

**Working Draft
For Discussion Purposes Only**

Dedicated Revenue Analysis: Governance Considerations

For more than two months, a small group comprised primarily of arts organization leaders wrestled with how the promise of “culture for all” could be delivered by revenue from a quarter-cent sales tax.

For this purpose, we assumed the referendum would be approved by Mecklenburg voters. As a result, our group focused entirely on the implementation challenges that are likely to arise in creating a new model for supporting the arts/science/history sector. We believe this new funding will transform the sector, and will drive economic growth.

Fundamentally, we believe any model we create must not only provide stability to existing and emerging cultural organizations, it must also ensure cultural equity across the county. We used ASC’s working definition of cultural equity to guide our work: *To truly achieve ASC’s vision of “Culture for All,” all Charlotte-Mecklenburg residents must have equitable opportunity to participate in the cultural life of our region as audiences, volunteers, artists, administrators, board members and donors.* By supporting our cultural institutions and delivering services equitably, we strive to make the newly transformed cultural sector a point of pride for all of our residents.

Given the limited scope of our assignment, we did not endeavor to provide answers to all of the governance questions. Instead, we identified key decision points that will require input and review, often including the broader community. In almost every instance, the governance solution will require careful examination of and balance between competing drivers (e.g. balancing the value cultural expertise and resident demand/voice; large organization stability and investment in healthy disrupters; neighborhood focus and community at-large impact.)

I. Possible structures

- **Preferred structure:** Utilizing a 501c3 that contracts with or receives grants from the county and establishes policies, practices and procedures to ensure transparency and accountability to the citizens
- **Alternative structure:** Establishing a new agency inside county government

II. Core functions of the Resulting Entity

- Distributes sales tax revenue and other available resources with an emphasis on cultural equity and excellence (who decides, how decided)
- Ensures programming relevance to distinct communities of residents as well as the community at-large
- Brokers partnerships (between emerging and existing organizations, across sectors)
- Serves as an incubator, providing requisite coaching, training and support for organizations
- Conducts macro-level research and data collection
- Provides large-scale cultural planning
- Actively advocates for the sector
- Manages existing endowment funds
- Provides leadership, strategic vision and management regarding public art
- Provides grants, professional development, and marketing support to individual artists

III. How do we ensure that all residents have access and the opportunity to experience cultural life?

- Conduct public surveys or other tools to assess needs, interests, gaps

- Solicit broad resident representation and input in a transparent grant distribution process
- Deploy programs where the people live (or determine ways to get people to the programs)
- Ensure full range of offerings — arts, history and science experiences
- Guarantee regular, high quality free offerings
- Increase programming and experiences for K-12 students whether in-school or out-of-school
- Enhance marketing, communications, awareness-building for the full sector

IV. How do we ensure cultural equity guides resource distribution?

- Regularly communicate the definition of cultural equity and require grant applications to demonstrate commitment to cultural equity
- Appoint representatives of all towns (Charlotte, Cornelius, Davidson, Huntersville, Matthews, Mint Hill and Pineville) and all socio-economic, racial/ethnic, age, ability categories in review process and selection
- Establish clear, open criteria for applications, decisions
- Communicating grant selection/evaluation criteria regarding cultural equity and reflecting the importance of those criteria in the scoring/weighting paradigm
- Publishing annual assessments of grant recipients

V. How do we balance predictability and stability in the cultural sector on the one hand with innovation and healthy risk-taking on the other hand?

- Designing new processes/systems with direct input from partners to be impacted
- Creating tiers by organization size, other criteria
- Creating a potential "Innovation Fund" created for investments in emerging organizations and special opportunities
- Devising mechanisms for supporting individual artists, scientists, historians to grow the sector and drive innovation

VI. How do we ensure efficient, expertise-based administration of resources?

- Communicate, communicate, communicate
- Clarify, and where possible, simplify application process
- Offer training/support for new applicants
- Determine distribution approaches: by geography/county commission district, organization size, type of support
- Demand that relevant staff, boards/advisory boards include subject matter experts in art, science and history

Members of the work team:

- **Susan Patterson**, ASC officer
- **Tiffany Capers**, Crossroads Corporation for Affordable Housing and Community Development, Inc., former Teach for America, Foundation For The Carolinas, City of Charlotte
- **Adrienne Dellinger**, Clayworks executive director
- **Kathryn Hill**, Levine Museum of the New South, staff support for DR Study Committee
- **Tyrone Jefferson**, A Sign of the Times executive director
- **Patsy Kinsey**, former Charlotte City Councilwoman, Mayor and Mecklenburg County Commissioner, member of DR Study Committee
- **Nikkeia Lee**, The Possibility Project executive director, Race Matters for Juvenile Justice
- **Barbara Meeks**, Blumenthal Performing Arts Board Member, Moore & Van Allen
- **Mary Newsom**, Charlotte History Museum Board Chair, former UNCC Urban Institute Director of Urban Policy Initiatives and Charlotte Observer editor
- **Kevin Patterson**, Jazz Arts Charlotte Board Chair-elect, former ASC Board Chair, former Public Art Commission Chair, Retired IBM
- **Edwin Peacock**, former Charlotte City Councilman, member of Cultural Life Task Force
- **Rebecca Schultz**, Three Bone Theatre executive director

- **Doug Singleton**, Charlotte Ballet, board member for Cain Center for the Arts, staff support for DR Study Committee
- **Denytra Whitner**, ASC Board, member of DR Study Committee