



Young people enjoying art at Tawba Walk in Cornelius. This is the new arts center's mascot, Art. Courtesy Cornelius Arts & Community Center



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# Cornelius hopes a new, downtown arts center will spark more development

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The town of Cornelius is planning to start work on a new, non-profit arts center downtown, using bond money earmarked for the facility.

In January, the town purchased a 1.85-acre site next to the police station on Catawba Avenue for \$1.5 million. The facility will be built there, and the town has allocated \$4 million worth of bond money approved in 2013 for the facility. The town is planning to complete the new arts center in late 2019.

The Cornelius Arts & Community Center will be managed by a 501(c)(3) organization that will operate the new arts center. The group is searching for an executive director.

"The time is right for the Lake Norman region to engage more fully in the arts," said Greg Wessling, chairman of the group's board of directors, in a statement. "We're confident the Center will further establish the area as an arts catalyst and will help foster and sustain the Town's vitality and cultural enrichment."

Plans call for hands-on classes and a wide variety of media, including paint, photography, pottery, plays, films and concerts. The center could be built in several stages, depending on how private fundraising goes. The center will include a plaza and outdoor amphitheater, a theater with 300 seats, artist studios, classrooms, gallery space, special event rooms, ceramics facilities and space for food vendors.



The site currently.  
Mecklenburg County property records

The Cornelius Arts & Community Center will be participating in events such as the “Tawba Walk, Beyond Walls and Cornelius Jazz Festival to raise awareness of the project before its completion.

“We plan to offer programs for children, young adults, adults and seniors alike,” said Wessling. “And at varying levels of expertise: First-timers will have the opportunity for exploration, novices can improve their skills, and more experienced artists and performers can be challenged to produce and share their best work.”

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