

Raleigh Arts Plan Community Conversation Guide

OVERVIEW

The goal of an arts and cultural plan for Raleigh is to better meet the cultural needs for all residents. In order to accomplish this, our team needs to understand the attitudes, preferences and priorities of Raleigh residents. The best way to ensure the Raleigh plan reflects a true community vision is to engage as many residents as we can in the process. We will be conducting interviews, surveys, discussion groups and community conversations. Our community conversations are conducted in partnership with community volunteers.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION?

Community Conversations are volunteer-led dialogues about arts and culture in the community. Small groups of residents meet to talk about arts and culture in your community. What are people doing now? What types of arts and culture events do you enjoy? What do you want to see in the future? How will tomorrow look different from today? What are the priorities?

Our unique process engages resident volunteer facilitators to work side-by-side with the project team to collect opinions, views and ideas from other residents. **We provide all volunteer facilitators with the information, tools and meeting materials needed to host and facilitate a community conversation.**

WHERE ARE COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS HELD?

Community Conversations are held in a variety of places. Many residents are more comfortable in their familiar environments and do not enjoy going to public meetings. So, a community conversation can be conducted anywhere – business and neighborhood association meetings, church gatherings, school events, library events, restaurants, cafes, bars, in someone’s living room, or any other venue or meeting place deemed appropriate.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE VOLUNTEER FACILITATOR?

As a volunteer, you recommend what meetings you think are best for your community. You will select venues relevant to your network of friends or business associates, conduct community meetings and provide feedback to the project team. You can work alone or in teams with other volunteers or project team staff.

We make this process very easy by providing the training, information and tools needed to prompt thoughtful discussions, and a format to provide insight back to the project team. We will keep you updated on the project through emails and are here to answer any questions throughout the process. Some of the tools provided include a discussion guide with questions, handouts for participants and an information collection template.

Please keep in mind....

~ Each meeting may go a little differently. Some groups may be eager to have long discussions, and some may be more pressed for time.

~ Discussion guides are just that – guides. Feel free to customize to your own voice and style.

~ Conversation may wander off the specific areas listed in the guide. That is great if it's still about arts and culture and economic development. Most AHA! moments come from the community!

Community Conversation Meeting Process

Introduction

Community Conversations engage a community in thoughtful dialogue about various topics using a toolkit and a facilitator from your local community. Our planning process is a shared endeavor with the community that encourages participation of all citizens. *Community Conversations* provide arenas in which people come together for thoughtful discussion and dialogue about arts and culture in your community – past, present and future.

The Facilitator

The facilitator of a Community Conversation will be the person in charge of asking thoughtful questions and moderating the conversation among all participants. The facilitator is responsible for documenting the thoughts, ideas and themes of the conversation.

Facilitator Tips:

- *Emphasize confidentiality to the group – all data is reported only in the aggregate (no data is attributed to an individual)*
- *Always respect each person's opinion*
- *Invite and encourage different, multiple perspectives and ideas*
- *Encourage group to build meaning together*
- *Reference group comments and ideas to continue the conversation*
- *Group involvement 85%, Facilitator involvement 15%*

Gathering an Audience

We can help brainstorm lists of meetings and audiences that may work for your conversation. We encourage you to think about any meetings you attend, associations you belong to, and/or colleagues and friends who should be part of this conversation. Consider local places of worship, community centers, cultural institutions, senior centers and service organizations. Ask them if they have a meeting or event where a community conversation can be placed on the agenda.

Group Size and Duration

Try to gather a group of at least 5 but no more than 25 people, though any size group that has thoughtful dialogue about this process is valuable. Conversations are usually about 30 - 60 minutes in duration.

Conversation Toolkit

1. Discussion Guide and Questions
2. Data Collection Template – Electronic (preferred) or paper [partner for note taking if available]
3. Sign-in Sheet
4. Attendee Surveys
5. The Raleigh Arts Plan Summary
6. Smart Phone/Camera – optional, but would love photos of the meeting (with permission from participants)

Process

- Introduction of participants and circulation of the sign-in sheet and attendee surveys
- General introduction of the Raleigh Arts Plan (from the Summary)
- Discussion
 - Introduce a question and perhaps give your own example or story to get the conversation flowing
 - Probe with follow-up questions if answers are vague

Note taking

- Listen for key themes and ideas
- Please record any great quotes you hear
- Note if hearing similar responses from multiple members/or groups – (i.e. all members agree that there is that ONE thing Raleigh really needs to do for arts and culture)
- Note if you think there are any individuals who warrant follow up after the meeting
- Contact Rachel McKay if you would like someone from the project team to take notes (Rachel.McKay@raleighnc.gov, 919.996.2986)

Materials Submission

- Notes should be recorded in Word or Google Docs
- Digital notes and photos can be emailed to Rachel.McKay@raleighnc.gov. Hard copy notes, sign-in sheets, and attendance surveys can be dropped off at the Office of Raleigh Arts (127 W. Hargett St., Suite 408), or you may call Rachel at 919.996.2986 to arrange for someone to pick up the materials, or you may mail materials to Rachel McKay, Raleigh Arts Plan Coordinator, 222 W. Hargett St. P.O. Box 590, Raleigh, NC 27602.

Questions?

Contact Jerry Bolas (gerald.bolas@raleighnc.gov, 919.996.4685) or Cassie Schumacher-Georgopoulos (cassie.schumacher-georgopoulos@raleighnc.gov, 919.996.4797).

Community Conversation Discussion Guide and Questions

Arts and Culture Introduction

When speaking about arts and culture, many of us visualize different things – different ways we like to express our creativity and different ways we enjoy the arts and the culture in our communities. But we all participate in one way or another – whether it be playing an instrument, manipulating digital media, taking photographs, throwing pots or developing graphic designs.

Raleigh’s creative culture includes creative businesses, nonprofit arts organizations, individual artists and creative professionals, and residents who attend arts events and activities.

Today, we want to hear what makes your community unique, what you value about your quality of life here in Raleigh, and what you think can be improved or different or what you want to see more of.

Discussion Questions

Q1: What is your creative outlet? (Examples: singing in a choir, painting at home or in a class, visiting a museum)

Q2: What are some of your favorite cultural activities, experiences, and places to go? Why?

Q3: Thinking about Raleigh, let’s talk about what you think defines the culture or way of life. What makes Raleigh Raleigh? (Examples: theaters, parks/trails, historic sites, natural environment, quality education, etc.)

Q4: In 8-10 years, what is your vision of the cultural life of Raleigh? What is already great and what could be even better? (Examples: more clubs, cafes and/or galleries that offer live arts events; art displayed in public places throughout the community; more arts and cultural festivals; more arts and music education in the schools)

Q5: What do you think it will take to realize the visions we just discussed? What is working well today? What is not working well?

Q6: What role do you think the City should play in this vision?

Q7: How do you find out about cultural events and activities in Raleigh? What is your preferred resource?

Q8: Is there anything else about Raleigh arts and cultural life you want to share with us?

Community Conversation Data Collection Template

Date: _____

Meeting Facilitator: _____

Meeting location with zip code: _____

Brief Group Description: _____

Discussion Notes:

Q1: What is your creative outlet? (Examples: singing in a choir, painting at home or in a class, visiting a museum)

Q2: What are some of your favorite cultural activities, experiences and places to go? Why?

Q3: Thinking about Raleigh, let's talk about what you think defines the culture or way of life.

Q4: In 8-10 years, what is your vision of the cultural life of Raleigh? What is already great and what could be even better?

Q5: What do you think it will take to realize the visions we just discussed? What is working well today? What is not working well?

Q6: What role do you think the City should play in this vision?

Q7: How do you find out about cultural events and activities in Raleigh? What is your favorite resource?

Q8: Any additional notes, thoughts, observations about the meeting?

Raleigh Arts Plan Community Conversation Attendee Survey

Thanks for helping us keep track of who is in the room!

I am....

- Male
- Female

My age range is...

- Under 21
- 21 to 34 years
- 35 to 44 years
- 45 to 54 years
- 55 to 64 years
- 65 to 74 years
- 75 years and over
- Prefer not to answer

I identify myself as....

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black/African American
- White
- Hispanic/Latino
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- Multi-racial
- Other _____
- Prefer not to answer

My education level is....

- Less than 9th grade
- Some high school
- High school graduate
- Some college
- Associates degree
- Bachelors degree
- Graduate/professional degree
- Prefer not to answer

My home zip code is:

My native home state is:

I heard about this meeting through....

- Word of mouth
- Newspaper
- Email
- Facebook or twitter
- Online announcement
- Flyer
- Other _____

Do you consider yourself an arts professional? (Do you make any or all of your income in the arts?)

- Yes
- No
- Not sure