City of Santa Clarita

CULTURAL ARTS PLAN

Phase I

Prepared By:

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I. Executive Summary

Introduction and Purpose

In 1996, the City of Santa Clarita, in cooperation with a representative task force of arts community leaders, called the Arts Alliance, began a new initiative to identify and address the community's cultural needs. An early conclusion was the importance of cultural arts planning and this Plan was undertaken as the first of a two-part process. The purpose of this Plan (Phase I) was three-fold, to:

- Assess arts community needs
- Determine how, and to what ends, arts organizations can work in unison
- Recommend further cultural arts planning

Arts Community Needs Assessment

Arts Community Overview

Santa Clarita's nonprofit arts community includes a broad array of organizations and artists, and a substantial amount of arts programs and activities. There is a diverse spread of artistic disciplines, and a strong focus on programs for children and youth. Taken as a whole, the community's institutional development is at an early stage. The City has in recent years become the largest provider of arts programs, as measured in terms of program diversity, budget, audience, and staff. All private arts organizations are in the small-budget category, under $100,000 per year. Many arts organizations are young, few have paid artistic or administrative staff, there are relatively few paid artists, and a correspondingly strong reliance on volunteers for staff and other assistance. Programs are predominantly "mainstream," meaning not ethnically specific or overtly avant-garde. The infrastructure for arts support is also at an early stage of development: There are inadequate cultural facilities, few support services for arts organizations and artists, few institutional funding sources, and relatively little private institutional giving to the arts.

Arts Community Needs

- Facilities for performing and visual arts: Virtually all interviewees cited the need for cultural facilities, a clear need which flows from the relative lack of cultural facilities in the community, the inadequacy of existing facilities for many arts purposes, and the difficulty of obtaining access to existing venues. Several arts organizations demonstrate a need for a larger proscenium theater of approximately 600 to 1,000 seats, which could also be used for presenting and arts education performances. Other arts organizations need a small- or mid-sized theatre of approximately 200 to 500 seats. It is important to note that the arts community's need for cultural facilities does not define

the market for such facilities, further research is required in order to formulate feasible options for meeting facilities needs.

- Cooperation, coordination, and a local arts agency: Expressed in a variety of ways, there was almost universal expression of the need for arts organizations to work together cooperatively for the benefit of the arts community as a whole.
- Mission, leadership, and planning: There was strong expression of the desire for achieving consensus on a mission for the whole arts community, the need for stronger leadership, and an arts plan for the community.
- Audience development and education: Interviewees often stated the need for promoting public awareness of local arts activities, increasing arts attendance and participation, and better ongoing marketing of specific events and programs. In addition, interviewees often suggested providing educational programs in the arts for children and adults as a strategy for increasing awareness and attendance.
- Increased support: Some interviewees cited the need for more support in terms of funding and attendance.
- Assistance in self-development: Many interviewees discussed the need for arts organizations to have access to training and services which would assist them to better manage their own organizations and develop their own support.

Recommendations for Cultural Arts Development

The needs assessment permitted a full evaluation of all options for a lead agency in continued cultural arts development. The needs assessment leads to recommended options regarding the choice of lead agency and its role as a local arts agency, plus recommendations for cultural arts development:

- To assure continued cultural arts development of the community, the City is the recommended option for lead agency. It has already developed some local arts agency programs, has the best capacity to develop additional such programs, and enjoys wide community support in assuming this role.
- The public/private partnership option offers the advantage of non-governmental action, but faces substantial challenges in its own support and development.
- The objectives of the lead agency, in its role as a local arts agency, should include: Leadership in facilities research and development; an emphasis on coordination, support, and promotion of local arts activities; and additional producing of events, programs and performances only insofar as it does not duplicate or unduly compete with existing local programs. The lead agency

should pursue its role with an emphasis on representative community leadership and input and qualified, professional staff.

- With substantial community input and participation, the lead agency should refine its cultural arts mission, objectives, and structure through further cultural arts planning.

Recommendations for Further Cultural Arts Planning (Phase II)

Continued, comprehensive cultural arts planning that builds on the conclusions of this Plan is required for successful development and implementation of the above Recommendations for Cultural Arts Development. If the City chooses to become the local arts agency, the recommended options for a second phase of cultural arts planning include:

Strategic Planning for the City as a Local Arts Agency

Building on the needs assessment and recommended objectives, the City should develop a three- to five-year strategic plan that defines a mission, sets objectives and priorities, develops specific programs, addresses staffing needs and hierarchy, and evaluates costs and financing. This component of the plan should investigate the potential for arts partnerships to address community needs in non-arts sectors: Such as, economic development and cultural tourism; education; community development, redevelopment, and historic preservation; youth development; workforce readiness; health, human services, and special populations; and law enforcement.

Cultural Facilities

Addressing this issue requires looking beyond the needs of the arts community, and assessing the needs of the community as a whole, by:

- Identifying cultural facilities needs of other potential users; such as local colleges, schools, and the private sector and the potential for partnerships
- Researching the specific market for cultural arts programs, that is, what types of performances the public will purchase tickets to attend; when, where, and at what price and similar information.
- Inventorying existing facilities, the specific terms of their availability, and the limitations on their use

Once whole-community needs are clarified, Phase II will be able to develop short- and long-term strategies for cultural facilities development and evaluate costs and financing. Possible strategies to be investigated include:

- Facilities development by the City alone, through a public/private partnership, or City assistance to private arts groups to meet their own needs

- A centralized, large-or mid-sized performing arts center employing one or more theaters, or multiple facilities in different locations for different uses
- A variety of locations, including existing venues and City parks
- New construction, renovation, and/or adaptive re-use
- Specifics of shared use of cultural facilities

II. Introduction

In 1996, the City of Santa Clarita, in cooperation with the Arts Alliance, began a new initiative to identify and address the cultural arts needs of the Santa Clarita Valley area. The Arts Alliance is a task force composed of representative Santa Clarita arts and cultural leaders, who were invited by City staff to work together towards improving arts support and awareness in the community. One of the early conclusions of this joint effort was the importance and role of cultural arts planning. Researching needs and obtaining impartial, professional input was deemed essential to further effective action. Staff obtained partial funding for cultural arts planning from the Los Angeles County Arts Commission, which was matched by the City of Santa Clarita, and the City then retained Arts Consultant David Plettner to prepare Phase I of a Cultural Arts Plan.

As its name implies, this Cultural Arts Plan, Phase I, was intended as the beginning of a two-part process to assess community needs and formulate strategic plans for meeting those needs. The purpose of Phase I was three-fold, to:

- Assess arts community needs
- Determine how, and to what ends, arts organizations can work in unison
- Recommend further cultural arts planning

Based on the outcome of Phase I, the City, with input from the Arts Alliance, would determine a recommended course of action.

This Cultural Arts Plan, Phase I is organized according to its three purposes, with three principal sections (plus an Executive Summary, Introduction, and Attachments):

1. Arts Community Needs Assessment: Presents the purposes, methods, and findings of the assessment. Provides an overview of the arts community, with special reference to the City and the Santa Clarita Valley Arts Council.
2. Recommendations for Cultural Arts Development: Identifies a specific agency to undertake joint community action and appropriate objectives.
3. Recommendations for Further Cultural Arts Planning: Additional research and strategic planning to begin implementation of the above recommendations.

For purposes of cultural arts planning, the term "arts community" was defined as: Local nonprofit arts and cultural organizations, the City of Santa Clarita itself, arts and arts education programs conducted by local educational, and other non-arts organizations (e.g. the Boys and Girls Club, and California Institute of the Arts,) individual artists of all disciplines, unincorporated arts groups, and with some reference to arts organizations from outside the community whose programs impact the local community. This concept of "arts community" is distinguished from the commercial or entertainment segment of the arts, such as commercial movie theatres, entertainment-oriented theatre and music shows, commercial crafts, and similar enterprises. This distinction of nonprofit and commercial art is in some ways arbitrary and there is a gray area of semi-commercial arts activity. In addition, dividing the arts in this manner in no way implies a value judgment; rather it recognizes that the support systems for the nonprofit and education arts are substantially different. Thus, planning to improve arts support is a distinct challenge for arts occurring in the nonprofit context; and separating the nonprofit and commercial arts is merely a useful technique for accomplishing the goal of productive cultural arts planning.

III. Arts Community Needs Assessment

1. Purposes and Methodology

The purposes of the arts community needs assessment were to:

- Gain an overview of the community's arts and cultural resources
- Identify, document, and analyze specific needs of the arts community
- Measure the level of overall institutional development of the arts community

In the larger context of cultural arts planning, the intent was to first look internally at the arts community as a step towards understanding how best to both serve its needs then, in a subsequent phase of cultural arts planning, investigate how the arts can work together with non-arts elements of the community. This approach is based on the premise that the arts community and the community as a whole each benefit from identifying common needs and solutions. As an example, many recent cultural arts plans in other communities incorporate elaborate arts education components that connect local arts communities with the schools. Likewise, the arts can have an important role to play in human service agencies. Knowing the local arts community well is an imperative to planning such inter-connections.

The needs assessment methodology combined quantitative and qualitative approaches to data collection, including:

- A document review
- A survey
- An open arts community meeting
- Data analysis and comparison with relevant local, state, and national benchmarks

The document review included materials supplied by City staff and local arts organizations. Documents included relevant local plans, studies, and directories; information on the City's own programs and local arts organizations; grant applications; and sample marketing materials. The survey (see Survey Questionnaire, page 25) was conducted by telephone interviews with leaders of specific arts organizations and other arts community leaders, elected officials, and City staff (see list of Needs Assessment Survey Interviewees, page 30). The primary criteria for selecting interviewees was substantial interest and involvement in (and knowledge of) the local arts community. Through the survey, organizational data was collected on mission, programs, finances, marketing, audience, cultural facilities, and organizational needs of 16 local arts

organizations (see list of Arts Organizations Assessed, page 31). The survey also solicited opinions on the needs of the arts community as a whole, as well as how it could best work together to improve arts support. The open arts community meeting, held on September 16, 1997, was widely publicized and attracted approximately 50 participants, who provided opinions on individual and whole-community needs, as well as potential solutions.

Because one of the major issues of this Plan is to determine how the arts community can best work together, special attention was paid in the needs assessment to the City of Santa Clarita, which plays a major role in the arts community, and the Santa Clarita Valley Arts Council, which is the community's designated local arts agency.

Comprehensive national or state data on the issues in the needs assessment are virtually unavailable. There are few relevant national or statewide surveys of attendance, funding, marketing, programs, staffing, and other such indicators of arts communities. Useful interpretation of survey results is nonetheless possible through logic, limited comparison with related circumstances, and professional experience and observation. Helpful anecdotal information is also informally available from service organizations and funders.

2. Arts Community Overview

Conclusions

Santa Clarita's nonprofit arts community includes a broad array of organizations and artists and a substantial amount of arts programs and activities. There is a diverse spread of artistic disciplines and a strong focus on programs for children and youth. Taken as a whole, the community's institutional development is at an early stage. In recent years the City has become the largest provider of arts programs, as measured in terms of program diversity, budget, audience, and staff (see City of Santa Clarita's Cultural Arts Programs, below in this section). In contrast, all private arts organizations are in the small-budget category, under $100,000 per year. The average annual budget for private arts organizations (excluding the City) was very low: approximately $22,000. Many arts organizations are young; approximately half were started since the City's incorporation in 1987. Reflecting their limited financial resources, they have few paid artistic or administrative staff, relatively few paid artists, and a correspondingly strong reliance on volunteers for staff and other assistance. Programs are predominantly "mainstream," meaning not ethnically specific or overtly avant-garde. The infrastructure for arts support is also at an early stage of development: There are inadequate cultural facilities; few support services for arts organizations and artists; few institutional funding sources; and relatively little private institutional giving to the arts. The City fills some of the functions of a local arts agency, but lacks a comprehensive cultural arts plan. The Santa Clarita Valley Arts Council was created to serve as a local arts agency for the

community, but has faced substantial obstacles posed by the relative lack of an arts support infrastructure in the community. Despite passionate and diligent efforts by its board members and volunteers, the Arts Council currently fills a very limited support role.

Composition of the Arts Community

Santa Clarita's nonprofit arts community contains eight private nonprofit arts organizations, plus several additional unincorporated arts groups (two were included in the needs assessment). Several other private nonprofit organizations have active arts programs or assist private arts organizations, including the Santa Clarita Valley Boys and Girls Club and the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society. Local colleges and schools all have arts programs as well: California Institute of the Arts, College of the Canyons, Masters College, and the four public school districts. The 25 local PTAs, in part coordinated by the Santa Clarita Valley PTA Council, provide a substantial amount of arts education programming in local schools, utilizing artists and programs from both inside and outside the community. Total PTA spending on the arts is estimated to be at least $75,000 per year, making it collectively one of the largest private arts providers in the community. There also are numerous individual artists living in Santa Clarita: Professional performing and visual artists, artists who are teachers, college arts faculty, artists and designers working in the commercial media, and many avocational artists.

Budget and Funding

Several conclusions of the needs assessment are based on the facts of the arts community's budgets and the breakdown of its funding. The overall picture is one of small budgets and scarce contributed dollars. The City's total arts spending can be measured in a variety of ways, but totals more than $200,000 and is the largest in the community. The colleges, schools and private non-arts organizations included in the needs assessment occupy a second tier of arts spending, although exact figures are unavailable. Private arts organizations have the smallest budgets, ranging from $1,500 to $78,000 during the most recent fiscal year. Although there are exceptions, larger budget groups have a greater ability to attract, and rely more on, contributed income. Smaller groups generally depend more on earned income. At present there are few institutional funders— public or private— in the community, although several arts organizations are successful in obtaining smaller grants from local businesses and funders outside the community.

Artistic Disciplines, Purpose and Programs

The arts community needs assessment included 20 arts and related organizations. The breakdown by discipline is as follows (because some organizations occupy more than one category, figures do not total 20):

Having Youth Programs	11	Film	2
Youth Programs Only	7	Dance	1
		Historical	1
Multi-Disciplinary	6	Literary	1
Music	3	Visual Arts	1
Theatre	2		

As shown above, programs for children and youth are the largest discipline category, and there is otherwise a diversity of artistic disciplines. Descriptions of purposes and programs suggest that virtually all organizations are "mainstream," apparently focusing on relatively traditional art forms and styles, and not on the overtly avant-garde. None of the arts organizations is ethnically specific. There appears to be a greater amount of community-based arts activity and training, and a lesser amount of professional arts activity. There also appears to be a substantial total amount of arts activities and many groups expressed a desire for growth.

Audience

Although there are no statistical norms for arts attendance by population, overall community arts attendance appears to be moderate and organizations with larger budgets have, on the average, correspondingly larger audiences. Youth arts programs generally served larger audience numbers. The arts audience for the City's own programs can be measured in several ways, but is clearly the largest in the community. Few arts organizations collect data on their audiences, employing informal observation and estimates to quantify their attendance.

Marketing

Marketing of arts activities and programs is, in geographical terms, almost exclusively targeted at local audiences and generally employs simple, inexpensive methods. There is a normal reliance on word-of-mouth and local press and relatively little use of direct mail or paid advertising. There is little collaboration or coordination of marketing among organizations.

Staff and Volunteers

The City and colleges have virtually the only full-time paid arts staff positions. Private arts organizations, with one recent exception, cannot afford paid full-time staff, and instead generally rely on part-time, underpaid staff positions for arts administration and artistic leadership. There is substantial use of volunteer staff and other volunteer involvement, which is essential to the operations of each organization. There appear to be relatively few paid artists, reflecting the small-average budget size and community-based emphasis of many arts organizations.

Cultural Facilities

This Plan does not include a comprehensive cultural facility inventory; nonetheless the needs assessment clearly indicates the lack of adequate cultural facilities in the community (see Overview of Existing Cultural Facilities, page 32). Arts organizations frequently perform in inadequate spaces, or limit their productions to accommodate available venues. There is no medium- or large-sized proscenium theater and few visual arts facilities available to the arts community. It is important to note that the arts community's need for cultural facilities does not define the market for such facilities, further research is required in order to formulate feasible options for meeting facilities needs (see Recommendations for Further Cultural Arts Planning, Cultural Facilities, page 22). The primary existing performing arts facilities are located at California Institute of the Arts, Valencia High School, Canyon Theatre Guild, and temporary stages in the City's parks. The facilities at California Institute of the Arts are almost entirely utilized by campus activities, and the Valencia High School auditorium is small and available for private use only on a very limited basis. Canyon Theatre Guild uses its own small theatre space virtually year-round, and the City's temporary stages are erected only for its own programs. The William S. Hart High School Auditorium served as the community's primary performing arts venue until earthquake damage forced its closing in 1994. There is a similar lack of exhibition space for visual artists.

City of Santa Clarita's Cultural Arts Programs

The City's cultural arts programs have grown in recent years and the City is currently the largest provider in the community, by all measurements and by a substantial margin. Its programs are the most diverse, including the Cowboy Poetry and Music Festival, Concerts in the Parks, Arts and Crafts Fairs, a grants program, a scholarship program, several outreach programs, extensive classes, and other programs. Total annual audience for the Festival, Concerts and Fairs exceeds 35,000, plus substantial numbers for the classes and other programs. Total arts spending is divided among several budgets, but total net expenses exceed $200,000. All activities and staff are organized within the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department, but are decentralized within that Department. There are three full-time staff for these programs, plus supervisory staff, and additional part-time staff for classes and specific events. The City is now clearly filling some of the functions of a local arts agency, including convening the Arts Alliance and undertaking this Plan. However, it lacks a comprehensive cultural arts plan that could serve to refine and increase the effectiveness of its role. The programs and services typically associated with local arts agencies, or service organizations, include (not in priority order): Grants, information and referrals, technical assistance, cooperative programs such as joint marketing, operating or supporting facilities, community coordination and planning, data collection and analysis, presenting, education, awards, community events, leadership convening, and development. The topic

of local arts agencies, and the City's role, is discussed at length in the Recommendations for Cultural Arts Development, starting on page 16.

Santa Clarita Valley Arts Council

The Arts Council was founded in 1989 with the support of the City as the community's local arts agency, or service organization, to promote, encourage, and provide performing and visual arts in Santa Clarita. Current programs include: An annual variety show at Valencia High School showcasing local artists, several smaller performances in homes hosted by board members, and a newsletter. The organization has a history of larger scale programming, including presenting outside groups at the William S. Hart High School Auditorium. It also initiated a plan and funding drive to build a major performing and visual arts center, although that effort is apparently suspended. There are no paid staff; the board president serves as the primary administrator, and there are approximately 35 volunteers and 150 members. The Arts Council recently opened new office space with a small exhibition capability in Canyon Country. Its budget is approximately $7,000 per year, comprised entirely of earned income from memberships and program revenues with no contributed income.

The Arts Council has clearly faced substantial obstacles posed by the relative lack of an arts support infrastructure in the community. It arguably has also had the most challenging mission of all private arts organizations, including both providing for its own needs as well as those of the arts community. Although it has been larger in the past, it is currently a small organization with limited resources, even in the context of the local community. It is now focusing on a very limited portion of its role as the community's local arts agency; its programs do not include many of the services typically provided by local arts agencies, as described above. While its programs do seek to provide performance opportunities and exposure for local artists, its collective audience for these programs is small. Also, it does not have a strategic plan for development of such programs.

3. Arts Organization Expressed Needs

Arts organizations surveyed expressed a remarkable consistency of needs for their individual organizations. Also, the objective picture of the arts community arising from the needs assessment corroborates these needs. These needs should be distinguished from opinions about needs of the arts community taken as a whole, which are discussed below. The expressed needs of individual arts organizations are (in general order of collective magnitude):

- Facilities: Almost all arts organizations articulated facilities needs, although specific needs varied. These needs included a larger and/or better-equipped theater, a better quality of theater, having venues more available, and an exhibition space.

- Staff: Most arts organizations view adding staff as a critical need, which fits with the low number of paid staff positions in the arts community generally.
- Funding: The need for additional funding is universal and clear, given the relatively low average budgets and levels of contributed income.
- Marketing: Specific needs varied widely, but all illustrated a need to increase local awareness of the arts and develop larger audiences through expanded and/or better marketing efforts.
- Board development: Several arts organizations view improving their boards as a key to further development, and would like assistance in board training and recruitment.
- Desire for growth: Many arts organizations have specific goals for growth, such as expanding programs, obtaining a facility, or incremental improvements in operations.
- Desire for joint development and coordination of local arts community: Most organizations mentioned joint action as a need for their own organization, viewing collective effort as both a need and a partial solution to their individual challenges.

4. Arts Community Needs

Interviewees were comprehensive and articulate in their views about needs of the whole arts community. As with the expressed needs of individual arts organizations, these opinions about whole-community needs are largely corroborated by the objective facts of the needs assessment. Arts community needs include:

- Facilities for Performing and Visual Arts

  Virtually all interviewees cited the need for cultural facilities, a clear need that flows from the relative lack of cultural facilities in the community, the inadequacy of existing facilities for many arts purposes, and the difficulty of obtaining access to existing venues. Several arts organizations demonstrate a need for a larger proscenium theater of approximately 600 to 1,000 seats, which could also be used for presenting and arts education performances. Other arts organizations need a small- or mid-sized theatre of approximately 200 to 500 seats. The City is considering building a large outdoor amphitheater and has a need for better parking at its current facilities. Other facilities needs include visual arts exhibition space and for workshop or other educational spaces in local neighborhoods throughout the community. As noted above, the arts community's facilities needs may be different from the market for use of such

facilities, further research is required in order to develop feasible options for meeting facilities needs.

- Cooperation, Coordination, and a Local Arts Agency

  Expressed in a variety of ways, there was almost universal expression of the need for arts organizations to work together cooperatively for the benefit of the arts community as a whole. There was discussion of the desire to avoid unproductive competition and conflict, and to foster collective action, as a critical component of whole-community advancement. For almost all interviewees, this need included a local arts agency, or service organization of some type, as a facilitator.

- Mission, Leadership, and Planning

  There was strong expression of the desire for achieving consensus on a mission for the whole arts community, the need for stronger leadership, and an arts plan for the community.

- Audience Development and Education

  Interviewees often stated the need for promoting public awareness of local arts activities and increasing arts attendance and participation through better ongoing marketing of specific events and programs. In addition, interviewees often suggested providing educational programs in the arts for children and adults as a strategy for increasing awareness and attendance.

- Increased Support

  Some interviewees cited the need for more support in terms of funding and attendance. It is noteworthy that the majority of interviewees did not cite funding, per se, as one of the highest priority needs. Interviewees tended to see better financial support as the result of self-improvement, rather than the first-and-only means to achieve progress. This attitude reflects the actual practice in other communities, where increased financial support is combined with a variety of other strategies for cultural development.

- Assistance in Self-Development

  Many interviewees discussed the need for arts organizations to have access to training and services which would assist them to better manage their own organizations and develop their own support.

IV. Recommendations for Cultural Arts Development

1. Summary of Recommendations

One of the purposes of this Plan is to determine how the arts community can best work together and towards what ends. The mechanism for working together was broadly defined by consensus at the start of this planning process as a lead agency that would fill a local arts agency role. The potential options for the lead agency were identified as the City, the Santa Clarita Valley Arts Council, the Arts Alliance, or some other private nonprofit organization. The needs assessment permitted a full evaluation of all options for a lead agency. The three non-City options all would be public/private partnerships, so the possibilities were analyzed first as a choice between governmental or public/private action, then the specific options were evaluated individually. The "ends" were to be objectives for the local arts agency. The needs assessment leads to recommended options regarding the choice of lead agency and its role, plus recommendations for cultural arts development:

- To assure continued cultural arts development of the community, the City is the recommended option for lead agency. The City is the most feasible choice because it has already developed some local arts agency programs, has the best capacity to develop additional such programs, and enjoys wide community support in assuming this role.
- The public/private partnership option offers the advantage of non-governmental action, but faces substantial challenges in its own support and development.
- The objectives of the lead agency, in its role as a local arts agency, should include: Leadership in facilities research and development; an emphasis on coordination, support, and promotion of local arts activities; and additional producing of events, programs, and performances only insofar as it does not duplicate or unduly compete with existing local programs. The lead agency should pursue its role with an emphasis on representative community leadership, input, and qualified, professional staff.
- With substantial community input and participation, the lead agency should refine its cultural arts mission, objectives, and structure through further cultural arts planning.

2. Options for Lead Agency to Serve as a Local Arts Agency

Recommended Option: City

The City is the recommended option to assume the role of a local arts agency, based on convincing evidence that the City is the most feasible of the potential

lead agencies for facilitating continued cultural arts development. The fundamental question is: What is the most effective and sustainable mechanism for meeting the community's cultural arts needs? The best choice for a given community depends on a variety of factors, including:

- Specific community cultural arts needs
- The amount of existing local cultural arts programs
- Other existing arts infrastructure, including local arts agencies
- The availability of private support
- Community attitudes toward arts leadership
- Government cultural arts capacity

Virtually all these factors indicate that the City is in the best position to fill the role of a local arts agency. First, the need for a local arts agency is overwhelmingly demonstrated by the specific needs emerging from the needs assessment. The assessment reveals a substantial amount of cultural arts programs in the community, with a strong need for leadership, coordination, and support. The existing arts support infrastructure is insufficient to meet those needs. For example, there is little private support available to finance a private, independent local arts agency, and the Santa Clarita Valley Arts Council has indeed encountered substantial difficulty in this area.

Community attitudes towards arts leadership favor City action. The City has a demonstrated commitment to, and capacity for, effective cultural arts programming and leadership. Interviewees in the assessment expressed a clear mandate for City action in this area, citing the City's capability and current role. In addition, although some interviewees expressed general skepticism about the influence of government taking too powerful a role in arts, this was tempered with the observation that in Santa Clarita the City has the best leadership capacity. Assuming the City defines an appropriate role as a local arts agency, it emerges as the strongest alternative for effective action.

Option #2: Public/Private Partnership

The City could choose to fund an independent nonprofit organization— a public/private partnership— to serve as a local arts agency, such as the Santa Clarita Valley Arts Council, the Arts Alliance, or a new entity. The primary advantage to be gained by such an approach is greater reliance on non-governmental action. A lead agency constituted as a public/private partnership would release the City from a portion of responsibility for cultural arts development and, arguably, provide the arts community with greater freedom in implementing programs, and in making funding and other decisions. This fits with interviewees' often-expressed desire to avoid undue government influence

and action in the arts. It also recognizes that governments are better at meeting some, but not all, community needs and that the arts may be best left in the private sphere.

While it may be philosophically satisfying, a public/private partnership faces daunting challenges in its own support and development, especially in an arts environment lacking strong infrastructure. Although there is relatively little private arts funding available in Santa Clarita, a public/private partnership would compete with local arts organizations and other programs for such support. A public/private partnership could theoretically undertake to create new arts funding through a unified fundraising campaign, but such campaigns, when housed in a local arts agency, are rarely effective and there are no successful models in Southern California. In contrast, arts organizations fare much better when they can fundraise directly to meet their own needs.

The public/private partnership is essentially the approach, which has been tried in Santa Clarita for the past eight years, with very limited success. As discussed below, many of the difficulties are environmental, built into the system in which the arts now function.

The real issues are more practical than philosophical. California communities have crafted individualized means of meeting cultural arts needs, depending on each community's unique circumstances. Building consensus and leadership, having sufficient administrative infrastructure, and generating funding are all practical problems to be solved. The sum total of the needs assessment clearly indicates that the City has reached a critical mass of success factors which best equip it to meet these practical challenges. Conversely, although a public/private partnership would certainly require a substantial annual public subsidy, funding alone does not solve all these problems. Finally, the City has already taken an interest in cultural arts development. If it chooses to become the lead agency, the City retains the direct ability to define and pursue the community's interests, as opposed to attempting to fulfill them at arm's length through a private intermediary.

Option #3: Santa Clarita Valley Arts Council

The needs assessment does not indicate that the Santa Clarita Valley Arts Council should assume a greater role in cultural leadership. The community's current cultural needs have surpassed the organization's capacities, despite passionate and diligent efforts on the part of its board members and volunteers. Its programs now are not focused on the areas identified as of greatest whole-community need, its resources and fundraising abilities are modest, and the organization does not have the mandate of the arts community to assume greater leadership. There have been many substantial environmental obstacles to success, including the lack of local cultural infrastructure and funding; paid

professional administrative leadership, and research and planning information that would allow the organization to focus its energies.

Option #4: Arts Alliance or Other Private Nonprofit

The Arts Alliance has been welcomed by the arts community as a means to begin collective action for cultural arts development, but it is not widely viewed by interviewees as potentially capable of filling the local arts agency role itself. Its purpose and current capacities do not indicate that it could be effective in this role, and most of its members prefer that the City assume leadership.

Creating a new private, nonprofit organization to serve as lead agency is an option that was also considered. Given the general analysis of the public/private option above, it does not appear to be a feasible approach since it does not address the fundamental question of solving the practical problems in sustaining an effective local arts agency.

Additional Factors Affecting the Recommendation

Comparison with other Southern California communities shows that the governmental local arts agency is by far the most widely used and effective solution to cultural arts development. Private arts councils are fewer in number, weaker, generally older, and have arisen in communities with stronger, private arts support. Santa Clarita's relatively undeveloped infrastructure for arts support is common in the region. Possible explanations are: The relative newness and rapid development of Southern California cities, geographic decentralization, and extreme diversity. Southern California communities generally do not have strong, unified historical infrastructure, cultural traditions, or even geographic connection. These factors appear to help explain why there are few private mechanisms for arts philanthropy and development and why government action so often fills this role.

The City has already undertaken part of the role of a local arts agency through its existing programs. Its 1995 Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Master Plan recommended the development of additional cultural arts programs. The needs assessment of the Master Plan documented a strong, unmet need for cultural arts programs, including facilities. It also measured the general magnitude of the market for attendance at special events, festival and concerts as 17% of the population. The 1995 service area population was estimated at 189,000, yielding a figure of 32,130 potential attendees. This figure will increase due to several factors: Projected population increases (slated to grow to a maximum of 250,000 during the decade of 2010) repeat attendance during a given year, and the impact of marketing and education. These figures suggest strong public demand for further cultural arts development, including a market to support facilities development. The Master Plan also specifically

addressed public attitudes towards government action, public/private partnerships, and privatization. The public clearly supported a balanced approach to government action, with the City assuming at least a partial role in leadership of areas such as cultural arts.

This local attitude is confirmed at the national level. "Americans and the Arts VII," the seventh Louis Harris national poll of Americans' arts attitudes, documented in 1996, as it has in each of its six previous polls, overwhelming public support for government arts funding. Seventy-five percent favor such support on the local, state and federal levels. This study also documents a strong, shared national belief in the value of the arts in local communities and schools. A majority of Americans consider exposure to, and training in, the arts to be as important as the "three R's," and favor shifting school funds from sports and recreation activities to arts programs.

If the City chooses to become the local arts agency, further fiscal analysis is required to define the costs of, and potential funding for, implementation. However, given the clear needs and mandate for City leadership, the City has a remarkable opportunity to take productive action. It has indications of broad, public demand, the near-unanimous support of the arts community, participation of a broad and representative cross-section of current arts leaders, and a healthy skepticism about the role of government in the arts— what government can and cannot accomplish and the unintended consequences of concentrating further arts influence in municipal hands. The City already has a mandate for increasing cultural arts programs and has developed a leadership role. This does not conflict with the desire for strong, self-supporting arts organizations, and the contributions of individual artists within the community. The reality of arts support in the United States is that private nonprofit arts organizations must be market-worthy to a substantial extent in order to survive, even with government support. The City can readily focus its activities to foster success of the most vital, market-worthy arts activities, and giving all arts organizations an equal opportunity to develop.

3. Appropriate Local Arts Agency Role

The "ends" of cultural arts development that the lead agency should pursue in its role as local arts agency emerge clearly from the needs assessment. The local arts agency's objectives should include:

- Facilities research and development: The needs assessment identifies general facilities needs of local arts organizations. The local arts agency should identify other cultural facilities needs in the community and develop strategies for facilities development. Possibilities include a multi-phase approach where existing facilities are used or re-adapted for the short-term, while a more comprehensive solution is pursued.

Partnerships with schools, colleges, and private entities could also be pursued.

- Coordination, support, and promotion of local arts activities: The local arts agency should develop programs and services that address the non-facilities needs of the arts community, as identified in the needs assessment. They include: The development of a clear mission and a strong leadership structure, promoting cooperation and coordination, audience development and education, increased support, and assistance for self-development. Although specific program development requires further cultural arts planning, some programs and services should very likely be pursued: Joint marketing and audience development efforts; grant-making; coordinating activities, such as, master calendars; technical assistance; leadership forums and development; and partnerships with educational and other non-arts organizations.
- Don't compete: The local arts agency should clearly avoid additional producing of events, programs, and performances that duplicate or unduly compete with existing local programs. Its role should be supportive and complementary. Presenting and producing is unwise if it does not serve the local arts agency's or community's needs. For example, creating a second youth orchestra would be needlessly competitive with the existing youth orchestra, unless it was unable to meet a pressing future demand. On the other hand, the Cowboy Poetry and Music Festival does not duplicate, or unduly compete with, local arts events and must draw on outside artists to produce the desired attendance and economic multiplier effect.
- Community leadership: Strong, representative community leadership and input is required to assure that the local arts agency understands and responds to the priority needs of the arts community and that that community is invested in the agency's efforts. While further study is required into the fiscal and other impact if the City chooses to become the lead agency, it is possible that an appointed cultural arts commission with appropriate selection criteria is the best means to this end. Commission selection criteria would include broad representation of each component of the arts and arts support communities, as well as an ability to put whole community interests ahead of one's own affiliations.
- Qualified professional staff: The experience of other communities would generally indicate that staff with specific, relevant expertise in arts administration, properly compensated, and (in the case of municipal agencies) with the full support of the City's administration are essential to effective action. As with community leadership, specific choices about staffing will require further study.

- Cultural arts planning: A comprehensive cultural arts plan that addresses the specific local issues of cultural development and identifies clear community interests and goals, is required to serve as a blueprint for implementation. If the City decides to become the lead agency, cultural arts planning must also address the issue of structure and hierarchy within City government.

If the City chooses to become the local arts agency, it is also essential to recognize that the City and arts community must take responsibility together for cultural arts development. The arts community must actively participate in the City's efforts to more effectively fill a local arts agency role. The needs assessment indicated a strong need for cooperation and great desire to see cooperative action. For the City to lead effectively, local arts organizations and other arts leaders must willingly assume their roles as appointed commissioners, participants in City programs, and advocates for whole community action. It is also natural that arts organizations and artists will continue to promote their own interests. For its part, the City must always assure that there is "something in it" for the arts community. In short, the programs and services must be of sufficient value to assure continued cooperation. As some interviewees mentioned, neutrality, objectivity, and a sense of "community-mindedness" are also essential attitudes for both the City and its appointed commission.

V. Recommendations for Further Cultural Arts Planning

Continued, comprehensive cultural arts planning that builds on the conclusions of this Plan is required for successful development and implementation of the above Recommendations for Cultural Arts Development. If the City adopts the recommended option, a second phase of cultural arts planning will refine the City's role as a local arts agency and produce specific strategies in the areas of mission and goals, programs and structure, financing, and cultural facilities. The planning process will also seek to develop ways the arts can work together with other community needs and interests: The business community, local colleges, the school districts, human services, law enforcement, other non-arts agencies, and community redevelopment.

Phase II of cultural arts planning should include the following components.

1. Strategic Planning for the City as a Local Arts Agency

Building on the needs assessment and recommended objectives, the City should develop a three- to five-year strategic plan that defines a mission, sets objectives and priorities, develops specific programs, addresses staffing needs and hierarchy, and evaluates costs and financing. In addition to planning for cultural arts needs identified by the needs assessment, this component of the plan should also investigate the potential for arts partnerships in non-arts sectors. Arts partnerships could be developed to address community needs such as:

- Economic development: Involving such potential partners as the City's economic development office, the Chamber of Commerce, and major employers
- Cultural tourism: Same as above
- Education: Involving the three local colleges and four school districts
- Community development, redevelopment, and historic preservation: Involving the City, community redevelopment agency, and Historical Society
- Youth development, including diversity and tolerance issues: Involving the Boys and Girls Club and other similar agencies
- Workforce readiness: Same as above
- Law enforcement (for example, arts programs for youth-at-risk): Involving the police department
- Health, human services, and special populations: Involving agencies that serve seniors and the disabled, low-income citizens and other special populations

2. Cultural Facilities

The lack of cultural facilities is documented by the needs assessment and is viewed by virtually all interviewees as a high-priority issue. Addressing this issue requires looking beyond the needs of the arts community and assessing the needs of the community as a whole with respect to cultural facilities. To do this, and develop options for solutions, it is necessary to measure the market for public use of cultural facilities and combine this knowledge with an understanding of other potential users' needs.

The cultural facilities component of Phase II should identify whole-community cultural facilities needs by adding two new areas to the existing assessment of arts community needs:

- Identifying facilities needs of other potential users such as local colleges, schools, and the private sector and the potential for partnerships, and
- Researching the specific market for cultural arts programs, that is, what types of performances the public will buy tickets to attend, when, where, at what price, and similar information.

Phase II should also inventory existing facilities, the specific terms of their availability, and the limitations on their use. Once whole-community needs are clarified, Phase II will be able to develop short- and long-term strategies for cultural facilities development and evaluate costs and financing.

Phase II will document a range of cultural facilities needs, encompassing performing and visual arts venues of different sizes and configurations. Possible strategies for cultural facilities development to be investigated include:

- Facilities development by the City alone, through a public/private partnership, or City assistance to private arts groups to meet their own needs
- A centralized, large- or mid-sized performing arts center, employing one or more theaters; or multiple facilities in different locations, for different uses
- A variety of locations, including existing venues and City parks
- New construction, renovation, and/or adaptive re-use
- Specifics of shared use of cultural facilities

Phase II will include the use of architects with specific expertise in cultural facilities development, as well as market researchers.

VI. ATTACHMENTS

1. Survey Questionnaire

Note: The entire questionnaire was administered to representatives of arts organizations. Arts community leaders not leading a specific arts organization were asked questions only in Section B, Arts Community Needs and Solutions.

A. ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

Mission	

Program Overview

When was organization founded?	
Brief description of programs & activities	
Avg. # artists participating/year	
Avg. # activities/year	
Avg. paid attendance/year	
Avg. paid attendance/event	
Avg. total attendance (pd. & free)	
Avg. ticket price	

Venue/Facility

Where is your office?	
Rent or inkind?	
Where do you perform/exhibit?	
Name of facility(ies)	
# seats	
Rental?	
Free use?	

Staff/Volunteers

# full-time artistic staff	
# paid artists	
# paid full-time administrative staff	
# part-time administrative staff	
# volunteer staff	
# other volunteers	

Finance

Total income last completed fiscal year	
Total expenses last completed fiscal year	
Breakdown by:	
Admissions	
Performance fees	
Memberships	
Contracts for services	
Other earned income	
Government grants	
Corporate/foundation	
Individual contributions (including board contributions)	
FR event income (net)	
Fund balance (net assets) at end of last completed fiscal year	
Was last year a typical year financially?	
How/why was it different?	
Will it change significantly this year?	

Marketing

Who is your constituency?	
Audience for performances/exhibitions/events	
Students/young artists	
Other (describe)	
How do you communicate with your audience now?	
Subscription brochure	
Other mailers	
Advertisements (newspaper, radio)	
What role does word of mouth play in your marketing?	
What other marketing tools do you use to reach your audiences?	

Development

Who is responsible for grant writing?	
Who is responsible for other fundraising?	

Governance

Does board meet regularly?	
# active board members	
How does the board assist with fundraising?	
How successful is the board in fundraising?	

Your Organization's Needs

What does your organization need to better fulfill its mission?	
Please describe your organization's highest priority needs in any of the below areas:	
Programs	

Facilities/venues	
Staff	
Finance	
Marketing	
Development	
Governance	
Other needs	

B. ARTS COMMUNITY NEEDS AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

What does the arts community need as a whole?	
What should the arts community work together to accomplish?	
If the arts community works together to improve arts support, what specific objectives should it try to accomplish? Possibilities might include:	
Giving grants (grants for what purpose?)	
Facilitating joint audience development efforts	
Providing use of facilities	
Producing and/or presenting performances	
Technical assistance: consultations, workshops & other training	
Directly providing more children's arts programs	
Directly providing more adult arts programs	
Convening different elements of the community to strengthen the arts	
Leadership forums	
Partnerships with the schools	
Partnerships with other non-arts agencies	

What mechanism(s) should the arts community use to best work together? Why?	
What role can the City of Santa Clarita play in improving arts support?	
What role can the SCV Arts Council play in improving arts support?	
Do you have other suggestions for how the arts community can work together?	

2. Needs Assessment Survey Interviewees

Total Interviewees: 30

Name	Affiliation
Glenna Avila	California Institute of the Arts Community Partnership
Jim Bartos*	SCV Concert Band
Tim Ben Boydston*	Canyon Theatre Guild
Sue Bozman	College of the Canyons
Rick Byrum	Clarita Awards
George Caravalho	City Manager, City of Santa Clarita
Russ Cochran	SCV Arts Council
Patti Cook	SCV Artists' Association
Corrine Glover *	Santa Clarita Ballet Company
Dr. Anne Hazlett *	Newhall School District
Janice H. Heidt	Councilmember Pro Tem, City of Santa Clarita
Marlee Lauffer	Newhall Land and Farming
Robert Lawson	Symphony of the Canyons, SCV Youth Orchestra
Bill Lively *	SCV Arts Council
Michael Marks	City of Santa Clarita, Cowboy Music and Poetry Festival
Mike Millar	Musician
Sean Morgan *	City of Santa Clarita
Sue Neiberger	PTA Council
Rick Putnam *	City of Santa Clarita
Carol Rock *	The Signal, SCV Historical Society
Carmen Sarro	Canyon Theatre Guild & SCV Arts Council
Chris Shoemaker	SCV International Film Festival
Murray Siegel *	Sound Designer
Hamilton C. Smyth	Mayor, City of Santa Clarita
David Stears *	Santa Clarita Repertory Theatre
Larry Stein	Young Audiences
Jim Ventress	SCV Boys and Girls Club
Richard Weekley	SCV Poets
Dr. Mark Winger	Newhall School District
Kimberle Wooten*	Theatre Arts For Children

*Arts Alliance Member

3. Arts Organizations Assessed

Total Organizations: 20

Organization

California Institute of the Arts Community Partnership
Canyon Theatre Guild
City of Santa Clarita, Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services
Clarita Awards
College of the Canyons*
Newhall School District*
Santa Clarita Ballet Company
Santa Clarita International Film Festival
Santa Clarita PTA Council*
Santa Clarita Repertory Theatre
Santa Clarita Valley Artists' Association
Santa Clarita Valley Arts Council
Santa Clarita Valley Boys & Girls Club
Santa Clarita Valley Concert Band
Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society
Santa Clarita Valley Poets
Santa Clarita Valley Youth Orchestra
Symphony of the Canyons
Theatre Arts for Children
Young Audiences*

*Full organizational data was not collected from these organizations because it was not relevant to the purposes of the needs assessment.