

City of Dallas

Asian American Cultural Center AACC

Master Plan Study

Focus Group Meetings
Work Session

July 10th & 11th, 2009

Agenda

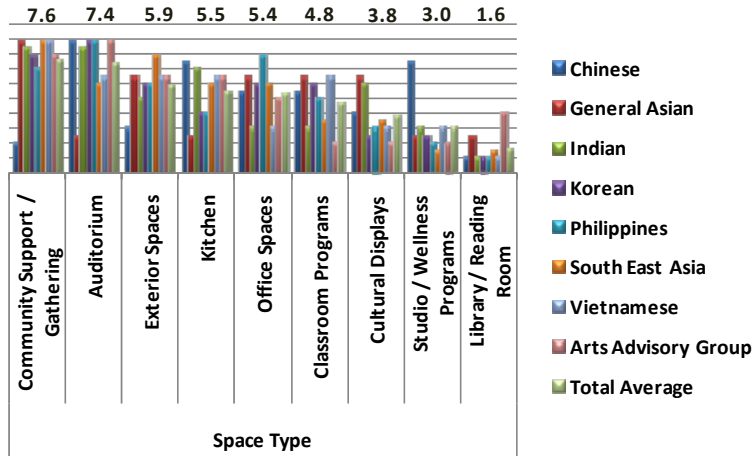
City of Dallas
Asian American Cultural Center AACC

- Introductions
- Project update – what we have learned so far
- Discussion about similarities and unique characteristics
- Wrap up and questions / answer session



PRIORITIES BY SPACE TYPE

- Space types were scored on a scale from 1 to 9 (9 being most-cited).
- Community Support Space and Auditorium Space are the needs identified most frequently by the focus groups.



3

Community Support / Gathering Space

Multipurpose Space / Gathering / Community Support was ranked #1 by the focus groups. 7 of the 8 groups placed it in the top 3.

Multipurpose space is to be used for non-specified or general arts and cultural events. Specific programmatic needs that could be housed in such a space were cited in the following order:

- Community-service-related: Translation, legal aid, veteran benefits, visa and immigration; work space for volunteers to assist in processing
- Various multipurpose space needs: Yoga, Martial arts, Dance, Ping Pong, Racquetball / Badminton, Tennis, Basketball, Boxing
- Senior programs: Health fairs / screening; lectures on related topics such as Medicare; daytime activities such as games and physical activities; general gathering space

4

Auditorium

Auditorium space was ranked #2 by the focus groups.
Support spaces (e.g., dressing room and storage facilities) would need to accompany such a space.

Program needs, in priority order:

- Dance, theatrical and musical performances: Many groups currently are leasing space in the private sector. Programs include traveling theatrical and dance groups as well as local groups such. Audience sizes are expected to range from 1000 to 3000 people.
- Lectures: Smaller audiences (100 – 500 people) are expected for lectures about cultural history, current events, etc.
- Film: Asian film screenings are currently being held throughout the city.
- Ideal situation is flexible auditorium space that could be reconfigured as needed.

5



Exterior Space

Exterior space was ranked #3 by the focus groups.

Program needs, in priority order:

- Festivals / Celebrations: Large scale celebrations are held throughout the year by the Asian community. An exterior plaza with multiple discrete areas could serve smaller events being held simultaneously. Once-a-year events that attract tens of thousands of participants might not be accommodated at this facility.
- Gardens: Several focus groups discussed gardens as an expression of Asian culture and an appropriate setting for small events, such as wedding. A community garden was also mentioned.
- Exterior Wellness / Sports Activities: Tai Chi, soccer, cricket, for example

6



Kitchen

Kitchen ranked #4 in needs by the focus groups; multiple groups expressed the integral role of ethnic food in gatherings of all kinds.

Program needs, in priority order:

- Catering / Banquet Facilities: Space that supports festivals, auditorium events and family gatherings / celebrations with to serve gatherings from 25 to 1,000. One group suggested allowing catering companies to rent the facilities as a production kitchen, assuming that they would provide required insurance and compliance items.
- Cooking Demonstrations / Classes
- Food Court / Concessions: Small outlet for food sales
- Specialty food events mentioned included pig roasts/luaus and crawfish boils
- Meals for seniors



Office Space

Office space ranked #5 by the focus groups.

Program needs, in priority order:

- Non-Profit Organizations: Many groups are all-volunteer and would benefit from a "virtual office": consistent mailing address, storage space and shared administrative support functions (printers, fax, copiers)
- Conference / Board Rooms: Community organizations need space for board and volunteer meetings
- Staff / Volunteers: For center staff and volunteers
- Tenant Sublease / Incubator Offices: Space for start-up organizations that could provide revenue for operating the facility



Classroom Space

Classroom space was ranked #6 by the focus groups.

Program needs, in priority order:

- Language Classes: English as a Second Language (ESL), Asian languages
- Cultural Exchange Programs: For Asians to learn about each other's culture, to introduce new immigrants to American culture, or to share Asian culture with the community at large
- Training Classes: For example: calligraphy, math, computers, crafts, arts
- Youth programs: After-school programs, including scout groups and leadership training



9

Exhibit Space

Exhibit space was ranked #7 by the focus groups.

Opportunity to celebrate Asian history and culture through exhibits in gathering spaces and corridors. Museums in the metroplex already provide an outlet for Asian art, so the need was identified as display space, rather than climate-controlled museum space.

Program needs, in priority order:

- Artifact display: Content could include cultural costumes / ceremonial dress.
- Rotating Exhibits: Provide an outlet for local artists or center classes.
- Permanent Collection: One group felt that their community needed permanent collection.



10

Studio Space

Studio space was ranked #8 by the focus groups.

Studio space generally requires special fittings, e.g., sound absorption, special floors, mirrors, bars.

Program needs, in priority order:

- Dance / Fitness: Dance, yoga, martial arts
- Music: Classes, rehearsals, recording studio



Resource Room

Resource room was ranked #9 by the focus groups.

The space was discussed as a casual resource area where organizations could share publications of interest to the Asian community. There was no intention of a formal library that required monitoring of books, etc. Specific needs, in priority order:

- Reading area for Asian periodicals
- Display area for community resources oriented to Asian community
- Lounge area for seniors to congregate
- Game area for chess, cards, etc.



Other Considerations Expressed

- Sustainability
- Facility must be non-religious and non-political to ensure success
- Need for a centralized communications facility if disaster strikes country of background



Arts Advisory Group Input

- The Arts Advisory Group was organized to give the arts associations that support the Asian community a voice
- The primary need of the Arts Advisory group is the auditorium
- Items of particular note include an amphitheatre in the exterior spaces
- The idea that the facility could provide a tourist destination was brought up



Vietnamese Focus Group

Unique attributes of the Vietnamese Community Focus Group:

- Fishing is traditional occupation in the country of origin, so food events that focus on seafood such as a crawfish broil are a huge success.
- Youth programs that include mentoring such as big brother / big sister programs .
- “Paris by Night” and beauty pageants are very common in the community .
- Food is a motivator for this group. Identified cooking classes as a way to unite the Asian communities.

15



Chinese Focus Group

Unique attributes of the Chinese Community Focus Group:

- High focus on Interior exhibit spaces – cultural displays as well as an auditorium.
- Chinese Opera identified as both an exhibit and a class.
- Math and calligraphy classes identified as a community need.
- Karaoke identified as something that could bring people in every week as a social activity.

16



Indian Focus Group

Unique attributes of the Indian Community Focus Group:

- Large focus on ethnic foods
- Indian Independence Day very large compared to other Asian focus groups
- Higher consideration to the Dallas community outreach
- Identified the facility to be non-religious and non-political to ensure success

17



Korean Focus Group

Unique attributes of the Korean Community Focus Group:

- Considered using a banquet area as a Meals-on-Wheels location as a method to bring the senior population together. Group also felt that the meals could be traditional Korean cuisine.
- Identified weddings as a community desire

18



Philippines Focus Group

Unique attributes of the Philippines Community Focus Group:

- Very high priority placed on office space for community organizations
- Exterior spaces could include a pig roast pit / luau
- Focus of being able to “Move, Shake and Sing” as illustrated by request for recording studio
- Expressed special concern to provide a sustainable facility

19



General Asian Focus Group

Unique attributes of the General Asian Community Focus Group:

- High amount of focus on cultural displays, especially as it relates to festivals and celebrations
- High priority on Community / Gathering space, similar to other focus groups but the General Asian work session had a very high focus on volunteerism
- Less priority on the Auditorium and Kitchen than the average focus group

20



Unique attributes of the SouthEast Community Focus Group:

- Auditorium could be multi-purpose to provide flexibility of space (possible combination with sports & wellness)
- High focus on exterior spaces, with special attention to gardens
- Expressed need central disaster location to organize community response in the event of a significant event in the country of origin (ex: earthquakes in Japan, Tsunami in Indian Ocean)

21



- Q&A for findings

22



Next Steps

- This is the last meeting for the Focus Group
- The Project Team will continue to compile input of community needs and priorities from this set of Focus Group Meetings
- The Project Team will start to determine square footage requirements as they correspond with the Community needs, and apply rough order of magnitude pricing to construction costs
- Findings will be presented to the Steering Committee
- Findings and Steering Committee input will be presented at the Town Hall sessions on Tuesday, August 4th at 5:30 – 7:00 PM at the Latino Cultural Center

