

Lisa Clausen

From: Public Council Inbox
To: George Counts
Subject: RE: Burien's New Vision

Thank you for your message. It will be transmitted to the appropriate City staff and included in the Correspondence for the Record for a future City Council meeting.

L. Clausen
Burien City Manager's Office

From: George Counts [<mailto:g.numero@gmail.com>]
Sent: Friday, July 08, 2011 2:11 PM
To: Joan McGilton; Public Council Inbox
Cc: Brian Bennett; Jack Block Jr.; Rose Clark; Lucy Krakowiak; Jerry Robison; Gordon Shaw
Subject: Burien's New Vision

Dear Madame Major and Burien City Council members:

I urge the inclusion of an eighth core value, Arts and Culture in the City of Burien's New Vision. You have repeatedly stated that "the arts are pervasive in Burien" and they are so interwoven that one doesn't need to write them into the Vision specifically. While we are very appreciative of the value the City's current elected officials place on the arts in Burien, a verbal statement doesn't substitute for identifying in the Vision document, Arts and Culture as a core value.

The City of Burien's proposed new Vision for its future as a government, and for its citizens and businesses, needs to incorporate a strong commitment to Arts and Culture into that Vision. The current language for including Arts and Culture in the June 20th draft proposed Vision is very passive. While the current draft Vision includes "creativity" as a value it does not state that the City supports and values the critical importance of Arts and Culture to the overall quality of life and economic vitality of the City. Therefore, a specific eighth core value, Arts and Culture should be included in the Vision for Burien.

Arts and Culture attract new businesses, residents, and artists/performers to put down roots and to become actively invested and engaged in making communities better places to live and work. Without a strong commitment to Arts and Culture the long-term sustainability of Burien's many non-profit arts organizations is in question.

As you know, the City of Burien currently provides through its annual arts and culture grant program (administered by the Burien Arts Commission), critical funds that are necessary to provide the array of visual and performing arts programming currently enjoyed by residents. Burien Arts, for example, then leverages its modest City grant funds (Burien Arts received \$1,500 in 2010) EIGHT to ONE from our own fundraising, membership, programs, and donations. All other grantees leverage their grant monies similarly.* Burien's non-profit arts agencies present a wealth of arts and cultural activities that go well beyond what the Burien city government could afford to provide on its own.

Additionally, inclusion of Arts and Culture in the Vision as a core value will ensure that future City leaders will make informed future policy decisions supporting Arts and Culture. Planning, zoning, city codes and ordinances must support the ability of Arts and Cultural organizations and businesses to engage in commerce and provide services within the city well into the future. Quoted from Burien City News June 2011, "The visioning effort will help shape the long-term future of Burien. 'Vision for Burien' will provide the City with sense of direction

and framework for evaluating future policy decisions”.

Arts and Culture are key ingredients of shaping that direction and framework and evaluating future policy. Arts and Culture should be added as the eighth CORE value.

Thank you for your thoughtful discussion with citizens, organizations and businesses. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the important role that Arts and Culture has in the history, character and evolution of the Burien community. We appreciate the many hours City officials, the Steering Committee, and City Staff have put into the development of the new proposed City Vision and look forward to seeing a strong commitment to Arts and Culture incorporated into the next draft proposed Vision statement.

Sincerely,

George W. Counts
9025 3rd Ave NW
Seattle, WA 98117

*"The Arts Industry generates nearly \$30 billion in revenue for local, state, and federal governments. Each year. By comparison, the 3 levels of government. collectively spend less than \$4 billion annually to support arts and culture. This is a spectacular 7-to-1 return on investment that would thrill even Wall Street veterans."

ICMA Newsletter Oct. Vol. 90 Lead Article (International City/County Management Assoc. whose mission is to create excellence in local governance.)