

**NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

Historic and cultural resources play an important role in defining the quality of life and unique character and identity of a community. These resources present opportunities for residents and visitors to learn about and appreciate its heritage, while stimulating economic vitality and tourism.

The intent of the Cultural Resources Element is to facilitate and encourage the identification and protection of significant historic and archaeological resources, promote and enhance the cultural institutions, programs, and events that shape the Rock Hill community. As the City's population grows and new residents bring their own culture to the area, Rock Hill must exercise responsible stewardship of its cultural resources to ensure that existing and future residents are aware of these resources and understand their value to the community.

**Quality of Life & Community Identity**

Rock Hill should continue its efforts to preserve historic buildings and sites and seek to implement the recommendations of the 2004 Historic Resources Survey Update for National Register Historic District boundary adjustments and new designations, National Register listing for individual properties, local register designations, and future survey priorities. The City should protect properties and established neighborhoods that may potentially become historic, particularly when there is existing or potential demolition and redevelopment pressure, by encouraging the establishment of individual Neighborhood Conservation Overlay Districts. It should strive to ensure compatibility of new buildings and subdivisions adjacent to existing historic buildings and sites and seek ways to work with York County on protecting potentially historic sites outside the corporate limits. Community pride should be instilled through community enforced property maintenance, façade improvements, and neighborhood improvements such as lighting, signage, and markers that identify historic areas.

**The Economic Conditions Element emphasizes the need to revitalize targeted areas (such as gateway corridors, the Textile Corridor and Downtown) through adaptive reuse of historic structures and sites.**

The arts community should expand programming and facilities for public arts, visual arts, performing arts and other arts' activities to capture a wider audience that reflects the City's diverse population. Efforts should be made to attract groups with typically low participation according to age, race, or social groups. Furthermore, greater emphasis should be placed on attracting international events and business that bring a variety of cultural opportunities to the area.

**Recreational and cultural facilities and programs should be enhanced to better represent the City's diverse population and promote community identity. The Population, Community Facilities, Natural Resources, Economic Conditions, and Priority Investment Elements also identify this growing need.**

The City and its partnering cultural organizations should promote and integrate Rock Hill's vibrant cultural environment as part of tourism and economic development programs. As Rock Hill struggles to revitalize and bring economic stability to its downtown, the community should focus on promoting the downtown as a cultural destination by building on the success of its current arts and cultural programming. Currently, plans are being developed by various arts and cultural organizations to establish new downtown cultural facilities, including a performing arts center, children's museum and an umbrella/farmer's market. There are also identified needs to expand the library and establish museum space in the downtown. In addition, downtown cultural destinations should be linked through a series of specialized "tours" which feature downtown historic buildings, landmarks and gardens. Land uses that support cultural activities, including residential and mixed uses, should be encouraged in and around downtown to create a more vibrant activity center.

## VI. Cultural Resources Element

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### Partnerships & Intergovernmental Coordination

Many historic and cultural resources exist in Rock Hill; however, programs and events are administered through a variety of independently operated agencies and organizations. These are often scheduled with little consideration to other planned local or regional programs and events. To more effectively promote community interest in cultural affairs, a more systematic approach is needed to ensure greater collaboration and coordination among arts, historical, and cultural agencies and organizations. Agencies should seek to cross promote the events and programs of other institutions while planning their own events to compliment scheduled cultural activities and maximize turn-out.

Improving arts and cultural programs will require additional fiscal resources. One part of the solution is partnerships with the private sector and civic organizations. The City should continue to support the efforts of the many arts, historical, and cultural organizations that promote awareness of cultural resources in Rock Hill through partnerships and funding opportunities.

Another key issue is the need for intergovernmental coordination. The City must work closely with the South Carolina Department of Archives and History and the York County Cultural and Heritage Museums to preserve and showcase Rock Hill's historic and archaeological resources. There are also opportunities for Rock Hill to work closely with York County, Fort Mill, the Catawba Indian Nation, and other adjacent municipalities on mutually beneficial efforts to protect historic and archeological resources as well as support cultural events and programs.

### Education & Public Awareness

Public education regarding Rock Hill's distinctive heritage and different cultural resources should be encouraged. These efforts should be complemented by a wide range of programs, festivals and events that celebrate the City's multi-culturalism.

Information about historic preservation including the process, requirements, and advantages of historic designation should be more readily available through brochures, workshops, and other proactive methods. Property owners should be made aware of the benefits and tax incentives available at the local, state, and national level for the preservation and rehabilitation of historic buildings to encourage historic designation and protection of these irreplaceable assets.

The arts must continue to play a key role in the community, particularly as an integral part of student education through all levels of institutional learning. Public and private schools as well as higher education institutions within the City have established programs that emphasize the importance of music, art, and theater. Many of these performances are enjoyed by students, faculty, residents, and visitors of Rock Hill. The City should continue to support and seek to enhance educational programming designed for the arts and cultural enrichment of its youth.

Rock Hill, in collaboration with local and regional arts and cultural organizations, must find more innovative ways to reach the community about cultural programs and events. As more and more people are turning to non-traditional sources for news and information, a more comprehensive marketing strategy will need to be developed that utilizes modern techniques to promote cultural awareness and distinguish Rock Hill as a center for events, festivals and historical interest. The internet, special interest tours and other technological advancements should be utilized to promote public awareness and education on cultural resources. Printed information must also be readily available such as brochures at strategically located kiosks in public places and marketing materials in multiple languages.

**By following the 2020 Priority Policy Directions identified in the Vision 2020 Plan Summary, Rock Hill can better address cultural needs now and into the future.**

**These include:**

- *Focus on Redevelopment and Infill*
- *Achieve Sustainability*
- *Plan for Dave Lyle Corridor East*
- *Enhance Mobility and Connectivity*
- *Promote Redevelopment and Infill Development Along Key Corridors*
- *Create Livable Places*
- *Leverage Resources through Partnerships and Coordination*