

NYC COUNCIL FIRST-EVER CULTURAL PLAN

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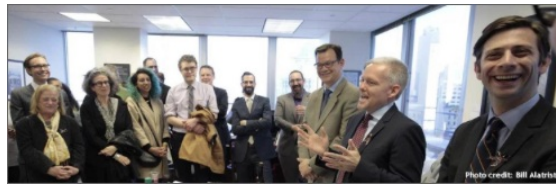
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PRESS RELEASE

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL PASSES LEGISLATION TO ENHANCE ACCESS TO ARTS AND CULTURE BY IMPLEMENTING FIRST-EVER CULTURAL PLAN



On April 28th, the New York City Council unanimously passed [Introduction 419](#) which will initiate – for the first time in the City of New York – the development of a comprehensive Cultural Plan. Under the legislation introduced by Council Member Steve Levin and Majority Leader and Chair of the Cultural Affairs Committee Jimmy Van Bramer, New York City will research and devise a comprehensive strategy to increase access, equity and opportunity for all New Yorkers to engage in the arts and culture, and plan how New York City can remain an artist friendly city in a time of skyrocketing rents and a variety of economic pressures. The Cultural Plan will be administered by the Department of Cultural Affairs with a robust community engagement process that empowers the cultural community.

[Council Member Stephen Levin](#) said, "New York City is the cultural capital of the world and it is important that we do everything we can to ensure that it stays that way. With the passage of this legislation, New York City will soon create its first-ever comprehensive cultural plan and will create a roadmap to making New York a more artist-friendly city and ensuring that we are able to exhibit the rich culture found in every borough. I want to thank Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito, Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer, all of the advocates and cultural groups, and a special thank you to Commissioner Finkelpearl and the Department of Cultural Affairs for working with us on this exciting and important legislation."

"The passage of Introduction 419 solidifies our City's presence as the world's premiere destination for culture," said [New York City Council Majority Leader and Chair of the Cultural Affairs Committee, Jimmy Van Bramer](#). "By initiating – for the first time in the City of New York – a five-borough Cultural Plan, we are embarking on an inclusive community engagement process that will empower the cultural community and the least served populations of our City. With the comprehensive data we will acquire from every corner of the City we will implement a strategy to increase access, equity and opportunity for all New Yorkers to engage in the arts and culture. I want to thank Speaker Melissa-Mark-Viverito, Council Member Steve Levin, my colleagues, Department of Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl, the Administration as well as the tireless cultural advocates who supported this transformative bill. Together we made this day possible."

"This Administration recognizes that the arts are essential to the vibrancy of our communities and the quality of the education we provide our students—that's why we have launched a number of initiatives dedicated to enhancing cultural equity and access for all New Yorkers. We look forward to working with the City Council to formalize this vision of 'one New York' as it's expressed in our cultural community and to seek feedback and new ideas from residents," said NYC Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl.

The bill was first introduced in 2013 in response to the lack of cultural planning for New York City. New York City now joins major cities across the country including Chicago, Houston, and Denver that have implemented cultural plans that reflect the needs and desires of their residents.

Under the Cultural Plan, the Department of Cultural Affairs will survey and identify the current level of service of cultural groups in each neighborhood; detail the feedback from community outreach, establish a strategy to meet the specified needs of each community; quantify the economic impact of arts and culture in the City; and ultimately put forth a targeted approach to increase cultural activity citywide, increase the economic impact of the arts and culture and provide support to individual and emerging artists in the City.

Heather Alexa Woodfield, Executive Director of One Percent for Culture said, "We commend Council Members Van Bramer and Levin and the entire New York City Council for passing legislation requiring the Department of Cultural Affairs to create a comprehensive cultural plan. The cultural plan will provide many benefits for our city including increasing access to arts and cultural programming for all New Yorkers and helping to assess and enhance the social and economic benefits that our cultural sector provides."

Caron Atlas, Director of Arts and Democracy, said, "This is an important day when the city of NY says it is committed to creating a cultural plan that ensures that all New Yorkers have the opportunity to participate in arts and culture and that all cultures can flourish. We commend the city council for stepping up and affirming that arts and culture are an essential part of a just and equitable city. We look forward to being part of the planning process and to bringing it to neighborhoods across the city."

Lane Harwell, Executive Director of Dance/NYC, said, "In passing this momentous legislation, the Council shows us it is listening to its constituents and that the arts and culture matter to neighborhoods in every council district throughout our city. It commits the City to a future where the creative sector is essential, artists are empowered, and the arts truly are for all."

Elise Bernhardt, Executive Director and Dianne Berkun-Menaker, Founder & Artistic Director of Brooklyn Youth Chorus said, "Congratulations to Stephen Levin, Jimmy Van Bramer and everyone involved in this critically important step in preserving New York City cultural life and building the future of our great city. Arts and culture are vital to our economy and play an important role in fostering community cohesion. New Yorkers in all five boroughs deserve access to the best of the arts and arts education and this plan will help us understand where cultural resources are needed and how they can best be distributed. We believe our mission at Brooklyn Youth Chorus will be recognized and

furthered by this important legislation.”

The legislation also requires the Department of Cultural Affairs to establish a Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) to advise the agency with respect to the development, gathering of community input and implementation of the Cultural Plan. The CAC will consist of a minimum of twelve members from a diverse array of backgrounds including: experience with community-based organization; experience in business; experience in real estate; experience with a charitable organization; and experience in public housing.

A City-wide Cultural Plan will:

- Enhance availability and distribution of cultural activities throughout the City
- Improve the relationship between cultural activities and social and economic health and welfare in the City
- Meet the needs of artists with respect to affordable housing and affordable long-term and temporary studio, office and rehearsal space
- Increase arts educational programming and cultural activities in the schools throughout the City
- Incorporate cultural activities into community development, economic development and land use planning processes and policies
- Develop a scheme of how city agencies will coordinate with respect of cultural activities
- Require the Department of Cultural Affairs and other relevant agencies to consider, and act upon as appropriate, the conclusions and recommendations in the Plan

Beginning two years following the submission of a Cultural Plan, and every two years after, the Department of Cultural Affairs will submit to the Mayor as well as the Speaker of the City Council a report detailing progress made on its recommendations, initiatives and priorities. The legislation would provide the Cultural Plan would be reviewed and may be revised, as appropriate, every ten years. The first Cultural Plan is projected to be submitted by July 1, 2017.

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