

**Cumberland County Cultural Heritage Commission  
LONG RANGE PLAN EXTENSION**



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**CUMBERLAND COUNTY CULTURAL & HERITAGE COMMISSION  
LONG RANGE PLAN EXTENSION**

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# CUMBERLAND COUNTY CULTURAL & HERITAGE COMMISSION

## LONG RANGE PLAN EXTENSION

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission hired Nancy Moses Planning + Development to update the Long Range Plan, adopted in 2007, and extend it for another five years. The key initiatives for the updated Plan are to align with the County's Strategic Plan, *Cumberland County 2020: The Coming Decade and Beyond* and to help cultural and heritage organizations become more stable and self-sustaining. By setting out strategies and an implementation plan to accomplish these initiatives, the Commission is continuing the progress of its 2007 Long Range Plan, furthering the current offerings and services in line with the needs of the community, and improving the sustainability of the County's cultural and heritage organizations.

The Plan possesses at its core two main goals: help arts and heritage organizations achieve long-term stability and build Cumberland County into a culture/eco destination.

From these two goals derive four tangible objectives:

1. Building a better brand through consistent offerings.
2. Increasing fundraising capacity.
3. Implementing metrics to make a stronger case to donors.
4. Diversifying boards of trustees so that organizations' governing bodies reflect the County's demographics.

To achieve these objectives, the following strategies are recommended.

- Commission an Economic Impact Study.
- Create an Online Toolbox for constituents.
- Host regular get-togethers for arts and cultural staff and board members.
- Offer matching grant programs to increase fundraising incentives.
- Design a Cultural Hub to serve as a resource center.
- Hire a Cultural Coach to consult with organizations regarding fundraising and management.
- Link Culture with Eco-Tourism and Agri-Tourism.
- Research the possibility of a Cultural Trust to assist with countywide initiatives.

# CUMBERLAND COUNTY CULTURAL & HERITAGE COMMISSION

## LONG RANGE PLAN EXTENSION

### THE ASSIGNMENT

In 2007, the Cultural & Heritage Commission of Cumberland County, New Jersey adopted a Long Range Plan that set the stage for its cultural and heritage organizations to grow, artists to thrive, and residents and visitors to experience its unique places, people and events. Five years later, it hired Nancy Moses Planning + Development to update the Plan and extend it for another five years. Nancy Moses and Rachel Dukeman conducted the work under the supervision of Matthew Pisarski, Principal Planner.

Work began with a meeting with the Commissioners to discuss progress on the 2007 plan, recent changes in the County, and aspirations for the future. Out of this discussion emerged a desire to strengthen organization's fundraising acumen, foster collaboration among cultural and heritage organizations, and to support the County's Strategic Plan.<sup>1</sup>

The Commission then sought to inform itself on the steps needed to develop into a thriving cultural tourism destination. To that end, the Consultants arranged a series of private, confidential meetings with some of the key players who shaped, and now lead, Philadelphia's expanding and exceptionally profitable cultural sector: the city's Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy, the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, and the Greater Philadelphia Tourism & Marketing Corporation. To frame the County's investigation, the Consultants provided study questions and gave a presentation on how Philadelphia developed a thriving tourism industry by building out its cultural attractions.

The work plan originally called for two group meetings: one with leaders of arts and heritage providers, and one with business leaders. Since the business group did not generate sufficient attendance, the Consultants interviewed four people who could inform the Commission on opportunities and impediments to fundraising by cultural organizations Cumberland County. Finally, to understand the path to a thriving eco/cultural tourism industry, the Consultants analyzed the experiences of four rural communities with characteristics similar to Cumberland County.

The Updated Long Range Plan that follows realigns the Commission's efforts in light of the changing environment and needs on its constituents: arts and heritage providers. It advances *Cumberland County 2020: The Coming Decade and Beyond* the County's Strategic Plan, and sets out implementation steps for the next five years.

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<sup>1</sup> County's Strategic Action Plan "2020: The Coming Decade & Beyond"

## FINDINGS

While much has changed in Cumberland County over the last five years, four factors stand out as especially significant for the cultural sector:

**The Great Recession.** Between 2007 and 2009, Cumberland County, like the rest of the nation, suffered a precipitous economic decline. In the County, unemployment reached as high as 14.4 percent. Many families lost jobs, poverty increased, communities lost downtown businesses, and the government lost tax revenues. Young people left in search of employment, and recent retirees looking to downsize could not find buyers for their homes.

When times are tough, basic human services must take priority, as other needs are set aside. For many arts and cultural organizations, the last five years have seen declines in donations, grants, memberships, and other revenue. Others have survived quite well. Millville's Arts District, for example saw an influx of art galleries. The Levoy Theatre recently reported that 31,000 patrons attended 92 performances over a nine-month period. Bayshore Center at Bivalve is seeing record crowds on warm weather weekends.

**Philanthropy.** Many in the County believe that cultural organizations are not able to raise funds because residents lack the resources to give. This is not always the case. According to a 2012 report by the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, Cumberland County placed in the top 18 percent of US counties in terms of generosity. In 2008 residents contributed \$3.36 million. Those with salaries of \$50,000 or more – which is estimated at 14,388 people -- gave on the average \$2,073 or 4.4 percent of their median discretionary income.<sup>2</sup>

In terms of  
**GENEROSITY**  
Cumberland County  
is in the  
**TOP 18 %**

Other County nonprofits have been able to secure major philanthropic support. The South Jersey Healthcare/Inspira Health Network and Cumberland County College benefit from robust fundraising operations that continued to attract donors despite the Great Recession, though with smaller gifts. County residents continue to attend such big-ticket events as galas and golf outings.

Clearly, there is wealth in Cumberland County. Whether it can be tapped for arts and heritage organizations is another matter. When asked to describe the impediments to giving, a local businessman and an expert on fundraising told us that donors only give to organizations that engender trust. They tend not to support those that:

- Garner negative press because of management problems or poor artistic reviews;
- Appear unstable because they cancel events and productions;
- Fail to understand donors' needs and preferences so make uninformed or unreasonable requests.

<sup>2</sup> *How America Gives*, Chronicle of Philanthropy, August 2012, [www.philanthropy.com](http://www.philanthropy.com). Note that the report is based on tax records from 2008.

**Collaboration.** Third, it appears that more arts and heritage organizations are recognizing the value of collaborative action. Their leaders told us about the benefit of learning from other groups and exploring tourism development packages, advertising co-ops, countywide events, and shared services. Cultural and heritage program providers are also eager to jointly advocate for increases in county and state support.

**Growing Disparities.** Our last finding addresses the County's population. Over the last five years, Cumberland has become a minority/majority county with a growing percentage of young families and children. Many organizations are beginning to see more people of Hispanic and Asian origin among their constituents, but have yet to see these sectors represented on boards. How the cultural community responds to the discrepancy between their leadership and constituency will shape their future.



## PLAN EXPANSION

### GOALS

- **Help arts and heritage organizations achieve long-term stability.**

The 2007 Plan focused on strategic planning and governance. This expansion will build on that by providing organizations with the tools and support they need to remain vital, relevant, and financially sustainable in the future.

- **Build Cumberland County into a culture/eco destination.**

The County's 2020 Plan seeks to increase economic activity by capitalizing its natural resources and building an eco-tourism industry. We suggest that greater gains will be achieved if the tourism package includes both ecological and cultural offerings. Other rural communities offer models that point the way.

### OBJECTIVES

- **Consistent offerings and branding.** Many of the smaller arts and heritage organizations supported by the Commission continue to be managed by volunteers, and this makes it difficult to achieve consistency in what they offer the public, the schedule of offerings, and their brand. A brand is the reputation or perception of an organization that identifies their distinction from other organizations. It allows a consumer – who, in nonprofit terms, would be an attendee or donor—to know what to expect.
- **Effective fundraising.** Commissioners, cultural organizations, and fundraising authorities agree that fundraising is the number one priority. But helping the staff of small organizations to compete more effectively in the highly competitive philanthropic marketplace is neither quick nor easy. It requires more than a set of tools or occasional workshop.
- **Implement metrics to make a stronger fundraising case.** Since the Great Recession, donors of all types want to know exactly how their contribution helps advance the causes they support. The organizations that can document these impacts are the ones most likely to make successful appeals.

It is relatively easy to track attendance and membership, but much harder to document such illusive impacts as the thrill of a memorable dance performance, or an evening at a provocative lecture. These impacts – the ones that are the toughest to capture let alone document – are the best measures of impact, and thus the most accurate indicators of success. Over time metrics like these will become increasingly important in fundraising.

- **More diversity on boards of trustees.** The final objective is in the area of governance. It may, for many organizations, be the most challenging. It is to encourage organizations to move, over time, to boards that better reflect their constituents. Board diversity is an issue facing organizations of all sizes and types in virtually every community in the nation. It is especially challenging in communities like Cumberland that are very ethnically diverse, rural, and where a large percentage of its population is economically challenged. But, organizations

that have achieved diversity benefit from offerings better aligned with their constituency. And that builds trust in the community and ultimately among donors.

## **STRATEGIES**

### **Economic Impact Study**

Today, arts and heritage organizations have come to be recognized as contributors to the economic health of a community, as employers, taxpayers, and as draws for tourists, residents, and even businesses. As the Commission members learned during its meeting with the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, economic impact studies can be very persuasive when meeting with government officials, business executives and other types of donors. In fact, these studies are often game-changers for the cultural sector, giving them a seat at the table where significant economic decisions are made.

Cumberland County is ripe for an economic impact study. There is much upon which the study can draw, including a 2004 study by the Cumberland County Department of Planning & Development,<sup>3</sup> and economic studies by the Millville Arts District. There is also tourism data. A recent report noted that tourism direct sales in Cumberland County have gone from \$86 million in 2005 to \$318 million in 2012.<sup>4</sup> The Southern Shore, which encompasses only Cape May County and Cumberland County, is second in New Jersey in the number of visitors with 12.4 million or nearly 18% of the total.<sup>5</sup> Future reports might indicate the percentage gain in cultural tourists. It will be necessary to secure funding in order to implement this recommendation.

### **Online Toolbox**

With relatively few dollars, the Commission could establish an online portal where its grantees could access current materials in fundraising, marketing and impact assessment from sources throughout the region and across the nation. Care must be taken to assure that data sources remain fresh and relevant, but summer interns or other low cost labor could provide this. This recommendation can be implemented in the short term.

In fact, the Commission has already begun this initiative. As a part of this Plan, it retained the regional law firm of Montgomery, McCracken, Walker & Rhoads, LLP, to create templates for a New Jersey nonprofit charitable cultural organization's certificate of incorporation and bylaws. Attorneys Donald W. Kramer, a national authority in nonprofit law, and Catherine H. Gillespie, chair of the firm's Health, Education and Nonprofit Law group are handling this work.

### **Regular Get-Togethers**

During the Commission's retreat in Philadelphia, the staff of the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance talked about the value of bringing cultural leaders together on a regular

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<sup>3</sup> "An Estimation of the Economic Impacts of the Arts Community in Cumberland County, New Jersey," The Cumberland County Department of Planning & Development for The Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission, April 2004.

<sup>4</sup> 2012 Tourism Economic Impact Study. State Division of Travel and Tourism. <http://www.visitnj.org/new-jersey-tourism-research-and-information>

<sup>5</sup> Cape May County Tourism Conference Annual Report. April 25, 2013.



basis to share ideas and get to know each other. Over time, these sessions tend to build trust among participants and spark ideas for collaborations. Examples can be as simple as monthly brown bag lunch sessions where the Commission provides the space and sample discussion topics. This recommendation can be implemented immediately.

### **Matching Grants**

Cumberland County's Cultural and Heritage Commission has limited philanthropic resources, and the economic recession was felt especially hard in its community. So, if the Commission wants to maximize its impact, it might consider a program of matching grants. Matching grants motivate fundraising professionals and allow donors to effectively doubling their donations. They are easy for donors to understand and can make small contributors feel their dollars make a bigger difference. Matching grants make it easier to raise funds, and the easier it is, the greater the chances of success, and ultimately, the better the nonprofit becomes at fundraising. It is possible to implement this recommendation in the short term.

### **Cultural Hub**

If the Commission wants to encourage arts and heritage providers to collaborate, they must first learn to trust each other. The most effective ways to foster trust is through frequent, ongoing interaction. We believe that a central meeting place could advance this. This "cultural hub" could house the coach noted below. It could also house equipment, research supplies, and periodicals that are too expensive for any single group to purchase but that could be shared.

The ideal space may soon become available. Cumberland County College, with the help of the Millville Urban Development Corporation, is planning a 3-story, 30,000 square foot building called the Cumberland County Arts and Business Innovation Center. This building will house the College's Art Department, Glasstown Arts District Offices, retail, and studios. The project is dependent upon a mix of city and county financing, which is currently being explored. If dollars are secured, the Arts and Business Innovation Center is slated for a 2015 opening, and some space might work well for the Cultural Hub.<sup>6</sup> This requires an agreement with the entities administering the facility.

### **Cultural Coach**

Over the last five years, the Commission's approach to capacity building has been through short-term consultancies by experts in such fields as governance, online marketing and strategic planning. This helped seed fresh ideas and current information. But, by their very nature, short term, episodic consultancies are not suited to the kind of sustained nurturing that many smaller organizations need. Accordingly, we suggest that the Commission pool the dollars used for consultants and direct it toward the part-time hire of a "cultural coach" who can work with groups on a regular basis. The coach should be seasoned, sensitive to the needs of small groups, and savvy. He/she should be equipped to supply pragmatic advice, training, and assistance on fundraising, friend-raising, and branding. The coach could help organizations determine ways to measure impact and develop strategies for diversifying boards of directors.

There is a model for this kind of "coach" already. Glasstown Arts District is piloting a consortium where five organizations share the cost and services of a part-time grants

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<sup>6</sup> Concept Proposal: Cumberland County College Arts & Business Innovation Center, Triad Associates for Millville Urban Redevelopment Corporation, October 2012.

researcher/ writer. Each organization pays the same amount and receives the same level of service. At the end of the six-month pilot, the consortium will assess the results. Implementation of this recommendation will require the involvement of the County's Personnel Department.

## **ECO-TOURISM and AGRI-TOURISM**

**Link Culture with Eco-Tourism and Agri-Tourism.** Promoting the County's natural resources, and commerce derived from natural resources, with the region's arts and cultural offerings will further an objective from the County's Strategic Action Plan.<sup>7</sup> From the research into model communities, collaborative partnerships with local tourism organizations and arts services organizations can help attract further visitation. The communities surveyed were proud to use terms that convey natural and pastoral settings like "rural" or "trails." They promoted farms, local wineries/breweries, and outdoor recreational activities along with music, visual and performing arts, etc.

The Commission may build upon Cumberland County's rich maritime history and agricultural commerce when promoting arts and culture. Collaborations between organizations (whether non-profit or for profit) in each field may prove extremely fruitful and the Commission may find itself in an ideal situation to promote such collaborations.<sup>8</sup>

### **Cultural Trust**

Finally, it may be a good time to revisit a long-held dream: a trust that could support and help keep sustainable cultural organizations in the County. The director of the South Jersey Community Foundation told us that Cumberland is ripe for a community foundation. The cultural trust could become a donor advised fund of the South Jersey Community Foundation or of another entity, or established as a separate organization. Some cultural trusts also provide such bridge loans that must be repaid in addition to, or instead of grants.

Here again, Millville is leading the way, but with a different goal in mind. By January 2014 it hopes to establish an Arts Sustainability Fund at a local bank for six local organizations. The bank would provide a line of credit to carry an organization between the date that a grant award is announced and the date the check arrives.

This kind of Cultural Trust may or may not be housed with the Commission, so the process for implementing this recommendation must be carefully considered.

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<sup>7</sup> County's Strategic Action Plan "2020: The Coming Decade & Beyond" p. 83. Natural Resources, Objective 6: "To create and develop marquee eco-tourism facilities to anchor the eco-tourism industry."

<sup>8</sup> Please see Appendix 3: Model Communities for more information.

## METRICS

To best assess the impact and progress of the Long Range Plan's implementation, we suggest employing a set of performance metrics. Namely, this set of metrics should track attendance, operational consistency, number of collaborative programs, contributed income and diversity in board development. How will the Commission track the impact of its plan? We recommend five specific measures:

- 1. Increase in attendance at cultural events and heritage sites.** By tracking the number of attendees both as general admissions and event specific attendance, the Commission can gauge attendance figures. While not yet available in New Jersey, a standardized data form required when submitting grants such as the one created by the Cultural Data Project would be a reliable method of collecting programmatic data.<sup>9</sup>
- 2. Demonstrable consistency in programming, schedule and branding.** Evaluating hours of operation, frequency of program offerings, and appearance of marketing materials over a five-year period will provide a sense of the organization's consistency – vital to the public perception of the arts and cultural offerings in Cumberland County.
- 3. Increase in the number and scale of collaborative programs and initiatives.** The research undertaken for this Plan indicates that collaborative programs increase professional acumen and organizational capacity. As it is highly recommended to promote collaborative programs, adding a question to grant reports citing the number of collaborators will track the progress of this initiative.
- 4. Amount of funds secured, as matches, by organizations receiving funds from the Commission.** Tracking matching grants can be easily implemented by requiring an organization to raise the 'match' before receiving the matching grant. The Commission would be responsible for recording this data.
- 5. Percentage increases in board members from different ethnic backgrounds.** The Cumberland County Cultural Heritage Commission is already tracking ethnic backgrounds amongst a staff and board level as per state guidelines. Continuing to do so and monitoring the changes, will provide insight as to increased diversity.

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<sup>9</sup> Cultural Data Project. <http://www.culturaldata.org/>

## **IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE**

### **2014**

#### Online Toolbox

- Place template for certification of incorporation on website
- Place template for bylaws on website
- Promote both
- Survey grantees to determine types of Online Toolbox materials needed
- Determine sources for Online Toolbox materials
- Determine how to update annually

#### Regular Get-Togethers

- Bring this idea to cultural leaders
- Determine optimum format and location
- Issue invitation to cultural leaders

#### Matching Grants

- Determine amount of dollars to designate for matching pool
- Develop guidelines

#### Cultural Hub

- Follow the development of Arts and Business Innovation Center
- Determine program and physical requirements for Cultural Hub
- When groundbreaking is scheduled, discuss build-out costs, rental fees and locational issues with key organizations

#### Cultural Coach

- Identify skill sets and experiences needed for Cultural Coach
- Determine salary (fee?) for Cultural Coach in collaboration with County Personnel Department

#### Eco-Tourism

- Identify natural resources that may be collaborators for arts and culture
- Identify potential volunteer opportunities
- Organize meeting(s) with leaders to discuss collaboration(s)

#### Agri-Tourism

- Identify commercial entities that utilize the land (orchards, farms, vineyards, etc.)
- Organize meeting(s) with leaders to discuss collaboration(s) and cross promotion

#### Cultural Trust

- Develop ad-hoc committee to oversee research
- Invite committee determine research issues and work plan
- Meet with authority on charitable trusts

### **2015**

#### Online Toolbox

- Collect and add materials for Online Toolbox
- Promote Online Toolbox

#### Regular Get-togethers

- Implement Regular Get-Togethers

#### Matching Grants

- Implement Matching grants

#### Cultural Hub

- Identify and secure funding source for Cultural Hub
- Negotiate lease for Cultural Hub

#### Cultural Coach

- Post job for Cultural Coach; secure resumes, interview, hire

#### Eco-Tourism

- Begin incorporating natural resources and volunteer collaborations as Commission initiative(s)

#### Agri-Tourism

- Begin collaboration and cross promotion with commercial entities that utilize the land (orchards, farms, vineyards, etc.)

#### Cultural Trust

- Develop ad-hoc committee to oversee research
- Invite committee determine research issues and work plan

### **2016**

#### Online Toolbox

- Update and promote

#### Matching Grants

- Evaluate results of Year 1 Implementation
- Modify program accordingly

#### Cultural Hub

- Build out space
- Secure furniture, fixtures
- Establish operating guidelines
- Open Office
- Promote Cultural Hub

#### Cultural Coach

- Cultural Coach begins work in Cultural Hub

#### Eco-Tourism

- Continue incorporating natural resources and volunteer collaborations as Commission initiative(s)

#### Agri-Tourism

- Continue collaboration and cross promotion with commercial entities that utilize the land (orchards, farms, vineyards, etc.)

#### Cultural Trust

- Research opportunity and costs
- Ad hoc committee presents recommendations
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#### **2017**

##### Online Toolbox

- Update and promote
- Assess utilization; query constituents about content improvements

##### Regular Get-togethers

- Assess viability

##### Matching Grants

- Evaluate results
- Modify program accordingly

##### Cultural Hub

- Continue

##### Cultural Coach

- Continue; evaluate effectiveness
- Determine salary (fee?) for Cultural Coach

##### Eco-Tourism

- Grow incorporation of natural resources and volunteer collaborations as Commission initiative(s)

##### Agri-Tourism

- Grow collaboration and cross promotion with commercial entities that utilize the land (orchards, farms, vineyards, etc.)

##### Cultural Trust

- Set targets; move forward if viable

#### **2018**

##### Online Toolbox

- Evaluate impact

##### Regular Get-togethers

- Evaluate impact

##### Matching Grants

- Evaluate impact

##### Cultural Hub

- Evaluate impact

##### Cultural Coach

- Evaluate impact

#### Eco-Tourism

- Evaluate impact of initiative(s)

#### Agri-Tourism

- Evaluate impact of collaboration and cross promotion with commercial entities that utilize the land (orchards, farms, vineyards, etc.)

#### Cultural Trust

- Continue if viable

## Appendix 1: Key Respondents

In alphabetical order:

- Dr. Flavia Alaya, Center for Historic American Building Arts
- Moira Baylson, Deputy Cultural Officer, City of Philadelphia, Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy
- Ed Bethea, Gateway Community Action Partnership
- Ella Boykin, Cumberland County Cultural Heritage Commission
- Maxine Chapman, Vineland Regional Dance Company
- Tim Cabbage, Bridgeton Public Schools
- Nancy DeLucia, Director of Policy & Community Engagement, Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance
- Martha Godown, Vineland Regional Dance Company
- Trudy Hansen, Advancement Manager, Delaware Historical Society
- Sidney R. Hargro, Executive Director, Community Foundation of South Jersey
- Carola Hartley, Bridgeton Main Street
- Carolyn Heckman, Vice President, South Jersey Healthcare/Inspira Health Network
- Tom Kaiden, President, Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance
- Sharon Kiefer, Gallery 50
- Marianne Lods, Glasstown Arts District
- Rebecca Lyons, Riverfront Renaissance Center for the Arts
- Holly Manders, Barn Studio
- Suzanne Merighi, Cumberland County Cultural Heritage Commission
- Todd Noon, Vineland Main Street
- Michael Norris, Vice President of External Relations, Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance



- Sue Ann Perry, Executive Director, Cumberland County College Foundation
- Carol Perrelli, Mauricetown Historical Society
- Steven Schimmel, Jewish Federation of Cumberland County
- Merle Silver, Cumberland County Cultural Heritage Commission
- Rose Spencer, Vineland African American CDC
- Gary Steuer, Chief Cultural Officer, City of Philadelphia Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy
- Robert Trivellini, Millville Public Schools
- Meghan Wren, Bayshore Discovery
- Phillipp S. Van Embden, Esq., Levoy Theatre
- Veronica Wentz, Director, Strategic Online Partnerships, Greater Tourism Marketing Corporation
- Jonathan Wood, Cumberland County Historical Society
- Chuck Wyble, Millville Army Air Field Museum

## Appendix 2: Focus Group Summary: Cultural Leaders

June 13, 2013

### How life has changed for cultural organizations in Cumberland County since the 2007 Long Range plan was adopted

- This is now a majority/minority county, with a larger younger population than in decades past. The County is now called on to expand public elementary schools.
- Between 2007 and 2009, Cumberland County suffered a steep economic decline with unemployment reaching as high as 14.4 percent. While the economy *is* improving, it is doing so very slowly.
- The economic downturn has placed many families under stress. Poverty and poverty among youth is especially extreme, and communities have seen many downtown businesses closing and an increase in minor crimes. While Cumberland has long suffered from economic challenges, they became much more severe in recent years.
- Architecture firms suffered a “catastrophic decrease in work.” Now it’s picking back up but the projects are smaller, and moved from new construction to rehabilitation of existing structures.
- The “brain drain” has accelerated as more people in their 20s and 30s leave the County in search of employment and a livelier lifestyle.
- Recent retirees who are looking to downsize are experiencing trouble selling their homes.

### Changes in the audience for cultural offerings

- 2007 and 2008 were peak years for Millville’s Arts District, which boasted heavy sales and an occupancy rate of 93 percent. 70 percent of the audience for visual arts was from the County or very close by and 30 percent lived a 1-1.5 hour drive away. Attendance has remained fairly consistent, but the number of galleries has grown, which has increased competition and made it harder to sell art.
- Over nine months, Millville’s Leeway Theater attracted 31,000 patrons for its 92 performances. We discovered that locals will spend 7.5 more in the area over ticket price, and expenditures for non-locals are much higher. The theater is an economic engine. It also partners with many of cultural organizations.

### Changes in the funding climate since 2007

- Fundraising has become more difficult, especially securing donations from businesses. We used to be able to walk in to a store, talk to a manager and get a \$500-\$1000 donation – now we get turned down. “We don’t support the arts.”
- Very hard to find grant sources that donate to arts education or programs, and those that do fund in this area tend to have very specific requirements.
- Public funding is not what it was 5-6 years ago.

### **What is the toughest problem that cultural organizations face today?**

- Raising money
- All going after the same piece of pie.

### **Possible solutions that have been considered**

- In Millville, a consortium of organizations has retained a grants developer to work for all of the members.
- Get more outside individuals and corporations to come to the County. Especially publicity wise. People from around the country should come here.
- At the annual conference for New Jersey Grantmakers, the focus was on Hurricane Sandy. Most of the funders in the room were interested in poverty issues but they weren't looking at the poorest county in the state. We need to get them to look at Cumberland County. For example, Bayshore is not considered eligible for Atlantic Coast funding. We need to get together to make our voice be heard.

### **Impediments to and benefits of building individual cultural organizations into a cultural sector**

- Control over tourism funding is very political. The driver is Cape May, and Cumberland does gain some of the benefits.
- Many residents in East Vineland do not frequent cultural attractions or businesses in Vineland. They prefer to go to Philadelphia or Atlantic City
- Cumberland County should promote its attractions and amenities more effectively both to residents and potential visitors. Reputation / perception that our county isn't good.
- If there were a coalition it could lobby the tourism group to promote arts and culture as well as eco-tourism. The coalition could be public/private.

### **Potential roles for the Commission**

- Explore the disposition of the bed tax to determine the percentage raised from the County and the percentage invested in the County.
- Partner with the tourism commission to advocate for increased funding from the state.
- Facilitate scheduling by inviting groups to share the schedules for their seasons and discuss upcoming productions. It could produce and update an events calendar. It could encourage organizations to package events on the same weekends, jointly purchase ads, and promote each other's activities.
- Bring the best from outside to the county. It could collect information on what other communities are doing to advance cultural development.

- Help organizations demonstrate the economic impact – of arts and heritage. That would help the sector make the case for increased County support.
- Help to position the County as a unique cultural destination by highlighting its unique legacy.

### **Key goals for the future**

- Create a forum in which cultural organizations can meet regularly to advance issues common to all.
- Secure a place at the table where decisions about tourism investments are made.
- Support efforts that preserve and promote the unique and memorable aspects of the County.
- Empower cultural leaders so they will take the lead in fostering change, especially in changing people's perceptions about what the County has to offer.
- Continue to support efforts in arts education through the public school system so that students understand the importance of art personally and economically.
- Facilitate collaboration among arts, heritage and cultural entities and between the cultural sector and other sectors of the economy
- Teach cultural organizations how to measure impact – something funders increasingly ask for
- Increase financial and other resources for the cultural sector
- Fostering greater diversity in cultural organizations: management, volunteers, staff, patrons

### **Other suggestions**

- The Commission might become instrumental in creating tourism packages that combine cultural and eco experiences.
- Involve young people – youth on main street, get more youth programs. Involve the people who will be living these plans we're making for the future.
- CCHC can have a role in marketing countywide for a bigger buy.
- Deal with the dearth of newspaper coverage by hosting a blog that presents news from 4-5 different places each day. As simple as a photo with a caption. Get it recognized. Maybe a larger media outlet can start picking it up.
- Further develop collaborations by visiting each other's facilities. Would like to see the other organizations and see what they're doing and they're missions, etc. Let's share issues and solutions. Five decades ago, none of these cultural organizations existed and look where we are now. There has been a change but if we work together.

- Tourism council needs a boost of new ideas and help. Encourage the County to refresh marketing.
- We need to market this county as a place for entrepreneurial opportunities. Market the quality of life. Get people to move back here.
- Mentor 18, 19, 20 year olds and bring them to the table. And allow them to showcase their talent.
- Commission can identify turnaround communities and invite them to come tell their story.
- 'Had I not been asked to come back by my predecessor to come back here, I would still be living in New York. People are studying the arts more in college now so if we can bring them back here – we make those decisions – we can effect real change that I don't think anyone else in the County could.'
- The priority should be keep the very strong groups in the area strong and help them grow.
- View the Commission as a tool for your organizations to help you build your capacities to compete statewide.

### Appendix 3: Model Rural Cultural/Eco Destinations

In order to discern how rural communities in other parts of the United States promote and support arts and culture, four counties were analyzed to draw comparisons, benchmarks and garner further inspiration. This report summarizes the research on those model communities undertaken for the Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission Long Range Plan Extension.

Research focused on distinguishing communities with a strong agricultural background, abundance of natural resources and recreational activities, as well as cultural heritage sites. States noted for their cultural/ eco destinations were researched and counties from Pennsylvania, Colorado, Washington, Oregon, Texas, Kentucky, Tennessee and Indiana were evaluated for similarities to Cumberland County, New Jersey. The data demonstrated that there are few counties in the United States with similar demographics to Cumberland County. Cumberland County is unique in its size, population density, cultural and natural offerings, and economic makeup.

The research was conducted between October and December 2013. Consultants surveyed the websites of each organization, reviewed brochures and marketing materials, researched the cities / towns in each community and its surrounding counties, acquired and analyzed US Census data, and conducted phone inquiries when necessary.

Care was taken to identify communities that could inform the Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission Long Range Plan Extension. Accordingly, the Consultants sought to identify those that met the following criteria:

- Location in a rural area with a population density around 325 per square mile.
- Tourism focus on a countywide level
- Active program that includes many arts and cultural offerings
- Goal to increase regional cultural / eco tourism
- Similar economic makeup (per capita income around \$22,000 annually)

Through this research, the following communities were identified as comparables: Hendricks County, Indiana; Cambria County, Pennsylvania; Brazos County, Texas; and Anderson County, Tennessee.

#### Community Comparisons

	<b>Cumberland County, NJ</b>	<b>Hendricks County, IN</b>	<b>Cambria County, PA</b>	<b>Brazos County, TX</b>	<b>Anderson County, TN</b>
<b>Population 2000</b>	146,438	104,093	152,598	152,415	71,330
<b>Pop 2010</b>	156,898	145,448	143,679	194,851	75,129
<b>Area</b>	678 sq miles	409 sq miles	693 sq miles	590 sq miles	345 sq miles
<b>Pop. Density</b>	324 sq/mi	356 sq/mi	209 / sq mi	333 / sq mi	211 / sq mi
<b>Per Capita Income</b>	\$22,449	\$23,129	\$22,307	\$16,212	\$19,009
<b>Unemployment Rate (8/2013)</b>	12.4%	5.7%	9.1%	5.4%	8%

## **MODEL COMMUNITIES FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Celebrate Eco-Tourism**

The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) defines eco-tourism as, "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people."<sup>10</sup> According to their website, eco-tourism is about uniting conservation, communities, and sustainable travel. Cumberland County has many parks and trails for hiking and biking, and is developing arts corridors in Bridgeton and Millville that are walkable. Additional promotion with volunteer opportunities combines the essential characteristics of eco-tourism – all of which already exist within Cumberland County.

Marketing eco-tourism in coordination with arts and culture requires similar language and messaging. Terms like "rural," "route," "trail," are used right along "cultural," "arts," and "heritage." Hendriks County, Indiana promotes "Rural Routes to Main Street Cultural Trail." Exploring the "Texas Brazos Trail" by theme in Brazos County, Texas can lead you to "arts and leisure," "cultural heritage," or "open spaces and wildlife."

### **Promote Agri-Tourism**

One thing that unites many rural communities is the connection the local economy has to natural resources that urban environments cannot replicate. Vineyards, farms, orchards, lumber mills, etc. dot the landscape throughout rural countryside. Likewise the artists that reside in rural communities draw inspiration from their natural surroundings. It stands to reason then that a tourist may wish to experience the breadth of what that community has to offer: where their artists work and become inspired, what the land has to offer in terms of trade and recreation, how the landscape looks and feels.

### **Collaboration with Multiple Organizations**

Each of the surveyed communities' tourism campaigns involved multiple agencies and often had consistent messages and information on marketing collateral (brochures, websites, etc.) from state and county levels. While there was always an entity that serviced arts and culture organizations, institutions including convention and visitors bureaus, chambers of commerce, county art councils and local government were often involved. The participation on multiple levels presents a unified message to visitors and provides a full range of experiences.

Coordinating inter-agency collaboration – especially between different levels of government – is not an easy task. Accordingly, each of the surveyed communities has a service organization dedicated to arts and culture of which a major priority was advocacy and, as the Hendriks' County Arts Council puts it, "establish a liaison between the Arts Council, towns, and organizations." By increasing advocacy efforts and acting as a conduit for inter-organizational communication and collaboration, programming is enhanced countywide.

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<sup>10</sup> The International Ecotourism Society, 1990. <http://www.ecotourism.org/what-is-ecotourism>

## RESOURCES

### Anderson County, Tennessee

<http://yallcome.org/>  
<http://oakridgevisitor.com/>  
<http://tn.gov/local/anderson.shtml>  
<http://www.andersoncountychamber.org/>  
<http://www.tnvacation.com/agritourism/>  
<http://tntrailsandbyways.com/>

### Brazos County, Texas

<http://www.brazoscountytexas.gov/>  
<http://www.brazoscountyhistory.org/>  
<http://brazosvalleybus.com/>  
<http://texasbrazostrail.com/>  
<http://www.thc.state.tx.us/public/upload/publications/brazos.pdf>  
<http://heritagebrazos.blogspot.com/>  
<http://www.visitaggieland.com/>  
<http://acbv.org/>

### Cambria County, Pennsylvania

<http://www.cambriacountypa.gov/>  
Pennsylvania Rural Arts Alliance <http://www.praa.net/>  
<http://www.visitjohnstownpa.com/>  
<http://www.visitjohnstownpa.com/visitorsguide2013/>  
<http://www.cambriacountypa.gov/arts-and-culture.aspx>  
<http://www.visitjohnstownpa.com/things-to-see-do/arts-culture/>

### Hendriks County, Indiana

<http://www.tourhendrickscounty.com/>  
<http://hendrickscountyarts.org/>  
"Roam a Rural Route in Hendriks County" <http://www.in.gov/visitindiana/triplanner/trip-idea.aspx?categories=3&city=Danville&id=10049&search=1>  
<http://www.ruralroutestomainstreet.com/>  
<http://www.hendrickscountyhistoricalmuseum.org/home>



## Appendix 4: Retreat

### Wednesday, March 13, 2013

- 10:00 AM Meeting: Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance  
Michael Norris, Vice President of External Relations  
Nancy DeLucia, Director of Policy & Community Engagement
- 11:30 AM Meeting: City Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy  
Gary Steuer, Chief Cultural Officer, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- 2:30 PM Meeting: Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corporation,  
Veronica Wentz, Director of Partnership Marketing
- 4:30 PM Tour of the Union League with Jim Mundy, Director of Library &  
Historical Collections, The Union League of Philadelphia

### KEY QUESTIONS AND TOPICS TO DISCUSS

#### Origins

- How did the organization get started?
- What are its main goals?
- How long did it take to see results?
- How does it define its audiences?

#### Structure

- What are their main revenue sources?
- What is the staff structure like?
- Who does this organization directly serve? Is their core audience different from the audience they wish to benefit?

#### Planning

- How does the organization measure success?
- How does this organization approach planning for long-term goals?
- What role does it play in the greater community?
- What benchmarks does it set?

#### Collaboration

- How does the organization interact with partner organizations?
- Why would many diverse cultural groups organize themselves into a cultural sector?
- How does this organization define collaboration?
- What are the benefits of collaborative action?

#### Cumberland County Cultural Heritage Commission

- What does this organization do that CCCHC can model?
- What can CCCHC take away from the lessons these organizations learned?
- What challenges will CCCHC face that these organizations may not have?