



# NapaLife

*For those who live in Napa Valley –  
and those who wish they did...*

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An Insider's Look at Napa Valley

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## Arts Council launches cultural planning

In the last five years, donors and funders in Napa County have invested close to \$150 million dollars in the arts – without an overarching plan. Yet according to the Arts Council Napa Valley, the results have been disappointing. The valley has world-class venues, but inadequate local audiences, and our 4.7 million visitors each year generally don't know about local arts.

The numerous arts organizations face a tough financial climate: at least 12 galleries and theater groups have closed since the fall of 2004.

There are many artists here, but few who can make a living in Napa County while the committed and passionate arts supporters face an overtapped donor pool.

To address these problems and opportunities, Arts Council Napa Valley is creating a road map for an arts and culture sector that the community wants to see, hear, and experience. It is doing this with arts organizations, community members and civic leaders from across the county.

Cultural plans like these, and the cultural planning process, have been successfully used in communities large and small across America to create strong, vibrant, exciting arts sectors. To accomplish this locally, Arts Council needs Napa County residents to get involved and speak out for the arts.

"This is an important project," said Napa Mayor Jill Techel. "With all of the challenges facing our arts community, the timing is critical to create a plan to strengthen the arts sector, which will in turn strengthen Napa County as a whole."

"The most important part of the process is getting out into the community and asking for feedback on the arts we have, the arts we need, and the arts this county can support," explains Michelle Williams, executive director of ACNV.

ACNV has contracted with Napa consultant Morrie Warshawski, who has worked with clients nationally

on cultural planning processes, including recently the city of Flint, Mich., and the state of Mississippi.

The process has already begun with the creation and updating of comprehensive databases of cultural resources, facilities, individual artists, and arts education opportunities available in Napa County.

This will be followed by community input on local arts, obtained by interviews, surveys, focus groups, and "town hall" meetings throughout the county from American Canyon to Calistoga.

Once all the information is gathered, a team of community leaders from across Napa Valley will analyze the data and create a series of recommendations. Those recommendations will then be given to the public for further feedback; once that is completed, the recommendations will be crafted into the cultural plan.

This planning process is being partially funded by the Community Foundation of Napa Valley, as well as by individual donors from across the county.

"The Community Foundation is excited to support such a forward-thinking, strategic project," said Terence Mulligan, President. "By investing in ACNV now to start this project, we have the possibility of saving millions of dollars in arts investments."

ACNV invites the public to get involved in this groundbreaking project for Napa County. ACNV's website, [www.artscouncilnapavalley.org](http://www.artscouncilnapavalley.org), will soon have a section dedicated to this process. The public will be able to follow the planning process by reading the "Strengthening the Arts in Napa County" cultural planning blog at [www.nvartsplanning.blogspot.com](http://www.nvartsplanning.blogspot.com).

ACNV also asks that those support the arts but who are not yet involved get in touch.

For more information, call 257-2117 or email [info@artscouncilnapavalley.org](mailto:info@artscouncilnapavalley.org).