



**ART & ENTERTAINMENT FACILITIES ASSESSMENT
FOR DOWNTOWN BURLINGTON, VT**

BCA
BURLINGTONCITYARTS

Prepared by Burlington City Arts, 2011

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INTRODUCTION

This report highlights the findings and needs of the Arts and Cultural Facilities Inventory conducted by Burlington City Arts in the fall of 2011. The inventory focuses on facilities located in the downtown core of Burlington. Because the arts and cultural community exhibits partnerships that expand the impact of the downtown/waterfront area, a few farther reaching entities are discussed. Also included is a summation of other facilities and sites that act as venues for cultural events and activities among other purposes within the City. The inventory for each facility includes:

- Description of the facility's mission and activities
- Square footage
- Capacity
- Typical Uses
- Location on map

Prior to this inventory, the last comprehensive report was completed in 1992 by the Golden Associates. The Golden report is cited frequently throughout this report and is helpful in noting the advancements and continued concerns of the past two decades.

INVENTORY

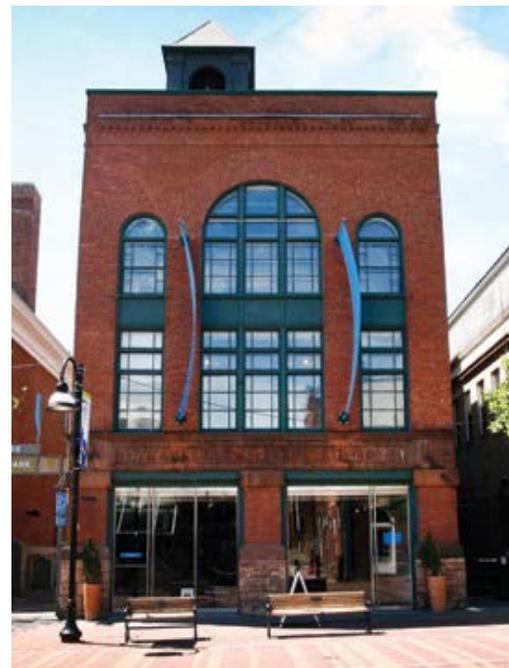
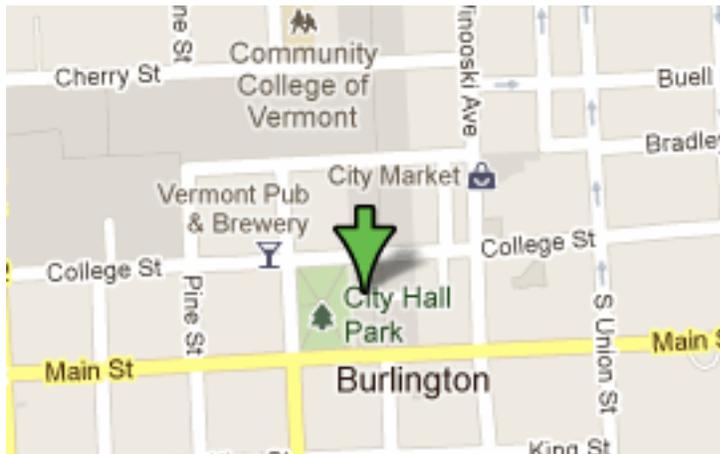
VISUAL ARTS SUMMARY

In the 1992 Golden report, facilities for exhibition of visual arts were rated as “zero to poor.” Ironically, at that time, there were even more commercial galleries in Burlington than there are today. The report highlighted the need for a community-centered gallery—“a creative home base that symbolizes the creative energy of the community, and to which community talent has regular access.” Since the Golden report came out, BCA garnered control and renovated the old Ethan Allen Firehouse into a 5 floor arts center, opened a print studio in Memorial Auditorium’s annex, and took on a fully equipped clay studio when Frog Hollow dissolved its education program in 2003. BCA also started an art sales and leasing program, which places artists’ work in high visibility locations such as the Burlington International Airport and Fletcher Allen Healthcare. Throughout this period, private galleries have sprung up and disappeared. We will mention a few gallery spaces that have opened since October of 2011 but they are too new to include in the inventory. The Scarlet Gallery on Bank Street represents the owner’s work and a few out of state artists, and The Mark Boedges Fine Art on Battery St. represents only the proprietor’s work. The 215 College Gallery, which prevailed for five years as an artist collective, disbanded in 2011, and a new artist collective called Firefly Collective appeared at 200 Main Street soon after, which seems to function as a combined studio space/gallery. Coffee shops, restaurants and stores also provide much needed exhibition opportunities, but these multi-use spaces can compromise the viewing experience and are almost always passive sales spaces without full-time representation of the artwork. These types of opportunities cannot be the only options for exhibition available to professional artists or we will continue to lose talent. Thus, in spite of the advancements in visual arts since 1992, there is still a great need for more professional, commercial spaces that will help provide sales and visibility for local artists’ work in the downtown core; however, the market for art sales in Vermont must be transformed as well, through a tourism and marketing effort for a traditional commercial gallery to succeed in Burlington.

BCA—BCA Center and Memorial Auditorium

The BCA Center features two floors of Contemporary art exhibition, an artist-in-residence studio on the fourth floor, a traditional darkroom and a media lab in the lower level, and numerous contemporary events throughout the year including music, film and performance. It houses classes in fine arts, photography and digital media to the general public and also provides rental space for small events and business meetings, and has a 10 foot media screen and projection equipment on the second floor. Several local colleges, including CCV, Saint Michael's, Champlain and Burlington College, take advantage of BCA's facilities to extend their own fine art offerings. The BCA Center facility has a historic preservation easement on the exterior of the building and on several internal elements, which requires annual attention. The satellite space at Memorial Auditorium offers classes in clay and print. The Clay studio is equipped with 12 electric wheels and 3 electric kilns and the Print studio has a Takach etching press, a letter press, and a clunky screen printing set up (the future location of screen printing is in question because the classes are popular but the process conflicts with other printing techniques). Future plans include an expansion of classroom space, upgrading ventilation and electrical problems in Memorial Auditorium classrooms, and opening a new gallery focused on selling art for local artists.

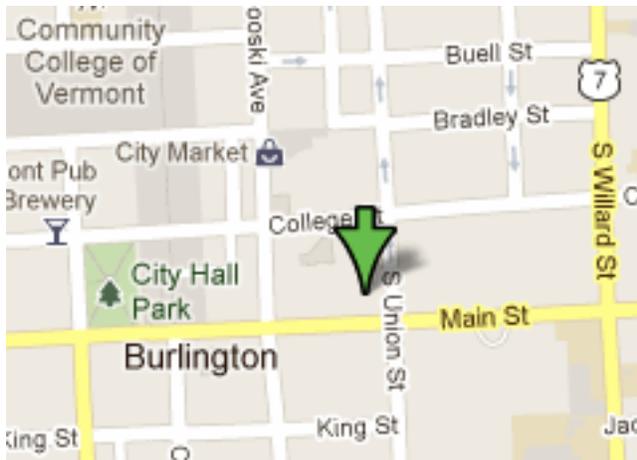
BCA Center. 135 Church St.



Specific space	Type of Space	Square Footage	Capacity	Typical Uses
Gallery	Gallery	1700	140 (+100 in plaza)	exhibition openings, student visits
Roth room	Open room	623	69	city and external events

LBG room	Open room	822	105	city and external events, presentations
Metz Family Room	resource room, offices	623	29	offices and library
3rd floor classroom	classroom	740	34	art classes
Darkroom classroom	classroom	600	15	photography classes
Digital Lab	classroom	822	32	digital classes
4th Floor artist in residence	studio	620	29	

Memorial Annex. 250 Main St.



Specific space	Type of Space	Square Footage	Capacity	Typical Uses
Clay and Craft Studio	Classroom and technical facility	2088	100	Classes, kiln firings, use of equipment
Print Studio	Classroom and etching press	840	15	Classes, artist rentals

Amy Tarrant Gallery. 153 Main Street.

The Amy E. Tarrant Gallery is referred to by the organization as an extension of the Flynn Lobby. It was originally conceived as a space that would show work related to the curated Main Stage events, but it has evolved to show work by well-established Vermont artists in all subjects. The gallery is a well-lit space in a prominent Main Street location and often serves as an events space in advance of performances. Its drawback for artists is that it is not open to the public for very many hours during the week so sales opportunities are curbed. It has a great deal of future potential as a full time gallery, perhaps in partnership with another organization.



Specific space	Type of Space	Square Footage	Capacity	Typical Uses
Amy Tarrant Gallery	Art Gallery	1046	57	Gallery, meeting space

Metropolitan Gallery. 149 Church St.

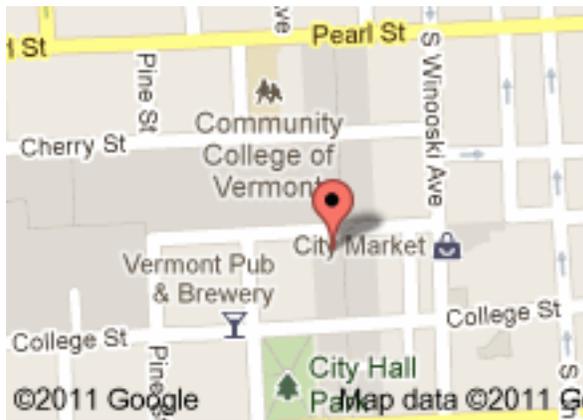
The Metropolitan Gallery is programmed with community artists' and youth work by BCA's Art Sales and Leasing program. The space receives a great deal of pass-through visitors, but it has terrible lighting for viewing artwork, and the plaster walls make hanging a technical difficulty. BCA has investigated upgrading the lighting, but this would need to be addressed as part of a larger upgrade of City Hall's entire electrical system, which is still original on the second and third floors. If the lighting upgrades were accomplished, the space could be a wonderful full time addition to the local visual art scene with BCA as a management team.



Specific space	Type of Space	Square Footage	Capacity	Typical Uses
Metropolitan Gallery	Lobby	1050	60	Gallery, lobby for performances, meetings, and the Clerk Treasurer's office

Frog Hollow Vermont State Craft Center. 85 Church St.

Over the last 15 years, Frog Hollow has morphed from an organization with gallery stores and hands-on educational centers throughout Vermont to a single gallery in Burlington. Today, Frog Hollow exhibits a unique collection of fine traditional and contemporary Vermont arts and crafts. Their gallery on the Church Street Marketplace features the work of over 200 juried Vermont artisans and offers many artist demonstrations and workshops in the space. Under recent management, the marketplace location has flourished and is one of the longest running galleries in Burlington. Frog Hollow and is establishing programs to begin working with schools across the state to aid in keeping arts programming in their curriculum and is interested in pursuing hands-on educational programming in the near future, most likely through partnerships with existing organizations.



Specific space	Type of Space	Square Footage	Capacity	Typical Uses
	Commercial Gallery	2400	200	Commercial sales of artist and artisan work, book signings, demonstrations exhibitions and small events

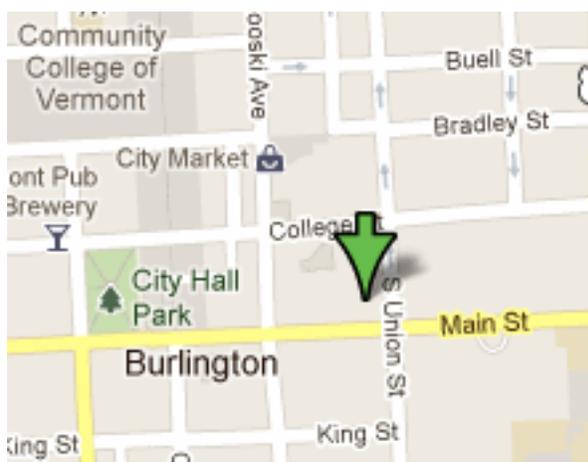
PERFORMING ARTS SUMMARY

Burlington has long been known as a music town—since 1984, the Discover Jazz Festival programs every available space in town with local and international talent for 10 days in June; many local bands have developed and flourished here, including the now legendary band Phish. There is no shortage of venues for the emerging musician to develop a following in the private club world. But there is really only one venue in the downtown that is community and artist-centered and presents the gamut of the performing arts: the Flynn Center for the Performing Arts. Since the Goldman study, one major addition to the performing arts facility landscape is the Main Street Landing Company Performing Arts Center at Lake and College, which offers a state-of-the-art film theatre, a black box theatre, and a gallery space in the midst of an expanse of businesses and office spaces. It is not programmed by the management, however, and is still an underused resource among the artist community. With a programming entity behind the space, the facility could add much more value to the cultural offerings of the City and enhance the activity on the waterfront. In recent town meetings BCA held with artists, the theater community continues to want more accessible and affordable rehearsal space. Lyric Theatre has sought to purchase a warehouse style space in Burlington to house its whole operation, and while it has the financial resources, there is no space for sale that meets their needs. It is likely they will seek space outside of Burlington. While Memorial Auditorium continues to limp along as a run down and depressing venue, it is surprising how much community activity actually takes place there, and if changes to its use occur, serious thought should be given to relocating the existing activities.

There is a clear need for a 400-600 seat venue to support more local and listening room style talent. The Golden study cited cabaret club settings as the dream for artists needs but suggested that these types of venues belonged in the private sector. Today, the need for this type of space still exists, and without it, much like gallery space in visual arts, talent will continue to disappear. Performing arts are an expensive business that requires a lot of space. To add impact to the performing arts, there needs to be much more collaboration and partnership between facilities and their management, and a centralization of the festival structure to enhance efficiency for all.

Memorial Auditorium. 250 Main St.

Memorial Auditorium is city owned and the largest public assembly facility in downtown Burlington. It has suffered from years of deferred maintenance and the cost of repairs increases exponentially by day. Built in 1928 to house the Vermont Symphony Orchestra, the facility currently needs about \$4 million of capital improvements simply to be brought up to code. Memorial Auditorium and its future uses have been discussed by numerous combinations of business, city and citizen groups over the last 20 years. In this time period there have been two citizen task forces that made recommendations to the city as well as an independent assessment done by the Golden Associates in 1992. Each administration has chosen to invest only in immediate and compelling needs. Three administrations have deferred the ultimate decision of whether this facility should remain a city facility and be repurposed and renovated or sold to the private sector. The Golden report states that “despite its many technical and aesthetic deficiencies, it is a major venue for Burlington that serves a number of important and useful functions and should be improved and not replaced”. Activities in the building are numerous, particularly by smaller community groups, such as African dance and drum groups, Parks and Rec’s youth camps and teen center 242 Main, BCA’s art classes, and on events like First Night, every square inch of the building is used. Concerts are fewer and farther between due to the perceived issues with mixing sound in the concert hall and the dismal state of bathrooms and dressing rooms. It is not a preferred venue by artists or promoters and has in recent years become better known for large events like boxing and housing the Vermont Frost Heaves basketball team rather than cultural events. Many users feel that the space should be substantially modernized and then the quality and quantity of performing arts events would bring many more people to Burlington. BCA and Parks and Rec have dipped into the prospect of partnering on expanding the cultural offerings of Memorial with minimal capital costs that would include expanding arts education space and a flexible performing arts space. However, the recent addition of similar performing arts space in the private sector makes the concept of performing arts space in Memorial a difficult sell in the current political and economic environment. One thing is for sure: it would be difficult to find space for cultural purposes at the scale Memorial Auditorium offers anywhere else in the downtown core. Memorial’s future ultimately rests with larger decisions around development of the entire “super block,” which must be taken on and supported by the City as a whole, not by individual departments.



Specific space	Type of Space	Square Footage	Capacity	Typical Uses
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Annex and auditorium	Auditorium, gym	20000; stage 23x22; floor 96x32; annex 5700; loft (dance space 1350)	2500 standing, 2240 seated	concerts, sporting events, farmers' markets, etc.
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Flynn Center for the Performing Arts. 153 Main Street.

Since the Golden study, the Flynn has advanced *dramatically* in both facility and programming issues. It is the cultural underpinning of the downtown, along with BCA. The mission of the Flynn Center for the Performing Arts is to foster the enjoyment, understanding, and development of the performing arts in Vermont and the region. Their goals are to:

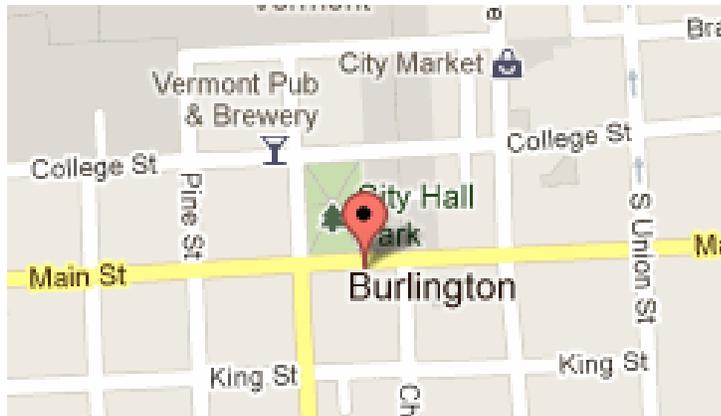
- Develop, maintain, and manage the historic Flynn Theatre and Flynn Center properties to meet current and evolving performing arts needs in the region
- Present a diverse range of high quality performances by established and emerging artists that expand and enrich the community's cultural experiences
- Provide educational programs that engage children, teens, and adults in the artistic process; cultivate appreciation of the performing arts; and make the performing arts an integral part of school and community life
- Support local, national, and international artists in the development and presentation of their work

Today, close to 200,000 people annually attend performances on the Flynn MainStage and in FlynnSpace. An average of 45,000 young people attend more than 30 performances in the Flynn Student Matinee Series each year. Students and teachers benefit from greatly expanded in-class workshops provided by Flynn teaching artists, and the Flynn is a strategic partner in the new Integrated Arts Academy at Burlington's Wheeler School. Thousands more people discover their creative selves in FlynnArts classes and summer camps offered year-round in the Flynn studios and diverse community settings. The Flynn Center also continues to nourish the creative spirit in international, national, and regional artists, hosting residencies, commissioning new work, and providing rehearsal and performance space for the development of new projects. It also produces the Discover Jazz Festival in association with BCA.

Current plans for improvements and upgrades include the replacement of the seats that were originally bought in 1946. This will happen in the summer of 2012, and they will add ten more accessibility stations in the main hall to comply with ADA standards. Railings will also be installed on both aisles. The acoustics are being upgraded in the theater and they will recalibrate the hall to create a warmer sound. The lobby is also being upgraded with new architectural lighting and highlighting of the art deco details. They will add outside lighting above the marquee. The cost will be \$2m over 2 years. Recently they completed the enclosure of the loading dock. This will increase energy efficiency and ensure crew safety.

The Flynn's 1-5 year plan looks at the whole map of their campus (including storage, bathrooms etc) and envisioning the most efficient use of all space. This includes addressing the fact that the bathrooms are currently downstairs. They may open up the ticketing operation into the gallery and create more of a café environment.

The current (and first new in 30 years) Executive Director, John Killacky's fantasy is to co-develop a 500-seat hall with the university and colleges and/or the city, which would enable a jazz cabaret, a dinner club/bar and a more formal theatre. They have done a good job reaching new demographics in Burlington, but he feels that 30/40 year olds have been left out of the mix and Flynn programming must do more to reach out to them. In general, Killacky says, "We have to share our space more and we are."



Specific space	Type of Space	Square Footage	Capacity	Typical Uses
Main Stage	Theater	40,250 including lobby	1453 seats; 1481 at full	plays, dance performances, musical performances
FlynnSpace	Cabaret space	5692	250	music performances, smaller cabaret style performances
Hoehl & Chase Studios	Dance studios	1,050; 1,000	100 people in each studio	dance practices

Contois Auditorium. 149 Church St.

Contois Auditorium was referred to by the Golden study as a “better than nothing facility for performances, art exhibits and cultural gatherings.” Since that study, little has changed about the facility to change this assessment, in spite of a major renovation of the basement of City Hall in 2001. There is no green room, there is only a small back stage area, and no technical systems for performance; everything must be rented and hauled in through a small side alley door and dragged up a flight of stairs to the stage. Further, the alley is only accessible to cars for load in between the hours of 7am and 10:30am, making it a less than desirable space for most productions. Like the Flynn, Contois has a facility restoration fee associated with ticket sales, but this is not adequate to make significant improvements. Also, since the space was recently added to the union contract, it is used much less frequently by ticketed events, further reducing income from restoration fees. Contois is still used extensively during the occasional community arts festivals, such as Discover Jazz, First Night and Festival of Fools. It can be transformed into a suitable space for intimate performances with plenty of time invested. The space is now managed by the Parks and Rec department instead of the arts department, as the majority of uses are civic rather than cultural. BCA programs the lobby with local artwork (see visual arts).



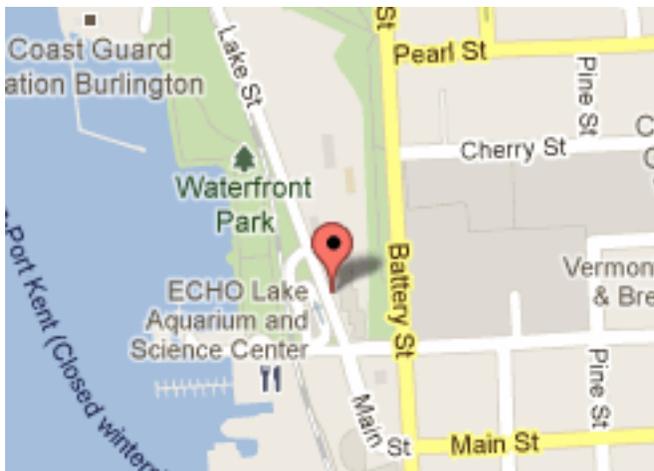
Specific space	Type of Space	Square Footage	Capacity	Typical Uses
	Auditorium and stage	2,530 auditorium plus 780 stage	332	concerts, public meetings, dance workshops, forums, film screenings

Main Street Landing Company. 60 Lake St.

The Main Street Landing Company supports the visual and performing arts, provides incubator space for local start-up businesses, nurtures social responsibility, and makes decisions based on ecological integrity, economic security, individual empowerment, and social well-being. Main Street Landing has completed over 250,000 square feet of new and renovated space on Burlington’s waterfront. The development projects include commercial, residential, and cultural uses at 102 Lake Street, Union Station, CornerStone Building, Wing Building, Lake & College Building, and the Train Station.

Main Street Landing created a performing arts center that includes daily rental of the Great Room, Atrium, Black Box, Film House, Lake Lobby, Board Room, The Gallery, and the Train Station. Public space is approximately 33% of all square footage. These spaces allow people to experience the building without having to be a tenant. Thousands use these spaces for meetings, events, film showings, fundraisers, private parties, drama and performances, talent shows, etc. It is very popular and the prices are reduced for non-profits and performances. The building is LEED certified, professionally designed, and technically well-equipped.

The focus for the company in the next 1-5 years is to increase the usage of the many public facilities. Currently, Melinda Moulton, the building co-developer, estimates that they are at about 25% capacity. She has hired a facility manager in an attempt to increase capacity to 60-65% over the next three years. Over the last 18 months they have upgraded the sound system in the black box, put in new lighting instruments and implemented a new computer system. There is a recommendation to upgrade the projector in the film hall.



Specific space	Type of Space	Square Footage	Capacity	Typical Uses
Film house		2484	220	
Black box		stage is 800	130	

Train station		7000	200	
Great room		1064	60 sitting, 80 standing	
Board room		784	30-45	
Lake lobby		2184	150-200	
Atrium		1064	60-80 or 130 if Great Room is included	corporate and nonprofit events, performing arts, conferences

OTHER CULTURAL FACILITIES SUMMARY

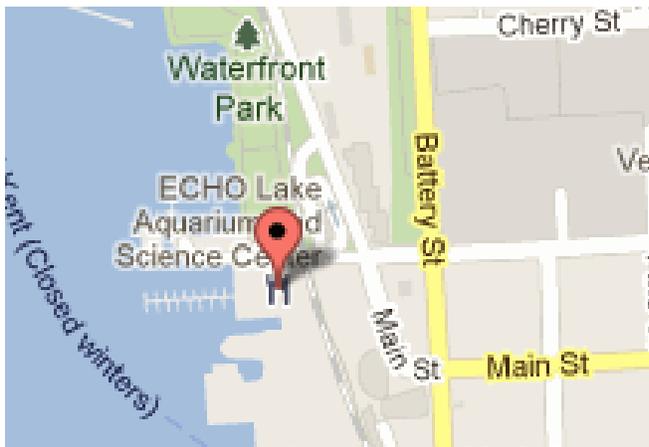
The quality and upkeep of museums, libraries and parks are all essential components of the cultural success of a city. Burlington has a wonderful assortment of these types of facilities for a small city, though more would only add needed depth to its current composition, particularly in key places. The Moran Plant development will be a welcome anchor to the Northern end of Waterfront Park, which currently just comes to a destinationless end. (The Community Sailing Center, which may be a tenant in the new development, is currently functioning out of the existing building with a very devoted following. Until more is confirmed about the building's future, we are leaving the Sailing Center out of this inventory.) At one point there was a serious effort to establish a Children's Museum within the Moran Plant redevelopment or in another downtown location. No further progress on this had been reported; however there is a great deal of advocacy for children's play space to be included in all future development plans, particularly outdoor spaces.

ECHO Center

ECHO Lake Aquarium and Science Center is a 28,500 square foot, award-winning LEED facility. Founded in 2003, ECHO welcomes more than 150,000 visitors annually with interactive exhibits and science education programs that include over 70 species of fish, amphibians, invertebrates, and reptiles; and more than 100 interactive experiences. ECHO is part of the Leahy Center for Lake Champlain — a 2.2 acre environmental campus on the Burlington Waterfront — which is home to a consortium of organizations working for public and academic engagement in science, environmental education, research, and cultural history.

The facility is unique to the area and right on the lake. Its mission is a good fit with its location. The center serves a broad audience, though it is often thought of as a children’s facility because it serves that demographic so well.

The current expansion includes increased media technology, more conference space, moveable walls and additional permanent outdoor exhibits that present working wind turbines, solar technology and a geothermal cooling system that would use lake water.



Specific space	Type of Space	Square Footage	Capacity	Typical Uses
	Science center	28500	750 standing	Aquarium and science center, photo exhibitions, permanent public art, special events, rental for events

Church St. Marketplace

The Church Street Marketplace is host to approximately 20 major events per year, many of them cultural events. It is a lively pedestrian mall, full of restaurants, coffee shops, clothing boutiques and vending carts. Musicians busk on the street year round, and it can be entertainment in itself just to sit on the bench and watch the bustle in nice weather. Given the number of events that occur, there is sometimes tension between events and store owners, who feel they hinder business, while restaurant owners do very well during events. Marketplace staff oversees day to day operations of the Marketplace including Administration, Marketing, Security (in coordination with Burlington Police Department), Maintenance and Capital Improvements. The Church Street Marketplace organization is a City Department but by charter must remain self-funded. While events are an important part of the fabric of Marketplace success, the overhead costs to manage them continues to rise—safety and security provided by Burlington Police Department and Fire Department is the bulk of this cost, but their presence is extremely important when thousands of people descend on the short 4 blocks. The organization takes on NO NEW EVENTS unless they are funded, or funding can be secured that is sustainable. The operations budget for the marketplace is not set up to fund capital projects and it cannot use tax dollars, so has relied extensively on federal grants to make upgrades possible. New LED street lighting will be the next upgrade, and improvements made to the top block, including new fountains.



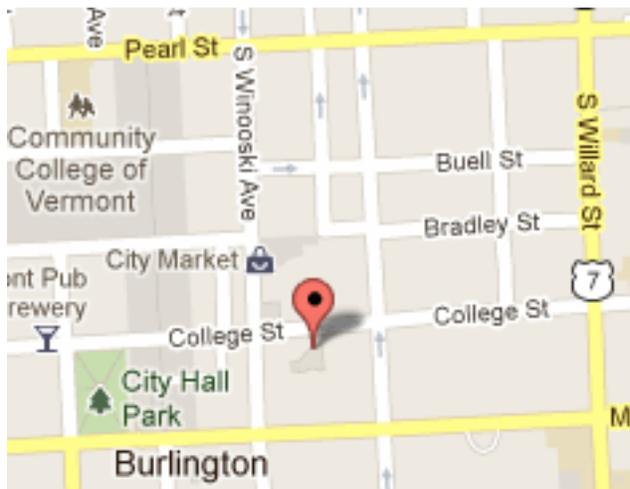
Specific space	Type of Space	Square Footage	Capacity	Typical Uses
	Pedestrian market	60 feet from building to building; 150,000 sq ft. from Main to Pearl	approximately 20,000 but only during Mardi Gras parade and this no longer occurs on Church St.	shopping, restaurants, parades, rallies, marches, festivals, sidewalk sales, street performers

Fletcher Free Library

Fletcher Free Library is the largest public library in the state, and functions as far more than just a library for the city. Of all the public buildings in Burlington, it is probably the most welcoming-- anyone from a homeless person to the Governor is likely to come in and the clientele is extremely diverse. In addition to checking out materials, people come in to get out of the cold, to use the computer center, to do research, hear lectures, see art exhibits, etc. The library offers literacy services and computer skills training to all people, with special attention to New Americans. Outreach services are available for the elderly and disabled who normally wouldn't be able to come.

The original building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in May of 1974. In 1978, Burlington voters approved a 2.4 million-dollar bond issue to build an addition which opened in 1981. Most of the building is still over 100 years old and maintenance is a continuous issue. While they are already the largest utilizer of LED lighting among the City Departments, Fletcher Free needs energy efficiency upgrades. The heating and cooling system needs to be constantly monitored and needs improving. The outreach van is rapidly aging and also needs continuous maintenance.

In this information age, technology has become a significant issue for any organization that wants to remain relevant with people "on the go", and even more so for a library. The Fletcher Free already has significant staffing challenges and relies heavily on its 70 plus volunteers. They need consistent, dedicated staff for communication improvements, in addition to the costly upgrade of technology hardware and software.



Specific space	Type of Space	Square Footage	Capacity	Typical Uses
	Library	44,000	5,000 patrons a week; meeting rooms are 80;70;45	public library, art exhibits, workshops, musical performances, lectures, literacy and computer workshops, outreach services

Parks

The Parks and Recreation Department has completed a full facilities assessment of each of the following venues, but here we will re-emphasize the uses and needs of downtown parks from a cultural perspective.

Battery Park is used all summer long by many community performers and home to the 30 year old free concert series produced by BCA. Noise restrictions in the neighborhood limit the types of bands that can play in this space, as does the electrical output of the bandshell. The bandshell should be rebuilt or at the very least upgraded with additional power, lights and bathrooms. If the bathrooms cannot be replaced they should be removed and portalets should be brought in for every event.



Waterfront Park is used for many high profile events, but is also under an act 250 restriction which does not allow events to occur on more than 3 consecutive weekends. The waterfront makes a wonderful and sought after location for events in the summer, but does not have adequate power in appropriate places and most events with sound-needs require a generator and an electrician on site. The electrical infrastructure is ugly and its design should be rethought so as not to detract from the natural beauty of the site. Access to the event location for technical and vending vehicles is also a problem, but this should be solved by the Waterfront North project that is underway.



City Hall Park is the smallest of the downtown parks but probably the most challenged by its heavy use. It is beloved for the Farmer's and Artist Markets that take place there every Saturday from May to October, but the vending and the crowds take an enormous toll on the turf and much of the infrastructure is worn down. Sporadic festivals use the southern end of the park for performances, which works well, but electrical boxes could also use an upgrade and a beauty make-over. The park suffers from a public perception that it is unsafe unless there are events going on that bring in more people to "self-monitor." A number of these issues, from infrastructure to programming, are currently being addressed in a new NEA funded masterplan that will be based on community engagement activities and surveys administered by BCA. Capital improvements and sustainability will be a challenge. There has been a suggestion by many business owners that the City Hall Park district be merged with the Church Street Marketplace district to fund future maintenance should infrastructure be completed.



SURROUNDING THE DOWNTOWN

While the downtown is the cultural core of the City, there is a plethora of creative activity and incubation that occurs in venues just on the outskirts of the downtown margins that all affect how we perceive our cultural landscape and the choices we will make in the future.

The South End area is honeycombed with artist's studios and incubator businesses, many of whom operate in near obscurity. Efforts by SEABA, the SPACE Gallery and others have shone a beacon on the highly talented, arts/industrial mix that seeks new audiences and customers.

Complementing the downtown and South End is the North End Studios comprised of Studio A, a 3700 square foot, newly renovated and fully-equipped space with stage, sprung dance floor (30' x 50'), lighting and sound and Studio B a 20'x30' fully-equipped, multi-purpose space. On the same premises is the *Off Center for the Dramatic Arts*-Vermont's newest black box theater all located in the heart of Burlington's Old North End. Off Center provides an affordable, accessible performance and rehearsal space for productions by local community theater artists.

Last year Burlington City Arts completed an Arts Planning Report for City Council after conducting on-line surveys about the strengths and opportunities for supporting artists and the creative industries in Burlington and holding meetings in four areas of Burlington: the Downtown, the Old North End, the New North End and the South End. Though not an exhaustive study, the report recommended the creation of multiple art/cultural districts in the city that would accentuate the unique and distinctive characteristics of each area. Guided by SEABA, the south end of Burlington was the most eager and prepared to advance this designation and market the popular, ever expanding southern arm of the city. Following this lead, it would behoove the other areas/neighborhoods to continue the work of identification and then jointly advance the marketing of the arts as a whole in Burlington.

RECURRING THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Aged Buildings in Burlington

Many facilities in Burlington are extremely old and should have annual investment in their maintenance in addition to general infrastructure updating and improvements to handicapped accessibility. A number of the inventoried facilities have inadequate ventilation and aged electrical systems that require regular maintenance and pose funding and safety issues for facility managers.

Parking and Transportation

Parking was mentioned as an issue for most facilities, both for downtown venues as well as those located on UVM's campus. Whether real or perceived, regular users state this concern as a primary deterrent to their usage or at best view it as an inconvenience. The issue could be buffered by a cultural collaborative awareness campaign about where to find parking in downtown Burlington and that encourages undertaking the short 3 or 4 block walk that is the typical maximum distance most people encounter before a cultural event. The development of a centralized transit center would also help alleviate some of this pressure, but the persistent use of the automobile in our climate and on Burlington's terrain will be hard to overcome. The marketplace has begun valet parking to help shoppers, as have some restaurants.

Transportation between the colleges and the downtown and the perceived parking issues need to be imaginatively addressed. The College Street shuttle is a great start and could be augmented. There is a need to work with appropriate City departments to connect the downtown core to other neighborhoods in the city through changes in signage, way-finding and traffic control systems. This would go a long way toward erasing the isolation felt by the Old North End in particular.

Need for Mid-sized Performing Arts Spaces

A performing arts space which is larger than the FlynnSpace (240) but smaller than the Flynn Main Stage and UVM's Royall Tyler Theater was mentioned by several facility managers as a growing need in Burlington. The Flynn Theatre has it on their long term plan to develop a 500 seat performing art space as well as addition space for performing arts classrooms. Both the Main Stage and FlynnSpace are almost always completely booked starting early in the year and much time is spent turning prospective clients away. If there was another suitable performing arts space located downtown, many of these clients that are now being turned away could be bringing more shows and more people into the city. At the time of this study, a group of young entrepreneurs was fitting up the old Outdoor Gear Exchange space on Cherry Street into what they describe as a "community shared space by day" and a "collaborative arts and events center by night." Their for-profit concept is essentially to provide multi-functional incubator space for lots of fledgling cultural efforts and a 400 seat downtown music venue. If they are successful, they could fulfill this midsize need.

Technology

Every cultural institution faces growing expenses in technology infrastructure every year. While technology is a financial burden, it also makes communication for small organizations much more effective if enough staff and funding can be put to the effort. There is a huge opportunity for Burlington to centralize events information and planning through technology. A comprehensive events calendar is something that all organizations have repeatedly asked for but the right management and resources have not materialized. Seven Days has the most comprehensive listing in town and calendar listings are free; there should be a collaborative

effort between institutions, the City, the Chamber of Commerce and the newspaper to do a better job pointing people to this resource, in print and online. The same need exists for a planning calendar to avoid costly duplication.

Central Marketing and Coordinated Efforts

For decades Burlington has received hundreds of accolades for its arts savvy and yet ironically, has never authored a city marketing plan reaping the benefits of such rich offerings. While not exactly a facilities issue, it is hard to avoid reiterating the desire from non-profit managers and businesses to develop a coordinated marketing effort that encompasses all of the cultural activities that Burlington offers—and that are not well understood outside of our own citizens, and even locals are easily confused. State tourism continues to focus on agriculture and skiing, which leaves Burlington largely out of the mix. With strong venues and attractions at the colleges, in the downtown, and on the waterfront, Burlington should brand and market itself as a unique arts city with diversity and breath. A consortium of the City, the Chamber, the BBA and strong cultural institutions like BCA, the Flynn and ECHO could be instrumental in moving this forward for the larger community, but ideally the marketing leadership should come from City. The City needs to determine the structure and funding mechanism needed to implement such a plan that benefits the entire City. The economic value to the city coffers, business hiring and retention and to citizen pride would be deeply improved.

Current partnerships with the Flynn Theatre, BCA, ECHO and others should be strengthened, which will provide new programmatic opportunities while addressing the challenges of bringing younger audiences to the arts. It will also help embrace the new diversity in Burlington and the surrounding communities. Institution-wide discussions about the need for a mid-size concert hall and expanded ticketing services could find realization as joint ventures. There is an expressed desire to deepen collaborations and loosen territorial allegiances. Age old misperceptions of inaccessibility and town /gown differences can be overcome. The University Campus, which is home to the Davis Center, Royal Tyler Theatre, Music Recital Hall and Fleming Museum could be better incorporated into the city cultural mix and together address the question of community usage and needs.

Other Issues

Several facilities noted a more substantial use of alternative energy as an important part of future plans. This not only makes buildings in the city more efficient, but could also be seen as attractive element for potential clients.

Adapting to Burlington's changing demographic landscape is affecting all cultural institutions. The ability to be relevant to people from many different cultures poses a challenge to our own institutions with a history of traditions themselves. There are a significant number of New Americans in Burlington, and finding the best ways to serve these new populations is vital to sustaining a diverse community. While many organizations have invested resources in assessing their attractiveness, affordability and accessibility, true cultural competency will affect programming decisions as well as facility design and accommodations. This impact will be easier to incorporate into new facilities as they come on line, but with thoughtful redesign and reallocation, many facilities can address different cultural needs with minimal changes and cost.

OPPORTUNITIES

Memorial Auditorium/Super Block

Whether Memorial Auditorium is renovated or sold, the need for cultural space on this block must remain paramount in the development of the superblock. Because Memorial is such a large space in the heart of downtown, it would be impossible to replace it as an asset in another area of town. The question is, in the reorganization of the block, can the cultural programs that take place now in Memorial exist and grow in another location within the block if the building changes use or is sold? With the right time and thinking, Memorial could be transformed into a wonderful, perhaps even revenue generating facility—or at the least, a break-even facility—with the right mix of uses and within the context of a newly devised cultural block.

Moran Plant

Assuming that the Moran Plant project moves forward as planned, the Waterfront will finally have its northern anchor, which will be key to its future success as both a cultural destination and an economic center. The mix of uses that move into the space should help inform the best addition to the activity. The history of the building and its location make it an ideal location for public art to commemorate its past.

Art Everywhere

The Golden report stated that the “somewhat melancholy and restrictive condition of facilities for the performing and visual arts in the City of Burlington is partially redeemed by the clever and ubiquitous approach used by area artists and arts promoters. They look upon the entire City as their venue.” Since that statement, the Flynn and BCA have both undergone significant facility transformations, Main Street Landing has developed a new space, UVM has grown substantially. The state of facilities can no longer be categorized as “melancholy.” However, there has not been a major change in the landscape of organizations developed to support artists and the creation of art. Rather, BCA and the Flynn have grown to do more, but they cannot meet every need. The “art everywhere” concept remains an extremely important component of Burlington’s art scene, and addresses social accessibility issues that institutions cannot overcome no matter how robust their outreach. It is also important to let artists lead and develop projects outside the boundaries of but supported by the institution whenever possible. Examples like the Highlow Project (in which an artist worked directly with at risk youth to create images of the high and low moments of their lives and then peppered the huge images on downtown buildings with audio narration) represent the best of temporary public art conceived of and mounted by an artist with minimal help from BCA. Another newly popular and successful concept is the “pop up,” in which artists take over empty store fronts to show or promote their work--a win-win for artists and property owners. BCA works well as an advisor and a guarantor for the artists, but is not necessarily the driver.

ATTACHMENT: FACILITIES MATRIX