

Historic Post Office Finds New Purpose as **Art & Culture Center**

After sitting silent for nearly seven years, the historic Auburn Post Office will once again be the site of bustling activity on Auburn Avenue. In early August the City of Auburn purchased the 80-year-old landmark from King County, with the hope of bringing the building back to life for active public use.

The building was constructed in 1937 under the national work relief program sponsored by the Public Works Administration, like many local construction projects during the Great Depression. The land for the post office was donated by Levi Ballard, an early Auburn citizen and the town's first postmaster in 1886.

The post office employed 15 people at the time of its opening. The opening and the building served as the Post Office building until 1963, when a newer, larger facility was built a few blocks away. Both the Auburn School District and the King County Health Department hoped to utilize the building for expansions of their services. In the end, the GSA awarded the building to the Health Department, who began renovations in 1964.

When the facility reopened in March 1964, the staff of the new facility included nine nurses and a clerk. The building continued to be used as a public health building until 2009, when King County Public Health relocated to a newer building on Auburn Way.

Now plans for renovation are underway to transform the interior of the building from small exam rooms and offices into a new Arts and Culture Center. But before we move forward, we want your input on how this great asset can best serve our community! To do that, the City will be hosting a series of open houses and focus groups as well as an online survey to collect community ideas. The building is in great condition and the majority of the interior work that will be completed will focus

on transforming the space into open areas for art classes, galleries, rehearsal space, and more.

The public is invited to share comments either through the online survey available at www.auburnwa.gov/arts, in person at an open house event, or by contacting Parks, Arts and Recreation directly.

The purchase was made possible in part by the Building for Culture

grant program—a joint effort of 4Culture, King County Executive Dow Constantine, and the King County Council. Signed into law in late 2015, this unprecedented \$28M fund provides grants to 102 arts, culture, and heritage projects throughout King County. As part of this grant, the City of Auburn will receive \$200,000 to go towards to the purchase and renovation of this important site.



A brief history of **100 Auburn Avenue** is available on the City Arts website www.auburnwa.gov/arts where you can also sign up for the newsletter to receive updates on the wide variety of upcoming arts and events.

