

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MAYOR

FOR

THE OFFICE OF ART, CULTURE & TOURISM

September 2003

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

First and foremost, this report focuses on the arts and cultural organizations, artists, and citizens of Providence's diverse communities and neighborhoods that truly make it a special place to live, work and visit. Providence is a rich, and ever-expanding, creative, cultural and historic hub. While the committee recognizes the importance of working with a wide range of public and private partners and constituencies, the arts (including film) and culture are our primary concern and the central underpinning for the recommendations that we offer the Mayor for his consideration which follow.

The main recommendation of this report is what the committee believes to be the preferred method in creating an office that represents the unique needs and interests of art, culture and tourism, that is directed by a cabinet-level position and directly accountable to the Mayor and the citizens of Providence. The primary benefits are twofold: it raises the status of art and culture and signals their importance as an integral component of city life; and it elevates them to a position of equal partnership in creating policy, framing solutions across disciplines and departments, and implementing programs and plans.

Finally, we applaud those who are recognizing and celebrating the economic power of the arts, as well as the tremendous potential of arts, cultural and creative workers as engines of growth and future development for the city as a creative hub. We recognize that the arts and cultural universe in the City of Providence cuts across both not-for-profit as well as for-profit sectors. It includes a range of participants and interested parties: including those who make a living from arts and culture broadly defined; individual artists, entrepreneurs and small businesses; large and small arts and cultural organizations; hoteliers, restaurateurs, and others involved in the tourism industry. In addition there are many individuals and groups who practice and enjoy the arts as avocational artists and audience members in a wide range of settings from first rate theaters and museums, galleries and shops, schools and after-schools, nursing homes and neighborhood and community centers, religious and civic organizations, associations and clubs.

INTRODUCTION

Project Background

In the spring of 2003, Mayor David Cicilline empowered a ten-member advisory committee and a chair to make recommendations on the creation of the new Office of Arts, Culture and Tourism. This new office would raise the visibility of the arts in the City and would be a one-stop center for any individual, organization or entity that wishes to hold an arts-related or public activity in Providence. It would enfold the Office of Cultural Affairs, currently housed in the Parks Department, with the existing, but dormant Film Commission. It would work in partnership with the Providence Tourism Council and the Providence/Warwick Convention and Visitors Bureau to ensure an effective tourism campaign that highlights the richness and diversity of arts and culture found in Providence. It would work in conjunction with other city agencies and departments, such as Planning and Economic Development, to ensure that the needs of all citizens of the city are met, including artists and other creative workers.

In fulfilling its charge, the committee drafted a proposed mission statement for the office and outlined ideas about its structure (Appendix B). The group then held a series of open meetings and focus groups to discuss these ideas. Neighborhood meetings were held over the summer at the Jewish Community Center on the East Side, the DaVinci Center for Community Development on the north side, the Elmwood Community Center in South Providence and the West End Community Center. A meeting for the film community was held at the Rhode Island Foundation and a meeting for individual artists was held at Monohasset Mills. In addition, members of the committee met individually with a wide cross section of individuals, arts and cultural organizations, and city departments and agencies (See list of participants in Appendix C).

Key Participants

The members of this advisory committee were selected by the Mayor to gather information and hear comments from organizations and individuals in order to make recommendations on the creation of a new office by the autumn of 2003.

The committee included:

Ann Galligan (chair), Cultural & Arts Policy Research Institute, Northeastern University
Linda Avant-Deishini, International Gallery
Peter Bramante, Arts & Business Council of Rhode Island
John Custer, Rhode Island College
Tyler Denmead, New Urban Arts
Barbara Dreyer, Capital Properties
Jim DeRentis, Bank RI
Claude Elliott, Rhode Island Foundation
Bob Jaffe, Independent Artist
Tatiana Pina, Sol Gallery
Randall Rosenbaum, Rhode Island State Council on the Arts

The committee was assisted and advised throughout this four-month process by members of the Mayor's staff. They include:

Cliff Wood, Deputy Chief of Policy (liaison for the committee to the Mayor's Office)
Carolyn Benedict-Drew, Chief of Policy
Paul Brooks, Chief of Protocol
Serena Conley, Appointment Secretary
Gonzalo Cuervo, Director of Communications
Deborah Plyntynsky, Intern
Luz Elena Wood, Providence Journal Mayoral Fellow

FINDINGS

- A. Providence is a vibrant city, filled with first-rate arts and cultural organizations, architectural treasures, historic properties, and a large array of artists and other creative workers
- B. Yet there are no existing structures or processes in place for comprehensive support of the arts and culture in Providence
- C. There are few avenues open to make information, resources, programming or services available to individual artists, and arts and cultural group in the City
- D. There are no guidelines or procedures for those seeking assistance, financial or otherwise, in creating, producing or marketing arts and cultural products or events in Providence
- E. There are resources in place, most notably, the tourism agencies, which are neither positioned nor charged with taking best advantage of the City's artistic or cultural assets that effectively attract tourists, revenue and new business to our city and our state

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

We propose the creation of The Providence Office of Arts, Culture and Tourism. The Office's primary focus is to ensure that the City of Providence:

1. Has an active, vibrant and sustainable arts and cultural community that contributes to the economy, education, employment and quality of life of its citizens in neighborhoods throughout the City.
2. Contributes to the growth, strength and vitality of its artists and arts organizations through development of policy, financial and technical assistance, facilitation with other City departments, and marketing and promotional support.
3. Is known nationally and internationally as a desirable cultural destination.
4. Is an attractive and viable place for artists and others to live and to work.

RECOMMENDED STRUCTURE

We recommend the following structure for the Office of Arts, Culture and Tourism.

- The Office and its director and staff shall answer directly to the Mayor and will fulfill the duties outlined in the Proposed Organization Outline (Appendix A).
- It will merge the duties and staff of the existing Office of Cultural Affairs, now housed under the Parks Department, within this new office.
- It will oversee the functions of the Film Commission.
- It will work in close partnership with the Providence Tourism Council and the Convention and Visitors Bureau to develop a coordinated campaign for marketing the city locally, regionally, nationally and internationally as a vibrant cultural destination
- It will act as a central clearinghouse for information, programs and services available for individuals, organizations and groups.
- It will provide technical assistance, as well as print and web-based information to all those who seek guidance on accessing available resources relative to funding, housing, permits, licenses, tax incentives and other city, state, national or federal services.
- It will serve as the designated local arts agency for the city, creating clear guidelines and criteria for all seeking city funds in support of arts and culture, and its relationship to making the City a cultural destination.
- It will convene panels to assist in making such awards. It will annually evaluate and monitor the use of all City funds, both discretionary and on-going support, to ensure that the City receives an acceptable return on its investment.
- It will work in conjunction with the Providence Economic Development Partnership to ensure that the economic potential of arts and culture is fully realized, including both organizations and individuals.
- It will work with individual artists, assisting them in locating (and possibly facilitating development of) housing and services to live and work in the city.

- It will assist filmmakers and performing artists in securing the needed licenses and permits needed to complete their projects. The Office will also work with the State Arts Council and the RI Film and TV Office in certifying state film tax credits, as established under state law.
- It will work in close partnership with the Providence School Department to ensure that the arts are part of every child's education as mandated by state law.
- The Office will work with schools, community and neighborhood groups as an advocate for the arts.
- The Office will be located in an easily accessible, visible location.

In order to accomplish these goals, we recommend the Office of Arts, Culture and Tourism:

- **Maintain** and enhance existing City programs (such as Convergence) through new and existing revenue sources and increased visibility through cooperative marketing efforts of the City's tourism agencies.
- **Partner** with economic development efforts and agencies on the city and statewide level in an effort to create a more viable and sustainable arts sector.
- **Determine** the basis for on-going support, both for long-standing arts projects and cultural festivals, as well as for stable arts and cultural organizations which contribute to making the City a viable cultural destination.
- **Develop** policy guidelines for grant-making for projects, particularly those which are unique and innovative.
- **Explore** avenues for new funding and re-granting opportunities, particularly those that do not compete with the City's arts/cultural organizations.
- **Make** available information about private and public resources to support the Arts.
- **Coordinate** with state and federal agencies such as RISCA, RICH, NEFA, the NEA and NEH for collaborate and non-duplicative granting.
- **Establish** a separate nonprofit arm to facilitate sponsorships and donations from funders who would not otherwise give to the Office & its programs.
- **Develop** local, regional, national and international marketing strategies in conjunction with tourism to promote Providence both directly and online.
- **Make** available comprehensive information of live/work spaces and other artist resources, and facilitate linkages to other appropriate City agencies.
- **Address** concerns and questions about the arts as needed (one-stop shopping).

- **Create** effective communication tools for individuals and organizations, such as website, e-letters, and public forums, etc.
- **Implement** mechanisms for effective outreach to the arts and cultural communities and groups, including panels and public forums.
- **Act** as a cultural ambassador for the City on the state, regional, national and international level.
- **Inform** tourists and the citizens of Providence about the richness and diversity of the City's artistic and cultural offerings in the neighborhoods.
- **Partner** with and support existing arts/cultural resources and services to take advantage of the synergies available to the community-at-large (for example, ArtTix).
- **Enforce** the Percent for Art Law.

Summary

The main recommendation of the committee is for the creation of an office that directly links art, culture and tourism, directed by a cabinet-level position. This move raises the status of arts and culture and signals its importance as an integral component of city life. In addition, it elevates arts and culture as an equal partner in creating policy, framing solutions across disciplines and departments, and implementing programs and plans.

We propose the hiring of a director and staff that will allow the Office to sustain and support the existing arts and cultural base; encourage and assist in the development of new events and activities; oversee the functions of the Film Commission; coordinate its marketing and programming with tourism; assist individuals, organizations and groups in securing needed city services; interact with other City departments and agencies in creating policy and streamlining information and resources; work with schools, neighborhood and community groups in ensuring the arts availability; and act as an ambassador and advocate for arts and culture on city, state, national and international levels.

Providence is a vibrant city, filled with first-rate arts and cultural organizations, architectural treasures, historic properties, and a large array of artists and other creative workers. We believe these recommended strategies will help Providence realize its full potential as a city of and for the arts.

Acknowledgements

The committee wishes to extend special thanks to those who hosted our focus groups and meetings. This includes:

Peter Bramante, The Arts & Business Council of Rhode Island

Eric Bright, Monohasset Mills Project

Tyler Denmead, New Urban Arts

John DaLuca, The DaVinci Center

Claude Elliott and Anne Rocheleau, Rhode Island Foundation

Ken Goode, The Westside Community Center

Robert Lever, New Commons & Dan Baudouin, Providence Foundation

Linda Singer-Berk, The Jewish Community Center

Dennis Tabella, The Elmwood Community Center

Appendices

Appendix A: Proposed Organizational Outline

Mayor's Task Force Office of Arts, Culture and Tourism

Executive Director

Responsibilities:

- Internal management of the Office
- Member of Mayor's Cabinet
- Develop the strategy to incorporate arts and cultural policy into the city's overall agenda
- Work actively across policy lines to ensure that arts and cultural policy is considered
- Reportable to the Board of the Office (if structured such)
- Responsible of the overall budget of the Office
- Responsible for developing new initiatives consistent with the mission
- Coordinate with state-wide arts and cultural tourism initiatives
- Keep the arts and cultural community informed as active stakeholders in the activities of the Office through public meeting and informational bulletins
- External face and voice for the office, its mission, and marketing of Providence as a cultural destination
 - in the Providence community at large
 - in the Providence arts community
 - in the nation at large
 - in the national arts community

Program Director

Responsibilities:

- Manage the budgets for all programs of the Office
- Manage any direct programs sponsored by the Office (e.g. Convergence)
- Develop any new program initiatives
- Act as liaison to arts/culture community re: application and use of program funds
- Manage all "grant-making" programs
 - establishing criteria for proposals
 - establishing panels to review proposals
 - monitoring all GOS programs and organizations
 - evaluating the efficacy of all program money

Appendix A: Proposed Organizational Outline (cont)

Development Director

Responsibilities:

- Develop relationships with funders for programs
- Manage the on-profit arm that is developed for raising and supporting the operations of the Office
- Coordinate with the Program Director to cultivate programs for funding
- Cultivate funding sources (particularly national) for re-granting (with sensitivity re: competing with local organizations)

Resource Director

Responsibilities:

- Act as a source of information for anyone who seeks knowledge, connections, networking, etc. relative to the arts and culture
- Develop synergies with other city departments, arts and culture organizations, property owners/developers
- Develop a database of information useful to the constituency
- Maintain a master calendar for the arts and culture in the City
- Find the answers to anything related to the function and the constituency of the Office
- Pro-actively forge relationships, legislation, and advocacy on behalf of those involved in arts and culture
- Develop and maintain Website

Administrator

Responsibilities:

- Oversee the day-to-day workings of the Office
- Maintain the appropriate databases to support the various activities of the Office
- Execute informational bulletins and public meeting convenings
- Provide information to the Directors, Board, panels as needed
- Provide all necessary clerical assistance as needed

Appendix B: Draft Mission Statement & Proposed Structure

- In order to demonstrate the City's value and support for arts and culture, we propose the creation of The Providence Office of Arts, Film, Culture and Tourism. The Office's primary focus is to ensure that the City of Providence is a viable and desirable cultural destination.
- The Office strives to create an environment that enables artists and arts organizations to thrive within the City's economy in order to retain, sustain and enhance artists and arts organizations. More than a granting organization the Office will implement a citywide plan for strategic and synergistic use of arts, culture, film and tourism that will enrich our downtown, our culturally diverse neighborhoods, communities and schools.
- The Office will provide financial support for arts and cultural organizations and individual artists; maximize the City's existing arts and cultural assets; and identify and leverage other resources and funding streams. The Office and its staff will act as arts ambassadors, reaching out and creating partnerships and collaborations with other cities and countries around the nation and the world, thereby promoting Providence as a unique arts and cultural destination.
- In order to fully realize this potential, the Office will coordinate with other City Departments, so that arts, culture, film and tourism are effectively integrated within City planning and design.
- The Office will make all recommendations pertaining to funding for arts, culture and tourism to the Mayor and the City Council. The Office will also advise and make recommendations on specific projects and programs, enforce and oversee public art policies, strengthen and promote the arts in neighborhoods of the City of Providence, consider artists and in their needs in citywide planning, encourage the private sector to increase its investment in Providence's artists, arts, culture and tourism.
- The Office will merge the existing functions and funding for arts, film, culture and tourism and will be managed by a cabinet-level Director.

PROPOSED STRUCTURE

- 1) Cultural and Heritage Events and Programming, both those under the City auspices such as Convergence, festivals and parades, and those who received City funding, such as Waterfire, First Night, Gallery Night, etc.
- 2) Granting Programs—including creation of funding and granting mechanism, and overseeing the application and award process.
- 3) R & D for new arts events and individual efforts.
- 4) Major tourism events and initiatives;
- 5) Servicing as an advisory board for related arts funding, such as CDBG monies, hotel tax, One Percent and related tourism.
- 6) Serving as an information resource and clearinghouse for the City's arts and culture.
- 7) Interface with the City's individual arts in order to better provide a climate for them to live and work.
- 8) Aiding the Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Film and Individual Artists

- 9) Coordinate the look and feel of "the City as Art." This includes art and design in City spaces throughout the year, including art in public spaces, commission for new public works of art, signage, landscape design and urban planning.
- 10) Liaison and outreach to other cities, both national and international;
- 11) Coordinator with arts, cultural and educational organizations.

Appendix C: Interview and Focus Group Participants

Sarah Agniel, Gallery Agniel
Karen Allen Baxter, Rites and Reasons
Sara Archambault, RI Council for the Humanities & Picture Start
Barbara Barnes, RI Historical Society
Meris Barreto, educator
Lee Beliveau, G Media
Christina Bevilacqua, Leadership RI & Everett Dance Theatre
Cathy Bert, Bert Gallery & Gallery Night
Dan Baudouin, Providence Foundation
Bernie Buonanano, RI Civic Center
Sherilyn Brown, RI State Council on the Arts
Don Carlton, RI Historical Society
Lisa Carnevale, RI Citizens for the Arts
Gary Carvahlo, Waterfire
Kate Champa, Raku Rodeo
Jeannine Chartier, VSArts RI
Daphne Clarke, Nemis Music Incubator
Laura Colella, filmmaker
Jay Coogan, RI School of Design
Bert Crenca, AS200
Margaret Cushing, Foundling Baroque Orchestra & Women's Advocacy Project
Tamara , New Urban Arts
Frank D'Agostino, RI Film Festival
Ruth Dealy, artist
Rev. Maria DeCharvalho, Cathedral of St John
John DeLuca, DaVinci Center
Margaret Cushing,
Diana DeCeseris, Virginia Lynch Gallery
Thom Deller, Providence Planning Department
Kristen Di Vona, City Arts
George Donnelly, Providence Tourism Council
Susan Esposito, JUMP!
Dean Esserman, Providence Police Department
Barnaby Evans, Waterfire
Mary Farrazza, opera lover & DaVinci Center
Mark Foley, Vidography
Herb Fried, Brown University & The Music Mansion
Pat Fuller, Providence Singers
Lisa Gautheri, Gateway Arts Gallery
Adam Gertsacov, RI A to Z
Dr. Joe Goldblatt, The Governor's Task Force & Johnson & Wales
Ken Goode, West End Community Center
Wrenn Goodrum, All Children's Theatre
Al Gomes, Big Noise

Appendix C: Interview and Focus Group Participants (cont)

Henry Gould, poet and writer
Rev. Anne Grant
Tereann Greenwood, VMA Arts
Ann Hudner, RI School of Design
Steve Isherwood, Narragansett Bay Chorus
Kathyrne Jennings, Opera Providence
Elizabeth Jones, Trinity Rep
Aaron Jungels, Carriage House
Bob Jungels, RI School of Design
Dorothy Jungels, Everett Dance Theatre
Therese Jungels, Everett & Carriage House
Tamara Kaplan, New Urban Arts
Jonathon Keiser, Brown University
Daniel Kertzner, Mass Cultural Council & Storyteller
Paula Keogh, Providence College & Festival Ballet
Steve Kumins, Waterfire
Lisa LeDew, Festival Ballet
Robert Lever, New Commons
Steve Kumins, Waterfire
Winnie Lambrecht, RI State Council on the Arts
Marcia Layden, The Players
Sandy Lemieux, John Brown House
Mark Lerman, Perishable Theatre
Barbara Macaulay, Hogan/Macaulay
Lori Maciel, Providence Washington
Roger Mandle, RI School of Design
George Marshall, The RI Film Festival
Kristen Martin, filmmaker
Paula Martiesian, Centercity Contemporary Arts
Lynne McCormack, Office of Cultural Affairs
Kip McMahan, Robinson Green Beretta
Allison McMillan, Providence Singers
A. Michelle, RI Music Hall of Fame
Paris Moore, filmmaker
Anne Mulhall, LDI Casting
Frank Muhly, filmmaker
Dana Neugent, URI
Deb Newhall, designer and filmmaker
Tom Oakes, Island Theater Company
Deborah Obalil, Alliance of Artist Communities
Emma Palzere-Rae, Chorus of Westerly
Drake Patten, RI Council on the Humanities
Steven Pennell, Artist-in-Residence, URI-Providence Campus
Nicholas Perl, Gateway Art Center
Margaret Phoenix, RI Historical Society

Appendix C: Interview and Focus Group Participants (cont)

Ricardo Pitts-Wiley, Actor
Kathleen Pletcher, First Night
Lon Plynton, New England Reggae
Diane Postoian, Looking Glass Theatre
Olon Reeder, Reeder Associates
Bob Rizzo, Office of Cultural Affairs
Annette Robinson
Anne Rocheleau, The RI Foundation
Leanne Rosso
Perry Rosenthal
Christina Rotella, Video Concierge
Joanne V. Rotondo, JVR Communications
Delores Rovnack
Baha Sadr, International Institute of Rhode Island
Carol Scott, Consultant
Lucie Searles, The Campaign for AS220 and Perishable
Sam Setter, AS220/Broad Street Studio
Barbara Sherma, artist
Linda Singer-Berk, Jewish Community Center
Lynn Singleton, Providence Performing Arts Center
Rick Smith, RI Film Commission
Steve Sorin, Trinity Rep
Spyce, Wicked Dog Productions
Kenn Speiser, artist
Paul Sproll, RI School of Design
Doris Stephens, First Night Providence
Judith Tannenbaum, RI School of Design Museum
Cade Thomkins,
Dennis Tabella, The Elmwood Community Center
Lora Urbanelli, RI School of Design Museum
Marc Viera, Arts Alive!
Barbara Walzer
David Wax, RI Philharmonic
Rose Weaver, artist & actor
Herb Weiss, Pawtucket Dept of Planning
Kira Wills
Chanselle Wilson, AS220/Broad Street Studio
Martina Windels, Hive Alive
Todd Winkler, Brown University
Sally Zinno, Sally Zinno Consulting

Appendix D: Highlights of the Providence Profile of Cultural Support¹

Providence, Rhode Island was one of ten sites chosen by the Pew Charitable Trusts and Ohio State University/ Americans in 1999 to participate in the National and Local Profiles of Cultural Support Project intent on defining the universe of arts and cultural organizations and groups in the United States.²

Among the reasons Providence was chosen are because of the cultural and economic “renaissance” the city experienced as part of its urban revitalization, attributed, in large part, to the arts. And second, because of the high level of informal, avocational or “unincorporated” arts found in its geographical area, i.e.-- activities falling outside the tradition commercial and not-for-profit scope in the community.

Here are some of the highlights from that study:

- While the financial industries sector remains in the lead in Rhode Island, the tourism industry is a fast moving second. Figures show that tourism generated over \$3.2 billion dollars of revenue for the state in 2000. At that time group and business tourism had been a major focus of the Greater Providence Tourism Council and the Convention Authority. While trends suggested a slowdown or leveling of growth after 9/11, the third tourism component, leisure travel, holds the possibility of increased growth, particularly given its reliance on cultural tourism and the area’s arts and cultural richness and easy transportation access.
- In 2000 (the study year) approximately 2.5 million people lived within a 30-mile radius of Providence (500,00 of whom had incomes of \$50,000 or greater), and 50 million people within a 300-mile radius,

As reported in a recent economic impact study,³ the arts, cultural, and humanities sector had a dramatic effect on the state economy, calculated at \$241.2 million in 1996. In the decade between 1985 and 1995, the state’s arts and cultural organizations demonstrated a 41 percent growth in admissions. In 1996 alone,

² National and Local Profiles of Cultural Support, 2002.

³ Gregory Wassall, *Economic Impact of the Arts in Rhode Island*, RI Foundation, 1997.

the arts returned \$1.7 million in state tax revenues including income and sales tax. This is a *268 percent* return of investment for the State of Rhode Island on its support of the arts.

- In the preliminary community profile, Greater Providence reported an overwhelming 71.2 percent of its arts and cultural universe is located outside the area outside the scope of large and medium-sized arts and cultural organizations. The largest part of Providence's universe included individual artists, embedded arts activities in other not-for-profit organizations (such as the RISD and Brown Museums and historic properties, and community, folk, or neighborhood-based associations. Much of this activity involves the arts as an expression within a larger cultural tradition, or as part of a community-based program, such as after-school programs, civic and ethnic associations, festivals, feasts, and clubs.

- As evidenced by the breakdown of what could be referred to as "traditional arts, cultural and service organizations," Providence has a large performing arts community, similar to Los Angeles, Nashville, Miami, San Jose and Philadelphia.

- Also similar to Los Angeles and Philadelphia, Providence has a strong humanities component to its cultural universe.

- There are relatively few local arts councils in the state, and arts service activities are more often to be found "embedded" in/or part of neighborhood, community, religious or social organizations. (Since the time of this study, one 501(c) (4) arts advocacy organization, Rhode Island Citizens for the Arts, has been established, as has one public radio station.

- While the city has a vibrant not-for-profit arts and cultural sector (generating both income and jobs), the city also is home to a large creative community. This includes folk and traditional, as well as freelance artists and employees in both the profit and not-for-profit arts sector, involved in what has been termed "the creative industries."

- A second distinguishing characteristic of the Greater Providence area is its demographic profile. Providence currently has one of the fastest growing Hispanic populations in the country, estimated at about

30 percent of the city's population in 2000. This diversity might suggest one reason for the large percentage of the Providence's arts and cultural universe falling outside the traditional universe shared by other Profile sites.

- A third distinguishing characteristic of the Providence and the state is the large number of individual artists who live in the area. The city boasts of a rich and deep cultural and intellectual base with a large artist population. Artists in this group includes both professional and amateur artists, as well as large population of student artists attending local universities including the Rhode Island School of Design, Brown University, Providence College, Rhode Island College, The University of Rhode Island, and Johnson and Wales University.

- During the past two decades, Providence's waterways have served as an instrument in its economic rebirth. As part of a \$1.5 billion renovation effort, two of the main rivers running throughout the base of the downtown area literally were moved to recreate a more connected centercity area with a major focus on the arts. The decaying downtown commercial area, build between 1828 and 1928, was transformed into an arts and entertainment district with theatres, nightclubs and restaurants (a number responding to this survey). Many of the establishments in the Arts and Entertainment District received low interest loans from the city. The city has spent more than \$1 billion in state and federal aid on construction, a large portion through federal monies targeted for community block development.

- One of the keys to Providence's revitalization has been its willingness to preserve its past while envisioning its future. Nowhere is this more evident in the city's use and reuse of its buildings. A source of both celebration and controversy, Providence has been on the forefront of historic preservation for both single-family homes and private as well as public buildings.

- Finally, Providence has used both direct and indirect tax incentives as a way of realizing its urban renewal and cultural policy plan. Starting in 1996, the City introduced a new model to assist individual arts and businesses through the creation of a tax-free arts and entertainment zone. The goal was to support individuals as well as act as a lure for tourism. The legislation, passed by the General Assembly, allows artists who live and work in the district exemptions on both state income tax and on the profits from sales of

their artwork. This includes artistic endeavors in the fields of literature, film, photography, sculpture, music, paintings, prints or dance. In addition, people who buy these works will also be exempt from paying state sales tax.