

2. Introduction

As part of its review, the Committee considered whether economic development programs or other associated public programs or policies (e.g., streetscapes) could be used to sustain or promote arts uses, and/or could contribute to the continued development of local retail and restaurant businesses. The Committee exhaustively reviewed the city's websites, and examined all the programs of relevance to the arts and commercial sectors. In public meetings, the Committee met with staff members from the following offices and representatives of the following organizations:

- Office of Planning: Rebecca Moudry and Sakina Khan (Retail and Creative Action Strategies)
- Department of Small and Local Business Development: Camille Nixon
- Washington DC Economic Partnership: Steve Moore (President & CEO)
- Mid-City Business Association: Natalie Avery, Executive Director
- Downtown Business Improvement District: Scott Pomeroy

In addition, the Committee contacted numerous city officials to collect additional information about economic development programs. The Committee also sought the advice of developers and retailers about these programs.

In the discussion below, the Committee has summarized the key economic development and related programs that could help support arts and commercial uses in the neighborhood. One of the overarching issues facing these programs is the effect the current economic downturn is having on public budgets. On the one hand, the 2009 federal stimulus temporarily raised the funding available from the National Endowment for the Arts enabling that organization to issue more grants. On the other hand, the city's budget for fiscal year 2010 (beginning October 1) has already been revised downward once, and may undergo further revision, due to falling revenues, causing a drop in available funds for a variety of programs. ***Any FY10 budget numbers presented in this report should therefore be treated as estimates only.***