

**CREATIVE
SPACES
TOOLKIT**

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INTRODUCTION

ArtsFairfax developed the *Creative Spaces Toolkit* to provide information and guidelines to assist artists, arts organizations, and property owners in the activation of Fairfax County's vacant spaces for creative community engagement. The arts are needed to rebuild and heal our community as we emerge from the pandemic. As COVID-19 restrictions are lifted and we consider what arts gatherings will look like, three priorities make sense — flexibility, reassessing space needs, and embracing alternative and interim uses. Artists and arts organizations are poised to activate vacant spaces and catalyze the recovery.

This toolkit will not only help the user understand the process and requirements of interim space use, but also encourage all of us to think creatively about the goals of bringing the arts to a broader audience and maintaining vibrant communities. Interim vacant properties, whether public or private, short-term, or long-term, can provide opportunities to bring arts programs into new communities and maintain the economic viability of properties in transition. The arts have the power to bring an area to life, thus building stronger and more successful communities.

The use of interim spaces is a valuable tool for community access to the arts. As professional arts facilities are limited, and rental of those spaces is highly competitive and expensive, interim venues can help grow diverse arts programs and reach diverse audiences. Too, the length of closure of arts facilities and programs due to the COVID-19 pandemic is unknown. Though we will eventually return to normal, the transition to full audience capacities may be slow. Smaller interim arts spaces may make the difference by enabling continued viability for arts organizations and community retail areas.

We extend our sincere thanks to all who contributed to this guide, including consultants Anne Corbett of Building Creative, d'Andre Willis of d'Andre Willis Consulting, HGA Architects, Fairfax County Department of Planning and Development, Fairfax County Land Development Services, Fairfax County Department of Economic Initiatives, ArtsFairfax Creative Spaces project staff Lisa Mariam, Manuela Quintero Fehr and Caroline Warren, and the many artists, arts managers, and landowners who contributed their wisdom and suggestions. The *Creative Spaces Toolkit* is available on our website and will be updated to maintain its relevance in a changing environment.

Linda S. Sullivan
President & CEO
ArtsFairfax, August 2021

ABOUT US

ArtsFairfax is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization, incorporated in 1964 as Fairfax County's designated local arts agency. ArtsFairfax is funded in part by Fairfax County, as well as corporations, foundations, individuals, the Virginia Commission for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Mission ArtsFairfax is the voice of the arts, dedicated to fostering dynamic and diverse local arts, ensuring that arts thrive by providing vision, leadership, capacity building services, advocacy, funding, education, and information.

Vision The arts fuel a thriving, creative, and economically strong community in Fairfax County.

Our Values

THE ARTS ARE TRANSFORMATIVE AND FUNDAMENTAL TO OUR LIVES, DEVELOPING EXPRESSION AND ANALYTIC SKILLS IN PEOPLE OF ALL AGES.

THE ARTS PROMOTE SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT AND UNDERSTANDING THAT CONNECT PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS, CULTURES AND EXPERIENCES.

THE ARTS ARE ESSENTIAL TO BUILDING COMMUNITIES, CREATING A SENSE OF PLACE, AND FUELING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC GROWTH.

IN ORDER TO THRIVE, THE ARTS NEED AN INVESTMENT MIX OF PUBLIC, PRIVATE AND CONSUMER RESOURCES

What We Do

Advancing Creativity for a Prosperous Fairfax County by:

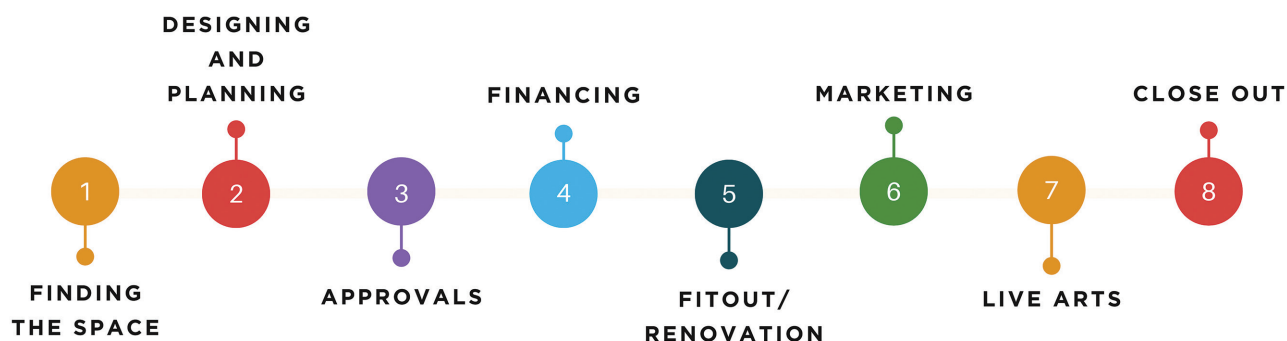
- Ensuring a vibrant arts community that creates a sense of place, fuels social and economic growth, and unites people of diverse backgrounds to attract business, residents, and visitors to Fairfax County
- Supporting the production and presentation of the arts in all disciplines by distributing approximately \$500,000 annually in grants including county, federal, and private funds.
- Fueling economic impact and the creative economy of Fairfax County, empowering the arts to produce nearly \$300 million in economic activity, provide over 6,200 full-time equivalent jobs, and generate approximately \$20 million in local and state government revenue each year
- Enhancing Fairfax County's global reputation by supporting nationally and internationally recognized arts programs, and developing unique, creative experiences for social and community engagement
- Advocating for increased arts funding that builds programs and audiences
- Helping to make Fairfax County a place where people want to live, work and play
- Helping to make Fairfax County a place where people want to live, work and play

HOW TO GET STARTED

The *Creative Spaces Toolkit* is a roadmap to interim activation of vacant buildings and spaces designed to create a new paradigm of collaboration between the arts sector, property owners, and government officials. There is no “one size fits all” approach to interim use of space. Whether an artist has an idea about activating a space or an organization needs help finding a vacant space, this toolkit is a guide to the processes needed to bring the vision to life.

The process is dynamic and multi-dimensional. Take some time at the beginning to articulate the vision: set goals and determine measurable objectives. Then plan an implementation strategy that addresses those objectives. Interim occupancy or space activation requires multiple resources including leadership, expertise, collaboration, time, funding, and marketing.

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS



MAKING THE CASE

A compelling case for the need and community benefits for your interim arts space project will help sell your request for space use. Be clear about your mission, proposed program, audience participation level, and community impact. When approaching property owners, funders, and elected officials, you might also address the following points:

- Bridging the gap for affordable arts facility needs.
- Making progress toward Fairfax County’s goal to reuse vacant spaces by providing interim or long-term uses for properties in transition.
- Invigorating areas lacking arts activity.
- Building community by connecting people with each other to create civic pride, bridge diverse groups and generations, and open worlds of creativity and artistic learning.
- Reinforcing the property’s brand and market position, attracting visitors, diversifying the customer base and building visibility of the property.
- Increasing foot traffic in a retail area, thereby adding value for other tenants.
- Generating positive public relations and earned media including increased buzz, human interest stories, and “Instagrammable moments” for social media.

PLANNING

Project Leadership

Developing an interim space is a major organizational commitment that requires support from the board, operations, and artistic staff. Every project requires a leader akin to a Production Manager or Exhibition Coordinator who can:

- Coordinate the effort among internal and external players.
- Communicate with the property owner and county officials.
- Hire and manage contractors for design, construction, or repairs.
- Solve unforeseen problems that will inevitably arise.

Goals and Objectives

To help define the project goals and objectives, leadership should answer the following questions:

- What types of art will the space accommodate? Be as specific as possible as to the purpose. Will you be producing, exhibiting, teaching, rehearsing or performing?
- Will the space be used for producing art, selling art, and/or public participation?
- Why is the project being initiated? What are the program objectives (e.g., to build visibility, serve more patrons, reach a new audience, test new artistic material, make money)? Quantify these objectives as much as possible.
- What are the space needs?
 - Length of time
 - Desired characteristics (type of facility, square footage, key functions, etc.)
 - Preferred location (district and area, proximity to other arts uses or complementary uses).

For more details, see Space Specifications and Considerations (page 37) in the Appendix.



Lerner Building
Entrance at
Tysons

FINDING SPACE

Most successful interim projects happen among artists and arts organizations who leverage trusting relationships with public or private property owners. To locate available spaces, try to use existing contacts including board members, audience members, volunteers, business owners and vendors, friends and neighbors, funders, and even elected officials.

Craft and circulate a brief proposal using the parameters identified above. Include all the potential benefits and indicate whether there is a modest budget for rent, or if the space must be donated. Send this proposal directly to key contacts with a cover note that articulates what you are requesting from the recipient.

Elected Officials

Fairfax County is divided into nine magisterial districts, each of which is headed by an elected supervisor. The Supervisors and their staff can be resources for identifying and/or obtaining an interim vacant space.

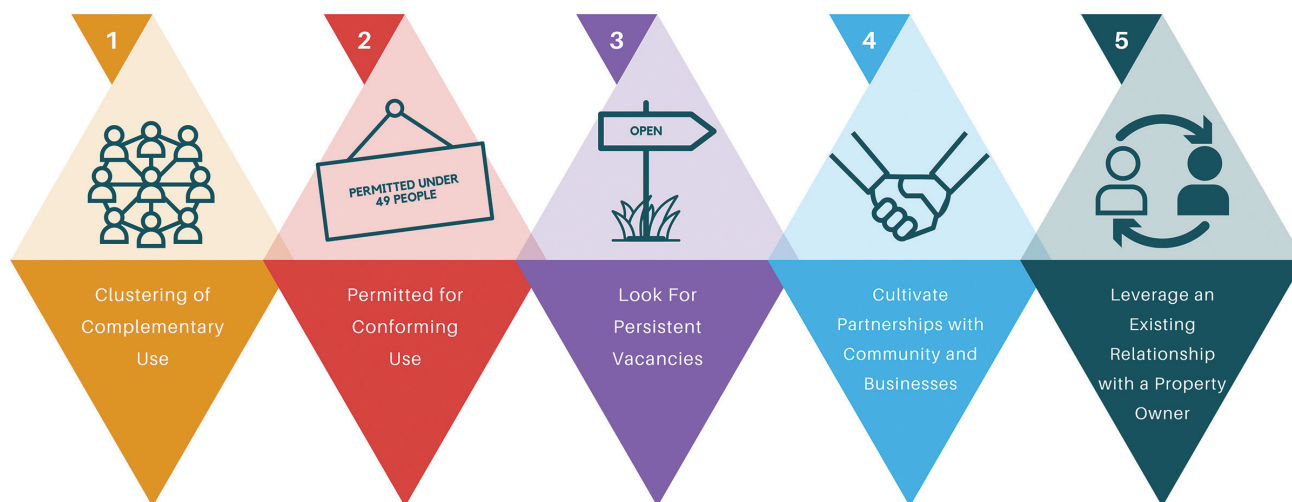
Here is how best to engage local elected officials:

- To find the Supervisor for a particular property, enter the address in [Fairfax County My Neighborhood](#). This webpage provides information for Fairfax County addresses, including magisterial district, taxes, and links to nearby land development and zoning information.
- Schedule an appointment with either the Supervisor or his/her land use staff.
- Before the meeting, conduct research to determine key interests and issues for the Supervisor and the district. Identify ways to connect the project goals and objectives to the needs of the district.
- At the meeting, present the project goals, requirements, and potential community and economic benefits. Ask if the Supervisor knows of any vacant spaces that would be appropriate, and then request a referral and contact information for any potential property owner. See if the Supervisor has any other ideas or suggestions. If you have a pre-selected location, ask if the Supervisor can assist in making contact with the landowner.
- After the meeting, follow up with a thank you note. Keep the Supervisor and/or staff updated on the project's progress. Let the Supervisor's office know if the project encounters difficulties where they may be able to help.

Fairfax
County Board
of Supervisors



KEYS TO SUCCESS



Other Resources

- If you see a vacant property that you think is a great fit for your arts activation, search the Fairfax County Department of Tax Administration for the property owner:
<https://icare.fairfaxcounty.gov/ffxcare/search/CommonSearch.aspx?mode=ADDRESS>
- The Fairfax County Real Estate Assessment Site also includes the property owner:
<https://icare.fairfaxcounty.gov/ffxcare/main/home.aspx>
- Fairfax County Economic Development Authority (see contacts below) has access to Costar to help you identify vacant properties.
- Local Chamber of Commerce
- [Loopnet.com](https://www.loopnet.com) — searchable commercial real estate database
- ArtsFairfax and its website, www.artsfairfax.org, which includes:
 - Arts Directory that lists local artists and arts organizations
 - A link to the Fairfax County map that lists existing arts venues.

ArtsFairfax staff may be able to assist you by sharing new opportunities, project suggestions, and posting or discussing RFPs and RFQ samples.

LEASES AND AGREEMENTS

Business relationships are governed by contracts that come in many formats and varieties. Interim uses of property can be governed by a lease, a license agreement or even a simple memorandum of understanding. Legal documents are customized to the project and property. Property owners usually present the first draft of a lease or license agreement for the use of property; however, savvy tenants will have a clear sense of the elements critical to their organization and project success prior to negotiating.

To facilitate short-term arts activation uses, lease terms will be a critical element of using vacant real estate effectively. Know your project's key needs (i.e., hours, audience capacity, utility services, etc.). These terms shape the success of the space use agreement.

Negotiating the contract that governs property occupancy is a critical element of project success. Get the right expertise to support the process. Contact Washington Area Lawyers for the Arts (WALA) for low-priced or pro bono legal services if you are not already working with a lawyer familiar with these agreements.

Lease Considerations

This section provides several key terms that should be discussed early in the lease negotiation process. This list of terms is not comprehensive. There may be site-specific terms depending on the property, owner, tenant or artistic program, that factor into use of the space. Consider engaging a transactional real estate attorney who is familiar with arts tenants.

See the Glossary (page 22) and Key Lease Terms (page 25) in the Appendix.

Artistic Content. Be prepared to talk about artistic content and have an open dialogue about any potential concerns with the property owner. No censorship or artistic oversight by the landlord should be permitted. That said, work is subject to local law. In initial conversations, both parties should be direct about their objectives for the partnership. For instance, if the landlord seeks to attract families, s/he should be upfront with that objective and a family-friendly clause could be added. Neither party should inadvertently surprise the other with their work or expectations.

Condition of the space. This is the existing and intended functionality of the physical space. Delivery conditions are often described with the term “as is” but prospective tenants should also consider:

- Specifics of what is working, broken, dirty and/or contaminated and the expectations for return condition(s); these should be noted. This can often be addressed in an “exhibit” or other type of addendum to an agreement.
- Tenant ability to make alterations, the scope of any build-out, and what, if any, improvements should be made or are anticipated. Owner contributions should be discussed; these might include tenant improvement allowances or other concessions.
- Maintenance and cleaning responsibilities during the lease; what will the owner repair, if needed.
- Code Compliance — be aware of the standard to which the space was constructed (to enable the current/prior user) as well as any changes that may be required to accommodate your proposed use.
- Access to restrooms and other amenities; be sure to learn about restroom requirements for the capacities of the space in all aspects of its use.

LEASES AND AGREEMENTS CONTINUED

- Loading access should be covered, including location, nature of the access, and timing issues.
- Waste disposal facilities should be spelled out, including trash, recycling, and disposal requirements for toxins (paint, paint stripper, glue, batteries, bulbs, etc.).
- Food service requirements/limitations.

Indemnification. Typically, the tenant needs to hold the landlord harmless. There are, however, aspects of use of the space for which the tenant should be held harmless. Be sure that adequate legal counsel focuses on this issue, particularly if there is to be a public occupancy aspect to the use of the space.

- **COVID-19** — As of 2020, expect that lease agreements require the tenant to be compliant with all public health guidelines as well as hold the landlord harmless if anyone associated with the project or attending programming contracts COVID-19. There may be additional insurance requirements related to COVID-19.

Insurance. The tenant must carry liability insurance and name the landlord as an “additional insured.” Check with the owner for any additional coverage required. Specific required policies often depend on the type of activity, and the nature and frequency of public participants using the space.

Rent Structure. Considerations include affordability, flexible financial terms, and price per square foot or a non-traditional rent structure. If applicable, the agreement may be in the form of a “Net Lease” (full service, triple net or a hybrid.) For detailed definitions, see Key Lease Terms (page 25) in the Appendix.

Property Taxes. Short-term tenancies typically do not qualify for property tax exemptions. Commercial property taxes can run \$2-6 per square foot depending on the location and zoning.

Tenure. How long will the anticipated the tenancy be? Does it have a predetermined term or is it “month to month?” Are extensions available, renewable, first right of refusal?

Termination Process. How will the lease end? What’s the “kick out” clause? How much notice will the tenant receive and/or be obligated to give? Consider this issue in terms of the amount of investment that might be made in the space. The tenant will not want to make considerable capital improvements if there is no assurance of reimbursement upon termination of the lease or other options to recoup infrastructure costs. Conversely, if considerable capital investment is required to make the space usable, consider how that can be factored into the base rent or other cost issues.

Utilities. The tenant’s access to water, power, gas and internet, quality of those services, and payment terms should all be spelled out in the agreement.

Visibility. If visibility of the space itself to pedestrians and other passersby is a critical feature, be sure the agreement treats the ability to improve that visibility with appropriate signage.

Other issues that should be examined: schedule of daily operations; parking rights; common area issues (e.g., are there mandatory contributions to a landscaping fund, marketing fund or merchant’s group).

Short-term tenancies typically do not qualify for property tax exemptions. Commercial property taxes can run \$2-6 per square foot depending on the location and zoning.

LEASES AND AGREEMENTS CONTINUED

Financing a Project

Developing a budget is a critical planning step for any facility project. Map out both the available sources of funds as well as project expenses. Identify potential funding that may be available for the effort including cash reserves, discretionary income, project grants and/or sponsorships, and loans, if appropriate.

Funds may be needed to build out a space for a specialized art form or artistic program, and potentially to make the space safe and code compliant. Determine the capital costs associated with the conditions of the space, physical moving expenses, marketing and communications for the new location, additional construction or materials, permitting, security and insurance. There may be other costs specific to the features of the use or space.

Funding and/or financing a short-term or interim project is challenging. This toolkit includes a detailed worksheet for developing a budget. Budgets are a crucial element of any business plan and the first thing a potential funder or lender usually wants to see to assess the project's viability. A capital project cash flow projection and operating projections may also be required by lenders.

In addition to typical fundraising methods, here are some potential funding sources:

- **Community Foundation for Northern Virginia** – Community Investment Funds
- **Virginia Commission for the Arts** – Project Grants; Technical and Organizational Development Assistance Grants
- **Virginia State Community Development Block Grants**
- **Virginia Small Business Financing Authority**

For larger or longer-term space occupancy, consider these funding sources:

- **Fairfax County's Economic Opportunity Reserve (EOR):** capital funds for projects that demonstrate positive economic development impacts.
- **Federal, state, and local incentives,** such as New Market Tax Credits and Historic Preservation Tax Incentives, which incentivize community development and growth through federal income tax credits, are useful tools for large projects (those costing \$3M or more).

Other possible funding:

- **Marketing and communication budgets.** Every new building must invest in building visibility; artistic programs can provide creative, valuable marketing solutions by providing interesting content, driving foot traffic, social engagement, and earned media.
- **Interior design budget.** Commercial office buildings often have a line item for lobby art and furnishings that may be directed toward an artistic program or organization in residence.
- **Federally funded housing.** This type of housing requires a “creative” element, often devoted to retail. The ‘creative element’ could more effectively be an arts/culture use that serves community social, educational, and economic needs.

ZONING AND PERMITS

Arts Uses

By adaptively reusing older or vacant commercial properties, arts organizations and individuals can position themselves in commercial centers that offer better visibility and access to residents and clients. When locating in these types of buildings, an important consideration will be matching the arts use with the allowed uses for a specific property.

The Fairfax County Zoning and Permitting process can seem complex to the uninitiated. This section of the Toolkit and accompanying links are intended to help navigate the process. Additional information is available by contacting Land Development Services and the Department of Planning and Development.

When locating in these types of buildings, an important consideration will be matching the arts use with the allowed uses for a specific property.



ZONING AND PERMITS CONTINUED

Zoning and Permitting in Fairfax County

When considering potential locations, find out the current zoning district for each property of interest. The property owner, developer or broker may be familiar with the property's zoning classification and permitted uses. Tenants should only plan for interim arts use in properties that are already zoned for such uses.

Create a plan for a compliant project before investing organizational resources. Failure to comply with zoning or building code regulations may result in a Corrective Work Order or a Notice of Violation.

In real estate, as in art, each project is unique so there are many variables to consider.

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Fairfax County requires several critical review steps.

- a. Determine the zoning district in which the property is located.
- b. Review the Zoning Ordinance to determine whether the proposed use is allowed in the zoning district by right, or with special exception or special permit approval, and any standards that may apply, including parking and other requirements. Find a space that has appropriate zoning because changing the zoning can be time consuming and cost prohibitive.
- c. Review the Building Code and Fire Code for the intended use and occupancy to determine design and construction needs to ensure compliance with occupancy loads and life safety requirements. This evaluation is best accomplished by a qualified, registered design professional (architect/engineering firm) who can perform a code analysis given the existing conditions of the property. Most architectural firms offer some limited pro bono services to nonprofits.
- d. Determine what building improvements need to happen before an occupancy permit for the intended use can be issued. For public safety, there are non-negotiable building code requirements related to the intended use that must be satisfied through the issuance and finalization of a building permit before an occupancy permit can be issued. Legally, an occupancy permit (Nonresidential Use Permit or "NonRUP") must be issued before any programmatic or administrative activities can be conducted on site.
- e. Conducting a thorough building code review will help inform an accurate estimate of how long the building permitting process will take. Be sure your intended use aligns with both the costs and the time required.

The quickest path to approval is when the desired activity conforms to the building code use group identified on the existing certificate of occupancy. In that instance, only a new NonRUP may be required.

ZONING AND PERMITS CONTINUED

Zoning

Regardless of location, every property use is regulated by the Zoning Ordinance, which establishes zoning districts where certain uses can take place. In general, some arts uses fall into just a handful of zoning uses, and each use has specific Zoning Districts where they are allowed. To determine the Zoning District of your property, please use the [Zoning District Analyzer interactive web map](#).

After determining the zoning district of the property, the user can determine what specific uses are allowed in this district. Determining the appropriate use often depends on the proposed use and its operational characteristics. The following categories provide general guidance on the classification of different arts uses that apply to many arts activities.

- **Cultural Facility or Museum:** This classification includes many art galleries, museums, theaters and dance studios, as well as outdoor performance spaces and arts centers.
- **Indoor Commercial Recreation:** Like above, this classification could include art galleries, recording studios, theaters, dance studios and arts centers.
- **Specialized Instruction Center:** Where classes or instruction is provided, this classification can include arts education and rehearsal studios, dance schools and some arts centers.
- **Retail:** When on-site sales of artwork occur, this classification might include art galleries and multi-arts centers.
- **Office:** This classification applies to office space for arts uses, recording studios, and other arts storage spaces.

Contact the Department of Planning and Development's Zoning Administration Division (ZAD) Planner of the Day at (703) 703-1314 or ORDAdmin@fairfaxcounty.gov for guidance on which specific use your proposal may fall under. A formal interpretation may be recommended.

Permitting

With so many variables, (such as building condition, zoning and uses), it is not possible to predict the specific route for the necessary permitting that may be required for any specific arts use. Therefore, artists and arts organizations will need to consult with County staff. Applicants can receive assistance and guidance directly by contacting the Permit Application Center at 703-222-0801.

In general, however, there are some typical steps or permits that just about every arts use would need to undertake when considering a location in a commercial building or center. These include:

- **Zoning Use Determination:** After contacting the Planner of the Day, an interpretation of the Zoning Ordinance to confirm whether the specific arts use is permitted under the zoning district may be recommended. An interpretation may be applied for at this website: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/zoning/ordinance-interpretations>. (Timing: approximately 30 days)
- **Optional Nonprofit Pre-Application Meeting:** Present the project concept to county staff who will help identify critical hurdles in the steps leading to legal occupancy. This informal meeting lays out the project steps, provides general timelines for the project, and informs the applicant of what professionals they will need to engage. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/plan2build/assistance-places-worship-and-nonprofit-community-groups>

ZONING AND PERMITS CONTINUED

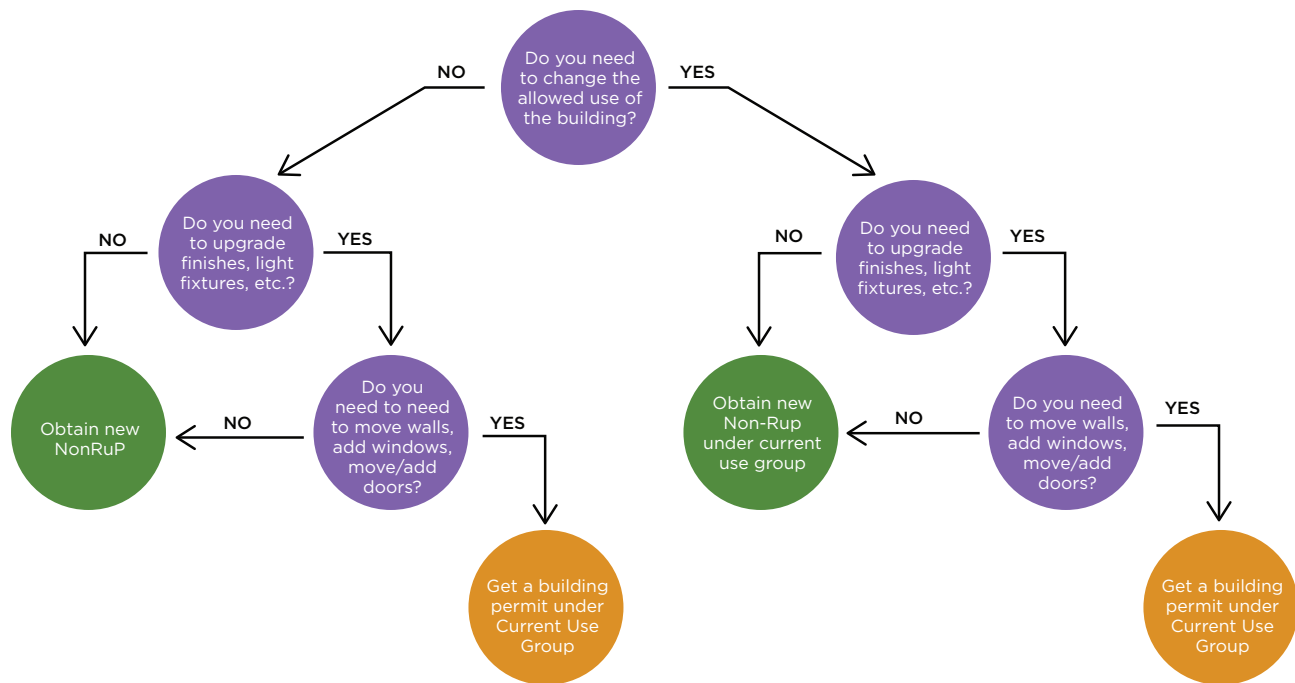
- **Optional Building Code Consultation:** Land Development Services (LDS) offers several different opportunities to meet with plan reviewers to talk about your project. Meetings at differing levels of complexity can be held with the Building Division staff in order to discuss Building Code questions pertaining to your project. You can determine which level of meeting you need and schedule it at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/landdevelopment/meet-staff>. (Timing: 2 weeks)
- **Interior Alterations or New Tenant Layout Permit:** At a minimum, an interior alteration commercial building permit will be required. When dividing an existing space into two or more spaces, a separate permit for each space is required. A mechanical, electrical and plumbing/gas (also called trades) permit may be required depending on the project's scope of work.
 - **Building Permit Application:** Submit digitally signed and sealed construction drawings from a registered design professional through an online system to be evaluated for building code compliance (https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/landdevelopment/sites/landdevelopment/files/assets/documents/fee-schedule_0.pdf). This process may require multiple iterations; successful completion of the requirements identified in the Code Consultation Meeting could make this timeframe shorter. (Timing: depends on the complexity of the project, the quality of the submission and the responsiveness of the registered design professional. Up to date turnaround times for building permits and plan review can be found at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/plan2build/development-review-metrics>. All meetings and inspections are done virtually only.)
 - **Inspections:** Request inspections throughout construction and to finalize the building permit. Required inspections may include structural, mechanical, electrical, and/or plumbing and are performed via video apps. The final inspection will finalize the building permit. (Timing: all inspections take about 1 day and some can be combined; request online the night before).
 - **Sign permit:** A permit is required for all signs except minor signs (as defined in the Zoning Ordinance). You can apply either via email or mail. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/zoning/sign-permits>

A permit is required for all signs except minor signs



ZONING AND PERMITS CONTINUED

NAVIGATING BUILDING AND TRADES PERMITS



Temporary vs. Permanent

The County Zoning Ordinance and the Virginia Construction Code, which includes the building permit standards, do not differentiate between temporary and permanent use of buildings. Any occupancy, even for a day, requires compliance with all applicable building and fire codes to ensure public safety. Therefore, this *Creative Spaces Toolkit* only uses “temporary” when referring to an outdoor activity the County will allow via an Administrative Permit.

Interim is used to refer to the short-term use of a space, which may last from as little as one day to a longer-term use of up to five years. In some cases, the initial agreement may be for a short-term, clearly defined period, which later may be extended at the request and agreement of the landlord and tenant. 1st Stage is an example of an interim use of space that was extended and expanded. See Success Stories (page 30) in the Appendix.

Outdoor Activations

Activating an outdoor space involves some of the same initial steps as an indoor space to identify a vacant space. Permits for outdoor uses are dependent on the concept and duration of time involved. An Administrative Permit may be required. See the Pop-up Guide (page 19) in Fairfax County Resources.

Examples of outdoor arts activations include temporary interactive public art installations, pop-up performances, and parking garage activations. See Success Stories (page 29) in the Appendix.

Considerations for Outdoor Activations:

- **A minor site plan through Land Development Services** is needed if there is more than 2,500 square feet of land disturbance or a substantial addition to the existing structure. Subsection 8100.7 of the Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance outlines exemptions from the requirement.

ZONING AND PERMITS CONTINUED

- **Consult with the Site Development and Inspections Division (SDID)** to determine if a minor site plan is required. Contact SDID at 703-324-2268, TTY 711, sitequery@fairfaxcounty.gov.
- **DPD-ZAD Zoning Permits Section:** Determine if an Administrative Permit for a special event is needed. This is required for certain uses, such as a festival, pop-up park, or other similar temporary events. This application costs \$205. In addition, a Nonresidential Use Permit (NonRUP), which costs \$70, may be required. More information about these two processes can be found on the following websites:
 - <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/zoning/temporary-outdoor-uses>
 - <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-zoning/zoning/non-residential-use-permits>
 - Other recommendations prior to installation:
 - Coordinate with the District Supervisor's Office to provide public information and get troubleshooting advice.
 - Provide project information to the District Police/Fire departments.
- **Noise Ordinance considerations:** <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/zoning/noise-ordinance>
- **FCDOT/VDOT approval** may be needed if road closures are involved: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/> or <http://www.virginiadot.org/business/fairfax-permits-main.asp> and for VDOT: https://www.virginiadot.org/business/resources/NOVA_FairfaxPermits/Road_Use_Permit_Guidelines.pdf
- **Fire Marshal Review and Inspections** may be needed for tents or depending on crowd size: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fire-ems/fire-marshal>
- **Health Department** approval may be needed if any exterior sanitation facilities, such as portable toilets, are included, or if there is food being served: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/> With the exception of Food Trucks which are subject to Food Truck regulations: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/zoning/food-trucks>
- Depending upon what is being proposed, a **building or trades permit** may be needed (e.g., for a structure of a certain size or if additional lighting or a generator is proposed). Apply online — <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/landdevelopment/new-permitting-plan-review-and-inspections-process-instructions>
 - Apply and get permit issued (Timing: As soon as you have specs)
 - Call before you dig: VA811.com
 - Build and install, call for inspection; once finalized, apply for "NonRUP" if applicable (Timing: Week of installation before opening)

Other Potential Permits and Considerations

Depending upon the type of activity, these may be considerations for indoor and outdoor activations.

- Business License ("BPOL")
- ABC license for beer/wine
- Sales Tax
- Signs (see link above)
- Promoter's or Solicitor's License

MARKETING

Communication lies at the heart of arts and culture. Getting the word out about your program will be instrumental to building and expanding your community, raising the profile of your organization or work, and attracting media attention, all of which may ultimately translate into a successful presentation.

Once you've done the groundwork to find a market for your project, it's time to build on this momentum. The next step is to connect with people who are interested in what you have to offer. The goal is to provide an opportunity for the right people to hear about something they might enjoy. You can find and grow your audience by applying what you know across channels and using a mix of strategies that evolve as you learn. One way to market your project is to work with the property owner and their marketing team to promote the space activation. To learn more, visit the Marketing Your Project section in the Appendix on page 32.

CLOSING OUT YOUR PROJECT

Refer to your lease and permits for requirements to close out your project. In most cases, you will be expected to leave no trace of the arts activation.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

- **ArtsFairfax:** www.artsfairfax.org, Arts Directory of arts organizations and artists, opportunities, promotes available spaces and connections with potential partners, general questions, Lisa Mariam, Director of Grants and Services, lmariam@artsfairfax.org 703.864.6114
- **BizEx:** A step-by-step guide to launching, expanding or relocating a business in Fairfax County. [BizEx Contact Form](#).
- **Fairfax County Board of Supervisors**
- **Fairfax County Department of Economic Initiatives:** EconomicInitiatives@FairfaxCounty.org, 703.324.5171
- **Fairfax County Department of Planning & Development, Community Revitalization Section:** For assistance with proposals in Fairfax County Commercial Revitalization Districts (CRDs) and Areas (CRAs) contact Revitalization@fairfaxcounty.gov, 703.324.9300
- **Fairfax County Economic Development Authority:** Stephen Tarditi, Director, Market Intelligence, Fairfax County Economic Development Authority, 703.790.0600. The FCEDA can help find vacant properties and access COSTAR (a commercial real estate listing service)
- **Made in Fairfax:** MadeInFairfax@fairfaxcounty.gov
- **Nonprofit and Places of Worship Coordinator:** provides guidance to nonprofits throughout the entire land development process, from concept to occupancy and beyond; meetings can be scheduled on the website <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/plan2build/assistance-places-worship-and-nonprofit-community-groups>
- **Zoning Administration Division:** ordadmin@fairfaxcounty.gov or phone 703.324.1314; Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Fairfax County Resources

- **Building Codes:** Code requirements. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/landdevelopment/codes-and-standards>
- **Fairfax County Pop-up Guide:** For outdoor space activations refer to this guide: https://www.fcrevite.org/sites/default/files/Assets/Documents/Publications/PopUp_01-19-2017.pdf
- **Fairfax County Revitalization Zones and Economic Development Authority Profiles:** Useful information to help identify opportunities
- **Fairfax Inspections Database Online (FIDO):** Online system used for Fairfax County building and trade permit application and inspection scheduling; contains historic permit information to 2007.
- **Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance:** Contains all the various zoning districts, how they apply, and how land may be used within these districts
- **Land Development Information History (LDIH):** Searchable database for permit information. LDIH is also accessible via My Neighborhood on the County's website.
- **Made in Fairfax:** Small Scale Production Initiative to enhance and revitalize the County's commercial areas — includes the arts: <https://www.fcrevite.org/made-fairfax>
- **Permit and Process Guide:** Fairfax County building and zoning permits guidance
- **ProjectDox:** Online system used for plan review for building and trade permits and site plans
- **Starting a Business in Fairfax County Guide:** A step-by step process guide for new businesses

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Arts Focus Group/Artists

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Robin Carroll, Traveling Players Ensemble

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GLOSSARY

Alternative Rent Structure: Can be a discounted rate; number of free months; deferred rent payment; goods or services in exchange for some portion of rent.

Arts Space Seekers: Types of Space/Leasing Activity

Total: The sum of all reported transactions, including new, re-let, sublet and pre-leasing. This figure is the total of all leasing activity within the previous six months.

Re-let: Previously occupied space leased.

New: Newly constructed space leased.

Sublet: Leased space, via an existing tenant and not the landlord.

Arts Definitions:

Performing Arts: Artists performing for an audience using voices, bodies, instruments or objects, including dance, music, opera, theatre, puppetry, comedy/spoken word, and performance art. May involve sets, costumes, props, lighting, and sound. May require public performance area; lobby space for audience gathering, box office and concession sales; backstage entrance, loading dock and dressing rooms. Issues: power supply, parking, and egress.

Production Space: Office or light industrial space for production of both visual and performing arts, including artist studios and maker spaces for visual arts, and backstage support activities such as rehearsals, costume, prop and sets construction, writing, composing, planning and administration. Generally not open to the public.

Rehearsal studio: Where the performers practice for days/weeks of work to prepare for performances. Issues: light and noise.

Visual artist studios and production shops: Where arts are fabricated. Artworks are designed and fabricated; costumes are designed, stitched, cleaned and stored. Sets and props vary greatly in size and require a shop to design and build; storage is needed for materials and supplies. Issues: light, noise, power, ventilation, air supply/exhaust, loading and waste disposal.

Building Code Occupancy Types:

Assembly (Group A): Places used for people gathering for entertainment, worship, and eating or drinking such as theaters, churches, (with 50 or more possible occupants) and stadiums. Group A is divided into five sub-groups subgroups:

A-1: The production and viewing of performing arts or motion pictures (theaters, concert halls)

A-2: Food and/or drink consumption (restaurants)

A-3: Worship, recreation or amusement and other assembly uses

A-4: Viewing of indoor sporting events and activities with spectator seating (arenas)

A-5: Participation in or viewing outdoor activities (stadiums)

Business (Group B): Office, professional or service-type transactions including banks, doctor's offices, radio and television stations, print shops.

Educational (Group E): The use of a building for educational purposes by 6 more people through the 12th grade.

GLOSSARY CONTINUED

Factory and Industrial (Group F) or High Hazard (Group H): Use of a building for assembling, disassembling, fabricating, finishing, manufacturing, packaging, repairing, or processing operations.

Institutional (Group I): The use of a building for care of others, such as a hospital, assisted living facility, congregate care facility, childcare or adult care center.

Mercantile (Group M): Places where goods or merchandise are displayed and sold such as grocery stores, department stores, and gas stations. Art Galleries qualify under here.

Storage (Group S): The use of a building or structure, or a portion thereof, that is used for storage that is not classified as a hazardous occupancy.

CRA: Commercial Revitalization Area

CRD: Commercial Revitalization District

Creative Placemaking: When artists, arts organizations, and community development practitioners deliberately integrate arts and culture to improve a public space or overall area to make it more of a destination and shared gathering place.

Economic Incentive Program (EIP): Provides incentives to the private sector to utilize property for economic development purposes, with financial incentives and regulatory flexibility, in designated areas.

Entitlement: Approval from a regulatory body to use or develop land. Ex. Rezoning, special exception, special permit, etc.

Interpretation: If a change to an approved zoning application is such that a formal written determination is needed or desired, the interpretation process is available to a requestor. The Zoning Administrator has delegated the responsibility and authority for preparing these interpretations to the Division Director of the Zoning Evaluation Division. The request is reviewed against the standards found in the Zoning Ordinance, which provides guidance on what constitutes a minor modification and what exceeds that threshold.

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED): A green building certification system developed in 2000 by the U.S. Green Building Council to verify that commercial and residential buildings are designed, constructed, operated and renovated in environmentally sustainable and efficient ways. LEED ratings are Certified, Silver, Gold, and Platinum, which are awarded to a project based on a 100-point scale. For details, visit www.usgbc.org.

Life Safety: Inspection by Fire Marshal to determine fire and safety codes adherence; they look at exit paths, push doors, sprinkler system, fire alarms and any other issues under the code.

Made in Fairfax Network: A network of County-based makers and producers who make tangible, reproducible products. The Network is supported by Fairfax County to encourage and promote small scale manufacturing businesses such as furniture, jewelry, woodworking, metalworking and food producers.

Mixed-Use: Pedestrian-friendly development blending two or more residential, commercial, cultural, institutional, and/or industrial uses. This approach fosters community design and development that serves the economy, community, public health, and the environment.

Occupancy: The use, or intended use, of a building, or portion of a building.

Office Space Classifications: General guidelines for building classifications. No formal standard exists for classifying a building. Buildings must be viewed in the context of their market, i.e., a Class A building in one neighborhood may not be a Class A building in another.

Class A Building: These buildings represent the newest and highest quality buildings in their market. They are generally the best-looking buildings with the best construction,

GLOSSARY CONTINUED

and they possess high-quality building infrastructure. Class A buildings also have good access and are professionally managed. As a result, they attract the highest quality tenants and command the highest rents.

Class B Building: Buildings that are generally a little older, but still have good quality management and tenants. Often, value-added investors target these buildings as investments since well-located Class B buildings can be returned to Class A status through renovations such as facade and common area improvements. Class B buildings should be generally functionally sound and well maintained.

Class C Building: The lowest classification of office building and space is Class C. These are older buildings located in less desirable areas and are often in need of extensive renovation. Architecturally, these buildings are the least desirable, and typically their building infrastructure and technology is outdated. As a result, Class C buildings have the lowest rental rates, take the longest time to lease, and are often targeted as re-development opportunities.

Opportunity Zones: With the Federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, a new tax incentive program called “Opportunity Zones” was created by Congress to encourage economic development and revitalization in targeted areas. In Fairfax County, the Opportunity Zones are: Bailey’s North/Glen Forest, Herndon South, Hybla Valley, Lake Anne, Mount Vernon Woods, North Hill, Skyline Plaza, South County Center and Willston Center.

Pop-Up Project: Interventions that temporarily improve spaces, address neighborhood issues, or demonstrate desired improvements within a public or sometimes private space such as a vacant building or underused lot.

Proffer: A written condition, which, when offered voluntarily by a property owner and accepted by the County Board Of Supervisors in a rezoning action, becomes a legally binding condition that is in addition to the zoning district regulations applicable to a specific property. Proffers are submitted and signed by an owner prior to the Board of Supervisors public hearing on a rezoning application and, once approved by the Board of Supervisors, become the legal regulations of the land. Once approved by the Board, proffers may be modified only by a proffered condition amendment (PCA) application or other zoning action of the County Board and the hearing process required for a rezoning application applies. See Sect. 15.2-2303 (formerly 15.1-491) of the Code of Virginia. Proffers for a specific location can be found through the Planning and Zoning Viewer here: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/maps-and-geographic-applications>.

Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT): A company that pools capital of numerous investors to own, operate, or finance income-generating real estate.

Repurposing Spaces: The process of identifying vacant spaces and transforming them into active, vibrant places to reinvigorate neighborhoods per jurisdiction priorities. Examples: changing abandoned schools into art galleries, office space into residential units, blighted strip centers into maker spaces.

Temporary: Fairfax County can only consider outdoor activities as “temporary” for the purposes of permitting. No indoor occupancy is considered temporary under the Zoning Ordinance or the Virginia Construction Code.

Tenant Improvement (TI): Typically, a lump sum that an owner will provide to a tenant to help build out the space to fit their specific uses.

Vacancy Rates: The total available space divided by the inventory. Available space consists of new or re-let space that is available directly through the landlord and not a third party such as an existing tenant (i.e., sublet). Buildings under construction are not included in this figure.

KEY LEASE TERMS

To facilitate short-term arts development, lease terms are a critical element in determining whether artist groups and arts organizations can successfully activate vacant real estate. These terms shape the feasibility and potential return on investment of the arts development project, thus impacting whether the project will benefit the developer, the tenant, the County, and the community mutually.

Access to restrooms and other amenities: A certain number of restrooms, depending on the occupancy load, will be required by the building code.

Common Area Maintenance: Often referred to as “CAM” charges, these fees are paid by the tenant to cover utilities, cleaning and maintenance of areas of a property that are shared by all the tenants, such as a lobby, roof deck or shared meeting room.

Condition of the space on delivery: Describes the functionality of the built space plus owner contributions (including any tenant improvement allowance). As is conditions, alterations, build out, expectations for return condition are all issues to consider and include in the agreement with respect to “condition of the space on delivery” and “return condition” paragraphs. Extensive improvements undertaken by the tenant should be considered in terms of possible offsets by the owner.

Full-Service (FS) Leases: Sometimes referred to as “Gross Rent,” this rate includes operating expenses, common area maintenance (CAM), real estate taxes and insurance for which the landlord is then responsible. A tenant may pay for increases in these costs over a base year, which is stipulated in a lease. This kind of lease is very common for office leases.

Industrial Gross (IG) Leases: Base rent includes insurance and real estate taxes with tenant responsibility for increases over this base year. The tenant is also responsible for the CAM charge.

Loading: The lease should identify the location of load-in access, timing of the move-in and/or other access issues, restrictions (if any) and other issues germane to tenant use.

Maintenance responsibilities: These tenant and owner responsibilities should be identified in the lease terms and conditions. Ask for a historic report of these utility fees and maintenance expenses over the past year or two.

Net Leases: The tenant is responsible for some of or all operating expenses, such as real estate taxes, insurance, utilities and CAM charges. This type of lease is most common for industrial/flex properties. The primary types of Net Leases are:

Net (N): In addition to rent, the tenant typically pays for utilities.

Double Net (NN): In addition to rent, the tenant typically pays for utilities and cleaning.

Triple Net (NNN): Sometimes referred to as a Pure Net Lease, the tenant is responsible for all or almost all operating expenses, such as utilities, CAM, real estate taxes and insurance.

Operating Cost Responsibilities: Be sure that the negotiating and final lease stipulates access, quality and payment terms, utilities, HVAC, phone, WiFi, security, insurance and any other applicable costs.

Parking: It’s critical for any arts organization anticipating public use to define how many parking spaces are available, where they are, and the hours they can be used.

Property Taxes: Define who is responsible for paying.

KEY LEASE TERMS CONTINUED

Rent Structure: Look for affordability and flexible financial terms. Rent can be a typical price-per-square-foot or a non-traditional rent structure. A variety of approaches exist.

Signage: Signs are regulated by Fairfax County. The agreement should describe signs that can be used, their size, type, and placement.

Tenant Improvement (TI): An allowance the landlord may provide for building out the space.

Tenure: The appropriate length of the lease term of use; agreements should also consider termination process, renewal options and any other aspects of the term of occupancy.

Visibility: Agreements should address the visibility of the space itself to pedestrians and other passersby and the ability to improve that visibility with appropriate signage.

Waste Disposal: Be sure the agreement specifies the requirements for trash, recycling, and disposal of toxins (paint, paint stripper, glues, batteries, bulbs, etc.).

BUILDING PERMIT SCENARIOS

The following case studies provide example scenarios of how arts uses can be successfully located in older commercial properties.

SCENARIO #1

Art Gallery Building in a Shopping Center

An artist seeks to open a small art gallery in a 1,000 square foot former retail space within a neighborhood shopping center, constructed in 1960 and renovated in 1989. The shopping center is zoned C-6, and the artist contacts the County Zoning Administration Division to provide a “Use Determination” letter confirming that the art gallery use would be permitted in the C-6 zone. Because the building is classified as “B” (Business) according to the Building Code, an exhibition gallery could be allowed without a change in classification. However, if the gallery sold works of art on the premises, the classification for a portion of the space would change from “B” to “M” (Mercantile). A Building Permit staff member would need to conduct an analysis to determine the occupant load for that space. If the forecasted occupant load for the space is less than 15 people, the suite would not require a second bathroom. But if the gallery were to host events larger than 15 people, such as exhibit openings, then the suite might require additional facilities, such as accessible bathrooms. Any event larger than 50 people would shift the building to an “A” (Assembly) classification, which entails additional life and safety features. In terms of permits, the new art gallery use would require a new building permit for “New Tenant Layout” or “Interior Alterations,” depending on the extent of modifications, as well as a “Nonresidential Use Permit” (NonRUP) for occupancy.

SCENARIO #2

Dance Studio in a Small, Stand-Alone Building

A dance company is looking for new space for a dance studio and is considering a 4,900 square foot stand-alone building built in 1953 that was previously used as an auto repair shop. The site is currently zoned as commercial (C-8) and the County Zoning Administration Division has confirmed through a “Use Determination” letter that the dance studio would be permitted in this zone. However, as the building is currently classified as “B” (Business) use by the Building Code due to its former auto use, and the dance studio would need to be classified as “A-3” (Assembly) use due to the activities of this particular arts use, a new building permit for “Interior Alterations” or “New Tenant Layout” would be necessary. A “Nonresidential Use Permit” (NonRUP) for occupancy also would be required. Due to its age and previous use, bathroom upgrades would also likely be needed, and such an improvement would require that accessibility upgrades be made based on existing conditions and plans. Other mechanical and electrical changes, as well as associated permits, may also be necessary depending on the condition of the building and the new anticipated layout. Also, as the structure was built before 1985, an asbestos abatement certificate would be required. If a certificate does not exist, the new owner/tenant would need to hire a licensed firm to conduct an asbestos inspection. Finally, the building would not be required to undergo sprinkler and fire alarm upgrades if classes and events hosted at the dance studio stayed under 300 attendees gathered indoors. Staying below this threshold would result in extensive cost savings to the overall project.

BUILDING PERMIT SCENARIO CONTINUED

SCENARIO #3:

Small Theater in a Former “Big Box” Large Stand-Alone Building

A small theater company is considering leasing a divided space within a large, former “Big Box” store constructed in 1974, renovated within the last two years, and subdivided for multiple tenancy. The entire property is zoned C-6 and the suite available is approximately 9,000 square feet. Prior to signing a lease, the tenant wisely contacts the County Zoning Administration Division to confirm through a “Use Determination” letter that the small theater use would be permitted in the C-6 zone. The building was formerly classified as “M” (Mercantile) according to the Building Code, however with the renovations, this particular suite was updated to “A1” (Assembly) for restaurant use. A small theater would also be classified as “A1” (Assembly) under the Building Code, and therefore may be able to avoid extensive upgrades. However, the new arts use still requires a new building permit for “New Tenant Layout” or “Interior Alterations” depending on the extent of modifications, as well as a “Nonresidential Use Permit” (NonRUP) for occupancy. The previous owners/tenants have an asbestos certificate already, and bathrooms are currently ADA-accessible due to the recent building renovations.



1st Stage
theatre company
occupies a
former tile
showroom

SUCCESS STORIES

INDOOR PERFORMANCES

Artomatic

In 2009, at the height of the recession, Monument Realty built a new 275,000 square foot LEED Silver Class A office building — Half Street's first office building at 55 M Street, SE. Attracting interest for leasing was a challenge. Monument partnered with Artomatic to present several weeks of free art, music, theatre, and workshops in unfinished space within the project. The event attracted 75,000 people over four weeks, which contributed significantly to the building being successfully leased.

McLean Project for the Arts

In December 2016, McLean Project for the Arts (MPA) opened a second location (MPA@ChainBridge) at 1446 Chain Bridge Road, in a busy commercial strip mall in McLean. MPA needed to relocate temporarily while McLean Community Center underwent a major renovation. The Board formed a committee to search for an interim space, and eventually a long-time community sponsor made available commercial space in the shopping center. The conversion from a liquor store to an art space required a building permit to construct offices, a renovated bathroom, an education studio, and refinishing retrofit of the main space as an exhibition gallery. The total cost was approximately \$100,000. MPA funded the buildout using a combination of donations and grants. The interim space was used for two years (including a lease extension) and significantly expanded the MPA audience due to the high-traffic commercial location. MPA returned to the McLean Community Center in July 2019.

McLean Project
for the Arts
(MPA)



SUCCESS STORIES CONTINUED

1st Stage

1st Stage theatre company occupies a former tile showroom in the Spring Hill Business Center complex, a mixed-use, industrialized, flexible area that includes auto detailers as well as retail establishments in the rapidly developing and metro-accessible Tysons area. Their theatrical productions range from classics to world premieres of contemporary work, and the organization also produces a roster of popular, community-centered programs. 1st Stage offers compelling stories and intimate experiences for its audiences. Through the dedicated work of the founding artists, volunteers, the architecture firm Butz-Wilbern, and general contractor M. Raina, 6,500 square feet of industrial office space was converted into an intimate and unique 110-seat theatre with offices and a library. 1st Stage started off in April 2008 with an interim five-year lease, extended it for another five years, and recently signed a new ten-year lease. When the adjacent storefront became available in 2016, 1st Stage annexed it to support special events and provide auxiliary space for rehearsals, dressing rooms, and prop and set storage. This expansion brought the total square footage to approximately 11,000. The original build-out cost \$250,000, funded by a combination of grants, individual donations, and in-kind contributions of time and services.

Traveling Players

Traveling Players Ensemble is an educational theatre company dedicated to bringing “great theatre into the great outdoors” through summer camp and year-round acting classes and workshops. In January 2020, Traveling Players partnered with Macerich and opened its Studio in Tysons Corner Center for classes, performances, and events. Additional storage space totaling approximately 3,000

square feet was needed for costumes, props, and equipment, with access to at least one restroom and one to three parking spaces. Traveling Players partnered with INOVA Health System for storage space in a former nursing home facility.



Traveling
Players
Ensemble

INOUT Springfield

ArtsFairfax's Imagine Art Here was an innovative public art series intended to enliven communities with art while gathering feedback to inform the County Master Arts Plan. Imagine Art Here projects occurred at locations throughout Fairfax County from 2015-2020. The most recent project, INOUT Springfield, was installed from July through August 2019 at Old Keene Mill Shopping Center. Federal Realty Investment Trust hosted and sponsored the project to provide creative placemaking for the temporary parking lot dining area during the renovation of the outdoor sidewalk. The artist team, Epigram, designed INOUT: Springfield to engage the community through an interactive photobooth and temporary public art installation. Participants responded to prompts about the role of the arts and took selfies that were projected in a community photo gallery.

SUCCESS STORIES CONTINUED

OUTDOOR PERFORMANCES

Gin Dance Company at Reston Town Center

Gin Dance Company performed original choreography in response to the public art installation Reston Rondo by Mary Anne Mears at Reston Town Center.

“Hello! Goodbye!” was choreographed by the company’s artistic director, Shu-Chen Cuff and performed by six dancers at two pop-up performances in conjunction with the 2017 Northern Virginia Fine Arts Festival.

Just as the Mears sculpture is a clean, organic form that brings a feeling of lyricism and whimsy, Shu-Chen Cuff’s choreography brought high energy, joy, grace and humor that transformed Hyatt Park into a living theatrical experience.

Virginia Chamber Orchestra Concert at Meadowlark Gardens

During the COVID pandemic in September 2020, the Virginia Chamber Orchestra (VCO) partnered with Meadowlark Botanical Gardens in Vienna to present ensemble concerts in the Korean Bell Pavilion. Socially distancing principal players and guest artists performed for large, enthusiastic, socially distanced audiences. By performing in this alternate venue, VCO engaged a new audience, and plans to repeat the concerts in 2021.

Gin Dance
Company and
Virginia Chamber
Orchestra



MARKETING YOUR PROJECT

Creating a Media Strategy

Working with the media is one of the most effective ways to develop a strong, positive presence in your community. These guidelines are designed to help you do that, particularly if your organization hasn't had much experience with media relations in the past.

As You Prepare

- Think of 'media-friendly' events and programs you can use to promote your project. Do you have a showcase or performance scheduled? Invite the media and your elected officials to these events.
- Leverage your stakeholders. Look inside and outside your organization for advocates. Identify spokespersons to tell your story, and bloggers and taste makers to enhance your social media presence. Gather testimonials from constituents or partners to highlight the impact of your work on their lives and the community.

Traditional Advertising

- There's the more traditional advertising route such as handing out flyers, putting up posters or paying for print advertising in relevant media. Get planning early and recruit some willing volunteers. The more noise you can drum up about your efforts, the better. Don't leave it all to the last minute.

Create a Distribution List

- Think of all the types of media in your area. Make a list of local newspapers, trade journals, online publications, radio programs, public broadcasts, television stations and local bloggers.
- Your media list should include each reporter or assignment editor's name, address, email, phone number and fax number. Determine the medium in which it is best to make contact (i.e., phone, email or fax).
- Be sure to include a publications photographer or photo editor contact. A photographer may attend the event even if a reporter is unavailable.

Public Relations

- Depending on who you are, what you're planning and where you're planning it, there will be media outlets with audiences that would be interested to know about you. Do some research and get in touch with them. Offer interviews and send out press releases. Be realistic; don't aim for national newspapers or global TV stations. Think super local media or local bloggers. If you're popping-up in a new area or city, make sure you reach out to the local art community.

MARKETING YOUR PROJECT CONTINUED

Create Your Press Release

- A press release is one of the best ways to get word out to local media about your event or program. Give yourself enough time to properly promote your event or project. Aim to send a press release one month in advance, then reconnect with your contacts a week or two before the project or event takes place.
- Who, what, when, where and why are all answered in a press release. Be sure to include your spokesperson's contact information on the release. Many reporters may have questions or seek additional information on your event or program.
- Be sure to include a photo (including a credit line) with your press release. A visual representation of your event/project or a logo of your organization will help readers better identify your event or project.
- Publish the press release on your organization's website or blog.

Getting the Word Out

- Utilize your media distribution list. Send your press release, along with photos, captions and credits, to your contacts. Remember, timing is everything. Don't send a news release after 3 pm and try not to send it at the end of the work week.
- Invite your media contacts for interviews, tours or a behind-the-scenes look at your event, program or project.
- Remember the power of social media. Use Facebook, Twitter and other platforms to spread the word about your event. Make sure you include relevant media in these links or post on their social media pages, as well.
- Don't forget to send your press releases to any community group or civic organization that might be interested — these can include Visit Fairfax, local Chamber of Commerce groups, public schools and other arts and culture organizations.
- Include your local, state, and federal representatives in a separate email. While they might not be able to attend, they often pass on good news from constituents.

Pitch Your Story

- Follow up by calling your media contacts to confirm receipt and "pitch" your story. Present the facts quickly and emphasize why this would interest his or her readers or viewers. If there is interest, you might offer to set up an interview with the director or arrange a tour of your facility. If possible, offer a high-resolution photograph of your event or a past event to use in promotions.

MARKETING YOUR PROJECT CONTINUED

Social Media

- Social media tools, such as blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok are great, useful resources when trying to share news of your project. A few things to consider when using social media:
 - **Integrate social media into your overall strategy:** Social media is a great tool when trying to reach constituents, but it's not the only tool. Make sure to include your greater media outreach goals in your social media plan. Reference the press release section of your website, your news page and more.
 - **Familiarize yourself with each platform:** Create accounts on social media sites well in advance of promoting your event or project. Find others on the site with like goals that will share your content. Are there other organizations with similar values and missions?
 - **Know your goal:** Why are you using social media? What is your long-term goal with social media?
 - **Pick the platforms best suited for your goal:** There are several social media platforms available. Choose the ones that best suit your needs and develop a well-thought-out social media strategy. Does the content you promote lend itself to a certain medium? If you take high-quality photos, maybe Instagram is the best platform. If you want to publicize events, stick to Facebook and Twitter.
 - **Make a plan:** Creating an engaging, active social media presence can be time consuming. What can you do to sustain a plan? Who will be the point person on social media? How often do you plan to publish fresh content? Who will monitor your social media channels and respond as appropriate to comments/questions from the public?
 - **Use personality:** Social media users are looking to build a community. Make sure your content provides a strong voice with interesting content.
 - **Share for others:** Social media is about sharing, so be a good steward and share relevant information in retweets and shares on social media.
 - **Be engaging:** Aim to have two-way interactions and conversations. Enable comments and engage with users of similar interest in your field. Find relevant hashtags on Twitter to follow and retweet.

Events and Giveaways

- A good way to drum up awareness and interest in a limited time is to run events and promotions. You can also use these to support your other promotional efforts. Think launch parties, pop-up shows, or raffles. If you can pull some strings and get a local celebrity or official to come down, do it.
- Promotions are another option. Do you have something you can give away for free? Think about partnering up with others — perhaps a local food producer or retailer. You could help them drive sales and attract people to your exhibition.

For additional information on social media strategies, visit the National Endowment for Arts Social Media guide.

Activating empty spaces with the arts is a crucial element in revitalizing communities. ArtsFairfax is committed to providing support to Fairfax County arts organizations and can provide guidance for such projects. Don't hesitate to reach out to us to discuss your concepts and progress. We want to help promote each project and inspire others to develop their own Creative Spaces Project. Don't forget to tag us in your photos and posts! Use hashtag #ArtsFairfaxCreativeSpaces.

BUDGET WORKSHEETS

A downloadable XLS spreadsheet is available at <https://artsfairfax.org/creative-spaces/>
Please see Step 6 – Creating Your Budget.

PROJECT BUDGET	
INCOME	Amount
Capital Reserve Fund	
Capital Campaign Proceeds	
Corporate or Foundation Grants	
Government Grant	
Individual Donations	
Loans	
Other Potential Income	
Tenant Improvement Allowance (TI)	
TOTAL:	
EXPENSES	Amount
Hard Costs:	
Construction Costs	
Contingency (10%)	
Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment	
IT/Phone/Security Equipment	
Signage and Exterior Costs	
Specialty Equipment (e.g., lighting, dance floor, sink, mirrors, curtains, etc.)	
General Conditions and Fees	
Other Hard Costs	
SUBTOTAL:	
Soft Costs: (there may be others unique to the project or organization)	
Acoustical Engineer	
Architecture & Interior Design Fees	
Capital Campaign Costs	
Consultant Fees	
Engineer Fees (Structural/MEP)	
Financing Fees	
Graphic Design/Signage (interior and exterior)	
Insurance (Liability, Other)	
Legal & Accounting	

APPENDIX

BUDGET WORKSHEETS CONTINUED

EXPENSES	Amount
Soft Costs: (continued)	
Lighting & Sound Design	
Marketing/Advertising	
Moving Costs	
Other Fees (Certificate of Occu-pancy, Green, Utility, etc.)	
Permit Expediter	
Permit Fees (Zoning, Building, oth-er County Requirements)	
Project Management	
Architect/Design Costs (Render-ings, Mockups, etc.)	
Storage	
Third Party Inspections	
Other Soft Costs	
SUBTOTAL:	
TOTAL:	

* NOTE: THE PROJECT BUDGET DOES NOT INCLUDE ONGOING OPERATING COSTS.	
THE OPERATING BUDGET COULD INCLUDE:	
OPERATING COSTS	Amount
Rent	
Staff Salaries	
Cleaning	
Employment Taxes	
HVAC	
Independent Contractors/Consultants	
Insurance	
Legal	
Maintenance	
Parking	
Phones/Internet/WiFi	
Repairs	
Special Events	
Supplies	
Utilities (electrical, gas, water)	
Other	
TOTAL:	

SPACE SPECIFICATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

What do you need?	
Purpose/Use Description (How space will be used? Classroom? Performance? Rehearsal? Studio? Exhibit?)	
Dates Needed:	
Total Square Foot Requirements:	
SPACE ATTRIBUTES	
Ceiling Height Requirement	
Climate control	
Daily and hourly usage requirements (weekends, early mornings, evenings, etc.)	
Accessibility /Elevators/ADA Compliance	
Flooring type (wood, concrete, carpet)	
Lobby	
Meeting Rooms	
Office Space	
Scene Shop	
Single or multiple floors	
Special Events Space	
Storage	
Visibility, Signage or Storefront required	
Use – Retail, Industrial or Office	
PERFORMANCE SPACE	
Acoustic isolation	
Loading Dock	
Unobstructed sight lines (be aware of columns)	
Vibration control	
MECHANICAL/PLUMBING/HVAC	
Electrical capacity needed	
HVAC	
Kitchen/cooking facilities	
Number of Restrooms	
Mechanical/electronic	
Slop sink and/or water access	
Ventilation	
Waste Removal	

SPACE SPECIFICATIONS CONTINUED

Space Specifications and Considerations (continued)	
EXHIBIT SPACE	
Artist workspace	
Number of galleries	
OTHER	
Available Parking	
Cost	
Transit accessibility	
Location (preferred)	
CONSIDERATIONS	
Insurance	
Occupancy requirements	
Permits	
Tenant Improvement Funds?	
Zoning	
CONTACT	
Primary Contact Person	
Name	
Function/Title	
Email	
Phone	
Secondary Contact Person	
Name	
Function/Title	
Email	
Phone	

ESTIMATED BUILDING FITOUT COSTS BY TYPE OF PROJECT

	Facility Identification	Fitout Costs	Construction Costs	Notes
Arts Office Space				
1	Office Space	\$92/SF Fitout	Range of \$585,000 - \$819,000	2,500-3,500 SF; reception area, large conference room, small conference room; bathrooms, supply/copy room; 8 offices/workstations; kitchenette.
Visual Arts				
2	Art Galleries	\$121/SF Fitout	Small: \$81,500; Medium: \$163,000; Large: \$326,000	500 SF / 1,000 SF / 2,000 SF — Large or small flexible (unbuilt) spaces, high ceilings, ambient natural light but not a lot of windows, track lighting grid, can also be retail spaces for smaller organizations or collectives selling art and crafts, two-four offices, storage, restrooms.
3	Museum	\$121/SF Fitout for White Box (excludes exhibits)		Children's Museum, Science/Tech museum (tech community support). A museum can become a significant anchor, and possibly be attracted from outside the community with space and subsidy or some other benefits. An art museum would unlikely be home grown, unless there is a significant local collector/benefactor looking to create a museum (draw depends on collection).
4	Public Art		\$25,000 - \$250,000 + higher	Depends on project; consider temporary and permanent projects, creative use of space (e.g., parking garages/rooftop sculpture gardens/medians).
5	Arts Education Classrooms/Studios	\$92/SF Fitout	\$117,000 - \$351,000	Medium and large open space(s) (500-1,500 SF); can be minimal infrastructure; northern or ambient light; needs adequate water/sink/drainage, area needs to have exhaust fan(s) to pull fumes out of area, restrooms.
Artist Residences				
6	Artist Live-Work Spaces	\$71/SF Fitout		Combination housing/studios/gallery; large flexible spaces, residences — could be low-cost housing on upper levels; co-located with workforce housing; may need to be subsidized; consider offering performing & media artists as well as visual.
7	Film/Video Studios/Galleries	\$142/SF Fitout		Small spaces can be clustered, specialized power, no windows (curtained storefront), acoustical treatments, storage, restrooms, office.
8	Recording Studios	\$355/SF Fitout		Small space can be clustered, specialized power, no windows (curtained storefront), specialized acoustical spaces (soundproof small rooms), storage, restrooms, office.

APPENDIX

BUILDING FITOUT COSTS CONTINUED

Theatres				
9	Large Theatre for Dance/Musical Theatre/Opera	\$603/SF	\$24,120,000	Based on 40,000 SF/50' wide proscenium stage with 45' opening; 40' deep; 100' fly space; 750-1,200 seats; wing space of 25' per side; orchestra pit; sprung dance floor with a Marley floor available; lobby to hold seating capacity; box office with 2-3 windows; concession area; restrooms; (both in public and artist areas); specialized systems (electrical, lighting plumbing, HVAC); storage for sets and costumes; rehearsal room same size as stage with sprung floors, 6 Equity standard dressing rooms; 2 chorus dressing rooms; direct access loading doors bus access for entrance.
10	Medium Theatre	\$603/SF	\$18,090,000	Based on 30,000 SF/ 35-40' wide stage opening; 30' high; 30-35' deep; ceiling/grid height; 2.5x opening; orchestra pit; 250 seats; 6,800 SF w/o scene, costume, & office spaces; 14,500 SF for full production/residency theatre. Some storage options. 32 by 60-foot column-free space; end stage; fixed seating; sound insulation if adjoining another facility; fully wired for all technical needs; restrooms; front of house lobby/box office.
11	Small Theatre	\$603/SF	\$12,060,000	Based on 20,000 SF/150 seat: 4,000 SF w/o rehearsal space, scene shop costume shop & office space (a walk-in space); 12,000 SF if fuller production & resident personnel. 32' by 60' wide column free space/flexible seating; no fly space; specialized power requirements (separate grounded sound/lighting); restrooms; ticket sales/lobby.
12	Large Concert Hall	\$603/SF	\$66,330,000	Based on 100,000 SF/900-1,200 seats, wing and fly space for opera, acoustically designed for musical performances: 3 offices, 2 rehearsal halls, lobby with 1,000 capacity, green room, loading dock.
13	Large Dramatic Theatre	\$603/SF	\$24,120,000	Based on 40,000 SF/50' wide proscenium stage with 45' opening; 40' deep; 100' fly space; 750-1,000 seats; wing space of 25' per side; orchestra pit; sprung dance floor with a Marley floor available; lobby to hold seating capacity; box office with 23 windows; concession area; restrooms (both in public and artist areas); specialized systems (electrical, lighting plumbing, HVAC); storage for sets and costumes; rehearsal room same size as stage with sprung floors, 6 Equity standard dressing rooms; 2 chorus dressing rooms; direct access loading doors to stage; bus access for entrance.
Outdoor Arts Facilities				
14	Large Outdoor Performance Space		\$24,000,000	Amphitheatre, permanent stage and stage housing, fixed half circle stepped seating and adjacent plaza furnishings, adequately wired for all technical needs, stage, concert shell, lighting, sound, electrical access, media/film, storage facility, managers office w/ communications, proximity to restrooms for both artists and audiences.
15	Small Outdoor Performance Space		\$12,000,000	Stage/Concert Shell; adequate wiring and electrical access, storage for equipment, screens, etc.

BUILDING FITOUT COSTS CONTINUED

Outdoor Arts Facilities (continued)				
16	Festival Park / Civic Plaza		\$17,000,000	Community use area for many types of festivals, not just arts: non-permanent stage, staging equipment, concert shell, etc; lighting, sound, & electrical access; off-street loading and truck access.
12	Large Concert Hall	\$603/SF	\$66,330,000	Based on 100,000 SF/900-1,200 seats, wing and fly space for opera, acoustically designed for musical performances: 3 offices, 2 rehearsal halls, lobby with 1,000 capacity, green room, loading dock.
Multi-Purpose Facilities				
17	Multi-arts Center	\$603/SF	\$30,175,000 - \$60,350,000	50,000-100,000 SF multi-stage and studio facility to accommodate music, dance, theatre and visual arts; one 500 seat theatre and one 150-250 seat theatre could be flexible space; 3 rehearsal rooms to match size of theatres, 5 classroom spaces; green rooms, dressing rooms; administrative space; lobby with 750-800 capacity, artist studios, café, gallery/shop space; loading docks and truck access.
18	Dance Consortium Center	\$497/SF	\$19,880,000	Based on 40,000 SF/Center for dance: Multiple users (companies and schools); studios for classes & rehearsals, multiple small (100-250 seating) &/or midsize (300-600) flexible performing spaces with collapsible stadium seating. Multiple office suites for organizations.
19	Dance Studio/School	\$142/SF Fitout	\$2,130,000	Based on 15,000 SF/Studio sizes range from 600-3,000 SF with length and ceiling height needed; need at least one of each; multiple studios (depending on size of company/student capacity) sprung floors, mirrored walls, bars; dressing rooms, storage areas, restrooms, office suite for management (depending on scope adds up to 1,500 SF additional space). Could be a co-location for or also provide fitness/wellness classes.
20	Music Education and Rehearsal Space	\$355/SF Fitout		Include ensemble space(s) and individual practice/instruction rooms; acoustic sound insulation within each room, otherwise minimal needs (beyond storage, restrooms, office).
21	Drama Class and Rehearsal Space	\$355/SF Fitout		Drama classes and rehearsals.
22	Space for Writing Classes	\$92/SF Fitout		One large meeting and reading room, small workshop rooms, office space and public amenities. Otherwise, minimal infrastructure.

General Notes:

- 1 Core and Shell construction includes the exterior shell and primary building infrastructure, which may consist of a building or an interior leasehold space.
- 2 Fit out construction includes the interior construction of an existing shell space or a leasehold space to satisfy the facility program.
- 3 All ranges of estimate of probable cost listed herein are limited to construction cost value only. Other project costs, commonly referred to as Project Soft Costs, are not included in the value. Customary Soft Costs include but are not limited to design fees, reimbursable expenses, testing, and permit application fees. A 20% multiplier should be applied to the construction cost value for this range of soft costs.
- 4 Other project costs, in addition to construction cost and customary soft costs, may be required depending on project circumstances. These costs may include site development costs, land acquisition cost, legal fees, broker fees, developer fees, and project contingency allowances.

REQUEST FOR AN INTERPRETATION OF THE ZONING ORDINANCE

All requests for an interpretation of the Zoning Ordinance must be submitted electronically through the PLUS application portal. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/zoning/interpretations>

SAMPLE COVID WAIVER

Assumption of Risk and Waiver of Liability Relating to Coronavirus/COVID-19

COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus, has been characterized as a pandemic by the World Health Organization and has prompted, among other actions, a declaration of a national emergency by the President as well as a declaration of a public emergency by the [insert governor or other public official]. COVID-19 is particularly contagious and as a result, federal, state, and local governments have enacted social distancing restrictions and have prohibited the congregation of large groups of people.

[insert org] has created new protocols and put in place measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19; however, [insert org] cannot and does not guarantee that you will not become infected with COVID-19. Attending or participating in any activity at [insert full name of site or location] ("site abbreviation, if appropriate") may increase your risk of contracting COVID-19 and may increase the risk of transmitting COVID-19 to others.

.....

I acknowledge the highly contagious nature of COVID-19 and voluntarily assume the risk that I, or members of my group or organization, may be exposed to or infected by COVID-19 by participating in any way in any event, program, activity, reservation or rental taking place at [insert site], and that such exposure or infection may result in injury, illness, permanent disability, or death. I understand that the risk of becoming exposed to or infected by COVID-19 at [insert site] may result from the actions, omissions, or negligence of myself and others, including, but not limited to, [insert org] employees, volunteers, and other participants and their families.

I voluntarily agree to assume all of the foregoing risks and accept sole responsibility for any injury to myself or members of my group or organization, including, but not limited to, personal or bodily injury (including death), disability, illness, damage, loss, claim, liability, or expense, of any kind, that they or I may experience or incur in connection with participation in any event, program, activity, reservation or rental taking place at [insert site]. I hereby release, covenant not to sue, discharge, and hold harmless [insert org], and their employees, agents, and representatives, of and from any claims related to COVID-19, including all liabilities, claims, actions, judgments, damages, costs or expenses of any kind arising out of or relating thereto. I further agree to indemnify and hold harmless [insert org] and their employees, agents, and representatives from any claim that may arise from or in connection with my or members of my group or organization's participation in any program taking place at [insert site], including claims related to COVID-19. I understand and agree that this release includes any claims based on the actions, omissions, or negligence of [insert org] and their employees, agents, and representatives, whether a COVID-19 infection occurs before, during, or after participation in activities at [insert site].

