



**Commission on the Future of the Arts
In Fairfax County**

**Final Report to the
Board of Supervisors**

July 2008

Commission on the Future of the Arts in Fairfax County

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Preface

In March 2006, at the request of Chairman Connolly and Supervisor Gross, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved an initiative to create a Commission on the Future of the Arts in Fairfax County.

The commission was charged with undertaking a comprehensive review of the current state of the visual and performing arts and what steps should be taken to strengthen the arts as an important component in the overall quality of life and economic vitality of Fairfax County. The examination included

- A review of current physical facilities for the arts in the county, how those facilities do or do not serve the needs of the community, and what types of facilities might be required to meet current and future needs, including an examination of whether or not to look closely at the need for a large, state-of-the-art performing arts center serving the entire county;
- The need for public art in public spaces and how such a program might be funded and administered;
- The role of the arts in Pre-K through 16 education and the role of the arts in lifelong learning opportunities for residents of the county;
- Ensuring that the arts serve the needs of an increasingly diverse county population; and
- The role and relationship of the arts to economic development and the business community, as well as the role and relationship of the arts to county government.

In the fall of 2006 the members of the commission were selected with Dr. Alan Merten, President of George Mason University as chair. The commission roster is found as *Attachment 1* to this report.

The commission acknowledges with thanks the significant assistance it received in the research and information gathering required to prepare its findings and recommendations. Special thanks to the PNC Foundation, and the regional president of PNC, Michael Herrald, for providing the financial support that greatly assisted the commission in its work. As consultant to the commission, Duncan Webb of Webb Management Services provided the benefit of his firm's national experience and expertise in looking at the role

of the arts in overall community development and “lessons learned” from other similar jurisdictions.

Thanks as well to the Arts Council of Fairfax County, the Fairfax County Park Authority, and the Fairfax County Department of Community and Recreation Services all of which assisted the commission in its review of existing facilities and programs as well as thinking about the vision for the future of the arts in Fairfax County.

Finally, the commission expresses its sincere appreciation to the numerous arts leaders and county residents who expressed their views and shared their unique perspectives through a commission hosted open forum and in many other informal settings.

The findings and recommendations that follow represent the commission’s collective assessment of current realities and a vision for the future of how the arts can play an important role in maintaining and strengthening the unique qualities that make Fairfax County a national leader in so many areas of endeavor. This report does not focus in detail on implementation issues. It is our hope that the Board of Supervisors, the business community and arts leaders from across the county, as well as the many residents of the county for whom the arts play a major role in their lives, will come together to advance the agenda proposed by the commission.

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Commission on the Future of the Arts in Fairfax County was created by the County Board of Supervisors to undertake a review of the current state of the visual and performing arts in the county and what steps should be taken to strengthen the arts as an important component in the quality of life and economic vitality of Fairfax County.

The commission looked at these issues from a variety of perspectives:

- Audiences
- Participants (those who actually “make art”)
- Existing organizations
- Arts educators
- Arts facilities
- Sources of public financial support for the arts
- Sources of private financial support for the arts

These elements are often intertwined and progress in one area cannot be accomplished without an active connection to other areas. However complex the issues, and however challenging may be the current economic climate, the commission believes that progress can be made on a number of these issues.

The focus of the commission’s work was to look at existing arts-related facilities in the county and how those facilities do or do not serve the needs of arts groups and county residents generally, as well as what types of new facilities might be needed to meet current and future needs. The facilities examination also included a review of the issues related to the need for a large performing arts center to serve the entire county and the region.

In addition to facilities, the commission was asked to address how Fairfax could address the issues of public art in public places, the role of the arts in providing lifelong learning opportunities for Fairfax residents from Pre-K to seniors, ensuring that arts-related opportunities are available to all of Fairfax’s ethnically diverse communities, the role and relationship of the arts to economic development, and the role of county government in both directly and indirectly supporting the arts.

Over a period of more than a year, the full commission met six times, in addition to subcommittee meetings. In June, 2007 the commission hosted a well attended open forum at Government Center at which many Fairfax-based visual and performing arts groups were represented.

During the course of its inquiry, the commission reviewed prior similar studies in Fairfax, research conducted by the Arts Council of Fairfax County, the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority, the Fairfax Chamber of Commerce, and the Americans for the Arts, among other sources. The commission also met with key community leaders from the public schools to assess the direction of arts education in the county. In addition, the commission engaged the expertise of Webb Management Services to look at the experience of other similar jurisdictions with regard to arts facilities and resources.

The commission is certainly cognizant of the county's current financial constraints and therefore has carefully considered its priorities, as well as the timeframe for implementation of its recommendations. Some items require immediate investment of time and modest financial resources. For other items, discussions and planning can begin now with implementation over a longer period of time.

Findings and Recommendations

A list of all commission recommendations is attached to this report as *Attachment 6*.

The commission began its work by looking at what is perceived as the strengths and weaknesses of the arts in the county as well as opportunities for growth and development. It then developed a statement articulating its vision for the future of the arts in Fairfax County:

Fairfax County will be a community that is recognized for its leadership in the arts. It will be a county in which the arts reflect the county's diversity and are recognized and valued as integral to its future. Its passion for the arts will be demonstrated through public policy in partnership with businesses, educators, artists, and residents.

Through its research the commission became mindful that much of the conversation around arts facilities and resources is today focused on arts *audiences*. However, we are clearly in an era when increasingly residents are looking for opportunities to actually *participate* in art making either individually or through organized groups. The ability to provide "messy space" and the technical capacity for meaningful arts participation to occur is what will increasingly define how well a community fulfills the expectations of its residents with respect to the arts.

Facilities

The commission found that existing arts facilities in the county are not only limited in number, but those that do exist are often too large or too small and technically inadequate to meet the needs arts organizations. There is a serious lack of spaces for people to actually "make art".

High Priority Recommendation

The commission strongly recommends that the major focus of new arts facilities in Fairfax be aimed at building three to four community-based arts centers each containing an approximately 500-seat, well-equipped performance space for music, dance and theater, as well as studio, teaching and exhibit space for visual artists. The commission suggests the idea of building one such center as a “pilot” to examine utilization patterns and how well the mix of services and spaces within the facility meet the needs of the community. There are several existing community centers and park facilities in Fairfax County that could be expanded and renovated to meet these requirements. The county should explore these possibilities with the Department of Community and Recreation Services and the Fairfax Park Authority.

Priority Recommendations

With respect to a large performing arts space (1,500+ seats), the commission found that such a space is necessary to meet the needs of a small number of local arts organizations and to bring to Fairfax outstanding artists from around the world. Such spaces currently exist at Wolf Trap and George Mason’s Center for the Arts. A first-class performing arts facility has the potential to make Fairfax a destination for the arts, much as we have seen with the Kennedy Center in the District and Strathmore in Montgomery County.

The commission recommends that the county explore several options regarding a large venue. A new, free standing performance space at Wolf Trap is one possibility. Another would be an expansion and renovation of the existing Center for the Arts at George Mason University. These two options would require a substantial financial commitment from the county, perhaps the state, Wolf Trap or the University, and the private sector.

A third option might be the construction of a multi-use complex, perhaps at Government Center, to include a large hall along with smaller performance venues, as well as conference facilities. There do exist models across the country of large performing arts spaces that are built as part of a larger project including commercial, retail and/or residential components.

The commission’s report outlines a number of the potential benefits and cautions regarding constructing a new large performance space. Even if construction funds are available, operating expenses would be significant and would likely require a combination of both public funding and private fundraising.

The needs of visual artists for affordable studio, teaching, exhibit and living space require special attention. While Fairfax lacks the inventory of 19th century factories and warehouses that have been adapted elsewhere for use by visual artists, there are a number of older strip malls in the county that might serve as the core for developing an “urban” visual arts “Soho” experience that would not only meet the needs of visual artists, but would add to the economic vitality of the county.

Public Art in Public Places

Most jurisdictions the size of Fairfax County have policies and procedures in place that have guided the development of dynamic public art programs. Fairfax County has no such program. While various public art programs in the county are in the development stage, including a privately funded study for public art in Reston, a county-wide public art program is long past due for Fairfax. As major commercial development activity continues to be planned for various sectors of the county from Tysons to BRAC-related locations, it is an opportune time for county government to enact a public art program.

High Priority Recommendation

The commission recommends that the Board of Supervisors task the Arts Council to establish a public/private task force on a public art program for the county which would consult widely with the appropriate constituencies and develop several alternative policies and procedures, and the financial impact of each, for consideration by the Board. The Task Force would address such issues as lessons learned from other jurisdictions, funding mechanisms and financial impact, the scope of a public art program, and how the community at-large should be engaged in such a program. Both Montgomery County and Arlington County have models that can be considered.

Arts Education for Life

The Fairfax County Public Schools is known for having one of the best K-12 arts education programs in the country. The Wolf Trap Foundation provides a wide variety of arts education programs for teachers and learners of all ages and skill levels. It's Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts provides arts education programs and services for children three to five years of age and their teachers. In addition, there are numerous arts education programs available for seniors through community centers and membership programs such as the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute affiliated with George Mason University.

High Priority Recommendation

In a period of financial constraint, the requirements of federal legislation such as "No Child Left Behind," and state Standards of Learning, make it increasingly important for the local arts community and business community to urge the public schools to maintain and strengthen its commitment to a quality arts education for every student. Arts education not only has its intrinsic value, including building the arts audiences for tomorrow, but the extrinsic value of preparing students to be innovative, analytical, disciplined and self-confident.

The Relationship of the Arts to Economic Development and County Government

A recent study by American for the Arts reports that nonprofit arts and culture is a significant industry in Fairfax County generating \$77.75 million in local economic activity (2005 data). The spending by nonprofit arts organizations and the event-related spending by their audiences supports 1,693 full-time equivalent jobs, and generates \$4.59 million in is state and local government revenue. Clearly, supporting the arts not only enhances our quality of life, but is a critical element in what businesses want in a community.

While these data illustrate the importance of the arts to the county and the business community, neither sector has supported the arts at a level that allows it not only to grow, but to flourish.

Although the most visible performing and visual arts organizations in the county receive some annual support from the business sector, overall operating, special project or endowment support is very modest both in absolute terms and in comparison to similar jurisdictions, especially Montgomery County. The reasons for this are outlined below, but it is clear that the future of the arts in Fairfax cannot rely on government support and the support of individuals. Given the role the arts play in the economic future and overall quality of life in Fairfax, the business community – especially those larger companies with a significant workforce in the county should “step up to the plate” and become leaders in supporting the arts.

High Priority Recommendations

Several members of the County Board of Supervisors, and especially its Chairman, Gerry Connolly, have been, and continue to be, articulate advocates for the arts. However there are numerous ways in which county government can act, even during a period of fiscal constraints, to strengthen the arts and move us toward a shared vision for the future of the arts in Fairfax County. These include doing more to promote the arts locally and nationally, providing additional resources to the Arts Council (FY08 grants budget is \$680,000 vs. just under \$4 million in Montgomery County), developing an overall cultural facilities plan for the county, launching a public arts program, providing improved services and arts opportunities for the many ethnic arts organizations in the county, and using both public policy and the “bully pulpit” to encourage greater business support for the arts.

Priority Recommendation

The Arts Council of Fairfax County, an independent 501(C)(3), is the primary advocate and resource for Fairfax arts organizations and individual artists. However, there is no office or individual within county government that can advise the County Executive and Board of Supervisors and advocate for the arts. The commission urges the county to explore creating such an office.

As Chairman Connolly said recently at the annual meeting of the Arts Council of Fairfax County, “Fairfax County is first in the nation in household income, has world class public education, health services, public safety, and parks and recreation. We have an economic climate that is the envy of the nation. It’s time we did the same for the arts.”

Previous Studies on Fairfax County Arts Infrastructure

Since 1970 there have been four formal studies undertaken examining the need for cultural facilities in Fairfax County. Additional studies have been commissioned dealing with site specific facilities that would serve a small section of the county.

- 1970 *Study of Feasibility and Program Alternatives for a Cultural/Recreation Facility in Northern Virginia*. Prepared by Gladstone Associates for the Northern Virginia Recreation and Cultural Authority
- 1976 *Fairfax County Cultural and Heritage Center Feasibility Study*. Prepared by Fothergill Beekuis Associates for the Fairfax County Park Authority
- 1985 *Study for a Major Arts Complex in Fairfax County*. Prepared for Hazel/Peterson Companies by Harrison Price Company
- 1990 *A Study of the Need for a County-Wide Cultural Facility in Fairfax County*. Prepared by the Wolf Organization for the Fairfax County Government
- 2001 *Town of Herndon Community Cultural Arts Center Feasibility Study*. Prepared by Webb Management Services for the Town of Herndon

None of these studies resulted in additional facilities, but several did have an impact on the design and construction of school and recreational facilities that have been used heavily by local performing and visual arts groups.

While much has changed since the last study of a county-wide arts facility in 1990, there are elements of these studies that are certainly applicable today. The recurrent theme is a *focus on meeting the needs of local performing and visual arts organizations for performance, rehearsal, workshop and storage space, as well as exhibition venues*.

The studies warn against the “one size fits all” approach. Small organizations need specific types of spaces in terms of seating capacity and support facilities. More established groups require somewhat larger spaces through which they can grow their audience and therefore their potential for contributed support. Music, dance and theater each have very specific requirements to effectively do their work. The issue of proximity is also important. Arts facilities must be located in ways that best serve the various geographic areas of the county.

It is interesting to note that none of the studies through 1990 focused on giving expression to the cultural heritages of Fairfax’s increasingly diverse population. This is clearly an important element in 2008.

With respect to a large cultural facility to serve the entire county, the 1990 Wolf study was written just prior to the opening of George Mason’s Center for the Arts. It was assumed then that the Center for the Arts and Wolf Trap would meet the need for large presenting spaces.

The commission has examined how the dynamics have changed over the last 18 years and what mix of facilities will best meet the needs of Fairfax residents now and in the future.

An annotated list of previous arts infrastructure studies in Fairfax County is found as *Attachment 2* to this report.

The Arts in Fairfax County

A Vision for the Future

The commission began its work by discussing a vision for the future. By 2030 what do we want the arts in Fairfax to look like? What opportunities should be available to all our residents? What role should the arts play in the overall quality of life in Fairfax as well as its continuing economic vitality? What is the role of both the public and private sectors in realizing this vision for the arts?

The commission looked at its vision for the future from a variety of standpoints:

- Audiences
- Participants (people “making art”)
- Arts organizations
- Arts educators
- Arts facilities
- Sources of public financial support for the arts
- Sources of private financial support for the arts

To begin to answer the questions posed above the commission examined what it perceived to be the strengths and weaknesses of the arts in Fairfax County as well as the existing opportunities for growth and development.

Strengths

- High rate of participation in arts activities
(According to a 2002 Shugoll Research study, 72% of Fairfax households reported participating or attending at least three cultural events during the past year)
- Strong demographics that support arts participation and attendance
(Disposable income, educational attainment, homeownership)
- A vibrant business community
- Strong Pre-K through 12 arts education programs
- Growing demand for additional arts opportunities, especially for facilities
- Major presenting venues in the county or close by
(Wolf Trap, Mason Center for the Arts, Strathmore, Meriwether Post, Nissan Pavilion)
- New arts facilities in the advanced planning or construction stage
(Lorton Workhouse, Herndon Community Arts Center)
- Diversity in population leads to a diversity of cultural offerings
- Supportive elected officials
- Large number of arts groups networked through the Arts Council
- Youth cohort demanding new art forms and new delivery vehicles
- Strong regional arts community from which to draw, especially in the District

Weaknesses

- Although Fairfax County is justifiably proud of its leadership in many quality of life components, a leadership position in the arts is absent
- Performing arts venues are not distributed throughout the county leaving some areas underserved
- Fairfax County has very little in the way of public art in public places and has no formal policies in place to encourage public art
- In both the visual and performing arts, facilities of the right size and technical capacity are lacking, as is the presence of a large, attractive and technically advanced facility
- In the visual arts, there is a serious lack of both exhibit space and studio space
- There is active competition for private funds among arts groups and from non-arts groups in the region
- Lack of recognition of the value of the arts to economic vitality, especially the role of the arts in providing jobs and ancillary income for small business
- Lack of a sense of county-wide community may translate into lack of support for the arts county-wide
- Lack of arts-related public policies generally
- Lack of public and private funds available to support arts organizations relative to other jurisdictions such as Montgomery and Arlington Counties
- Transportation and traffic plays a role in the ability of people to travel cross county for arts activities
- Difficulty in integrating culturally diverse arts activity with “mainstream” arts activity
- Financial and organizational fragility for many arts organizations in the county; Arts organizations often lack the knowledge and ability to effectively raise funds and market their activities
- Lack of significant support for the arts from the business community; no “executive champion” who can rally support from others
- Lack of an overall cultural facilities plan for the county

Opportunities

- Lack of a primary, county-wide arts facility that can be used by local arts organizations provides a future opportunity to make a dramatic impact for the performing and visual arts
- An opportunity to create a world-class pan-arts festival for Fairfax that draws on local and regional talent as well as touring artists
- Through increased partnerships, an opportunity to enhance arts education at all levels and for all age groups
- Incorporate the arts more fully into the public policy of Fairfax County in areas such as facilities support and public art, among others
- Involve the business community more fully in the arts by demonstrating the value of the arts to economic growth

- Maximize the use of currently available performance and exhibition venues by an online reservation and information service
- An opportunity to make Fairfax County a leader in presenting the arts of varied cultures

Given existing strengths and opportunities, with strategies to address these weaknesses, the commission presents the following statement articulating its vision for the future of the arts in Fairfax County:

Fairfax County will be a community that is recognized for its leadership in the arts. It will be a county in which the arts reflect the county's diversity and are recognized and valued as integral to its future. Its passion for the arts will be demonstrated through public policy in partnership with businesses, educators, artists, and residents.

This vision for the future can best be attained through integration of a vision for the arts with the vision for the county as a whole.

As outlined in the 2007 American for the Arts study, *Arts and Economic Prosperity III: The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and Their Audiences in Fairfax County*, the arts are a highly significant, and often forgotten, industry. In 2005 total spending by nonprofit arts and culture organizations and their audiences in event-related spending was \$77.5 million. This spending supported 1,693 full-time jobs, generated \$35.01 million in household income to residents of Fairfax, and delivered \$4.59 million in state and local government revenue. As this economic impact study states, “when we support the arts, we not only enhance our quality of life, but we also invest in Fairfax County’s economic well-being.”

The full text of the Americans for the Arts economic impact study for Fairfax County can be found as *Attachment 3* to this report.

It is perhaps symptomatic that recent planning initiatives for the county such as *Planning for the Future*, and the Fairfax Chamber of Commerce’s *Fairfax 2030* project hardly mention – if at all – the arts as an element in looking at the future of the county.

These and other studies look at future trends and implications of population growth, the “graying” of Fairfax, ethnic diversification, children and youth, housing, health care, technological change, public safety, and community engagement but ignore the role public and private sectors can and should play in utilizing the arts as an important vehicle in achieving desired goals.

It is our hope that this report will lay out an agenda for the future of the arts in Fairfax County and in so doing, will place the vitality of the arts firmly on the agenda of county government, the business community and all who value the quality of life and economic progress of the county.

Arts Facilities: Where All Discussions Begin

"We've been doing so much for so long with so little, that I think people begin to think we can do anything with absolutely nothing"

Fairfax arts leader
June 2007

In 2005 there were 242 501(c) (3) arts organizations in Fairfax County. There are also dozens of others that have not taken the formal step of becoming a formal non-profit. Of the 242 organizations, 98 filed IRS *Form 990* required of groups that have annual income of \$25,000 or above.

Most visual and performing arts groups in Fairfax (and across the country) operate off the radar screen of government. They are driven by a small group of individuals whose passion for theater, music, dance, crafts, and the visual arts sustain them year in and year out. For many, their active participation in the arts is a central component of their lives. These activities most often take place in private homes, local places of worship, schools (public and private), and community centers. Sustainability is normally only as strong as the ardor of the leader of the core group.

For larger, more established, organizations such as the Fairfax Symphony, Fairfax Choral Society, Fairfax Ballet, the Elden Street Players, or the McLean Project for the Arts, many assume their facilities issues are "solved" since they are performing, producing, exhibiting, etc. However this is far from the truth.

In discussing the future of the arts in Fairfax, the commission was confronted time and again by the central issue of facilities. At the Fairfax Cultural Policy Summit held on May 25, 2005, the three main topics of discussion were solving the space issue, collaborations and partnerships, and public policy.

On June 20, 2007, the commission hosted an Open Community Forum at Government Center to discuss a range of arts-related issues. Close to 100 people attended and 18 organizations were represented. By far, facilities issues dominated the discussion.

The Fairfax Arts Facilities Inventory

With the assistance of the Arts Council of Fairfax County and Duncan Webb of Webb Management Services, the commission reviewed existing performing and visual arts facilities in Fairfax.

An annotated list of those facilities can be found at *Attachment 4* to this report.

Findings

While there are a number of facilities in the county that are used extensively by arts groups, the overwhelming majority of arts events are held in multi-use spaces that do not meet the basic needs of those user groups. This is especially true for the visual arts and performing arts groups whose audiences normally range from 300-500. Larger groups such as the Fairfax Symphony and Fairfax Choral Society have found homes at the George Mason Center for the Arts and Schlesinger Concert Hall on the Alexandria Campus of Northern Virginia Community College.

In reviewing existing arts spaces it is important to make the distinction between facilities that are used by county residents for their own participatory activities and those that serve as venues for professional and semi-professional presentations and exhibitions.

Regarding the current arts facilities inventory, the commission has concluded the following:

1. Existing arts facilities are lacking in terms of appropriate size, technical capacity, and availability.

2. For theater, music and dance there is a **lack of performance space that is the right size**. What we have is either too small or too large. The need is for well equipped performances spaces that seat approximately 500. Existing spaces have very little wing and fly space and generally have little technical sophistication. None of the existing spaces are designed specifically to serve the unique requirements for dance presentations.

The best smaller spaces that do exist are in the Reston Community Center (CenterStage – 290 seats) and McLean Community Center (Alden Theatre – 434 seats).

These spaces have very little availability beyond established users in Reston and McLean. Reston and Mclean were built decades ago through the creation of special tax districts. It is highly unlikely that this model would be viable today.

3. Schools are not the answer. Fairfax has 24 high schools and middle schools with performance spaces available for community rental. They range in size from 500-1,600 seats. These spaces cannot be booked by outside groups until the school calendar is set making it very difficult to market a performance season effectively. It is very difficult to schedule rehearsal time in school facilities. It is also not possible for a production to “sit down” for several weeks due to school use. Numerous community music groups, such as the Fairfax Band, currently use school facilities, but such use is becoming increasingly difficult to schedule because of increased school activity. Generally school facilities are modestly equipped and too large for community theater, music, and dance groups.

4. Existing multi-use facilities (serving music, dance and theater) usually end up serving none of these groups well. Each arts genre has its own specific requirements. Acoustical properties, technical capacity, stage flooring, wing and fly space, and stage size vary with the discipline.

5. The two largest presenting venues in the county, **Wolf Trap and George Mason's Center for the Arts** are too large for almost all county arts groups. The Fairfax Symphony does use the Center for the Arts, but internal use, cost, and size make these unrealistic options for general community use. The Center for the Arts is antiquated technically and is aesthetically not up to the standards of facilities such as Strathmore.

6. Two Northern Virginia Community College venues, **Schlesinger Concert Hall** (Alexandria Campus – 1,000 seats) and the **Ernst Theater** (Annandale Campus – 525 seats) are used by several community arts groups. Schlesinger is well equipped, but is generally underused due to its size. Ernst is a good size, but lacks sufficient parking and is technically and acoustically poor.

7. The **Fairfax County Department of Community and Recreation Services** operates 10 community centers across the county. Its primary focus is social services (seniors, teens, wellness, team sports, etc.) Although several centers have make-shift performance areas, only the James Lee Center in Annandale has a real performance space. That theater seats 245 and is used by a variety of community groups including the Providence Players. The space has modest technical capacity and little wing or fly space. However, in several ways, it is a model to look at for including performance spaces in future or renovated community centers.

8. The **Fairfax County Park Authority** operates five outdoor amphitheaters of varying sizes in county parks and historic sites. One site is partially covered, one has a sound shell, and three have only a wooden stage. All have minimal technical capacities and hold from 75 to 400. During the summer the Park Authority organizes close to 200 performances at these and other park facilities. All performances and related costs are paid for by private contributions of approximately \$200,000 annually. With its extensive property holdings, the Park Authority sites could be considered for any future community arts centers.

9. The **visual arts** have specific needs for work space, classes, and exhibition venues. Fairfax has several well established visual arts organizations including the McLean Project for the Arts, Vienna Arts Society, Fairfax City Art League, and the Greater Reston Arts Center among others. There are also numerous smaller organizations that focus on quilting, wood crafts, and photography, etc. Most of these artists work in their home. Some have studios, but the lack of affordable studio space is a major issue for the visual arts in Fairfax.

A second challenge for visual artists is exhibition space. The organizations mentioned above have limited exhibit space. The Arts Council of Fairfax runs an "Art in the Workplace" program which mounts temporary exhibits of local artists in government and corporate settings. However, with no art museum or large cultural center in the county, artists have limited ability to show and sell their work.

The county has invested heavily in the soon to open **Lorton Workhouse Arts Center**, a 55-acre cultural arts complex created through adaptive reuse of an historic prison. With

