when the theater needs new renovations, it has a strong reserve that enables it to cover 80% of that renovation with capital contributions and reserves, reducing its loan payments and increasing the portion of its resources that can be invested into the facility.

### A THEATRE'S JOURNEY THROUGH RENOVATION

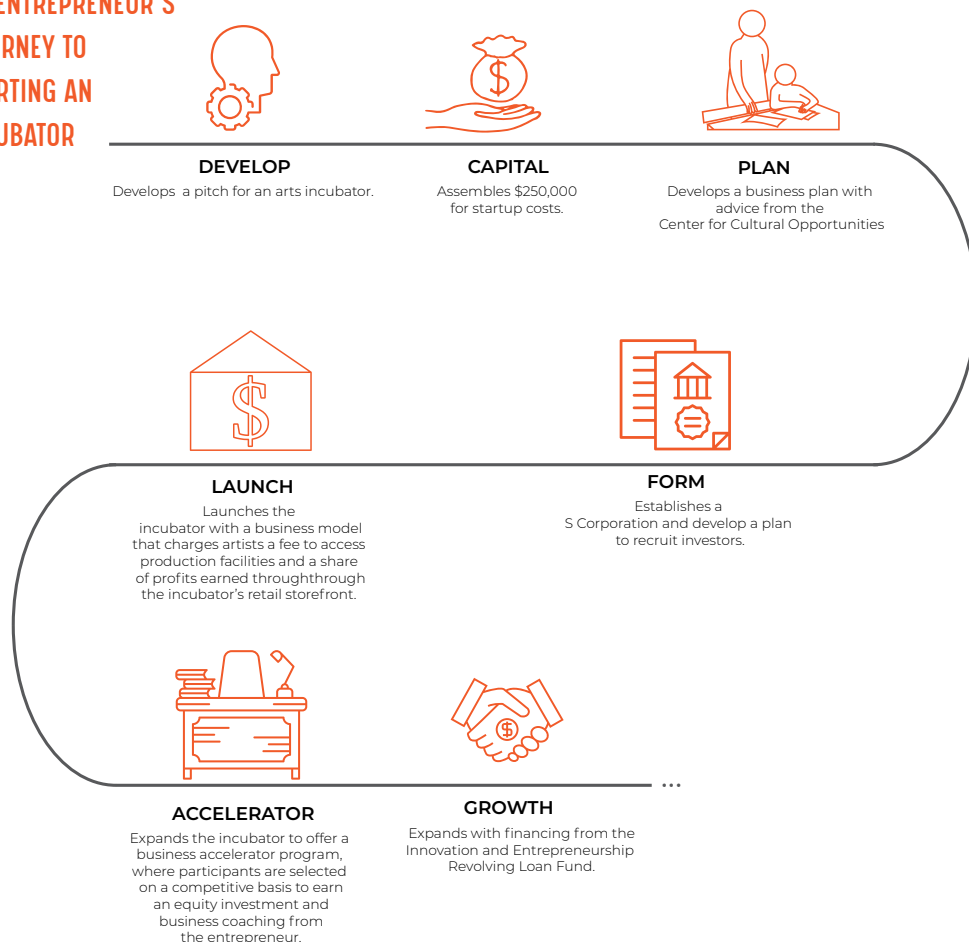


## INCUBATOR

A cultural entrepreneur wants to develop an incubator for artists specializing in metal work. The entrepreneur has \$250,000 available for an initial investment. The Center for Cultural Opportunity connects the entrepreneur with an experienced advisor to help refine the incubator's business plan. The business plan is based on artists paying fees to access specialized tools, workspaces and a retail storefront. The entrepreneur will earn a share of the profits from each product sold through the storefront. The entrepreneur will also host workshops for aspiring artisans for a small fee and offer a business accelerator opportunities for members. Through the business accelerator program, the entrepreneur will become a business partner with selected members to develop their businesses and secure investment capital.

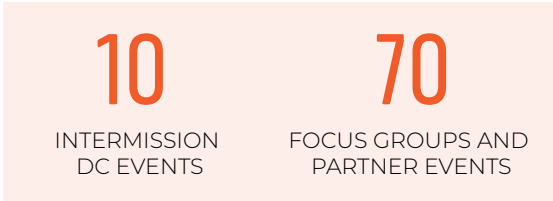
Given the nature of the entrepreneur's business, the Center for Cultural Opportunities recommends forming a S Corporation, which has significant tax advantages in addition to being attractive to investors. However, the Center advises that this type of business requires more complex accounting and business administration. The entrepreneur forms a S Corporation and recruits investors to fund the incubator. The entrepreneur applies for, and receives, a low-interest loan from the Cultural Facilities Fund to purchase and fit-out the incubator facility. The low-interest loan enables the entrepreneur to invest in more equipment and marketing. Ultimately, the incubator proves to be a successful venture launching numerous cultural enterprises.

### AN ENTREPRENEUR'S JOURNEY TO STARTING AN INCUBATOR

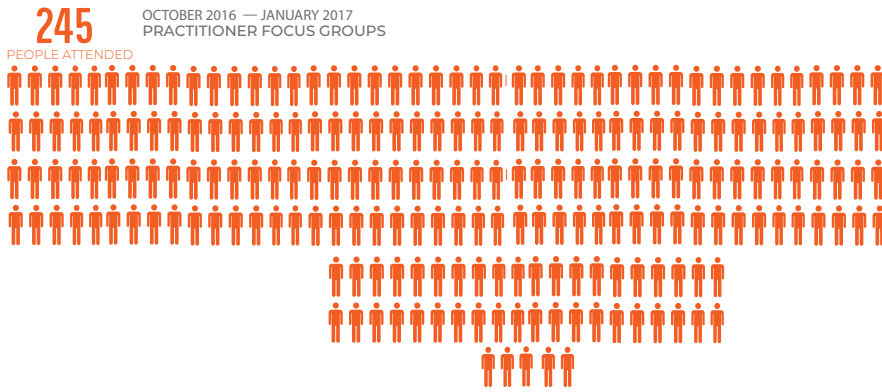
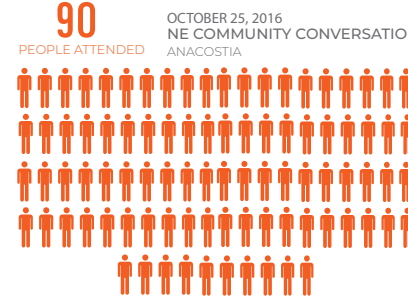
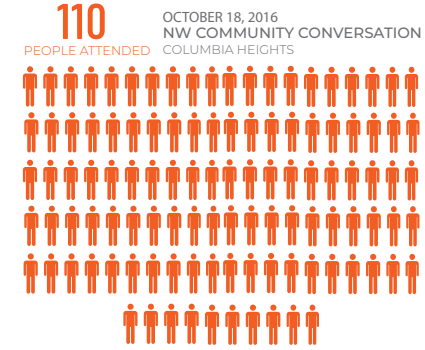




# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

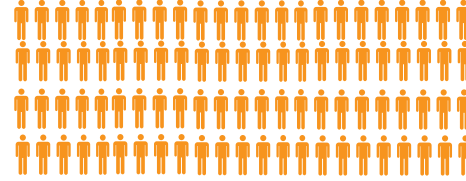


RESEARCH & DATA PHASE



DRAFT PLAN DEVELOPMENT

**100**  
PEOPLE ATTENDED



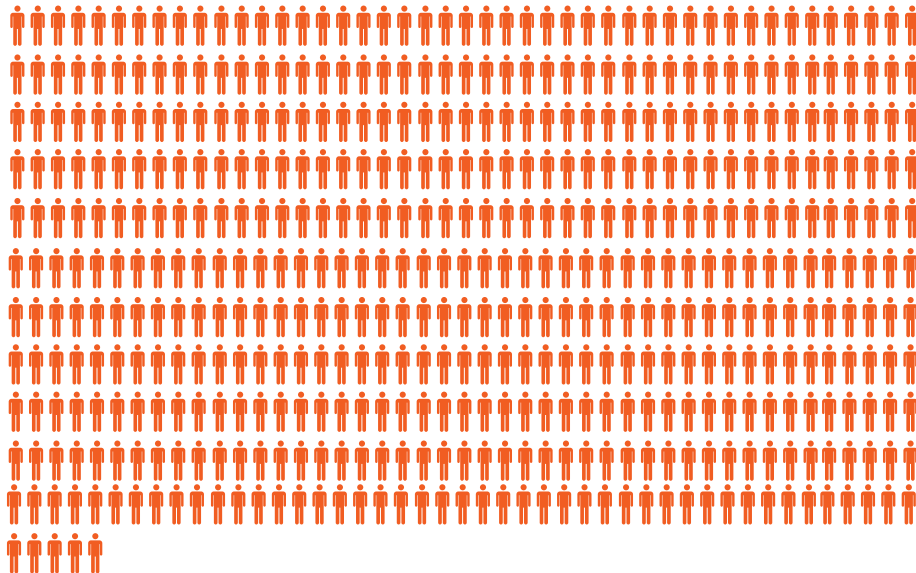
FINAL PLAN REFINEMENT

## Cultural Plan Kickoff

JULY 20, 2016  
MLK CENTRAL LIBRARY

500

PEOPLE ATTENDED



## Community Conversations

150

PEOPLE ATTENDED

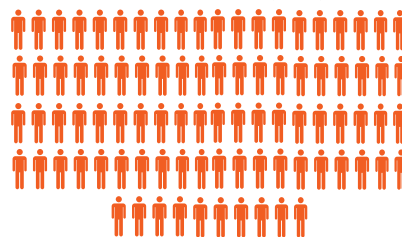
NOVEMBER 14, 2016  
ARTS ACTION ORGANIZATION  
ARENA STAGE



90

PEOPLE ATTENDED

MARCH 9, 2017  
INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS &  
CULTURAL PRODUCERS  
HAMILTONIAN GALLERY



## Focused Engagement

55

PEOPLE ATTENDED

DECEMBER 15, 2016  
YOUTH & EDUCATORS  
KENNEDY CENTER



75

PEOPLE ATTENDED

MAY 8, 2017  
DEAF & HARD OF HEARING  
IVY CITY SMOKEHOUSE



2800  
COMMENTS

DRAFT  
D.C.  
Cultural  
Plan

## DRAFT Plan Feedback

JANUARY THROUGH FEBRUARY 2017

700

COMMENTS

FEBRUARY 20, 2018  
DRAFT PLAN OPEN HOUSE  
441 4TH STREET NW

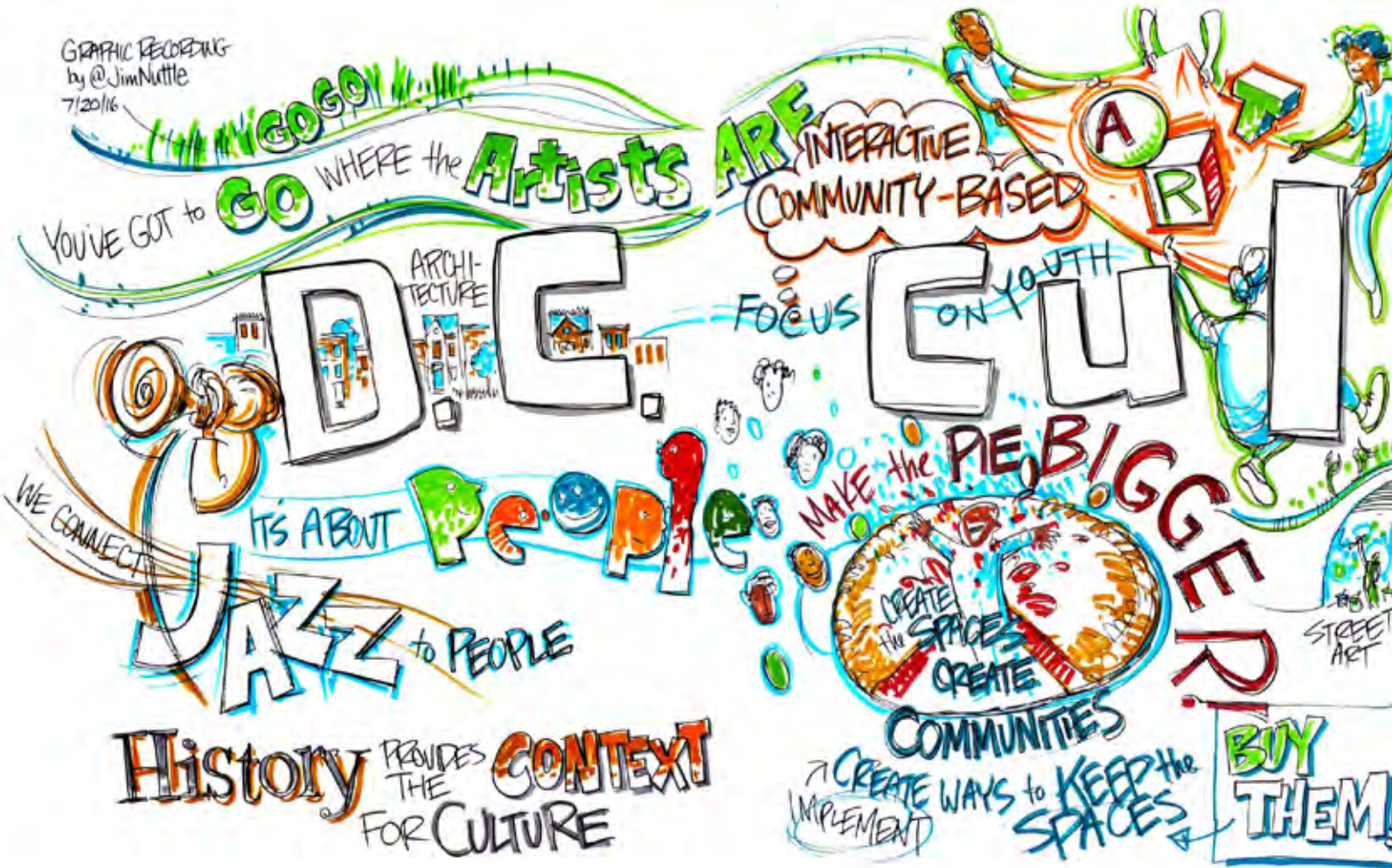
FINAL  
D.C.  
Cultural  
Plan

3,500

TOTAL CUMULATIVE  
ENGAGEMENT  
COMMENTS

1,500

TOTAL CUMULATIVE  
ENGAGEMENT  
PARTICIPANTS



Kick Off Event



Arts Action



NE Community Conversation



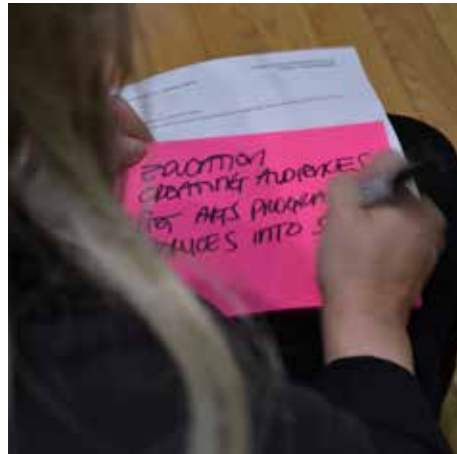




NW Community Conversation



SE Community Conversation



SW Community Conversation





me



# CULTURAL PLAN OVERVIEW

# The District's Cultural Plan

This is a plan to expand Washington, DC's cultural sector by empowering creators while introducing innovative approaches to cultural space and advancing equitable opportunities for cultural consumers. The Plan strengthens arts, humanities, culture and heritage in all communities across the city by increasing cultural participation, supporting creators, stimulating cultural production and informing decision-making.

Most importantly, this Plan introduces new approaches that link cultural development with the District's growth by aligning support programs with new cultural funding models and increasing cultural promotion.

The Plan is a framework for the District's cultural stakeholders to collectively invest time and resources to increase the equity and sustainability of the city's culture. This Plan lays out a vision and recommendations for the government and its partners to build upon that strengthens culture by investing in the people, places and ideas that form culture in the District. The recommendations include an array of short-term improvements to strengthen the cultural community while setting the stage for innovative funding models that will enable culture to thrive as the District continues to grow.

This Plan was developed with an inclusive approach to culture that encompasses arts, humanities, heritage and beyond with the notion that "all infrastructure is a stage and every resident is a performer." One of the most important components of the inclusive approach was a new engagement model called 'flat' engagement that emphasized all stakeholders' ability to engage decision-makers directly. Engagement was conducted through a variety of channels including a dedicated engagement-oriented project website, ten public meetings and dozens of focus groups. Throughout the engagement process, more than 1,500

stakeholders shared their experiences and provided suggestions for the Plan.

The planning team examined how the District government invests in cultural infrastructure and programs including: grants, facilities, parks and public space. Then the team examined privately-held cultural assets, such as galleries, night clubs, theaters and concert halls.

The cultural investment analysis also found that the District has invested billions of dollars in cultural programming and infrastructure since 2010. These investments include new libraries, schools, and recreation centers, along with programmatic funding for the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities and the Office of Cable Television, Film, Music and Entertainment (OCTFME). Additionally, the District provided significant support to privately-owned cultural facilities with tax increment financing initiatives and Industrial Revenue Bonds.

These are major investments, but the full extent of cultural sector investment extends far beyond government investment. Some of the District's best-known cultural spaces, including the 9:30 Club and LongView Gallery, have been privately financed, while foundations and other donors support numerous leading organizations, such as the Kreeger Museum and Phillips Collection. Though it was not possible to determine how much has been invested by private investors, foundations and other stakeholders, the scale

# CULTURAL EXPRESSION

**"Increasing opportunities that are accessible for all residents to experience art, fashion, music and theaters will make the city more equitable and dynamic."**



of these investments is evidenced by their economic impact. The economic impact analysis for this Plan found cultural activities support about \$30 billion in annual spending and \$1.1 billion in tax revenue related to more than 150,000 jobs. The cultural economy includes people and organizations that produce cultural works directly, businesses that provide goods and services to those organizations, and jobs distributed throughout the broader economy generated by spending from those individuals and businesses in the first two categories.

Still, throughout the engagement process, many creators shared challenges finding affordable space and sufficient funding. The research phase of the Plan corroborated these accounts with findings that showed the District's cultural organizations typically have high rates of spending on space exacerbated by limited opportunities for additional funding.

These financial stressors are part of broad national trends that are particularly pronounced in the District, which has experienced high population, economic and real estate value growth rates over the past twenty years that have enabled the city to recover from the financial crisis that led to the Control Board. However, the consequences of the rapid and sustained growth have included changes in the location and types of cultural space as well as changes to the practices themselves. Growth has been focused on parts of the city that were underutilized such as NoMa, Capitol Riverfront and Mount Vernon Triangle.

Unfortunately, many cultural organizations were leasing low-cost space in these underutilized areas and as their buildings were redeveloped, some organizations closed and others relocated. Analysis for this Plan also demonstrates that creators are particularly vulnerable to changing real estate

conditions because people who work in many common cultural industries have significantly lower average incomes than employees in many of the city's largest industries.

These patterns of urban economic and population growth are part of broader change reverberating through the nation. This change is systemic, driven by the new technologies and economies reshaping American life. The DC Cultural Plan offers a new way to reinforce the city's heritage while growing culture in the District by leveraging its strengths and successes. This Plan explicitly affirms the culture that is here today, which includes cultural nonprofits, professional artists and the creative economy. It also recognizes that they city's cultural funders are not able to keep pace with increasing demands on their resources. In response, the plan emphasizes growth opportunities for cultural nonprofit and for-profit organizations based on new models that use a three-part catalytic framework of shared stewardship, organizational innovation and funding innovation. Through this approach, the Plan increases cultural creation and consumption opportunities for all stakeholders including the youngest residents and the oldest institutions.

This Plan will strengthen cultural connections between District residents, regional neighbors and visitors. It supports incubators that invest in creators and empowers them to thrive. It also outlines a robust financing system that fully leverages existing resources to unlock new funding that will maintain existing cultural space and create new space for diverse cultural expression. This approach includes working with the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development to focus District investments in communities with high levels of unemployment. Together, these strategies will increase residents' expression of, and exposure to, culture.



ART is LOVE  
ART is freedom  
ART is FUN!  
ART is FUN!



## Vision for Cultural Equity

Culture in the District embodies the city’s heritage, diversity and opportunity. It is an inclusive reflection of the District, celebrating and interweaving diverse subcultures and counterculture with symbols of democracy. All stakeholders will help create spaces, tools and support for every resident to aspire, test and scale their ideas. All residents will have opportunities to develop and share cultural practices by using public spaces and facilities as platforms for creativity. The Plan increases social, informal and formal cultural spaces, facilitating cycles of creation and consumption that inspire and empower every resident to find their cultural voice and share it. Through this Plan, the District will build upon foundations of heritage and diversity to foster thriving and equitable culture.

The Cultural Plan lays out a series of strategies and tools to achieve twelve goals. These aspirational goals are the leverage points that the Plan will change to make culture more sustainable and inclusive across the District.

### Cultural Creators

- Cultural Creators will develop their practice with the support of aligned educational and technical assistance resources.
- Cultural Creators will have increased access to affordable housing.
- Cultural Creators will have increased access to affordable production space.
- Cultural Creators will be empowered to build careers as creators.



### Cultural Spaces

- Cultural Space in the public realm and in public facilities will be platforms for expression.
- Cultural Space will be more accessible.
- Cultural Space will be increased and maintained as community anchors.
- Cultural Space creation will be linked to the city’s growth.

### Cultural Consumers

- Cultural Consumers will have more information about cultural events in the city.
- Cultural Consumers will have access to a broader and more diverse range of cultural practices.
- Cultural Consumers will have inclusive access to cultural spaces and practices.
- Cultural Consumers will experience culture in every community.

# LOOKING BACK

## A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON DISTRICT CULTURE

The District’s culture is its soul. The city’s history has formed a uniquely rich local culture shaped by its role as: the nation’s capital; one of the first places to abolish slavery; home to jazz, go-go and punk music; the civil rights movement; and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) movement. The city’s culture reflects the stories and traditions from generations of people who migrated from other states and countries. After the Civil War, many former slaves migrated north, viewing the District as a beacon of hope. The people who came brought traditions including food and music that have left indelible marks. Both World Wars brought huge population influxes that transformed the District into a large city. Most recently the District’s culture has undergone further evolution as

the city experiences a new wave of population growth driven by residents seeking opportunities in the city’s growing economy.

DC is a global city with more than two centuries of experience hosting the international community. Today, 170 nations are represented in the District, along with international institutions such as the World Bank. The District has welcomed immigrants and refugees from many nations. Over time, the culture has been infused with cultural traditions from nations around the world. These influences have helped the District become a more diverse and inclusive international community.

### DC CULTURAL PLAN PRINCIPLES

The Cultural Plan will be implemented a by multi-sector, interdisciplinary Steering Committee that will use the following eight principles to shape the investments, programs and initiatives that will implement this Plan.

**AFFIRM** 

that existing cultural practices, heritage and organizations are important to the District.

**ALIGN** 

and expand programs that support creators.

**DEPLOY** 

grant funding strategically to incubate creators.

**CREATE** 

programs that support innovation in cultural funding.

**FORM** 

stronger linkages between real estate development and cultural space production.

**PROMOTE** 

the District’s cultural opportunities to local, regional, national and international audiences through partnerships.

**BUILD** 

partnerships with local and federal cultural organizations that increase cultural access for District residents.

**INVEST** 

time and resources collectively through shared stewardship with every resident and stakeholder to support and lift-up cultural expressions.







**"DC is a global city with more than two centuries of experience hosting the international community."**

The District's community identity is inextricable from its distinction as the nation's capital. Still, many District residents feel friction with the federal government. They know hosting the nation's capital is an honor. It is fundamentally part of the city's identity and its economy. However, at times District residents feel their lives and perspectives are overwhelmed by federal symbolism.

Federal cultural organizations are among the most robust in the world, benefiting from nearly continuous investment for more than a century. The District's locally-oriented cultural organizations reflect its complex history as a city of power, opportunity and oppression. The District grew as a center of influence while serving as a refuge for the oppressed. Historically, the city was affluent and segregated; home to one of the nation's preeminent historically Black universities but oppressed by prejudiced congressional representatives.

Cultural organizations, like the rest of the city, were profoundly impacted by decades of increased turmoil, population loss and deferred investments that started after World War II and intensified in the 1960s. During this period, housing in many parts of the District was inexpensive compared to the booming suburbs. Despite the period's challenges, jobs remained plentiful in the District, which provided a foundation for many low-income and immigrant residents to build thriving communities. With time, these communities helped endow the

city with its ethic of inclusivity and diversity.

Comparing the paths of the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History and the Tivoli Theater illustrates the different paths federal and locally-oriented cultural organizations have taken. Both were constructed as the District and the nation grew in the early 20th Century. The Natural History Museum is centrally located along the National Mall while the Tivoli Theater is located at the heart of Columbia Heights. The Natural History Museum was originally founded as the National Museum, housing the Smithsonian Institution's art, culture, history and natural history collections. The Tivoli Theatre was one of the District's most elegant but segregated theaters celebrating popular culture and a golden era of movies.

Change came in the turbulent 1960s when a vast expansion of the federal government was contrasted by mounting social, economic and racial tensions in the District. During this period, the Smithsonian National Museum subdivided its collections and expanded along the National Mall. In contrast, life in the District grew more difficult—streetcar service stopped in 1962; Dr. King's assassination in 1968 sparked uprisings across the city; the Tivoli was rocked by both events. The uprisings devastated numerous communities including Columbia Heights.

The Tivoli Theatre closed in 1976 after a long decline of patronage and





revenues coinciding with prolonged population loss and rapid growth in the metropolitan region outside of the city.

In the 1970s, the planned route for Metro’s Green Line was realigned to locate stops along 7th, U, and 14th Streets as part of a strategy to invigorate redevelopment of corridors heavily damaged by the uprisings. Thirty years after the uprisings ended, the Columbia Heights Metro station opened, catalyzing redevelopment throughout the community including the Tivoli Theatre. The theater was renovated as a mixed-use facility, housing the GALA Hispanic Theatre partially within the original Tivoli Theatre space. Over the same period, federal cultural space continued to expand, including the National Museum of the American Indian, and most recently, the National Museum of African American History and Culture.



Many iterations of this pattern unfolded across the District. For example, U Street is defined by its history as Black Broadway with theaters from the heyday of jazz including the Howard Theatre, 9:30 Club and Lincoln Theatre.

The U Street corridor, scarred by the 1968 uprising, was revitalized through coordinated public policy and investments.

The 1968 uprising started with a broken drug store window at the intersection of 14th and U Streets NW. In the 1980s, the District constructed the Reeves Center on the site where the riots began as

## CULTURAL ORIGINS



an anchor for reinvestment. Then in 1991, the U Street Metro Station opened and over the past decade the U Street corridor has begun teeming again with music and entertainment. In many ways, U Street shows its Black Broadway roots through refurbished and reused venues while reflecting the city’s changing demographics, social geography and culture. Today, U Street is still a cultural epicenter, but it is a very different place than it was at the height of its time as Black Broadway. However, through cultural memory and touchstones, the corridor’s heritage continues as an invaluable part of Washington, DC culture.

Another lens for the city’s cultural heritage is through houses of worship, which have been the most accessible cultural spaces for many residents—particularly in the District’s Black community where religious freedom provided a stage for liberty. Houses of worship take a wide variety of forms and serve a range of functions. Many of the District’s houses of worship have been hubs of social movements, ranging from abolition to Black Lives Matter. Additionally, some religious organizations created nationally focused places of worship, such as the Washington





National Cathedral and Basilica of the National Shrine of Immaculate Conception that serve as national common ground. These institutions have extensive cultural programs and presentation spaces. Most are community-oriented while some reach regional and national audiences. Today, there are new opportunities for houses of worship to serve as platforms to bring new residents and longstanding communities together.

Cultural space and identity have been fundamental parts of the city's resurgence. Beginning in the 1980s, cultural uses anchored revitalization of the downtown central employment area. The revitalization built on the area's long history as the city's economic

and cultural epicenter by using storied venues such as Ford's Theatre, the Warner Theatre and National Theatre as anchors. Cultural organizations were able to build on the area's central location, extensive transportation, large worker population and throngs of visitors to build one of the nation's leading theater and entertainment areas. Downtown's culturally anchored revitalization provided a strong base and template for subsequent efforts across the city.

The most widely shared cultural touchstones are large popular events targeting regional audiences—including concerts, football, baseball, soccer, boxing and roller derby. For many years, these events have been held

just east of Capitol Hill at RFK stadium and the DC Armory. These large specialized venues host events that attract thousands of people. Today, large events are predominately held at the Capital One Arena, Nationals Park, Audi Field and the Entertainment and Sports Arena at St Elizabeths.

The District's deeply layered and continually evolving cultural geography needs all of these types of cultural space. The shared experiences and traditions that form in communities are important and will continue to guide the District's cultural stakeholders as we move forward. This Plan values heritage as a vital element that must be preserved and incorporated into new expressions as the city evolves.



## BLACK CULTURE

District culture and Black culture are deeply intertwined. In the early 19th century, the District extended progressive but limited liberties to Black people that set the District apart as a leader in the abolition movement. These liberties enabled people who were previously counted as property and their descendants to participate in local government, acquire land, establish businesses, and form aid organizations.

As the District's lands transformed from rural to urban communities, residents celebrated milestones including the founding of Dunbar High School, the nation's first public high school for Black students. Dunbar became a national center of educational achievement, laying a foundation for generations of Black leaders.



Almost since the District's inception, Black residents fought to gain freedoms and privilege through education and entrepreneurship. Prior to racial integration in the mid-20th century, the District had numerous predominately Black thriving communities representing both working and professional families. They enjoyed cultural playgrounds including Black Broadway on U Street NW, a home to musical innovation for generations. Black Broadway was a center of jazz and later it was premiere stop on the Chitlin' Circuit. The circuit was comprised of places predominately in the south where it was safe for Black musicians and entertainers to perform during the Jim Crow era. Many Black artists gained voices and success from the circuit's live performances at venues predominantly serving Black audiences. These performances and surrounding cultural practices infused the District with poetry, literature and music. The city's leading role in national Black culture is particularly evident through its musical heritage including Duke Ellington, Marvin Gaye, Chuck Brown and Wale.

The combination of increased liberty, educational and economic opportunities firmly established the District as Chocolate City. While the Civil Rights Movement grew in the 1960s and 1970s, the city became unapologetically Black. For many, the "Chocolate City" moniker refers to the District as a center of Black

culture, government, space and life. For decades, most communities beyond Capitol Hill, Georgetown and Upper Northwest were primarily home to Black families. Being part of a majority-minority community was and still is important for many people of color who had experienced rampant racism and discrimination. For many people, Chocolate City meant freedom, power and opportunity strengthened by increased political autonomy from District Home Rule in 1976.

The culture of Black people in the District has left a lasting impact on the city, nation and world. Whether it is the monuments produced at the hands of Black artisans or the sounds of R&B, go-go and pop music that evolved in racially inclusive clubs that speckled U Street, it would be impossible to ignore the significant cultural contributions from numerous Black people—past and present—who call or have called our nation’s capital home. These traditions and accomplishments are fundamental parts of the city, and they will continue to inspire future generations of Black leaders.



Over the past twenty-years, the District has been growing and changing. The city is more diverse but no longer majority Black. It has been a period of opportunity and change. However, there is also widespread concern, particularly among long-time residents and native Washingtonians, that places, traditions and communities built in Chocolate City could be lost to change. Black culture is important to the city, and this Plan offers tools and resources to both preserve traditions and inspire new practices.









# RESPONDING TO CHANGE

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This is a pivotal time for culture in the District. The city has transitioned from a low-value real estate market to a high-value real estate market. It is difficult to overstate the magnitude of this shift to cultural creators and organizations.

For generations, most cultural organization business models relied on low-cost space and widely available, market rate affordable housing. During the mid-to late 20th century, growing suburbs, new highways and changing retail models produced cities with surplus housing, retail space and industrial space but limited demand to support reinvestment.

Cultural creators leveraged these surplus spaces as opportunities for creative freedom. Eventually, cities collaborated with creators to spark reinvestment. In DC, several reinvestment plans sought to rekindle the rich cultural heritage that resonated throughout the city. The city provided incentives, funding and support while creators rehabilitated and adapted spaces. For a time, several areas throughout the city, such as Dupont, Gallery Place and U Street formed dense cultural clusters; however most have thinned as real estate values have risen. Still, these efforts preserved the city's cultural landscape by restoring historic cultural space as new anchors for future cultural uses.

Now, the District's population and economy are both growing rapidly. Twenty years ago, the city's population began growing for the first time since 1950 and it is on pace to return to peak population in about a decade. Incomes have grown faster than inflation for all income brackets—though wealthier households have seen the greatest increases. As the city grows, its neighborhoods will continue to undergo dynamic changes as widespread reinvestment introduces many new faces to long standing, deeply rooted communities.

As the District has become more affluent, the costs of living have increased, offsetting or even outpacing the income gains for many lower income residents. Frequently, this means the cost of housing is becoming increasingly burdensome. Most extremely low-income households spend more than 50% of their income on housing, greatly exceeding the national benchmark for housing affordability where households that spend more than 30% of their income on housing costs are considered burdened. Housing affordability is a challenge for many District residents; even those approaching median income make increasingly difficult budget decisions due to the rising cost of housing. The financial strain translates into reduced capacity to invest in personal and professional growth.

The District is a national leader in housing programs that help residents secure quality homes they can afford. For example, the Affordable Housing Production Trust Fund is the nation's best funded affordable housing gap financing program on a per capita basis. More recently, the city has built on this model to establish the Housing Preservation Fund. The Fund helps the city ensure that new affordable housing adds capacity by preserving the existing base of affordable housing as federal subsidies expire that were used to finance much of the city's existing affordable housing.





HAVE A DREAM  
MARTIN LUTHER KING  
THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON  
FOR JOBS AND FREEDOM  
AUGUST 28, 1963



Additionally, the city also makes leading investments in programs, such as the Local Rent Supplement Program and the Home Purchase Assistance Program that increase housing choice and reduce cost burdens for many residents. These programs and investments represent critical steps towards economic equity, but there is still more to be done.

Despite numerous challenges, the city's growth has also created vast new opportunities. There is more capacity to leverage higher real estate values to cross-subsidize affordable housing and new cultural spaces. The District's real estate portfolio has more value that can be leveraged through public-private partnerships. There are more people to attend cultural events, and more of those people will provide financial support to cultural creators. Additionally, new funding models are emerging based on social impact investing that can provide dramatic expansions in financing for cultural space and organizations.

The District has already leveraged its real estate portfolio to increase affordable housing, jobs and the tax base. In the future, it will help scale new cultural organization models that increase the equity and diversity of cultural practice in the District. These models use shared stewardship, organizational innovation and leveraged funding to enable cultural creators to dream, test and scale their ideas.

In the short-term, the District will work with partners to strengthen and support existing cultural organizations while building on best practices from leading fields beyond the cultural sector and emerging international best practices to support new cultural models that organizations can adopt to thrive in the growing city. Over the next five years, the District will work with foundations to build partnerships that leverage its unique funding position and facilitate more equitable growth of cultural practices in the city. Cultural organizations will work strategically to develop business plans and strategic plans that increase cultural equity and resilience.

The cultural sector is currently composed of two separate clusters of organizations, nonprofit and for-profit. This structure is primed for evolution. The modern nonprofit organizations emerged in the 1960s to represent the broader array of public interest organizations with operations extending beyond traditional charities. Over the past fifty years, the District has been a hub of innovation in the nonprofit sector. Now it is time for the District to lead the way toward a new framework maximizing the middle ground between nonprofit and for-profit by embracing two important emerging types of organizations, which are social impact organizations and social enterprises. These emerging organizational categories will join charitable organizations and commercial enterprises

to form a continuum of organizational models that subdivides the nonprofit and for-profit spheres in a way that generates new opportunities for meaningful growth in the type, scale and diversity of the District’s cultural organizations.

Each type of organization has an important place in the cultural sector; in particular, the Plan recognizes the need for unwavering support of charitable organizations that provide important services. However, it is important that cultural stakeholders begin building both capacity and infrastructure to support adaptation to social impact organizations and social enterprises. The financial resources available from the District and the region’s foundation community must be combined with higher levels of revenue, financial planning and strategic investment to fulfill the city’s cultural potential. Simply put, there is dramatically more demand for financial support than resources available despite the District’s nation leading funding for art and culture on a per capita basis.



Advancing these new organizational models is a critical step that will enable the District to both build cultural equity and sustain its existing base of cultural institutions.

To take these steps, cultural organizations will need to establish stronger relationships with broader bases of cultural consumers through resident-focused programming. Additionally, nonprofit cultural organizations are encouraged to focus on building relationships with individual donors to diversify their funder base and become more representative of the communities they serve. These alignments will help ensure that organizations' work is culturally relevant to consumers by better engaging and collecting feedback from stakeholders.

The District’s cultural sector has reached a critical juncture. Established organizations require higher levels of support to sustain the cultural capacity currently in place. However, emerging and historically marginalized communities are seeking support to form and grow cultural organizations that reflect their traditions, experiences and perspectives. Increasing costs and ongoing constraints to federal cultural funding are combining with dramatically expanding needs for massive public investments in the core facilities and services needed to support social, economic and racial equity. These conditions necessitate this Plan’s approach to structural evolution of the cultural sector.



Building cultural capacity by undertaking structural adjustments to the cultural sector will facilitate many important outcomes. For example, individual artists will have more access to cultural spaces, incubators and technical assistance. There will be increased support for artists who form cooperatives and collaboratives to gain access to production and presentation space in public space and private facilities.

The District will form closer relationships with federal organizations, such as the Smithsonian Institution. These organizations offer unparalleled opportunities for cultural experiences. Several federal cultural organizations already partner with local creators to develop innovative programs that increase engagement among District residents. Going forward, the District will forge stronger mutually reinforcing relationships with federal cultural organizations to increase resident interaction while encouraging increased opportunities targeted to their host city.

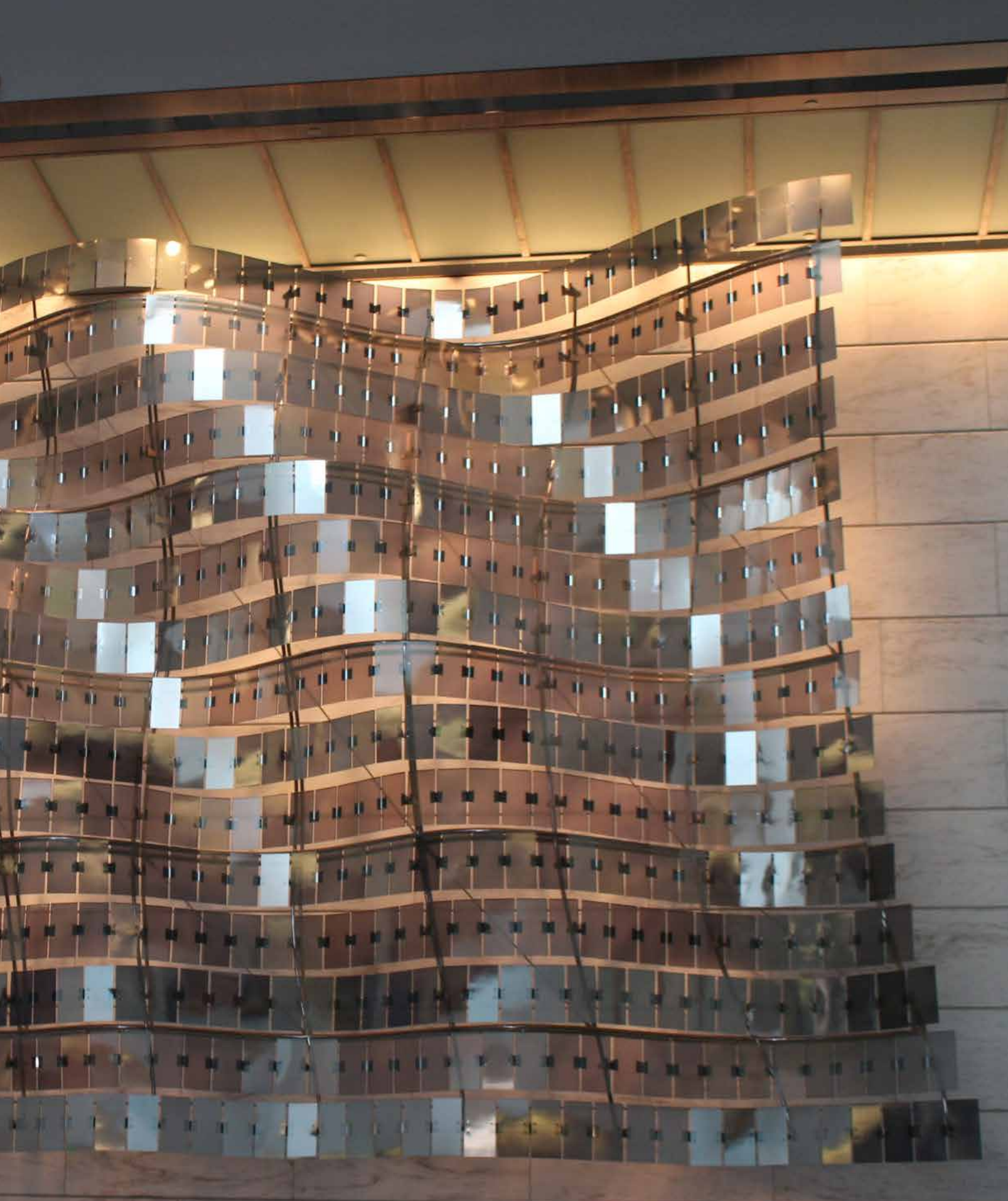
Through this Plan, the District will partner with cultural organizations to create larger audiences for cultural practice in the District by increasing promotion. The city will also invest in diverse and varied cultural programming for youth that increase youth exposure to cultural techniques and expressions. Youth cultural

education will take place in many different venues including schools, recreation centers and libraries through District and partner programs. As a result, children will have more access and exposure to the phenomenal cultural organizations that the District has to offer.

The District's Cultural Plan is intentionally ambitious. It presents a structural approach to equitably connect the opportunities from the thriving economy with the city's heritage. Most importantly, this Plan presents an outline to guide collective action by the District's cultural stakeholders.

The Plan's success will be measured by increased cultural production and participation by residents as well as use of the city's cultural infrastructure. This means more residents will be engaged in the production of cultural works; more people of all ages will partake in arts and cultural learning. Theaters and other performance venues will only go dark for maintenance; libraries and recreation centers will be widely used as community cultural centers; cultural expressions will be common in public and private spaces. Simply put, this Plan will be successful if culture is everywhere and it is representative of Washington, DC's residents and the city's heritage.



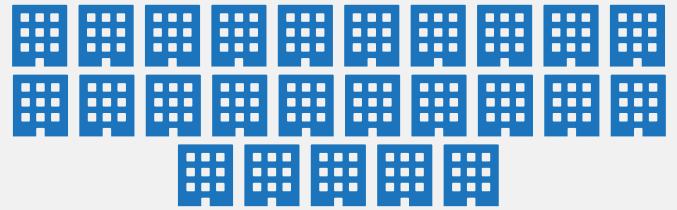


THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER

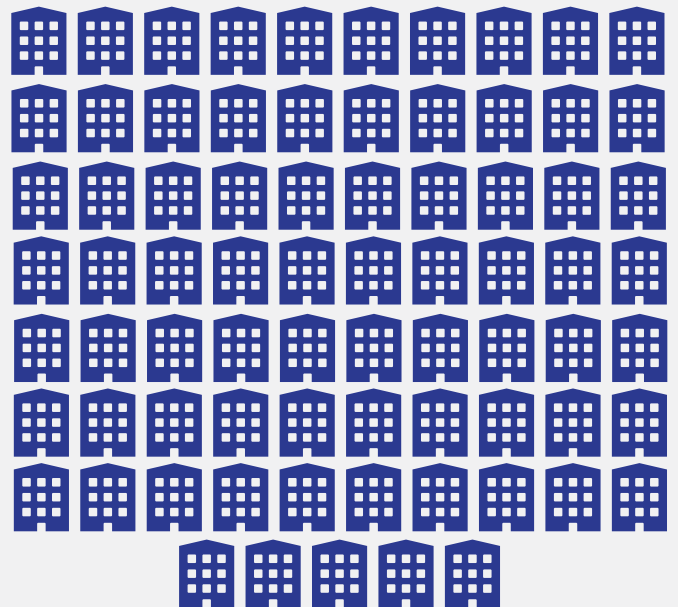
# CONTINUUM OF CULTURAL BUSINESS MODELS

## Current Distribution of Cultural Organizations

**NONPROFIT**



**FOR-PROFIT**



This Plan’s recommendations are designed to help the District’s cultural economy evolve from clusters of nonprofit and for-profit organizations to a continuum of organizations spanning charitable organizations, social impact organizations, social enterprises and commercial enterprises. This approach takes advantage of growth and funding opportunities that have emerged between traditional nonprofit and for-profit cultural business models. Unlocking this growth capacity will reduce barriers for cultural growth and increase opportunities to build cultural equity.



# Anticipated Future Distribution of Cultural Organizations

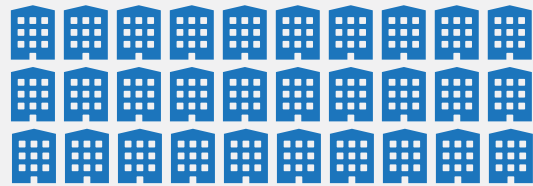
## CHARITY



## SOCIAL

## IMPACT

## ORGANIZATION



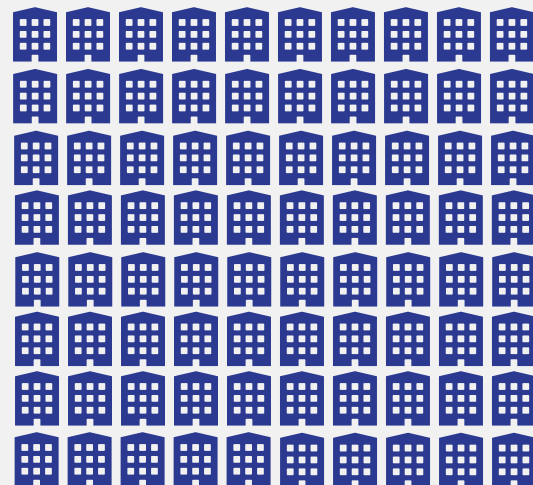
## SOCIAL

## ENTERPRISES



## COMMERCIAL

## ENTERPRISES



### Charitable Organizations

Nonprofit organizations with a business model that predominately utilizes endowments and/or contributed revenue to fulfill a benevolent public purpose.

### Social Impact Organizations

Nonprofit organizations with business models that leverage endowments and/or contributed income to build organizational capacity, enabling the organization to make measurable progress toward fulfilling its mission by funding most operational expenses with earned revenue.

### Social Enterprises

For-profit organizations formally designed to fulfill both financial and socially beneficial purposes.

### Commercial Enterprises

For-profit organizations designed to fulfill a financially beneficial purpose for its owners.



# THE DISTRICT'S CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT



This chapter explores the District’s cultural assets, programs and economy. Together, these three components reflect the structure and function of the city’s cultural community. Assets depict the city’s cultural geography, through the concentration and distribution of cultural facilities. Programs indicate how the city’s initiatives connect with cultural creators, spaces and consumers. Lastly, an assessment of the size and structure of the District’s cultural economy describes the types of cultural organizations and economic impact culture generates in the District.

# CULTURAL ASSETS

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The District's cultural assets range from national museums to concert halls and recreation centers. The asset types and locations are shaped by the integration of the city's land use pattern and transportation infrastructure both historically and today. Over the past thirty years, the city has worked to both preserve historic cultural areas while seeding economic revitalization through cultural anchors. Today, the city is economically thriving, and cultural practices are more broadly distributed than ever. Going forward, the planning team anticipates that cultural assets will be increasingly distributed throughout the city, more accurately reflecting the city's cultural communities.

One defining part of DC's cultural geography is the National Mall, which is lined by national museums and flanked by the Library of Congress and Kennedy Center. This area is an epicenter of national culture that has shaped the District's cultural landscape. District residents have a complex relationship with the institutions that present cultural expressions oriented to a national audience. The Smithsonian Institution has set an unprecedented benchmark for accessible culture with high-quality exhibitions from extensive collections accessible to all, free of charge. However, there is additional demand for cultural spaces that support cultural works focused on and reflecting the District.

Beyond the Mall, there are hotspots in cultural epicenters, such as the U Street NW corridor and downtown, where the performing arts have been historically clustered.

The Dupont Circle area still reflects its enduring but changing role as a center of gravity in the region's visual arts community. The H Street NE Corridor is reemerging as a cultural center emanating from the Atlas Performing Arts Center and bolstered by the Rock and Roll Hotel and Fringe Theatre. Anacostia also stands out as a unique kind of cultural cluster that combines grassroots and institutional investment with a fantastic array of cultural anchors including the Anacostia Arts Center, We Act Radio, the Anacostia Playhouse, the Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum. Additionally, the Town Hall Education Arts Recreation Campus known as THEARC located nearby offers high-quality presentation and practice facilities that incubate creators. There are also communities where cultural hotspots that have emerged more recently including Brookland and Ivy City where former industrial sites have been repurposed for new uses.

To better understand how different types of cultural assets were distributed across the city, the planning team grouped the city's cultural assets into one of five categories: heritage, commercial revitalization, education, production and presentation. The following section describes the function of each asset group.

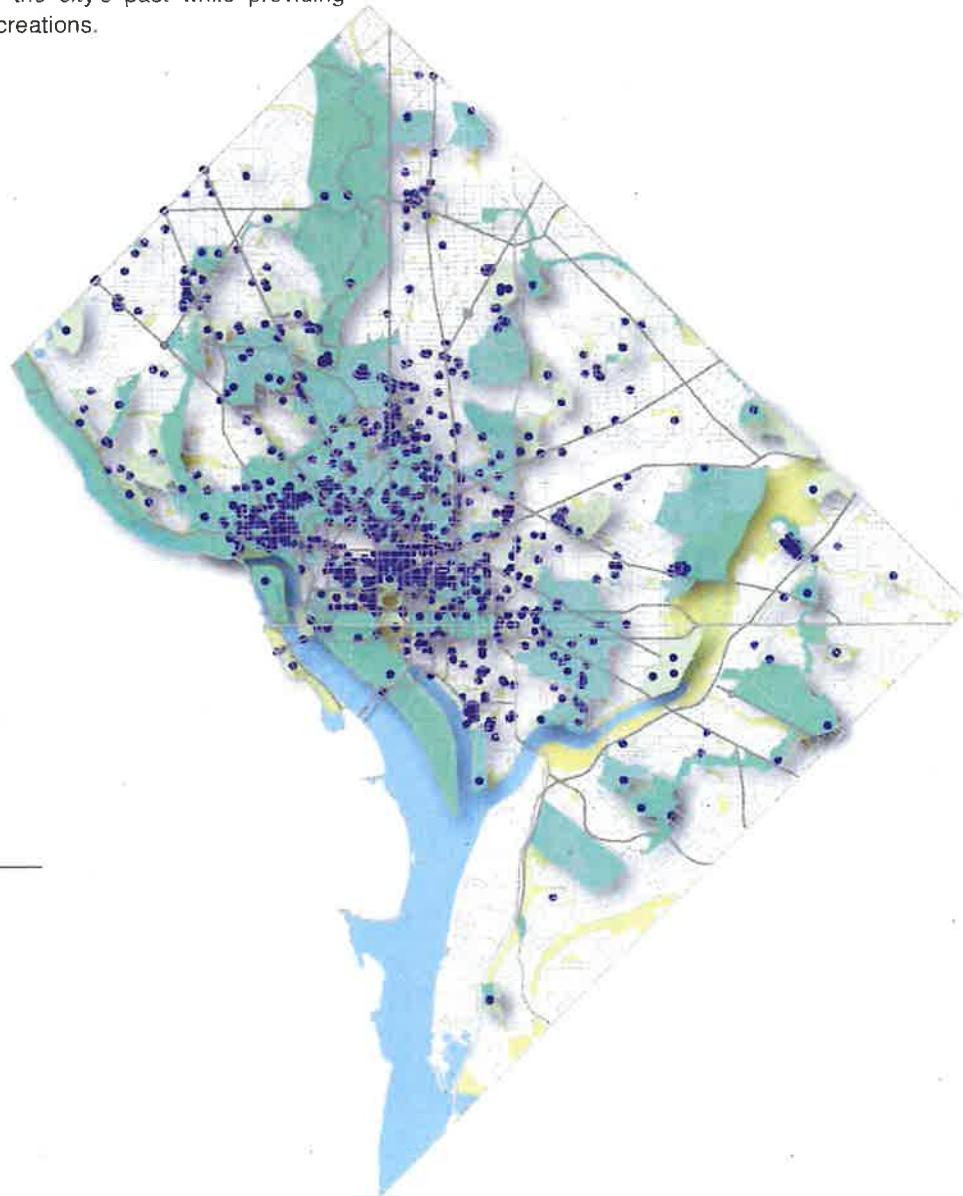


# Heritage



## Historic District, Landmarks and Heritage Organizations

The physical artifacts of the city's cultural heritage are the foundations of its culture today. Cultural assets such as historic theaters and heritage sites provide both venues for ongoing creativity and touchstones for intergenerational knowledge sharing. In the District, there are many different layers of cultural heritage that extend back to the city's founding with historic sites, such as the Old Stone House and long-standing anchors including the Howard Theatre. These spaces provide windows into the city's past while providing venues to share new creations.

Through a combination of District and Federal historic preservation laws, the DC Historic Preservation Office runs two important programs, the DC Inventory of Historic Sites and DC Historic Districts. Together, these programs catalog and preserve cultural heritage by preserving landmarks and contextual settings as the city changes.

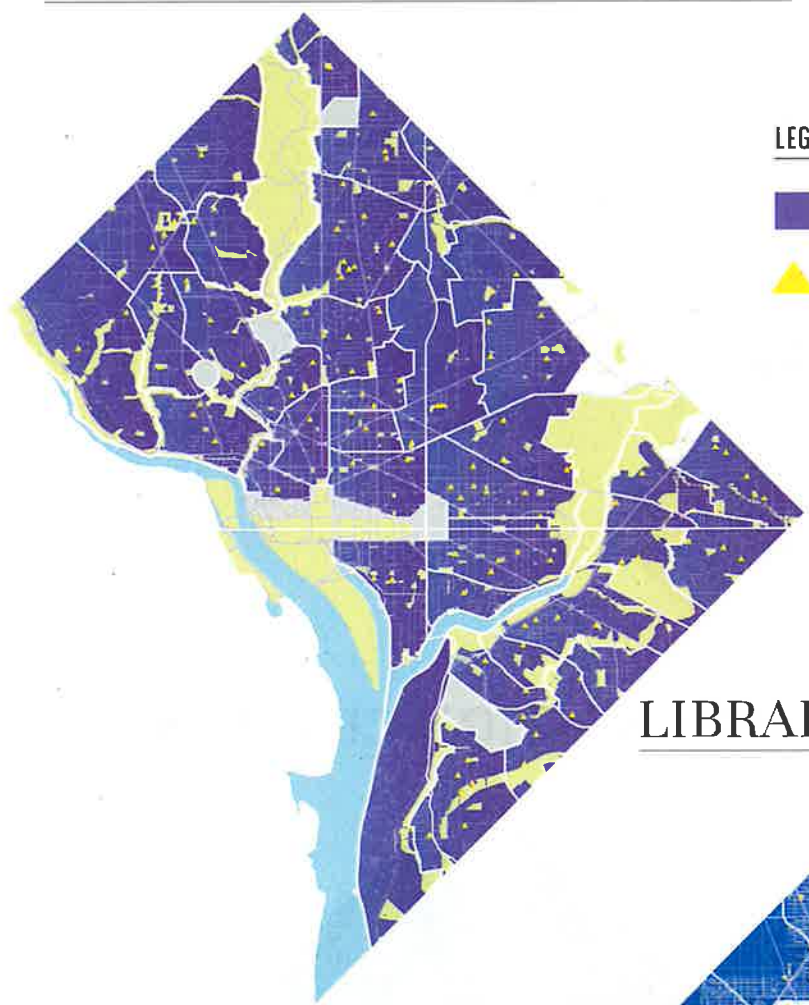


### LEGEND

-  Historic District
-  Historic Landmark

# PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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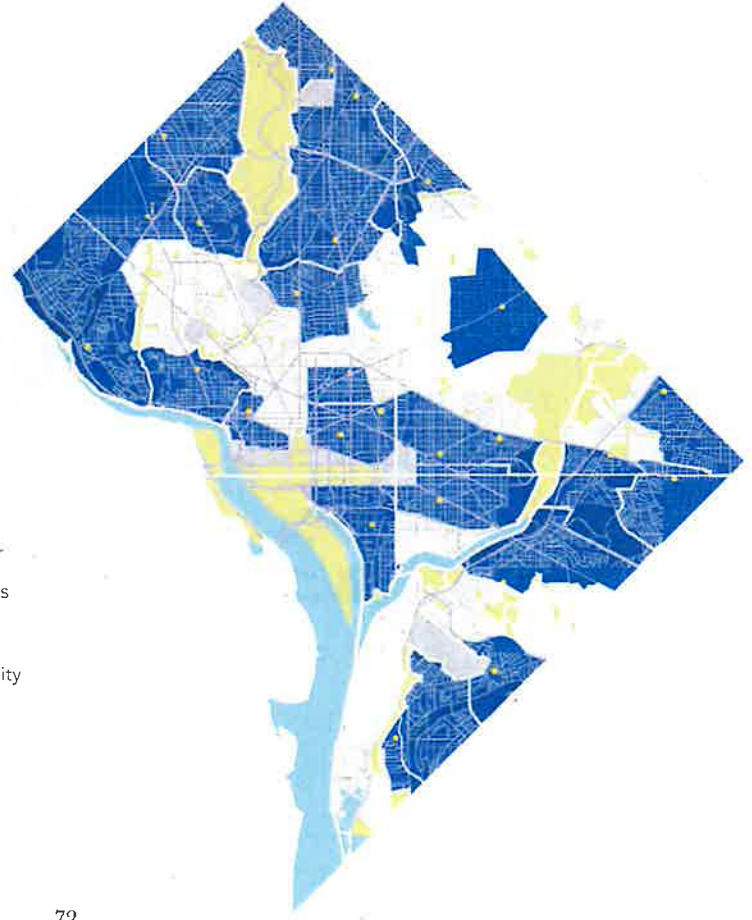
## LEGEND

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- Neighborhood Clusters with Public Schools
- DC Public Schools Facility

# LIBRARIES

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## LEGEND

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- Neighborhood Clusters with DC Libraries
- DC Public Libraries Facility

# Commercial Revitalization

The District has three major forms of place-based economic development: Great Streets, Business Improvement Districts and DC Main Streets.

Great Streets is the District's leading commercial revitalization initiative led by the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development. The program is designed to support existing small businesses, attract new businesses, increase the District's tax base, create new job opportunities, and transform emerging corridors into thriving neighborhood centers.

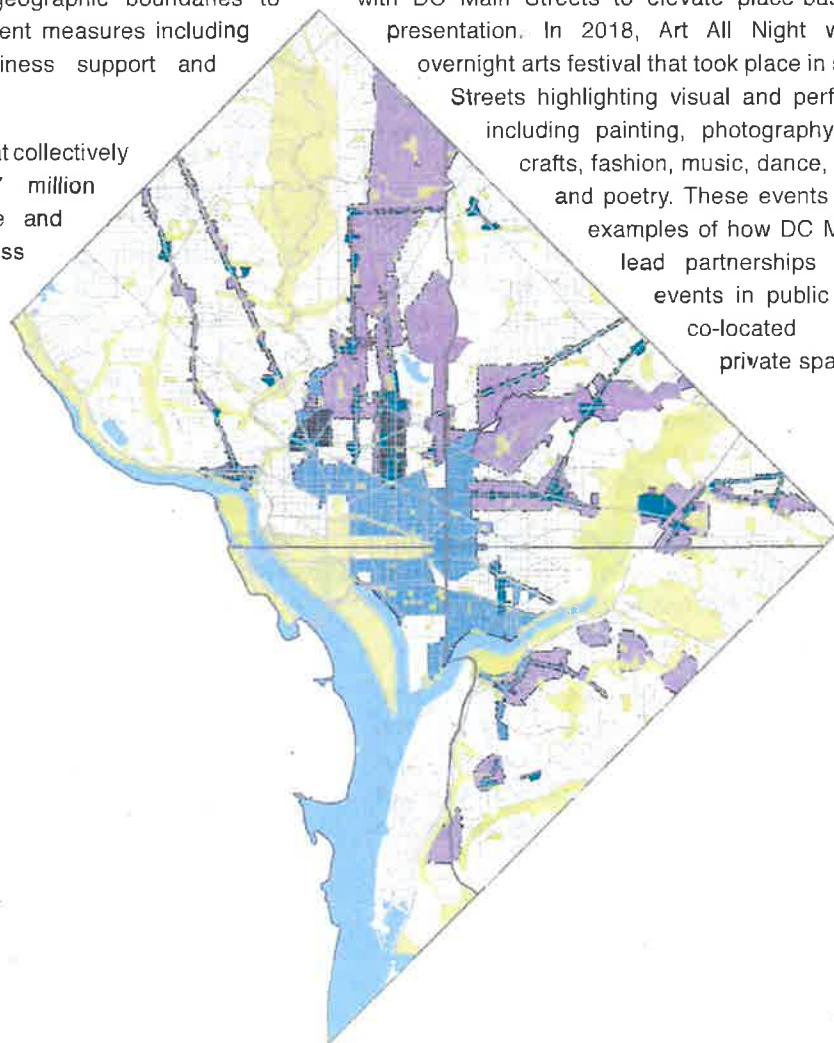
Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) support most commercial areas in or near downtown. These organizations play a key role in maintaining the commercial environment and public space in commercial areas across the city. BIDs collect additional taxes or fees within specified geographic boundaries to support business improvement measures including marketing, tenancing, business support and public space improvements.

DC currently has ten BIDs that collectively spend approximately \$27 million per year to help manage and enhance communities across the city that are home to over 189,000 DC residents and nearly 16,000 hotel

rooms serving visitors. DC's BIDs produce year-round arts and cultural events that shape life in the city. In 2016, BIDs hosted 622 events attended by 786,000 people. Most of these events were informal and social including film screenings, concerts and public art installations.

DC Main Street organizations support economic vitality, urban design, promotion and community organization in emerging and neighborhood commercial areas. In 2018 the District has sixteen official DC Main Streets representing all eight wards of the city. DC Main Street organizations are leading community partners for cultural events and installations. These organizations collaborate with creators to build and daylight community identity through public art and cultural events.

Art All Night is a leading example of how the city partners with DC Main Streets to elevate place-based cultural presentation. In 2018, Art All Night was a free overnight arts festival that took place in six DC Main Streets highlighting visual and performing arts including painting, photography, sculpture, crafts, fashion, music, dance, theater, film and poetry. These events are leading examples of how DC Main Streets lead partnerships to connect events in public space with co-located events in private space.



## LEGEND

- Great Streets Corridors
- Business Improvement Districts
- DC Main Street Corridors



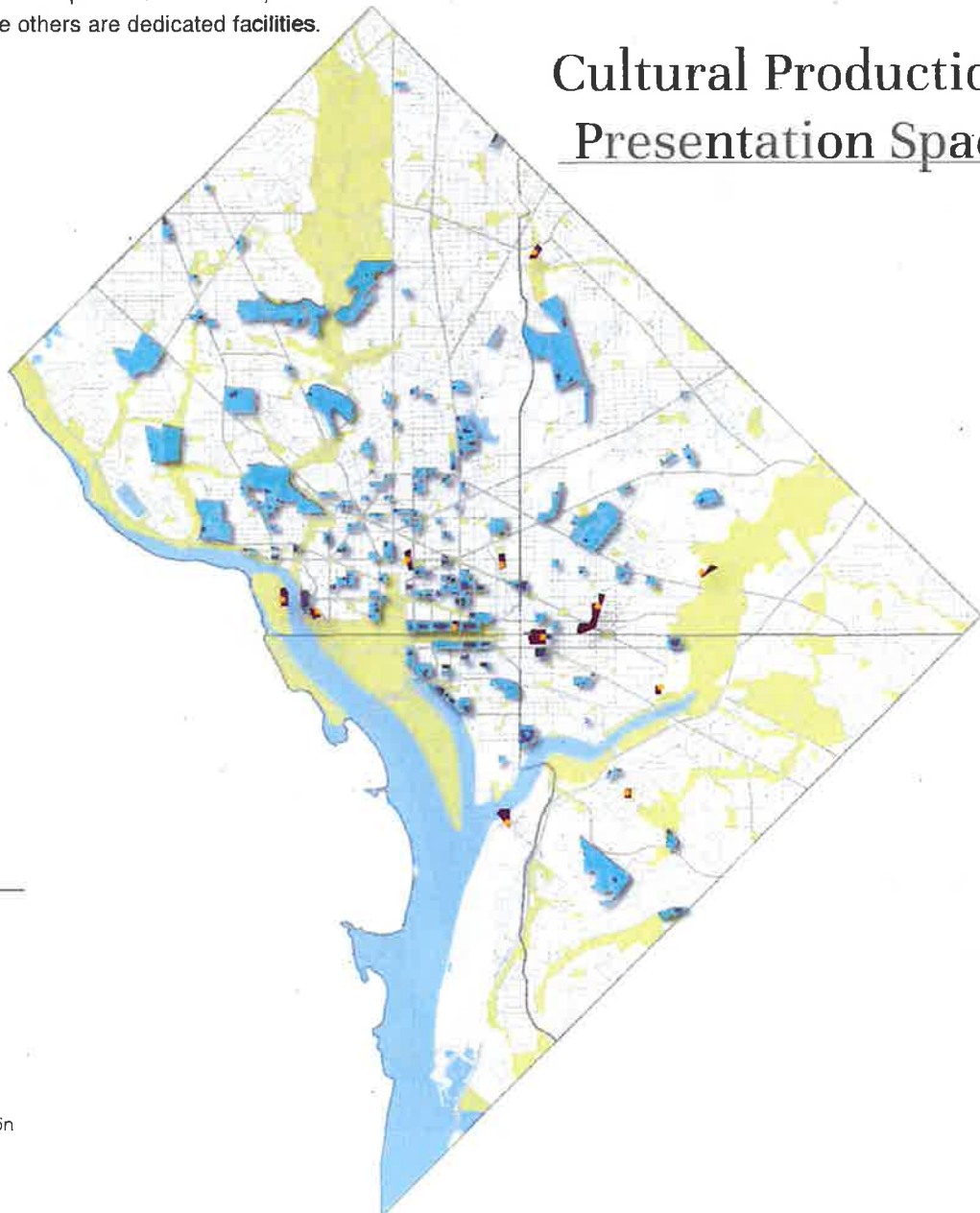
# Production

## Collectives, Studios and Practice Spaces

Culture is produced in a wide-range of spaces in preparation for public presentation. Typically, these spaces offer facilities out of public view where creators can develop new types of cultural expression. Some are simple studio spaces, others are collective production spaces. Production spaces are needed by all disciplines where some spaces are informal, such as part of a home while others are dedicated facilities.

These spaces are fundamentally important to the city's cultural landscape because they host the creative process. The unseen experimentation and collaboration feeds the city's cultural evolution.

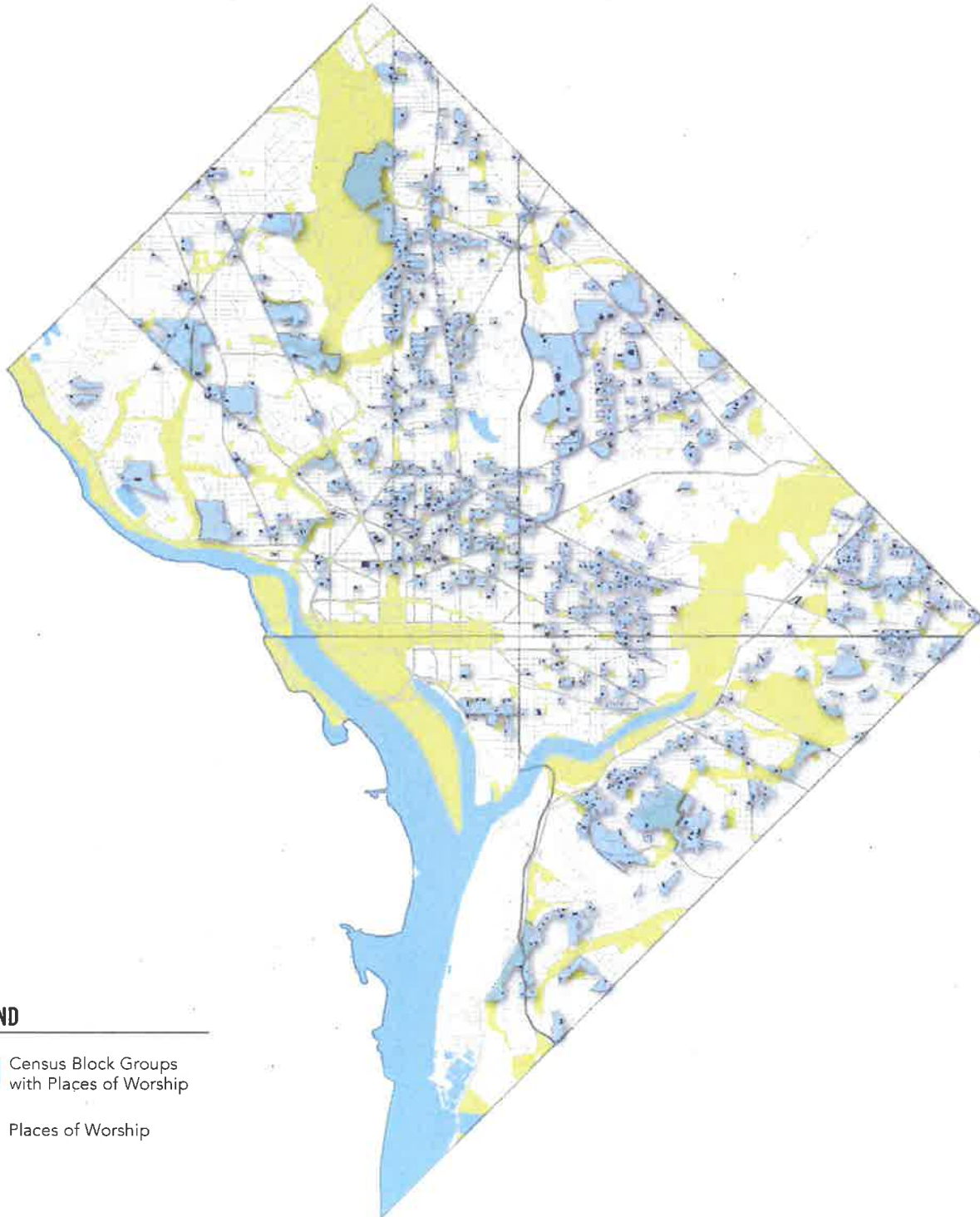
## Cultural Production & Presentation Spaces





### LEGEND

- Census Block Groups with Cultural Presentation Facilities
- Cultural Presentation Buildings
- Census Block Groups with Cultural Production Facilities
- Cultural Production Buildings

# PLACES OF WORSHIP



## LEGEND

-  Census Block Groups with Places of Worship
-  Places of Worship

# CULTURAL ASSETS & ACCESS MAP

The map below articulates how the nine preceding maps fit together to reflect the District's cultural landscape. In this map, the city's networks of schools, libraries, recreation centers, parks and places of worship provide a cultural foundation that serves every community across the city. Institutions and groups of cultural organizations form clusters of cultural production, presentation and consumption opportunities. These clusters include performance theaters downtown, museums along the mall, universities, and large entertainment venues.

The city's transportation system provides affordable access to these areas, which presents all District residents with access to cultural opportunities far beyond what most Americans experience. Additionally, communities that are adjacent to and interconnected with these facilities have an added level of cultural access that presents unique cultural opportunities.

**LEGEND**

- Typical Cultural Access:**  
These are parts of the city with typical cultural access for the District of Columbia.
- Institutionally Adjacent Communities:**  
These are communities in close proximity to major cultural institutions such as Universities.
- High Cultural Access Communities:**  
These areas depict parts of the city with exceptional access to major cultural institutions.
- Citywide Cluster:**  
These are areas where cultural institutions and organizations that predominately serve the citywide and regional cultural community are concentrated.
- Major Institutional Cluster:**  
These are areas predominantly anchored by federal institutions such as the Smithsonian.

