

Cultural plan for county

In two years, Santa Cruz County could have a new museum, two local cultural centers, a 1000-seat auditorium complex and a refurbished civic center, as well as an extensive elementary school arts program.

These are some of the proposals of the Cultural Council of Santa Cruz, a diverse group of community and business leaders attempting to see dreams come true through a unique funding arrangement. In this post-Prop. 13 era, in which funding for cultural programs is becoming increasingly tight, the Cultural Council hopes to raise millions in donations and grants from community, business and government.

"The cultural action plan," the result of more than a year's work by the 100 members of the council, has so far found a warm reception with the myriad of groups approached by chairman Hal Hyde.

The plan is actually two separate reports, one on facilities development and another on the establishment of a coordinated county-wide arts program.

Hyde emphasizes that the plan is merely a collection of suggestions for local governments and groups on how to provide county residents and artists with better cultural programs and facilities. The proposals are in many ways starting points for further discussion and consideration.

In Watsonville, the facilities plan suggests that the Veterans Memorial building or Radcliff school could be renovated to provide community centers, equipped with classrooms, small theaters, and meetings rooms. Cost estimates for the projects place a price tag of a quarter of a million dollars on the Veterans renovation and \$150,000 on Radcliff's revitalization.

On a grander scale, the plan calls for the eventual development of a mid-county 1000-seat auditorium complex. One proposal suggests that an \$8 million facility be constructed on the Porter Sesnon property located between Cabrillo College and the ocean.

The land was owned by the University of California until last year when its use was

acquired by the Palo Alto development firm of Hare, Brewer and Kelley on a 99-year lease.

The firm, which also developed the Pajaro Dunes complex, has offered to contribute \$4 million towards the project. Part of their money is expected to be recouped through profits on adjacent condominium and commercial developments.

The council backs off on making any firm recommendation on the auditorium complex development, indicating that land-use decisions should be determined by the affected communities without prodding by the council.

The cultural action plan also calls for the revitalization and expansion of the Santa Cruz Civic auditorium. The home of the Miss California Pageant would be gutted and permanent seating for 2,200 would be installed. Presently, the auditorium holds approximately 1,800, using several hundred folding chairs. The project, which could be completed by December of 1982, would cost up to \$13 million.

Beyond the construction and renovation projects, the council's program plan proposes to "strengthen the area's cultural institutions, assisting its artists and exploring new ways of bringing together the arts, sciences and people."

Foremost in this effort is the establishment of an arts education program for the schools, known as SPECTRA. The council hopes to raise \$147,000 for SPECTRA's first year of operation from local school boards, businesses, foundations, state and federal grants and the California Arts Council. The Pajaro Valley school board has tentatively budgeted \$25,000 for the program (contingent on the failure of Prop. 9 at the polls this June, among other factors).

SPECTRA kicked off its activities in the Watsonville area this week with the visit of Ruth Azawa, an internationally known sculptress, to Freedom School. Offering workshops for groups of Pajaro Valley school children, this is the first of what is expected to be several presentations by visiting artists.

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