

Chapter 9 Cultural Resources

Mauldin's cultural history began when the Greenville and Laurens Railroad was constructed in the 1880s. Local residents appealed to Lt. Gov. William L. Mauldin, who was a former president of the railroad, to route the line through the community then known as Poplar Springs, instead of bypassing the community as had been originally proposed. The small depot erected in 1886 was named in honor of Lt. Gov. Mauldin; since then, Mauldin's place in the region has been one of intersecting cultures and history.

Cultural life currently is centered mainly around the Mauldin Cultural Center which is housed in the original Mauldin School, one of the oldest buildings in Mauldin, which housed grades 2-12 from 1937 until 1957 when it became Mauldin Elementary School through 2002. The Mauldin Cultural Center is a city-owned and operated facility that hosts almost 30,000 people a year and well over 1,500 different classes, performances, and events each year. In the past four years, improvements to the facility include a new amphitheater, extensive landscaping, a veterans memorial, pathway lighting, benches and picnic tables.

Cultural Resources

The largest physical cultural resource in Mauldin is the Mauldin Cultural Center. Purchased by the City in 2003 from Greenville County Schools, it has been the community's intent to continually develop the 1937 school building into a hub of cultural activity for the community.



*Mac Arnold & Plate Full O' Blues
May 2013*

Since that time, the facility has seen a tremendous growth in activity and infrastructure improvements. During the early years in its new role as Mauldin Cultural Center, many rooms in the facility were renovated through public and private funds. Founded in 2004, Mauldin Cultural Council, a nonprofit organization, helped raise funds to update much of the old school's interior and began implementing various arts programs.

In 2011 the City took lead on updating the facility's auditorium space along with new landscaping, including the addition of a 1,000+ seat outdoor amphitheater. These two improvements helped jumpstart an increase in facility use, program development and community identity.

Through the City's Office of Cultural Affairs, the Mauldin Cultural Center has become the hub of cultural activity first envisioned in 2003. Currently, the Center hosts almost 30,000 people every year and boasts a regular concert series, a resident theatre company, numerous arts

classes, a large number of private rentals, and is the host site for large community festivals such as the annual Mauldin BBQ Cook-Off and community Christmas events.



Grammy Award winning jazz musician Gregory Porter performed for a sellout crowd approaching 1,000 people in May 2014.

Much more is planned for the Mauldin Cultural Center. Further improvements to landscaping, along with additional renovations to interior classrooms, and a long-term goal of a complete renovation of the auditorium space are all projects that are in the works. Additionally, the Office of Cultural Affairs is growing its offerings to the public in an effort to strengthen the community's identity and reach residents and visitors alike.

The goals and objectives listed in this section of the Comprehensive Plan point to a vision of a stronger cultural bond in the community and an increased role for Mauldin to play in the cultural landscape of the entire Upstate of South Carolina.



Historic Resources

Many of Mauldin's oldest sites have since been torn down and developed into commercial or residential districts. This includes the original train depot which was demolished in 1953; the Whatley House, which served as the location for community Christmas gatherings; and a number of other houses. Several farm houses built in the late 19th and early 20th century remain, but are not likely candidates for historic register designation. All of the city's oldest structures have been too extensively modified to qualify for National Register of Historic Places designation.

Notable sites still standing in Mauldin include the old Mauldin School building, now the Mauldin Cultural Center. The original school burned down in 1935 and the current facility was built by the Works Progress Administration in 1937. It served as a place of learning until 2002 when the new Mauldin Elementary School was built and the City purchased the facility to develop it into a community cultural center.

Mauldin United Methodist Church, originally Poplar Springs Methodist Episcopal Church South, was the first church in the community and operated the first school. Other historical markers include Laurel Creek Church, Gilder Plantation grounds, and McBee Chapel.



2009 PLAN GOALS & OBJECTIVES | STATUS

Goal: Develop & Improve Cultural Programs that help define the City of Mauldin.

- **Objective 1.1: Develop a “signature” festival for Mauldin City Center**
 - **Strategy:** Collaborate with Mauldin Cultural Center, Chamber of Commerce & Garden Club.
 - **STATUS:** In 2013 the Mauldin BBQ Cook-Off moved to the Cultural Center grounds with the intention of making this event the community's “signature event”. (2,500 people)
 - **STATUS:** The Garden Club hosts an Annual Spring Fling in April. (800 people)
 - **STATUS:** The Chamber hosts an annual model train show. (5,000 people)
- **Objective 1.2: Develop a recurring outdoor music series at the Cultural Center**
 - **Strategy:** Develop the outdoor amphitheater called for in the Cultural Center Master Plan and collaborate with Mauldin Cultural Center Foundation Board (MCCFB) to develop and schedule events.
 - **STATUS:** First concert series held in summer of 2010, has continued every year. Now called the Railroad Concert Series offered free to the public.
 - **STATUS:** Formal outdoor amphitheater created in 2011.
- **Objective 1.3: Complete the development and renovation of the Mauldin Cultural Center, giving top priority to renovation and improvement of the auditorium.**
 - **Strategy:** Adopt the updated Cultural Center Master Plan.
 - **STATUS:** Master Plan was adopted.
 - **STATUS:** Landscaping Master Plan created and adopted.
 - **STATUS:** Updated Auditorium space in 2011 and created new amphitheater space.
 - **Strategy:** Collaborate with MCCFB on fundraising and implementation of the master plan.
 - **STATUS:** A feasibility study was developed in 2011, pointing to a need to focus on community identity before any major fundraising efforts are undertaken.
 - **STATUS:** Board of Directors involved in all planning revolving around Cultural Center.
 - **STATUS:** The City created an Office of Cultural Affairs in 2013 to manage the Cultural Center. MCCFB became the Mauldin Cultural Council with a new focus on the entire community.
- **Objective 1.4: Support the creation of a Mauldin Community Theater group.**
 - **Strategy:** Encourage use of the renovated auditorium for “satellite” productions by area theatre groups.
 - **STATUS:** American Callboard Theatre became the Cultural Center's resident theatre company in 2014 – hosting three productions plus summer camps.
 - **Strategy:** Offer auditorium space to summer theater camps and other theater classes.
 - **STATUS:** American Callboard Theatre hosts week-long summer camps in June and July.
 - **Strategy:** Offer auditorium space to churches and schools for musical and theatrical events.
 - **STATUS:** Montessori School of Mauldin uses the Auditorium two times each year for a theatre production. Other private rentals for productions have also occurred.

2009 PLAN GOALS & OBJECTIVES | STATUS [continued]

Goal: Develop an historic preservation strategy for the city.

- **Objective 2.1: Support preservation and restoration of historic sites and buildings.**
 - **Strategy:** Pursue eligibility for historic preservation tax credits for historic houses to encourage preservation and reuse.
 - **STATUS:** The number of historic structures in Mauldin is small and pursuing tax credits for renovation and reuse is based on preferences of property owners. The City should still support any private efforts to complete this.
 - **Strategy:** Provide zoning and/or city property tax incentives to preserve historic homes.
 - **STATUS:** Not completed.
 - **Strategy:** Seek funding to construct a replica of the C&WC Railroad depot.
 - **STATUS:** Railroad Depot is a component in the approved Downtown Mauldin Master Plan.
- **Objective 2.2: Increase community awareness of Mauldin's history.**
 - **Strategy:** Pursue National Register of Historic Places designation for Cultural Center.
 - **STATUS:** Was pursued at first, but was unsuccessful. Current modifications and proposed future modifications to facility may impact eligibility or would have to be drastically altered to conform to requirements.
 - **Strategy:** Erect historical markers at sites in Mauldin.
 - **STATUS:** Historical marker erected at Cultural Center.
 - **Strategy:** Develop a Mauldin Historical Collection room at the Cultural Center or other building.
 - **STATUS:** The Cultural Center does not host any permanent tenants (except for Chamber). Cultural Center does accept historic items though.
 - **Strategy:** Document Mauldin's past through an oral history project.
 - **STATUS:** Not completed.
 - **Strategy:** Encourage formation of a Mauldin Historical Society.
 - **STATUS:** Not completed. Not much public interest.
 - **Strategy:** Complete the update of the City's history in a new "Mauldin's Legacy" publication.
 - **STATUS:** Not completed. Not much public interest.

CULTURAL RESOURCES | 2014

Recommended Goals, Objective & Strategies

Goal A: Build a stronger, more identifiable, cultural community through the activities of the Office of Cultural Affairs.

Objective A1: Position the Office of Cultural Affairs, and the Cultural Center, as a resource for the community.

Strategy A1.1: Create a directory listing of all area (Mauldin and non-Mauldin) artists that is accessible to the public.

Strategy A1.2: Offer professional development opportunities specifically for artists to help them build their own business, strengthen their role in the community and market their work.

Objective A2: Continue to develop the Mauldin Cultural Center facility and grounds according to approved Master Plans.

Strategy A2.1: Update and/or renovate rooms to a high standard.

Strategy A2.2: Invest in high quality equipment.

Strategy A2.3: Create better signage (indoors and outdoors).

Strategy A2.4: Provide a short-term and long-term solution for Murray Drive side of grounds including ample parking, planting, and building appearance.

Objective A3: Create more opportunities for artist to showcase their work.

Strategy A3.1: Partner with local businesses (restaurants, retail) to show local artwork.

Strategy A3.2: Include more art and culture components in community festivals/events.

Strategy A3.3: Highlight the various international cultures in the area.

Goal B: Make cultural amenities more visible to the public and more participatory in nature.

Objective B1: Highlight the various cultural and artistic offerings of the community.

Strategy B1.1: Create a "Welcome Packet" for new residents and businesses.

Strategy B1.2: Build a strong marketing campaign for all community events to attract a larger audience.

Strategy B1.3: Develop program to designate certain areas of community as "districts" (art, food, commerce, etc.)

Objective B2: Develop spaces dedicated to public gatherings, cultural programs and public interaction.

Strategy B2.1: Advocate for the inclusion of "common spaces" in development projects (private and public). These would include green space, common seating areas, open lobby space, and welcoming outdoor spaces.

Strategy B2.2: Create a "Town Green" as included in the Downtown Master Plan.

Strategy B2.3: Market current community spaces better to attract people throughout the year. (e.g. Cultural Center grounds, parks, local businesses, etc.)

Objective B3: Highlight historically and cultural significant resources.

Strategy B3.1: Create a City-wide "Historical Designation Program" that would be community driven, and would not require specific property or land restrictions.

Strategy B3.2: Create a repository for historic photos and documents.