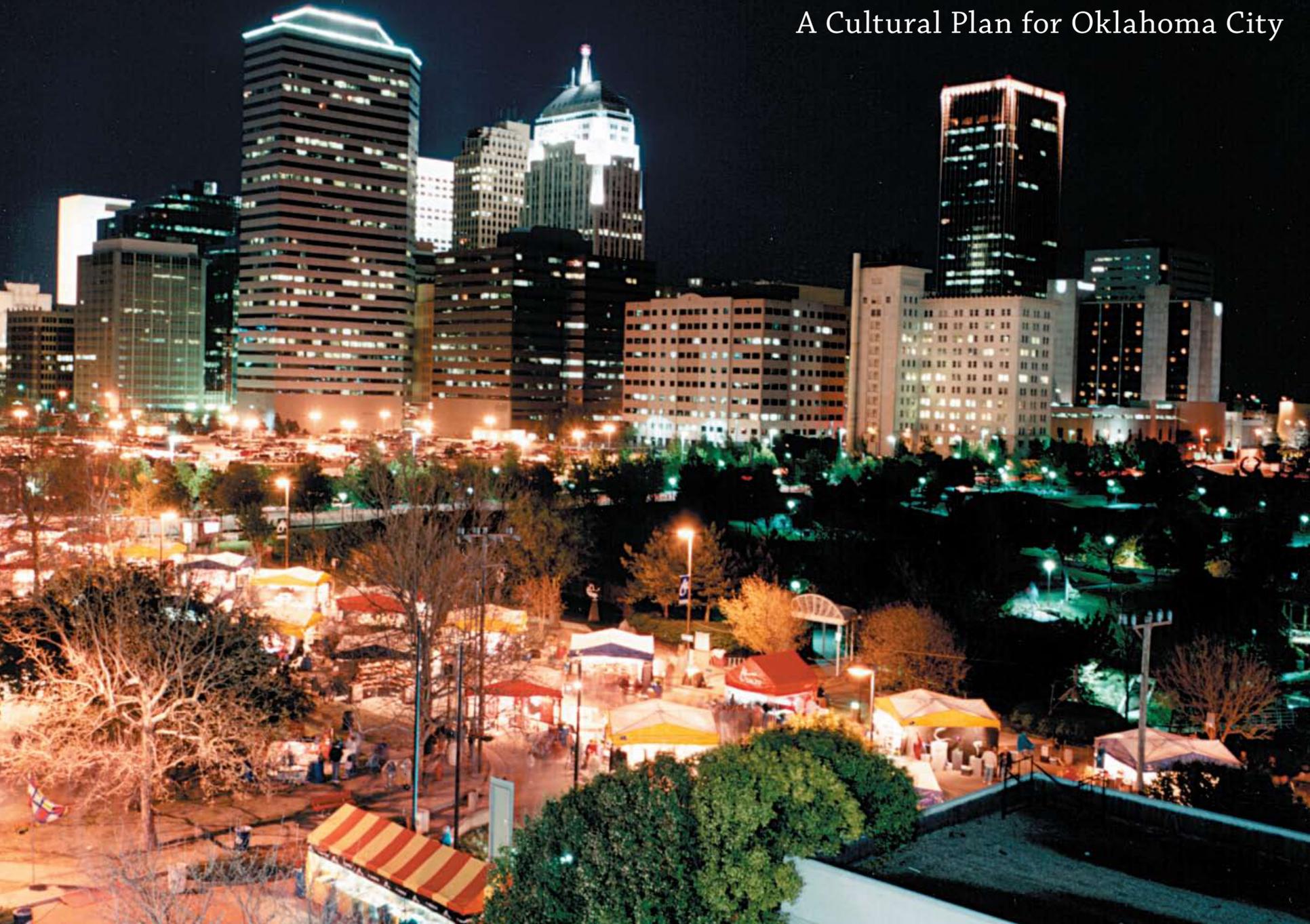


Strategies For Tomorrow

A Cultural Plan for Oklahoma City



Strategies For Tomorrow

A Project of the Cultural Development Corporation of Central Oklahoma

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Opening Thoughts

From the vantage point of 2009, the cultural life of Oklahoma City looks brighter and more diverse than ever before. This sort of inspired growth rests on a foundation that was carefully built over time by individuals and organizations devoted to the ideals of art and culture. During the past 10 years, the Cultural Development Corporation of Central Oklahoma (CDC) has created an identity for itself by helping arts agencies and community organizations dare to dream big with their plans. The CDC has focused on specific tasks: raising money; creating new arts venues and improving existing venues; and strengthening communication among all involved parties. Things have gone well.

Momentum, once generated, cannot be put on hold. To guide steady cultural progress from now through 2014, the CDC proposes a series of creative strategies for Oklahoma City. The dynamic nature of cultural growth means the plan, the various people and organizations involved, and the financial partners will continuously evolve. It is impossible to know in advance all the exciting and subtle turns *Strategies for Tomorrow* will follow.



Cultural is a descriptor that is sprinkled across every page of this plan. But what does cultural actually encompass? The CDC operates from a multi-dimensional concept of cultural:

- The visual, performing, literary and media arts
- Artists and arts audiences
- Arts education
- Public art and arts facilities
- Architectural design and historic preservation
- Public events and festivals throughout the community
- Individuals and groups who support the arts with energy, time and money

Like the spokes of a wheel, definite lines extend out from the hub of cultural development to economic growth, opportunities for tourism, the revitalization of neighborhoods and a deeper appreciation of ethnic diversity. Exciting new projects that embody these ideals are already underway including development along the Oklahoma River, construction of the American Indian Cultural Center and a visionary plan for the *School of Rock*.¹

¹The University of Central Oklahoma's Academy of Contemporary Music, located in Bricktown. The academy will be known as ACM @ UCO.

Momentum, once generated, cannot be put on hold.



More Really is Better

Wouldn't it be great if continued cultural development happened spontaneously? The reality is that more cultural development depends on increasing people-power: people to create, lead, organize and fund. People such as: **Implementers, Government and Business Sectors, Cultural /Arts Organizations**

Implementers are the individuals and organizations that actually carry out the work. As such, they are central to long-term success.

Government and Business Sectors must strive to broaden from a narrow field of key supporters to a diverse array of interested parties who participate and contribute.

Cultural/Arts Organizations must identify, train, and empower new leaders. They are called on to innovate from the inside out, with the goal of collaborative networking.

The CDC exclaims, "More is better!" Moving forward with these key groups, we're on a path toward:

- More economic impact through cultural development
- More public understanding of why art and culture matter
- More cultural/arts venues
- More support from the private sector
- More focus on the arts in the schools
- More support from colleges and universities
- More public art
- More community based arts education for all ages
- More artists and opportunities for them to sell their art
- More free-form creative expression in non-traditional venues
- More inclusion of ethnically diverse art and cultural activities
- More communication among arts organizations
- More cooperative alliances between government, business and the arts

Why Keep Investing?

Economic Impact

Studies conducted in 1999 and 2004 show that the arts in Oklahoma City translate into economic opportunity - more than \$1 billion of opportunity.

The facts from the last 10 years are exciting:

- The quantity and diversity of art activities more than doubled
- \$200 million was invested in capital projects to support the arts
- More than 10 million people attended cultural events
- Cultural organizations contributed \$3.7 million in state and local taxes

There are more interesting choices for art and entertainment than ever before.

Return on investment takes on new significance when the ratio is 10-to-1. Our City anticipates revenue of \$10 or more for every one dollar invested in visual and performing arts.

Momentum: A stream of forward motion is sweeping the cultural life of Oklahoma City to new heights. Now is the time to celebrate our vast array of events, venues, artists, performances, audiences and eclectic cultural opportunities. The people have spoken with a clear voice of approval.

As a result, there are more interesting choices for art and entertainment than ever before! The cultural momentum of our City is influencing economic growth, opportunities for tourism, the revitalization of neighborhoods, and a deeper appreciation of ethnic diversity.

Awareness: Greater visibility means bigger audiences and increased demand. One tremendous breakthrough is OPUBCO's introduction of the Wimgo on-line calendar of events and activities. Further use of the Internet, combined with other creative marketing techniques, will expand audience reach. Importantly, Allied Arts and the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce stand ready to take the lead in creating a campaign for arts awareness.

Untapped Potential: The creative renaissance of Oklahoma City continues to generate fresh opportunities. People are looking for more uncommon styles of entertainment such as art films, cabaret performances and more diverse music venues. This reflects the remarkable spectrum of demographics, ethnicity and interests of our population. Further cultural development calls for these truths to be recognized, embraced and celebrated.

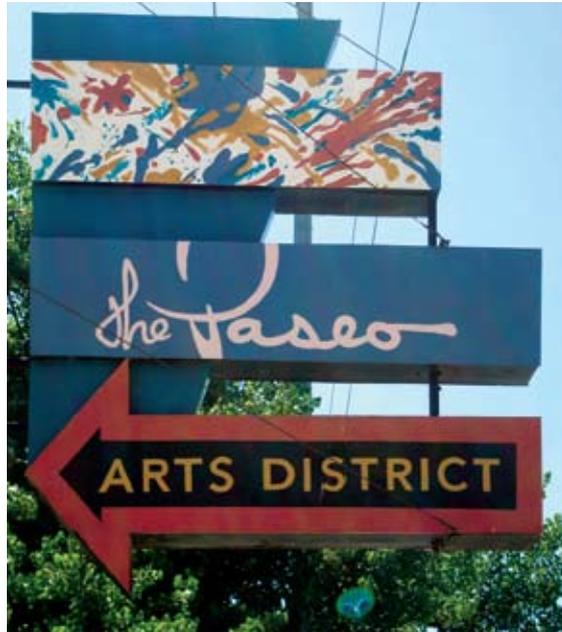
Stability: Our various cultural/arts organizations must focus on their long-term financial viability. It is not enough to think and work creatively. Financial planning, measuring outcomes, and surveying for audience satisfaction need to be incorporated into a standardized document, to be known as Art Business Guidelines. Local organizations that operate under these guidelines can then qualify for community funding and other support.



Strategies for Tomorrow

The CDC presents five Creative Strategies for advancing the cultural agenda of Oklahoma City. Each strategy presents:

- **Bright Ideas:** Practical suggestions that lay the groundwork for improvement
- **Bold Moves:** Proactive steps that are financially and logistically achievable
- **Implementers:** Organizations that have agreed to plan and implement



Creative Strategy 1: Entice, Attract, Entertain

Present Oklahoma City as a Cultural Destination for Residents and Visitors



Bright Ideas:

- Connect with the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce and the Oklahoma City Convention and Visitors Bureau to collaborate on a plan to promote Oklahoma City nationally
- Continue focusing on cultural tourism as a *double win*: Cultural tourism infuses money in the local economy and improves quality of life
- Celebrate and promote the cultural assets of Oklahoma City including key museums; the Arts District; Myriad Gardens; Bricktown; the Paseo; the Oklahoma River; Native American roots and an eclectic mix of expressions from African American, Hispanic and Asian cultures
- Explore the possibility of developing advertisements in partnership with the Oklahoma Department of Tourism or the OKC Advertising Club
- Encourage and assist all arts agencies and venues to participate with wimgo.com
- Consider creating *cultural kiosks* in Oklahoma City for maximum access to wimgo.com and other Internet resources for culture/arts

Bold Moves:

Develop a multi-media awareness campaign to promote the diverse opportunities for cultural tourism in Oklahoma City

Implementers:

TBD



Creative Strategy 2: Maximize What Exists

Forge a Wider Path for Collaborating with City and County Government

Bright Ideas:

- Research the role of City government in other cities with highly developed public art and art events (i.e. Seattle, Miami, Columbus, Denver)
- Propose innovative thinking to the City of Oklahoma City to expand and sustain a bold cultural agenda
- Simplify zoning and permit procedures for unique creative ventures such as street vendors, outdoor performances/exhibits, festivals, new gallery locations, mixed-use environments and non-traditional venues
- Publicize and promote the vital connection between technological innovation and cultural development
- Create an informal space for artists and art supporters to meet



Bold Moves:

- Present a persuasive case for the City to establish a staff position to serve as an advocate for cultural opportunities
- Create a Zoning and Permits Team (ZAP Team) to work with city government to update zoning and permit policies to better accommodate the arts community
- Establish a task force to help define the role of City and County government in developing a comprehensive range of public art, both publicly and privately funded

Implementers:

TBD



Creative Strategy 3: Energize the Atmosphere

Appreciate and Improve the Existing Cultural Network

Bright Ideas:

- Encourage fresh, innovative forms of creative expression in non-traditional venues
- Advance the use and maintenance of existing performance venues; consider creation of more intimate venues in neighborhoods
- Identify *Arts Champions* in the community and create strategies for furthering their involvement
- Conceptualize Art Business Guidelines document

Bold Moves:

- Support the Oklahoma Creativity Project to encourage innovation in creative expression
- Create and promote Art Business Guidelines as part of a tool chest for arts agencies, venues and artists
- Conduct an updated facilities study for arts and performance venues, clearly identifying strengths and weaknesses
- Provide an opportunity for existing cultural/arts organizations to combine and share resources, as well as utilize common facilities

Implementers:

TBD



Creative Strategy 4: Amplify Lifelong Learning

Provide Opportunities for Arts Education Across the Age Spectrum

Bright Ideas:

- Identify new ways to support and partner with the City's thriving arts educators, including the DaVinci Institute, A+ Schools, Oklahoma City Museum of Art, City Arts Center, Oklahoma Children's Theater, Edmond Arts Institute, area universities and UCO's new Academy of Contemporary Music (aka *School of Rock*)
- Further enlighten area school boards of the academic value of arts education
- Add more after-school programs that foster creativity and artistic development
- Inventory the public classes currently offered by all arts educators in the area; work to minimize duplication and maximize resources
- Emphasize comprehensive programs that cover the age spectrum from early childhood to adult education
- Make connections with art and music in churches, libraries and other neighborhood venues
- Seek collaborations with social service agencies

Bold Moves:

- Increase arts education in all Oklahoma City elementary schools (public and private) using a mix of traditional and unconventional methods
- Recruit arts mentors:100+ visual and performing artists to work two hours a week with interested school districts
- Ensure that wimgo.com includes art classes for kids and adults, including therapeutic arts classes
- Promote adult art education under the theme of *Never too Late to Learn*

Implementers:

TBD





Creative Strategy 5: \$upport and \$ustain

Determine All Avenues of Support for Cultural/Arts Organizations

Bright Ideas

- Create an advocacy organization for cultural/arts organizations
- Encourage the development of a master plan for cultural facilities to support the community's growing demand for diverse arts programs
- Explore untapped sources of public funding for the arts, including grant opportunities; implement a strategy for pursuing the most viable sources
- Commit to fund and publish an Economic Impact Study of the Arts in Oklahoma City every five years
- Develop an endowment strategy for maintaining and enhancing facilities on a long-term basis

Bold Moves

- Work with local government entities to develop an ongoing funding stream for the arts, including programmatic and facility funding
- Work with corporations, foundations and others to establish a fund to begin implementing the five Creative Strategies proposed in this document
- Conduct a current Economic Impact Study, to be published in 2009

Implementers:

TBD



Making it Work

Four key actions underlie the success of *Strategies for Tomorrow*:

- **Energize:** The City of Oklahoma City and Oklahoma County will dramatically expand their roles as cultural/arts advocates
- **Empower:** Local organizations and government entities cited under *Implementers* will actively assume their roles
- **Navigate:** The CDC will steer the wider process by building a creative partnership with Oklahoma City governments; generating funds; serving as consultant/advisor to all stakeholders and monitoring the progress of each strategy
- **Support:** Local organizations and government entities identified as *Implementers* will be provided initial financial and other support needed for implementation

Measuring Success

Public support for these strategies will flow from the following tangible increases:

- Economic impact through cultural/arts development (Measured by 2009 Economic Impact Study)
- Event attendance, art sales and art venues (Measured by 2009 Economic Impact Study, updated facilities study)
- Funds raised from the private sector (Measured through Allied Arts, 2009 Economic Impact Study)
- Arts education in the schools (Measured by increase in A+ Arts School)
- Public art (Measured by Oklahoma City Arts Commission)
- Community based arts education for all ages (Measured by number of arts education opportunities being offered)
- Artists and opportunities for them to sell their art (Measured by membership in artist organizations, 2009 Economic Impact Study)
- Business structuring applied to cultural/arts organizations (Measured by Allied Arts, the Center for Non Profits)



Photo Credit: Elliott & Associates Architects



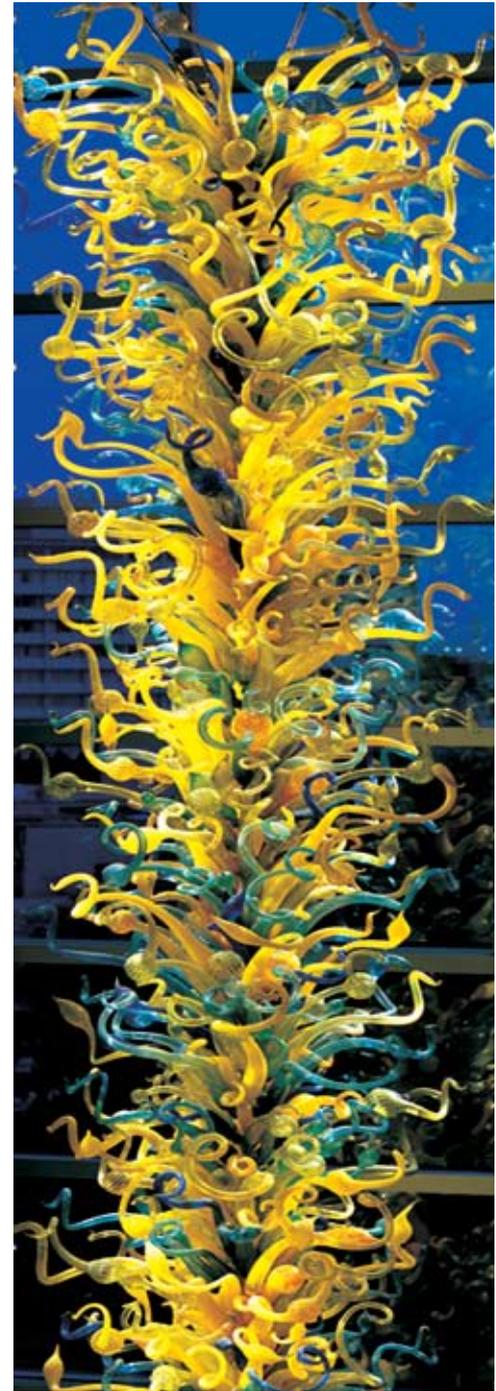
Last Look

The vibrancy that Oklahoma City exudes today has everything to do with cultural development. From a rowing exposition on the Oklahoma River to an evening sculpture class at a community center, our area's cultural renaissance is generating more forward energy with each passing year. The CDC proposes the *Strategies for Tomorrow* as a focused plan to support and sustain continued growth and opportunity through 2012 and beyond.

These strategies celebrate the well-known museums, festivals, performance venues, artists and events that are woven into the cultural fabric of Oklahoma City. They also increase the excitement that surrounds fresh projects like the American Indian Cultural Center and the comprehensive on-line events calendar, wimgo.com. The proposed multi-media advertising campaign will spark further awareness and enthusiasm for art and culture. Yet ultimately, what these strategies may do best is open new doors, explore hidden corners and illuminate our more subtle cultural assets. Including historic architecture, public art pieces, landscaping, small galleries in diverse neighborhoods, art classes for older adults, eclectic street performers and ethnic culture / art. Advancing these "niches" is vital to enlivening our cultural conversation and emboldening new generations of creative thinkers and doers.

Oklahoma City has the creative capital, the leadership and the financial will to implement the *Strategies for Tomorrow*.

From this position of strength, let's begin energetically moving towards the next level!



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