

CULTURAL ELEMENT

PURPOSE

Our culture tells others who and what we are. We express our identity as a people through our, dance, painting, music, and literature. Because of this, cultural activities are indispensable in satisfying the basic human need for self expression and in counteracting the dehumanizing influences of urban crowding and industrialization. In short, cultural activities make the difference between living and merely existing.

Creative activities develop self-esteem and a sense of accomplishment. They stimulate community spirit and provide an understanding and appreciation of our heritage as human beings. Therefore, it is essential to encourage the appreciation and preservation of the literature, and the visual and performing arts of the City's multi-ethnic culture. By providing opportunities for individuals to discover their own creative skills, for artists to perfect their talents, and for all to gain inspiration and an understanding of their fellow human beings and the world around them, we can also help to unite diverse ethnic, racial, and age groups.

The Redwood City Civic Cultural Commission proposes this cultural element as a part of the City's Comprehensive General Plan. Through adoption of this element the City will promote a closer, more productive relationship among business, government, the arts, and the community.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Redwood City is situated close to the myriad cultural activities of San Francisco and San Jose and the active cultural of Palo Alto and Stanford University. Thus far, Redwood City lacks the richness of cultural activity found in these communities. The importance of our neighbors' highly developed arts community to the spirit of those cities and to their economic life should not be underrated. Symphonic and dance concerts, and

repertory theaters generate income for many other businesses. Furthermore, they are increasingly a consideration in attracting corporations and tourists.

However, Redwood City is far from bereft of arts activity. This section details the organizations, facilities, programs and special events that are currently a part of the city's culture.

1. Organizations

The strongest cultural organizations in the City are:

- Canada College
- Redwood City Parks and Recreation Department
- Sequoia Art Group
- Peninsula Celebration Association
- The Redwood City Heritage Association
- The Archives Committee of the Library
- Friends of the Library
- Sequoia High School District
- Redwood City School District
- Sequoia Union High School District

Canada College is available to any resident who wishes to participate in its arts-related courses or extracurricular activities. The music and theater arts programs offer opportunities for residents to attend well-directed performances of talented students, and to perform when enrolled.

The Redwood City Parks and Recreation Department offers a variety of cultural activities and classes based on community demand and availability of qualified instructors. They provide facilities and support for many of the cultural organizations within the City.

The Sequoia Art Group has a well developed visual arts program of classes, demonstrations, field trips, and exhibits. This group is a major contributor to the annual Spring Art Show.

The Peninsula Celebration Association provides three of the strongest community events in the City: The Fourth of July Parade (open to participation by arts groups), the Community Fair (at

which local artists are invited to perform), and The Miss Redwood City Pageant (which recognizes the individual contestant's talent).

The Redwood City Heritage Association is active and vocal in its efforts to preserve significant architecture within the City. Their prime achievement, and the focal point of their work has been the restoration of Lathrop House and the operation of self-guided or docent-guided walking tours of significant buildings in the downtown area.

The Archives Committee of the Redwood City Public Library works to preserve the history of the City and its citizens in photographs, letters, documents, and the recorded and transcribed reminiscences of older citizens. These artifacts are then made available to interested residents.

The Friends of the Library is active and known for its regular sales of used books and records to benefit the library's acquisition program. With these funds, they assist in maintaining a community arts resource of records and paintings at the library.

Both the Redwood City School District and the Sequoia Union High School District offer a variety of cultural programs to students and adults. Concerts, plays, dance performances, art shows, and classes are all part of the offerings available to the community.

Other significant cultural influences are provided by service clubs and other organizations that, while not primarily arts oriented, offer art and literary competitions, particularly for youth. For example, The Native Daughters of the Golden West has a yearly art contest, as does the Peninsula Hills Junior Women's Club.

2. Facilities

Cultural activities require meeting, studio, exhibit, rehearsal and performance facilities. The chart on page 14-6 and 14-7 lists the known:

- Theaters/Performance Space
- Exhibit Spaces
- Rehearsal/Studio/Classroom Space

available in Redwood City, their condition and function.

3. Programs

Programs are offered by the:

- Redwood City Parks and Recreation Department
- Elementary and High School Districts
- Community College District
- Fitzpatrick Professional Center (Sunday concert series and art exhibits) on a seasonal basis.

The school and city programs are developed in response to community demand.

4. Annual Events

A number of annual events have become traditional in Redwood City. These include:

- Miss Redwood City Pageant (February)
- Peninsula Camellia Show (February)
- Native Daughters Arts Show (March-April)
- Peninsula Rose Show (May)
- Spring Arts and Crafts Show (May)
- Fourth of July Parade (July)
- Downtown Arts and Craft Show (August)
- Heritage Week (September)
- Wellesley Crescent Art Show (September)
- Gem and Mineral Show (September)
- Lathrop House Victorian Christmas (December)
- Peninsula Movie Makers Annual Salon Show
- Sequoia Stamp Club Show (December).

5. Evaluation

Because of the closeness of San Francisco and San Jose, in the past there has been little impetus to establish major cultural organizations in Redwood City. In some instances, the needs of both artists and the public may be well served by the organizations that already exist elsewhere on the Peninsula, so an organization representing a particular art form may not exist in the City. Indeed, the needs of both the artists and the community might be ill served by a proliferation of such organizations.

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However, every community requires a climate that encourages the arts if it is to be complete and vital. It is at least partially because Redwood City as a community lacks this commitment to the arts that the city has experienced a continuing problem in attracting new businesses, and in supporting service businesses such as restaurants that have tried to establish themselves.

Many talented artists live in Redwood City, but perform and exhibit elsewhere. Some cultural groups that do exist in the city are relatively unknown outside their immediate circles. The needed structures for performing arts exist in the City. However, many have deteriorated because of a lack of funds and community support. Exhibit spaces are limited. Studio space, outside of private homes, is virtually nonexistent.

Many existing groups have continuing problems with their organizational leadership, membership, finances or some combination of these three. As a result they tend to be insular - to be so concerned with their immediate needs and activities that they fail to recognize that the real long term solutions are to be found in working together to improve funding and facilities for all. Instead, they hold small, individual fund raisers that provide some operating income, but no possibilities of growth either in the number and quality of programs or in improved facilities.

Unless and until the city, the community, and the art groups develop a commitment to work toward a vital cultural life in Redwood City, the status quo will continue indefinitely. This element proposes a plan to work toward a sense of community in the arts a step at a time, by first fostering communication. It is hoped that, in time, commitment and cooperation will follow.

GOALS

1. To improve available cultural facilities. For example, Sequoia High School's Carrington Hall is historically significant and is potentially a major resource for the city. The school district does not have the funds to renovate it. A long term goal of this element is to make this a useful and desirable

performance space for school and community groups and also for special performances by touring groups.

2. To strengthen Redwood City arts and education programs. Both students and artists can benefit by implementing the Arts Council of San Mateo County's Schools with Artists Program in which an artist is given surplus classroom space as a studio in return for a certain number of hours per week teaching the students.

3. To promote appreciation of and involvement in the creative arts by the citizenry of Redwood City. There is a need to focus residents' attention on the talents of local artists and the joy and satisfaction of direct participation regardless of the individual's talent or skill.

4. To strengthen and improve current programs and develop new programs.

5. To promote quality cultural events and get other organizations in the City to do the same.

6. To obtain support of cultural (creative) activities from local businesses.

7. To provide opportunities for local artists to perform or otherwise display their talents.

8. To develop the means to carry out arts programs (including government and business support, and earned income).

9. To integrate aesthetic qualities into City planning. There have been substantial improvements in parts of the city, e.g. the planting along the median of El Camino. People are drawn to shop and do business in attractive environments as evidenced by such major shopping malls as Stanford and Hillsdale.

10. To achieve cooperation among the various City and community organizations. The motto of the Federated Women's Clubs is a truism. "Strength united IS stronger." What the city's organizations have not been able to accomplish individually, they

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could achieve if they worked together toward common goals.

STANDARDS

1. Programs should serve all ages, ethnic groups, and neighborhoods in the City.
2. Any necessary service charges should be kept at affordable levels and provision should be made for those unable to afford even minimal charges.
3. Attention should be paid to the unique needs of special populations such as the disabled.
4. High quality of all exhibits, performances, and programs should be maintained.

PROPOSALS

1. Work with the San Mateo County Arts Council to develop an arts program for the schools of Redwood City.
2. Provide funding to support cultural planning and activities.
3. Form a Cultural Advisory Council, consisting of one representative from each arts-related group based in the City. This group would meet several times a year to review current programs, make recommendations regarding future programs, and facilitate communication and cooperation among the groups in the City.
4. Set up an Artists Service League (perhaps through the Cultural Advisory Council) to:
 - Create and maintain a central file of artists, musicians, dancers, choreographers, composers, graphic artists, writers, poets, and crafts people.
 - Set up and maintain an inventory of facilities in the City that are suitable for performances, exhibits, rehearsals, studio, of classroom space.

Both lists would be available to City residents and to other interested organizations such as the San Mateo County Arts Council.

5. Develop further proposals as circumstances warrant.

IMPLEMENTATION

Primary responsibility for implementation of this element is within the purview of the City (through the Council, Civic Cultural Commission, Park and Recreation Commission, Historic Advisory Committee) and the City school districts.

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Action	Responsibility	Time frame
1. Work with the Arts Council of San Mateo County to develop arts programming for Redwood City Schools	SM County Arts Council Civic Cultural Commission School Districts	1985
2. Form Cultural Advisory Board	Civic Cultural Commission	1985-1986
3. Provide funding as necessary	City	1985-
4. Set up Artists Service League	Civic Cultural Commission Cultural Advisory Council	1986-1987
5. Develop priorities	same as 4	1986-1987
6. Work on facilities improvements • Carrington Hall • New Main Library • McKinley School	City Civic Cultural Commission Cultural Advisory Council Artists Service League School Districts	1985-1995

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FACIL

TYPE OF FACILITY(IES) AVAILABLE

	THEATRE	OTHER PREF.	EXHIBIT SPACE	STUDI	MEETING RM	CLASS RM	MULTI PURPSE, RM.
Parks & Recreation Dept.							
Community Activity Bldg.		X	X		X	X	X
Veterans Memoria Bldg.	X	X	X		X	X	X
Fair Oaks Community Center	X				X		X
Easter bowl (Amphitheatre)	X						
School District Facilities							
Mc Kinley School	X					X	
Sequoia High School	X	X	X			X	X
Library							
Main Library			X		X		
Schaberg			X			X	
Canada Community College	X		X			X	
Main Theatre	X						
Flexible Theatre	X						
Amphitheatre	X						
Lathrop House		X					
Sequoia Fox Theatre	X						
Banks							
Glendale Federal Bank			X				
Churches							
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel	X	X				X	X
First Christian		X			X		X
First United Methodist		X			X		
St. Pius		X					
First Congregational Church							
Temple Beth Jacob		X			X		
Clubs							
Redwood City women's Club		X			X		X
Highlands Community Club					X		X
Foresters Hall	X	X			X		X
Elks Club		X			X		X
County Buildings							
Courthouse							
Hall of Justice		X					
Hospitals							
Raleigh Hills (in patient)			X				
Sequoia			X				
Businesses							
Ampex		X	X		X		X
Fitzpatrick Pro. Center		X	X		X		X
Circle Star Theatre	X				X		

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ITIES

CHARACTERISTICS

FEES	CAPACITY	KITCHEN	PARKING	WHEEL CHAIR ACCESS	PUBLIC TRANSPRT.	CONDITION	COMMENTS
Varies	75-300	X	X	X	X	1	
Varies		X	X	X	X	1	
			X	X		2	
						5+	Unusable
Varies			X			3	No lighting, dressingrooms, storage space or backstage
Yes	850		X	?	X	4	Need substantial renovation
	100 & 18		X	X	X	1	
			X	X	X	2	
Yes			X	X	X	1-2	Not that available for Community functions. Best equipped theatre in the city
Yes	500		X	X	X		
Yes			X	X	X		
?		X	X	X	X		
		X	X			1	
Varies	805	X	X			3	Privately owned
No			X				Scheduled by the Sequoia Art
			X	X	X		
	350		X	X	X		
Yes	120			X	X		
	235			X	X		
Yes	1200		X	X	X	1	
Yes		X	X		X	2	
Yes		X			X	4	
Yes		X	X	X		3	
			X	X		1	
			X	X		1	
No	250		X	X	X	1	
No	75	X	X	X	X	1	
Yes		X	X		X		

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