Get Creative, Mankato

A Framework for Artistic, Cultural and Economic Vitality

Table of Contents

Executive Summary 3

Preface: Purpose, Values, and Vision 6

Planning Process 7

- Get Creative, Mankato 7

Plan Recommendations 9

- Overview 9
- Principal Recommendations of *Get Creative, Mankato* 9
- Community Design 10
- Promotion and Support 15
- Arts and Culture Access 18
- Financial Resources 22
- Tourism and Economic Vitality 26

Next Steps 29

Appendix 30

- Partner Organizations 30
- Community Engagement Sessions, February 21 & 25, 2017, Word Clouds 31
- Public Engagement Sessions, Public Comments, February 21 & 25, 2017 33
- Community Focus Group: Funding 37
- Community Focus Group: Multiculturalism 38
- Community Focus Group: Promotion + Support 39
- Community Focus Group: Education 41
- Community Focus Group: Education – High School 42
- Community Focus Group: Needs of the Arts Community 43
- Open House, Survey Responses, January 23, 2018 44
- Open House, Public Comments, January 23, 2018 45
- Open House, Gary Pettis' Visuals, January 23, 2018 50
- Artspace Creative Spaces Consulting Report 63

Executive Summary

Get Creative, Mankato

A Framework for Artistic, Cultural and Economic Vitality

Over the past ten years, Mankato has made great strides in its commitment to infusing arts and culture into the fabric of the community. Most goals from the first arts and culture plan developed in 2007 (*Arts, Culture and Community Enhancement plan)* were realized, leading to a need for a revised and refocused arts plan to direct future arts and culture initiatives. The City of Mankato partnered with Twin Rivers Council for the Arts and the City Center Partnership to lead an update to the arts and culture plan and build on the significant changes in the arts and culture setting in Mankato since the first plan was implemented.

Throughout the process key questions were raised during public engagement:

- How do we recruit and retain talent in Mankato?
- How do we develop a 21st century workforce?
- How do we make Mankato a more welcoming community for all creatives and cultures?
- How can arts and culture play a role in providing answers to these complex issues?

One solution to these questions is in our city's commitment to a healthy creative economy.

Creative Economy Defined: *Economic systems where value is based on imaginative qualities rather than the traditional resources of land, labor and capital.* ~ John Howkins (2001)

A prominent opinion in today's marketplace is the view that *creativity* is the defining characteristic of 21st century economies, just as manufacturing was in the 19th and early 20th centuries. In addition to providing life changing experiences, educational opportunities and accessibility to diverse audiences, creative workers, artists and arts and culture organizations are important employers and economic engines. Investing in the creative economy gives Mankato a competitive edge. For south central Minnesota, it's been found that the combined economic impact of nonprofit arts organizations, their audiences and artists and creative workers exceeds $33 million annually (Creative Minnesota Report 2017).

Get Creative, Mankato is an outline for artistic, cultural and economic strength over the next ten years. The plan summarizes arts and culture values expressed by the larger community, what the community would like to see new or enhanced, and what would help the creative economy prosper in Greater Mankato. This plan will be used as an advocacy tool to garner support and investment in the creative sector.

Public Opinion based on the 2017 Creative Minnesota Report:

- 91% of Minnesotans believe that people who create art are contributing something important to their communities
- 90% of Minnesotans believe that arts & cultural activities help make Minnesota an attractive place to live and work
- 82% of Minnesotans believe it's important to have the opportunity to express themselves creatively or to experience the creativity of others every day

Get Creative, Mankato is organized into five overarching sections:

1. Community Design
2. Promotion and Support
3. Arts and Culture Access
4. Financial Resources
5. Tourism and Economic Vitality

Goal statements and priorities of each section based on community engagement:

Community Design: It is important to create spaces throughout the community that encourage creativity and innovation, enhance livability and aesthetics, serve the needs of creative businesses, individuals and nonprofits, highlight the unique history and identity of Mankato, and demonstrate high standards of design and accessibility in public spaces.

Priorities:

- Identification, development and promotion of Creative Districts.
- Establishment of Community Cultural Center and affordable spaces for creative work.

Promotion and Support: Mankato will experience a surge in arts and culture participation by creatives and their target audiences as the message and advocacy efforts of the value of arts and culture is strengthened.

Priorities:

- Identify the creative silos in our community to connect them to resources and to provide support.
- Strengthen creative resources to increase participation in arts and culture.

Arts and Culture Access: Everyone, regardless of background, in the Greater Mankato community will have equal access to arts and cultural learning at all stages of life, contributing to a welcoming community with a strong appreciation for the arts.

Priorities:

- Emphasis on diversity and inclusion to create a welcoming community.
- Offer diverse arts and culture learning opportunities relevant to our 21st century global society.

Financial Resources: Develop new funding resources for creative and cultural programs, individuals, businesses, and organizations while sustaining and maximizing current resources. Ensure that resources are made available to underserved populations, such as people whose first language is not English and people of all abilities.

Priorities:

- Diversify funding strategies for arts and culture initiatives.
- Explore centralized sponsorship opportunity for arts and culture.

Tourism and Economic Vitality: Mankato will be a regional hub for creative and innovative businesses. The rich arts and culture found throughout Mankato will attract business, organizations, entrepreneurs, artists, residents and visitors.

Priorities:

- Explore ways to build on the intersection of creative economy and traditional market economy.
- Work toward positioning Mankato as an innovative and creative regional hub.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Join – The implementation team for *Get Creative, Mankato* will include representatives from Twin Rivers Council for the Arts, City of Mankato, City Center Partnership, Greater Mankato Growth, Visit Mankato, arts and culture organizations, and other stakeholders. Each team will focus on a specific section of the plan. Sign up to be on a committee to move the goals and objectives forward.

Invest – Review the full plan at www.mankatomn.gov determine where you would like to make an impact and support these initiatives with financial resources. Contact Twin Rivers Council for the Arts, City Center Partnership or City of Mankato Community Development staff to discuss the areas you are most passionate about.

Promote – Become an ambassador for *Get Creative, Mankato*. Spread the word that this this plan exists within your network, share updates on social media and help us share and celebrate the positive impact that arts and culture are having on our community.

Preface: Purpose, Values, and Vision

PURPOSE

Mankato is a culturally rich community where all forms of art and culture are valued and celebrated. The vitality of the arts, culture and historical sectors of our community flourish through the support, encouragement and fostering of public-private partnerships.

The benefits of arts and culture are extensive. Arts and culture can improve the quality of life through several means, including beautification, bringing the community and different cultures together, developing perspectives, making people more resilient, enhancing connections to our heritage, providing community identity, increasing civic participation, and reducing stress levels. Arts and culture activities attract residents and tourism that support adjacent businesses, providing a positive economic impact.

Under the City Center Renaissance Plan, an Arts, Culture and Community Enhancement (ACCE) committee was convened in 2007 where two methods to enrich the region were identified:

> *Developing a physical district that supports the arts: This district, located in the City Center of Mankato and coordinating with the City Center Renaissance plan, would be populated with arts and culture venues, museums, galleries, studio and rehearsal space, retail, residential and office space that enhances the community and attracts visitors.*
>
> *Developing a community culture that supports the arts: Mankato has a multitude of arts, cultural and historical organizations and events that improve the quality of life for residents and visitors. Promoting these existing assets and fostering new ones, encouraging diversity and educational opportunities and supporting an entrepreneurial spirit can benefit both the community spirit and economic vitality of the region.*

The *Get Creative, Mankato* process provides an update to the 2007 plan by defining through public engagement the public's arts and culture values, what the community would like to see new or enhanced, and what would help the creative economy flourish in Mankato.

VALUES

Several values emerged from the community engagement process as core, over-arching values for arts, culture and creativity in Mankato:

1. **Inclusion:** We value sharing (information, resources, processes); we value being a welcoming community to the immigrant or refugee, to the college student, to the new family, to all that call Mankato their home
2. **Collaboration:** We value working together, recognizing that when one person succeeds, we all benefit; that there is strength in numbers; that there is enough for everyone.
3. **Discovery:** We value everyone's story – including our own; we are intentional about reaching out and inviting those on the fringes, ignored, without voice to the table to hear their stories. We will discover and uncover truths about ourselves and use art to build a more compassionate and inclusive community.

VISION

In 2028, Mankato identifies as a creative community, having developed an atmosphere where arts, culture, heritage and creativity are integral to the fabric of everyday life. A multitude of arts, cultural and historical organizations and events enhance the quality of life for residents and attract visitors, and the public is strongly supportive of these creative initiatives and institutions. Residents have equal opportunities to learn and create, finding inspiration from the talent and inventiveness that surrounds them. Drawn and nurtured by our community's appreciation for creativity and the energy it creates, creative entrepreneurial businesses thrive. The richness of our cultural assets and the strength of the creative economy heighten community pride and benefit the economic vitality of the region.






Planning Process

Get Creative, Mankato



The City of Mankato partnered with Twin Rivers Council for the Arts and the City Center Partnership on a planning effort to update the *Arts, Culture and Community Enhancement* (ACCE) *plan*, which was adopted in 2007.

The ACCE plan was completed in 2007 per *Envision 2020* and the *City Center Renaissance plan* to develop a community culture to support the arts, cultural organizations and events that improve the quality of life for residents and visitors. The plan also called for establishment of an arts and culture district and serves as an appendix to the *City Center Renaissance plan*.

Outcomes of the ACCE plan included the creation of Twin Rivers Council for the Arts, City Center Partnership, CityArt program, Greater Mankato Events website, Riverfront Park, Mankato Heritage Plaque program, Songs on the Lawn, Alive After 5, Hockey Night, Civic Center plaza, Heritage Preservation Commission, and Heritage Preservation Ordinance.

With significant progress to date on initial goals within the ACCE plan, an increased number of creative economy organizations, and new recognition among the public of the value of arts and culture in enhancing our community, an update was necessary for arts and culture to continue to flourish.

The process began by reconvening the ACCE committee to review the 2007 plan and determine what goals were met, relevancy of goals today, and to evaluate the success of realized initiatives. Two citywide community engagement sessions were held on February 21 and February 25, 2017, which included a brief presentation about the previous plan and current state of the arts, roundtable discussions, and a performance by local musicians.

The sessions were designed to bring together residents, artists and community members to engage on issues related to arts and culture. A pop-up museum of ideas provided a way for the public to communicate their "future creative Mankato" in an interactive, visual way, as part of the community engagement sessions. Over forty people participated in the community engagement sessions. Additionally, those unable to attend the community engagement sessions or focus groups were able to participate virtually via a community remarks page. The web page allowed users to map comments and leave general comments regarding arts and culture in Mankato.



Focus groups were also held throughout the community from March 9 through April 4, 2017 to dig deeper into specific priority areas: needs of the creative community, multiculturalism and the arts, promotion and support, and arts and culture education. Over 45 people participated in the focus groups. The steering committee formed a small working group for each section of the plan thereafter to review recommendations and provide feedback on the plan.

More than 40 people attended an open house on January 23, 2018 at the Emy Frentz Arts Guild to see the unveiling of the plan's recommendations. The open house included artwork by local artist, writer, and graphic designer, Gary Pettis. Mr. Pettis was selected through a community wide RFP process to create a visual display to communicate the essence of the vision of the plan. Mr. Pettis' visuals are included in the appendix. Attendees were asked to provide feedback via surveys which were available at the open house and online for those unable to attend. The plan recommendations were printed on a large scale for view and attendees were asked to write comments directly on the printout. The community expressed their support for the plan and its comprehensiveness. Feedback received from the community is included in the appendix.

Plan Recommendations

Overview

Recommendations have been developed to effectuate the plan and are based on input received at public engagement sessions, focus groups, online, and an open house. The plan is divided into five sections:

1. Community Design
2. Promotion and Support
3. Arts and Culture Access
4. Financial Resources
5. Tourism and Economic Vitality

Another dominant theme that arose throughout the process was multiculturalism and diversity. The community values multiculturalism and believes it should be reflected within each section.

Each recommendation is followed by a matrix of suggested implementation tactics that include the following:

Implementers: suggested, based on input from the community as to possible roles and responsibilities.
Timeline: Short Term = 1 – 3 years Medium Term = 4 – 9 years Long Term = 10+ years
Models: referenced examples of programs from other communities.
Resources: financial, in-kind, and volunteer time are suggested.
First Steps: suggested to guide implementation of the recommendation.
Benefits/rationale: impact to the community from implementing the recommendation.
Evaluation Criteria: means of measuring completion of the recommendation.

Principal Recommendations of *Get Creative, Mankato*

The result of this process is this document: Get Creative, Mankato! The plan's vision, values, goals, and recommendations provide themes to develop tactical plans as opportunities and challenges arise. The goal of the plan is to develop a vision and make recommendations about how the city and its partners can build, strengthen and invest in people, places, communities and ideas that define culture within southern Minnesota. The plan also links other community planning efforts, including:

- City of Mankato Strategic Plan
- City of Mankato Transit Development Plan
- Old Town Master Plan
- City of Mankato Wayfinding Plan
- City Center Renaissance Plan
- City Center Open Space Plan
- Artspace Creative Spaces Consulting Report
- South Front Street Connectivity Plan

The following five ideas emerged as the most important principal recommendations of the Arts + Culture Plan:

- Identification, development and promotion of Creative Districts;
- Establishment of community cultural center and affordable spaces for creative work;
- Increase in funding strategies for arts and culture initiatives;
- Emphasis on diversity and inclusion to create a welcoming community; and
- Intersection of creative economy and the traditional market economy.

Community Design

Public spaces are vital to creating opportunities to gather, create and share. The American Planning Association and Project for Public Spaces provides guidance in creating great public spaces with the following characteristics:

- Offer reasons to linger and return
- Comfortable and clean
- Conduits of sociability
- Ample seating
- Safe, welcoming, and accommodating for all users
- Visually compelling
- Reflect the local culture or history
- Relate well to bordering uses
- Have unique or special character
- Have design and architectural features that are visually interesting

Parks and other public spaces found throughout Mankato should be enhanced to tell the story of each neighborhood's distinct cultural and historical identity. The distinct attributes of these neighborhoods should be augmented to enhance the city's livability and to attract visitors. New public spaces should be created as appropriate.



Additionally, as the city of Mankato continues to build its public art collection and programming, it is important to put clear guidelines and expectations in place to support the artist, ensure consistent quality, and maintain the public art assets to ensure their longevity. Policies should be established regarding locating/relocating, commissioning/decommissioning, and maintaining public art. Adoption of a public art ordinance will provide a legal basis for a public art program and should be evaluated.

The city of Mankato and its citizens have a history of supporting large scale cultural venues, as seen with the creation of Riverfront Park amphitheater and most recently the expansion of the Verizon Center into a multi-use event center. Community engagement meetings and focus groups continue to express the need for affordable, flexible and viable performance space for the performing arts and more intimate events.

During the public engagement process, there was much interest in varying facets of public art. The Mankato area is comprised of talented artists whose talents should be tapped.

Community Design Goal: Spaces will be created throughout the community that encourage creativity and innovation, enhance livability and aesthetics, serve the needs of creative businesses, individuals and nonprofits, highlight the unique history and identity of Mankato, and demonstrate high standards of design and accessibility in public spaces.

Recommendation 1: Develop public art ordinance and policies to encourage and support diverse offerings of public art and creative placemaking projects throughout Mankato.

Public art can enhance the community and quality of life through integration into building design or public spaces. A public art ordinance and specific policies will guide Twin Rivers Council for the Arts, City of Mankato, other organizations and individual artists in growing the public art collection in a thoughtful, effective way. Written policies will outline desired locations for public art, a process for acquiring or commissioning art, and a clear plan for the maintenance of public art assets. Care should be take when crafting an ordinance and policies so that they do not result in discouraging growth of Mankato's public art assets. Policies should be simple and not too restrictive.



Implementers: Twin Rivers Council for the Arts, City Center Partnership, City of Mankato, art educators, artists, neighborhood groups.
Timeline: Short term (1 – 3 years).
Models: City of Saint Paul, Minnesota; City of Berkeley, California; How to do Creative Placemaking, National Endowment for the Arts.
Resources: Forecast Public Art, Springboard for the Arts
First Steps: 1. Adopt a public art ordinance and create public art policy that includes clear and simple processes for creatives wishing to complete public art projects and events. 2. Clearly communicate public art processes to the creative community and general public, including via public meetings and City of Mankato and Twin Rivers Council for the Arts websites. 3. Provide training to creatives on how to implement public art and creative placemaking projects.
Benefits/rationale: Public art enhances the community by adding to the quality of life and attracting tourism. This leads to a positive economic impact. Having a public art ordinance and public art policies in place will provide guidance for growing and maintaining public art assets.
Evaluation Criteria: Adoption of public art ordinance and public art policies; successful implementation; community support; increased number of public art projects.

Recommendation 2: Recognize and support naturally occurring creative districts within Mankato.

Creative districts will enhance and encourage the creative economy and draw visitors to Mankato while creating a sense of place for residents. Creative districts should include performance venues, cultural establishments, unique retail and hospitality establishments, offices, studio and residential space.



Identification and support of creative districts as they naturally occur will assist with marketing areas by highlighting their unique characteristics to draw interest and facilitate vibrancy. Arts, creative, cultural, heritage and/or historic districts should feature appropriate design and creative elements in future infrastructure projects to highlight the unique qualities of these districts and provide visual

cohesion. Visual cues, signage, interpretive plaques and public art are also important designators of these districts.

In 2016, Artspace, the nation's leading nonprofit developer of arts facilities, provided consulting services to evaluate the feasibility of establishing a creative district in Mankato; their report can be found within the appendix. Creative districts have the potential to naturally occur within different areas of the city, as evidenced in the recent organic growth in the Old Town neighborhood. The density of historic buildings and a variety of creative, local business, as well as the establishment of the Minnesota State University Mankato's Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, is a prime example of a naturally occurring creative district identified by the Artspace evaluation.



Implementers: City Center Partnership, City of Mankato, Old Town Collaborative Association, Lincoln Park Neighborhood Association, Washington Park Neighborhood Association, Minnesota State University-Mankato, Blue Earth County Historical Society, Twin Rivers Council for the Arts, Mankato Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Minnesota Makers and Artists Guild, Mankato Makerspace.
Timeline: Medium term (4 – 9 years).
Models: RiNO (Denver, Colorado); Lowertown (St. Paul, Minnesota); Sioux City, Iowa.
Resources: Artspace Creative Consulting Report (include link to report); Minnesota Main Street Program
First Steps: 1. Review and use the ArtSpace Creative Spaces Consulting Report completed in 2016 for Mankato. 2. Develop criteria to recognize naturally occurring creative and cultural districts; provide formal recognition of current and potential creative districts in Mankato. 3. Establish parameters of support the City can provide within these districts.
Benefits/rationale: Creative districts will enhance and encourage the creative economy and help draw visitors to Mankato, while creating a sense of place for residents. Creative districts include venues, retail, office, creative and residential space. Identification and support of creative districts as they naturally occur would assist with marketing the areas by highlighting their unique characteristics to draw interest and facilitate vibrancy.
Evaluation Criteria: Designation of district(s), community support, increased innovation and business creation in those districts, increased visitor traffic, ongoing vitality of districts.

Recommendation 3: Use art to reconnect to the Minnesota River.

Mankato was established in 1852 near the junction of the Blue Earth and Minnesota rivers. Its ideal location made the area accessible for trade and transportation, spurring growth in industry and agriculture. The river provided opportunities for the city to grow, but also brought challenges with flooding. The river provides an opportunity yet again to serve as an asset to be capitalized.

Community engagement sessions from the Mankato strategic planning process have shown high interest from the community in finding ways to connect to our water systems, increase recreational activity in and along the riverfront, and create an improved aesthetic in the riverfront areas of the City Center.



As opportunities arise to develop the area along the riverfront, creative spaces should be incorporated, as well as strategies to connect the riverfront with the rest of the community. Reconnection to the river may also be accomplished through public art or repurposing of existing structures, such as retrofitting existing spaces to allow for views of the river. Cultural events also provide opportunities to reconnect to the river, which played a key role in Mankato's development.

Implementers: City of Mankato, Army Corp of Engineers, City Center Partnership, downtown stakeholders, private developers.
Timeline: Long term (10+ years).
Models: St. Cloud, Minnesota – river walk; San Antonio, Texas – river walk; Milwaukee, Wisconsin – river walk; Tampa, Florida – river walk
Resources: Public and private sector funding; Grants may be available for public art installation, interpretive plaques, or events; opportunities may exist with Mankato Area Foundation, Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council, and State Historic Preservation Office. Mankato Strategic Plan
First Steps: 1. Research other redeveloped riverfront communities and examine best practices for incorporating art into the design, especially communities with flood projects. 2. Include art and culture in the redevelopment of Mankato's riverfront, both inside and outside the floodwall that will attract new business development, increase pedestrian traffic and recreational activity. 3. Develop creative spaces that connect to the Minnesota River and tell the story of its importance in Mankato's history.
Benefits/rationale: Community engagement sessions have shown high interest from the community in finding ways to connect to our water systems and create an improved aesthetic in the downtown. This would provide new ways for people to interact, attract visitors and artists to the community. Reconnecting the community to the river would leverage the river to attract new business development and economic growth, increasing recreational activity in and along the riverfront.
Evaluation Criteria: Improved access to the river and increased pedestrian activity.

Recommendation 4: Identify, enhance and create cultural facilities for creatives, residents and visitors.

Creative use of underused existing spaces can provide artists with affordable space for rehearsals, performances, creation and displays. In addition to providing a needed resource for creatives, this also benefits the greater community by allowing residents to experience additional arts and culture opportunities.

Throughout the public engagement process, artists and residents brought up the need for affordable spaces that facilitate the creative process and enhance the vitality of our community. Requests from the public include:

- Utilize and share the existing resources for outside the box venues (example parks, berms, food truck hub, temporary street closures, and vacant storefronts).
- Create a master list of venues, costs, and point of contact.
- Collaboration and partnerships to create mutually beneficial opportunities for multi-artistic and cultural venues and uses.
- Working with multiple users for storage and resources; example a shared warehouse.
- An affordable black box theater space for small theatrical, musical and dance productions and rehearsals.
- A maker space that might include welding equipment, shared kilns, pottery wheels, kitchen, 3-D printers, sewing equipment, specialty tools, etc. to allow community members to learn and express their creativity – "a place to go create." Could also be used for workforce development for skills such as welding and machining.
- Additional studio space for visual artists.
- Community sculpture center that provides workshops and opportunities to learn sculpting.
- Free skateboard parks with large-scale visual art incorporated.

Existing spaces, such as schools, universities, and churches, may be able to serve as venues for performances or studios. Partnerships should be developed to encourage low-cost access to existing spaces when they are not being used. Incentive programs can also be developed to assist nonprofits in establishing these spaces.

Implementers: Twin Rivers Council for the Arts, arts and culture nonprofits, local developers, City of Mankato.
Timeline: Medium term (4 – 9 years).
Models: Austin, Texas
Resources: Parks, berms, food truck hub, temporary street closures, and vacant storefronts; Post Office Reuse report.
First Steps: 1. Create a master list of current venues/facilities; include types of activities spaces can support (i.e. performance, studio space, maker space, etc.), costs, and contact. 2. Determine the space/facility needs of the creative community of Greater Mankato. 3. Identify partners willing to collaborate with creatives on additional facilities. 4. Follow up with donors and developers that have shown interest in the Post Office; utilize 2007 performing arts center research, costs and possible build out options. Research how other small-mid-sized cities fund their performing arts centers. 5. Research the feasibility of a designated Cultural Center that includes space for creative businesses and services, arts and cultural displays and activities, and rehearsals and performances. 6. Research and develop funding strategies for building owners who donate a portion of their space for noncommercial use (i.e. art installations; rehearsal; etc.). Identify the city of Mankato's support role in developing and offering funding strategies.
Benefits/rationale: Creatively using existing spaces and venues and providing a "one-stop shop" of resources. The benefits include ease of finding spaces and allowing creative design of spaces.
Evaluation Criteria: More venue opportunities and utilization, therefore creative options would be available to art and culture consumers.

Recommendation 5: Utilize the artist perspective in city design.

The City of Mankato will collaborate with Twin Rivers Council for the Arts (TRCA) on reviewing opportunities to incorporate public art into city projects. The City of Mankato should collaborate with TRCA on major initiatives and encourage creative collaboration across city divisions as an avenue to support local artists and bring new perspectives. The artist perspective should be considered across city divisions (parks, planning, public works, planning studies, ongoing street and sidewalk maintenance, programming of public spaces, etc.). This will allow local artists to participate in enhancing Mankato's livability.

Implementers: City of Mankato, Twin Rivers Council for the Arts.
Timeline: Long term (10+ years).
Models: Public Art Saint Paul – Saint Paul, Minnesota; Austin, Texas; Minneapolis Creative City.
Resources: City of Mankato Strategic Plan; City of Mankato Capital Investment Plan.
First Steps: 1. Establish a city Artist in Residence program. 2. Explore ways to include local artists in the Mankato Strategic Plan planning and implementation process.
Benefits/rationale: Artist in Residence programs can provide creative approaches to problem-solving and empower and support local artists.
Evaluation Criteria: Incorporation of public art in city projects.

Recommendation 6: Enhance quality of life and visitor experiences through public art and creative placemaking.



Fostering public art and creative placemaking opportunities will create conversation, enhance the quality of life and visitor experience and foster community pride. During the public engagement process, there was much interest in varying facets of public art and creative placemaking. These may include:

- Integrating art into infrastructure (sewer lids, tree grates, utility box wraps, murals, benches, bike racks, lighting, parks, etc.);
- Interpreting Mankato's unique heritage to assist with generating an appreciation of our heritage and instilling community pride;
- Creative placemaking utilizing neighborhood resources to promote and create community art opportunities;
- Streetscaping improvements to soften pedestrian realm (trees, ornamental plantings, lighting, banners, benches, etc.);
- Alleyway enhancements (landscaping, lighting, consolidation of parking); and
- Gateway enhancements (including entrances into Mankato from Highway 169).
- Identifying "Art Deserts" and creating "Art Oasis"

Implementers: Twin Rivers Council for the Arts, City of Mankato, City Center Partnership, Visit Mankato Partners: neighborhood associations, business and property owners, local artists and arts organizations.
Timeline: Short to medium term (1 – 9 years)/ ongoing.
Models: Miles of Murals – Chicago, Illinois; Cloud Gate (the bean), Millennium Park, Chicago, Illinois; Parking ramp enhancements – Louisville, Kentucky; Columbia, Missouri; Fort Collins, Colorado; Art in Public Spaces, Austin, Texas.
Resources: Forecast for Public Art; Springboard for the Arts; Artists; Grants may be available for public art installation; opportunities may exist with Mankato Area Foundation, Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council.
First Steps: 1. Identify areas where public art and creative placemaking opportunities may exist to enhance the visitor experience and city's livability. 2. Enhance gateways into the city and into the trail system with public art. 3. Create a large-scale public art piece that is unique to Mankato, as a tourism draw.
Benefits/rationale: Creates conversation, organic promotion of community, enhances visitor and resident experience and promotes pride in the community.
Evaluation Criteria: Implementation, attracting attention and visitors.

Promotion and Support

The Mankato community has shown increasing support of art and cultural initiatives, however, the community engagement process for this plan also revealed gaps. Many artists and community members are not aware of all of Mankato's cultural offerings. The community wants more collaboration on promotional efforts and needs administrative support to promote events and offerings. The community also revealed a gap in the types of diverse and multicultural experiences residents and visitors are looking for outside of Mankato. The Promotion and Support recommendations are suggestions generated by artists and community members to increase these offerings.

Creative community members, as well as those residents who patronize arts and culture, and those visitors who look upon Mankato as a place of artistic, musical, literary and historical experience, look for promotional campaigns that inform, are fun and serve scheduling needs.

The amount of engagement between individual artists and creative organizations needs to increase. Initiatives to actively support and enroll all of the talents and creative minds beyond the current reach will attract more people. Proactive support will bring in a greater number of participants.

Promotion and Support Goal: Mankato will experience a surge in arts and culture participation by creatives and their target audiences as the message and advocacy efforts of the value arts and culture is strengthened.

Recommendation 1: Recognize and support Twin Rivers Council for the Arts as the umbrella arts and culture council and arts commission for Greater Mankato.

Empowering and recognizing Twin Rivers Council for the Arts (TRCA) as the central resource for creatives will improve communication within the creative sector, increase creative opportunities, and expand resources and advocacy efforts. There should be inclusivity in representing all arts organizations and creatives. This builds on existing framework and resources.

Implementers: Twin Rivers Council for the Arts, Greater Mankato Growth, City of Mankato, City of North Mankato. Partners: TRCA, Visit Mankato, local creative economy.
Timeline: Short term (1 – 3 years).
Models: https://www.philaculture.org/; https://www.austincreativealliance.org/.
Resources: Membership/volunteer involvement, staff capacity building
First Steps: 1. Perform direct outreach to ensure the creative community understands the role of TRCA as Mankato's designated arts commission. 2. Recruit TRCA affiliates to serve at the board and committee level. 3. Involve TRCA affiliates in the organization's strategic planning process. 4. Update website content to expand affiliate presence, profiles and resources. 5. Present clear advantages/benefits for affiliation.
Benefits/rationale: Empowering and recognizing Twin Rivers Council for the Arts as the central resource for creatives improves communication within the creative sector, increases creative opportunities, and expands resources and advocacy efforts. Builds on existing framework and resources.
Evaluation Criteria: Increase in affiliate membership and involvement within the organization.

Recommendation 2: Design professional skill-building, team-building and networking programs for the creative economy. Organizations providing these programs should work together to determine offerings to provide expert service and avoid duplication.

Artists, creatives and nonprofit leaders benefit from high-quality continuing education and networking programs. Currently several organizations offer these types of programs, but there are gaps and duplication. Strategic partnerships and deliberate planning are necessary to ensure the creative community has access to opportunities and resources.

Networking and training opportunities for artists, creative, and cultural organizations will allow for growth and development, creating a stronger base for arts and culture in the Mankato area. Offerings should continue to be built to provide creative entrepreneurs the skills and tools needed to succeed. New mechanisms should be explored such as fundraising training and workplace giving.

Implementers: Twin Rivers Council for Arts, Community Education and Recreation, Small Business Development Center, Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council. Partners: Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, Connect the Grey, Greater Mankato Growth, 410 Project, Carnegie Art Center, Minnesota State University Mankato, Bethany Lutheran College, South Central College, Mankato Makerspace, School Sisters of Notre Dame, Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, ISD 77.
Timeline: Short term (1 – 3 years) / ongoing.
Models: Springboard for the arts "Business of Art" / "Work of Art" curriculum; Connect the Grey "Explorations"; Twin Rivers Council for the Arts "Spark"; Creative Mornings; Iowa City MC Ginsburg artist in residence program & visiting author program; NEA – Creativity Connects: https://www.arts.gov/partnerships/creativity-connects; Anderson Center for the Arts, Red Wing, Minnesota: http://www.andersoncenter.org/video.html; Arts in Oil City Program: http://www.artsoilcity.com/.
Resources: staff time; technology resources; funding for facilitators and/or curriculum; implementers as identified above.
First Steps: 1. Inventory the current curriculum offered in Mankato. Look for gaps in programming and determine organization(s) best suited to fill the gap. 2. Develop online tools/resources for individuals to complete learning in their own time/at their own pace. 3. Invest in "train the trainer" workshops to increase number of teachers/facilitators in Greater Mankato. 4. Develop a list of teaching artists and facilitators who can provide ongoing training to creatives **(related to Recommendation 1 in Arts and Culture Access).** 5. Survey area creatives on the types of networking events they are looking for. Develop consistent, relevant programming to build community among creatives. 6. Establish arts and culture liaisons for the business, nonprofit and education sectors to strengthen ties between artists, arts/culture organizations and larger community. a. Start a dialogue with school administrators to introduce the concept and discuss available options. b. Start a dialogue with social service agencies to gauge interest. c. Discuss interest in an Artist in Residence program with local art centers and other organizations. d. Partner with university faculty and/or graduate students to develop the liaison models. e. Provide support to leaders of immigrant communities to act as liaison; disseminating information, facilitate and host community meetings within these populations.
Benefits/rationale: Cross promotion of curriculum offerings; new skills and partnerships being formed; increase the types of events and projects being done across the city. Strengthen ties between arts/culture organizations and the larger community.
Evaluation Criteria: Participation, new partnerships, new skills. Liaisons engaged, creation of network, evaluate feedback from stakeholders and residents about experiences and learning.

Recommendation 3: Determine who is seeking to earn a sustainable income from artistic endeavors. Provide coaching on the multi-step process from Hobby Creative to Professional Creative. Build up creatives to value their work and build a community that values and supports our local creative economy.

In order to provide education and resources to entrepreneurial creatives, it is important to know who they are and what resources they need to succeed. For local artists to succeed financially in Mankato, the community needs to value arts and form the habit of purchasing local artwork and paying for artistic and cultural experiences. Marketing efforts may support this recommendation. It may also be helpful to communicate where local artwork can be purchased.

Implementers: Twin Rivers Council for the Arts. Partners: Greater Mankato Growth, Small Business Development Center, Connect the Grey, University arts and humanities departments, Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council.
Timeline: Short term (1 – 3 years).
Models: CreativeMN research model; Boulder artists census survey; Creative Lexington videos.
Resources: staff time, graduate students; online technology to gather data; videographer to create professional creative profiles.
First Steps: 1. Conduct a comprehensive survey to determine who identifies as a "hobby" artist, "emerging" artist and "professional" artist. Determine through the survey the number of artists who want to remain hobby vs those who want to earn a sustainable income from their art. 2. Offer peer learning (panel discussions, videos) from local creatives who transitioned from hobby to professional artist. Encourage hobby artists to see the value of their art medium to the community. 3. Encourage businesses to commission and/or purchase local artwork; provide information on the commissioning process. 4. Establish a youth art fair for K-12 and college artists. 5. Encourage small retail businesses to carry local artists' artwork. 6. Research an artist co-op retail gallery and develop a network of artists to manage it (long term goal).
Benefits/rationale: Gain a better understanding of who our creative audience is and how to serve them.
Evaluation Criteria: Survey participation and growth in professional creatives.

Recommendation 4: Establish creative profiles according to primary areas of interest (i.e. traditional art forms, emerging art forms, and professional services).

Twin Rivers Council for the Arts (TRCA) should build and strengthen creative directories to increase knowledge, encourage partnership, create connection, and build trust. TRCA and Visit Mankato should amplify the presence of Mankato arts/culture throughout the region and state.

Implementers: Twin Rivers Council for the Arts.
Timeline: Short term (1 – 3 years).
Models: https://www.MnArtists.org; https://www.austincreativealliance.org/members/#!directory; Southern Minnesota Visual Art Gallery Alliance; Boulder, Colorado – Dance Bridge.
Resources: Staff time, funding.
First Steps: 1. Identify the creative silos found in Greater Mankato and leaders who can bring the individuals/groups together. 2. Create opportunities for creative silos to come together, share what they do and their unique, specific needs. 3. Encourage artists to become TRCA affiliates and be listed in the local directory; encourage artists to create a profile on Mnartists.org. 4. Create a series of sub-brands to market specific local creative silos and use these sub-brands to draw attention to the talents and capabilities of the overall art and culture community (i.e. Mankato Arts, Mankato Music, Mankato Makerspace, Mankato Theatre, etc.).
Benefits/rationale: Develop a clearing house for various creative silos to increase networking, knowledge, partnership; build trust – tear down walls; build a larger presence of Mankato arts/culture throughout the region and state.
Evaluation Criteria: Number of artists participating in these directories; use of directories by people and organizations looking for creatives.

Arts and Culture Access

Arts and cultural learning enhances school achievement and attendance, contributes to healthy youth development, and instills problem solving and creative thinking skills. Arts and culture education should

be a priority in the community, providing resources that create opportunities for artists to teach and for the community to learn.

Arts and culture should be included within all levels of education and opportunities should be available for all ages. Offerings for special and advanced instruction should be available in greater Mankato to diminish the need to travel to advance one's skills or knowledge.

Retention of students will support the growth of Mankato's creative economy if opportunities are provided. Students come to Mankato to study at colleges and universities and often leave upon graduation; for some it is because there is a lack of opportunities for them to grow their creative abilities and share their crafts. It is important to support these individuals and provide opportunities for them to continue to learn and grow and inspire future generations.

Education and exposure to different cultures within Mankato, past and present, is another area that should be a priority. This would promote cultural awareness and sensitivity. Offerings may include food, arts, and language. Creation of a cultural center could provide a location to house the offerings. A community based mural could provide learning opportunities in designing and creating the mural, along with an opportunity to illustrate the cultures of Mankato, past and present.

Arts and Culture Access Goal: Everyone, regardless of background, in the Greater Mankato community will have equal access to arts and cultural learning at all stages of life, contributing to a welcoming community with a strong appreciation for the arts.

Recommendation 1: Offer diverse arts and culture learning opportunities to the public that include creative offerings relevant to our 21st century global society, retaining old knowledge along with gaining new knowledge and skills. Ensure that creative instructors are adequately compensated.

Individuals of all ages and backgrounds would benefit from cultural experiences and/or education that they currently seek outside of Mankato such as ethnic food, multicultural events, museums and a broader offering of fashion and music. These offerings and opportunities create community, broaden knowledge and understanding, and encourage critical and creative thinking skills. It is important to ensure that teaching artists and other creative instructors are adequately paid for their work to allow higher quality teachers and opportunities to expand and build curriculum offerings.

Mankato is fortunate to be the home of talented artistic and creative individuals, ranging from students in elementary school to graduate school, to retired individuals looking to reconnect to their passions. Arts and culture should be included within all levels of education and opportunities should be available for all ages. It was uncovered during the community engagement process that the community's older population desires more options for creative learning, including theater, choirs, bands, etc. that prominently feature older adults.

Education and interpretation on different cultures within Mankato, past and present, is another area that should be a priority. This would promote cultural awareness and sensitivity.

Implementers: Twin Rivers Council for the Arts, Universities, ISD 77, Creative business sector, arts and culture teaching organizations (410 Project, Mankato Makerspace, Carnegie Arts Center, Community Education and Recreation, Theater, Dance, etc.), Blue Earth County Historical Society, Mankato Heritage Preservation Commission, Mdewakanton Sioux.
Timeline: Medium term (4 – 9 years).
Models: http://imagination.org/our-projects/imagination-chapters/; http://springboardforthearts.org/; http://think360arts.org/; http://www.lifetimearts.org/institute/; http://www.ruralartsandculturesummit.com/ ; https://www.openbadgeacademy.com/home
Resources: Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council, Minnesota Historical Society.
First Steps: 1. Survey residents to see what they currently participate in and what they want. 2. Develop comprehensive index of current arts and cultural experiences offered (and who they are offered by), with gaps in offerings identified. Update index to reflect additions and share information with the community. 3. Identify diverse groups who could provide new cultural offerings to supplement existing programs. Additions could include design incubators in schools, businesses, and community organizations. 4. Offer opportunities for youth and young adults to be exposed to creative career options: Creative Career Conference; expanded summer programming; and internships and work study programs connected to creative careers. 5. Develop teaching artist roster and research/develop models for paying teachers that encourage retention **(related to Recommendation 2 in Promotion and Support).**
Benefits/rationale: Supports individuals with an interest in arts and cultural experiences and/or learning who might otherwise leave or seek experiences outside of Mankato. Creates a continuous experience of community through differing age groups in the community. If teaching artists are adequately paid, the result will be higher quality teachers and the opportunity to expand and build curriculum offerings.
Evaluation Criteria: Survey results, index creation, track participation/engagement and data/feedback from offered programming. Summarize findings, reflect on findings and determine if model will continue.

Recommendation 2: Develop supports to ensure all citizens of Greater Mankato have access to arts and culture learning and experiences.

Real and perceived barriers prevent all residents from equally accessing arts and cultural opportunities. Barriers include cost, childcare, transportation/mobility issues, language, and fear of being unwelcome or out of place. Simple actions and partnerships can provide increased access to the community and make arts and culture more inclusive.

Mankato continues to become more diverse, and intentional efforts should be made to celebrate the entire community. Increased multi-cultural offerings will assist in building diverse audiences. The community noted during the engagement process that one of the main reasons for leaving Mankato was to be immersed in different cultures or to attend multi-cultural events.

Intentional efforts should be made to form partnerships with diverse organizations. Through public engagement, it was discussed that that immigrant populations are more likely to participate in cultural offerings if they see themselves represented. Diverse populations in general (i.e. people of color, people with disabilities, LGBTQ, older adults, etc.) are under-represented in Greater Mankato cultural offerings. It was discussed that new Americans are struggling to meet basic needs (i.e. housing, employment, safety, etc.), therefore, involvement in arts and culture is not a priority. Partnerships can serve to mentor new immigrant populations on resources available in the community. Examples include how to find and write a grant, training on sewing to make cultural garments not found in locally, and creative job skills training to help in finding employment.

Implementers: Twin Rivers Council for the Arts. Partners: VINE Faith in Action, YWCA, Minnesota Council of Churches, Greater Mankato Diversity Council, Minnesota Valley Action Council, Open Door Health Center, Lincoln Community Center, library systems, childcare facilities, cultural facilities, transportation systems, art/culture organizations

Timeline: Short to Medium term (1 – 9 years).
Models: Eagan Puppet Wagon (https://www.cityofeagan.com/puppets); Minneapolis Art Lending Library (http://www.artlending.org/); http://www.artlending.org/; http://www.artlending.org/other-art-lending-libraries.html; http://www.act1az.org/faq/
First Steps: 1. Create an Arts Access Pass that would allow residents free access to arts and cultural experiences. 2. Develop an Art Lending Library: Individuals and businesses check out original local artwork for a specific time period for free. 3. Create an Arts Mobile gallery on wheels; bring multiple art forms to various parts of the community. 4. Build partnerships to offer childcare to families so that they can attend cultural events; publicize cultural events where children are welcome. 5. Build networks for people seeking companions to attend cultural events if they are uncomfortable going alone. 6. Host under 21 nights so that young adults can enjoy performances in a unique and fun setting. 7. Explore how to improve transportation to and from events; especially on weekends. Develop networks to provide affordable, safe transportation options. 8. Work with leaders of immigrant communities to ensure new Americans feel welcome attending arts and cultural events in our community.
Benefits/rationale: Provide increased access to the community and making arts and culture more inclusive. Retention of arts and culture community.
Evaluation Criteria: Number of artists/cultural leaders served. Increase in community arts participation, especially among members of underserved populations.

Recommendation 3: Provide cultural education to the community about Greater Mankato's rich heritage and changing cultural community.

Mankato has a rich heritage that has been influenced many cultural communities, from the native Dakota through waves of migrants to the recent new Americans. In order to develop pride in the community and understanding of our heritage and culture, programs should offer historic and civic education and stimulate creative engagement in future community participation and planning. Programs should work to remove barriers and encourage diverse participation. Community education and outreach on the City's history, heritage and historically significant properties will build support for preservation efforts, instill community pride and increase heritage tourism opportunities.



The City Center Renaissance plan and Old Town master plan highlighted the importance of historic preservation. The community also noted their appreciation for historic properties and our community's heritage during the community engagement process for this plan.



Historic designations mean the property or district is significant and worthy of recognition and protection. There are two types of historic designations, either at the local level (heritage preservation landmarks /districts) or at the national level (National Register of Historic Places).

The city's Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) makes recommendations to the City Council that certain properties be locally designated as heritage preservation landmarks and districts. The HPC reviews construction activity affecting the exterior of buildings and properties that are locally designated. The design review is not to prevent change, but rather guide change through review of exterior alterations so that they do not jeopardize the historic integrity of the building and property.

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of properties worthy of preservation; this listing is an honorary designation. Review of alterations to properties listed on the National Register require review by the State Historic Preservation Office and National Park Service only if the project uses federal funds.

Historically significant properties should continue to be surveyed and designated and their historic significance should be communicated to the public. Means of communicating the city's heritage include signage (interpretive plaques, gateway signage, signs on historic buildings), mapping of historic resources, historic walking tours and brochures, audio tours, historical performances, and mobile apps.

Implementers: Blue Earth County Historical Society, Neighborhood Associations, theaters, City of Mankato Heritage Preservation Commission, Visit Mankato, City Center Partnership, Mahkato Mdewakanton Association, Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota.
Timeline: Short term (1 – 3 years) - long term (10+ years) / ongoing.
Models: Small Towns Big Ideas; Great American Think Off, New York Mills MN (https://www.kulcher.org/think-off/the-great-american-think-off/); Dane Dances (http://www.danedances.org/); Mobile Saint Paul; https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/city-council/services/mobile-saint-paul; National Trust for Historic Places; heritage tourism; Berkely Historical Plaque Project; http://berkeleyplaques.org/.
Resources: Minnesota Historical Society, Blue Earth County Historical Society, City of Mankato, Mankato Free Press, Minnesota Council of Churches, Greater Mankato Diversity Council, other local cultural/historical societies, Mahkato Mdewakanton Association, neighborhood associations, City of Mankato Historic Context Study; Grants may be available through the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) for heritage tourism projects; Grants may be available through the Mankato Area Foundation.
First Steps: 1. Gather information from the community, cultural and historic organizations about important elements of Mankato's heritage and community identity. 2. Hold workshops with the larger community to identify diverse key groups, leaders and resources that could foster cultural partnerships. 3. Develop (a) festival(s) that highlight Mankato's history, heritage and rich cultural diversity. 4. Include Dakota language as a companion to Dakota interpretive signage. 5. Commission and install public art that tells the story of Mankato's diverse populations, from the native Dakota through immigrants from European countries to the newest Americans from Latin America, Somalia and Sudan. 6. Designate Heritage landmarks and districts. 7. Complete the river history walk and the history wall within Mankato Place Mall. 8. Identify project recommendations within the Mankato Historic Context Study. 9. Explore programming to communicate the city's heritage, including interpretive plaques, gateway signage, historic designation markers, mapping of historic resources, historic walking tours and brochures, audio tours, historical performances, and mobile apps.
Benefits/rationale: To build support for preservation efforts, instill community pride and increase heritage tourism opportunities. Create wider understanding and appreciation for the area we live in. Remove barriers in communication and foster a sense of connection to place and civic engagement citywide. Offer context for who we are as a community today; stimulate thinking to create ideas/possibilities about future roles in our community; strengthen ties to community/citizenry by protecting the heritage and cultural assets that the community feels are important.
Evaluation Criteria: Feedback from community stakeholders, formation of partnerships with diverse groups, direct exchanges of information and learning between city and citizen groups, creation of communication through sharing of sharing of knowledge and cultural heritage through multiple venues and mediums. Designation of district(s) and landmarks, community support, historic tours, increased historical promotion and presence in those districts, increased visitor traffic, ongoing vitality of districts.

Financial Resources

Mankato is a generous community, supporting arts and culture with both private and public funds. Community engagement meetings around the issue of funding revealed that potential donors are not

aware of all the possible arts funding opportunities available. Nonprofit organizations expressed the scarcity of operational support grants, noting the burden of needing to create new programming in to receive grant dollars. There is a level of competition among the arts and culture organizations for funding and more collaboration is needed among the sector in order to build a positive unifying message around the positive impact that supporting the arts brings to the community.

Funding Goal: Develop new funding resources for creative and cultural programs, individuals, businesses, and organizations while sustaining and maximizing current resources. Ensure that resources are made available to underserved populations, including people whose first language is not English and people of all abilities.

Recommendation 1: Incorporate public art funding into new City construction.

Communities across the nation are adopting policies and programs to build and support their public art collection. Some communities adopt a Percent for Art program where a predetermined percentage of project costs for public facilities is used to incorporate public art (in some cases, only public improvements over a certain cost threshold are required to participate). A Percent for Art program should be explored for incorporating public art for new city facilities, buildings, or major renovations for projects that exceed $1,000,000. A percentage of the project costs could to public art at the project site or at another location within the City.

Implementers: City of Mankato, Twin Rivers Council for the Arts, Public Art Advisory Committee. Partners: artists, developers.
Timeline: Medium to Long term (4+ years).
Models: RiNo Art District BID (Denver, Colorado); Duluth, Minnesota Percent for Art; St. Paul, Minnesota Percent for Art; East Lansing, Michigan Public Art Ordinance, Missoula, Montana Public Art.
Resources: Staff to research, Public Art Fund along with impact to cost.
First Steps: 1. Research best practices to identify the best model for Mankato. 2. Communicate current status of public art programming and what public art is planned for the future to help build community interest and enthusiasm for the program. 3. Develop a draft recommendation for the consideration by the City Council after public engagement with stakeholders including community members, developers, artists, city officials, and Twin Rivers Council for the Arts.
Benefits/rationale: Will encourage and support the vitality and growth of arts and culture in Mankato.
Evaluation Criteria: Support from community stakeholders; approval of the program fund.

Recommendation 2: Diversify support to encourage investment in arts and culture activities.

A variety of arts funding mechanisms and programs would ensure adequate support for creative activities and projects in Mankato. It is important to educate residents on the importance of donating to arts and culture and to provide easy mechanisms to do so. In addition, current funding support for investment in the creative economy should be publicized, and new support should be considered. When considering establishment of new support strategies, the City should focus on whether the strategy will encourage and support the goals of this plan and the recommendations and outcomes supported by the community.

Support strategies should encourage installation of public art, installation of heritage plaques, heritage tourism, building rehabilitation, historic preservation, and the establishment and retention of creative businesses.

The City of Mankato has maintained a wish book which highlights opportunities that the community can realize through donations. The city has been fortunate to have many of the items realized throughout the years. Similar to a crowd funding platform, the city establishes a funding goal for a particular Wish List project. An online giving portal could show the progress made on the fundraising goal for each project. Once the goal is reached, the project would be completed.

An avenue for a round-up for the arts campaign should be explored where an option would be provided to donate to the arts by rounding up a purchase or utility bill to the nearest dollar. Proceeds could go to support art projects within the City. Twin Rivers Council for the Arts (TRCA) serves as the arts commission for the cities of Mankato and North Mankato and is the local organization that also serves to represent the needs of the various artists and arts organizations. TRCA may serve as the organization to collect contributions to then disperse proceeds to support arts and culture in the community.

A special service district, also known as a business improvement district (BID), is a public/private partnership in which property and business owners of a defined area, through a defined cooperative review process, elect to make a collective contribution to the maintenance, development and marketing/promotion of a district. Property owners must be the lead and petition for establishment of a special service district. BIDs typically provide services such as street and sidewalk maintenance, public safety officers, streetscape maintenance, marketing, capital improvements and various development projects. BIDs tend to be most successful if they are generated from a private sector interest. An example is the South Front Street Special Service District where property owners pay for the increased level of services through service charges which are based on property values, as determined by the Blue Earth County Assessor. Fees collected were also used to provide streetscaping improvements.

Implementers: Twin Rivers Council for the Arts, Greater Mankato Growth, City of Mankato.
Timeline: Short term (1 – 3 years).
Models: Boulder County Arts Alliance Community Arts Fund. https://www.bouldercountyarts.org/caf_faq; Articulture. https://www.articulture.org/donate/; Columbia Arts Fund. https://www.como.gov/arts/columbia-arts-fund/; Lincoln Arts Council. https://artsceneorg.presencehost.net/get-involved/donate.html; City of Fredericksburg, Virginia; RiNo Art District BID (Denver, Colorado);
Resources: Grant funds may be available to develop web page to serve as the host to donate funds to a specific wish list project; opportunities may exist with Mankato Area Foundation, Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council; publicity needed to market and promote the community arts fund.
First Steps: 1. Establish a Creative Community Arts Fund that supports local arts and culture initiatives, including a "wish list" of public art projects; publicize to the community and encourage donations. Develop criteria for use and dispersal of Community Arts Fund donations; these criteria should incorporate means to support diverse and underserved artists and organizations. 2. Investigate a Round-Up for the Arts program, which provides residents the option of rounding up their utility bill for arts/culture activities/programming. Direct donations to Community Arts Fund. 3. Investigate establishment of a Business Improvement District that supports the arts through property/business owner petition. 4. Publicize existing funding to developers and property owners; investigate if additional funding strategies would benefit the goals of this plan.
Benefits/rationale: Allows the community to make an impact no matter how big or small the amount is. Will encourage and support the vitality and growth of arts and culture in Mankato.

Evaluation Criteria: Improved utilization of existing resources, growth of creative sector in Mankato.

Recommendation 3: Explore a centralized sponsorship for the arts

By pooling efforts together, nonprofits may broaden their outreach and audience. An organized approach to fundraising efforts among nonprofit arts and culture organizations would limit the amount of daily requests to individuals and businesses, and would support small nonprofits administratively. A comprehensive marketing sell on sponsorship needs could be created as a flyer to provide to area individuals and businesses who might be interested in sponsoring arts and culture events and programming.

Implementers: Twin Rivers Council for the Arts. Partners: nonprofit arts and culture organizations; individual artists.
Timeline: Short term (1 – 3 years).
Models: Greater Mankato Growth marketing opportunities book.
Resources: Grant funds may be available to develop a web page to serve as the host to donate funds to the centralized sponsorship for the arts or to develop a marketing sell; opportunities may exist with Mankato Area Foundation, Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council; publicity needed to market and promote the centralized sponsorship.
First Steps: 1. Identify nonprofit arts and culture organizations willing to combine fundraising efforts. 2. Identify eligible activities for utilization of funds and structure of options to donate to specific activities and/or organizations. 3. Create a comprehensive marketing sell sheet on annual arts/culture sponsorship needs and target to individuals and businesses who are interested in sponsoring arts and culture events, programming and projects.
Benefits/rationale: By pooling efforts together, nonprofits may broaden their outreach and audience. Limit the number of "asks" to businesses by arts nonprofits; one-stop-shop on sponsorship opps available to the community. An organized approach to combine fundraising efforts among nonprofit arts and culture organizations would limit the amount of daily requests to individuals and businesses, and would support small nonprofits administratively.
Evaluation Criteria: Successful marketing of the site and receipt of donations.

Recommendation 4: Provide resources and education to creatives on opportunities for grants, funding, scholarships, and crowd funding, as well as freelance/employment opportunities.

A centralized source of information on funding opportunities will make it easier for individual artists and small organizations to find resources vital for operations and growth. Continued education and skill development is important in our rapidly changing landscape.

Implementers: Twin Rivers Council for the Arts, Prairie Lakes Council for the Arts, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, Mankato Area Foundation, schools/universities, City Center Partnership, Greater Mankato Growth.
Timeline: Short term (1 – 3 years).
Models: Greater Mankato Growth ops book; http://www.Creative-Capital.org; Springboard for the Arts, Minnesota Council of Nonprofits; Kick Starter.
Resources: Staff time, facilitators, curriculum. Grant funds may be available to develop a web page to serve as the host to donate funds to the centralized sponsorship for the arts or to develop a marketing sell; opportunities may exist with Mankato Area Foundation, Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council; publicity needed to market and promote the centralized sponsorship.
First Steps: 1. Consolidate all funding information in one place on the Twin Rivers Council for the Arts website. 2. Provide financial workshops (i.e. grant writing, business plan development, independent contractor proposals, fundraising/development skills, information sharing for creative entrepreneurs and nonprofits) on a regular basis according to the needs and interests of the creative community. 3. Create a freelance job board on Twin Rivers Council for the Arts website.

Benefits/rationale: Skill building and self-driven.
Evaluation Criteria: More funding and more projects completed. Increased private sector support.

Tourism and Economic Vitality

Tourism and Economic Vitality Goal: Mankato will be a regional hub for creative and innovative businesses. The rich arts and culture found throughout Mankato will attract business, organizations, entrepreneurs, artists, residents and visitors.

Recommendation 1: Work toward positioning Mankato as an innovative and creative regional hub. Advocate and support community recognition of the importance of arts experiences and arts and culture learning.

Mankato is facing a workforce shortage projected to last until 2030. As business and community leaders actively pursue ways to attract and retain talent, livability and community vitality are key. Strategic attention to the community's vitality will help attract and retain needed workforce. Workplaces and the community as a whole must adapt to the talent shortage by becoming places talented workers clamor to be part of and where entrepreneurial students see a future for themselves. Enhanced partnerships between businesses and arts organizations will positively differentiate Mankato from other communities and provide revenue opportunities for creative organizations.

Arts experiences and arts and culture learning improves quality of life through shared vision. Research consistently shows the benefits of arts and cultural learning, which provide problem solving and creative thinking skills necessary for a 21st century workforce.

Businesses already in Mankato should be encouraged to take advantage of the creativity and innovation around them. Partnerships between the creative and business sectors can help businesses adapt to the changing workplace while providing revenue opportunities for creative organizations. Employees in all businesses should be made aware of opportunities to use the arts and culture to enhance their professional development – i.e. by taking an improvisation class to aid in public speaking or working with a poet to add flair to marketing copy.

Implementers: Twin Rivers Council for the Arts, Greater Mankato Growth, City Center Partnership, City of Mankato, Minnesota State University – Mankato Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, South Central College, Bethany Lutheran College, Rasmussen College, Gustavus Adolphus College, Connect the Grey, Twin Rivers Council for the Arts, Blue Earth County Historical Society (coalition similar to E2020 efforts), Community Education, school systems - including home school, library systems, arts/culture groups, community/social service groups, museums, health organizations.
Timeline: Ongoing.
Models: NEA Creativity Connects; Fort Collins, Colorado; Austin, Texas; Any Given Child Initiative: http://education.kennedy-center.org/education/anygivenchild/; New Horizons Band: http://www.iowacitynhb.org/; Arts access pass: http://www.act1az.org/faq/; NEA Partnership Plan.
Resources: Staff and volunteer time needed; training/consulting; Artspace; Springboard for the Arts; funding; NEA (https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/2017_NEAGuide-FINAL.pdf); board/volunteer time.
First Steps: 1. Identify barriers for creative/innovation entrepreneurs (i.e. affordable housing, codes, talent needs) and research best practices to reduce these barriers.

2. Educate the business community on opportunities to use local arts and culture assets to enhance professional development and adapt to the changing workplace.
3. Develop branding, marketing and communication plan for each creative district.
4. Form an advisory board with broad sector representation to develop plans for gathering and sharing information.
5. Research and gather information about how people encounter and experience arts and culture in Greater Mankato.
6. Develop a promotional campaign to share the value of arts and culture experiences and learning, highlighting opportunities available in Mankato. Provide and update a calendar with all arts and culture activities.
7. Support and promote collaboration between university and community organizations to share opportunities.
8. Bring performances and events to new spaces in the community, making particular efforts to reach diverse and underserved populations.

Benefits/rationale: Help to attract and retain needed workforce by contributing to the vitality of our community; differentiation from other communities for workers and businesses. Improves quality of life through shared vision.

Evaluation Criteria: Establish a baseline at 2017; evaluate changes in five years. Formation of a board, summary of information, survey, and reports on collaboration.

Recommendation 2: Develop partnerships between the corporate and nonprofit arts sector to show support for local arts and culture and encourage innovative thinking about business and community issues.

Businesses can use the arts to inspire employees, stimulate innovation and foster creative collaboration. The creative sector benefits by accessing the expertise, resources and leadership of business sector.

A number of Mankato businesses display original art in their public or private spaces for the enjoyment of their employees and visitors. Some of these businesses proudly display their employees' creative work. A toolkit could be developed for other businesses who would like to incorporate original art into their workspaces, but are unsure how to start. The community should develop a digital catalog of available work. This could include details on the lending library included in this plan, samples of local artists' work, resources for commissioning original work and information on displaying artwork.

Businesses who incorporate artwork into their workspace and otherwise celebrate creativity should be recognized. Tours can be developed of businesses that display art in their public and semi-public spaces to showcase the creative atmosphere that inspires innovation in Mankato's businesses.

An "arts mobile" can also offer opportunities to display art or to bring performance art to various parts of the community. This would provide increased access to the community and making arts and culture more inclusive.

Implementers: Twin Rivers Council for the Arts (committee or workgroup).
Partners: Blue Earth County Library, Minnesota State University-Mankato (library and arts department), higher education to create program, participating businesses, Greater Mankato Growth, design professionals, art students and local artists.

Timeline: Short term (1 – 3 years) / ongoing.

Models: League of Chicago Theatres; Fargo, North Dakota; Des Moines, Iowa; Eau Claire, Wisconsin; http://www.partnershipmovement.org

Resources: Staff and volunteer time; funding for quality photo and video; marketing knowledge/expertise.

First Steps:
1. Create a partnership program between for-profits and non-profits where businesses donate time, expertise, and/or services, providing opportunities for businesses to get involved in the creative community and give back. In return, creatives and arts/culture groups offer creative solutions, ideas, and/or experiences to the business.
2. Connect business leaders to nonprofit art/culture boards.
3. Incentivize employees to volunteer for arts related activities.
4. Develop Artist in Residence model for businesses **(related to Arts and Culture Access Section).**
5. Create a toolkit with information and resources on displaying art in a workspace. Make this available to marketing managers with marketing kit on how to publicize their support of arts and culture.

6. Create a toolkit for businesses on how to host pop-up art events at their offices. 7. Create a digital catalog of work available for loaned or purchased display at area businesses (may be combined with Art Lending Library included in the Arts and Culture Access section of this plan) which includes samples of local artists' work and resources for commissioning original work. 8. Create tours of businesses that display art and/or support other types of art mediums in their public and semi-public spaces to showcase the creative atmosphere that inspires innovation in Mankato's businesses.
Benefits/rationale: Businesses use the arts to inspire employees, stimulate innovation and foster creative collaboration. The creative sector benefits by utilizing the expertise, resources and leadership of business sector.
Evaluation Criteria: Creation of toolkit and catalog; number of participating artists and businesses; feedback from participants.

Recommendation 3: As a community, develop programs, strategies and collateral to market Mankato arts and culture.

The Mankato tourism brand, adopted and promoted by Visit Mankato, is built on outdoor recreation and arts and culture. While larger cultural events, like major concerts, Kiwanis Holiday Lights and the Mahkato Wacipi Pow Wow, draw visitors on their own, smaller events and organizations enhance the overall experience of those who come to Mankato for conventions, sporting events, healthcare, shopping, recreation and university visits.

Avenues should be developed to ensure Visit Mankato staff is knowledgeable about cultural and creative organizations and events. Twin Rivers Council for the Arts could facilitate regular meetings with Visit Mankato staff and staff/volunteers from arts and cultural organizations to ensure there is appropriate communication of opportunities that will be of interest to visitors. Visit Mankato and Twin Rivers Council for the Arts can provide guidance to artists and organizations on what types of collateral and information would be of most interest to visitors.

Mankato's residents should be empowered to be ambassadors for the artistic and cultural economy. The iKnow Mankato program provides information to frontline staff on the area's attractions and activities. Art and culture should feature strongly in this and similar programs. The iKnow program should be expanded to include the frontline staff within reception and admissions departments as well.

Visit Mankato's promotional materials should highlight information on arts and culture in Mankato. Cultural organizations should provide Visit Mankato with accurate information and high-quality visual assets.

Cultural and artistic events and venues should also be concierges for the greater community, providing information about Mankato's highlights and attractions to visitors and residents.

Implementers: Visit Mankato, Greater Mankato Growth, City Center Partnership, Twin Rivers Council for the Arts. Partners: Verizon Center, arts and cultural organizations, higher education.
Timeline: Short term (1 – 3 years) / ongoing.
Models: League of Chicago Theatres; Fargo, North Dakota; Des Moines, Iowa; Eau Claire, Wisconsin.
Resources: Staff and volunteer time; Funding for quality photo and video; Marketing knowledge/expertise.
First Steps: 1. Convene a gathering of tourism, arts and culture professionals to discuss best means of communication between arts and culture organizations, Twin Rivers Council for the Arts and Visit Mankato. 2. Create guidelines and provide services for the type of collateral artists and organizations should provide to Visit Mankato.

3. Ensure Visit Mankato's iKnow Mankato program, which provides information to frontline staff on the area's attractions and activities, includes arts and cultural locations and events. 4. Create a plan for cultural and artistic venues to be concierges for the greater community, providing information about Mankato highlights and attractions to visitors and residents. 5. Create a plan to empower Mankato's residents to be ambassadors for the artistic and cultural economy all year long (i.e. every season).
Benefits/rationale: Supporting local artists and creating welcoming creative workspaces.
Evaluation Criteria: Evidence of strengthened, cohesive relationships and communications, shared messaging creation, attendance at forums/education sessions.

Next Steps

1. An implementation team will be created to guide and document progress on this plan. This team should include representatives from Twin Rivers Council for the Arts, City of Mankato, City Center Partnership, Greater Mankato Growth, Visit Mankato, arts and culture organizations, and other stakeholders. This group will report annually on progress and recommend updates to the plan.
2. Twin River Council for the Arts, as the City's designated arts commission, will take the leadership role in the implementation of this plan. The responsibilities of City leadership and staff should also be defined. Creative and cultural leaders should also commit to furthering the goals of this plan by identifying the areas where they and their organizations can make an impact.
3. This plan should be publicized to the Greater Mankato community and community members encouraged to join the implementation efforts.

Appendix

Partner Organizations

- Bethany Lutheran College
- Blue Earth County Historical Society
- Carnegie Arts Center
- City Center Partnership
- Community Education and Recreation
- Connect the Grey
- Greater Mankato Diversity Council
- Greater Mankato Growth
- Linking For Good
- Mankato Area Foundation
- Mankato Makerspace
- Minnesota State University, Mankato
- Neighborhood Associations (Old Town Collaborative, Lincoln Park Neighborhood Association, Washington Park Neighborhood Association, Tourtellotte Park Neighborhood Association)
- Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council
- South Central College
- Southern MN Initiative Foundation
- The 410 Project
- Twin Rivers Council for the Arts
- Verizon Center
- VINE
- Visit Mankato
- YMCA
- YWCA

What arts and cultural activities do you regularly enjoy in Mankato?



What kinds of arts and cultural activities do you regularly leave Mankato to experience?



How can arts and culture play a role in enhancing our community?



What's your BIG IDEA for Mankato arts and culture?



Public Engagement Sessions, Public Comments, February 21 & 25, 2017

Question #1: What arts and cultural activities do you regularly enjoy in Mankato?

- Historical society
- Architecture
- outdoor restaurants
- alive after 5
- trails
- Mankato symphony orchestra
- Food, wine, and beer
- rive ramble
- promotion of the river in old town
- city parks
- library
- Minneopa State Park
- international festival
- MSU theatre,
- live music at the Coffee Hag
- Pub 500,
- Wine Café
- Mankato marathon
- performances at riverfront park
- blues on Belgrade
- poetry readings
- open mic nights
- retooling festival
- MSU international festival
- MSU concert series
- KMSU concerts
- local radio broadcasting
- pow-wow
- historical society events
- boy in blue events
- reconciliation ride at reconciliation park
- Kiwanis holiday lights
- book clubs
- murals
- poetry walk
- music events
- author events
- riverfront park concerts
- live music art bars
- ballet
- MSU theatre and merely players
- Betsy Tacy events
- songs on the lawn
- gallery exhibits
- old town arts fair
- north Mankato library arts fair
- chamber performances at Bethany
- symphony
- music
- live music at brewery
- Pan African conference at MSU
- twin rivers gallery
- standup comedy
- world talent competition at MSU
- international festival at east HS
- enjoy a variety of cultural events
- dialogue not found in smaller rural communities
- Tom Miller sculptures
- rib fest
- art truck
- outdoor stories
- river trail
- old town arts fair
- wineries and brewers
- bands at the 410 project
- outdoor art fairs
- community ED
- art classes at the 410 project
- arts by the river
- concerts
- ice sculptures
- open mic performances
- rural route dance ensemble
- MSU dance shows
- Satori Violet belly dance
- Lincoln community center
- riverfront park events
- hiking
- biking and skiing tracts
- shop small
- dancing with the stars
- art galleries
- photo club
- karaoke
- listen to all music
- photography online
- make/ sell jewelry
- Hubbard gardens or house
- Carnegie and Emy Frentz art exhibitions.

Question #2: What kinds of arts and cultural activities do you regularly leave Mankato to experience?

- Science museum
- major concerts
- fine art exhibits
- Grand Old Days
- major author events

- St. Peter open day Arts cooperative
- Nobel conference
- fine dining
- children's museum
- history center
- major league sports
- Northern Spark (climate change through art)
- ice houses
- winter carnival
- bed & breakfast experience
- Art crawl
- Minneapolis uptown art fair
- Native American history
- Edina arts festival
- Food
- Sculpture park
- sports events,
- drive- in movies
- parks
- multi-cultural experiences
- Duluth
- Shopping
- uptown arts festivals
- historic sites
- Walker
- log cabin theatre
- renaissance festival
- traveling shows
- experience more visuals through art or the people about diversity
- more diverse community
- historical museums for different cultures
- better shopping
- MN opera
- better food options
- update fashion options (big and tall)
- Weisman Museum at the University of Minnesota
- Walker and sculpture garden
- jazz (Dakota club)
- target center
- NE Minneapolis
- spoken word
- furniture
- black history month events
- Rochester Thursday
- farm America
- expand music genres
- no urban music
- need events more Mondays
- bigger name bands
- dry art
- DIY art
- vegetarian or vegan food festivals
- ethnic food
- churches
- mid-town global market
- farm to table.

Question #3: How can arts and culture play a role enhancing our community?

- Diversity
- Business
- destination location
- open mindedness
- great for kids
- colleges and universities
- grow the economy
- beautification
- transcend cultural boundaries
- shared experiences
- keep creativity in the curriculum – beyond sports
- give value to individuality
- art is an expression
- art and culture change minds
- perspectives and opinions
- get out of comfort zones
- have SSC host a global conference
- have MSU host an international festival
- create a low fuel economy
- create a place that we want to stay in
- get out of comfort zones
- create joy
- relief stress
- create a vibrant living environment
- creativity makes resilient people
- emotionally intelligent
- it's beautiful
- improves quality of life
- bring excitement
- it's fun
- promote businesses to come here
- bring people together over all and with other ethnicities
- it can blow your mind (painting electric boxes)
- social connections
- provide experiences through multiculturalism
- help kids and people develop as they get older

- bring more people to Mankato
- get more support from businesses
- bring in universities
- good for the economy
- make Mankato more attractive to students
- bring diversity of people businesses, and venues
- it can bring people together and anyone can enjoy it
- beautification
- art shows that people care= less crime and crime rates
- pride
- education tool (values and cultures)
- sense of place
- providing and living for artist and entrepreneurs brings quality of life and helps with attraction and retention
- art inspires art
- gets community to interact in new and different ways
- impacts local economy
- draws tourists
- marketing tool for Mankato
- makes kids smarter
- encourages creativity
- bridges or history and new ideas
- connects people
- new ideas
- shares stories
- draws visitors
- increases property values
- keeps people here and brings them back
- town pride
- fun
- jobs
- keeps kids in schools
- improves self-worth
- connects businesses and art organizations
- encourages youth engagement
- highlight rural community
- greater appreciation for different cultures
- increases student and citizen participation
- connects people
- aesthetics
- builds pride
- respect
- sense of place
- gives people a sense of loyalty and would care more
- economic impact
- shared experiences
- free things to do
- expands or mind and culture
- become more accepting
- draw people to Mankato, stability
- more museums
- galleries or events about cultures to make more community more vibrant
- improve transportation to make art more accessible
- improve general health and quality of life
- welcoming to new people
- education
- teaching
- modeling
- role playing to help get rid of ignorance
- many economic benefits, catalyst to think differently
- boosts local pride
- promotes cultural awareness
- provides community identity
- can lure new residents
- inspires creativity
- stimulates conversation.

Question #4: What's your BIG IDEA for Mankato arts and culture?

- Outside dance area
- art schools
- pop up galleries
- puppet parades
- expand art districts
- light display downtown
- bike share
- photo booths in parks
- food trucks
- inviting artists to talk and make art,
- more live music that is not in bars so all ages can enjoy it
- interactive sculptures
- colored flags
- flower sculptures
- art making outside

- more murals on flood wall
- alley art
- arts hub
- boat trips
- international market
- banner drops off bridge
- music practice areas
- community based murals
- green space
- street performance
- hand painted signage
- more festivals
- repaint signs
- benches that are sculptures
- roof top venues
- murals
- river walks restaurants/ culture
- Broadway show
- bridge from Land of Memories to Sibley park, a musical walk
- production studios (film, sound, and stage)
- interactive
- roof top venues
- information share workshops
- art center for kids
- add patio
- dinner theatre
- Old Hubbard silos
- light up vinyl wrap
- art center for kids
- coordinates and planned communication in order to get the work out
- artist
- yoga and art
- Old Town on Fridays
- greater Mankato events
- arts and culture marketing
- living artist wage (union?)
- public use space
- affordable and rentable gallery/ concert/ theatre flex space
- destination build a market regular venue
- popup markets
- outdoor movies at Riverfront Park
- Local author sculptures similar to snoopy sculptures
- an arts district with a marquee for arts information
- use old quarry for farmers markets
- restaurants or food trucks
- rooftop dining
- stories on the steps (personal story slam)
- river boat
- cultural center to retain and educate about cultures
- “history of here” historical events or activities about Mankato
- Arboretum
- Conservatory
- fountain in Washington Park
- Bringing MSU’s prominent speakers to the civic center as well
- more connectivity, permanent chalk wall that anyone can draw on
- tie culture and neighborhoods together
- revamp stage to provide a better atmosphere. Improve on landscaping, make flexible for theatre and other arts
- assistance with grant and business plan writing
- promote local artists
- more partnerships
- state fair- like events, sculptures in every park in order engage kids
- public transportation to get people home late at night
- more night options for people under the age of 21
- promoting resources available for small business owners
- have a sister city
- hosting international conditions subsidizing artist’s housing
- lights on flood wall
- plaques that highlight Mankato’s history
- creating an event that engages more kids
- street musicians
- a clear process for getting a performance permit
- archways
- gateways to old town district
- tour packages
- rotating graffiti mural
- poetry night
- Earth Day festival

- regular annual events outside
- more recycling bins
- graffiti art wall
- more areas to sit and enjoy native grasslands
- celebrate the river
- art trains to Mankato
- murals on silos
- Native American Dakota language classes
- affordable housing
- huge public access project to nontraditional spaces
- more art projects
- get rid of flood wall because it blocks the view of the river
- winter carnival
- move library to post office
- historical society
- make a flag for the city of Mankato

Community Focus Group: Funding

March 9, 2017, Shared Spaces

FORMER OVERALL GOAL: Develop a funding strategy to support our existing Arts and Culture Facilities and Organizations and encourage the location of residents, businesses, organizations, and facilities to create the Arts and Cultural District.

1. What are your priorities? (MAF)
    a. Looking to impact quality of life for the community – "Livability."
    b. Caretakers for donor advised funds – help to find people with big interests in the arts.
    c. Looking for that "big project" and is it a good fit.
    d. Does not support operational support.
    e. Mayo Health System has developed a "community outreach board" to get more involved in the community. Starting to understand health in a more holistic/wellness sense.
    f. Bush Foundation – primary focus is assisting communities of color.
    g. Bremer Foundation – looking to get more involved; not sure where they stand in terms of arts/culture priorities.

2. Are you aware of arts/culture activities? Adequately informed?
    a. Yes, most of the grants MAF receives are for arts/culture.
    b. Also meet with organizations one-on-one to hear about what they're doing and get a sense of the needs out in the community.

3. Many of the same businesses and individuals are asked repeatedly for sponsorships and donations. Would it be helpful to have one place/one way for businesses to give, to cut down on the amount of asks? Similar to the GMG marketing opps?
    a. Possibly – the schools do an "All City" ask for needs within the school system. One ask/once a year.
    b. Suggested a membership system. How could this benefit the entire arts community?

4. What kind of ROI are you looking for?

a. We're not. We are looking at impact vs. ROI; a visible result/change/shift in the community from the money invested.
b. We're the bricks and mortar people. We invest $40K to support operations, in-kind support from city staff, community grant and tax credits. Rehabilitation funding models.

5. How do we cultivate a culture of giving? Not just for the top level donors, but among everyone?
    a. All about relationships, and other donors encouraging others to give – to get on board.
    b. We need to provide training to our arts groups on how to fundraise.
        i. That is a grant that MAF would fund; training/education/skill building.
    c. Talk with United Way about how they work to develop a culture of giving and how they manage their workplace giving.
    d. Interested in exploring the idea of setting aside a percentage of Capital Improvement Projects bond money for art; this would potentially be about $26K – need to determine the legality and policy issues surrounding the bonding.
    e. This is something to explore/research – this added money is a step in the right direction if we want to do really cool, unique art in Mankato.
    f. Is the idea of Round up for the Arts on the utility bill still on the table?
        i. Yes – we are going paperless. I would suggest giving people the option of donating a dollar at the time of payment. This could be used for additional grant dollars.

MISC.

What about the Legacy dollars at the state level?

Only certain budget sizes are eligible for operating support grants. Other grant categories include: http://www.arts.state.mn.us/grants/

There is also our regional arts council (PLRAC) that manages a separate pool of Legacy money. The max amount that you can request is $8,000. Not much to do a major art project.

Community Focus Group: Multiculturalism

March 23, 2017, Craft Collective – Centenary United Methodist Church

The Craft Collective meets the fourth Thursday of every month from 5-7pm. They work on simple sewing projects, jewelry making, and share a meal together. This is an offshoot of the Tapestry project which connects refugees to local residents for relationship building and information sharing.

Unfortunately, no people of color or refugees showed up to this meeting. The women mentors that attend each month met to help bridge the gap between refugees and the community.

Perceived barriers to participating in the arts:

- Language – sometimes the children act as interpreter.
- More transient population – still trying to get settled; working on life issues such as housing, transportation, work, etc.

- Limited knowledge of how to secure grant funding for art projects; need more mentoring.

Where to begin in building connection to refugee community?

- Start small – potluck at an inclusive venue like a park (Highland Park), invite religious leaders, invite them to play music from their culture.

How to disseminate information to refugee community?

- Islamic Center – however this is volunteer run; not always easy to get information passed.
- Community Education Adult Education.
- Health Connections.
- Word of mouth.
- High School guidance counselors.

Questions that came up through discussion:

- How can arts help bring healing from traumatic experiences?
- How can arts help educate refugees on US customs/ways of life?
- How to provide sewing training to women so they can make the type of clothing they want. There is a lack of appropriate fabric for Muslim women; can't find what they need here and often purchase online which is more expensive.

Community Focus Group: Promotion + Support

March 21, 2017, Emy Frentz Arts Guild

FORMER OVERALL GOALS:

1. To raise awareness of the various forms of arts/culture, actively coordinate the publicity of these activities and assist the creation, support and collaboration of these organizations and individuals.
2. Provide training for artists and arts organizations to help develop relations with local media, including guidelines on writing effective and timely news releases.

Question – How do people currently get their arts news? And what tools do you use to promote?

- Facebook, Instagram, other social media – although difficult to reach new audiences – value in boosting posts to gain more viewership.
- PLRAC newsletter.
- Greatermankatoevents.com.
- Twin Rivers website.
- Free Press – although sometimes the information is promoted too late; they are selective with what they will promote.
- Word of mouth – getting in front of your audience and letting them know.
- KMSU, KTOE.
- MN River Valley Woman magazine, Mankato Magazine.
- KEYC TV – opportunity for organizations with set time slots to share their slots with others and to promote each other's work.
- Digital marquees and temporary signage along roadways.

- Direct mail (postcards, mailers, etc.).

Ideas:

- Training on audience development.
- More collaboration – have collateral at other events to cross promote – can we develop a centralized mechanism to streamline this process?
- First Friday – all the arts do something; open air market, "Arts Night Out"; music, theatre, dance – many activities going on; businesses could open their space for artists to display/sell; promote all the businesses that show local art (Radiance Salon, Coffee Hag, Tandem Bagels, Fillin Station, etc.).
- Walkability issues – trolley that takes people around city center.
- Have a city wide arts/culture open house – 1x/quarter or 1x/yr, scavenger hunt, passport program.
- Arts needs to show a united front; we are a community working together; strengthen arts bond.
- Develop a print piece that highlights arts/culture – professional looking tourism piece.
- Could we incorporate set number of pages in MN Valley Business Mag to arts/culture?
- Would like to see more support from Free Press on covering arts news/happenings.
- Collaborate on press releases to get more coverage.
- Small nonprofits with lots of turnover – need more administrative support/training.
- KTV – interview artists/arts groups – use videos for promotion – can we use students to produce?
- Create an arts podcast.
- Need consistency in whatever approach we use to promote to generate interest and awareness.
- Create an artist award – recognizing sustainable arts organizations – include award at GMG Hall of Fame – recognize business that has supported art that year (buying art, commissioning sculpture, etc.).
- Build network among arts groups, creating comfort in sharing audience and information.
- Organized campaign to "Show and Tell" about arts groups.
- Work together to build an annual calendar of events.
- General community unaware of all of the arts/culture happenings and the high quality of what we have to offer.
- New artists have hard time connecting to the arts community.
- Create an arts/culture visitor center/resource center where people can find arts info; collateral pieces.
- Educate artists to use the internet to promote their work.
- Educate artist on pricing their work and finding the value in their work.
- Art festival in downtown.

Community Focus Group: Education

March 31, 2017, VINE Faith in Action

What types of art classes/learning opportunities do you partake of in Mankato?

- Ceramics studio – community education
- Musicorum
- MN Valley Chorale
- Dance classes
- Library story hour
- ECFE toddler art classes
- 410 Project – art classes for youth
- St. Peter Co-Op cooking classes
- Suzuki School of Music
- Music Garden – youth
- Riverfront Performing Arts – starting a First Friday Folk Dance Fun – 6:30 – 8 p.m. – learning dances from Mexico – uses guest instructors, students, grad students.

What do we need in Mankato?

- People commute to cities for special/advanced instruction. You can only get so far with a skill in Mankato; then you need to travel outside to become an expert or find expert instructors.
- Additional music venues.
- Black box theatre – where in Mankato?
- Connect teaching artists to emerging artists.
- Artist space.
- Arts Center for textile arts, maker space, clay studio.
- Restructure model for paying teaching artists – get away from number of registrants = whether or not the class will continue; pay teachers stipend up front so that there is less competition for student fees. If you pay teaching artists, you get higher quality teachers. It also gives you time to build and expand your curriculum.
- Amount of schools applying for grant dollars is expanding in order to maintain what arts they have, but arts opportunities are not expanding.
- Schools can apply for funding – this is good! Who is being tasked with writing the grants?
- The stronger the PTO – the stronger the extracurricular activities. Arts experiences depends on active PTO (parent volunteers also acting as teaching artists); unfortunately the kids that need it most aren't getting it. How to make it more equitable among all schools in the district?
- PTO will pay artists to come in and provide learning experience.
- More foreign language immersion.
- Current curriculum doesn't allow for much flexibility for outside learning/extra experiences.
- More retired people in community and they want more options for learning.
- Need more promotion around "looking for teaching artists" – use repeat instructors – needs to be worth their time too.

Community Focus Group: Education – High School

Focus Group – Mankato West high school

What is one of your favorite art experiences in school?

- Art-a-thon – 12 hr art project on a Saturday.
- Cup Show in partnership with East (similar to Souper Bowl Sunday) – sell the cups for charity.
- Learning abstract painting.
- Print making – resident artist program.
- Photography in nursing homes – gave photos to residents.
- Art Club – attended Speechless Film Festival; uses 410 Project a lot for supplemental learning; afterschool art making.
- Mixed media/graphic design.
- AP Art History.
- Partnered with elementary school child to create their drawing into a 3-D sculpture.

What do you need/want?

- Art workshops after school and in the summer.
- Maker space for youth.
- Teaching artists to come into the schools.
- Model after Owatonna Art Center – doing great things; ceramics; lots of classes.
- Graffiti wall.
- Art festival with music.
- Performance art.
- Graphic design, 3D animation/illustration classes, more technology type arts classes.
- Design labs – tools for students to support a creative career path.
- Have an electives day to show possible options; students don't always know what to ask for.
- Arts Symposium – panels and speakers of various creative fields showing youth what is possible in a creative career.
- More museums/galleries.
- More time to develop skills.
- More pottery wheels.
- First Friday – arts/culture experience.

How do you find information related to arts/culture activities?

- Teachers
- Instagram/Facebook
- It would be great to have a community arts/culture page/website/FB page
- Just Art FB page for Mankato

Community Focus Group: Needs of the Arts Community

March 9, 2017, Coffee Hag

1. What are the needs of the creative community? What do you need to thrive in this community?
    a. Heather Vogus & Matthew Harding - Free skateboard parks and incorporate art into the parks. Right now you have to pay $8 to skate at the YMCA skate park. Heather is working on developing a free skate park(s) in Mankato – affordable; accessible; food trucks; music. She has a spot identified, but it is only temporary.
    b. Means of gathering; more connection to other artists; consistent time/place that artists gather to exchange ideas; collaborate; better communication.
    c. Create more synergy among the arts community.
    d. Is there a sense of competition? Fear of losing your audience/donors
        i. Need to shift this perceived fear to create healthy synergy, shared communication, collaboration.
    e. More murals on sides of buildings.
    f. Book up and coming bands instead of “has-beens.”
    g. We have a great local music scene, but lack viable performance spaces.
    h. Amphitheatre is underused; make it affordable for local musicians/arts groups to use.
    i. Training on how to collaborate with others in other disciplines
    j. Get the sense that we keep having these conversations about collaboration, building the arts/culture community, and there is no follow-through. Sense of fatigue in the planning process.
    k. Place to register as a creative professional so that people can find you (businesses, others that want to collaborate).
    l. Update TRCA website to highlight affiliates more and how to contact them.
    m. More Native American presence/ways to honor in the community.
    n. More events throughout the year to create more natural connection among the arts community.
    o. The Mankato market of creatives is small – need to keep this in mind when developing realistic plan.
    p. How to find arts/culture jobs?
    q. Artists need to learn how to make money at their craft.
    r. Winter festival – accessible and affordable – the GSR Fine Arts Festival is higher end and expensive to get into.
    s. Offerings for college age people; under 21 spaces to play and listen to music; “off campus” experiences
    t. More street presence – you visit other cities and there are musicians playing on the street; little markets selling art; here there is not enough density to make that worth the time/effort; need to create more density.
    u. Innovation Center in Old Town developing into cross-collaboration space.
    v. Community buy-in campaign
    w. Arts awareness/value campaign – bring the arts community together with strong, unified message

x. Open Space Plan – how to incorporate findings/ideas into this plan?

Possible partners:

- Connect the Grey
- Innovation Center
- GMG
- VWC
- Still need to hear from schools (district, community ed)

Open House, Survey Responses, January 23, 2018

Emy Frentz Arts Guild

1. What three recommendations from this plan are you most excited about?
    a. Public art spaces, river renewal, collaboration
    b. Partnering with Mankato Area Foundation and Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council should be explored along with private donors.
    c. Coordinating "cultural" districts with city/county/state planning and using the concepts of "complete streets"
    d. Coordinating alternate participation events for more inclusivity.
    e. Identify, enhance and create cultural facilities for creatives, residents and visitors.
    f. Recognize and support naturally occurring creative districts within Mankato.
    g. The public engagement aspects woven throughout.
    h. The entrepreneurial mindset (recognizing the connection between art and economy).
    i. That there is going to be a creative center
    j. May there be a systematic design center; Emy Frentz is somewhat small, but there is.
    k. That I can be on the "ground floor" as there is a lot of talent in this area.
    l. One of my specialties is writing grants; that was one of my talents as a grant writer in the school district I retained from back in 2000.
    m. Space is a big issue, so collectively working to find usable performance venues, etc. really excites me.
    n. I also really like thinking in creative districts, building up the great things about neighborhoods, which I think allows a diverse rather than homogeneous understanding of the city.
    o. I also like making links between businesses and artists – each as a resource flowing each way. This is especially important as business culture values creativity more and more. If Mankato wants to participate and grow in the larger discourse, its business culture needs to embrace that.
2. Did we miss anything?
    a. Having workshops is useful, but maybe they need to be slightly broader? Example, grant writing is a good topic, but maybe making sure that the various types of grants are covered by financial institution (MAF, PLRAC, State Arts board, etc.)
    b. Need to support women's interest too. Artists as well as visitors. We are 50% of the population.

c. I've got some ideas for how the three pieces mentioned up above could utilize some creative process design skills.
d. No, this is a good beginning.
e. Not that I can tell – you folks did a comprehensive job.

Open House, Public Comments, January 23, 2018

Emy Frentz Arts Guild

- Highlight on public access TV.
- **Community Design**
  - Be careful with art ordinance.
  - Coordinate with city and county entities for "complete streets" concept for accessibility act, pedestrian events.
  - Ensure that spaces and events are accessible and affordable for high school students.
  - Remember to partner with historic/cultural districts for synergy.
  - Love the "creative districts"
  - Ordinance: rules can be the enemy of innovation. Keep them minimal. Policy: this is where help for creatives can be. Again – minimal rules.
  - Too many rules become restrictive. More stimulation, less regulation.
  - Under "First Steps"
  - Simple processes for creatives wishing to do public art projects and events.
  - Prefer arts district to creative placemaking projects.
  - Cool – know our past to build our future.
  - Would be great to know (create a master list of current venues/facilities; include types of activities spaces can support (i.e. performance, studio space, maker spaces, etc.), costs, and contact).
  - Be smart about scheduling and publicizing and scheduling spaces.
  - Talk to developers and building owners to arrange temporary art work/display spaces.
  - Create some kind of billboard (online?) where artists can post "looking for x" x = other artists, supplies, locations, venues, etc.
  - Under Recommendation 3, add seventh step: Create a calendar that has all arts and culture activities (art, theater, music, etc.).
    - "Update" a calendar….
  - Recommendation 3, revise to read: "Identify, promote, enhance, and create cultural facilities for creatives, residents and visitors.
    - Key City Bike, 204 E. Vine Street. Outside of building – needs murals and colorful art.
  - Intermedia arts had a BIG impact in MPLS… (re. artist residency).
  - Cultivate spaces for young talent – encourage students to stay in Mankato to draw in aspiring artists (college and high school).
  - Recommendation 6, "every level" is a killer to the arts.
- **Promotion and Support**
  - Participatory leadership works! Re: prof. skill building.
  - What does designated arts commission mean?

- Based on 1/21/2018 FP article on the Mankato Area Foundation – is there some opportunities for financial partnerships?
- Need to allow other arts organizations to exist.
- Offer more paid internship opportunities in creative fields.
- Good idea! → *"Survey area creatives on the types of networking events they are looking for. Develop consistent, relevant programming to build community among creatives."*
- Spaces and programs for those interested in film and writing = a gap.
- CIE work with students MSU.
- While possibly useful – it's a snapshot and would have to be separated. Might not be worth it. → *"Conduct a comprehensive survey to determine who identifies as a "hobby" artist, "emerging" artist and "professional" artist…"*
    - Admit a "3rd way"
- Yes! → *"Provide coaching on the multi-step process from Hobby Creative to Professional Creative."*
- Or from hobby creative to NETWORKED creative → *"Provide coaching on the multi-step process from Hobby Creative to Professional Creative."*
- Just visual? → *"Establish a youth art fair for K-12 and college artists."*
    - Perhaps something less juvenile for older students?
- 410 Project? → *"Research an artist co-op gallery and develop a network of artists to manage it."*
    - Eg. Rochester, MN
- Yes! Online!! → *"TRCA should build and strengthen creative directories to increase knowledge, encourage partnership, create connection, and build trust. TRCA should amplify the presence of Mankato arts/culture throughout the region and state."*

- **Arts and Culture Access**
    - Yes!! → *"Support and promote collaboration between university and community organizations to* **systematically** *share opportunities."*
    - Applaud serendipity – a surprise around every corner.
    - Better accessibility for the disabled.
    - "Flash" art exhibits.
    - "Flash" art creative opportunities, i.e. on the street!
    - ? → *"Create an Arts Access pass that is checked out at the library…"*
    - ☺ → *"Develop and Art Lending Library"*
        - Had one, should do again!
        - Something that doesn't mess up work schedules.
    - Definitely! → *"Build partnerships to offer childcare to families so that they can attend cultural events; publicize cultural events where children are welcome."*
    - Yes * → *"Host under 21 nights so that young adults can enjoy performances in a unique and fun setting."*
        - Yes!
        - Yes!!
    - E.g. through VINE Adult Community Center, Community Ed… → *"Build networks for people seeking companions to attend cultural events if they are uncomfortable going alone."*

- Better bus service overall, to venues, studios, Mankato Makerspace, not just for college → *"…Develop networks to provide affordable, safe transportation options."*
  - Improved bicycle infrastructure.
  - Or "culture vulture" ubers?
- Produce art and events that celebrate new Americans.
- Wheel chair accessible and ASL. Perhaps programs for young, middle, and high schoolers immigrating to Mankato?
- Create a list of speakers that can come to businesses and talk about art.
- Take arts to where senior citizens live and meet. Like O.M.V., Pathstone, VINE, etc.
- * MSU Mankato has international students from almost 100 countries. Celebrate this resource.
- Connect public to MSU offerings (Native American Student Association).
- Super important for creative HS juniors/seniors → *"Offer opportunities for youth and young adults to be exposed to creative career options: Creative Career Conference; expanded summer programming; and internships and work study programs connected to creative careers."*
  - Yes!
  - Should include the MANY ways you can be part of the arts scene – art, film, writing, photography, music, etc.
  - Contests and competitions.
- ! ! → *"Start a dialogue with school administrators to introduce the concept and discuss available options."*
- ! ! → *"Start a dialogue with social service agencies to gauge interest."*
- Utilize diverse artists to provide examples and venue for them to be involved.
- Mankato has an active LGBTQ community – embrace them.
- Also a Justice component. Include the churches in a spiritual arts component?
- *"*…pride in the community…"*
- This! → *"Commission and install public art that tells the story of Mankato's diverse populations, from the native Dakota through immigrants from European countries to the newest Americans from Latin America, Somalia and Sudan."*
  - * Cool idea

- **Financial Resources**
  - Steady income stream is vital. Good idea.
  - Survey amount of financial support to purchase art by individuals and corporations/groups.
  - 1% for the Arts Program for all public projects.
  - What about something like the State's Legacy fund (yes, another tax...).
  - Need % for arts for building projects for arts funding.
  - Encourage Mankato and North Mankato to have historic preservation levies.
  - How can crowd funding be used for local opportunities? I.e. purchasing community art. Bringing in speakers, etc.
  - Golden carrot to businesses that renovate buildings that are historically significant v. ripping them down.
  - This needs a stellar champion → *Recommendation 3: Explore a centralized sponsorship opportunity for the arts.*

- * Yes! → *"Investigate a Round-Up for the Arts program…"*
- Shannon R. did a great job explaining economic and social benefits of the arts.
  - Could/would she help do so again?
- Provide more information to high school students interested in pursuing the arts (presentation or pamphlets in schools). Ensure that Mankato would be an artistic community they would like to stay in for college!
- Showcase a website where all creatives can showcase their work.
- Coordinate with Mankato Area Foundation "one-stop shop for philanthropy" and nonprofit grant opportunities.
- Best place? Does the website/board need to staff an expert at all times to stay current? → *"Consolidate all funding information in one place on the Twin Rivers Councils for the Arts Website."*
- Yes! → *"Consolidate all funding information in one place…"*
- Who would maintain this going forward? If TRCA, staff/funding concerns? → *"Create a freelance job board on Twin Rivers Council for the Arts website."*
- Jill Fischer, Purple Porchlight → sign up to help implement financial resources

- **Tourism and Economic Vitality**
  - Eliminate ordinance rental limits (10% 25%) that tend to raise rents and limit affordable housing!
  - Affordable artist housing!
  - Artist Lofts would help bridge the gap for affordable housing and build community for artists.
    - Post Office?
    - This would be wonderful for art students at MSU as well!
  - Need multi-use, black box performance space – cabaret, comedy, theater, improve*
  - Cost for young arts classes tend to be much too high → *"…affordable housing…"*
  - And places and sense of place → *"Develop branding support…"*
  - Advertise existing artistic institutions to young people (high school and college).
  - Get more businesses to display art and provide space for developing artists to be noticed.
    - Post on social media featured Artists by location, businesses will gain more customers and artist will get more attention.
  - ☺ → *"Create tours of businesses that display art in their public and semi-public spaces…."*
  - Thate are active participants and not just 1 figure head → *"Connect business leaders to nonprofit art/culture boards."*
  - More "women friendly" art opportunities. What do women want?
  - Less structure and more serendipity.
  - Strong local scene that can attract tourism. Not all "special wants," but local arts.
  - Like the City Center back alley? → *"…artistic alleyway enhancements…"*
  - A whiz bang unified calendar would be a great tool.
  - This will happen when we enhance our own access to creative spaces in our town.
  - Enhance the overall experience
  - Establish a region wide Dakota uprising tour.
  - What arts or culture organization are you a part of?
  - GSR Fine Art Festival.

- TRCA Board.
- Arts Center of Saint Peter.
- 410 Project.
- Centenary U.M.C. Arts, Spirituality, & Justice Committee.
- Where is Mankato Makerspace (represented at implementation team)?
- The outtakes productions theouttakesinfo.com
- SMPS x 2
- Implementation
- Implementation team
- Twin Rivers Council for the Arts…..City's designated arts commission…take the leadership.

Open House, Gary Pettis' Visuals, January 23, 2018



1

Harnessing the power of our creative community at the right time, for all of the right reasons.

Get Creat!ve Mankato

Reports say Mankato's next-stage community growth is certain. As the city grows, new doors of creative opportunity and arts and culture participation will open.

In the past, several local figures left their fingerprints on our arts, music, theatre, history, and community involvement scene.

Today, we're inspired by their legacy as we face a future where we must do more, create more, make more, and involve more area residents.

Want to use your imagination to help make a difference?

You have come to the right place. For all of us, it's time to get creative—and together, get things moving.

Fuel our efforts by getting involved to keep the plan moving forward.


2
All the signs tell us we're moving forward, and we're prepared for what's ahead.
The City Center Partnership follows through with its mission to revitalize Mankato's traditional downtown area. Finding ways to enlist and leverage Mankato's group of creative residents will help achieve the goals of building a stronger creative economy.
Three organizations teamed to give us the next-step vision from the 2007 Arts, Culture and Community Enhancement Committee.
The City of Mankato seeks solutions on how to easily engage visitors and new residents into all of our Arts & Culture-driven events, programs and activities.
It all starts here.
And the Twin Rivers Council for the Arts has been given the green light to accelerate with its role as the city's creative community strategist and liaison between City Hall and our creatives.
Get Creat!ve Mankato
Share your ideas on how visitors and new residents can easily connect with our creative environment.

3

A creative's best friend for creatives who want less time tracking down and figuring out the details.



We connect the creative dots. So you don't have to.

The Twin Rivers Council for the Arts sees the collective of our creative residents, groups and activities from the highest point possible. It holds the view of how things connect together in our Arts & Culture community.

From this perspective, we survey all of the information and details—big and small—whose availability might contribute to turning a creative's vision into reality. Because we connect the creative dots in Mankato, it saves creatives, groups, organizations and supporters time, money and energy.

Focus on being creative and let us do the fact-finding and information gathering.

Knowledge is shared. Dots connected.

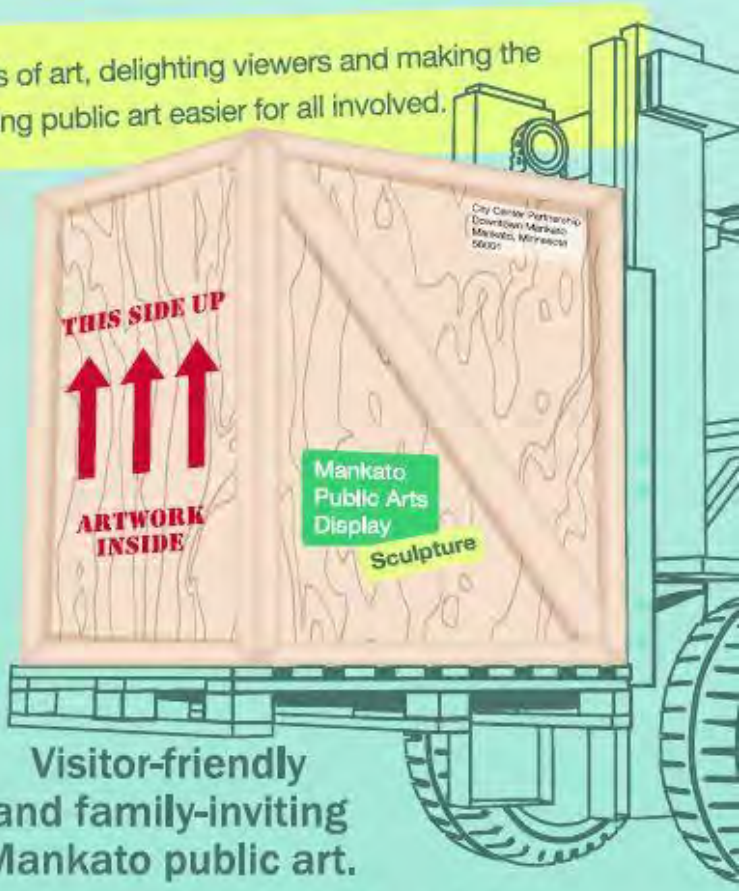
Get Creat!ve Mankato

Submit to the Twin Rivers Council for the Arts news of events, new programs and live performances.


4
Funding availability gives ideas and imaginative possibilities momentum.
Money is time facing a blank sheet of paper.
A fantastic idea might be burning inside and an imagination races to jot down, sketch or plot out on a blank sheet of paper the vision for the idea. But distractions get in the way, like having the money on hand to afford the time and resources the idea deserves.
So let's examine the funding and grant options available. For starters, tracking the stream of current funding for things like public art.
Next, we work with the private sector to put together new funding and grant programs.
Finally, a certain percentage of capital improvement projects might fund public art projects in the area. But we'll have options. Giving a marked-up, note-filled sheet of paper a chance to make it.
Get Creat!ve Mankato
Help us locate businesses and organizations willing to make a funding difference.

5

Public displays of art, delighting viewers and making the process of doing public art easier for all involved.



Visitor-friendly and family-inviting Mankato public art.

So far, our early pursuit of arty and compelling public art displays proved to be successful, years after the first pieces were installed.

Our use of art and sculpture along sidewalks, near downtown streets, increases interest in putting different works of art on display, regardless of suitability to their surroundings. And there, we need to take a brief pause.

Attracting visitors and new residents ranks high on our list of priorities. It's back to Marketing 101. We need to be sensitive to the needs of our audiences, plus we need to support our artists as much as possible. So, helping draft a City Ordinance is required, an ordinance that subjects public art displays to specific standards and requires approval before display.

Get Creat!ve Mankato

Give us your thoughts on how a citywide ordinance could be applied.


6
There's something about the openness of space that stirs the imagination.
The emptiness of space is what we long for.
Space. Lots of it. A vacant room with the right amount of length, width and height gives an artistically or musically inclined person enough space where inspiration might be found. We intend to always be on the lookout for unused rooms and difficult-to-rent vacant buildings in Mankato.
Creative spaces represent endless possibilities.
By finding potential places where our creatives can create, make, think, write and produce. Likewise, new and existing facilities that already feature amenities that support our creative processes can only support our cause. Donors and the business sector now have the chance to invest in the development of buildings and rooms to accommodate local creatives . . . and support the community.
It's in these spaces where our community's overall body of creative work is strengthened.
Get Creat!ve Mankato
Tune us in if open space opportunities appear on your radar.


7
Technologies and information access change how we identify talent and creativity.
Assembling a group of talented and skilled people of all measure.
Years ago, when we began a public arts program, we focused in on the finished works of sculptors and visual artists.
But things are different today.
Our updated plan covers all people in Mankato with different creative skills and unique visions on how to use them, bringing forth their own finished works. As plan writers, we now have a community obligation to make time for our creative residents and to tell the good stories about the city's creative achievements, then and now.
How we stack up as plan leaders will contribute directly to the city's ability to market Mankato as a destination to visit or a place to live.
Get Creat!ve Mankato
Please speak up if you know someone using personal imagination to make something that is impossible for us to imagine.

8 After launching our plan, cool results might come for those who dare to make the impossible possible.



Consider how your vision and sense of purpose will have an impact on the Mankato area.

The Big Dream sessions from our community Arts & Culture discussions helped define the Big Goals that we will try to achieve in the next months and years.

Now we're poised to team with many Mankato leaders, as well as the creative community, to explore the possibilities of taking the dreams from what was envisioned to turning them into reality.

For instance, individual neighborhoods or sections of Mankato branded for their charm and personalities. They could be labeled a designated Creative District, which offers a marketing and tourism opportunity. Various artists, sculptors and artisans could fill a Mankato Cultural Center, an existing structure or a new building.

Also on our possibilities list is a public walkway along the Minnesota River, which generates visions of how contemporary creative thinking could be blended with the memories of historic Mankato in various art forms.

Dreaming? Maybe.

But let's explore together the possibilities within all of our different Arts & Culture sectors.

Get Creative Mankato

Let's Dream Big together and create something great.


9
Strike up the band. Hit the keys. Take brush to canvas.
Rehearse until you get it right. This is the place to do it.
Explore the unlimited ways to express yourself in Mankato.
Young and old, whose home is Mankato, know Mankato has always been recognized as a hub of Arts & Culture activity, both on the creative side and on the participation side. This fact can be credited to a lot of things, such as the focus on quality pubic education and the coming and going of entertainment businesses while the city grew.
The love of music, the patronage of the arts, the opportunities to go to live theatre productions, etc., here in Mankato created the environment where there are more than one way for a creative person to express him and herself. Many Mankato creatives are multi-talented and indulge in different types of art forms.
Get Creat!ve Mankato
The range of arts options and cultural activities are sure to peak the curiosity of visitors and new residents, who remember their parents and grandparents gushing about the fun and memorable experiences they had in Mankato.
Give us your ideas on how we can capitalize further on the Arts & Culture choices awaiting our creative talent.


10
Our history stirs up emotions and sparks stories about the deeds and events that shaped our city since 1852.
FORGIVE EVERYONE EVERYTHING
WE KNOW OUR MANKATO HISTORY
Take a moment.
Take a seat.
Let's share stories about Mankato's past.
History remains one of Mankato's most important assets. Evidence of our past can be found everywhere in the city. Interest in local history and the retelling of tales from our early days creates numerous history enthusiasts eager to dig deep into everything and anything Mankato.
The discoveries from the efforts of this group of enthusiasts can inspire, for example, an artist's painting, a singer's song or a director's next stage production. They can also make their way into books, newspapers and destination marketing materials.
A consequence of our local history is that we have plenty of material to help reintroduce to Mankato residents, new residents and visitors.
Get Creat!ve Mankato
This is our chance to explain how our history helped influence the city we are today. It's our history, and nobody can share it like we can.
Sign up with us if you take pride in your Mankato history knowledge.

11

Great strides must be taken to assure everybody feels welcome in our Arts & Culture environment.



The Mankato Arts & Culture scene affects us like those glimpses of sunshine during winter's coldest days.

All of us brave Mankatoans deserve a little sunshine after witnessing falling snow, freezing temperatures and icy roads. Walking through an art gallery, enjoying a night at the theatre, or filling a seat close to a band gives us that feeling of joy, escape and wonder as a few rays of sunshine does during the coldest January day.

As Art & Culture advocates, we believe that everyone in the Mankato area should have opportunity to participate fully and share their skills and their stories. Everyone.

From the very young to the very old, participation keeps lives vibrant and stirs imaginative thinking. It's essential to brainstorm with arts educators, school administrators and local diversity group leaders. Our early efforts will attempt to remove the barriers of money, perception and lack of awareness.

Get Creat!ve Mankato

Connect us with educators and leaders who want to help us achieve this goal.

12

Twin Rivers Council for the Arts offers local creatives the opportunity to become an affiliate with the organization.

What best describes you?

- ☐ Hobbyist
- ☐ Skill Development
- ☐ Professional
- ☐ Arts & Culture Supporter

Members of our creative community fit nicely into different ambition levels and abilities to commit time to their creative aspirations.

Our planning results set the stage for the Twin Rivers Council for the Arts to serve and support all levels of experience, interest, and artistic and skill accomplishment in Mankato.

What everyone must have in common is a willingness to help make our Arts & Culture environment thrive. Then, we stand a better chance at contributing to our local Creative Economy.

Likewise, we can search for opportunities and places for all creatives and the people who support them to *Get Creative Mankato*.

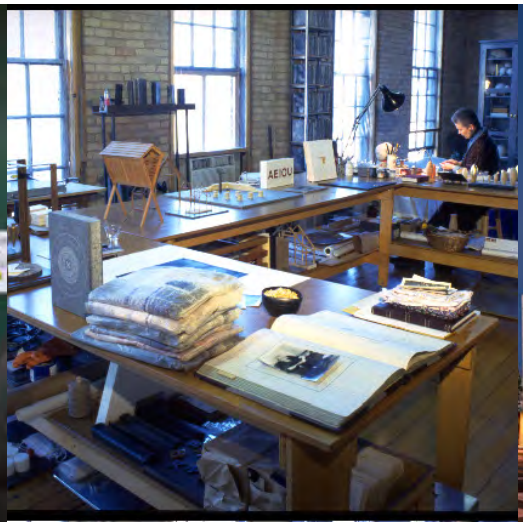
Get Creat!ve Mankato

Participate in upcoming Artist Census to provide data on who we are serving and how best to serve them.

artspace

Building better communities through the arts







Creative Spaces Consulting Report

Mankato, Minnesota

May 2016

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 2

Process 4

Findings

- Describe 5
- Analyze 13
- Dream 17
- Declare 19
- Anticipate 23

Recommendations and Next Steps 28

Appendix

- About Artspace
- Artspace's Presentation to Focus Groups

Introduction

Located along a large bend of the Minnesota River, at its confluence with the Blue Earth River, Mankato is the regional hub for Southwest Minnesota. Mankato has long been a draw for business and higher education. With its proximity to the Twin Cities (it's about 80 miles south west of Minneapolis), population of 40,000 people, and a combined Mankato-North Mankato metropolitan area of 94,000 people (both population counts according to the 2010 census), Mankato residents enjoy a balance of city life in rural surroundings.

During the first half of the 20th century, activity was centered around Mankato's bustling downtown, particularly in the Riverfront area. Though this history can still be seen in the rich historic architecture throughout the city, over the years the unified feeling of downtown has been decentralized. Urban renewal projects in the middle of the century brought overpasses and a downtown mall that covered Front Street and connected nearby buildings bisected the urban core. Later, increased commercial big-box development on top of the hill drew economic activity away from the downtown.

In 2007, as a part of Mankato's effort to turn attention back to downtown, the City Center Renaissance Plan highlighted the opportunities to lead the way toward the rebirth of the entire City Center. In reference to the Arts & Historic District, the Plan calls for this "signature area for the City Center [to focus] on the concept that the colocation of culture and arts activities will become an identifiable economic generator for the community and a focus of the City Center activity."

One of the outcomes of the City Center Renaissance Plan was the City Center Partnership. This private/public partnership was formed with a mission:

"to be a catalyst for the implementation of the City Center Renaissance Plan and support private and public investment in the City Center projects, programs and initiatives that attract a greater number of customers, employees and residents to the City Center."

(www.citycentermankato.com/city-center/partnership)

To address the goals of an Arts & Historic District, the City Center Partnership's Aesthetics and Livability Committee initiated the Arts & Historic District Dialogue. The Dialogue is designed as an ongoing exploration of ways to enhance the area, highlighting the concentration of historical assets and encouraging cultural activity. To do so, the Dialogue has been engaging the community through in-person and online conversations and researching best practices of cultural districts. As a part of that work, the City Center Partnership reached out to Artspace to provide consultation on the feasibility of enhancing the Arts & Historic District.

Artspace, the nation's leading nonprofit developer of arts facilities, provides consulting services to organizations looking at how to create and sustain arts, community, and cultural spaces. The Artspace Consulting approach focuses on gathering input from community stakeholders and identifying the puzzle pieces necessary to move an initiative forward. Affordability and long-term sustainability are always at the forefront of all the work we do, as articulated by our mission: to create, foster, and preserve affordable space for artists and arts organizations.



R.D. Hubbard House in the Current Art and Historic District of Mankato, Minnesota

With that in mind, the guiding questions for this study are:

- Is there a naturally occurring arts and historic district and if so, where is it?
- How can it be enhanced?
- What boundaries would make the district the most vibrant and sustainable?
- Is this the right time to pursue this?

Process

Artspace's consulting team conducted a two-day visit to Mankato on February 18 and 19, 2016, which included: work sessions with the core group, a tour of the current Arts & Historic District, a public meeting, and a series of four focus groups. The focus groups were divided into four categories: artists and arts organizations, civic leaders and elected officials, bankers and funders, and creative business owners and developers.

At the public meeting and at each focus group, Artspace presented slides to frame the conversation and posed a series of questions from the group. The questions were designed to elicit feedback to:

- **Describe** current perceptions about the arts in Mankato and specifically within the district boundaries
- **Analyze** the strengths and weaknesses of the district
- **Dream** about the possibilities: where the district boundaries could be and what could happen within them.
- **Declare** the benefits of designating and enhancing a district
- **Anticipate** what it would take to create – and sustain – a vibrant district

Artspace was represented by Wendy Holmes, Senior Vice President of Consulting and Strategic Partnerships; Anna Growcott, Director of Consulting and Strategic Partnerships; and Erika Dani, Asset Manager.

We gratefully acknowledge and thank our host, the City Center Partnership, represented by Megan Flanagan, Director, and the other members of the Core Group, Stacey Straka, Chair of the Aesthetics & Livability Committee; Tami Paulsen, Chair of the City Center Partnership Board of Governors; Jessica Potter, Executive Director of the Blue Earth County Historical Society; and Noelle Lawton, Executive Director of the Twin Rivers Council for the Arts, for their hard work in facilitating our agenda. We would also like to recognize the numerous community members who generously shared their time and ideas. Finally, we extend our sincere thanks to the Mankato Area Foundation for funding a portion of this study.

FINDINGS

Describe:

What is there now?

The first step in talking about how a district can be enhanced is to understand – and agree upon – what it currently is. For this study, we will consider materials created by City Center Partnership, impressions from a tour of the City Center's arts, historic, and cultural assets, community input gathered during the visit, and comments collected on the City Center Partnership's online forum: www.citycentermankato.com/ahdialogue.

Definitions

With the understanding that each person comes to the conversation with slightly different understandings of art, history, and district, below are a few working definitions

- **Art District** – a geographic concentration of artists, cultural venues and activities
- **Historic District** – a grouping of buildings, properties or sites designated as historically or architecturally significant
- **Art** – a practice that includes a wide array of creative pursuits. Artspace's definition includes visual, performing, and literary arts as well as traditional and applied arts disciplines, such as industrial arts, fashion design, graphic design, healing arts, fine crafts, culture bearing, film/radio/tv production and art educators and administration.
- **Historic Building** – a structure, typically built before 1965, that adds to the historical integrity of architectural qualities that make a historic district significant.

The term **Cultural District** is also used throughout this report to represent a designated district with any combination of arts, history, and creative venues and activities.

Arts & Historic District and Potential Expansion



Map Created by ISG

1. Masonic Lodge, 2. Federal Courthouse and Post Office, 3. Emy Frentz Arts Guild, 4. Cray Mansion, 5. R.D. Hubbard House, 6. St John's Episcopal, 7. Sinclair Lewis' Summer Home, 8. First Presbyterian Church, 9. Carnegie Art Center, 10. EnvisionLab, 11. Historic Courthouse (Blue Earth Co.), 12. Old Main, 13. Blue Earth Co. History Center and Museum.

Arts & History District Boundaries

The current boundaries of the Arts and History District are East Jackson Street to the Northeast, Warren Street to the Southwest, South 2nd Street to the Northwest, and South 5th Street to the Southeast. For the purposes of this report, we will refer to these six blocks as the Current District.

From the outset, City Center Partnership explained that these boundaries could be expanded or the entire district could be relocated. One expansion under consideration is to extend the district to the Northeast – the resulting boundaries would be East Main Street, Warren Street, South 2nd Street and South 5th Street. For the purposes of this report, we will refer to these additional nine blocks as the District Expansion.

We were also asked to consider Old Town, a cluster of historic buildings that provide a home to unique, locally owned creative and arts-friendly businesses.

Thus, with the understanding that there are arts and historic assets scattered throughout the entire City Center, we will focus on the Current District, District Expansion, and Old Town.

Tour

The Core Group led Artspace on a guided tour of the Current District and District Expansion, as well as other assets outside the Current District that add to the artistic and/or historical fabric of the city. With representatives from both the arts and historical leadership aboard the bus, the tour was filled with anecdotes about the cultural relevance of these spaces. Thus, we learned not only about the venues, but also about the connective tissue between the existing assets and the opportunities for development and space activation.

The group toured and drove by the following venues. An * indicates locations at which we had the opportunity to walk inside and speak to staff and volunteers.

Artspace Analytics:

Taking A Measure of Creative Placemaking



Taking a Measure of Creative Placemaking is an overview of the findings of Metris Arts Consulting's studies *How Artist Space Matters* and *How Art Spaces Matter II*. It summarizes Metris Arts Consulting's in-depth examination of five Artspace projects: the Northern Warehouse Artists' Cooperative, the Tilsner Artists' Cooperative, and the Traffic Zone Center for Visual Art - all in Minnesota; as well as the Tashiro Kaplan Artist Lofts in Seattle, and the Riverside Artist Lofts in Reno. The three Minnesota projects are among Artspace's earliest efforts and therefore address questions of long-term impact and sustainability. Both Reno and Seattle reflect Artpsace models where there is either a major nonprofit anchor tenant (Sierra Arts in Reno) or a substantial presence of non-residential space (the 16 galleries that anchor Tashiro Kaplan in Seattle). To download, visit http://www.artspace.org/sites/default/files/public/downloads/news/taking_a_measure_of_creative_placemaking_09_11.pdf

- Blue Earth County History Center and Museum *
- Emy Frentz Arts Guild *
- R.D. Hubbard House *
- Historic Courthouse (Blue Earth County)
- Federal Courthouse and Post Office
- Carnegie Art Center *
- First Presbyterian Church
- Old Main
- Sinclair Lewis' Summer Home
- Cray Mansion
- EnvisionLab *
- Masonic Lodge
- Saint John's Episcopal Church
- Coffee Hag *
- 410 Project *
- Residential homes throughout the district
- Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota
- Walking Sculpture Tour



Historic Buildings in the Old Town area of Mankato

Limited by time, we were not able to experience every historic and arts asset in the City Center. However, this whirlwind tour gave us a good idea about what is happening in, and directly adjacent to, the Current District, District Expansion and Old Town.

Community Input

Participants in the focus groups and public meetings shared their insights and perspectives as artists, civic leaders, business people, funders, and neighbors. We asked about their general thoughts on arts and Mankato culture, as well as their favorite arts and historic places in the City Center, and their impressions of the Current District. Some of the key comments we heard include:

The market for art

- Everyone, even blue collar/working class people, appreciates art
- Small market for art, so many young artists leave for the Twin Cities
- People love art, but don't want to pay (and are not used to paying) for it. That is changing now
- It is a "5 buck town" where many people in the area would not consider spending $10- $20 on a ticket to a play

Life as an artist in Mankato

- Inexpensive cost of living, but there are few rental homes that are not college housing
- Retaining Minnesota State University, Mankato graduates from the art department has been difficult
- Many artists also work fulltime jobs, because there is not a huge market for art
- There can be a negative stigma around artists
- It's hard to identify what the arts community is

Connectivity in the arts and business communities

- Good collaboration between small businesses and the artists
- Growing number of small businesses, especially in Old Town. Many of these businesses have good, supportive relationships
- Business community actively supports the Walking Sculpture Tour and other events

Where art happens

- Art happens all over the city and the City Center
- Artists tend to gravitate to Front Street, EnvisionLab, and Old Town

Favorite Arts and Historic venues in the Current District:

- R.D. Hubbard House
- Emy Frenz Arts Guild – home of Twin Rivers Council for the Arts
- Blue Earth County History Center & Museum
- Federal Post Office

Favorite Arts and Historic venues outside the Current District:

- Carnegie Art Center
- 410 Project
- Old Town – especially the 300 Block
- Envision Lab
- Minnesota State University (MSU)
- Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota – for its printing press collaboration with MSU and commitment to incorporating art into the Museum
- Civic Center
- Bars and cafes that present music, e.g. Pub 500 and What's Up Lounge
- Lincoln Park
- Riverfront Park – because of all the music that happens there
- Mankato Ballet Company
- Quarry – potential for reuse
- Walking Sculpture Tour

Summary

We compiled all the locations included on the tour and discussed by participants of the focus groups and public meeting into the following matrix, which organizes each venue by geographic area (e.g. Current District, District Expansion, Old Town, and Other) and by contributing characteristic (e.g. History and Arts). Locations that include both historic buildings and arts programming are listed in both columns.

Cultural Assets by Area

	History	Arts (Or Creative Enterprise)
Current District	• Emy Frentz Arts Guild • R.D. Hubbard House • Federal Courthouse and Post Office • Cray Mansion • Residences throughout the district • Saint John's Episcopal Church • Blue Earth County History Center & Museum	• Twin Rivers Council for the Arts (located in the Emy Frentz Arts Guild)
Expanded District	• Carnegie Art Center • First Presbyterian Church • Old Main • Sinclair Lewis' Summer Home • Masonic Lodge • Historic Courthouse (Blue Earth County)	• Carnegie Art Center • Envision Lab
Old Town	• The entire 300 block of North Riverfront Drive is on the National Register. Many of the arts / creative businesses are located in historic buildings.	• Curiosi-Tea • Coffee Hag • Friesen's Family Bakery & Soup Bar • Wine Café • Salvage Sisters • Semblance Boutique • What's Up Lounge • Riverfront Park • Coming soon: second location of 410 Project
Other	• Betsy-Tacy Houses	• 410 Project • Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota • Mankato Ballet Company • Coming soon: Civic Center Performing Arts Addition

Artspace Snapshot:

Corazón de Trinidad Creative District
Trinidad // Colorado



"Spike the Big Red Dragon" art car at Artocade (photo by Michelle Goodall)

Trinidad is just north of the Colorado – New Mexico border. A small town with a colorful history, The Corazón de Trinidad Creative District helps draw cars off the interstate and bring visitors into the center of the city.

The district identity blends creativity and history. The activities and businesses in and around it reflect the area's diverse creative people and organizations. The buildings and red-brick-paved streets provide a link to the past; the district has been recognized as a National Historic District.

Through their programming and strong messaging, reputation of the creative district has helped put Trinidad on the map of places to go and see in Colorado. Contributing to this success is the combination of daily attractions, such as galleries, shops and a museum; weekly and monthly events, such as theater performances, art crawls, and live music; and large annual regional events, such as Artocade "art car" festival and TrindieFest film festival.

For more information, visit: www.corazondetrinidad.org

Based on this information, our main takeaways are:

- Mankato has a large number of historic structures in its City Center, and additional opportunities for historic rehabilitation.
- There is a diversity of arts venues throughout the city – there are museums, independent galleries, collaborative spaces, informal music venues, and creative enterprises.
- A majority of the venues in the Current District and District Expansion boundaries relate primarily to history.
- Many of the arts and creative business venues are located in Old Town.

Analyze:

What are the strengths and weaknesses?

The second step in the process provides a platform for the community to discuss what makes a district great and how the Current District lines up with those qualities. Our goal was to get participants to take an honest look at what strengths should be highlighted and what weaknesses can be addressed to make their city's cultural district as vibrant as possible. These conversations focused on a few key questions:

- What are the qualities of a successful cultural (arts, historic, creative) district?

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of Mankato's Current District?

Qualities of Successful Cultural Districts

Working with diverse cities and districts across the country, we have discovered that some of the very best arts, creative, and historic districts have a lot in common. This has resulted in Artspace's list of the top ten qualities of successful cultural districts:

- Affordable Rent - provides spaces for small businesses, community, organizations, and creative endeavors to thrive.

- Historic Infrastructure – creates an authentic sense of place and connection to local history.

- Strong Branding – communicates the character of the district and promotes its assets and activities.

- Visual Cues – can be seen on the signs, murals, crosswalks, bike racks, etc, and lets visitors know they have arrived.

- Variety of Arts and Businesses – includes a diverse, walkable array of art venues, such as galleries, studios, performance spaces, music venues, public art; as well as creative businesses, such as catering companies, yoga studios, cafes, thrift stores, etc.

- Top Down + Bottom Up – combines civic support, e.g. incentives, grants, staffing,

etc. with grassroots activity, e.g. cluster of artists, entrepreneurial activity, voiced need for community spaces.

- Local Identity and Relevance – celebrates and reflects the unique history, geography, culture, and people of the area.

- Regular Hours + Special Events – blends consistent daily activity (e.g. museums, shops) with weekly, monthly, and annual events that bring in larger crowds.

- Management Organization – oversees the district's activities, communication, programs, etc. Ideally, it is an independent organization that operates with a staff and a budget.

- Anchor Venues – stabilize the district and have the ability to draw in consistent and significant audiences. Anchor venues should be walkable and connected to other assets and venues in the district.

Other attributes that are important to the success of a district that were discussed during the visit are walkability and density. Walkability refers to the quality of the pedestrian experience, and can include factors such as proximity of venues to each other, sidewalk conditions, hills, and safety. Density refers to the number of venues in an area, amount of 'dead space' between venues, and can affect decisions about where to draw district boundary lines. Both qualities are important for a district, especially if the goal is to encourage people to spend time strolling and visiting new places when they visit the district.

No cultural district can claim to have all of these qualities working in their favor all the time. Many of these qualities interact and change over time. For example, a district might begin with very affordable rent, but over years of increased investment, density, and commercial activity, the rents may rise. However, if the Top Down + Bottom Up quality is strong, incentives or other programs can work to maintain affordability for the arts, creative, and cultural organizations. With that in mind, these qualities provide a starting point for discussions, helping articulate what should be emphasized and celebrated as well as what could be changed or improved.

Community Input

Participants weighed in on which qualities are strengths and/or weaknesses for the Current District. Though not every participant agreed about the strengths and weaknesses of each quality, the chart on the following page provides a summary of recurring themes:

Other qualities that participants would like to see included in the district:

- Sustainability

- Feeling of destination

- Handicap accessibility

Community Input on the Proposed District

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Affordable Rent		• Rent in the Current District is not affordable compared to the rest of the city • Rising rent is becoming more of an issue throughout Mankato • Because most creative businesses rent, it becomes a challenge if the building owner wants to sell or doesn't allow the tenant to build out their space.
Historic Infrastructure	• Strongest quality • Opportunities for developing vacant buildings	
Strong Branding		• Does not currently exist, but when created could propel the district forward
Visual Cues		• Currently lacking • Public art along the Walking Sculpture Tour is not connected to the Current District
Variety of Arts and Businesses	• Good variety of businesses	• Lack live performance and theater presence
Top Down & Bottom Up	• Nice relationship between public and private entities	• The arts need a voice and more leadership • Organizations are protective of their mailing lists
Local Identity & Relevance	• Strong, especially in Old Town	• Spread out in Current District, so hard to create an identity
Regular Hours & Special Events		• The area needs to be activated on a regular basis • Businesses and historic venues have very limited hours, which makes it difficult to promote as a district
Management Organization		• Does not currently exist, though there are potential candidates
Anchor Venues	• There are several venues that can be considered anchors	• Volunteers at these venues get burnt out quickly and hours are very limited • Venues are spread out, not easy to walk between them
Walkability		• Not very pedestrian friendly, large buildings, fast traffic, and the hill creates barriers • Only 3 streets of viable commerce in the Proposed District

- Collaboration – between businesses, artists, and educational institutions
- Inclusivity
- Ownership – businesses and artists owning their own spaces

Summary

Participants spoke very positively of the City Center Mankato and the arts assets throughout the City Center, but also understand that there is room for improvement. We agree with the general sentiment of these discussions, and would add emphasis that:

- Venues in the Current District do not feel accessible by foot. The distance between venues, large lawns, parking lots, and stately entrances favor visitors driving to an individual venue. Adding small, pedestrian scale “in between” spaces and creative wayfinding signage can help improve the pedestrian experience and encourage people to walk. However, some features, such as the set back entrances and hill along Cherry Street are permanent features of the Current District and cannot (and should not) be changed. The better the walkability in a district, the more likely visitors will walk from one venue to the next, lingering and making unplanned stops along the way.
- The prevalence of residential housing in the Current District contributes to the historic nature of the area, but limits the arts uses and community programming that can naturally happen throughout a district. Historic infrastructure does not necessarily prevent arts uses. For example, Roosevelt Row Arts District in Phoenix, Arizona, makes use of converted houses for galleries, cafes, and arts studios. However, these uses require the appropriate zoning, agreeable property owners, and a critical mass of artists and groups that choose to operate their businesses in this type of unique setting.
- Density also seems to be a challenge. Only 6 of the 17 linear blocks of the Current District and 5 of the 21 linear blocks of the District Expansion have existing arts and historic assets.
- Participants seem to be in agreement that art and history can be found throughout the City Center, but that the hotspot of activity and new creative businesses is in Old Town. The tour gave us the same impression. We also noted that there seems to be more real estate opportunities for new businesses and artists to locate new ventures in the Old Town area.

Dream:

What would make it even better?

The third step is to have a conversation about what could be. Participants have the opportunity to imagine their ideal cultural district. This discussion continues to collect opinions about where the district should be located, and what should be included. In Mankato, we focused on two questions:

- What are the ideal boundaries for the district?
- What amenities should be added to improve it?

Community Input

What are the preferred locations for an Arts and Historic district?

Current District and Expanded District

- Has a blend of arts and history

Old Town

- Has the highest concentration of historic buildings, whereas in other areas of the downtown core they are scattered
- Should be under consideration as the arts and culture district
- Most of the action is happening there
- Is more artsy than the Current District

Other

- City Center Mankato is spread out, making one arts and historic district difficult
- Many historic and artistic assets are outside the Current District
- Why not create multiple arts, culture, and historic districts or areas?

What should be a part of a district?

- Pleasantly and easily walkable areas with wider sidewalks, lamp posts, and tree lined streets
- High density of venues
- Kiosks and signage to provide wayfinding throughout the district and directing visitors to other districts
- More restaurants that offer a greater variety of dining experiences
- Artist live/work space
- Higher concentration of things to do
- Gathering places for hanging out and strolling
- Venues and activities that will keep people in town longer. “Many people go to the symphony and then go straight home. We want to encourage them to stay and also go to a gallery.”
- Connection to the river
- More creative retail
- Public art
- Farmers’ market
- Street festivals



Sign posted at Envision Lab

Declare:

Why is a designated district important?

The fourth step is to agree on why this initiative is important. In addition to the documented social and economic benefits of cultural districts around the country, we want to know what is important to stakeholders in Mankato in their own words. It has been well documented that the benefits of cultural districts extend beyond the arts and benefit all members of the community. Thus, our aim for this step is to learn about local goals for a district and start to develop a language for communicating those goals – which local leaders can then use to continue articulating the vision and cultivating community buy-in.

Potential benefits of cultural districts

- Attracting artists and cultural enterprises to the community. Artists, cultural institutions and creative enterprises all contribute to a community's economy. Not only do they generate direct economic activity, but artists and creative entrepreneurs also bring energy and innovation to an area.

- Encouraging business and job development. The hub of economic activity that surrounds a cultural district can help create a feeling that this is a great place to live, visit and conduct business. The entire area prospers when visitors drawn to cultural attractions also patronize other nearby businesses. This can result in the creation of new economic opportunities and jobs.

- Preserving and reusing historic buildings. Adaptive reuse and rehabilitation of older buildings provide opportunities for affordable arts and creative spaces, especially when Historic Tax Credits can be applied to development costs.

- Establishing tourism destinations. Cultural districts are marketable tourism assets that highlight the distinct identity of a community and encourage visitors to check out the city.

- Enhancing property values. Successful districts combine improvements to public spaces (such as waterfronts and pedestrian corridors) along with property development. Redeveloping underutilized sites and recruiting businesses to occupy vacant spaces can help reduce vacancy rates and enhance property values.

- Fostering local cultural development. The establishment of a cultural district provides a focal point for celebrating and strengthening a community's cultural identity. Cultural districts highlight existing cultural amenities and work to recruit and establish new artists, cultural industries and organizations.



Inflatable mascot at an event in the RiNo Art District of Denver, Colorado



First Friday in the Crossroads Arts District of Kansas City, Missouri

Community Input

Potential benefits of an Arts & Historic District in the City Center Mankato:

- Bringing traffic downtown seven days a week. Right now, the City Center is busy during the workday, but sections empty out on the evenings and weekends.
- Supporting existing business owners in the City Center.
- Retaining workforce talent
- Bringing diversity of people and food to the city
- Attracting established artists to live and work in Mankato
- Increasing livability in the urban core, which is where young families want to be
- Creating an identity that is not just about shopping
- Improving the quality of life for all Mankato residents
- Promoting tourism. “It is much easier to communicate about something that has a structure and can be promoted as a package”
- Heightening the sense of community, “So it doesn’t feel so spread out”
- Creating an economic benefit
- Attracting employers and employees. As one participant said, “When companies are recruiting, they tell candidates to go out and do the Walking Sculpture Tour.”
- Creating a destination location. “Mankato has a large area to draw from”

artspace

Artspace Snapshot:

Northern Warehouse Artists’ Cooperative and Tilsner Artists’ Cooperative



In the late 1980s, the City of Saint Paul invited Artspace to redevelop a six-story warehouse built in 1908 by the Northern Pacific Railway. The result was the Northern Warehouse Artists’ Cooperative, which opened in 1990 and served as a catalyst for the economic and cultural growth of downtown Saint Paul’s struggling Lowertown neighborhood. The Northern was not only Artspace’s first project, it was also the first in the nation to use Low Income Housing Tax Credits for artist housing.

The Northern offers 52 affordable live/work units for artists and their families on its upper four floors. The lower two floors provide office, studio and commercial space for nonprofit arts organizations, commercial artists and other tenants, including a coffeehouse and an art gallery.

The Northern and the neighboring Tilsner Artists’ Cooperative, completed by Artspace in 1993, ignited a spectacular renaissance in Lowertown, now Saint Paul’s hottest neighborhood for galleries, restaurants and cultural activity. Just across the street, the Saint Paul Farmer’s Market enlivens weekend mornings, and a new light rail station stands just two blocks away.

In 2011, Artspace refinanced the Northern, using a new round of Low Income Housing Tax Credits to pay for more energy-efficient windows, a new roof and tuckpointing of the building’s distinctive brown brick façade. The refinancing guarantees Artspace’s first project will remain affordable for the artists who helped revive Lowertown for an additional 30 years.

- Catalyzing renovation and general property improvements
- Encouraging a higher level of collaboration with and between artists
- Retaining graduates from local colleges

Summary

During the focus groups and public meeting, participants touched on most of the potential benefits listed, and added their own locally specific flavor. The role of the educational institutions is evident, and the potential for a district to help retain recent graduates – and attract prospective art students – should not be underplayed.

As the initiative moves forward, these benefits can be refined to become specific goals for the district. Certainly, if these benefits are realized in a cultural district, the entire community will enjoy the positive impact of the district.



Iconic metal archways in the Short North District of Columbus, Ohio

Anticipate:

What are the challenges and solutions?

The fifth and final step is to anticipate potential challenges and plan for solutions. Though each community is unique, each district faces a number of challenges over the years as it comes together – and stays together. The purpose of this step is to share common challenges and solutions, learn about the local challenges that stakeholder groups anticipate, and articulate some of the local tools that can prevent or ameliorate these challenges as they arise.

Common Challenges in Cultural Districts

- Gentrification is an unintended consequence of success. Displacement of existing residents can lead to the loss of an area's unique and authentic identity and diminish local support.
- Staffing and administration are one of the most common challenges for cultural districts. Many are staffed with part-time or volunteer positions to save money, but over the long-term the operations of the district suffers without an ongoing management structure.
- Funding and financing districts is one of the most difficult challenges a local district administrator faces. Even when creative partnerships augment financial resources, funds for planning and promoting local districts can be difficult to secure.
- Lack of broad community support and buy-in is a typical challenge that faces districts formed with a top-down approach. To avoid becoming a district in name only, relevance to local residents is equally important as efforts that attract tourism.
- Long-term planning and evaluation of local efforts can be time consuming and demand extra resources but are crucial to sustaining a local district.

Cultural districts can prepare for these challenges by implementing incentive programs specifically tailored to the district before problems arise. Incentive programs depend on the local tools available and the nature of the district and surrounding community. Some common incentive programs include:

Certification of cultural districts

Example: Colorado Creative District certification. Creative districts apply to the State for certification. Certification provides the district with access to public and private funding through economic development funding sources and a community loan fund. Districts also receive marketing and communications support, technical assistance, access to training from the state and coaching from other creative districts.



Tour of the 410 Project, which includes a gallery in the storefront space and an education and creative works space behind

Tax abatements for new development and/or the sale of art

Example: Kansas City, Missouri's tax abatements for the Crossroads Arts District. The City provides property tax abatements for art-related businesses in the arts district. Previously, tax abatements had gone to developers to attract new residents with high-end condominiums and lofts, however rising property values and the threat of gentrification-led displacement prompted a re-focusing of the tax abatement program.

Assistance with attaining approvals within the district

Example: Fredericksburg Arts and Cultural District, Fredericksburg, Virginia. City provides arts and cultural businesses with a 100% reduction in planning, zoning and special event and building permit application fees incurred in the initial establishment of a business, an expansion of a business in the district, or a new special event.

Business Improvement District (BID) - a collective effort of stakeholders to finance services, programs, management and marketing with the aim of strategically managing growth and change

Example: RiNo BID in Denver, Colorado. Property and business owners partnered with the City of Denver to create an arts-focused BID in the RiNo Art District (formed in 2015). This BID will provide advocacy, branding, placemaking, and support to creative and entrepreneurial businesses. Much of the advocacy is related to affordability to help address the issue of rapidly rising property values and rental rates in the district.

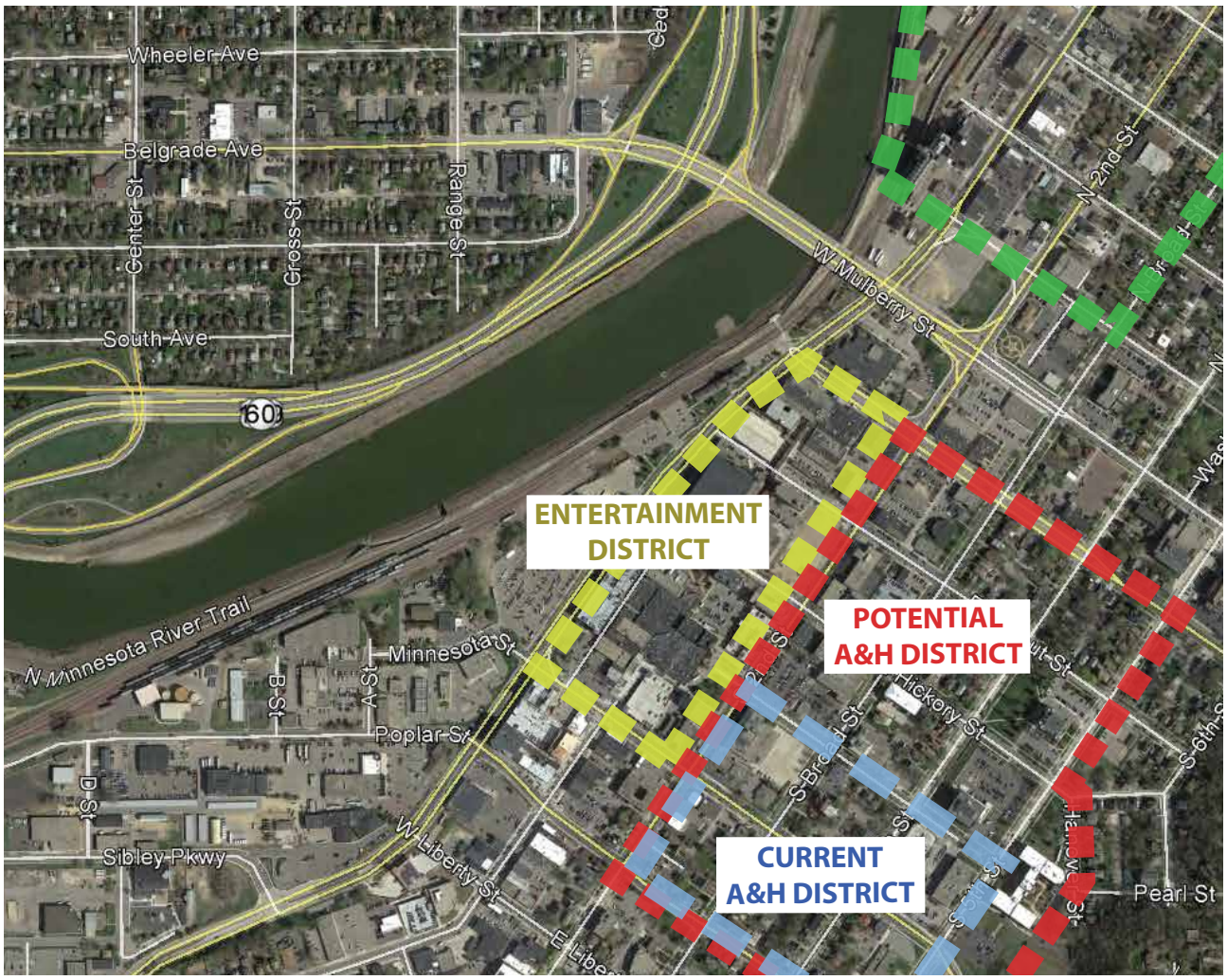
Enterprise Zones

Example: Enterprise Zone program in Rhode Island. Companies in the Zone can receive tax credits to cover 50% of wages paid to newly hired employees, if the new hires increase the company's employment by 5%. Additionally, business owners living in the Zone receive a $50,000 deduction on personal income tax for three years. Tax credits are also available for low-interest loans to businesses located in the Zone.

Funding for capital improvements

Example: Arts and Cultural District Micro Grant Program in Richmond, Virginia. The City has partnered with CultureWorks, an art nonprofit, that will administer two types of grants. One type of grant is provided to businesses, nonprofits, and individuals organizing an event, project, program or activity in the district; The other applies to capital improvements made to a site or building within the district.

Arts and Historical, Entertainment, and Old Town Districts



Map Created by ISG

Brokering of spaces

Example: Spaceworks Tacoma in Tacoma, Washington. A joint initiative of the City of Tacoma and the Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber launched the program in 2010 to activate empty storefronts with art and creative enterprise. Property owners donate vacant spaces for artists to transform with installations, short-term projects, pop-up retail, and events.

Community Input

Each focus group had a different perspective on the specific challenges and solutions that surround a cultural district. These perspectives are summarized in the chart below:

Community Input on the Challenges and Solutions of a Cultural District

	Anticipated Challenges	Discussed Solutions
Funding and Financing	• "Business and economic support systems in Mankato do not understand creative enterprise and how to support creative enterprise" • "Rising rent is becoming more of an issue in downtown"	• Rental Housing Rehabilitation Program and Commercial Rehabilitation Program • Historic Preservation Tax Credits • Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) • Tax abatement programs through the State of Minnesota • Tax Increment Financing (TIF) • Local banks are encouraged to support such initiatives through CRI funds • Loans from the City, similar to the loan that helped fund Friesen's Bakery's build out and façade improvements • Local foundations that focus on arts and aesthetics may be a source of funding • Local businesses that fund the sculpture tour may participate in providing support for a district
Relevance to local residents	• "The general community lacks understanding about how arts can be an economic driver"	• Increased collaboration between Mankato area arts organizations, non-profits, and historic organizations. e.g. creating an association between art and historic organizations, or a museum collaboration • A unified voice to represent the arts
Bureaucracy	• "Building codes have restrictive design standards" • "Noise ordinances – forcing artists to go outside of city boundaries to practice certain art forms"	• Clear and expedited process for attaining permits for artistic endeavors
Scale	• "The arts are spread out so the district should be larger" VS. • "The district should be walkable"	• Designate a small district that is compact and walkable, and include information and connections to other locations and districts. • Rename the district a node or a zone • Finding arts-related space opportunities in the Proposed District
Finding arts-related space opportunities in the Proposed District	•"Not a lot of space available" •"Rents are not affordable"	• Locate the district in the Old Town area, where there are more opportunities

Recommendations and Next Steps

During the visit, we experienced the high level of excitement and civic leadership that surrounds the idea of pursuing and enhancing an Arts & Historic District. Based on observations from the tour and feedback from the community input conversations, we would recommend revisiting and perhaps revising the location of the district.

There are ample historic assets in the Current District, District Expansion and Old Town. However, there are relatively few arts dedicated facilities, limited walkability and not much room for growth in the Current District and District Expansion.

On the other hand, the greatest concentration of arts activity is organically occurring in Old Town. Thus, Artspace believes Old Town is the most promising area to pursue an arts district. In addition to naturally occurring bottom up growth, this area benefits from a combination of affordable rent, walkability, historic buildings, a variety of arts and businesses, a distinct identity, and a combination of regular hours and special events.

Therefore, Artspace's recommendation is to create two separate districts:

1. **A "Historic District" or "Historic & Cultural District" in the Current District and potentially the District Expansion**

2. **An "Arts District" or "Creative District" in Old Town**

With two separate districts, each district can differentiate itself with its own features, character, goals, and scale. In this situation, if the Current District is to become the Historic District, Artspace recommends enlarging it to include the District Expansion. With the District Expansion, five additional historic buildings would be added. The tradeoff, however, is that the Historic District becomes less walkable, compact, and distinguishable from the rest of the City Center, partly because four of the nine added blocks do not feature historic buildings. This drawback is not too problematic, given that an Arts/Creative District in Old Town would provide those characteristics. Thus, the qualities of an Arts/Creative District in Old Town, with compact, walkable, visually distinctive features, would certainly become much more central to the district's identity and role within the community.

Alternatively, if community priorities or resources are focused on creating only one district, we recommend moving the Arts & Historic District from the Current District location to Old Town.

These recommendations are based on our short two-day visit; we also believe it is important to

have the data lead the community to any decision. Hence, our recommended next steps focus on gathering additional data that will help make a decision about where to focus local efforts.

1. **Create a map of Historic, Cultural, Arts and Arts-Friendly Assets in the City Center.** Work with the City to create a cultural asset map with overlays for historic, cultural, arts, and arts-friendly assets. The map will help visualize where the concentration of arts-related businesses – nonprofit and for-profit – are located and their proximity to historic assets. This is also a tool to see where these assets overlap and where the highest concentration is located. Use the map to help build a case for district enhancements and boundary definitions for one or both districts.

2. **Conduct a Survey of Artists, Arts Organizations and Arts-Friendly Businesses.** Work with Twin Rivers Council for the Arts to create an on-line survey that asks artists and creative businesses questions about art disciplines, space needs, desired locations and related affordability. Use the data to build a case for the arts and creative sector as an economic generator for the City and the region.

3. **Inventory Working Studio Spaces for Artists and Makers.** Use this data on locations, sizes, and rental rates of creative workspace, in combination to the survey data, to continue building on the story about the economic impact of the arts and to demonstrate where clusters of artists are currently located.

4. **Create a Hub for the Arts.** Partner with Twin Rivers Council for the Arts to create a place where visitors and residents go to find out what's happening in the arts. Twin Rivers would act as a mini-Chamber of Commerce or "Chamber of Arts" for the creative community, working with the Chamber to create a directory of all things related to arts in Mankato. Consider creating a map that shows Twin Rivers as the Hub with other organizations and activities radiating out from Twin Rivers like spokes of a wheel. Twin Rivers could be the primary Hub with connections to the Carnegie Arts Center, EnvisionLab, 410 Project, the Blue Earth History Center, etc. The cultural asset map (from Next Step 1) will help identify and illustrate the Hub and Spokes.

5. **Use Data from Next Steps 1 and 2 to Inform the Old Town Master Plan in 2016.** If the data aligns with the recommendation to create an Arts & Historic District or Creative District in Old Town, include those findings in the Master Plan.

6. **Educate Business Owners about the Economic Impact of the Arts.** A starting point for these discussions can include *Taking A Measure of Creative Placemaking*, the summary of an economic impact study in which Metris Arts Consulting examined the impact on the tenants and neighborhoods surrounding five of Artspace's earliest projects. (To download the PDF of the study and the summary, visit www.artspace.org/ideas-insights/artspace-publications/taking-measure-creative-placemaking)

7. **Begin Strategizing About Potential Funding Sources.** Once the location(s), focus(es) and boundaries for the district(s) have been determined, start identifying

potential funding sources. There may be different opportunities depending on the vision and concept. Public/private sector partnerships between art, culture, and economic development organizations will be key throughout the process, but especially while moving the vision toward a plan, developing a strategy, and seeking funding.

At the local level, it may be worth exploring partnerships with the City or the Economic Development Authority to provide tax exemptions for the sale of art in the district(s), or initiate a percent for the arts program to include 1% of the estimated cost of developments within the city and/or a hotel/motel tax to go toward funding a cultural district or districts.

On the national level, foundations such as the Kresge and Surdna Foundation, and programs, such as the National Endowment for the Arts' Our Town grants and ArtPlace also provide support to art and culture districts.

We would also look at the National Trust Main Street program to explore Mankato's eligibility, particularly along North Riverfront Drive in Old Town.

This report completes the scope of work that Artspace agreed to conduct for the City Center Partnership. We are open to discussion of a second consulting contract that would include designing and administering a market survey, creation of a vision statement, and facilitating fundraising strategy for the district(s). We extend our sincere thanks for the opportunity to work with the City Center Partnership on the Arts & Historic District and the Mankato community's interest in supporting arts, culture, and history in their city.

ABOUT ARTSPACE



Artists at work
With affordable space to live and work, our resident artists can unleash their creativity.



Lively neighborhoods
Our projects spur economic activity and dynamic street life in the area.



Sustainable solutions
Our projects provide long-term affordable space without ongoing fundraising.

Established in 1979 to serve as an advocate for artists' space needs, Artspace effectively fulfilled that mission for nearly a decade. By the late 1980s, however, it was clear that the problem required a more proactive approach, and Artspace made the leap from advocate to developer. Since then, the scope of Artspace's activities has grown dramatically. Artspace is now a national leader in the field of developing affordable space that meets the needs of artists through the adaptive reuse of historic buildings and new construction.

Artspace's first three live/work projects were in Saint Paul: the Northern Warehouse Artists' Cooperative (1990), Frogtown Family Lofts (1992), and Tilsner Artists' Cooperative (1993). In the mid-1990s, Artspace broadened its mission to include non-residential projects. The first of these, the Traffic Zone Center for Visual Art (1995), transformed an historic bakery in the Minneapolis Warehouse District into 24 studios for mid-career artists.

Since then, Artspace has expanded its range of activities to include projects in operation or development in more than 20 states across the nation. In all, these projects represent nearly 2,000 live/work units and millions of square feet of non-residential community and commercial space. Artspace has evolved from a Minnesota organization with a few national projects into a truly national organization based in the Twin Cities, with offices in New York, Los Angeles, Seattle, New Orleans, and Washington, DC.

Artspace programs fall in three broad categories: Property Development, Asset Management, and Consulting Services.

Property Development

Development projects, which typically involve the adaptive reuse of older buildings but can also involve new construction, are the most visible of Artspace's activities. To date, we have completed more than 35 major projects. A dozen more are under construction or in the development pipeline. Artspace live/work projects are operating from coast to coast.

Asset Management

Artspace owns or co-owns all the buildings it develops; our portfolio now comprises more than $500 million worth of real property. We

strive to manage our properties so that they will be well-maintained yet remain affordable to the low- and moderate-income artists for whom they were developed in the first place. Revenues in excess of expenses are set aside for preventive maintenance, commons area improvements, and building upgrades.

Consulting Services

In addition to its roles as developer, owner, and manager, Artspace acts as a consultant to communities, organizations, and individuals seeking information and advice about developing affordable housing and work space for artists, performing arts centers, and cultural districts, often within the context of historic preservation.

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Building better communities through the arts

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ARTSPACE CONSULTING

We'd like to thank:

citycenter PARTNERSHIP

MANKATO AREA FOUNDATION

Mankato, Minnesota
February 2016

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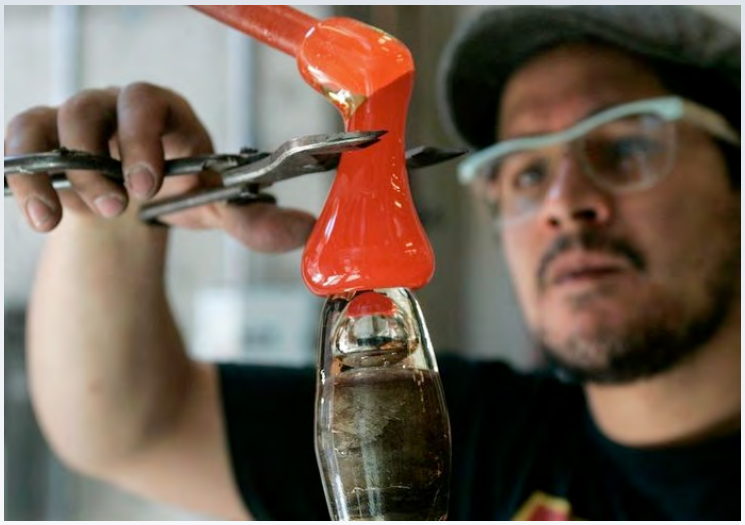
OUR MISSION

to create, foster, and preserve affordable space for artists and arts organizations



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BUILDING. CREATING. GROWING.
2015 Year-End Review

39 PROJECTS IN OPERATION IN 27 CITIES IN 17 STATES

12 projects in pre-development

3 projects began construction in 2015

2 new projects opened in 2015

3 projected openings in 2016

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

2,946,000 SF OF AFFORDABLE ART SPACE

1,374 LIVE/WORK UNITS for artists and their families

148 Live/work units under construction

298 Creative enterprises/ small businesses

132+K SF of community space

$3M TOTAL RENT SUBSIDY PROVIDED TO LOW INCOME ARTISTS

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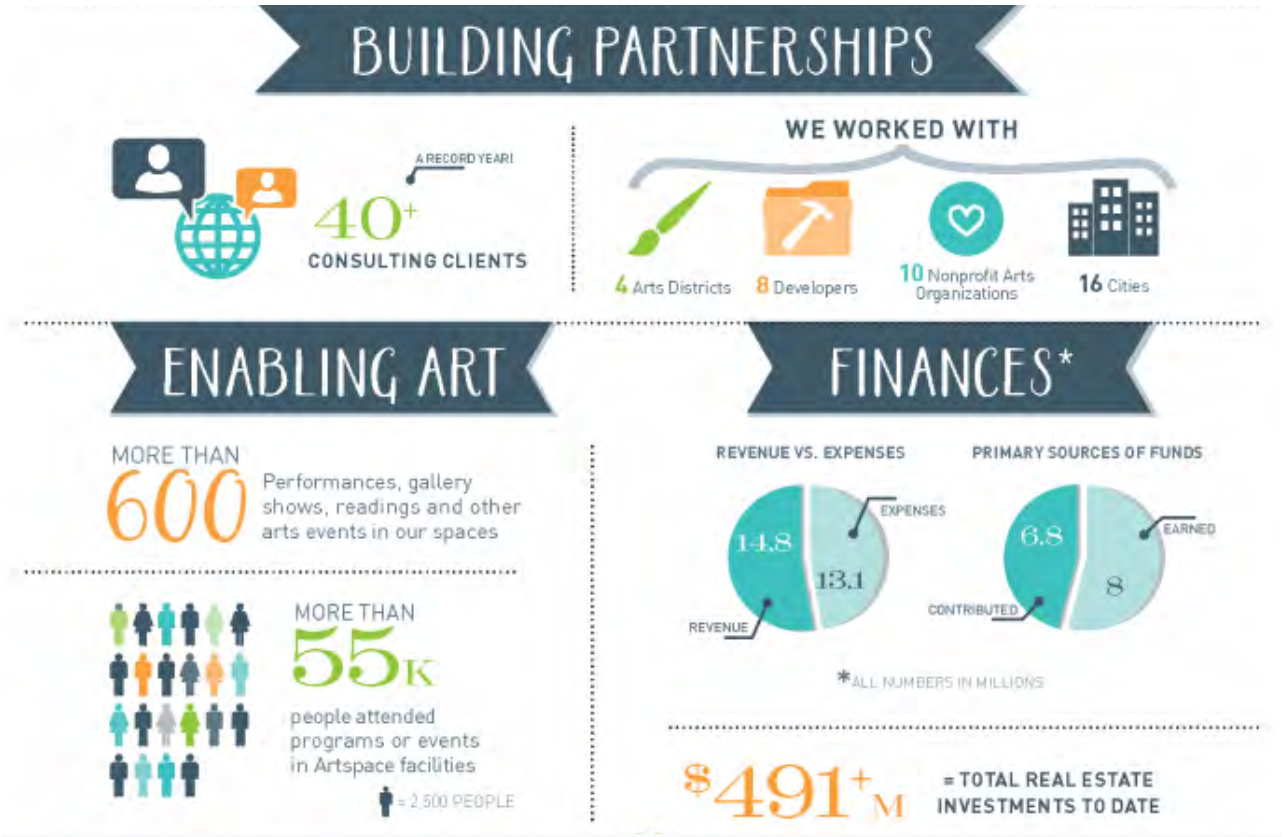

WHAT WE DO



Artspace Everett Lofts // Everett, Washington

- Property development
- Asset management
- National consulting

artspace // at work in the United States



ARTSPACE IN MANKATO

The question:



Would City Center businesses and organizations benefit from Arts & Historic District enhancements, what initiatives are achievable, and is the time right to pursue this?

ARTSPACE IN MANKATO

Study scope:

- Focus Groups
- Tour
- Public Meeting
- Core Group Meeting

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ARTS & HISTORIC DISTRICTS

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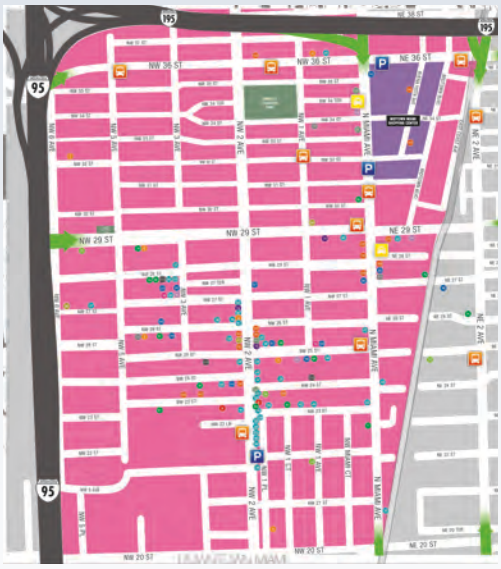
WHAT IS AN ARTS DISTRICT?



Wynwood Arts District // Miami, Florida

A geographic concentration of artists, cultural venues and activities

- Venues: theaters, museums, galleries, studios AND restaurants, cafes, bars, shops, arts-friendly businesses
- Activities: art crawls, open studios, craft fairs, performances, gatherings, classes

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BUT WHO IS AN ARTIST?

- photographers
- printmakers
- poets
- actors
- culture bearers
- musicians
- graphic designers
- singers
- folk artists
- architects
- weavers
- potters





- painters
- writers
- basket makers
- dancers
- sculptors
- performance artists
- film makers
- fashion designers
- arts educators
- welders
- healing artists
- etc...

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WHAT IS A HISTORIC DISTRICT?

A group of buildings, properties, or sites designated as historically or architecturally significant



Lake Street Historic District // Bergen, New York

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BUT WHAT IS HISTORIC?







- Adds to the historical integrity of architectural qualities that make the historic district significant
- Built before 1965

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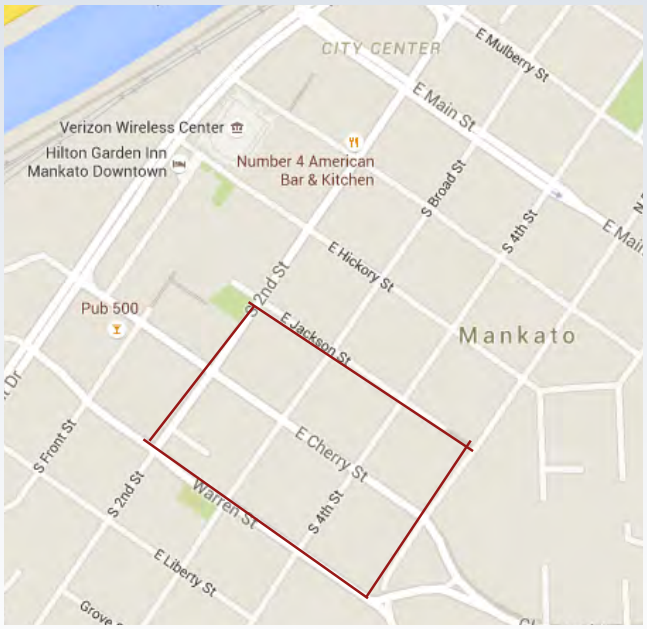
MANKATO ARTS & HISTORIC DISTRICT

Currently located between:
Jackson St and Warren St
&
S 2nd St and S 5th St

- Includes: R.D. Hubbard House, Emy Frentz Arts Guild, Federal Courthouse, Post Office and others



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YOUR TURN

- What are your favorite places and activities in the district?
- What would make it better?
- What arts or historic assets are outside the district?
- Do you associate the district more with art or history?

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WHY HAVE ARTS & HISTORIC DISTRICTS?

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THEY BENEFIT COMMUNITIES



Oldtown // Wichita, Kansas

- Transform area into a destination
- Catalyze other development
- Reclaim and animate underutilized buildings and areas
- Support creative entrepreneurs and small businesses
- Make cities more attractive to live, work, and play

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THEY BENEFIT COMMUNITIES

> "...The best cities are a dynamic system made up of ideas and culture rather than just roads and buildings." -- Charles Landry

> Soul of the community



Former highway turned into a linear park // Seoul, South Korea

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THEY BENEFIT COMMUNITIES



The best cities and towns are:

> vibrant
> safe
> dynamic
> innovative
> relevant
> multi-dimensional
> filled with surprises

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YOUR TURN

- How would an enhanced Arts and Historic District benefit Mankato?
- Are there areas in Mankato where artists and creative organizations are already gravitating?

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QUALITIES OF ARTS & HISTORIC DISTRICTS

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TOP 10 QUALITIES OF THE BEST DISTRICTS

1. Affordable rent
2. Historic infrastructure
3. Strong branding
4. Visual cues
5. Variety of arts and businesses
6. Top down + Bottom up
7. Local identity and relevance
8. Regular hours + special events
9. A management organization with a budget
10. Anchor venues

1. AFFORDABLE RENTS

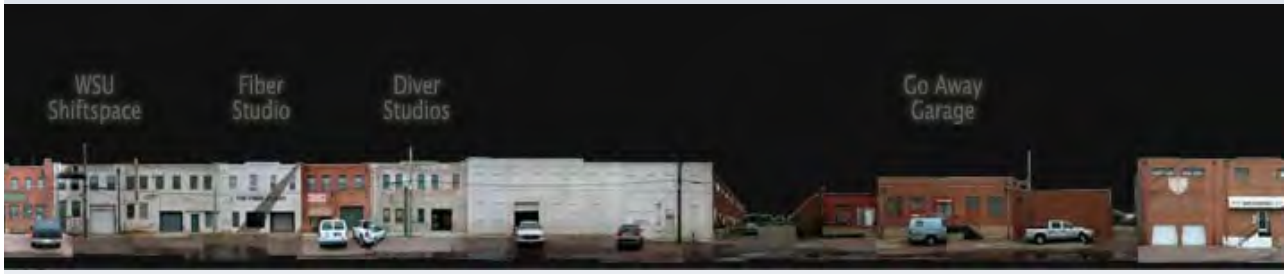


Northern Warehouse // Saint Paul, Minnesota

Lowertown Historic District
Saint Paul, Minnesota

- 118 live/work apartments for artists and families
- 50,000 sf commercial space for creative businesses and entrepreneurs
- Long-term affordability despite changing neighborhood

2. HISTORIC INFRASTRUCTURE



Commerce Street
Wichita, Kansas

- Old industrial buildings along a two-block stretch of Commerce St
- Colonized by artists
- Wichita has 3 other arts districts, more commercial in nature

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3. STRONG BRANDING









RINO Art District
Denver, Colorado

- Catchy name, shortened from River North (neighborhood)
- Slogan: “Where Art Is Made”
- Recognizable logo - seen on signs, shop windows, murals, sculptures, and online
- Biannual Field Guide available online and in district shops

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4. VISUAL CUES







Wynwood Art District
Miami, Florida

- 70 galleries, museums, collections
- Murals, art Crosswalks, signs

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5. VARIETY OF USES AND ACTIVITIES



District Banner // Minneapolis, Minnesota
Photo: Behance

Northeast Minneapolis Arts District
Minneapolis, Minnesota

- Venues: galleries, art studios, performance spaces, glass studios, public art, music venues
- Creative Businesses: catering companies, yoga studio, family owned businesses, social diy art locations, cafes, restaurants.
- Programming: Art-A-Whirl, Fall Fine Arts Show, Wintertide (run by NEMAA), open studios

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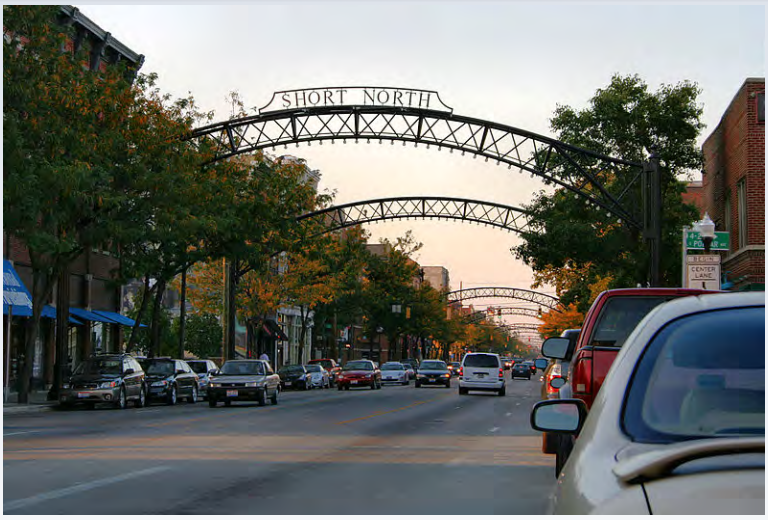
6. LOCAL RELEVANCE



Short North

Columbus, Ohio

City installed 17 lighted metal archways extending across High Street, recalling arches present in the area in the early 1900s.

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7. ANCHOR LOCATIONS

Danville Tobacco Warehouse and Residential Historic District

Danville, Virginia



- Anchor: “The Crossing at the Dan”
- Historic train station repurposed for Danville Science Center, farmer’s market, and event space.
- The Crossing offers access to Riverwalk trail and outdoor concert pavilion
- Other warehouses used for business, housing, and nanotechnology research

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8. TOP DOWN + BOTTOM UP

KEEP RiNO WiLD



RINO Art District
Denver, Colorado

- "Community development and placemaking organization dedicated to fostering commercial value, social value and personal value for the creative sector."
- Started in 2005 by artists living and working in the area
- Earned certification from Colorado Creative Industries
- Led the way in forming an arts-focused Business Improvement District (BID) and General Improvement District (GID)

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9. REGULAR HOURS + SPECIAL EVENTS

Corazon de Trinidad Creative District
Trinidad, Colorado

- Daily: galleries, museum, and shops
- Weekly: theater performances
- Monthly: Art Treks, with live music and late business hours
- Annually: Artocade (pictured), TrindieFest film festival
- Spontaneously: chalk drawings



Artocade // Trinidad, Colorado

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10. MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

40W Arts District
Lakewood, Colorado

- Nonprofit focused helping catalyze the resurgence of the W Colfax Corridor through the arts and culture
- Membership rates $40-$500
- All programming proceeds go to support the arts district.
- Operating costs (2012): $12,000
- 16% earned, 84% contributed
- West Colfax Business Improvement District (BID) contributes (appx 60% of the budget)





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YOUR TURN

- In the Mankato Arts and History District, which of these characteristics:

  — is strongest?
  — needs the most work?

- Describe a successful arts district you've seen elsewhere. What makes it successful?

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CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

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COMMON DISTRICT CHALLENGES

- Gentrification (keeping spaces affordable)
- Some arts districts are in name only
- Zoning sometimes gets in the way
- Lack broad community support and buy-in



Oldtown // Wichita, Kansas

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POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Incentives

- Legislation to create/recognize cultural districts
- Special zoning
- Tax abatements on sale of art
- Assistance with approvals within the district
- Business Improvement District or Enterprise Zone designation



Art District of Santa Fe // Denver, Colorado

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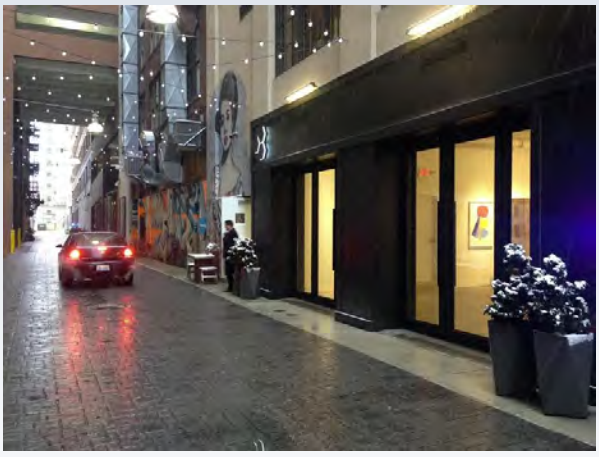
POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Programs

- Streetscape renovations
- Funding for capital improvements (facades, etc.)
- Wayfinding/connectivity (art walks, free buses, etc.)
- Festivals and other events that drive attendance
- Brokering of spaces



The Belt, art alley // Detroit, Michigan

Example of program in Tacoma, Washington: https://youtu.be/JvFTUJ3kVo4

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EXAMPLE: PROGRAM

COLORADO

State-wide Creative District certification

- Access to public and private funding through economic development funding and community loan fund (a CDFI)
- Marketing, advertising, and social media opportunities
- Technical assistance
- Access to training webinars
- Assistance with community asset mapping
- Mentoring and coaching from other creative districts

EXAMPLE: INCENTIVES

RHODE ISLAND

Enterprise Zone

- Tax Credit for wages paid:
  — 50% wages paid to newly hired employees, provided company employment is increased by 5%
  — 75% credit for employees hired who live in the Zone
- Business owners living inside the Zone receive a $50,000 deduction on personal income tax for 3 years
- Tax credits available for low-interest loans to businesses in the Zone

EXAMPLE: INCENTIVES

KANSAS CITY, MO

Tax Abatements for Crossroads Arts District

- Provide property tax abatements for art-related businesses in Crossroads that would otherwise be priced out because of rising property values (since 2007)
- Previously, tax abatements had gone to developers to attract new residents with high-end condominiums and lofts
- Today, Crossroads is one of the 5 largest arts districts in US, with 60+ galleries

YOUR TURN

- What are the current challenges of:
  — Artists and creative businesses in Mankato?
- What programs and incentives are **currently offered** to:
  — Help artists and creative businesses?
  — Support and enliven the district?
- What programs and incentives could be **added** to:
  — Help artists and creative businesses?
  — Support and enliven the district?

CASE STUDY: ECONOMIC IMPACT

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CASE STUDY:
IMPACT OF TWO ARTIST HOUSING PROJECTS IN ST PAUL



Lowertown neighborhood in St. Paul, Minnesota
Enter Artspace and Redevelopment Authority

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CASE STUDY:
IMPACT OF TWO ARTIST HOUSING PROJECTS IN ST PAUL



Northern and Tilsner Warehouses // St. Paul, Minnesota
52 and 66 live/work units in two historic warehouses
(opened 1990, 1993)

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CASE STUDY:
IMPACT OF TWO ARTIST HOUSING PROJECTS IN ST PAUL





> 1980s: No artists or arts activity

Today: 50,000 annual visitors to semi-annual art crawls. Avg spending of $20/person or $1 million.

> 1980s: No glimmer of sports stadium

Today: New ballpark for St Paul Saints:
$63 million in construction costs.
$10 million in annual economic impact.

> 1980: Area had no name or identity

Today: *Lowertown* is a designated historic district. Arts district status pending. Fastest growing neighborhood.

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CASE STUDY:
IMPACT OF TWO ARTIST HOUSING PROJECTS IN ST PAUL





> 1989: only 500 people lived in Lowertown

Today: 9,000 residents

> 1991: St. Paul Farmer's Market built across the street from the artist buildings

Today: 20,000 visitors every weekend from April-Nov

> Then: Closest bus line 5 blocks away

Today: Light Rail to immediate neighborhood

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FOCUS GROUP:
BUSINESS

> How is the business community engaged with the arts community?

> What other kinds of businesses do you want to support/attract to the district?

> What infrastructure exists to pool resources to assist businesses? (e.g. BID, Chamber of Commerce, RDA)

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FOCUS GROUP: FINANCE AND FUNDING

- What are your funding success stories and what can be learned from them?
- What are the potential funding/financing programs for a district?
- What is the community's current and projected general focus (arts, historic preservation, affordable housing, economic development, education, social services, etc.)?
- Who else should be brought into the conversation?

NEXT STEPS

- Stay tuned for continued dialogue through the City Center Partnership
- Artspace will deliver a report of findings to the City Center Partnership by Summer 2016.




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