

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

Updating the Cultural Compass Plan

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DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL

DIRECTION

Tonight's Study Session will provide a review of the 2004 Cultural Compass Plan and a proposal for updating the Plan. Staff seek feedback from Council on the proposed scope and approach to this update.

RECOMMENDATION

Proceed with a community needs assessment and update the Strategic Vision and Core Initiatives section of the Cultural Compass.

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

The Cultural Compass Plan is Bellevue's cultural development plan and was originally adopted by the City Council in September 2004. The purpose of the plan is to describe how to achieve Council's four "cultural infrastructure" priorities established in 2000 and 2003:

- Create community and neighborhood festivals and events;
- Support cultural enhancements/performing arts center;
- Define the City's role in promoting and sponsoring the cultural arts; and
- Define what actions would be necessary for Bellevue to become the cultural center of the Eastside.

Council directed the Bellevue Arts Commission to develop the plan, who in turn formed a steering committee with the mission "to develop an action-oriented, inclusive, consensus strategic vision for Bellevue's cultural development that realistically addresses the needs, interests, and priorities of all of Bellevue's residents." A consultant was brought on board to conduct a needs assessment, organize a community forum, and perform a financial analysis of Bellevue-based cultural organizations and education programs. The steering committee developed a vision and strategy based on this information. Council accepted these recommendations and adopted the plan in September 2004.

Overview of the 2004 Cultural Compass Plan and vision for the arts

The Cultural Compass narrows the scope of culture to "the entire range of fine and traditional art forms, the humanities, as well as the history and heritage of this community and this region. We include the built environment, as well as the folkways and traditions of all of Bellevue's residents, long-time and newly arrived." This definition of culture centers the "arts," or the expression of culture, as the primary activity of the cultural development process. The strategic vision of the 2004 Cultural Compass Plan is:

“By 2015, Bellevue’s cultural sector will have reached adulthood.

Some of its significant attributes are listed below:

- *Residents of Bellevue take advantage of compelling arts and cultural opportunities on multiple levels of engagement as part of the fabric of their lives.*
- *Families and friends take advantage of cultural festivals and informal cultural activities on a regular basis.*
- *The business community works hand in hand with the cultural sector to enhance the quality of life experience for both Bellevue residents and employees.*
- *Arts and cultural organizations located in Bellevue are part of an active matrix of communication and coordination.*
- *The City of Bellevue is known nationally as a model of urban cultural cultivation for cities of its scale.*
- *Residents of the Eastside come to Bellevue for leisure and educational arts opportunities (festivals, major professional offerings, and classes) often in conjunction with shopping or dining in Bellevue establishments.”*

The strategy to achieve this vision is based on a cultural development model that consists of four cross-cutting initiatives. The core initiatives serve to organize the cultural development strategy, and together with the vision, address the “why” of the plan. The four core initiatives are:

1. *Bellevue offers extraordinary cultural participation and learning opportunities for people of all ages.*
2. *Distinctive cultural districts are linked to Bellevue’s bustling commercial districts.*
3. *Bellevue’s maturing cultural sector builds its visibility, identity, and capacity.*
4. *Bellevue develops and attracts strong leadership in support of its cultural sector’s infrastructure and funding.*

These initiatives unfold across eight cultural topics that are discussed in detail in separate sections which include a goal statement and set of actions. These eight sections serve as the strategy and address the “how” of the plan. The eight sections in the 2004 plan include:

- *Cultural Organizations and Artists*
- *Cultural Economic and Business Development*
- *Cultural Diversity*
- *Cultural Education*
- *Cultural Facilities*
- *Public Art*
- *Cultural Resources*
- *Administrative Infrastructure*

Why an update is needed

The Cultural Compass Plan was intended to be a ten-year plan, guiding the work of the City and its community partners from 2005-2015 based on Council’s cultural infrastructure priorities at the time.

Since 2004 much has happened to shape and reshape the cultural landscape, including the 2008 economic downturn and subsequent economic boom.

In the years after the plan's adoption, nearly half of the nonprofit cultural organizations operating in Bellevue in 2004 ceased operations. Nearly all the professionally managed organizations in the performing arts are gone. In their place, a dozen new volunteer-based organizations have emerged that serve the cultural needs of the City's growing ethnic populations. By updating the Cultural Compass Plan, the City will be better positioned to adapt to and address the future cultural needs of Bellevue's residents and cultural community.

More recently, newer initiatives within the community continue to evolve the opportunities for cultural development and investment. For instance, the Grand Connection and Creative Edge projects present the opportunity for the arts to play a driving role in community redevelopment and the creative economy. Community driven projects such as PACE, the Bellevue Arts Museum, Kids Quest, and the Pacific Northwest Ballet play an important role as the emerging leaders of Bellevue's culture sector.

All these changes mean that the cultural sector today is very different from when the plan was adopted 15 years ago. Updating the Cultural Compass Plan will provide the City and its partners clearer direction and ideas on how to approach and support these opportunities.

The approach to updating the Cultural Compass Plan

The scope of this project is to evaluate the cultural needs of the community and revise "Part I: Strategic Vision and Core Initiatives" within the 2004 Cultural Compass Plan for approval by the City Council. The process includes quantitative evaluation, community engagement, drafting action strategies, and a request for formal approval by Council in the spring of 2020.

This proposed scope does not include updating the eight cultural topics because it is important to clarify the "why" of the plan before addressing the "how." An updated strategic vision and core initiatives may change the kinds of cultural topics that need to be included as part of the strategy. Future work will be determined by the Council's updated strategic vision for the arts.

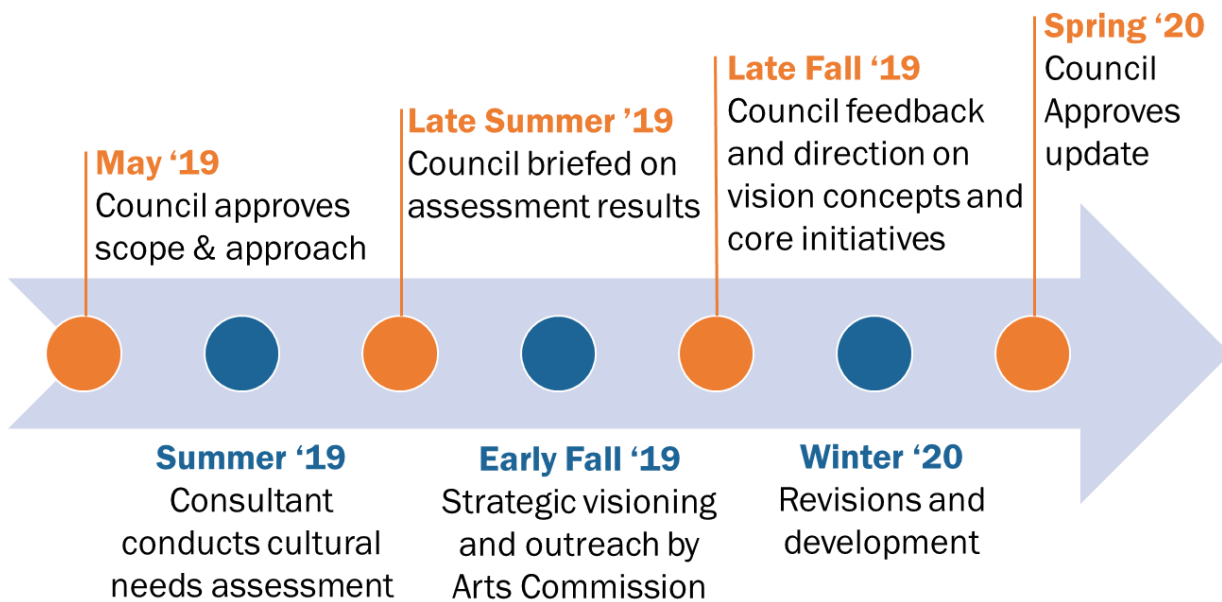
The project will occur in three stages:

Stage 1: Cultural Needs Assessment in Summer 2019. Staff will work with an experienced consultant to design and implement a community survey to identify the arts and cultural opportunities and services of value to the Bellevue community, and determine the unmet cultural needs and cultural development potential in Bellevue. The Cultural Needs Assessment will complement the City's annual performance survey and the Human Services Assessment in so far as it collects data about the cultural dimension of Bellevue's quality of life not currently collected by these other surveys. An extensive community engagement effort includes a survey of Bellevue residents, the use of the online engagement tool *Engaging Bellevue* – established as part of the Great Neighborhoods program – and additional efforts targeted to artists, cultural organizations, and underserved populations. At the conclusion of this stage, Council will be asked to provide direction on an updated set of cultural priorities to guide the strategic visioning process.

Stage 2: Strategic Visioning in Fall 2019. Using the results of the Community Needs Assessment and Council’s updated cultural priorities, staff will work with a consultant to update “Part I: Strategic Vision and Core Initiatives” within the Cultural Compass Plan document. Under the guidance of the Arts Commission, the strategic visioning process will include additional engagement with cultural stakeholders and partners including visioning sessions that will consider how to achieve Council’s updated cultural priorities.

Stage 3: Council Approval in Spring 2020. The Arts Commission will submit a draft document to Council for feedback in late Fall 2019 and will make a final recommendation to the City Council for approval in Spring 2020.

Please see the below timeline for more information about the Council process.



POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

Policy Impact

The Cultural Compass Plan is a separate and complementary plan to the Comprehensive Plan and designed to both inform arts and cultural policies in the Comprehensive Plan and provide a roadmap for implementation. The updated Cultural Compass Plan will inform the next Comprehensive Plan update process (2021-2023). For a list of the current arts and cultural policies, please see Attachment A: Arts and Cultural Policies.

Fiscal Impact

The project is funded through the existing Cultural and Economic Development budget.

OPTIONS

1. Proceed with a community needs assessment and update the Strategic Vision and Core Initiatives section of the Cultural Compass.
2. Proceed with a community needs assessment and update the Cultural Compass Plan with a different scope.
3. Do not proceed with updating the Cultural Compass Plan.

ATTACHMENTS & AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS

- A. Arts and Cultural Policies

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

2004 Cultural Compass Plan