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Project Tracker

New Cornelius Arts Center on track for 2020 opening

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Not expected to be named the Cornelius Arts Center for much longer, what is envisioned as a regional destination for arts and culture is on the path to fruition within the next two years. This year, according to Executive Director Justin Dionne, is a year of definition. So what does it look like so far by the numbers? Here's a look.

The estimated cost

The project will cost in the neighborhood of \$20 million based on early estimates, but that could fluctuate as the final stages come together. It is expected to open in 2020 but depending on several factors, that could change.

Original money

A bond package was passed in 2013 for \$20 million that included \$4 million for ramping up downtown Cornelius, including an arts center.

Property

The town purchased the Farmers Co. warehouse property off Catawba Avenue west of the police station for \$1.4 million. It was appraised at \$1.1 million in the early 2010s.

Seats

The original plan was for somewhere near 250 seats for a performing arts theater. Now, that number is up to 500 after the survey found that Cornelius residents overwhelmingly want to support performing arts.

Size

The space purchased is 1.85 acres.

Benefit

\$2.1 billion. That is the amount spent annually on the arts in North Carolina. According to the 2015 Arts & Economic Prosperity 5 report, the arts and culture sector in North Carolina alone yields more than \$2 billion a year. That same report found the average person spends roughly \$27 per art event.

Survey says

More than 1,000 people responded to a survey crafted by Dionne. Respondents indicated they are willing to pay for performance art.

State input

N.C. Rep. John Bradford secured \$100,000 from the state of North Carolina for the facility back in the fall of 2017, which helped pay for the architect.

Donations?

The Cornelius Arts Center is a nonprofit, and a registered 501(c)(3). Those who wish to donate can call Dionne at 980-689-3101.