

The Arts and Cultural District

Thursday, May 7, 2009

Tanya Mejia, Jason Peters, Marco Rivero, James Velez

- Falls Church has many options and decisions to make that can impact the success of the Arts and Culture District, including:
 1. Zoning and Comprehensive Planning
 2. Incentives
 3. Exhibits
 4. Heritage Trail

Introduction

Zoning and Comprehensive Planning

The Arts and Cultural District – Falls Church, Virginia

- Emphasize greater diversity in landmark choices
 - Highlight the City's various economically and socially diverse communities. (Potential Heritage Trail).
 - These culturally unique centers include the Tinner Hill site, the Henderson House, the various shopping centers along Washington Street.

Recommendations

- Be pedestrian friendly, help the development of the Arts and Cultural District
 - Offer displays, windows, street furniture, and landscaping that is inviting. Expand sidewalk coverage, street medians with trees, and provide street parking for buffering purposes.
 - Integrate retail and business components not only within the first floor of buildings, but also expand them throughout subsequent floors within multi-level buildings.

Recommendations



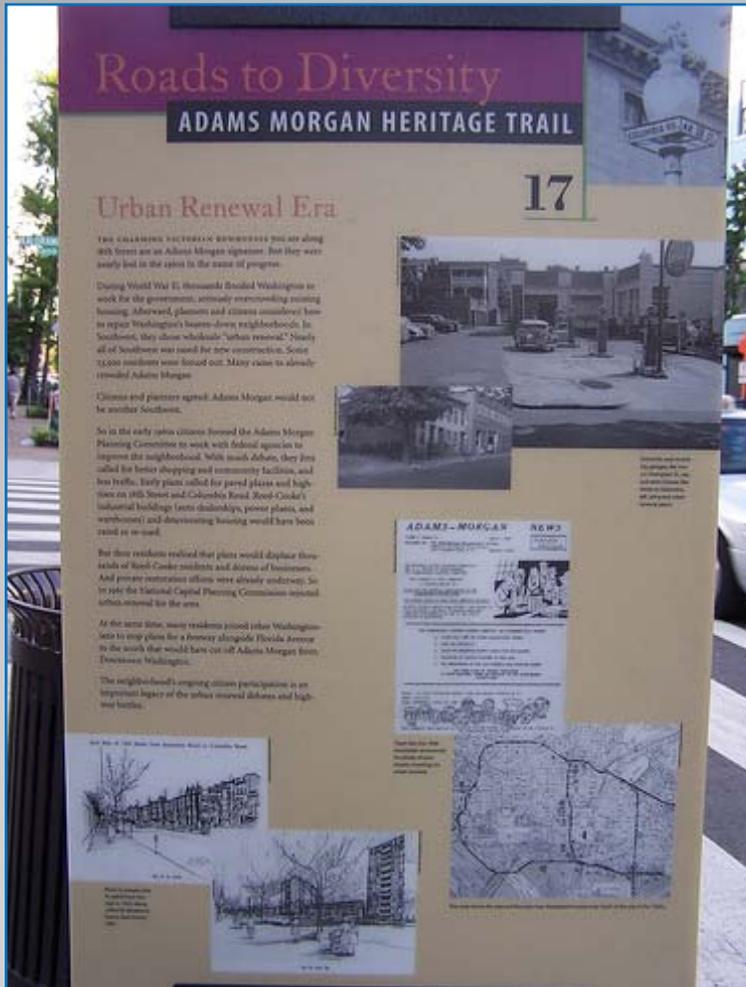
Recommendations

- Use current zoning designations
 - Official Design, O-D and two Transitional Use, T-1 and T-2, zoning districts to this area.
 - The two transitional zones can serve as points of incorporation between residential development and beginning commercial expansion (creating mixed-use growth, especially within the South Washington Street area).
 - The O-D zone district encourages protecting the character of prominent City buildings. A rezoning would have to occur so these measures can be implemented.

Recommendations

- Institute overlay zoning designations
 - Historic and Cultural Conservation (HCC) Overlay District can integrate greater mixed-use development within the South Washington Street area.
 - Historic designation creates an overlay for protection, while still promoting the culturally and historically relevant activities and sites that exist within a community.
 - Create a heritage trail and use it as an educational tool for social, cultural, and political history for the City. The trail and Arts and Cultural District can complement one another by doing this.

Recommendations



The Adams Morgan Heritage Trail

- Educates the public about the surrounding community through walking tours, oral history tours, virtual tours, maps and graphics.

- The Adams Morgan Heritage Trail contains five important components:

1. Focuses on authenticity and quality.
2. Preserves and protects resources.
3. Makes the site come alive.
4. Finds the fit between community life and tourism.
5. Collaborates between relevant stakeholders.

Incentives

The Arts and Cultural District – Falls Church, Virginia

- § 15.2-1129.1. Creation of arts and cultural district
 - “Each locality may provide incentives for the support and creation of arts and cultural venues in the district. Each locality may also grant tax incentives and provide certain regulatory flexibility in an arts and cultural district. “

Incentives

- Artist Housing and Workspace
 - Property tax exemptions
 - Temporary Historic Property Tax Exemption – Fairfield, Iowa
 - Grants and loan assistance
 - Arts District CARD Homeowner Loan Program – Covington, Kentucky

Recommendations

- **Zoning Incentives**

- Port Jefferson, New York Arts District Incentive Zoning

- Change property density requirements
 - Change permitted lot coverage
 - Change up to 20% in minimum FAR
 - Ease on site parking requirements
 - Retail use flexibility
 - Mixed use live/work space
 - Allow displays on property outside of building

Recommendations

- **Business Incentives**

- **Loans**

- Arts & Technology District Small Business Loan Program – Covington, Kentucky
 - Fairfield Revitalization Loan Program – Fairfield, Iowa

- **Benefits Pooling – Cleveland, Ohio**

- **Local Business Tax Breaks**

- Business license and admissions taxes – Harrisonburg, VA

Recommendations

- Awards

- Create awards for businesses and groups that support the arts through monetary donations or other contributions

- State Level Incentives

- Work with other cities to lobby Richmond for state level incentives, such as state income tax exemptions for artists

Recommendations

Exhibits

The Arts and Cultural District – Falls Church, Virginia

- Going Beyond a Conventional “Exhibit”
 - Partnerships to explore the creative use of exhibits to enhance cultural awareness and artistic expression within the community
 - Partnerships with Schools, Artists, Libraries, Residents, and NGO’s
 - Community Education, Enjoyment, Expression through:
 - Online, or Virtual Exhibits
 - Murals
 - Bus Shelter & Grate Murals

Exhibits

- **Online Exhibits**

- Potential to reach a large number of people, introduce residents and visitors heritage and current resources
- Mary Riley Styles Public Library does not currently have online exhibits
- Online exhibit can link to educational and Arts and Cultural District opportunities



Recommendations

- Online Exhibits: Harlem 1900-1940
 - Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, NY Public Library
 - Website:
 - Cultural Heritage Initiative for Community Outreach (CHICO) based at University of Michigan, funded by the Kellogg Foundation
 - 3 person production team, 3 person initial design team, 1 person follow-up
 - Content:
 - Timeline
 - Images & Photographs
 - Biographies - events, businesses, community landmarks, and activism events
 - "For teachers" section - program objectives, instructional strategies, tips for interpreting photos and conducting oral histories
 - "Resources" - bibliography, links to online resources, section for "young readers"

Recommendations

- **Community Murals**

- Sprout Fund – Pittsburgh, PA
- 8 staff members, operating budget of \$1.3 million in 2009
- Process:
 - Artist selection & Location selection
 - Matching artists to locations,
 - community input
 - Preliminary design, 2 weeks
 - (given \$100)
 - Pre-schedule meeting: 15 min
 - artists present to community
 - Community chooses final pick
 - One month to finish design
 - Mural is painted (4-8 weeks)
 - Public dedication ceremony



Recommendations

- Murals: Grates and Bus Shelters

- Boston Youth Fund Mural Crew

- 1991 Boston Youth Clean-Up Corps create Mural Crew
- Began with an employed artist and group of eight teenagers to cover graffiti-covered security grates with art

- "Grate Project"

- Greater Washington Creative Community under Cultural Development Corporation

- Seattle, WA - local transit agency partnered with community to include murals on bus shelters

- 700 murals since 1989

- Santa Cruz Redevelopment Agency

- Matching program



Recommendations

Urban Heritage Trail

The Arts and Cultural District – Falls Church, Virginia

- Urban heritage trails
 - Device to help organize the visitor experience while providing for both active and passive engagement with a place.
 1. Organize the rich cultural assets of the city
 2. Contextualize local heritage of the area
 3. Provide a coherent storyline and visitor experience
 - Seen to be flexible, multi-faceted products with many benefits ranging from **social** and **physical**, **environmental** and **cultural**, to **economic**.

Overview

- Urban Heritage Trails in Arts and Cultural Districts
 - Can assist in unifying the Arts and Cultural District by providing for a multi-faceted visitor experience and contributing to a deeper **sense of place** and **community pride**.
 - The trail could also serve as an **educational tool** depicting the history of Falls Church while at the same time recognizing significant individuals and places of interest.

Recommendations

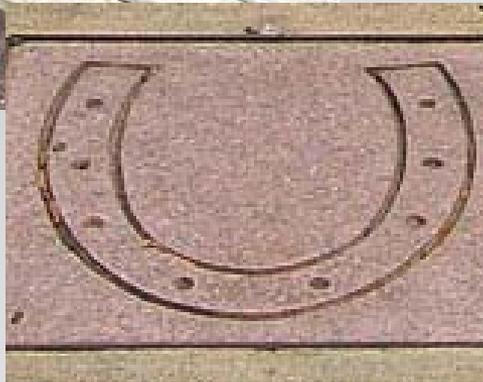
- Benefits of Urban Heritage Trail for Visitors
 - The trail should seek to provide opportunities for visitor's to actively engage with authentic emotional and spiritual experiences across **four realms**:
 1. Entertainment
 2. Educational
 3. Esthetic
 4. Escapist
 - The physical trail could link the characteristic attributes of the Falls Church area (e.g. local food chains, ethnic businesses, and locally significant places) to the general public.

Recommendations



- **Kelley Ingram Park, Birmingham's Civil Rights District, Birmingham, Alabama**
- Theme of civil rights at the core of the district's design. Built environment serves as a narrative landscape to audiences.
- At the district's core are three sites closely linked by proximity, design, and history.

Case Study



Case Study

- **Ashville Urban Heritage Trail**, North Carolina.
 - Linear interpretive trail revealing a series of themes with associated site-specific amenities.
 - Trail weaves divergent areas of the downtown with visual cues and markers to arouse interest.
 - Public art is integrated into the urban landscape.

- **Boston Women's Heritage Trail**



Case Study

- Auburn Avenue, Atlanta, Georgia



Case Study

- The urban heritage trail should include site specific improvements to link the built environment.
 - Strengthen pedestrian accessibility + walkability to surrounding sites of interest.
 - Provide more continuity between heritage resources and city's redevelopment efforts.
 - Promote visible public art to unify the district
 - Focus on potential themes for the trail.
 - Delineate special places of recognition.
 - Consider spatial, visual and geographic cues.

Conclusions