

Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center (WACC)

Questions and Answers

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I. Revised Space Program Outline

The following descriptions of spaces/programs is meant to provide general clarification. For more detailed information, please review Section II.

There have been changes to some spaces based on feedback from the April 24th, 2024 meeting. A revised building plan will be posted to the [project website](#) after the June 20th, 2024 meeting.

Flexible Theatre: The flexible theatre is intended primarily for performing arts and community event usage. It will be well-equipped for performance, dance, movement, and music, (with a surface appropriate for dance and acoustical sound treatment). It is designed with maximum flexibility in mind and is not intended to serve as a traditional proscenium theatre. As such, it does not have permanent fixed seating (but includes flexible seating options) or wing space, a set proscenium, fly space, or other elements traditionally associated with a proscenium-style theatre. It will have a professional grid with theatrical lighting, drapery, and rigging capacity so that the theatre can be styled with an end-stage or used as an open flat floor – and any combination in between.

Studio Space: The studio is intended primarily for use by the community at large for smaller gatherings and cultural events. It could also be used as a teaching or rehearsal space for performing arts disciplines including theatre and dance (a surface appropriate for dance will be included), small music ensembles, and select-visual arts disciplines including drawing and illustration. Readings and other events may also be held in this space.

Gallery: This space is intended primarily for visual arts exhibits. It can be closed and secured for gallery use only, or opened up to combine with the larger lobby space for bigger exhibits or events. It is not intended to be utilized by performance disciplines.

Flexible Classroom: This space is intended as a flexible gathering and teaching space. It will not be equipped for dance, movement, or music (no specialized flooring or acoustical sound treatment). It will be designed with maximum flexibility in mind including wi-fi and projection capabilities, ample electrical power, and moveable tables and seating. This room could be used for digital arts classes, smaller community or cultural gatherings, meetings, or table-top visual arts (i.e.: knitting, crafting, etc.).

Visual Art Classroom: This space is intended as a flexible visual arts studio classroom designed to serve the broadest possible number of mediums and uses. The space will have sufficient ventilation for use by painting and other mediums requiring similar air circulation. There will be a sink and ample electrical power. Examples of mediums that this room can serve include painting, drawing, jewelry, or other table-top arts. As many visual arts mediums require specialized spaces and equipment, it is important to note that not all of them will be able to be accommodated in this room. It will not be well-suited for pottery, large sculpture, metal working, or wood working.

II. Arts and Cultural Center Questions

A. Questions about operations

1. Who will operate/manage the facility?

- **Interested to hear more about who will manage / operate these spaces?**
- **Who will be the gatekeeper of the events?**
- **Is the County open to partnering with nonprofit organizations in the area for programming at the Wheaton Arts & Cultural Center?**
- **Is there interest in having nonprofit arts organization partners from Montgomery County?**

The County will contract with a third-party operator of the facility. The County would consider selecting a nonprofit organization to be the operator of the facility. It is anticipated that the operator would provide a full range of services including building operations and programming. They would provide programming consistent with the needs of the arts incubator, including professional development, central services and administrative support for the Wheaton arts community. In addition, the operator will be responsible for developing a robust facility rental program designed to provide access to community users. They would create an equitable and inclusive process for outside users to access and rent space. The process will be aligned with the mission of the Arts Incubator. The operator will provide the following opportunities:

- Increased arts and cultural events and classes for Wheaton community members.
- Professional development opportunities for local artists and arts organizations (see Section II.A.4 for more details on the arts incubator).
- New opportunities for Wheaton's diverse ethnic community to share their cultural offerings with the public.
- New opportunities for community members of all ages to participate in arts learning.
- Affordable performance and rehearsal space in Wheaton to arts groups from the region.

2. Who will be responsible for maintenance of facility?

Montgomery County would own and maintain the base building and the facility operator would maintain everything else.

3. When is the RFP for the operator coming out?

We expect a two-year construction schedule for the base building and will align selection of the operator with the construction timetable. See Section II.E for more information on timing for construction.

4. What is the "arts incubator?"

- **How will the project act as an arts incubator?**
- **At one point, the idea of an arts incubator was contemplated - is that still being tossed around?**

The arts incubator concept is still part of the programming. It would support a diverse group of artists in refining their business strategy, administrative and operational capacity, and strategic growth. The program would include professional development, central services and administrative support for the Wheaton arts community. Specific programming could include workshops, seminars, and resources to support the administrative and business development of individuals and organizations in the Wheaton arts community such as in-house counsel to artists, classes in business skills, website development and

marketing, and resources for professional opportunities. The incubator may also offer artists opportunities to produce and teach in the new facility, and create a network for artists to provide opportunities for collaboration and shared learning experiences. The administrative area will provide flexible workspace (office hoteling/hot desk) for artists in the incubator program.

5. Are you hiring a technical director as well as WACC "operator"?

The current business plan recommends the operator hire a facility and rentals manager to oversee the functional aspects of spaces and coordinate project requirements including event staffing. This would include hiring experts as needed to maintain technical assets (lighting and sound equipment, for example). Our arts consultant, Theatre Projects, is tasked with reviewing the business plan and recommending updates based on the evolved concept.

6. How will prices for events be established? Will the Wheaton community receive discounts? Will there be free events?

The operator will be responsible for developing annual budgets for the facility, to be approved by the County. It is anticipated that the budget would include offering both creative and office space to Wheaton artists and arts organizations at special rates. The operator will determine ticket pricing and scheduling of free events.

7. What is the plan for free or low-cost use of the rehearsal, practice and presentation spaces in the center?

• Will there be affordable or complimentary/free rehearsal space?

Pricing of the space will be determined as part of operations. We encourage those interested to look at the Programming and Business Plan document and associated presentation on our [website](#), which contemplates rental rates. Rentals for performances, rehearsals, and events are assumed as part of the business model. Our previous consultants based some of their projections on Prince George's County Brentwood Arts Exchange rentals. However, this was a few years ago, so things may have changed and again, these specifics will be determined as part of operations.

8. Will there be affordable or complimentary/free space for design/visual artistry?

Please refer to Section I, Visual Arts Classroom and Flexible Classroom descriptions. Please also see Section II.L which includes additional information on the classrooms. WACC does not include individual artist studios. See Sections II.A.6 and II.A.7 for information on pricing.

9. Will Wheaton-serving arts organizations get workspaces?

The administrative area will provide flexible workspace (office hoteling/hot desk) for artists in the incubator program.

10. What will the operating hours be?

This will be determined at a later date.

11. What job opportunities will the WACC provide?

The [programming and business plan from 2019](#) anticipated that the operator of the facility will have both full-time staff such as a Program and Education Manager and Rental and Facility Manager, as well as part-time staff such as a House Manager, Ticket Services Associate and Volunteer Coordinator. There may be additional part time opportunities such as teaching positions, which will be determined as part of

operations. The County has tasked Theatre Projects, our arts consultant, with reviewing the 2019 Programming and Business Plan to see where it needs to be updated for the evolved concept.

12. What internship opportunities will the WACC provide?

- **Will you offer internships? (Please do!!)**
- **Will there be an opportunity for summer internships for our high school/college students?**

Internship opportunities for the center will be part of the operator's responsibility.

13. What volunteer opportunities will the WACC provide?

Volunteer opportunities for the center will be part of the operator's responsibility.

14. Will there be arts for seniors?

Programming is the responsibility of the operator. Programming for various communities, including different age groups, will be considered as part of the competitive RFP for determining an operator.

15. How will the WACC represent the various different cultures in Wheaton? In the County?

- **Involvement of community organizations that represent the culture in our county**
- **How will the center serve Montgomery County Brazilian arts organizations and arts needs of Brazilians in Montgomery County and Silver Spring?**
- **Caribbean culture and representation in the County has decreased from previous offerings at libraries, schools, recreation centers and senior facilities, how is the Caribbean community able to secure place-making at the Gallery for its artists, artisans, musicians, dancers and arts-integrated instruction?**
- **How is the Caribbean community able to secure placemaking at the center for its artists, artisans, and arts-integrated programs?**
- **What are the dominant cultural communities and how have they asked for space?**
- **My concern is how do you address equity and inclusion to meet the needs of the community**

It is the intention for facility programming to reflect the various cultures and communities in the area. The operator will be required to provide opportunities for Wheaton's diverse ethnic community to share their cultural offerings with the public. The operator will create an equitable and inclusive use-policy that will allow access for a diversity of users.

16. How do organizations apply to use the spaces?

Groups will be able to rent the spaces and apply to the incubator program. The mechanics of how that process will work is part of facility operations which will be considered as part of the RFP process and beyond as the operator is brought on board.

17. Will there be any resident companies/ groups?

- **Why not make sure there is a plan for "resident artists"? Who would run such a program?**

At this point in time, we do not know if there will be any resident producing or presenting organizations, i.e., an anchor organization which operates the arts facility, provides programming and has dedicated space for their own use. The operator may be a resident company or may bring on a resident company. This will be determined during the RFP process.

18. What community activities will be hosted in this center?

Programming, including community activities, will be determined by the operator in consultation with the County.

19. What opportunities will the center provide for local artists and cultural organizations?

• What opportunities for artists will be available?

The new arts and cultural facility will provide:

- Professional development opportunities for artists to grow their business through the incubator program;
- Teaching opportunities;
- Performance space for a variety of activities such as theater productions, dance performances, concerts, recitals, amplified music, lectures, readings, film screenings and special events;
- Gallery space for visual artists;
- Potential retail opportunities for art sales; and
- Opportunities for collaboration and shared learning experiences with other artists.

20. What steps are being taken to ensure the project is inclusive and accessible to all members of the community?

• How will community members be able to get involved in theater or art galleries?

The operator will create an implementation plan that will identify how community members can become involved whether through classes, teaching, volunteering or performing, to name a few ways.

21. Can any of the spaces be rented? If so, when hosting events, can the renter charge for tickets?

The WACC is intended to provide a variety of different sized spaces available for rent. The largest rental space is the flexible theatre, the studio space offers a mid-sized option, and the classrooms offer smaller options available for rent. The County owns several arts venues such as Imagination Stage, Black Rock Center for the Arts, Strathmore, the Silver Spring Black Box Theatre, and others. Some of these facilities are run by operators who rent space to others who charge for tickets. We expect WACC to operate under the same structure.

22. What sort of on-site security will be available?

Security will be established in consultation with the operator. Please refer to Section II.C.3 for additional information about incorporating security through design.

B. Questions about overall program spaces

1. Could the WACC be bigger than what you show now?

• Could the WACC be greater than 40K SF?

The area allocated for the facility cannot be larger than we are currently showing on the plans. At 40,000 square feet, WACC exceeds the space requirements identified in the Program of Requirements (POR) which was 32,000 square feet.

2. The zoning allows for more floor area ratio (FAR) than what the project shows. Why can't the building be bigger/taller?

The building has been designed to maximize height and area within the restrictions of the zoning code, building code, and type of construction. The overall height is constrained by the height and setback requirements of the adjacent townhouse parcel. The FAR is one of many factors that informed the design

and the building cannot be bigger/taller than shown. The floor area of the WACC is based on program requirements and is not dictated by the height and area of the overall building.

3. How will the design allow for multi-disciplinary and traditional arts?

Each space is designed to be as flexible as possible and available for the greatest number of uses. Due to the specialized nature of the arts, each space will have specialized features to support certain artistic disciplines while also remaining open to alternate uses.

4. What will be the visual arts components?

The spaces identified as classrooms would be available for and be capable of supporting certain visual arts creation. In response to comments from various community members and groups, one of the classrooms is now a visual art classroom. There also will be dedicated gallery space. Please see Section I and Sections II.J and II.L.

5. Will it just be theatre and dance?

No, there will be more than theater and dance. While the performance spaces will allow for theater productions and dance performances, they could also accommodate concerts, recitals, amplified music, lectures, readings, film screenings, guest speakers, meetings and special events. Additionally, the flexible classroom space may be used for certain arts classes and professional development courses taught through the arts incubator program, and the gallery for visual arts exhibits. Please see Section I.

6. Is there any space/function for musicians?

Both the flexible theatre and the studio space would be available for musicians for concerts and recitals. These spaces would also be available for music instruction. The classrooms will not have the sound treatment necessary for music-based activities. See Section I and Sections II.H and II.I for more detail.

7. Where is the space for visual artists to create?

The spaces identified as classrooms would be available for and capable of supporting certain visual arts mediums. The facility does not include individual artists' studios. See Section I and Section II.L for more detail.

8. What is the size of the loading dock? What size trucks will fit in it?

The loading dock will accommodate a 35-foot box truck with the loading dock door closed and a small semi-truck with the door open (there is a loading dock vestibule). This loading dock is separate from the residential loading dock, so it is exclusive to the WACC. The dock is the typical four feet in height with a ramp for dollies and smaller items.

9. How do performers enter the WACC?

There is a side "stage door" from the garage on the south end of the building that is separate from where patrons enter.

10. What spaces will be available for use?

Please refer to Section I of this document. WACC also includes all back-of-house support space for productions such as dressing rooms and a green room, as well as a catering kitchen for events.

C. Questions about the building

1. Are there any environmental considerations being addressed in the project planning and execution?

The County is partnering with Montgomery Housing Partnership (MHP) who is developing the site and including the arts facility as part of one of their residential buildings. The overall MHP project will provide stormwater management facilities onsite as well as native plant species for landscaping. The residential portion of the building will meet the requirements of the Zero Energy Ready Homes program, EnergyStar Multifamily New Construction certification and is targeting National Green Building Standards (NGBS) silver. WACC will meet the energy requirements in the International Green Construction Code (IgCC) and the shared garage will have 70 EV-capable spaces.

2. Will any portion of the center be solar?

The roof of the building will have solar panels, which will serve the housing project.

3. How is security being addressed in design?

• How is a "bad" mass event being controlled through design?

The project team will develop security drawings and operation plans as the project develops. We are designing utilizing Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) criteria.

4. How can artists in the area be supported with this housing and Gallery/Arts center project?

Wheaton is in an Arts and Entertainment (A&E) district, which is a state designation created to empower localities with tax-related incentives to encourage artists, arts organizations and other creative enterprises to locate in targeted areas in order to promote community involvement, tourism and neighborhood revitalization. This facility will do just that, by providing an arts center that will support various artistic disciplines within an A&E district that currently lacks this type of facility. It is also the intention for WACC to have an arts incubator program, which is detailed in Section II.A.4.

D. Questions about cost

1. How much will the Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center Cost? What is the funding mechanism?

• How will the project be funded?

For the capital project (building the WACC), please click here for the most up to date budget information: <https://apps.montgomerycountymd.gov/BASISCAPITAL/Common/Project.aspx?ID=P722106>

For operations - The 2019 programming and business plan made clear that in addition to the capital costs for construction and tenant improvements, this facility will require an ongoing governmental operating subsidy. Other sources of revenue they pointed to were sales (tickets, rentals, concessions, merchandise), and contributed revenue such as gifts and corporate support. We encourage those interested to look at the Programming and Business Plan document and associated presentation on our website. Since the programming and business plan is from 2019, we've asked our arts consultants to prepare a report outlining any necessary or recommended changes to the previous operational model.

2. Will the revenue raised by the users cover the capital cost of building it and cost of maintaining?

It is not expected that revenue from operations would pay for the capital costs. It is also anticipated that the facility will need an ongoing operational subsidy. See the response to Section II.D.1.

E. Questions about timing

1. When will the WACC be open? What is the construction period?

- **What is the timeline?**
- **What is the timeline for completion?**

The base building (the shell of the WACC) has an anticipated construction start of mid-2026. Construction of the base building is anticipated to be completed by mid-2028. Fit out of the interior will begin after completion of the base building.

F. Questions about accessibility

1. Will this Center be welcoming & fully accessible to people with mobility challenges?

- **Are all spaces welcoming & accessible to rollers / people with mobility issues??**

Yes. The project must comply with all Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. All entrances are welcoming to both disabled and non-disabled alike, ensuring all patrons can enter the space from the same place and without any need to find alternative paths. The flexible design of internal spaces will allow users to utilize spaces in a variety of configurations to serve a wide range of artists, audiences, and community members.

2. Will there be seating for disabled who cannot walk very far?

Disabled seating will be considered as part of project. Most of the seating in the various spaces is flexible such as the classrooms and studio theater. We will look at placing seating in the lobby areas to allow those that have difficulty walking very far a place to rest.

3. Is there an elevator or ramp?

There is an elevator within the facility.

4. Where and how will ADA seating be organized in the performance space (flexible theatre)?

The Americans with Disabilities Act has specific guidelines for seating requirements in any theater/performance space, and Montgomery County is obligated to comply with these standards in this and any other County performance venue. This includes a flat, open, and level space for a wheelchair user to sit, an accessible route to the seats, bathrooms, parking, dispersed, integrated and companion seating, and line of sight. The space is flexible, and each performance could have different seating arrangements.

5. Where and how will ADA seating be organized in the studio theatre (studio space)?

The Americans with Disabilities Act has specific guidelines for seating requirements in any theater/performance space, and Montgomery County is obligated to comply with these standards in this and any other County performance venue. This includes a flat, open, and level space for a wheelchair user to sit, an accessible route to the seats, bathrooms, parking, dispersed, integrated and companion

seating, and line of sight. The space is flexible, and each performance could have different seating arrangements.

G. Questions about the facility planning process

1. What community outreach has been done so far?

The County began community engagement in 2018 with extensive outreach to the local Wheaton community, various artists and artistic communities. Please see the [project website](#) and click “Description” to learn more about community outreach to date.

2. The program the arts consultant did in 2018/2019 was pre-Covid. It is no longer relevant. What steps are being taken to update it?

As part of this current community engagement effort, the County posed that very question to our architect and arts consultant. Post-Covid, they are seeing greater HVAC requirements and the request for greater flexibility, which is typical across the building industry. Operationally, there is a greater request for livestreams. The County has tasked Theatre Projects, our arts consultants, with reviewing the 2019 Programming and Business Plan to see where it needs to be updated.

H. Questions about the performance space (now the “flexible theatre”)

1. Can the performance concert space can be increased to a capacity of 800-1000 seats?

No. There is no room to increase the size of the larger performance space without eliminating other key elements to the space. The size of the flexible theatre was based on in-depth research and analysis.

2. Will it have an auditorium for plays and musicals?

Please refer to Section I.

3. What is the floor to ceiling height of the performance spaces?

We are striving for 22 feet clear in the flexible theatre. We still need to design the interior rigging, lighting, acoustics and A/V.

4. Is there enough space to allow "fly" space in this theatre?

There is no fly space in the flexible theatre. The fixed pipe grid will allow for elements to be rigged in place.

5. Is there enough space to allow wing space in this theatre for sets/prop storage?

There is ample space and infrastructure to create wing space in the theatre in various configurations. The wing space would be created by hanging drapery/soft goods to create a proscenium. Increasingly, performing arts groups are seeking flexibility in their performance setup and this flexible space allows for various theatre and audience styles (such as thrust stage, in the round, and other options). There is dedicated storage in the design for the flexible theatre. Users could potentially utilize the storage for sets and props in active use, but there is not storage for these materials beyond the rental/usage time frame.

6. What is the situation for rigging / lighting in this space?

There will be a fixed pipe grid in the performance space to hang lighting and rig theatrical elements. The operator will determine the theatrical equipment inventory and the protocols for its use.

7. How many people does the large theater seat?

There are 280 seats shown in the rendering with retractable telescopic seating, which is one of the seating options we are considering. There are many other ways to use the room without a stage. The room is 5,000 square feet and assuming 15 square feet per person, it can accommodate 333 people in tables and chairs.

8. How will you make the performance space flexible for dance, theater and other kinds of uses?

Please refer to Section I.

9. Are the dressing rooms, green room, other support spaces shared between the two main performance spaces?

In response to community feedback, additional support space has been added to the program including additional back-of-house dressing rooms and restrooms. The operator will determine protocols for access to support spaces. Amenities such as the green room and back of house circulation would need to be shared by the flexible theatre and studio space, but depending on the number of performers the available dressing rooms could potentially serve both spaces concurrently.

10. Can the retractable seats be used on different sides of the space or are they fixed?

They may only be used on one side of the space as currently designed with telescopic seating.

11. Is the stage moveable?

There is no defined raised stage.

12. How can musical performances use this space?

The space is intended to be flexible for a variety of uses – see Section I. The flexible theatre and studio space will have acoustical separation from other spaces to accommodate live and amplified music.

13. Is there room for set design & construction?

There is no dedicated space onsite for set design and construction. Scenery can be brought in through the dedicated loading area.

14. What type of media equipment will be available for live-streaming, recording, podcasting, audience Q&A, etc.?

The future operator of the space will determine the media equipment made available to users for broadcast, creation, and instruction.

I. Questions about the studio theatre (now the “studio space”)

1. Will both floors be sprung for dance?

The flexible theatre and the studio space will have floor treatments suitable for dance and movement.

2. Will there be capacity to screen films?

Yes. The space is intended to be flexible for a variety of uses.

3. What is the floor to ceiling height of the performance spaces?

We are striving for 20 feet clear in the studio space. We still need to design the interior rigging, lighting, acoustics and A/V.

4. What is the plan for lighting / rigging in the space?

The future operator of the space will determine the media equipment made available to users for broadcast, creation, and instruction.

5. What will be held here or performances made?

The studio space may be used for smaller theatrical productions, dance performances, concerts, recitals, amplified music, rehearsals, lectures, readings, film screenings, guest speakers, meetings and special events. Programming will be determined by the operator.

6. Can musicians use this space?

Yes. The space is intended to be flexible for a variety of uses. The flexible theatre and studio space will have acoustical separation from other spaces to accommodate live and amplified music.

7. Can the space be divided into 2/3/or more to provide multiple rehearsal spaces? (Good rehearsal space is hard to come by)

Providing rooms of various sizes to accommodate multiple different users and purposes is an important aspect of the facility as a whole. The flexible theatre provides a large gathering space, while the gallery and classrooms provide smaller gathering spaces. The studio space is specifically sized to be a middle ground between the large and small gathering spaces.

8. What type of media equipment will be available for live-streaming, recording, podcasting, audience Q&A, etc.?

The future operator of the space will determine the media equipment made available to users for broadcast, creation, and instruction.

J. Questions about the gallery

1. Will there be a dedicated, secure gallery space for "professional" quality shows and events?

In response to feedback provided from various community members and groups, a dedicated, secure/lockable gallery space is now included in the concept plan. Revised plans will be posted to the [project website](#) after the 6/20/24 meeting. Specific security protocols will be established in consultation with the operator.

2. Is this intended to be a functional gallery with separate events from the performance space? Might be difficult with audience members waiting at box office.

Please see Sections II.J.1 and II.K.1.

3. Dimensions? Too small for community size?

The new gallery is about 1,300 square feet.

4. Can another wall be added to display more art and/or give more function to the space? It seems extra big for no reason.

The gallery has been redesigned in response to feedback provided from various community members and groups.

5. How will this contain 3-D art and people coming and going?

The gallery and lobby have been redesigned and there is now a separate gallery space.

6. How will art be kept safe from jostling? And theft?

The gallery and lobby have been redesigned and there is now a separate gallery space. The gallery space includes lockable doors.

7. I hear curved walls are expensive. How about an octagon?

As part of the redesign, neither the gallery nor lobby contain curved walls.

8. Will the gallery be "staffed" for security, etc.?

Security will be established in consultation with the operator. The new gallery space is now a separate room that is lockable.

9. What will be stored in the gallery equipment room? It appears rather small.

How the gallery equipment room is utilized will be up to the operator. The room is about 150 square feet.

10. After the show, where will the art be stored securely until the artists can come pick it up?

The operator will determine where art will be secured and stored.

K. Questions about the lobby

1. How will the box office line form and live in the space?

There is ample room in the upper lobby area to allow for queuing at the box office. In response to feedback from various community members and groups, we have added an additional box office desk by the garage entrance. Please refer to the revised plan that will be posted to the [project website](#) after the 6/20/24 meeting.

2. There needs to be a box office or annex by the garage entrance.

Please see Section II.K.1.

3. Will there be spaces/services for snacks/refreshments?

Yes, there is a concessions area in the lobby.

L. Questions about the classroom / studio / maker spaces (now the "flexible classroom" and "visual art classroom")

1. Will / can these classrooms support dance classes and rehearsals? (mirrors, flooring, live instrument, piano/drums).

Upon further study, it was determined that utilizing these classrooms as a rehearsal studio is not appropriate for the infrastructure offered by the classrooms. See Section I.

2. Will there be curtains to cover classrooms to allow closed rehearsals?

As the flexible classroom and the visual arts classroom are not meant to be used as rehearsal space, there will not be curtains.

3. Is there supply storage in the art rooms?

Yes.

4. Any consideration for equipment or dedicated storage?

There is dedicated storage attached to each classroom.

5. Are these rooms meant to be used for musical arts as well? The glass walls suggest a lack of soundproofing. It would be a shame if the only space for music groups to rehearse was the large performance space.

These spaces are not intended for musical rehearsal or performance.

6. "Maker space" tends to have a specific meaning- a place for renting / borrowing tools PLUS the space to work. Will these tools be available?

• **What will be made in these maker spaces and what resources / materials will be available?**

Upon further study, the term "maker space" is not appropriate for the infrastructure offered by the classrooms. The visual art classroom space will have ventilation for painting, a sink, and ample electricity. The visual art classroom will not be suitable for pottery, large sculpture, metal work, or woodworking. Which tools may or may not be included in the visual art classroom will be determined at a later date by the operator.

7. What resources will artists have available in the flexible studio spaces- tools, throwing wheels, etc.

The operator will determine the specific arts-discipline resources made available in WACC. For more specifics about intended arts-disciplines by space, see Section I.

8. If there will also be rehearsal spaces, how easy are the [classroom] tables to break down? Will there be mirrors/barres for dance classes?

Please see Section II.L.1.

M. Questions about the administration space

1. Will any of the spaces be open to be used by the community or co-work friendly?

Some of these spaces will be used as part of the art incubator program. Please see Section II.A.9.

2. Will there be options for shared work space for local artists who reside in Wheaton?

Please see Section II.M.1.

N. Questions related to the Arts and Entertainment District

1. The Arts & Entertainment District in Wheaton is established. How can artists become part of the conversation for affordable housing for artists, who live and work in Wheaton?

Those interested in these topics can reach out to County organizations engaged in this work including: the Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board, Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee, and the Department of Housing and Community Affairs.

2. What progress has been made in the creative placemaking goal of the 2016 planning document?

The Strategic Plan for the Wheaton Arts and Entertainment District 2016-2021 evaluated the challenges and opportunities in placemaking, arts, economic development, and marketing of the district, and identified several goals to preserve, strengthen and promote the arts in Wheaton. One of the goals was to “Strengthen arts infrastructure and build capacity to support the needs of the A&E District” – this facility is a key project to achieve that goal.

O. Questions about the interaction of the WACC and the residential project

1. How will the WACC and the housing interact?

These will be separate spaces owned and operated by separate entities. Other than a shared parking garage and some common maintenance items, the two spaces will not interact.

2. Will sound isolation / soundproofing be prioritized with the proximity to residential space? Sound produced in performance spaces could become problematic (especially at later hours).

- **How will you keep the noise from the residential away from the Arts Center?**

We have located the most sensitive performance areas under the residential courtyard, there will be a concrete slab between the two uses and potential other acoustical isolation in the ceilings.

3. Will the residents of the co-located housing project take over the use of the classroom(s)?

The residential project has its own amenity space, including telework space, space for classes and after school programs. The WACC will operate completely separate from the housing. Residents of the apartments would be required to lease space, pay for classes or pay for performances the same as other visitors to the facility.

P. Questions about site/location

1. Where will the WACC be located?

The WACC will be located at 11507 Georgia Avenue in Wheaton. The building will be co-located with an affordable housing development by Montgomery Housing Partnership (MHP). Please see the [project website](#) to learn more.

2. Why did the County decide to locate the cultural arts center at this location?

The County considered numerous sites for the WACC, including: Parking Lot District Lot 13 Remnant site; Wheaton HQ Retail space; Wheaton Gateway housing project; Westfield Wheaton Mall; Parking Lot District Lot 14; and Parking Lot District Lot 17. These sites were found unsuitable due to a variety of factors, including: too small to accommodate full facility program; lack of onsite parking; economic

infeasibility of providing underground parking; lack of frontage; operational and financial impacts of multiple floor construction; challenging site constraints; lack of interest from property owner; and located outside Arts and Entertainment District.

The current site offered numerous benefits, including:

- Allows for the full program to be accommodated
- Onsite parking garage with approximately 100 dedicated spaces
- Within Wheaton Arts and Entertainment District
- 0.5 mile walk from Wheaton metro station
- Accessible by WMATA and Ride On bus stops
- 0.3 miles south Wheaton Library & Recreation Center
- Co-location with affordable housing project
- Will complement the future public park across Elkin Street
- Great visibility along Georgia Avenue
- Allows for an off-street loading dock

3. Will there be opportunities for public art?

Yes, it is our intent to include public art at both entrances on the building. We are not sure exactly what this will be or look like yet; the renderings are illustrative. These may be murals or some other form of visual art at the entrances. There may also be opportunities for sculpture(s) outside. Within the building, any wall is an opportunity. We will work with arts groups as appropriate on public art opportunities.

4. Will there be parking? How will parking be distributed between residential units and center?

- **Need adequate parking for those who cannot walk to take buses.**
- **How far will people need to walk from the parking garage to the WACC entrance?**

There will be a shared garage between the two residential apartment buildings and WACC. At least 100 dedicated spaces including accessible spaces will be solely for WACC use. The exact number will be finalized during design. Parking for WACC will be secured and separated from the residential parking.

MHP is considering office space in the second building of their development. Should the office use move forward, we have spoken with MHP to use the office parking spaces, currently estimated to be about 50, during nights and weekends (off peak office hours would be peak WACC hours). There is a WACC entrance directly from the garage.

5. Will a 100-car parking garage be enough? Can't it be larger?

The garage includes more than 100 parking spaces total, as it includes the parking for the multifamily residences and the WACC. Within that shared garage, 100 spaces will be dedicated exclusively for the use of the WACC. See Section II.P.4. One of the reasons this site was so attractive was its close proximity to Metro and its location on Georgia Avenue which has several bus lines. There is also a bikeshare at the adjacent apartment building, the AVA. Therefore, we believe that 100 parking spaces is sufficient.

6. How will car drop off work?

There is a drop-off lay-by on the private street, off of Georgia Avenue. The entrance to the garage is just past the lay-by so drivers may easily park, if necessary, after dropping off a passenger.

7. How will bus/school bus drop off/pick up work? Will there be parking for school buses?
Like any more urbanized site, a bus would drop off and return to pick up passengers.

8. Landscape is also part of art and culture. Downtown Wheaton has a deficit of plants and landscaping.

Landscaping will be part of the larger project with MHP.

9. Will there be adequate walking and passing distance for two wheelchairs to pass on the sidewalk?

The current plan includes a 16-foot-wide sidewalk with an eight-foot buffer at Georgia Avenue.

10. Will there be dining within the sidewalk area?

There are no dining tables within the sidewalk area.

11. Will there be a physical boundary between the northern edge of the new development and the Leesborough neighborhood?

This is a design element outside of WACC. However, it is a condition of MHP's entitlements for the larger project that there be a pedestrian connection from the MHP property to the border of the Leesborough property.

12. Proximate transportation? How far is it to walk from public transportation to the WACC?

The current site is approximately a half mile walk from the Wheaton Metro station. Numerous WMATA and Ride-On buses serve the area. There is also a bike share at Blueridge Avenue and Elkin Street.

13. Where is the playground for families?

Residents of the multifamily building will have a playground in their courtyard above the WACC. Additionally, as part of the larger MHP project, MHP will be swapping property with Montgomery Parks who will construct a park on the east side of Elkin Street.

14. There is odd access from the "private road"- why not have the entrance / lobby facing more "open" / green space where we can also gather outside and display art / public art / change out / sculpture displace etc.?

The access to WACC is a result of many design and site considerations of the larger overall project. A vehicular through connection from Georgia Avenue to Elkin Road was required by the Planning Department. In addition, Georgia Avenue is a State road and a drop-off would not be allowed by the State Highway Administration. These factors, in conjunction with the steep slopes of the site, dictated the drop-off in its current location. There is a plaza area off of Georgia Avenue in front of the building where there is another entrance to the WACC that can act as a gathering place.

Q. Questions about the co-located housing project

Note: We have answered some high-level questions about the MHP residential project here. Further questions about the housing project should be directed to MHP: John Poyer, Senior Project Manager, jpoyer@mhpartners.org, 301.812.4116.

1. Will artist housing be provided?

- **Will the owners actively encourage artists to live as well as create there?**
- **What is the plan to have artists first on the list for housing?**
- **Why can't the county / operator agree for a certain percent of the housing to be saved for working artists?**
- **What is the plan to have artists first on the list for housing?**
- **How will it actually supporting living artists who need live-work-gathering spaces?**

Units will have range of affordability, thus making them attractive to artists. However, the funding for the multifamily project prohibits giving any specific group priority. There can be outreach to artist groups, but MHP can't give artists or any one group priority over anyone else. All units will be leased first come, first served to those who income qualify.

2. What does affordable units mean?

- **What is the definition of affordable?**

MHP will need to determine the affordability levels for the housing. At this time, the exact rents for the multifamily units are not set, but it is anticipated that there will be a range of affordability. While all units are intended to be deeply affordable, a certain percentage will be Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs). The anticipated sales price for the townhomes has not yet been determined.

3. Where are the kids going to go to school? All neighborhood schools are already at capacity.

- **What is the impact on schools?**

The WACC itself is a commercial project and will not contribute to school enrollment. For information on the impact of the housing project on local schools, please contact MHP.

4. How will the housing project be funded?

MHP is responsible for the housing project. They have informed us it will be financed through a variety of sources including but not limited to Low Income Housing Tax Credits, standard long-term mortgages, tax exempt bond financing, and various subordinate loans provided by the State and local governments.