

State of Culture Report At-a-Glance

In 2022, the City of Charlotte began a process to create the Charlotte Arts and Culture Plan to lay a foundation for strengthening the arts and culture landscape in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.

The year-long process is being undertaken in three phases:

PHASE 1



Opportunities Assessment



May – August
2022

PHASE 2



Public Engagement



August – November
2022

PHASE 3



Vision, Strategy, and Implementation



December – June
2023

The plan is being led by a steering group that includes the Arts and Culture Advisory Board, as well as City of Charlotte staff working with a consultant team led by Lord Cultural Resources.

The State of Culture Report does not make recommendations. Instead, it presents consolidated findings from the research and analysis conducted in Phases 1 and 2 of this process. These findings are summarized in eight emerging insights.

An Ecosystem in Crisis

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg area is rich with creative talent. However many stakeholders expressed that the creative ecosystem is on the verge of financial crisis, or even collapse.

The model that funded the Charlotte-Mecklenburg arts and culture sector for many years, which included robust workplace giving, no longer provides sufficient funding, in line with broader national funding trends. This trend is expected to continue due to what many economists believe to be an impending recession.

The 2008 economic downturn exacerbated funding challenges for the sector, as has the COVID-19 pandemic, and audiences are still not at pre-pandemic levels.

Time is running out

Currently, many small and grassroots organizations and independent artists, self-finance their art, which

is unsustainable. At the same time, mid-size and large organizations are also truly vulnerable. **The Charlotte-Mecklenburg area needs to change how it supports arts and culture.**

The Infusion Fund was introduced as a temporary measure to stabilize the sector, but time is running out since the Infusion Fund ends in FY 2024 (June 30, 2024).

Why This Plan Now: What's at Stake

There is a real risk that without a dependable, ongoing revenue stream, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg arts and culture sector could suffer major losses, with organizations of all sizes failing and artists leaving both the field and/or the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area for opportunities elsewhere.

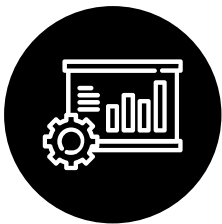
Research has demonstrated many benefits to having a robust arts and

culture sector (per the Americans for the Arts Social Impact Explorer tool); losses in arts and culture mean the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area would lose many other opportunities such as talent attraction and retention, education, health and wellness, workforce development, tourism, and more. Enhancing the arts and culture sector would, conversely, create more opportunities in these areas.

A key imperative of the forthcoming Charlotte Arts and Culture Plan is to identify and gain consensus for ongoing investment in arts and culture in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area, from both the public and the private sectors.

Everyone in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area has a stake in supporting arts and culture, including philanthropists supporting the sector, audiences attending events and buying tickets, companies and corporations appropriately valuing the contributions of creatives, and government setting arts-friendly policies and allocating sufficient funds.

The State of Culture Report lays the foundation for the planning process with a 360-degree review of the area's cultural environment, including:



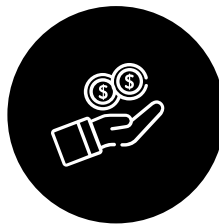
Analysis

Analysis of existing data and plans pertaining to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg arts and culture sector



Assets

A cultural asset inventory and map



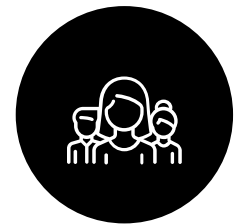
Funding

A funding assessment



Comparables

An examination of funding and governance in comparable communities across the nation



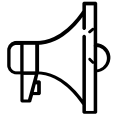
Engagement

Key findings from robust areawide community engagement



Sustainable funding for arts and culture in Charlotte-Mecklenburg requires public-private planning, collaboration, and commitment.

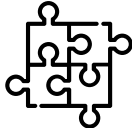
An equitable and inclusive approach to support is critical to realize sustainability and growth in the ecosystem; this includes balancing support for small, mid-size and large organizations; and resourcing BIPOC, LGBTQIA+ and other local artists.



Increased collaboration and greater cooperation throughout the creative ecosystem are imperative to break silos.



Arts education — lifelong, K-12 and post-secondary — experiences should be expanded for greater access and exposure to arts and culture, enhancing quality of life, workforce development, and retention and cultivation of future artists and supporters.



Recognizing the historic and continuing leadership of the private sector, the public sector must play an active leadership role in building Charlotte-Mecklenburg's arts and culture ecosystem.



Stronger communication—about and among the arts and culture community—is needed to increase awareness.

Emerging Insights

This analysis has generated eight Emerging Insights



Access to affordable space is challenging, both for producers and consumers of arts and culture experiences.



Access to arts and culture is needed throughout Charlotte-Mecklenburg — meeting people, artists and arts organizations where they are.

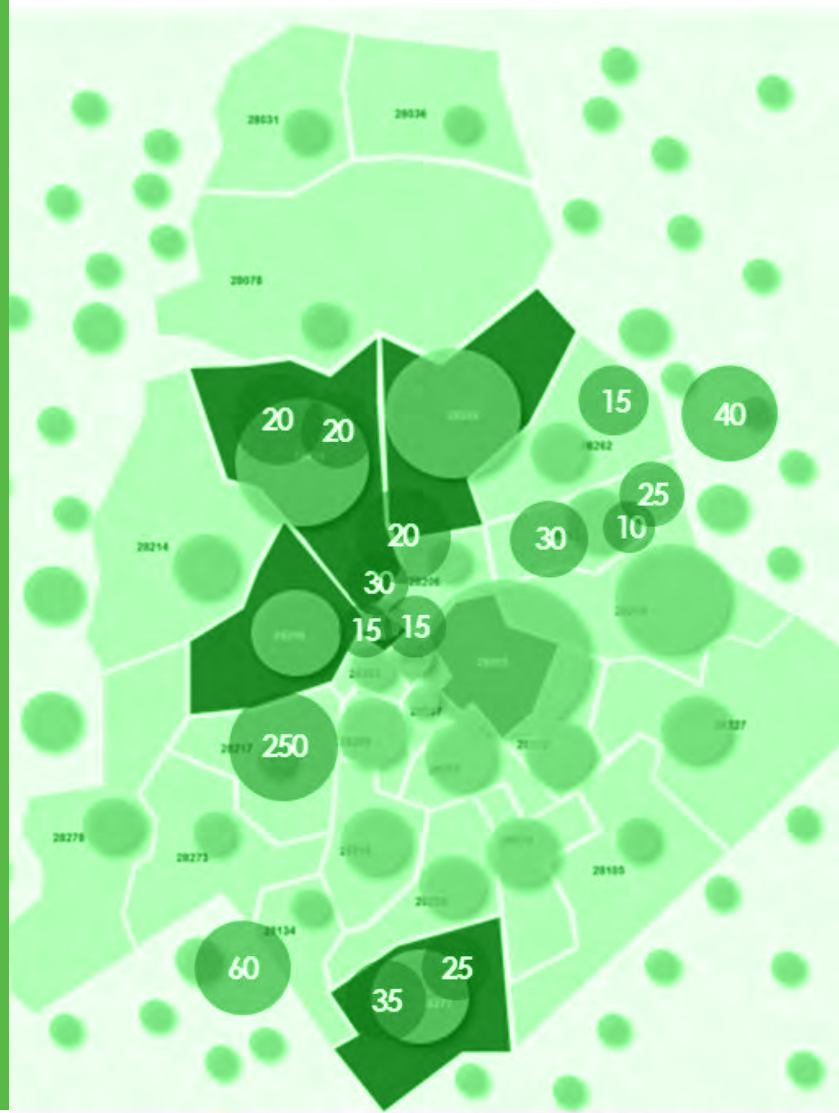
Robust Engagement



MORE THAN

3,240

AREA RESIDENTS IN 75 ZIPCODES



Next Steps

FEBRUARY

State of Culture Report will be shared online with the public

MARCH 15

Deadline for public feedback on State of Culture Report

MARCH to MAY

Taskforce implementation workshops and draft Charlotte Arts and Culture Plan

JUNE

Finalize Charlotte Arts and Culture Plan

2023

MARCH 8

Virtual State of Culture Report public event

MAY

Testing workshops with public and plan revisions

MARCH Finalize priorities for the Charlotte Arts and Culture Plan based on refined insights, and form taskforces (one taskforce per priority)