WASHTENAW COUNTY CULTURAL MASTER PLAN

Community & Culture

ArtsAlliance

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INVESTORS IN THE CULTURAL PLAN

Ann Arbor Art Center
Ann Arbor District Library
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Ann Arbor Summer Festival
Ann Arbor Street Art Fair - The Original
Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra
The Ark
Artrain USA
Chelsea Center for the Arts
Dance Gallery Foundation/Peter Sparling Dance Company
Kerrytown Concert House
Michigan Theater
The Neutral Zone
Riverside Arts Center
University of Michigan Exhibit Museum of Natural History
University of Michigan Museum of Art
University Musical Society
WEMU 89.1
LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

Co-Chairs:
Robert Guenzel, Washtenaw County Administrator
Dr. William C. Miller, Superintendent, Washtenaw Intermediate School District

Jesse Bernstein, President, Ann Arbor Area Chamber of Commerce
Cheryl Elliott, President, Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation
Paul Schreiber, Mayor, City of Ypsilanti
John Heiftje, Mayor, City of Ann Arbor
Trenda Rusher, Executive Director, Washtenaw County ETCS
Mary Kerr, President, Ann Arbor Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
Debbie Locke-Daniel, President, Ypsilanti Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
Dr. Larry Whitworth, President, Washtenaw Community College

STEERING COMMITTEE

Co-Chairs:
Phil D’Anieri, Program Director, Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation
Debra Polich, President & CEO, Artrain USA

Susan Badger Booth, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Communication & Theater Arts, Eastern Michigan University
Deborah Clancy, Supervisor, Instructional Services, Washtenaw Intermediate School District
Kenneth C. Fischer, President, University Musical Society, Ann Arbor
Lynne Friman, Co-Chair, Saline Area Arts Council
Derrick Jackson, Deputy Clerk, Washtenaw County
William Kinley, Board Chair, Riverside Arts Center, Ypsilanti
Aubrey Thornton Martinson, Executive Director, Chelsea Center for the Arts
Mark Palms, Festival Director, Riverfolk Music & Arts Festival, Manchester
Theresa Reid, Managing Director, Arts on Earth, University of Michigan
Eleanor Shelton, Board Member, Riverside Arts Center, Ypsilanti
Terri Sibo-Koenig, Co-Chair, Saline Area Arts Council
Anthony VanDerwerp, Director of Planning & Environment, Washtenaw County
John Kenneth Weiss, Executive Director, Neutral Zone, Ann Arbor
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Elizabeth Parkinson. Ann Arbor SPARK

James Christen Steward, University of Michigan Museum of Art
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Arts, culture, and creativity are among the core elements that make Washtenaw County a special place. Look at any of the “best of” awards that the communities in this county regularly win and there’ll doubtlessly be listed a reference to the area’s high quality of life, with its cultural assets typically highlighted. The Art Fairs and the area’s “top-notch” performing arts rank high in visitors’ memories and business leaders report that the county’s cultural resources help them recruit and retain talented employees.

Arts and culture has a long history in Washtenaw County, with groups such as the University Musical Society and the Ann Arbor Art Center reaching their 100th anniversaries and beyond. And yet, the long history and the lively appearance of the cultural community mask the true fragility of this sector. Peer behind the polished facades of many cultural organizations or talk to the artists practicing their craft here and you’ll find a vulnerable industry struggling to survive. With relentless decreases in government funding, a small corporate donor base (in relation to the size of the county’s non-profit sector), a dismal economy, and dizzying changes in entertainment offerings and expectations, this is an extremely challenging time for the cultural sector.

This report is a response to that challenge. Community leaders understand that the future growth and success of the county is inextricably tied to the health and well-being of those elements that contribute to the area’s quality of place. In a true collaborative effort, these leaders, along with thousands of grassroots individuals, have played a critical role in identifying the challenges outlined in this report and helping to develop the recommended actions.

“One of the best things about doing art in Washtenaw County is that you can create opportunities. Being in theater, it is easy to get bogged down and trapped in what everyone else is doing. ‘There aren’t any more auditions for this year; no one really needs this type of designer; all of the director spots are filled; none of these shows can really use my skills.’

But in Ann Arbor, I have found that if you mention an idea for a project to a group of friends (even ones you just met!), there will suddenly be discussion about where you could do it, who might help, who might donate some funds, what other projects it might pair up with, who you should talk to for more ideas, where some costumes might be, who loves ideas like that...

Washtenaw County is filled with creative, savvy and open minds… These “created opportunities” – being able, as an individual artist, to open your own doors – are what make me practice my art in Washtenaw County.”

Isaac Ellis
Priority Recommendations

The Washtenaw County Cultural Master Plan is a strategic vision of the future that includes 34 recommendations to be implemented over a 5-year period. The recommendations are the fruit of an 18-month, community-based planning effort that reflects the input of nearly 5,000 Washtenaw County residents, captured in 29 interviews and community forums, an online survey, an artists’ census, and a study of the area’s creative economy. The following recommendations represent the pinnacle of the Master Plan. (The plan is so named because it offers an overall vision for cultural development in Washtenaw County. In a next step, each participating population center will adapt this overall plan to address its own specific situation.)

The Plan was coordinated and summarized by the Arts Alliance, but its vision is the product of the ideas and efforts of thousands of Washtenaw County participants.

• **Strengthen the Arts Alliance**

  **What?** An Arts Alliance that is adequately funded and staffed will be able to unite under one roof the interests of artists, nonprofit cultural organizations, and for-profit creative businesses throughout the county. This service organization will be able to represent the cultural sector in discussions of county-wide challenges with business, government, civic, and educational leaders. The Arts Alliance will be able to provide the services requested of it in this plan which will create a stronger cultural sector overall as well as an economically healthier Washtenaw County.

  **Why?** No other county-wide organization can make sure the recommendations of the cultural master plan are implemented; there is no other organization that can represent the cultural sector in regional, cross-jurisdictional discussions.

• **Make arts and culture an integral part of K-12 education throughout Washtenaw County**

  **What?** Children in all parts of Washtenaw County will be able to reap the documented benefits of exposure and involvement in arts activities in an organized, ongoing, and comprehensive program. Engagement opportunities will expose students to cultures different than their own and prepare them to face the challenges of an increasingly diverse 21st century. Authentic arts learning will provide students with important career-building experiences as well as generate revenue for artists, cultural organizations, and creative businesses.

  **Why?** There is unequal access to cultural and creative education programs throughout the county; numerous studies show that access to arts education significantly enhances a student’s future professional and personal success.
• Provide services that support the growth of the creative economy

**What?** Artists, cultural organizations, and creative businesses will have access to business skills training that will enable them to function more productively and successfully. Resources such as artist incubators and microloans will assist artists and creative businesses to add to the economic vitality of the county. Producers of cultural events will collaborate with tourism, business, and economic development partners to maximize the economic impact of their programs. For-profit businesses will find new opportunities to sell their services to creative businesses and will learn skills more typically found in the non-profit sector.

**Why?** Strengthening creative workers’ business management, marketing, and other skills will help create a stronger, sustainable cultural ecosystem long-term; affordable spaces for artists to live and work will keep emerging creative workers from leaving the county; vibrant creative businesses will enhance the quality of place of the county’s cities and towns.

• Increase public and private sector funding for arts and culture

**What?** A “blue-ribbon” panel will be established to thoroughly investigate innovative funding models for arts and culture and make recommendations for implementing a county-wide system. A broad-based public awareness campaign will help residents understand the value arts and culture brings to their lives, personally and economically. Cultural organizations will learn the skills to diversify and increase their earned income streams.

**Why?** Funding is the #1 challenge facing the county’s cultural organizations; traditional systems for funding arts and culture are no longer effective in today’s rapidly changing world.

• Benchmark diversity in the audiences, staffs, and programming of Washtenaw County cultural organizations

**What?** A community-oriented, carefully constructed research program will provide essential data that will enable cultural organizations of all types and sizes to plan how they can best go about engaging diverse populations in their programs and governance.

**Why?** The rich diversity of Washtenaw County (home to over 90 different ethnic groups) is generally not reflected in the offerings and personnel of the cultural sector; the area’s cultural diversity is a strength that needs to be showcased.

“As a working artist in beautiful, eclectic and diverse Washtenaw County, I have the best of nature and metropolitan culture close by. It has been a wonderful place to live and work as an artist. My strongest support comes from my artist friends and the tremendous patrons of the arts for which I, as an artist, am eternally grateful.”

    Lorin Kummer

Lorin Kummer
Key Findings of the Cultural Plan

- People in Washtenaw County value arts and culture
  - 1,535 people completed online surveys.
  - 260 residents participated in 29 community forums and interviews.
  - 63% said arts and cultural programs were VERY important in their choice to live in Washtenaw County.
  - 75% said that business support for arts and culture made a difference when they chose what business to patronize.

- Many businesses recognize the value of arts and culture to the bottom line
  - 63% said that access to arts and culture was important in their decision to locate or keep their businesses in Washtenaw County.
  - 57% thought access to cultural programs was important in helping to recruit and retain qualified workers.

- The creative sector plays a distinct role in the county’s economy
  - 4.6% of the county’s total workforce works in the creative economy.
  - 10% of the county’s total payroll is generated by the creative economy.
  - 823 students from the University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University earned degrees related to the creative economy in 2007.

- The quality of our cultural offerings is generally high, but not everyone has access to them
  - 88% were satisfied with the quality of arts, heritage, and interpretive science programs in their community.
  - 66% felt that good science and arts education is not equally available to students throughout the county.

- Artists (visual, performing, and literary) in Washtenaw County are hungry for recognition and a sense of community
  - 2,530 individuals responded to the Artists’ Census conducted by the Arts Alliance.
  - 91% said that their creative activity is a primary focus or passion in their lives.
  - Artists reported their most important needs are:
    - Networking with others with similar interests,
    - Increased sales or other earnings,
    - Marketing,
    - Validation of their work.
• **Public and charitable organizations should help support cultural organizations**

• 89% agreed that public tax funding through local governments (county, city, or township) should help support nonprofit arts and cultural programs.

• 98% agreed that local foundations should include culture (arts, heritage, and interpretive science) among their funding priorities.

34 Recommendations
18 Months
5000 Residents
29 Interviews
90 Ethnicities
1535 Online Surveys
29 Forums
Introduction

In May 2006, the Arts Alliance published a report documenting the economic impact of arts and culture in Washtenaw County. The results were impressive: nonprofit cultural organizations produced a $165 million economic impact in the county in the study year of 2002, generating over 2,600 jobs and almost $57 million in household income. This report was widely distributed and community leaders began to appreciate more fully the significant role the cultural sector plays in contributing to the economic well-being of Washtenaw County as well as to its desirable quality of life.

Soon after this, the Arts Alliance became concerned that certain social, economic, and demographic pressures affecting the county could have a negative impact on the well-being of the cultural sector. Among these pressures:

- An apparent lack of community-based arts facilities, particularly in Ann Arbor
- Repeated rumors that the county was “losing all its artists”
- A seeming disconnect between the documented value of arts education in K-12 schooling and reports of the elimination of such programs
- An overall economic downturn that was hurting the vitality of the county’s downtowns and the economy in general
- Unprecedented uncertainty in funding for nonprofit arts and cultural organizations

The Arts Alliance decided that the time was right to create a cultural plan for the county. The report that follows is the result of more than 18 months’ work, input from thousands of county residents, and the efforts of scores of volunteers. It offers a vision of what Washtenaw County could look like if the energy, enthusiasm, and creativity of its citizens is harnessed and expressed in ways that tackle our shared challenges.

The Community & Culture Planning Process

Community & Culture: Creating a Plan for Washtenaw County was a major initiative to build stronger communities by creating a plan in which arts and culture are integral elements in achieving goals we all share, such as preparing our youth for jobs in the 21st century, creating and maintaining vibrant downtowns, and preserving our high quality of life. The desired outcome of this two-year project is to reframe the way area residents think about arts and culture in Washtenaw County. More concretely, the fruit of this effort is a five-year master plan for cultural development in Washtenaw County along with the opportunity for participating communities to customize the county’s plan to their own needs.

The project included three main components:

1. Gathering data about our county’s cultural assets and resident attitudes/interests in arts and culture;
2. Identifying county-wide cultural goals based on the data, and writing action steps to achieve these goals; and
3. Finalizing the county-wide cultural master plan and assisting participating communities to customize the plan, if they so desire.
The project was coordinated by the Arts Alliance, a county-wide service organization that works to create an environment where culture and creativity can flourish and arts programs are accessible to all. Communities participating in the project include Ann Arbor, Chelsea, Dexter, Manchester, Milan, Saline, and Ypsilanti. Robert Guenzel, Washtenaw County Administrator, and Dr. William C. Miller, Superintendent of the Washtenaw Intermediate School District, co-chaired the project’s Leadership Committee, with Debra Polich, President and CEO of Artrain USA, and Phil D’Anieri, Program Director of the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, co-chairing the initiative’s Steering Committee.

Dr. Craig Dreeszen, a nationally recognized expert in community cultural planning, served as the lead project consultant. Susan Badger Booth, Assistant Professor of Arts Administration & Management in the Department of Communication at Eastern Michigan University (EMU), served as the project’s associate consultant, facilitating nearly all the project’s focus groups and overseeing the work of seven EMU Arts Administration interns engaged in the data gathering. Tamara Real, President of the Arts Alliance, edited the interim and final cultural plans and provided staff support to the project. The Arts Alliance staff members Angela Martin-Barcelona and Cindy Johnson, provided invaluable staff assistance.

Community & Culture was supported by many investors, among them the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, Pfizer Global Research and Development, MASCO Foundation, Washtenaw County, ETCS/A Michigan Works! & Community Action Agency, Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, James A. and Faith Knight Foundation, Ann Arbor Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, Ypsilanti Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, Eastern Michigan University and more than 15 Washtenaw County-based cultural organizations.

From the outset, Community & Culture: Creating a Plan for Washtenaw County was envisioned as a highly collaborative endeavor. A Leadership Committee, composed of 10 top leaders of government, education, and business, was established to receive the project’s final report on behalf of the community as a whole. A 15-member Steering Committee was empaneled to oversee the administration of the project and ensure that all sectors of the community were represented throughout the process.

To facilitate planning, project organizers focused their efforts on the county’s seven main population centers: Ann Arbor, Chelsea, Dexter, Manchester, Milan, Saline, and Ypsilanti. Leadership Teams were established in each population center and charged with encouraging residents to take part in the Community & Culture online survey and community forums, called collectively a “cultural assessment.” Seven arts administration students from Eastern Michigan University served as interns on the project, assisting with the data gathering activities.

After reviewing the findings of the cultural assessment, the Steering Committee identified six issues to address in the cultural plan and for each issue, a task force was established to recommend action steps. The task forces’ reports formed the basis of the Washtenaw County Cultural Master Plan.

A draft plan was reviewed and accepted with corrections by the Steering Committee in June 2008. In September 2008, the Steering Committee accepted the final plan and recommended its presentation to the Leadership Committee. Following this, the Arts Alliance staff will work with the Leadership Team in each population center to adapt the master plan to that community’s own requirements.
Highlights of the planning process include:

- Over 125 government, business, cultural, education, and civic leaders attended a breakfast in the Student Center of Eastern Michigan University to kick-off Community & Culture. Becky Anderson, Executive Director of HandMade in America, was the keynote speaker.
- 1,535 people completed online surveys and another 193 submitted partially completed surveys.
- Over 260 residents participated in 29 community forums and interviews in seven communities.
- Over 120 leaders representing all sectors of the community attended a mid-project update breakfast in Chelsea and heard a stimulating presentation by keynote speaker Ben Cameron, Program Director for the Arts for the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.
- Over 50 cultural, community, and education leaders considered the findings of the cultural assessment and identified the issues to be included in the cultural plan.

More than 50 individuals, representing all parts of the county and all sectors of the community, served on task forces charged with developing the cultural plan’s action steps.

Cultural Assessment Findings

Cultural Assets

The cultural assessment shows that overall, residents are satisfied with the quantity and quality of cultural opportunities available to them. From world-class programs presented by the University Musical Society in Ann Arbor to homegrown festivals such as Harvest of the Arts in Saline, creative activities abound in Washtenaw County.

The presence of four institutions of higher learning (the University of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University, Washtenaw Community College, and Concordia University) contributes significantly to the creative vitality of the area, both in terms of arts programming and the number of students earning degrees related to the creative economy. This concentration of schools may also account for the surprisingly rich cultural diversity to be found in Washtenaw County. According to recent reports, the county is home to more than 90 different ethnic groups.

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<tr>
<th>SUMMARY OF CULTURAL ASSETS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Many cultural opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Many cultural organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Influence of higher education institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Significant economic impact</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Smaller cities and towns</td>
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<tr>
<td>• History and heritage apparent in communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Beautiful environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Many active artists and creative workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Festivals and special events</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Cultural venues</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Appreciative audiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Arts education strengths</td>
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<tr>
<td>• People proud of their communities</td>
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<td>• Citizens are engaged and active</td>
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There will never be enough time or money to “do [your art]” in an easy and orderly fashion. So just do it now. Make it fit into your life. You will be crazy but happy; and people will sense the joy in your work...somehow the commerce always follows art that speaks to people.

Kim Rhoney
Besides nonprofit cultural organizations, the county is home to 1,173 working artists, according to the Artists’ Census conducted by the Arts Alliance as part of the cultural assessment. While clustered in the county’s most populous communities, Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti, these creative workers can be found throughout the county.

The creative economy employs 4.6% of the county’s total workforce and generates 10% of the county’s total payroll, according to The Creative Economy Study conducted by Ann Arbor SPARK as part of the cultural assessment. A bright spot in Michigan’s dismal economic picture, the arts/entertainment/recreation sector gained 347 jobs between 2001 and 2006.

A strong spirit of cooperation and collaboration characterizes the cultural sector in Washtenaw County. Leaders of cultural organizations work together frequently and the traditional barriers between the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors seem to have less relevance here than is the case in other communities.

Arts education is seen as a strength in several communities, with particular recognition given to the high quality of musical instruction. Several area high schools boast stunning new performance facilities. Heritage and history are apparent in many communities.

The region’s history is obvious in its preserved architecture and historic sites. The county’s cities and towns are inviting with walkable downtowns that are compact and well-defined. Citizens are unusually active in civic affairs, devoting numerous hours to organizing and participating in local events.

See Appendix 3 for the complete summary of cultural assets.

Cultural Challenges

Despite the many positives, numerous challenges face the cultural sector. Participants in the community forums often spoke movingly about the difficulties facing the cultural sector – in both the for-profit and not-for-profit arenas. Through these conversations and from the results of the online survey, the scope of these challenges came into focus. While each community has its own particular challenges, several issues emerged repeatedly, among them:

Need for funding

The number one concern for nonprofit cultural organizations is funding. Organizations of all sizes and disciplines are struggling to sustain their operations and programs. Public funding from all sources has been diminished. State funding has been dramatically cut in recent years, and, surprisingly for a region so rich in cultural activities, the county’s municipalities offer little if any funding for cultural programs. Contributions and sponsorships from businesses and corporations are mostly down. While earned revenue is generally up, competition for funding is fierce as social needs increase and public sources diminish. A new generation of generous donors and philanthropists needs to be cultivated.

Nonprofit cultural organization capacity

There is a notable disparity in capacity between the larger, more established organizations and the smaller organizations running on passion and hope. Nonprofit organizations need help with funding, marketing, and overall
organizational development. Some cultural organizations need training and board development to build their capacity for fundraising. A number need training, assistance, and information that will develop their capacity to fulfill their missions and serve their constituencies. As leaders of cultural organizations start to retire, there is a need to prepare the next generation of arts administrators. Like workers in other sectors in Michigan, emerging arts leaders report trouble finding jobs.

**Economy**

Michigan’s economy has been buffeted for some time by the difficulties in the auto industry. The current economic situation is challenging as the auto, housing, and financial industries suffer. As resulting consumer confidence is diminished, so is the capacity to buy tickets and make contributions. In response, economic development is a high priority and many communities are trying to strengthen their downtowns. While the 2002 economic impact study by the Arts Alliance documents a $165 million dollar impact of the nonprofit cultural sector, it isn’t always clear how to translate the idea of creative economic development into practical outcomes.

**Artists’ support**

Many artists are struggling and need help with networking and marketing, among other services. Artists report a need for more affordable studios, housing, and health insurance. Younger artists need opportunities to show their work or perform. Young artists also long for more of the visibility that more established artists enjoy.

**Creative business development**

A concentration of highly skilled technical businesses need help to convert inventions into marketable products. Small creative businesses need encouragement, financing, and technical assistance.

**Public awareness and advocacy**

While nonprofit executives describe increased public awareness and support as factors that have strengthened their capacity, declining public funding indicates the need for more advocacy and awareness. Artists also wish for more awareness and respect. In the community forums, participants struggled with the question of how to inspire audiences to value arts and culture as more integral to community well-being and prosperity.

**Better communications and marketing**

The assessment reveals a desire for a central source of information on cultural programs and events, although few surveyed respondents currently use central web sites to find information. Some wished for more informed criticism in local news media.

**Audience development**

Audiences are loyal, but the size of the potential audience is relatively small, given the large number of cultural organizations offering programs in Washtenaw County. Cultural tourism has not yet been fully developed. Most people who attend cultural events frequently, indicate they usually do so in their own communities. However, leaders of some smaller communities with many commuting residents, indicate that commuters are less engaged in civic and cultural affairs in their communities.

**More access to programming**

Some county residents have more opportunities to attend cultural programming than others.
More diversity in programming, arts education, and participation

While diverse cultures are getting more attention in programming, there is need for improvement. As exemplified in the demographics of the online survey respondents, audiences tend more often to be white, educated, and affluent, while Washtenaw communities are more diverse.

Facilities development

Community leaders often described the need for new or improved cultural facilities. Artists wanted music and visual arts venues. Ann Arbor is dependent on University of Michigan facilities. Many smaller communities want community arts centers. Galleries have closed in some communities.

Retaining a sense of community

Civic leaders want to retain community pride and a sense of community in the face of developmental pressures and increasing numbers of commuting residents (this latter is particularly the case outside of Ann Arbor). Across the board, cities want more downtown retail and commercial development. Respondents noted a tension between those who wish to preserve historic features and those who wish communities to grow. Participants wish for more art in public places connected to the richness of the area’s green space. Perceptions of crime and safety issues limit some participation in cultural programming and the development of creative enterprises in communities such as Ypsilanti. Creative economic development could have the potential to address these issues.

More equitable access to arts education

Opportunities for a good education that includes the arts are not equally accessible throughout the county. While music education is relatively strong, the same is not true for visual arts, theater, or dance. There is no coordinated, county-wide arts education advocacy or coordination among cultural organizations and artists to provide services that enrich students’ education. Outside Ann Arbor, there are few opportunities for youth and teens to take part in youth-driven recreational and social programs such as those offered by the Neutral Zone. Academic service-learning opportunities do not generally include the nonprofit arts and cultural organizations.

Strategic Focus of the Washtenaw County Cultural Master Plan

Based on this understanding of the cultural climate in Washtenaw County, the Steering Committee identified the following areas to focus on in cultural plan:

Arts Education: Ensure that students and adults throughout Washtenaw County have equitable access to quality lifelong arts instruction and cultural enrichment programs.

Economic Development: Stimulate creative economic development to increase the prosperity of Washtenaw County communities and to enhance the economic viability of the County’s individual artists.

Nonprofit Capacity: Strengthen the capacity of nonprofit cultural organizations through increased and sustainable funding, improved governance, and better use of cultural facilities. This task force divided into two groups: one tackling funding and governance and the other focusing on cultural facilities.
Communications: Increase the visibility and public awareness of the cultural sector, enhance marketing to residents and cultural tourists, and increase participation.

Equity & Access to Cultural Opportunities: Reduce barriers to cultural participation and further diversify nonprofit cultural organizations’ management, governance, programs, and audiences.

Principal Recommendations of the Washtenaw County Cultural Master Plan

The task forces met repeatedly between May and June 2008 to identify action steps to address the key issues of the cultural plan. While there are 34 recommendations presented in the cultural master plan, the Steering Committee agreed that the following represent the overarching priority actions:

- **Strengthen the Arts Alliance**

  **What?** An Arts Alliance that is adequately funded and staffed will be able to unite under one roof the interests of artists, nonprofit cultural organizations and for-profit creative businesses throughout the county. This service organization will be able to represent the cultural sector in discussions of county-wide challenges with business, government, civic and educational leaders. The Arts Alliance will be able to provide the services requested of it in this plan which will create a stronger cultural sector as well as an economically healthier Washtenaw County.

  **Why?** No other county-wide organization can make sure the recommendations of the cultural master plan are implemented; there is no other organization that can represent the cultural sector in regional, cross-jurisdictional discussions.

- **Make arts and culture an integral part of K-12 education throughout Washtenaw County**

  **What?** Children in all parts of Washtenaw County will be able to reap the documented benefits of exposure and involvement in arts activities in an organized, ongoing, and comprehensive program. Engagement opportunities will expose students to cultures different than their own and prepare them to face the challenges of an increasingly diverse 21st century. Authentic arts learning will provide students with important career-building experiences as well as generate revenue for artists, cultural organizations, and creative businesses.

  **Why?** There is unequal access to cultural and creative education programs throughout the county; numerous studies show that access to arts education significantly enhances a student’s future professional and personal success.

- **Provide services that support the growth of the creative economy.**

  **What?** Artists, cultural organizations, and creative businesses will have access to business skills training that will enable them to function more productively and successfully. Resources such as artist incubators and micro-loans will assist artists and creative businesses to start up and add to the economic vitality of the county. Producers of cultural events will collaborate with tourism, business, and economic development partners to maximize the economic impact of their programs. For-profit businesses will find new opportunities to sell their services to creative businesses and will learn skills more typically found in the non-profit sector.
Why? Strengthening creative workers’ business management, marketing, and other skills will help create a stronger, sustainable cultural ecosystem long-term; affordable spaces for artists to live and work will keep emerging creative workers from leaving the county; vibrant creative businesses will enhance the quality of place of the county’s cities and towns.

- **Increase the visibility of the cultural sector through collaborative marketing**

**What?** Cultural activities will capture greater attention and generate increased revenues when marketed together in joint advertising and promotional ventures. A centralized cultural web portal for the entire county will make finding cultural information of any kind easy. Mobile young knowledge workers will identify the region as a place where cool things are happening and will feel welcome.

**Why?** The cultural sector is fragmented and does not communicate its offerings or its value as effectively as its quality merits; uncoordinated marketing means that the cultural sector is not playing its part in helping to promote the Ann Arbor Region as a destination for new businesses, knowledge workers, residents, and tourists.

- **Increase public and private sector funding for arts and culture.**

**What?** A “blue-ribbon” panel will be established to thoroughly investigate innovative funding models for arts and culture and make recommendations for implementing a county-wide system. A broad-based public awareness campaign will help residents understand the value arts and culture brings to their lives, personally and economically. Cultural organizations will learn the skills to diversify and increase their earned income streams.

**Why?** Funding is the #1 challenge facing the county’s cultural organizations; traditional systems for funding arts and cultural are no longer effective in today’s rapidly changing world.

- **Benchmark diversity in the audiences, staffs, and programming of Washtenaw County cultural organizations.**

**What?** A community-oriented, carefully constructed research program will provide essential data that will enable cultural organizations of all types and sizes to plan how they can best go about engaging diverse populations in their programs and governance.

**Why?** The rich diversity of Washtenaw County (home to over 90 different ethnic groups) is generally not reflected in the offerings and personnel of the cultural sector; the area’s cultural diversity is a strength that needs to be showcased.
Remember that time you went on your first blind date? You probably had a certain nervous excitement running through your body, wondering whether the person was going to talk enough or whether you looked just right. Imagine what that experience would have felt like if you knew you were not only going to find your mate, but also your career.

Jill Love, a self-proclaimed “picture historian” from Dexter, did all of that and more. Love met her husband Rod Marlow on a blind date and the pair hit things off right away. On their third date, Jill was invited to Rod’s hometown of Dexter for dinner. Though she lived 90 miles away and had never heard of the place, she went on a whim. Almost instantly, Love fell head over heels for the small southeastern Michigan town. With a camera in her hands, she began to photograph Dexter from a variety of perspectives and angles. Two years later, a chance encounter at a local business provided the backdrop for one of her most successful creations. At the suggestion of the business owner, she compiled the images she’d shot into a postcard highlighting what Dexter had to offer. Though she had been a professional photographer long before creating the postcard, Love notes that it was the most valuable thing she’s produced. Its success helped turn her attention to doing photography as full-time activity.

Today, Love is a part-owner of a gallery in Dexter called Artística which she runs with three partners. She takes both color and black-and-white photographs of a multitude of images. Whether she’s out in the elements taking a picture of an old Dexter barn, framing the simple beauty of a flower, or having the “honor to capture emotions between parent and child,” it’s clear that Love has a passion for her work.

“I love photographing my community,” she says with vibrant energy that matches her enthusiastic personality. “My art is alive. It changes, it grows, it has so many different phases.”

Jill Love
Vision & Values for the Cultural Plan

As a result of their deliberations, the Steering Committee endorsed the following Vision and Values as the foundation upon which their recommendations rest:

Vision

Creative entrepreneurs, non-profit cultural organizations, artists, and the general public value arts and culture in a way that engages them, increases their awareness, and develops an understanding of themselves and their community.

Engagement: Everyone is welcome and invited to produce, support, and participate in arts and cultural programming throughout the county. Economic, physical, and social barriers to cultural participation are removed. All residents can freely contribute to creative activities. Access to proper facilities enables artists and organizations to work in a stable environment. Creative communities are developed both virtually and physically to inspire collaboration. Entrepreneurial activities help sustain artists and creative businesses.

Awareness: Cultural organizations and individual artists share a sense of community admired and respected by county residents and visitors. Artists easily communicate the value of their work, sharing a county-wide brand for arts and culture that reflects excellence and creative impact. Cultural organizations and artists are essential community partners and fully integrated in our daily lives.

Understanding: Artists reflect who we are and what we believe, opening windows of understanding to our spiritual selves. Artists allow us to navigate our differences and celebrate what we all value. In a brush stroke, held note, rhymed couplet, or captured image, the artist celebrates what is unique about that moment in our communities.

Values

Community and Culture: Creating a Plan for Washtenaw County task force members embrace arts and culture as a point of pride in our communities, integral to our quality of life, and key to our economic vitality. Implementation of the plan’s recommendations are to be guided by these values:

Accessibility: We strive to make arts and cultural programming available to all county residents both as observers and active creators.

Diversity: We honor our cultural and creative diversity by increasing awareness of artists and organizations from diverse backgrounds.

Economic Impact: We appreciate the significant and measurable impact the cultural and creative industries have on the region’s economy.

Learning: Creativity fosters the development of critical thinking skills in a safe, non-threatening environment.

Quality: County artists and cultural organizations offer work of the highest quality and excellence.

Collaboration

Working together to make the best use of existing resources and expertise is fundamental to all our endeavors. Territorialism, pride of ownership, and distinctions such as “for profit” and “not-for-profit” fall by the wayside as participants work across boundaries for the common good. We celebrate the strengths of others and help those with fewer capabilities.
Conclusion

Washtenaw County is blessed with an enviable quality of life, thanks in part to the outstanding quality and breadth of its cultural resources. Increasingly, community leaders are coming to recognize that these cultural assets and this quality of life give our area an important competitive edge when it comes to attracting and retaining the businesses and knowledge workers that will make Michigan competitive in the 21st century. They are also coming to see that involvement in arts and cultural activities helps children obtain our educational goals, supports healthy living, and perhaps most importantly, that our residents want to have arts and culture in their communities.

But simply having these assets present is not enough. Cultural organizations, artists, and creative businesses — like any resource — need proper stewardship if they are to survive and thrive. Other regions, some outside of Michigan and some inside the state, are actively working to lure artists and creative businesses with promises of services, funding, and more. Communities with which Ann Arbor, for example, likes to compare itself such as Chapel Hill, Madison, and Boulder, invest significantly more in their cultural assets than we do. If Washtenaw County is to continue to use its cultural resources as a selling point, then it needs to invest in maintaining them. The challenge does not stop there. The cultural assessment also shows that access to the county’s rich cultural offerings — both in terms of programs and educational offerings in the schools — is not equitable. Many factors contribute to this, among them financial constraints, lack of transportation, and curriculum pressures. More broadly, all citizens lose out when the rich ethnic diversity of our county is not adequately represented in the programs and governance of our cultural organizations.

The Washtenaw County Cultural Master Plan offers an ambitious roadmap for tackling these challenges. The outpouring of community involvement in the planning process demonstrates that the will is there to make its recommendations come to life.

Now is the time to move forward.
NEXT STEPS
The best response to the tremendous outpouring of community effort to create the Washtenaw County Cultural Plan will be a thoughtful and methodical implementation of its recommendations. The following are among the most important next steps.

1. Complete the planning process by adapting the Washtenaw County Cultural Master Plan to the specific needs and interests of the seven population centers.

The Community & Culture planning process envisioned from the outset that each of the seven population centers would use the county’s plan as a basis for creating its own cultural plan. The Community Leadership Teams in each population center need to reconvene to review the master plan and identify the activities that most respond to the needs and interests of their citizenry. (Some communities may wish to take a few steps on several issues, some may want to focus their attention in one area). The Arts Alliance will continue to assist in this planning process. This step will be completed by February 2009.

2. Reconstitute the Community & Culture Steering Committee as a Cultural Plan Oversight Committee that will oversee the plan’s implementation activities.

The Community & Culture Steering Committee is composed of individuals from throughout Washtenaw County who have successfully guided the planning process through to its completion. The new Oversight Committee should include these individuals as well as members of the Community & Culture Leadership Team, interested Task Force members, and others committed to the plan’s success. Committee members should be individuals who command respect and represent the broad spectrum of interests covered in this plan: arts and culture, education, government, business, and civic interests. The group will meet quarterly to review implementation progress and recommend course corrections as needed. Committee members will be expected to advocate on behalf of the plan’s implementation and help procure resources to implement the plan’s action steps. The committee will report to the Arts Alliance and will include at least one Arts Alliance board member.
3. **Obtain adoption or endorsement of the Washtenaw County Cultural Master Plan by the area’s leading governmental, educational, cultural, business, and philanthropic organizations.**

The successful implementation of the cultural plan will be through its acceptance by the community’s leaders. Presentations should be made to the governing bodies of Washtenaw County and the Washtenaw Intermediate School District to obtain their adoption or endorsement of the plan. Similarly, once the local cultural plans are completed, these should be presented to the governing bodies of the seven population centers for adoption or endorsement. Presentations should also be made to leading business, educational, and civic groups throughout the county such as the chambers of commerce, convention and visitors bureaus, DDAs, institutions of higher learning, and school foundations. The Washtenaw County Cultural Master Plan should be shared with cultural organizations throughout the county. The boards of these groups should be asked to consider what the plan will mean for them and the future evolution and priorities of their organizations. Cultural organizations should be asked to endorse the plan and use it as a set of guiding principles. The plan should also be presented to the funders of the Community & Culture planning process along with requests to fund its implementation. As with the cultural organizations, funders should be encouraged to adopt or endorse the plan and use it as a set of guiding principles in allocating future funds to area cultural groups.

4. **Establish a measurable and clearly defined process for implementing the recommendations of the cultural plan.**

The Washtenaw County Cultural Master Plan includes a host of recommendations that involve the participation of many partners and anticipate a variety of outcomes. It is imperative that a clearly understood process be established to coordinate this implementation effort. In particular, it is extremely important that success measures be established for each Action so that the overall credibility of the cultural plan can be maintained. Early successes should be widely publicized so that the momentum of the project is maintained. A process should also be established to maintain communication with the many stakeholders who have participated in the cultural planning process. This is an important group that has a vested interest in the success of the cultural plan and that can be tapped to help in its implementation.

5. **Build awareness and support for the cultural master plan among members of the general public.**

The general public has probably heard sporadically about the cultural plan, but it now needs to be made aware of the breadth and scope of the endeavor. Specifically, the public needs to understand the significance of the recommendations — that the cultural sector is united in its desire to effect community change in six distinct areas. This will translate in cultural activities and opportunities that are increasingly relevant in people’s lives. Members of the Oversight Committee should be tapped to make presentations throughout the county to a wide variety of groups such as civic organizations (Rotary, Kiwanis, etc.) and educational groups such as PTOs. The Oversight Committee should also plan to meet with the media to explore ways to keep the progress of the cultural plan initiatives in the public eye.
LIFELONG ARTS & EDUCATION
EACH “ACTION” INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

Discussion: A brief synopsis of the background thinking that led to this Action.

Proposed Lead and Partner Organizations: Organizations recommended by the task forces and steering committee as potential partners in implementing the Action.

Please note: These are recommendations only and do not indicate confirmed collaborations or exclude any unlisted potential partners.

Start Date: The suggested time frame to begin implementing the Action.

Please note: This is a very general assessment as individual activities within each Action could begin earlier or later than the indicated start date:

• Near term: 6 – 12 months
• Medium term: 1 – 3 years
• Long term: 4 – 5 years

Recommended Activities: These are the specific steps suggested by the task forces and steering committee to bring the Action to life. The full report of each task force is available from the Arts Alliance.

Models: If appropriate, model programs from other communities/sectors are referenced.

Outcomes: This indicates the benefits, impacts, or changes that will result as a consequence of undertaking the Action.

NOTES

1. A number of terms with very specific meanings such as “cultural providers” and “creative economy” are used throughout this document. Definitions are provided in the Appendix, Section 7: Glossary.

2. In a number of instances, different task forces identified the same or similar activities as the preferred response to a given challenge. Such overlaps suggest the importance of the proposed activities and are cross-referenced.

3. Evaluation and indicators of success are important parts of any plan. An evaluation methodology and success measures will be established for each Action as a first step of its implementation.
Planning Issues

More equitable access to arts education

Opportunities for a high-quality education that include the arts are not equally accessible throughout the county. Outside Ann Arbor, there are few opportunities for youth and teens to take part in youth-driven recreational and social programs such as those offered by the Neutral Zone, an Ann Arbor Teen Center focused on arts and cultural programming. Academic Service-learning opportunities focus heavily on social service organizations and not the nonprofit arts and cultural organizations. Access to a wide range of lifelong arts education opportunities needs to be increased.

Statement of the Problem

There is no coordinated, county-wide arts education advocacy or coordination among cultural organizations and artists to provide services to area schools. In addition, programs beyond high school are often inconsistent and dependent on area community arts centers, which are not available in every part of the county. Higher education does not always offer continuing education in arts and culture.

The Desired Vision of the Future

Our vision is that all residents of Washtenaw County will thrive surrounded by relevant and accessible opportunities to engage their own capacity as creators and to learn about the creative work of others in all modalities.

Summary of the Task Force Recommendations

Washtenaw County needs to assure that students and adults county-wide have equitable access to quality arts instruction and cultural enrichment programs.

Goal Statement: Lifelong Arts & Education

All residents of Washtenaw County have lifelong opportunities to exercise their own capacity as creators and engage with the creative work of others.

“Follow your heart. I was a librarian for many years because a professor discouraged me from pursuing art. I enjoyed those years, but being creative every day is unbeatable.”

Marsi Parker-Darwin
**Action #1:**

**K-12 Community Collaborations with Schools:** Provide deliberate mechanisms and structures for area arts and cultural non-profits to offer programs in schools, during the day, across the county’s school districts.

**Discussion**
Ann Arbor has had long-standing relationships with community arts and cultural organizations, such as the University Musical Society. Because a working model already exists of how to offer teacher professional development, field trips, and artist residencies to some schools, this exemplar should be duplicated to offer programs to the entire county through multiple cultural organizations.

**Lead Implementer**
WISD

**Partners**
The Arts Alliance, school districts, arts and cultural organizations, artists

**Start Date**
Short term

**Recommended Activities**
- Develop a system to widely recognize the community arts organizations and leaders who contribute to in-school arts experiences.
- Create a system of artist residency opportunities and workshops in schools.
- Allow K-12 students to take art classes at community organizations for credit.

**Models**
Kalamazoo RESA’s Education for the Arts program: [http://kresa.schoolwires.com/105710621131441607/site/default.asp](http://kresa.schoolwires.com/105710621131441607/site/default.asp)

**Outcomes**
Educators, parents, and students appreciate the value of our local arts and cultural organizations.

- Use Kalamazoo RESA's County-wide Collaborative arts program as a model to develop a similar Washtenaw program.
- Jointly hire a staff person to develop a strategic plan and regular communication pathway between schools and community art groups.
- Create a directory for area arts and cultural nonprofits available for programs during the school day (like the Lansing Humanities Directory).
- Develop a list of artists willing to share their skills in schools.
Action #2: K-12 In School: Increase relevant, rigorous, and applied arts education that personalizes creative learning experiences for all students in Washtenaw County.

Discussion
Recommended mandatory arts curriculum for grades K-12 need to be expanded. It is only when course work is required that schools throughout the county will offer the kind of rigorous program our district needs. Making the case for more arts education in our schools should be connected to the new focus on the development of the creative economy and analytical thinking skills for workforce development.

Lead Implementers
WISD, Individual school districts

Partners
Area arts and cultural organizations, the Arts Alliance

Start Date
Medium term

Recommended Activities
• Create a county-wide fair/program in the visual arts as well as for choir, band, orchestra, and dance.
• Create county-wide exchange concerts in band, choir, orchestra, and dance.
• Assess quality and gaps in the arts curriculum across districts.
• Create a K-12 sequence of arts.
• Add AP arts classes to the high school curriculum.
• Extend Creative Writing Programs throughout each school district in the county.
• Link to career pathways and life skills through creative engagement.
• Coordinate and expand teacher Professional Development in the arts.
• Encourage academic service learning in the arts.
• Have an artist residency program in every county schools.
• Create an arts internship program at the high school level.

Outcomes
Arts curriculum is enhanced through comprehensive curriculum development. County arts organizations are used to their full potential as educational partners.

“I am most inspired by nature, especially flowers, sky and water. Since I retired from public school teaching, I have enjoyed having more time for travelling and painting, often combining both.”

Judith Spike
There are many reasons to remember fifth grade, but Antione Hackney’s is a unique one. That was the year his career was thrust into his hands – literally.

You see, the fifth grade music teacher at Hackney’s elementary school in Ann Arbor noticed that Antione had the type of big hands necessary to play the viola. So when it came time to dole out an instrument to the youngster, Antione, now a professional classical musician, was given the viola without hesitation.

Other chance events would help keep music in the forefront of Hackney’s mind. When he was 12 years old, he met a Lansing lobbyist named Gregory Eaton. Word had gotten around to Eaton that Hackney was a talented youngster with the viola, and Eaton knew of a music camp in Indiana for people at the top of their craft. When Eaton offered to pay the admittance fee for the young musician, Hackney jumped at the chance. Though he says he was the “worst one there,” the experience sparked Antione’s interest in improving his own abilities.

When he went into the eighth grade the next fall, he was afforded what he calls a “privilege.” Hackney was offered the opportunity to play with a music professor at the University of Michigan who was playing in a professional group. By participating, he was able to see early on how seriously preparation and practice are taken by professional musicians.

Hackney went on to attend the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y. where he practiced anywhere from three to seven hours a day. Upon graduation, he returned to Ann Arbor where his name was known and where he knew all the local music contractors. He currently plays in several symphonies throughout the course of the year and also teaches viola to anyone who wants to learn.

“(I) got there and said, ‘Oh man, I’m in the deep end,’” Antione notes with a chuckle. Though he says he was the “worst one there,” the experience sparked Antione’s interest in improving his own abilities.

Antione Hackney
Action #3: **K-12 Funding**

Dedicate new arts funding to sustain high quality and equitable arts education for all K-12 students in Washtenaw County.

**Discussion**

Area schools don’t offer the same kinds of extracurricular programming due to funding constraints. Students in the eastern part of the county need to have arts opportunities on par with those offered elsewhere in the county. Private-public partnerships need to be created to support creativity-based programming in all county schools. Dedicated fundraising to create more equitable access is critical.

**Lead Implementers**

School Foundations, Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, WISD

**Partners**

Area arts and cultural organizations, business community, philanthropy community

**Start Date**

Medium term

**Recommended Activities**

- Encourage the creation of a dedicated arts education fund through the Ann Arbor Public Schools Foundation and the Ypsilanti Public Schools Foundation.
- WISD, higher education institutions, and arts organizations should create a consortium to seek out new revenue through a "blue ribbon panel".
- Hire a staff person to staff an arts funding database.
- Develop relationships with business to provide materials for arts programs in schools.

**Outcomes**

K-12 arts programs have enough funding in all districts across Washtenaw County. Arts programming is not dependent on education funding.
**Action #4:**

**K-12 Parents: Create opportunities for parents to engage with their children in school-related artistic activities both on and off school grounds.**

**Discussion**
Encourage parents to join students on field trips to cultural organizations. Let parents know what kind of artwork their students are doing in school. Encourage community partners to attract families to take art classes outside of school.

**Lead Implementers**
WISD, arts and cultural organizations

**Partners**
Arts/music educators across the district, the Arts Alliance, artists, United Way, individual school districts

**Start Date**
Short term

**Recommended Activities**
- Establish a system of communications among art educators at all schools enabling them to share ideas for projects for eliciting parent engagement.
- Develop communication with parents about the value of art experiences as a part of primary education.
- Integrate arts education into *Success by Six* and *First Steps* Washtenaw Programs.
- Integrate arts education activities in county *Early On* programs.
- Schools and arts and cultural organizations partner to develop classes/courses/activities for parents and children to learn together.
- Extend field trip opportunities to parents whenever possible.
- Develop curriculum and workshops for parents to learn about supporting their child’s arts education.

**Outcomes**
Elevate the value of arts education from the parent’s point-of-view. Parents become more involved in their child’s art education.
KEN KOZORA

Imagine beating to the tune of your own drum, but doing so with a solar powered Zen-drum with a tap dancer accompaniment all to help support and increase visibility for green, environmental thinking. Enter Ken Kozora, a Manchester native, and composer/musician extraordinaire.

Kozora’s energy and passion for what he does is reflected in everything he does, and boy, he sure does do a lot. Out of necessity to earn a living as an artist, he juggles between being an educator, performer, event organizer, business person, laborer, and philanthropist.

His diverse musical compositions are inspired by people, philosophies, experiences, and aesthetics that are present in both rural and urban settings, and lucky for Ken, Washtenaw County offers the best of both these settings. He is influenced by all manner of human conditions and art forms - philosophy, politics, nature, technology, architecture - and as he puts it “anything from the sound of two stones hit together to the sweet sounds of Miles Davis and Disturbed to the electronic bleeps and blips of the latest tools created in our image for musical expression.”

When Kozora isn’t creating his art, he’s working on ways he can encourage the younger generation to explore and participate in the arts. He started the Horns for the Holidays program designed to collect and then put donated instruments into the hands of children who otherwise would not have the opportunity to be a part of their school band or orchestra. This annual program has been wildly successful and is a great way for instruments to be enjoyed, rather than collect dust.

Kozora is a believer that everyone is blessed with a talent unique to them, and he explains that it’s up to each of us to “find it, develop it, be proud of it, make lots of money from it if you can and want, but be willing to bleed to preserve the integrity of your art.”
Action #5:

Creative Enterprises: Through community arts organizations enhance relevant and varied arts opportunities for all county residents throughout their lives.

Discussion
Expand community development and planning through art-based programming. Allow county residents to work on organized community-building art projects. Increase interest and access to developing creative skills for all county residents.

Lead Implementers
Area arts and cultural organizations, Neutral Zone, artists

Partners
The Arts Alliance, Washtenaw County Government, individual school districts, WISD

Start Date
Medium term

Recommended Activities

- Apply for joint funding to have the resources to develop curriculum links to K-12 education and develop teacher training workshops.

- Create art-focused teen centers for: Chelsea - Manchester - Dexter area, Ypsilanti area, and Saline – Milan area.

- Hire a shared staff person who can coordinate arts and cultural offerings to schools and who can map out curriculum connections to programs offered by community-based arts organizations.

- Increase family arts events in the community by having special passes to participating arts and cultural organizations.

- Provide performance and gallery space for local schools to use.

- Encourage inter-generational cultural learning opportunities, i.e. teens open for a professional musician or student artwork on display with adult work.

- Offer student internship programs county-wide at arts organizations.

- Create introductory level arts classes in all disciplines for all county residents.

- Create a common website with arts and cultural offerings for educators to access.

Outcomes
Teens learn leadership and develop analytical skills within their own creative interest areas. Youth develop relationships with working artists. Students draw parents to art events.
**Action #6:**

**Higher Education:**
Encourage the colleges and universities to expand opportunities in artistic engagement for county residents and arts organizations.

**Discussion**
Expand access to arts curriculum through continuing education programs that are not based on a degree, but rather that focus on gaining skills and diverse experiences. Break down the barriers that exist between community artists and higher education students, professors and administrators. Make service in the arts and cultural community just as important as social service.

**Lead Implementer**
Institutions of higher learning

**Partners**
The Arts Alliance, area arts and cultural organizations, Neutral Zone

**Timeline**
Medium term

**Recommended Activities**
- Partner with community arts organizations to plan joint events that draw a student audience in shared venues with a shared calendar
- Engage higher education institutions in helping to showcase and organize a county-wide celebration of youth arts
- Publicize successful partnerships between higher education and the general community.

**Outcomes**
College arts students are connected to K-12 opportunities. Higher education institutions utilize their resources for community arts programming. Positive press is generated for higher education institutions.
CREATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
EACH “ACTION” INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

Discussion: A brief synopsis of the background thinking that led to this Action.

Proposed Lead and Partner Organizations: Organizations recommended by the task forces and steering committee as potential partners in implementing the Action.

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3. Evaluation and indicators of success are important parts of any plan. An evaluation methodology and success measures will be established for each Action as a first step of its implementation.
CREATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Planning Issues

Economy
The economic situation is challenging as the auto, housing, and financial industries suffer. Consumer confidence and capacity to buy tickets and make contributions are diminished. Many communities wish to strengthen their downtowns. Economic development is a high priority.

Artists’ support
Many artists are struggling and need help with networking and marketing, among other services. Artists report a need for more affordable studios, housing, and health insurance. Younger artists need opportunities to show their work or perform. Young artists also long for more of the visibility that more established artists enjoy.

Creative business development
A concentration of highly skilled technical workers is an untapped resource for economic development. Innovative businesses need help to convert inventions into marketable products. Small creative businesses need encouragement, financing, and help.

Retaining a sense of community
Civic leaders want to retain community pride and a sense of community in the face of developmental pressures and increasing numbers of commuting residents. Cities want more downtown development. There is sometimes a tension between those who wish to preserve historic features and those who wish communities to grow. People wish for more art in public places.

Statement of the Problem
An entrepreneurial environment for creative endeavors is not present in Washtenaw County. Washtenaw County lacks economic development partnerships between artists, businesses, and government programs. While the Art Alliance’s 2002 economic impact study documents a $165 million dollar effect of the cultural sector on the Washtenaw County economy, it isn’t clear how to translate the idea of creative economic development into practical outcomes.

The Desired Vision of the Future
To foster cultural arts, artists, and creative businesses (for profit and not-for-profit) so they become self-sustaining and contribute to the economic stability of the county.
Summary of Task Force Recommendations

Washtenaw County needs to build on the county’s significant cultural assets, which will help artists and stimulate creative economic development. As a result, this will increase the prosperity of Washtenaw County communities.

Goal Statement: Creative Economic Development

A strong entrepreneurial environment of artists, cultural organizations, and creative businesses enhances the economic health and quality of life of Washtenaw County communities.

Action #1:

Provide artists and creative businesses with business skills training, resources, financing opportunities, facilities, and other services to enhance their financial viability.

Discussion

The creative sector is important, and will become increasingly important, to the economy of Washtenaw County. Some 2,530 individuals responded to the Artists’ Census conducted by the Arts Alliance as part of the cultural assessment, with 1,173 of these respondents meeting the criteria of “working artist.” In addition, the Creative Economy study conducted by Ann Arbor SPARK for the cultural assessment notes that creative economy workers make up 4.6% of the county’s civilian labor force and 10% of its payroll. These creative individuals, however, often lack the business skills and resources to enable them to make their creative activities economically viable. Numerous resources and models already exist. This recommendation seeks to make these existing resources accessible to the creative sector as well as to develop new services specifically geared to this population.

Lead Implementers

Ann Arbor Area Chamber of Commerce, Chelsea Center for the Arts, Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center, ETCS

Partners

Ann Arbor SPARK, SCORE, EMU Entrepreneur Center, NEW, the Arts Alliance, artists, creative businesses

Start Date

Near term
Recommended Activities

- Provide business skills training specific to the needs of artists and creative businesses.
- Familiarize area SCORE counselors and others serving entrepreneurial and start-up business clients with the Arts Alliance as a resource for their creative customers.
- Educate cultural providers to take full advantage of existing business support and training services.
- Produce a database of business services (legal, accounting, etc.) with expertise in serving artists, nonprofits, and creative businesses.
- Study best practices in successful artist/creative business incubators elsewhere, including visiting HandMade in America to study their programs first-hand.
- Collaborate with Ann Arbor SPARK and other organizations to explore using existing business incubators to serve artists and creative businesses.
- Explore opportunities for traditional and creative start-up businesses to share space, business training/support, and resources.
- Explore best practices and then implement a micro-loan program for artists and creative businesses to stimulate creative economic activity.

Models
HandMade in America, www.handmadeinamerica.org
Springboard for the Arts, Minnesota: Connecting artists and resources, www.springboardforthearts.org

Outcomes
Artists make a sustainable living through their work. Attract more creative businesses to the county. Retain college graduates as residents after they finish school. Business leaders value creativity in their own work. Artists, creative workers, and cultural organizations have access to the training they require to be effective.

Action #2:
Provide artists and creative businesses with the creative and peer-to-peer resources that will increase their creative output.

Discussion
Artists often need specialized equipment or facilities to enable them to produce their work (for example, potters need kilns; photographers need darkrooms). Such resources, due to their expense and the sporadic nature of use, lend themselves well to shared ownership and usage. Many creative individuals also report the benefits associated with working in settings with other creative types. This recommendation seeks to establish an organized system of making such resources available throughout the county. See also, Cultural Facilities, Recommendation #2.

Lead Implementer
The Arts Alliance

Partners
Artists, creative businesses, DDAs, local units of government, area businesses

Start Date
Medium term

Recommended Activities

- Provide affordable creative facilities to enable artists to work collaboratively and share creative resources such as kilns, dark rooms, etc.
- Encourage collaboration among artists to reduce costs and enhance creative output.
- Establish a program to provide discounted “artist to artist” services.

Models
The Potters Guild, www.pottersguild.net
Arts and Industry Council of Battle Creek www.unitedartscouncil.org
Armory Arts Village www.armoryartsvillage.com
Minnesota Artists, www.mnartists.org
Artist Trust of Washington, www.artistrust.org
It’s been said that Ypsilanti is like the Brooklyn to Ann Arbor’s Manhattan. For literary artist Derek Green, he wouldn’t choose to practice his craft elsewhere. Even though his wife works at Yale University in New Haven, CT and his family divides their time between the two places, he says there is no comparison. The support of local artists, the interest in artists’ work and, in his field, the small presses in the area make Washtenaw County his home.

Green, a proud Puerto Rican-Irish, and a published fiction author, knows what it’s like to wear many hats. He especially knows what it’s like to use his life experience as the fuel for inspiration in his writing. Green got his MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Michigan and has worked as a professional journalist and a project copy writer and developer for advertising agencies and other corporations. He’s done a lot of work in the auto industry, and because of his Spanish language skills, he’s been able to do a lot of international travel. In his first book, New World Order, he notes that he “recast my day job experience in my fiction.” Each short story in the book is set in a different country, and all of these countries are places he visited in his day job as a writer and presenter. “It was quite a feat of efficiency to use material from the job I worked to support my fiction writing habit in the fiction I actually wrote,” he states.

Writing is what keeps Green going. In fact, he says he can’t stand a day that goes by when he doesn’t write some fiction, even if it’s a few hundred words. “If I miss a day every little challenge of the day looms like a mountain,” he comments. “But, when a day of writing goes well, there’s sort of a grace to the day and even the most tedious jobs, like paying bills, seem worth doing.”

“But, when a day of writing goes well, there’s sort of a grace to the day and even the most tedious jobs, like paying bills, seem worth doing.”

Derek Green
**Action #3:**

**Partner with business and economic development agencies in initiatives to grow, attract, and retain Washtenaw County’s creative workforce.**

**Discussion**

A talented workforce, prepared to face the job requirements of 21st century jobs, is one of Michigan’s critical needs. Economic development leaders recognize that the county needs to do a better job of preparing students for future creative employment. The county also needs to do a better job of attracting talented workers to the area, and of providing an environment and opportunities that will encourage talented workers to remain here. This recommendation focuses on activities that will nurture young talent workers and create a desirable quality of place.

**Lead Implementers**

ETCS, WISD, Ann Arbor SPARK

**Partners**

Concentrate, Area creative businesses, artists, arts and cultural organizations, institutions of higher learning, the Arts Alliance

**Start Date**

Near term

**Recommended Activities**

- Work with area educational institutions and cultural providers to establish a coordinated program of mentorships, apprenticeships, and internships in cultural organizations and creative businesses.
- Take part in secondary school and college-level job fairs to alert youth and their parents to employment opportunities in the for-profit and not-for-profit creative sectors.
- Research and disseminate widely employment data about creative economy jobs.
- Offer scholarships to enable artists and cultural organizations to participate in Chamber of Commerce “Leadership” programs.
- Offer scholarships to enable cultural providers to attend skills-building workshops and conferences.
- See Communications, Audience Development, and Advocacy Action #5.

**Models**

Americans for the Arts, www.americansforthearts.org

College for Creative Studies, www.collegeforcreativestudies.edu

**Outcomes**

More young creative workers stay in Washtenaw County. Washtenaw County successfully attracts knowledge workers from elsewhere to relocate here.
**Action #4:**

Implement programs and services that offer creative solutions to economic and workforce challenges facing the business sector.

**Discussion**

Although nonprofit organizations are often told to manage themselves “more like businesses,” there is much that businesses could learn from their not-for-profit colleagues as well as from artists and creative businesses. In addition, there are challenges that the creative sector can help traditional businesses address (examples of this could include helping small businesses develop an organized system for allocating culturally related sponsorship dollars, and helping traditional businesses develop recognition programs for valued clients and employees using cultural resources). This recommendation seeks to establish a systematic way for traditional businesses to benefit in a measurable way from the expertise and experience of the creative sector.

**Lead Implementers**

Ann Arbor Area Chamber of Commerce, area chambers of commerce

**Partners**

Area arts and cultural organizations, artists, creative businesses, DDAs, local units of government

**Start Date**

Near term

**Recommended Activities**

- Build area business organizations’ awareness of the economic potential of the creative economy.
- Encourage cultural providers to become actively involved in local business organizations such as chambers of commerce, Rotary, and downtown development authorities.
- Encourage business leaders to become familiar with issues impacting the cultural sector.
- Present educational programs to educate local businesses in ways to organize and manage their sponsorship and philanthropic giving.
- Present educational programs that show businesses how to employ techniques commonly used in the non-profit cultural and creative sectors.
- Identify programs that use the county’s cultural assets to help businesses recruit and retain talented employees and young knowledge workers.
- Facilitate networking opportunities between cultural providers and business leaders.

**Models**

Wilma Theater, Philadelphia: www.wilmatheater.org

Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, www.philaculture.org

**Outcomes**

Arts and businesses understand their mutual interests and benefits of collaboration.
Action #5: Identify and exploit new opportunities to develop Washtenaw County’s creative economy.

Discussion
The tax incentives encouraging film production in Michigan are having a palpable effect in Washtenaw County. The state regulations making creative businesses eligible for MEGA tax credits opens a door to new possibilities for this sector. This recommendation urges a continued tracking of the county’s creative economy with the goal of tapping the potential of new (and newly recognized) opportunities as they arise.

Lead Implementers
Ann Arbor SPARK, ETCS, Washtenaw County government

Partners
Area chambers of commerce, DDAs, arts and cultural organizations, creative businesses, artists, the Arts Alliance

Start Date
Near term

Recommended Activities
- Integrate cultural issues with other community planning and economic development initiatives.
- Track state legislation that impacts the creative economy to identify areas of opportunity and share this information with cultural and economic development partners.
- Use information gathered in the cultural planning process to assist economic development agencies identify and connect with artists and other creative workers in the county.
- Capitalize on the substantial pool of experienced artists in the community as a resource for training new generations of working artists.
- Explore the feasibility of using vacant buildings/storefronts as venues for cultural activity both as short-term traffic-builders and long-term arts sites.
- Study the skill sets of the county’s under-employed residents to identify opportunities for creative economic development.

Outcomes
Economic development agencies partner regularly with the cultural and creative sector. The creative economy grows in Washtenaw County.

“I’ve been fortunate enough to spend a little time in multiple states, and the talent and drive I’ve found here in Washtenaw County is second to none.”

Joe Zettelmaier
**Action #6: Enhance the economic vitality of the county through the strategic use of cultural activities.**

**Discussion**
Festivals, concerts, exhibits, and other cultural programs take place with great abundance and exuberance in Washtenaw County. They don’t take place, however, in any organized or strategic fashion. Some weekends can be overflowing with entertainment possibilities while others are bare. This recommendation focuses on bringing together the businesses that could benefit from cultural audiences (hoteliers, merchants, restaurateurs, etc.) with event organizers to identify ways to work together for their mutual benefit.

**Lead Implementers**
Ann Arbor Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, Ypsilanti Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, the Arts Alliance

**Partners**
Area arts and cultural organizations, artists, creative businesses, area chambers of commerce, DDAs, Washtenaw County government, local units of government

**Start Date**
Near term

**Recommended Activities**
- Build area business organizations’ awareness of the economic potential of the creative economy.
- Familiarize cultural organizations and creative businesses with the economic opportunities, challenges, and timelines of the county’s business sector.
- Foster collaborations between cultural providers and downtown business groups to develop cultural programming that can build business during slow periods.
- Coordinate marketing of cultural and general community activities to increase their economic benefit to the region.
- Educate area businesses on ways to capitalize on and profit from local cultural offerings through special promotions, offers, sponsorships, etc.
- Study the pattern of the region’s cultural programming to identify trends, times of surplus and deficits in programming, and recommend strategic action.

**Outcomes**
Arts and cultural organizations are stronger and more relevant to their communities. Arts and business understand their mutual interests and benefits of collaboration.
Action #7: Institute public policy and zoning that encourages the growth of creative businesses and cultural offerings.

Discussion
Lack of awareness on the part of government leaders can result in public policies and zoning regulations that hinder the growth of the creative economy in Washtenaw County. Similarly, lack of awareness can lead creative organizations and individuals to inadvertently run afoul of local rules and regulations. This recommendation urges a bridging of this gap through education, advocacy, and ongoing communication between the sectors.

Lead Implementers
Ann Arbor SPARK, Washtenaw County government, local units of government

Partners
Area chambers of commerce, DDAs, artists, arts and cultural organizations, creative businesses, the Arts Alliance

Start Date
Medium term

Recommended Activities
• Encourage cultural providers to become actively engaged in boards and commissions involved in zoning and regulatory activity in their communities.
• Work with area business organizations to build alliances to address zoning/regulations issues.
• Establish a resource center of best practices in legislation supporting creative economic development.
• Monitor local zoning/regulations for barriers to establishing, running, and growing creative businesses.
• Help municipal leaders understand the personal and economic benefits that cultural programming and public art installations can generate.

Models
Americans for the Arts, www.americansforthearts.org
ArtServe Michigan, www.artservemichigan.org
Illustrators’ Partnership of America, http://illustratorspartnership.org

Outcomes
Municipal and county governments see arts and culture as effective economic development assets. Creative businesses redevelop blighted commercial property. Creative economic development becomes part of municipal community and economic development strategies.
Action #8: Build a stronger cultural tourism product in Washtenaw County.

Discussion
Studies have shown that cultural tourists spend more money, stay longer than do other tourists, and are more likely to stay overnight in hotels/motels/b&bs. Although Washtenaw County is brimming with cultural opportunities, not all of the venues and offerings are ready to welcome tourist audiences. This recommendation encourages working with the county’s hospitality industry in a more organized and systematic way to increase the tourism-readiness and value of the county’s cultural organizations and creative businesses.

Lead Implementers
Ann Arbor Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, Ypsilanti Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

Partners
Arts and cultural organizations, artists, creative businesses, local chambers of commerce, DDAs, hotels, ETCS

Start Date
Medium term

Recommended Activities
- Encourage regular meetings between cultural leaders in the county and their counterparts in the hospitality sector.
- Familiarize cultural and hospitality leaders with key issues facing each other’s industries.
- Present educational programs to increase the cultural sector’s understanding of the county’s visitor profile, desired standards of hospitality, and other information that will enhance the sector’s ability to welcome tourist audiences.
- Foster collaborations between cultural providers and the hospitality industry to develop cultural programming that can build business during slow periods.
- Encourage strategic planning among the county’s events organizers to strengthen the impact and visitor appeal of regional arts and cultural activities.
- Explore ways to strengthen the region’s desirability as a tourism destination through new and/or improved cultural programming and marketing.

Models
HandMade in America: www.handmadeinamerica.org
National Trust for Historic Preservation, www.preservationbooks.org
Vermont Arts Council, www.vermontartscouncil.org

Outcomes
Cultural and hospitality representatives understand each other’s businesses and work together more effectively. Tourism-related business in the county increases.
The Relationship of Arts, Culture and Business: A Systems Approach
EACH “ACTION” INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

**Discussion:** A brief synopsis of the background thinking that led to this Action.

**Proposed Lead and Partner Organizations:** Organizations recommended by the task forces and steering committee as potential partners in implementing the Action.

**Please note:** These are recommendations only and do not indicate confirmed collaborations or exclude any unlisted potential partners.

**Start Date:** The suggested time frame to begin implementing the Action.

**Please note:** This is a very general assessment as individual activities within each Action could begin earlier or later than the indicated start date:

- **Near term:** 6 – 12 months
- **Medium term:** 1 – 3 years
- **Long term:** 4 – 5 years

**Recommended Activities:** These are the specific steps suggested by the task forces and steering committee to bring the Action to life. The full report of each task force is available from the Arts Alliance.

**Models:** If appropriate, model programs from other communities/sectors are referenced.

**Outcomes:** This indicates the benefits, impacts, or changes that will result as a consequence of undertaking the Action.

**NOTES**

1. A number of terms with very specific meanings such as “cultural providers” and “creative economy” are used throughout this document. Definitions are provided in the Appendix, Section 7: Glossary.

2. In a number of instances, different task forces identified the same or similar activities as the preferred response to a given challenge. Such overlaps suggest the importance of the proposed activities and are cross-referenced.

3. Evaluation and indicators of success are important parts of any plan. An evaluation methodology and success measures will be established for each Action as a first step of its implementation.
CAPACITY BUILDING, FUNDING & INVESTMENT

Planning Issues

Nonprofit cultural organization capacity
There is a notable disparity in capacity between the larger, more established organizations and the smaller organizations running on passion and hope. Nonprofit organizations need help with funding, marketing, and overall organizational development. Some cultural organizations need training and board development to build their capacity for fundraising. Most need some kind of training, assistance, or information that will develop their ability to fulfill their missions and serve their constituencies. As leaders of cultural organizations start to retire, there is a need to prepare the next generation of arts administrators. Like workers in other sectors in Michigan, emerging arts leaders report trouble-finding jobs.

Need for funding
According to the online survey data, the number one concern for nonprofit cultural organizations is funding. Organizations of all sizes and disciplines are struggling to sustain their operations and programs. Public funding from all sources has been diminished. State funding has been dramatically cut in recent years, and, surprisingly for a region so rich in cultural activities, the county’s municipalities offer little if any funding for cultural programs. Contributions and sponsorships from businesses and corporations are mostly down. While earned revenue is generally up, competition for funding is fierce as social needs increase and public sources diminish. We need to cultivate a new generation of philanthropists.

Statement of the Problem

Traditional sources of funding for the arts are declining in an increasingly competitive environment. New and creative models need to be explored in order to provide funding for an environment that supports the arts (both profit and not-for-profit) as viable business partners in our communities. Currently the arts community is fragmented with no centralized portal for services.

The Desired Vision of the Future
We envision a publicly and privately financed fund that exists in perpetuity to support a stable, vibrant arts and cultural environment that will contribute to the economic and personal well-being of Washtenaw County residents, workers, and visitors.
Summary of Task Force Recommendations

The capacity of nonprofit cultural organizations needs to be strengthened through increased funding, management assistance, improved governance, and increasing the availability of cultural facilities.

Goal Statement: Capacity Building, Funding, and Investment

Cultural providers have the management and financial resources to deliver their missions effectively and efficiently.

“[I practice my art] in Washtenaw County because as I continue to travel elsewhere...every time I come home I’m surrounded by all the powerful creative thinkers and people with stories we have right in our own town, and I’d rather be a part of creating something where we have all the resources then going where it already exists.”

Britten Stringwell

Action #1:

Increase the capacity of the Arts Alliance to serve as the county’s lead cultural service organization.

Discussion

All task forces working on the cultural plan identified the Arts Alliance as the lead agency in overseeing the implementation of the cultural plan. The Arts Alliance has established strong connections with the cultural leaders throughout Washtenaw County and has gained their trust to honestly and fairly represent them. To fulfill this new role, the Arts Alliance will need additional staffing and funding.

Lead Implementer

The Arts Alliance

Partners

Area arts and cultural organizations, creative businesses, artists, chambers of commerce, CVBs, Washtenaw County government, local units of government, business community, educational community, philanthropy community, Cultural Alliance of Southeast Michigan

Start Date

Short term

Recommended Activities

• Secure sustainable funding for the Arts Alliance to enable it to provide the services requested through the cultural plan and fulfill its county-wide leadership role.

• Evaluate and adjust the Arts Alliance’s staffing to build the capacity necessary to serve the region.

• Evaluate and adjust the Arts Alliance’s board membership to include representatives with necessary skills, resources, and who represent the county’s various population centers.
• Establish partnerships with outside organizations to deliver services beyond the internal capacity of the Arts Alliance.
• The Arts Alliance monitors and updates the cultural plan to reflect the region’s evolving situation and needs.
• The Arts Alliance regularly reviews and revises its own services to address the evolving needs of the region’s cultural producers and consumers.

Models
The Americans for the Arts, www.americansforthearts.org
Arts & Industry Council, Calhoun County, MI, http://whereisart.org
Fractured Atlas, a national nonprofit organization that provides services and support to artists and arts organizations, www.fracturedatlas.org
Center for Cultural Innovation, www.cciarts.org

Outcomes
The Arts Alliance is a strong organization that ably serves the cultural sector. The cultural plan is updated and reflects the ongoing needs of the region.

Action #2: Designate the Arts Alliance to lead the fundraising, implementation, assessment, and reporting of the Washtenaw County Cultural Master Plan.

Discussion
The Arts Alliance has successfully raised the funds needed to conduct the cultural planning process. The organization is well positioned to seek funds on behalf of the county’s entire cultural sector to implement the recommendations of the cultural master plan.

Lead Implementer
The Arts Alliance

Partners
Area arts and cultural organizations, creative businesses, artists, chambers of commerce, CVBs, Washtenaw County government, local governments, philanthropy community

Start Date
Short term

Recommended Activities
• Publish the cultural plan and distribute it widely.
• Coordinate the release of the cultural plan with the coordinator of the Washtenaw County Successful Communities initiative to avoid confusion or overlap.
• Meet with regional and local elected officials to brief them on the cultural plan and its implications for their constituencies.
• Coordinate with cultural service organizations in the seven population centers to plan implementation of the cultural plan in their communities.
• Brief potential funders on the vision described in the Washtenaw County cultural plan and related actions.
• Collaborate with regional and cultural partners to seek funds to finance the plan’s key priorities.

• Build alliances with organizations that can benefit from a stronger cultural sector to identify ways to raise funds to implement the plan’s recommendations.

Outcomes
The public is aware that the Arts Alliance is coordinating the implementation of the cultural plan. Potential funders recognize the value of implementing the plan and provide support to enact key recommendations.

Action #3:
Make available services that increase the ability of the county’s cultural organizations to generate income and deliver their missions.

Discussion
Cultural organizations recognize that they need to learn new techniques of fundraising and earning income, and recall with regret the loss of training workshops that were once provided by NEW. In some cases, such educational programs are still available locally (such as NEW’s BoardConnect program or courses offered by Washtenaw Community College), but awareness of them is lacking. In other cases, the appropriate programs are not offered at all.

Lead Implementers
NEW, Michigan Nonprofit Association, Washtenaw Community College, Eastern Michigan University

Partners
The Arts Alliance, area arts and cultural organizations, creative businesses, area chambers of commerce

Start Date
Medium term

Recommended Activities
• Promote awareness in the cultural sector of currently offered fundraising and development training programs as well as entrepreneurial instruction and resources.

• Promote awareness of NEW’s BoardConnect program among the county’s cultural organizations.
Just So

you turn to not quite see

just after the splash

breaks the quiet river

greensilver circles grow

just where a fish

might have been

the purple loose-

strife bend just

over the sheen

here in the late morning

their tips just dried

as the bees nudge in

the sun warms your

back the breeze cools

your face just so

ARTIST BIO

DAVID STRINGER

Through his own words to emerging artists, David Stringer describes how he’s been able to make money from his writing. He speaks from firsthand experience when he says, “All writing is creative, so seek and deliver quality from any writing gig you can find.”

Whether David Stringer, a Saline author, is rhyming couplets for a poem, doing case writing for management consultants, or assisting others with the writing process, he’s always writing.

His income comes from a wide variety of outlets. Stringer’s previous career as a high school English teacher helps with the mentoring he provides to others who want to write books and articles. As he puts it, he acts as a “midwife” by providing a combination of ghostwriting, editing, and advising to aspiring authors. Through this he’s helped others “give birth” to publications and proudly says his mentoring has “delivered books on business, psychology, history and a novel.” He counts his collaborative work on a book about breast cancer survivors as one of his favorites.

Along with mentoring, Stringer also meets with business organizations and then prepares “What should the boss do here?” scenarios, either for discussion or role-playing.

His personal writing includes two books of poetry and a non-fiction book. He’s still seeking a publisher for his non-fiction book about the murder of his schizophrenic brother. Stringer includes the work he’s done for The Ann Arbor Observer as part of his personal writing, and he notes it’s “a great place for beginning writers to start because the editing is so good.”

Thanks to laptops, Stringer says “writing is a portable art.” It’s an art that enables you to live where you want and write where you want. Lucky for us, Stringer has lived in Washtenaw County for the last 40 years and chooses to write here.

“I write whenever I can, avoiding writer’s block by lowering my standards until something hits the page,” he says. “I think caffeine fuels my creativity,” which is why a strong cup of coffee at Starbucks helps. His barista work at Starbucks helps, as he puts it, “supplement my erratic writing income.”

David Stringer
• Survey the cultural sector to learn highest needs for skills training.

• Collaborate with area institutions of higher learning to make low-cost educational programs in fundraising and nonprofit management available to regional cultural organizations, with particular attention to serving the needs of smaller, emerging groups.

• Present an annual arts conference in Washtenaw County that provides skills training, artists showcase, and networking opportunities.

• Make available scholarships to enable artists, cultural organizations, and creative businesses to attend skills-building workshops and conferences.

• Establish and/or publicize an easy-to-use and easy-to-administer system to enable cultural organizations to share services (e.g., accounting) and facilities (e.g., office space).

• Create and promote a directory of management service providers (e.g., lawyers, accountants) with expertise in serving the cultural community.

• Explore feasibility of establishing service provider groups such as Business Volunteers for the Arts and Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts.

• Provide best practice information on nonprofit and cultural organization management practices.

• Explore feasibility of establishing a coordinated matching gifts program for businesses contributing to the region’s cultural organizations.

• Make it easy to contribute to arts and culture by developing a centralized online donations mechanism to receive contributions for the region’s cultural organizations.

Models

Outcomes
Arts and cultural organizations have increased capacity to raise money. Educational opportunities become available for cultural organizations and artists. Arts and cultural organizations survive as viable enterprises that serve their communities. Small grass roots organizations have access to support services.

• Update the Washtenaw County nonprofit cultural economic impact study and share its findings as a tool for area cultural organizations in their fundraising efforts.

• Provide timely information on changes in management issues affecting nonprofit organizations (e.g., 990 reporting requirements).

• Track current trends in charitable giving and earned income techniques and make findings available to area cultural organizations.
Action #4: Implement ongoing advocacy, education, and cultivation activities to increase public and private sector investments in non-profit arts and cultural organizations.

Discussion
In general, the cultural sector has been fragmented, with each organization approaching potential donors separately. There has been no coordinated effort to build general public awareness of the need to support the cultural sector and no coordinated publicity describing the economic and community benefits that arts and culture provide.

Lead Implementer
The Arts Alliance

Partners
Area arts and cultural organizations, creative businesses, artists, chambers of commerce, CVBs, philanthropy community, higher education institutions, Michigan Nonprofit Association, Cultural Alliance of Southeast Michigan

Start Date
Medium term

Recommended Activities
• Implement a publicity campaign to encourage increased corporate giving by clearly articulating the economic and community benefit of arts and culture.
• Coordinate the region’s advocacy efforts with ArtServe Michigan and other organizations to support increased state funding for arts and culture. (See Communications, Audience Development & Advocacy, Action #6)
• Collaborate with the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation to increase its arts endowment.

Outcomes
Increased state and local funding for arts and culture. Increased private funding for arts and culture.

“It is sometimes difficult to find new and creative ways to make a living at my craft. The most rewarding experience is when I DO find something that clicks — like selling a story to a magazine that I’ve really wanted to write for, or writing a poem that people really relate to. It’s all about sticking to your art, continuing to produce and look for outlets.”

Sandra Xenakis

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Action #5:

Build a publicly and privately financed fund that exists in perpetuity to provide financial support to area arts and cultural organizations.

Discussion

The cultural sector has been buffeted by diminishing government funding and uncertain corporate support. Organizations are spending more and more of their time working on raising money, giving them less time to do the creative work that is their reason for existing. A secure source of funding that the cultural sector could rely on would give the sector a much-needed platform of stability. Any collaborative fundraising effort, however, needs to respect the fundraising efforts of individual organizations and needs to dovetail with existing fundraising systems, such as that of the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation. If a publicly/privately financed fund is established, it should be bifurcated to allow for both endowment-type growth as well to expend funds on a project-specific basis.

Lead Implementers

Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, the Arts Alliance

Partners

Arts and cultural organizations, artists, creative businesses, business community, philanthropy community, Washtenaw County government, local units of governments.

Start Date

Long term

Recommended Activities

- Establish a “blue-ribbon” panel to thoroughly explore traditional and non-traditional community-wide cultural funding systems and report their recommendations for implementation in Washtenaw County.
- Research best practices in publicly/privately financed cultural funds.
- Establish a metric that can be used on an on-going basis to define “adequate funding” for the non-profit cultural sector in Washtenaw County.
- Discuss with the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation and/or comparable organizations the feasibility of managing a publicly/privately financed cultural fund.
- Build support for public funding for the cultural sector among area elected officials.
- Explore the feasibility of an arts and culture millage to support the cultural vitality of Washtenaw County.

Models

San Antonio’s the Fund, www.thefundsa.org
EarthShare of Texas, www.earthshare-texas.org
City of Austin, http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/culturalplan
Denver Scientific and Cultural Facilities District, www.scfd.org
Cleveland, Cuyahoga Arts and Culture: Regional Arts and Cultural District: cigarette tax, http://www.cuyahogaartsandculture.org/cuyahoga.arts.and.culture.grant.info.php

Outcomes

Arts and cultural funding stabilizes and increases.
**Action #6:**

Build a strong network among cultural providers in Washtenaw County.

**Discussion**

Peer-to-peer learning is an extremely effective way of communicating information. As groups network, not only do they learn from each other, but they also learn how to make use of existing services and to avoid creating redundant programs.

**Lead Implementer**

The Arts Alliance

**Partners**

Cultural services groups in the seven population centers, area cultural organizations, artists, creative businesses

**Start Date**

Short term

**Recommended Activities**

- Position the Arts Alliance as the hub in a constellation of cultural service organizations that are affiliated with the Arts Alliance but that each serve their own population center.
- Provide skills training and services to enable each of the affiliated cultural organizations to function efficiently and deliver local services effectively.
- Provide guidance and assistance to enable affiliate cultural organizations to lead implementation of the cultural plan locally.
- Provide a forum for the leaders of the affiliated cultural organizations to meet regularly to share information and learn from each other.

- Increase promotion of the Arts Alliance’s Creative Connections program to encourage greater participation.
- Explore other networking opportunities for specific subsets of cultural providers, i.e. emerging arts leaders, dancers, festival organizers, etc.
- Create a Washtenaw County cultural listserve to facilitate intra-county cultural communications.

**Models**


**Outcomes**

The Arts Alliance becomes the hub of cultural information. Educational opportunities become available for cultural organizations and artists. Communication, collaboration and partnerships increase between cultural organizations and artists.
Key

Each “Action” includes the following:

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Models: If appropriate, model programs from other communities/sectors are referenced.

Outcomes: This indicates the benefits, impacts, or changes that will result as a consequence of undertaking the Action.

Notes

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2. In a number of instances, different task forces identified the same or similar activities as the preferred response to a given challenge. Such overlaps suggest the importance of the proposed activities and are cross-referenced.

3. Evaluation and indicators of success are important parts of any plan. An evaluation methodology and success measures will be established for each Action as a first step of its implementation.
Planning Issues

Public awareness and advocacy
While nonprofit executives describe increased public awareness and support as a factor that has strengthened their capacity, declining public funding indicates the need for more advocacy and awareness. Artists also wished for more awareness and respect. People should value arts and culture as more integral to community well being and prosperity.

Better communications and marketing
People wished for a central source of information on cultural programs and events, though few survey respondents used central websites to find information. Some wished for more informed criticism in local news media.

Audience development
Audiences are loyal, but relatively small given the number of cultural organizations offering programs. Cultural tourism has not yet been fully developed. Most people who attend cultural events frequently indicate they usually do so in their own local community. However, leaders of some smaller communities with many commuting residents, indicate that commuters are less engaged in civic and cultural affairs in their bedroom communities.

Statement of the Problem

Although many systems already exist for communication between cultural organizations, individual artists, and the general public, the ability to use these methods is not consistent. A common system to encourage connectivity and creative collaboration between all audiences is needed. The problem is there is no easy way for the public, artists and arts producers to find and share the information they seek and want.

The Desired Vision of the Future
To communicate the value of arts and culture to area residents, public officials, and visitors in a way that engages them and increases their awareness and understanding.

To foster a sense of creative community amongst cultural organizations and individual artists where communication can exist through media outlets, gathering spaces and affinity groups.

To create an environment where all potential and current audience members feel welcome, comfortable, and invited to produce, support, and participate in arts and cultural experiences.
Summary of Task Force Recommendations

Developing participation in arts and cultural programming by increasing the visibility and public awareness of the cultural sector through systematic marketing to residents and cultural tourists.

Goal Statement: Communications, Audience Development, and Advocacy

Effective, collaborative communication strengthens the arts and cultural sector, increases cultural participation, and heightens public understanding of the intrinsic value of arts and culture in society.

Action #1: Position the Arts Alliance as the lead agency for cultural communication and information in the county.

Discussion
Washtenaw County is home to many cultural organizations and creative individuals, each of which generates information about its own programs and activities. Similarly, there are many outlets where slices of information about cultural activity in the county can be found. There is, however, no one place where audiences and creators alike can go for any type of cultural information. There is no one repository of information the media can consult for sector-wide data. As the cultural sector gains greater prominence in the county, it is critical that there be one “go-to” organization that can speak accurately and credibly on behalf of the entire cultural community.

Lead Implementer
The Arts Alliance

Partners
Area arts and cultural organizations, artists, creative businesses, Ann Arbor Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, area chambers of commerce, media.

Timeline
Near term

Recommended Activities

- Function as the primary resource for up-to-date organizational/economic/statistical information about the region’s cultural sector.
- Coordinate county cultural communications and marketing activities, either alone or in partnership with other organizations.
- Serve as a connector between the cultural community and other sectors, such as government, business, media, and education.

Art is a form of communication; concentrate on what you want to say. If you learn to faithfully express yourself through your art success will come - eventually.

Bill Knudstrup
W hat’s the first thing you notice when you sit down with local artist Leslie Sobel? Ironically, it’s her Barack Obama button.

Sobel, a mixed-media artist holding a general studio degree with focus in sculpture from the University of Michigan School of Art and Design, has been a precinct organizer for the Democratic Party in Milan for many years. That’s actually a fitting activity for the artist, who describes her creations as “art with a political agenda.”

“(The artwork) is specifically about climate change and what we’re about to lose,” says Sobel. “(It’s) not just about an ethereal idea. It’s important to me.”

Leslie Sobel

To create her pieces, she starts by taking a combination of photographic images and superimposes them on a block of cradled plywood panel which functions as the base for her work. The photos, taken from NASA satellite images of landforms and ocean, and also from biological imagery that she creates using her own collection of toy and antique microscopes, show one of the major themes of her work — the interconnection of science and art.

“(It’s only) natural to try and integrate those two points of view,” Sobel notes, describing her work as a “slow-moving process,” much like the earth’s geologic movements over time.

The next step in the process involves adding certain effects to the super-imposed images. To do this, Sobel uses wax to create texture and depth. The wax contains pigment which allows Sobel to emphasize certain aspects of the work by using particular colors to make a statement. Taken in total, the added textural and color elements mimic the topographical nature of some of the images that are used in the initial step. One particular image stands out when Sobel shows you samples of her work. In it, half the image is of the ocean, the other half of the polar ice caps. Sobel has mixed bright red pigment in with the natural white of the ice caps, creating a sharp contrast with the light blue of the water. This contrast makes the ice caps look as though they’re rapidly melting.

“Think of (the) melting ice caps as the earth bleeding,” Sobel explains. Al Gore would be proud.
• Serve as the “spokes agency” for the cultural community in public discussions.
• Monitor cultural legislation and coordinate responsive action as needed.

Models
Americans for the Arts, www.americansforthearts.org
American Museums Association, www.aam-us.org

Outcomes
Citizens, civic leaders, and funders value and invest in cultural development. Organized advocacy with increased public support and funding. A strong and effective umbrella organization serves the county.

Discussion
All task forces working on the cultural plan identified a need for a centralized, online cultural portal. At present, such a resource does not exist, (although the Ann Arbor Area Convention & Visitors Bureau manages the county-wide cultural events calendar). This new online portal will connect the cultural sector, providing a virtual gathering place for the community. It will serve as an informational resource, a tool for building collaborations, and a promotional vehicle for artists, cultural organizations, and creative businesses without their own websites. In addition, it will provide useful information for educators wishing to work with the cultural sector, funders seeking data, and audiences seeking entertainment information, among other purposes.

Lead Implementer
The Arts Alliance

Partners
Area arts and cultural organizations, artists, creative businesses, Ann Arbor Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, area chambers of commerce, media, WISD.

Start Date
Near term

Recommended Activities
• Create a robust online portal/hub to connect residents, businesses, educators, visitors, media, funders, and government with area cultural providers and services.
• Collaborate with other organizations such as chambers of commerce and convention and visitors bureaus to manage and continually improve cultural events calendars and other appropriate databases.
• Provide training to area artists, cultural organizations, and creative businesses to ensure their use of the cultural portal, events calendars, and other online services.
• Conduct a marketing campaign to build county awareness of the cultural online portal among members of the public.
• Monitor trends in online communications and usage, and upgrade portal as needed.

Models
Chicago Artists Resource: www.chicagoartistsresource.org
The Arts & Industry Council of Calhoun County: www.whereisart.com
HandMade in America: www.handmadeinamerica.org

Outcomes
Cultural leaders and artists have ready access to the information they require. Residents and visitors have access to information on cultural events and programs. Participation increases. Cultural organizations, artists, businesses, tourists, public officials, and the community are aware of cultural events and programs.

Discussion
Washtenaw County does not have a clearly defined cultural identity although the area serves as home to a great number of artists, cultural organizations, and creative businesses, many of which are well-known as individual entities. This makes it challenging to market the area’s rich cultural, artistic, and heritage resources effectively. By working together around one brand, the cultural sector can save time and money in its promotional activities and can partner more effectively with the business community to attract potential clients, employees, and visitors to the area.

Lead Implementers
Cultural Leaders Forum, Regional Cultural Leaders Network, the Arts Alliance

Partners
Area arts and cultural organizations, artists, creative businesses, county’s CVBs and chambers of commerce, Ann Arbor SPARK, DDAs, media

Start Date
Medium term

Recommended Activities
• Create a value statement that can be used by cultural providers to build public understanding of culture’s value to the community.
• Work with artists, cultural organizations, and creative businesses to familiarize them with the value statement and encourage them to use it.
• Work with area business organizations such as chambers of commerce to build closer working connections between the cultural and business sectors.

Action #3:
Develop a collaborative branding and public relations campaign on behalf of the cultural sector.

Models
Chicago Artists Resource: www.chicagoartistsresource.org
The Arts & Industry Council of Calhoun County: www.whereisart.com
HandMade in America: www.handmadeinamerica.org

Outcomes
Cultural leaders and artists have ready access to the information they require. Residents and visitors have access to information on cultural events and programs. Participation increases. Cultural organizations, artists, businesses, tourists, public officials, and the community are aware of cultural events and programs.

Discussion
Washtenaw County does not have a clearly defined cultural identity although the area serves as home to a great number of artists, cultural organizations, and creative businesses, many of which are well-known as individual entities. This makes it challenging to market the area’s rich cultural, artistic, and heritage resources effectively. By working together around one brand, the cultural sector can save time and money in its promotional activities and can partner more effectively with the business community to attract potential clients, employees, and visitors to the area.

Lead Implementers
Cultural Leaders Forum, Regional Cultural Leaders Network, the Arts Alliance

Partners
Area arts and cultural organizations, artists, creative businesses, county’s CVBs and chambers of commerce, Ann Arbor SPARK, DDAs, media

Start Date
Medium term

Recommended Activities
• Create a value statement that can be used by cultural providers to build public understanding of culture’s value to the community.
• Work with artists, cultural organizations, and creative businesses to familiarize them with the value statement and encourage them to use it.
• Work with area business organizations such as chambers of commerce to build closer working connections between the cultural and business sectors.
• Work with business and media organizations to build broad public recognition that a creative economy is viable and desirable in Washtenaw County.

• Partner with area philanthropic and media organizations to communicate the need for and value of arts and culture in Washtenaw County.

• Create a cultural brand for Washtenaw County, accompanied by appropriate media materials.

• Work with artists, cultural organizations, and creative businesses to encourage them to incorporate the cultural brand in their promotional efforts.

• Track and build awareness of the economic impact resulting from creative enterprises.

• Explore the need for and possible development of a county cultural publication.

Models
HandMade in America, www.handmadeinamerica.org

Outcomes
Tourism agencies have information to promote cultural attractions. Residents and visitors have information they need to participate. Participation increases. Performances, exhibits, and other cultural events are available to everyone and all feel welcome and invited to participate.

Action #4:
Make available services and programs to increase the marketing capacity of area arts and cultural organizations

Discussion
At a time when new ways of communicating and sharing information are expanding exponentially, cultural organizations have limited budgets and resources to devote to marketing. In this rapidly changing environment, cultural organizations, artists, and creative businesses need to be able to compete effectively for the time and attention of potential audiences and customers. It is imperative that cultural organizations know how to make smart marketing choices and that they have the tools they need to carry out their promotional plans. In a time of such financial constraints, cross-marketing activities and collaborations become essential.

Lead Implementer
Area chambers of commerce, Chelsea Center for the Arts

Partners
County CVBs, area marketing professionals, the Arts Alliance, Washtenaw Community College, Eastern Michigan University, media

Start Date
Medium term

Recommended Activities
• Partner with area media providers to offer reduced rates for cultural advertising.

• Develop a toolkit/resource center of marketing resource information to enable cultural organizations to promote themselves more effectively.
**Action #5:**
Offer programs and services to create a stronger sense of community among cultural providers.

**Discussion**
There are many artists, cultural organizations, and creative businesses in Washtenaw County, but many seem to be operating within their own silos. These silos are often built around media (theatre, music), profession (museum administrators, historic preservationists), geography (Ypsilanti, Chelsea), and business model (for-profit, not-for-profit). Unhappiness with this lack of community was expressed repeatedly in community forums and in surveys and is reflected in part in the departure of younger artists for other, more dynamic cultural centers. This recommendation urges multiple steps to build linkages throughout the creative sector in Washtenaw County to both strengthen this sector and enhance the desirability of the area to talented young knowledge workers.

**Lead Implementer**
The Arts Alliance

**Partners**
Area arts and cultural organizations, artists, creative businesses, chambers of commerce

**Start Date**
Near term

**Recommended Activities**
- Encourage networking and support groups for cultural workers in specific areas, such as dance and festivals.
- Encourage collaborations among cultural organizations and artists to develop new and expanded audiences.
- Create a Washtenaw County cultural listserv, Blog, online video center and other social networking resources.
- Work with area educational institutions and cultural providers to establish a coordinated program of mentorships and internships.
- Create a tradeshow to showcase county artists, cultural organizations, and creative industries to potential consumers such as area educators and businesses.

**Models**
Chicago Artists Resource,
www.chicagoartistresource.org
Americans for the Arts,
www.americansorthearts.org

**Outcomes**
Artists and cultural leaders gain support and information from each other. Cultural programming grows. Audience participation increases.

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I feel that Washtenaw has the best demographic for my contemporary paintings, sculptures and public art work. We moved here about two years ago, opened a gallery and have found a very welcoming dynamic with local artists and arts organizations that we have not felt before. My art sales have increased dramatically since we moved here! Thank you, Washtenaw County!

David Austin
**Action #6:**
Implement planned, coordinated advocacy efforts on behalf of the county’s arts and cultural organizations, artists, and creative businesses.

**Discussion**
Government leaders at the state and local levels are gaining a better understanding of the value, both economic and personal, that arts and culture bring to Washtenaw County. Similarly, community leaders and the public are coming to appreciate the creative sector in ways that extend beyond mere entertainment value. As economic problems deepen, however, and more hard choices need to be made regarding allocation of scarce resources, the creative community will need to advocate for itself in an increasingly organized and sophisticated way. This recommendation envisions continuing the advocacy work initiated by the Arts Alliance and increasing efforts to involve more organizations and individuals in speaking on behalf of the value of arts, culture, and creativity to the community.

**Lead Implementer**
The Arts Alliance

**Partners**
Area arts and cultural organizations, artists, creative businesses, ArtServe Michigan, Americans for the Arts, media, government officials, political parties

**Start Date**
Medium term

**Recommended Activities**
- Meet with ArtServe Michigan to discuss ways to coordinate advocacy efforts.
- Monitor cultural legislation and coordinate responsive action as needed.
- Implement a sustained, coordinated communications program targeting regional elected officials to build awareness and understanding of the significance of the cultural sector to the personal and economic well-being of Washtenaw County residents.
- Build greater public awareness of the Arts Alliance’s annual candidates’ survey.

**Models**
ArtServe Michigan, www.artservemichigan.org
Americans for the Arts, www.americansforthearts.org

**Outcomes**
Increased communications between public officials and the cultural sector. Public officials and funders understand, support and value the key role arts and culture play in a sustainable community.
**Action #7:**

Provide communications services, resources, and tools to increase delivery of and participation in diverse cultural programs.

**Discussion**
Cultural organizations, artists, and creative businesses often don’t know how to reach diverse audiences. They lack awareness of basic elements, such as words that may provoke unintended reactions, how and when leisure-time decisions are made, and which media platforms are preferred. This lack of understanding means that diverse audiences may not feel welcome to attend, and even more importantly, may not want to attend because cultural offerings don’t respond to their interests. (See Diversity & Access, Action #2)

**Lead Implementers**
The Arts Alliance, county higher education institutions, media

**Partners**
Diversity and Access task force members; Ann Arbor SPARK, UMS, area arts and cultural organizations, creative businesses, artists, social service organizations

**Start Date**
Medium term

**Recommended Activities**
- Communicate to cultural providers the value and importance of including diverse populations in audience, staff, and board.
- Provide training to cultural providers about communications vehicles and methods preferred by diverse audiences.
- Make more information available about cultural opportunities by working with media outlets used by diverse audiences.
- Implement a program of media blasts for targeted audience groups similar to the national media tourism alerts sent out by the Ann Arbor Area Convention & Visitors Bureau.

**Models**
Wild Swan Theater, www.wildswantheater.org
University Musical Society, www.ums.org
The Public Theater, www.publictheater.org
Ann Arbor Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, www.annarbor.org

**Outcomes**
Cultural providers are more effective in communicating with diverse audiences. More diverse audiences attend area cultural programs.
• 34 Recommendations
• Communicate
• Create & Foster
• Develop Participation
• Collaborate
• Creative Individuals
• Cultural Leaders
• Marketing
EACH “ACTION” INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

Discussion: A brief synopsis of the background thinking that led to this Action.

Proposed Lead and Partner Organizations: Organizations recommended by the task forces and steering committee as potential partners in implementing the Action.

Please note: These are recommendations only and do not indicate confirmed collaborations or exclude any unlisted potential partners.

Start Date: The suggested time frame to begin implementing the Action.

Please note: This is a very general assessment as individual activities within each Action could begin earlier or later than the indicated start date:

- Near term: 6 – 12 months
- Medium term: 1 – 3 years
- Long term: 4 – 5 years

Recommended Activities: These are the specific steps suggested by the task forces and steering committee to bring the Action to life. The full report of each task force is available from the Arts Alliance.

Models: If appropriate, model programs from other communities/sectors are referenced.

Outcomes: This indicates the benefits, impacts, or changes that will result as a consequence of undertaking the Action.

NOTES

1. A number of terms with very specific meanings such as “cultural providers” and “creative economy” are used throughout this document. Definitions are provided in the Appendix, Section 7: Glossary.

2. In a number of instances, different task forces identified the same or similar activities as the preferred response to a given challenge. Such overlaps suggest the importance of the proposed activities and are cross-referenced.

3. Evaluation and indicators of success are important parts of any plan. An evaluation methodology and success measures will be established for each Action as a first step of its implementation.
CULTURAL FACILITIES

Planning Issues

Facilities development
Community leaders often described the need for new or improved cultural facilities. Artists need additional music and visual arts venues. Ann Arbor is dependent on University of Michigan facilities. Many smaller communities lack community arts centers to support artists and programs. Galleries have closed in some communities. Nonprofit leaders have difficulty raising funds for capital improvements.

Statement of the Problem
Washtenaw County needs to use existing facilities better, both arts facilities and non-arts facilities (such as empty buildings). We need to provide facilities to enable artists to pursue their craft at all levels and encourage arts organizations to fulfill their missions in a stable and resource-efficient environment.

Facilities remove barriers to success. If you don’t have space, you can’t create or present and you can’t be successful.

The Desired Vision of the Future
To provide better access to new and existing facilities (both arts and non-arts facilities and empty buildings); to enable artists to pursue their craft at all levels; and enable arts organizations to fulfill their missions in a stable and resource-efficient environment.

Summary of Task Force Recommendations
Information about performance and exhibition space in Washtenaw County needs to be compiled and made readily available to the cultural community. Elected officials, landlords and others need education explaining the unique requirements of artists, cultural organizations and creative businesses.

Goal Statement: Cultural Facilities
Accessible cultural facilities throughout the county enable artists to create their work and cultural organizations to fulfill their missions.

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Cal Fette
Mark Palms

Staff
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Task Force Members:
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Paul Cousins
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Robert Duha
Nathalie Edmunds
Ken Fischer
Karen Hart
Kamilah Henderson
Susan Katz Froning
Barry LaRue
Debbie Locke-Daniel
Aubrey Thornton
Martinson
Peter Pollack
Terry Soave
**Action #1:**
Encourage the development of safe, affordable, functional cultural spaces of all types – studios, live/workspaces for performances, exhibition, instruction, storage, rehearsal, office, and incubator spaces.

**Discussion**
Artists of all types (visual, literary, and performing) need places to practice their craft that are safe, accessible, and affordable. Some artists want to be able to share space with other creative workers to be inspired by their creative work. Actors and other performers explain that they lose valuable creative time simply hunting for suitable rehearsal space. Other artists find that the lack of suitable space means that they are forced to leave the county if they want to increase their output or take on new artistic challenges. Any cultural facilities developed through the cultural plan initiatives should adhere to “green” building practices as much as possible.

**Lead Implementers**
DDAs, Washtenaw County Government, local units of government

**Partners**
Chambers of commerce, the Arts Alliance, Commercial Realtors, NEW, cultural organizations, artists, creative businesses

**Start Date**
Medium term

**Recommended Activities**
- Develop a mechanism for matching those seeking affordable creative space with realtors/landlords.
- Establish a roster of facility service providers, e.g. lighting/sound technicians, information technology, etc.
- Partner with business organizations to provide assistance and training in leasing, buying, space management, and related issues.
- Partner with business organizations to educate realtors/landlords regarding the value of cultural tenants and the needs of artists and cultural organizations.
- Monitor and report on pertinent state legislation such as the current proposed arts district bill.
- Encourage local elected officials to use zoning creatively to encourage development of arts-friendly facilities and services.
- Encourage the development of affordable living and live/work space for artists
- Develop a “toolkit” of resources to use: zoning, funding, what to look for in renting, etc.

**Models**
AS220 in Providence, RI: www.as220.org
ArtSpace – nonprofit real estate developer
Arts Council of St. Louis, MO – new arts center
Torpedo Factory, Alexandria, VA
Project Row Houses, Houston, www.projectrowhouse.org
Western Avenue Studios, Lowell, MA, www.WesternAvenueStudios.com

**Outcomes**
Artists and cultural organizations have access to information on available spaces. Knowledge about the availability of facilities is shared throughout the county. There is adequate space for performances and exhibitions throughout the county at a variety of price points.
Action #2:
Encourage the use of existing buildings for arts and cultural purposes through collaborative partnerships, incentives, and innovative re-development projects.

Discussion
Artists, creative businesses, and cultural organizations see numerous vacant storefronts and buildings throughout Washtenaw County and visualize creative opportunities. Numerous studies have shown that creative businesses are “good for real estate values,” often lifting up a formerly downtrodden neighborhood and adding new life to it. Tax incentives and other economic development tools have been effective elsewhere in the country to revitalize neglected neighborhoods and should be explored here.

Lead Implementers
DDAs, Washtenaw County Government, local units of government

Partners
Chambers of commerce, Ann Arbor SPARK, the Arts Alliance, media, artists, cultural organizations, creative businesses, business community, commercial realtors, historic preservation community, American Institute of Architects

Start Date
Medium term

Recommended Activities
- Establish a matching service for artists and cultural organizations seeking to share space.
- Build a resource center of best practices for sharing space and adaptive reuse of historic buildings for cultural activities.
- Partner with area business development organizations to repurpose unused buildings to house artist incubators. (See Creative Economic Development, Action #1).
- Familiarize area business organizations such as chambers of commerce and commercial realtors with the economic benefits of innovative cultural re-development projects.
- Explore economic development tools such as tax incentives, tax credits, TIFs, etc. and develop a toolbox of information for cultural providers.
- Work with local governments to put safeguards in place so that artists are not forced out of neighborhoods when redevelopment/gentrification occurs.
- Encourage renovation and adaptive reuse by making available information about facilities specialists, ADA requirements, building codes, and financing sources.
- Track and report on the economic benefits artists, cultural organizations, and creative businesses bring to the neighborhoods where they are located.
One common perception of professional dance is that it’s dictated by the virtues of grace, beauty, and placid mental stability. There’s at least one experienced dancer in Ann Arbor who might amend some of this sentiment.

“Why do I (dance)?” Aimee McDonald-Anderson ponders. “Because I’m crazy. (You) don’t do it because you want to; you do it because you’re driven to.”

Though she seems to be far from nutty when you meet her in person, the drive she mentions is evident when you consider what she’s had to work through. The longtime Ann Arborite, who majored in dance when she was at the University of Michigan in the mid-1990s, learned the hard way that dance is not all about seamless movement across the floor. Aimee hurt her ankle while performing in college. The painful injury prevented her from walking most of the time, but somehow she still managed to continue to dance.

After graduation, McDonald-Anderson spent a year in Ireland. When her work permit ran out in 1997 and she returned to Ann Arbor, she found herself working on rehabbing not one, but two injuries – her ankle, and the fractured local dance scene. She was thrust into the role of producing an entire show – the old “Summer Dances” program – in one month’s time. She managed to pull it off successfully, though her definition of success speaks to the difficult challenges the dance community faces in today’s unstable economy.

“A successful show is one I haven’t lost money on,” McDonald-Anderson notes. Not to be discouraged, McDonald-Anderson has been able to make a comfortable living. She runs her own pilates business – an activity she learned while rehabbing her ankle. Though the ankle seems to be working alright these days, the dance scene continues to struggle.

One way to combat this, McDonald-Anderson hopes, may be to hold a dance summit to unify the Ann Arbor dance scene.
Models
Arts Council of St. Louis, MI – new arts center
Denver Mayor’s Task Force on Creative Spaces, and Denver Space Matters report
http://www.denvergov.org/tabid/385851
Massachusetts Cultural Council ArtistLink: space development tool kit,
www.artslink.org
AS220 in Providence, RI: www.as220.org
Sammons Center for the Arts, Dallas,
www.sammonartcenter.org
Hennepin Center for the Arts, Minneapolis,
www.artspaceusa.org/neighborhood/hennepincenter
Fort Worth Center for the Arts,
www.fwcac.com
DeSoto Project, Portland,
www.museumofcontemporarycraft.org
Fort Mason Center, San Francisco,
www.fortmason.org
Outcomes
Artists and cultural organizations are aware of available spaces and best practices. Washtenaw County heritage is preserved for current use and for future generations. Businesses understand the economic benefits of re-using buildings for cultural purposes.

Action #3:
Encourage “cross-jurisdictional” use of existing performance facilities throughout Washtenaw County.

Discussion
Although the supply of non-University affiliated performance facilities might seem limited in Ann Arbor, numerous performance venues exist in schools, universities, colleges, churches, cafes, cultural organizations, and creative businesses throughout Washtenaw County. Some of these facilities are in high demand, while others are less frequently used. Performers who might like to use such venues, however, may be unaware of their existence. Potential users need basic information about performance venues in order to book them. Audiences need to be encouraged to travel a few extra miles to attend events in nearby communities.

Lead Implementer
The Arts Alliance

Partners
Area arts and cultural organizations, artists, creative businesses, schools, institutions of higher learning, churches, WISD

Start Date
Short term

Recommended Activities
• Develop an online roster of performance venues in Washtenaw County with rental data to encourage greater use of existing facilities.
• Promote awareness of the performance venue roster among performing artists and performing arts organizations.
• Solicit public support to make publicly financed performance facilities accessible to cultural organizations at affordable rates.
• Conduct a promotional campaign to encourage the public to travel to other communities for cultural performances and events.
Models
Denver Mayor’s Task Force on Creative Spaces, and Denver Space Matters report
http://www.denvergov.org/tabid/385851
Chicago Artists Resource,
www.chicagoartistsresource.org
MA Cultural Council ArtistLink,
www.artistlink.org
Seattle cultural facilities database
City of Austin, cultural plan
http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/culturalplan

Outcomes
Cultural organizations find affordable and appropriate performance facilities without leaving the county. Cultural programming takes place in more parts of the county.

Action #4:
Support efforts to advocate on behalf of and to promote the preservation of the county’s landmarks and historic assets.

Discussion
Washtenaw County is fortunate to have a strong collection of heritage sites, ranging from urban storefronts to centennial farms. The presence of these architectural assets enriches the built environment and can provide inspiration to creative individuals. The historic preservation community is generally strong in Washtenaw County but could benefit from the support of its allies in the cultural sector.

Lead Implementers
Washtenaw County Historic District Commission, Ann Arbor Preservation Alliance, local historic district commissions

Partners
The Arts Alliance, area arts and cultural organizations, artists, American Institute of Architects

Start Date
Medium term
Recommended Activities

- Build closer relationships between the region’s historic preservation organizations and cultural providers and arts service organizations.
- Encourage communities without historic preservation guidelines in place to adopt them and value their historic assets.
- Collaborate with organizations such as the American Institute of Architects and local historic preservation groups/commissions to promote increased public appreciation of the region’s historic assets.

Models
National Trust for Historic Preservation, www.nationaltrust.org

Outcomes
Washtenaw County heritage is preserved for current use and for future generations.

“My fans in Washtenaw County are passionate about music, and art, and have been the greatest inspiration to a new direction in my career. My band has received amazing support from a very diverse fan base who come out to listen, groove and have a good time.”

Chris Genteel
Washtenaw County Supports CREA

Invest in MICHIGAN...

Invest in the

...
**DIVERSITY & ACCESS**

**Key**

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3. Evaluation and indicators of success are important parts of any plan. An evaluation methodology and success measures will be established for each Action as a first step of its implementation.
Planning Issues

**More access to programming**
Some county residents have more opportunities to attend cultural programming than others. While every program can't be replicated in every community, there could be more equity.

**More diversity in programming, arts education, and participation**
While diverse cultures are getting more attention in programming, there is need for improvement. As exemplified in the demographics of the cultural assessment online survey, respondents and audiences tend more often to be white, educated, and affluent, while the communities are much more diverse.

**Statement of the Problem**
The cultural planning process is only the beginning of the advocacy necessary to expand access to and the diversity of arts and culture in Washtenaw County. While many individuals and arts and cultural organizations are aware of, value, and support attracting diverse populations, more could be. Some state that they value diversity and access in their missions. Many don’t have the knowledge and/or resources to make themselves accessible to diverse populations. Little is known about what outreach efforts are taking place and confusion exists even in the terminology used to discuss the issue.

The Desired Vision of the Future

We envision that artists and arts and cultural organizations/individuals are actively engaged in equity and access; and their value for and support of diversity is reflected in their audiences, programs, boards, staff, and volunteers.

Summary of Task Force Recommendations

The Diversity and Access Task Force discussed diversity in broad terms encompassing race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability, religious affiliation, and socio-economic and educational status. The group discovered that it is hard to find commonly held definitions of diversity and accessibility. It is essential to think about diversity and access more broadly. The task force determined that additional research is necessary to assess the current state of diversity and access and that this research in and of itself can be a tool to promote diversity and access in Washtenaw County.
Remember the saying that if you can’t stand the heat, you should get out of the kitchen? Annette Baron’s form of artwork brings new meaning to this sentiment.

That’s because Baron, a glass blower by trade, spends a good chunk of each day just feet from a giant oven – in her words, a “heat-recuperating system” – that churns out about 2,150 degrees of temperature Fahrenheit. At just more than ten times the temperature necessary to boil water, there is little time to stop and take a breather.

“Once you start (working with the glass), you finish the piece,” Baron notes with a smile.

Because glass blowing requires artists to use air from their lungs to help shape the pieces they make, the work has a certain labored component to it. So what physical activity does it most closely resemble? The answer might surprise you.

“Glass blowing is a collaboration, even if you work solo,” Baron says. “It’s almost dance-like to get glass to do what you want it to (because it) has a strong tendency to do what it wants.”

In her own way, Baron has done what she wants in crafting her career as an artist today. Originally interested in a career in music, she started out playing trombone in the high school band. She followed that up by getting a bachelor’s degree in Music from Western Michigan University and then spent time working as a professional musician in the music community around Detroit. When opportunities began to dry up in the 1980’s, she turned her attention to glass – and hasn’t looked back since.

Today, Baron owns and runs Baron Glassworks, a glass-working studio she helped build nearly 10 years ago on the banks of the Huron River in Ypsilanti. A self-described “townie,” Baron grew up in this area and noted that its atmosphere is great for the arts. In addition to making her own glass, which she has sold at various art fairs and galleries, she also teaches glass-blowing classes.
Goal Statement:
Diversity and Access

Increased awareness and understanding of our county’s diverse populations promote participation by them in cultural programs and governance.

Action #1:
Assess and define the current state of diversity and access in the Washtenaw County cultural sector and recommend an engagement plan.

Discussion
Attracting diverse populations acts as a catalyst for the exchange of ideas, techniques, talents, experiences, and skills in arts and culture. To encourage this to happen, a baseline needs to be established showing the degree to which diversity exists in cultural programming, staffing, governance, and audiences.

Lead Implementers
Area higher educational institutions, Diversity and Access task force members, UMS, the Arts Alliance

Partners
Washtenaw County government, area cultural organizations, area faith-based organizations, area social services agencies, area human rights organizations, area disability service organizations.

Start Date
Medium term

Recommended Activities
• Undertake research to establish a baseline understanding of whether and how diverse audiences access arts and cultural programming in Washtenaw County.
• Secure funding to conduct participatory research into diversity and access issues.
• Conduct participatory research with related community-building activities.
• Develop a plan to enable diverse audiences to participate more fully in the region's cultural opportunities and to enable cultural providers to respond more effectively to diverse audiences' interests and needs.
Models
Americans for the Arts, www.americansforthearts.org
The Urban Institute, www.urban.org

Outcomes
Discover what has and hasn’t worked and why. Develop the methodology and case statement so funding can be secured. Increased awareness of the region’s diverse programming and events. Project funding allows the Arts Alliance to continue its advocacy for diversity and access.

“\textquote{I’ve made music in Washtenaw County as a creative outlet and a way to serve the community.\textquote{]}}

Omari Rush

ACTION #2

Provide educational and relationship-building services and training to help area cultural organizations, artists, and creative businesses increase diverse representation in their programs, staffs, boards, and participants.

Discussion
Achieving diversity in cultural programs, staffs, and boards will be a long, slow process built on new ways of viewing the world and new relationships established with nontraditional partners. Cultural providers will need to learn how to cultivate the “connectors” in the community, how to build relationships with them, and how to share power and decision-making with new stakeholders.

Lead Implementers
Ann Arbor SPARK, Workforce Development, area institutions of higher education, the Arts Alliance, NEW

Partners
UMS, Ann Arbor Summer Festival, area arts and cultural organizations, area faith-based organizations, area social services agencies, area human rights organizations, area disability service organizations, area chambers of commerce

Start Date
Medium term
Recommended Activities

- Work with NEW to share information about potential board members of diverse backgrounds with cultural organizations.
- Establish a database of cultural organizations currently serving diverse audiences and share information with cultural programmers and others wishing to serve diverse audiences.
- Establish a database of community organizations currently serving diverse populations that could serve as access points for cultural providers.
- Establish a resource center of best practices in diversity programming, staffing, and audience and board development.
- Familiarize cultural providers with access issues faced by diverse audiences to enable the providers to address these issues in their events planning and communications.
- Provide opportunities for diverse groups to meet cultural providers and vice versa.
- Dedicate consistent, ongoing staff to work on building relationships for the cultural community with diverse populations.

Models

University Musical Society, www.ums.org
Ann Arbor Summer Festival, www.annarborsummerfestival.org
Ann Arbor Street Art Fair, www.artfair.org
U-M Initiative on Disability Studies – Prof. Tobin Siebers
National Center for Institutional Diversity at U-M
Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living, www.aacil.org
U-M Ginsberg Center, http://ginsberg.umich.edu
Wild Swan Theater, www.wildswantheater.org

Outcomes

Cultural organizations have access to information about diversity and access. Participation increases. Relationships are built with diverse populations in the county.

Action #3:

Collaborate with community agencies to address county-wide issues that impact the ability of diverse audiences to participate in cultural offerings.

Discussion

Non-participation in cultural activities results from many factors, some of which can be well beyond the control of the cultural sector. The lack of an affordable, wide-ranging public transportation system in Washtenaw County, for example, can limit the ability of some potential audiences to attend cultural programs. Washtenaw County government is leading an effort to tackle some of these large, county-wide challenges through its Successful Communities initiative. Cultural leaders should make every effort to coordinate their work with this initiative.

Lead Implementers

Washtenaw County government, Ann Arbor SPARK, AATA, area economic development and social services agencies, area chambers of commerce

Partners

Philanthropy community, area social services agencies, the Arts Alliance

Start Date

Medium term

Outcomes

Diverse participation in cultural programs and events increases. Community collaborations and partnerships increase.
These are the words of Rick De Troyer, a metal artist from Chelsea and a retired Pioneer High School Shop Instructor, whose first break came from offering to make door handles for the Common Grille in Chelsea for just the cost of metal.

When the brazed metal fish handles caught the eye of Jeff Daniel’s wife Kathleen, De Troyer learned that his love of making things was supported and enjoyed by others. Her love of fish gave De Troyer the opportunity to design a customized metal-top kitchen table for the family. Since then, De Troyer has continued to connect with the community. He says, “I enjoy volunteering at local arts community events. These opportunities allow me to be in the right spot at a ‘need’ time, and having the chance to remind folks that I do art.”

De Troyer is aware of his “carbon footprint” on this earth and he says his inspiration comes from rusty corn planters, metal stamping, even old 60’s aluminum storm doors because that’s where he started. “I couldn’t afford to buy new metal to practice my skills,” he chuckles. “Now the darn scrap metal has hit all time highs, and I am glad to see recycling take center stage.”

Thinking out of the box is important to De Troyer’s craft, and in his words of wisdom he states, “If you have a crazy idea and people say that it will never work, realize you are on to something of your own and you are halfway there.”
**Recommended Activities**

- Partner with area organizations working on public transportation issues to lessen transportation as a barrier to cultural participation.
- Start a program to help cultural and social service providers get to know each other and learn about each other’s programs.
- Partner with social service agencies working with diverse populations to encourage them to include and to enable cultural providers to offer cultural programs to their clients.

**Models**

Santa Monica, CA Arts Education Transportation Grants, http://arts.smgov.net/programs/Arts Application-2007-08.doc


**Outcomes**

Participation in cultural programs/events increases. Community collaborations and partnerships increase.
EACH “ACTION” INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

Action: Refers to the “Action” listed in the narrative section of the Washtenaw County Cultural Master Plan.

Implementation Partners: Organizations recommended by the task forces and steering committee as potential partners in implementing the Action.

Please note: These are recommendations only and do not indicate confirmed collaborations or exclude any unlisted potential partners.

Start Date: The suggested time frame to begin implementing the Action.

Please note: This is a very general assessment as individual activities within each Action could begin earlier or later than the indicated start date:

- Near term: 6 – 12 months
- Medium term: 1 – 3 years
- Long term: 4 – 5 years

First Steps: Suggested activities to begin implementation of the Action.

Resources: An indication of the resources that will be needed to undertake the first steps.

Note: Evaluation and indicators of success are important parts of any plan. An evaluation methodology and success measures will be established for each Action at the outset of its implementation.
## Lifelong Arts & Education

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<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Proposed Implementation Partners</th>
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| **Arts & Education #1:**  
K-12 Community Collaborations with Schools: Provide deliberate mechanisms and structures for area arts and cultural non-profits to offer programs in schools, during the day, across the county’s school districts. | **LEAD:** WISD  
**PARTNERS:** The Arts Alliance, individual school districts, area arts and cultural organizations, artists | **Short term** | Establish a committee composed of key educators and cultural leaders to begin a familiarization process and start the implementation activities. Conduct research into the Kalamazoo RESM’s Countywide Collaborative arts program and make recommendations regarding its possible implementation in Washtenaw County. | WISD staff and teachers, area artists, area arts and cultural leaders. Funding for dedicated researcher to study Kalamazoo and other programs. |
| **Arts & Education #2:**  
K-12 In School: Increase relevant, rigorous, and applied arts education that personalizes creative learning experiences for all students in Washtenaw County. | **LEAD:** WISD, Individual school districts  
**PARTNERS:** Area cultural organizations, the Arts Alliance | **Medium term** | Develop a resource database of best practices in linking career pathways and life skills through creative engagement; Conduct baseline research to establish quality and gaps in arts curriculum across districts in Washtenaw County. | Staff to assemble best practices database and baseline data about arts curricula in the county; funding for in-county travel to visit districts; Staff to assemble best practices database and baseline data about arts curricula in the county. |
| **Arts & Education #3:**  
K-12 Funding: Dedicate new arts funding to sustain high quality and equitable arts education for all K-12 students in Washtenaw County. | **LEAD:** School Foundations, Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, WISD  
**PARTNERS:** Area arts and cultural organizations, business community | **Medium term** | Meet with leaders of the county’s PTOs and educational support foundations to better understand current funding protocols; Establish a database of best practices in funding school arts programs. | Staff time: School Foundations, WISD; Educational foundations; Staff to assemble best practices. |
| **Arts & Education #4:**  
K-12 Parents: Create opportunities for parents to engage with their children in school related artistic activities both on and off school grounds. | **LEAD:** WISD, Arts and cultural organizations  
**PARTNERS:** Arts/music educators across the district, the Arts Alliance, artists, United Way, individual school districts | **Short term** | Begin program of regular meetings between area cultural leaders and the leaders of the Success by Six and First Steps Washtenaw programs; Initiate media campaign to build parent awareness of family arts activities. | Staff time: WISD, cultural organizations, educational foundations; Staff to assemble best practices. |
| **Arts & Education #5:**  
Creative Enterprises: Through community arts organizations enhance relevant and varied arts opportunities for all county residents throughout their lives. | **LEAD:** Area cultural organizations, Neutral Zone, artists  
**PARTNERS:** The Arts Alliance, Washtenaw County Government, individual school districts | **Medium term** | Create a section on the new cultural web portal that offers educators and the public easy access to information about arts and cultural programs. | Staff time: Arts Alliance. |
| **Arts & Education #6:**  
Higher Education: Encourage the colleges and universities to expand opportunities in artistic engagement for county residents and arts and cultural organizations. | **LEAD:** Institutions of higher learning  
**PARTNERS:** The Arts Alliance, area arts and cultural organizations, Neutral Zone | **Medium term** | Market continuing education programs in arts and culture through newly developed centralized information portal. Increase membership of the cultural leaders forum to include relevant arts educators at area universities and colleges or establish a Cultural Leaders forum-type affinity group for university/college-level arts educators. | Staff time: Arts Alliance, University of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University, Concordia College and Washtenaw Community College; funding to create a new county-wide cultural web portal. |
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<td><strong>Creative Economic Development</strong></td>
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| **Creative Economic Development #1:** Provide artists and creative businesses with business skills training, resources, financing opportunities, facilities, and other services to enhance their financial viability. | LEAD: Ann Arbor Area Chamber of Commerce, Chelsea Center for the Arts, ETCS, Michigan Small Business 
& Technology Development Center, ETCS 
PARTNERS: Ann Arbor SPARK, SCORE, EMU Entrepreneur Center, NEW, the Arts Alliance, creative businesses | Near term   | Establish a task force to inventory existing business skills training programs, identify artists' needs, and coordinate organizations providing and wishing to provide business skills training to the creative sector; Visit HandMade in America; Research best practices in micro-loan programs for creative businesses, artists, and cultural organizations. | Volunteers, interns, staff time; funds to support travel to HandMade in America headquarters. |
| **Creative Economic Development #2:** Provide artists and creative businesses with the creative and peer-to-peer resources that will increase their creative output. | LEAD: The Arts Alliance 
PARTNERS: Artists, creative businesses, DDAs, local units of government, area businesses | Medium term | Research best practices in artists' shared facilities/resources; Survey artists to determine needs. | Volunteers, interns, staff time, online survey tool |
| **Creative Economic Development #3:** Partner with business and economic development agencies in initiatives to grow, attract, and retain Washtenaw County's creative workforce. | LEAD: ETCS, WISD, Ann Arbor SPARK 
PARTNERS: Concentrate, Area creative businesses, artists, arts and cultural organizations, institutions of higher learning, the Arts Alliance | Near term   | Partner with Concentrate to feature culture and the creative sector in its online publication; Raise funds to offer scholarships to enable cultural providers to attend skills-building workshops; Establish relations with appropriate personnel at U-M, EMU, WCC to begin coordinated program of creative economy internships, apprenticeships, mentorships. | Funds for cultural feature in Concentrate, funds for scholarships; staff time |
| **Creative Economic Development #4:** Implement programs and services that offer creative solutions to economic and workforce challenges facing the business sector. | LEAD: Ann Arbor Area Chamber of Commerce, area chambers of commerce 
PARTNERS: Area arts and cultural organizations, artists, creative businesses, DDAs, local governments | Near term   | Partner with chambers of commerce and other business organizations to develop educational programs that help businesses better utilize their cultural advertising and sponsorship dollars; Establish a working group to identify ways cultural organizations and creative businesses can support the efforts of area economic development organizations to retain and attract highly skilled knowledge workers. | Staff time; Arts Alliance, area chambers of commerce, economic development organizations; funding to support retention and attraction programs for highly skilled knowledge workers |
| **Creative Economic Development #5:** Identify and exploit new opportunities to develop Washtenaw County's creative economy. | LEAD: Ann Arbor SPARK, ETCS, Washtenaw County government 
PARTNERS: Area chambers of commerce, DDAs, arts and cultural organizations, creative businesses, artists, the Arts Alliance | Near term   | Work with ETCS and others to identify workforce needs by film industry and make connections with existing talent pool; Promote findings of artists census and creative economy study widely to build awareness of the creative economy. | Staff time |
| **Creative Economic Development #6:** Enhance the economic vitality of the county through the strategic use of cultural activities. | LEAD: Ann Arbor Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, Ypsilanti Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, the Arts Alliance 
PARTNERS: Area arts and cultural organizations, artists, creative businesses, area chambers of commerce, DDAs, Washtenaw County government, local governments | Near term   | Participate regularly in DDA, merchant association, CVB, and economic development meetings; Analyze economic cycles to determine times when cultural programs could help stimulate economic activity. | Staff time, interns |
| **Creative Economic Development #7:** Institute public policy and zoning that encourages the growth of creative businesses and cultural offerings. | LEAD: Ann Arbor SPARK, Washtenaw County government, local units of governments 
PARTNERS: Area Chambers of Commerce, DDAs, artists, cultural organizations, creative businesses, the Arts Alliance | Medium term | Build a resource center of best practices of legislation supporting creative economic development; present findings of creative economy study to elected officials, government administrators. | Staff time, interns |
| **Creative Economic Development #8:** Build a stronger cultural tourism product in Washtenaw County. | LEAD: Ann Arbor Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, Ypsilanti Area Convention & Visitors Bureau 
PARTNERS: Arts and cultural organizations, artists, creative businesses, local chambers of commerce, DDAs, hotels, ETCS | Medium term | Establish an ongoing program of regular meetings between hospitality and cultural leaders; Familiarize cultural providers with strategic goals/plans of the CVBs and enlist their support in achieving these goals. | Staff time |
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<td><strong>Capacity-Building, Funding, and Investment</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Capacity-Building #1:</strong></td>
<td><strong>LEAD:</strong> The Arts Alliance  <strong>PARTNERS:</strong> Area arts and cultural organizations, creative businesses, artists, chambers of commerce, CVBs, Washtenaw County government, local governments, business community, educational community, philanthropy community, Cultural Alliance of Southeast Michigan</td>
<td><strong>Short term</strong></td>
<td>Secure stable funding to enable the Arts Alliance to fulfill new responsibilities; evaluate and adjust the Arts Alliance's staff level accordingly.</td>
<td>Funding, new staff</td>
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<td><strong>Capacity-Building #2:</strong></td>
<td><strong>LEAD:</strong> The Arts Alliance  <strong>PARTNERS:</strong> Area arts and cultural organizations, creative businesses, artists, chambers of commerce, CVBs, Washtenaw County government, local governments, philanthropy community</td>
<td><strong>Short term</strong></td>
<td>Report progress to planning investors and secure continued investments; establish Cultural Plan Oversight Committee to oversee implementation efforts.</td>
<td>Staff time, fundraising materials, volunteers</td>
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<td><strong>Capacity-Building #3:</strong></td>
<td><strong>LEAD:</strong> NEW, Michigan Nonprofit Association, Washtenaw Community College, Eastern Michigan University  <strong>PARTNERS:</strong> The Arts Alliance, area arts and cultural organizations, creative businesses, area chambers of commerce</td>
<td><strong>Medium term</strong></td>
<td>Promote awareness of currently offered development training programs; Promote awareness of NEW's BoardConnect program.</td>
<td>Staff time, enewsletter, marketing plan and materials</td>
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<td><strong>Capacity-Building #4:</strong></td>
<td><strong>LEAD:</strong> The Arts Alliance  <strong>PARTNERS:</strong> Area arts and cultural organizations, creative businesses, artists, chambers of commerce, CVBs, philanthropy community, higher education institutions, Michigan Nonprofit Association, Cultural Alliance of Southeast Michigan</td>
<td><strong>Medium term</strong></td>
<td>Research programs nationwide to identify best practices; implement publicity campaign to increase public awareness of need for supporting arts and culture.</td>
<td>Interns, volunteers, staff time, marketing plan and materials</td>
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<td><strong>Capacity-Building #5:</strong></td>
<td><strong>LEAD:</strong> Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, the Arts Alliance  <strong>PARTNERS:</strong> Arts and cultural organizations, artists, creative businesses, business community, philanthropy community, Washtenaw County government, local governments</td>
<td><strong>Long term</strong></td>
<td>Research programs nationwide to identify best practices; work with Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation to increase funds to Arts Endowment.</td>
<td>Interns, volunteers, staff time</td>
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| **Communications, Audience Development, and Advocacy #1:** Position the Arts Alliance as the lead agency for cultural communication and information in the county. | LEAD: The Arts Alliance  
PARTNERS: Area arts and cultural organizations, artists, creative businesses, Ann Arbor Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, area chambers of commerce, media | Near term | Arts Alliance to establish personal contact with area media and government to be recognized as an information resource. Partner with county’s CVBs, Chambers, and others to deliver cultural information. | Dedicated staff, enhanced website, robust information management system |
| **Communications, Audience Development, and Advocacy #2:** Develop an online, centralized, cultural communications, information, and events portal. | LEAD: The Arts Alliance  
PARTNERS: Area arts and cultural organizations, artists, creative businesses, Ann Arbor Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, area chambers of commerce, WISD, media | Near term | Research existing online cultural portals. Determine local needs for an online cultural hub; Hire professional designers to build web architecture and create appropriate design. | Funding, dedicated staff, domain name, web designer |
| **Communications, Audience Development, and Advocacy #3:** Develop a collaborative branding and public relations campaign on behalf of the cultural sector. | LEAD: Cultural Leaders Forum, Regional Cultural Leaders Network, the Arts Alliance  
PARTNERS: Area arts and cultural organizations, artists, creative businesses, county’s CVBs and chambers of commerce, Ann Arbor SPARK, DDAs, media | Medium term | Create a value statement that can be used by cultural organizations, artists, and creative businesses to build public understanding of culture’s value to the community. Build local awareness of the new online cultural portal. | Dedicated staff, enhanced website, professional branding assistance, funding |
| **Communications, Audience Development, and Advocacy #4:** Make available services and programs to increase the marketing capacity of area arts and cultural organizations. | LEAD: Area chambers of commerce, Chelsea Center for the Arts  
PARTNERS: Area CVBs, area marketing professionals, the Arts Alliance, Washtenaw Community College, Eastern Michigan University, media | Medium term | Create a value statement that can be used by cultural organizations, artists, and creative businesses to build public understanding of culture’s value to the community. Build local awareness of the new online cultural portal. | Volunteer assistance, staff time |
| **Communications, Audience Development, and Advocacy #5:** Offer programs and services to create a stronger sense of community among cultural providers. | LEAD: The Arts Alliance  
PARTNERS: Area arts and cultural organizations, artists, creative businesses, chambers of commerce | Near term | Implement coordinated marketing campaign to increase awareness/participation in Creative Connections. Present conference/tradeshow to showcase area artists, creative businesses and cultural organizations. | Marketing materials, staff time, volunteers, interns, sponsorships for tradeshow |
| **Communications, Audience Development, and Advocacy #6:** Implement planned, coordinated advocacy efforts on behalf of the county’s arts and cultural organizations, artists, and creative businesses. | LEAD: The Arts Alliance  
PARTNERS: Area arts and cultural organizations, artists, creative businesses, ArtServe Michigan, Americans for the Arts, media, government officials, political parties | Medium term | Discuss coordinated advocacy efforts with ArtServe Michigan. Monitor local, state, and national cultural legislation and coordinate responsive action as needed. | Staff time |
| **Communications, Audience Development, and Advocacy #7:** Provide communications services, resources, and tools to increase delivery of and participation in diverse cultural programs. | LEAD: The Arts Alliance, area higher education institutions, media  
PARTNERS: Diversity & Access task force members, Ann Arbor SPARK, UMS, area arts and cultural organizations, creative businesses, artists, social service organizations | Medium term | Identify and make available information about currently offered training on marketing to diverse audiences. Develop a roster of media outlets most used by diverse audiences. | Staff time, volunteer assistance, database |
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<td><strong>Cultural Facilities</strong></td>
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| **Cultural Facilities #1:**  
Encourage the development of safe, affordable, functional cultural spaces of all types: studios, live/workspaces for performances, exhibition, instruction, storage, rehearsal, office and incubator spaces. | **LEAD:** DDAs, Washtenaw County Government, local units of government  
**PARTNERS:** Chambers of Commerce, the Arts Alliance, Commercial Realtors, NEW, arts and cultural organizations, artists, creative businesses | **Medium term** | Build a toolkit of resources to assist cultural providers with their facilities issues. Establish a connection between the Arts Alliance and the commercial realty industry. | Interns, volunteers, staff time |
| **Cultural Facilities #2:**  
Encourage the use of existing buildings for arts and cultural purposes through collaborative partnerships, incentives, and innovative re-development projects. | **LEAD:** DDAs, Washtenaw County Government, local units of government  
**PARTNERS:** Chambers of Commerce, Ann Arbor SPARK, the Arts Alliance, media, artists, arts and cultural organizations, creative businesses, business community, commercial realtors, historic preservation community, American Institute of Architects | **Medium term** | Partner with chambers of commerce and media to build awareness of the economic value of the creative economy. Establish a matching service for artists/cultural organizations seeking to share space. | Media kit, staff time, volunteers, interns |
| **Cultural Facilities #3:**  
Encourage "cross-jurisdictional" use of existing performance facilities throughout Washtenaw County. | **LEAD:** The Arts Alliance  
**PARTNERS:** Area arts and cultural organizations, artists, creative businesses, schools, institutions of higher learning, churches, WISD | **Short term** | Develop an online roster of performance facilities in Washtenaw County with rental data. Promote awareness and use of facilities roster. | Volunteers, interns, staff time, website |
| **Cultural Facilities #4:**  
Support efforts to advocate on behalf of and to promote the preservation of the county’s landmarks and historic assets. | **LEAD:** Washtenaw County Historic District Commission, Ann Arbor Preservation Alliance, local historic district commissions  
**PARTNERS:** The Arts Alliance, area arts and cultural organizations, artists, American Institute of Architects | **Medium term** | Establish regular meeting schedule between historic preservationists and the Arts Alliance. Cross-promote cultural and historic preservation events and programs. | Staff time, e-newsletter |
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<td>Diversity and Access #1: Assess and define the current state of diversity and access in the Washtenaw County cultural sector and recommend an engagement plan.</td>
<td><strong>LEAD:</strong> Area higher education institutions, Diversity &amp; Access task force members, UMS, the Arts Alliance&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>PARTNERS:</strong> Washtenaw County government, area arts and cultural organizations, area faith-based organizations; area social services agencies, area human rights organizations; area disability service organizations</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
<td>Reconvene Diversity and Access task force; meet with representatives of potential partner organizations to determine interest; seek funding to undertake research.</td>
<td>Dedicated staff, volunteer assistance, research funding</td>
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<td>Diversity and Access #2: Provide educational and relationship-building services and training to help area arts and cultural organizations, artists, and creative businesses increase diverse representation in their programs, staffs, boards, and participants.</td>
<td><strong>LEAD:</strong> Ann Arbor SPARK, Workforce Development, area higher education institutions, the Arts Alliance, NEW&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>PARTNERS:</strong> UMS, Ann Arbor Summer Festival, area arts and cultural organizations, area faith-based organizations, area social services agencies, area human rights organizations, area disability service organizations, area chambers of commerce</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
<td>Work with NEW to share information about potential board members of diverse backgrounds with cultural organizations; Make available information about affordable, currently available diversity training.</td>
<td>Staff time, volunteer assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diversity and Access #3: Collaborate with community agencies to address county-wide issues, such as transportation, that impact the ability of diverse audiences to participate in cultural offerings.</td>
<td><strong>LEAD:</strong> Washtenaw County government, Ann Arbor SPARK, AATA, area economic development and social services agencies, area chambers of commerce&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<strong>PARTNERS:</strong> Philanthropy community, area social services agencies, the Arts Alliance</td>
<td>Medium term</td>
<td>Participate in the implementation of Washtenaw County’s “Community Success” program; Monitor and promote information about funding opportunities to underwrite transportation costs for school group visits to cultural organizations.</td>
<td>Staff time</td>
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APPENDIX 1
Participants

APPENDIX 2
Project Organizational Structure and Timeline

APPENDIX 3
Summary of Cultural Assets

APPENDIX 4
Highlights of the Online Survey

APPENDIX 5
Summary of Issues Addressed by the Cultural Plan

APPENDIX 6
Cultural Assessment Report Documents

APPENDIX 7
Cultural Plan Glossary

APPENDIX 8
Consultant Biographical Statements
PARTICIPANTS

LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

Co-Chairs:
Robert Guenzel, Washtenaw County Administrator
Dr. William C. Miller, Superintendent, Washtenaw Intermediate School District

Jesse Bernstein, President, Ann Arbor Area Chamber of Commerce
Cheryl Elliott, President, Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation
Paul Schreiber, Mayor, City of Ypsilanti
John Heiftje, Mayor, City of Ann Arbor
Trenda Rusher, Executive Director, Washtenaw County ETCS
Mary Kerr, President, Ann Arbor Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
Debbie Locke-Daniel, President, Ypsilanti Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
Dr. Larry Whitworth, President, Washtenaw Community College

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Debra Polich, President & CEO, Artrain USA

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Eleanor Shelton, Board Member, Riverside Arts Center, Ypsilanti
Terri Sibo-Koenig, Co-Chair, Saline Area Arts Council
Anthony VanDerworp, Director of Planning & Environment, Washtenaw County
John Kenneth Weiss, Executive Director, Neutral Zone, Ann Arbor
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John Kenneth Weiss, Executive Director, Neutral Zone

Chelsea Co-Chairs
Aubrey Thornton Martinson, Executive Director, Chelsea Center for the Arts
Robert Pierce, President, Chelsea Area Chamber of Commerce

Dexter Co-Chairs
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Jill Love, Photographer

Manchester Co-Chairs
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Pat Vaillencourt, Village President, Village of Manchester

Milan Co-Chairs
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Judith Spike, Visual Artist

Saline Co-Chairs
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Terri Sibo-Koenig, Council Member, City of Saline

Ypsilanti Co-Chairs
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Eleanor Shelton, Board Member, Riverside Arts Center

Task Force Members

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Amy Harris
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Charlie Penner
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Dennis J. Carter
Kamilah Henderson
Ben Johnson
Brian S. McClemens
Robert Pierce
Lori Roddy
Omari Rush
Deborah Strong
Frances Wang

APPENDIX I
Community Input

In addition to those named below who participated in interviews and community forums, many thanks go to the 1,535 Washtenaw County residents who participated in the online survey.

Jeanne Adwani  
Jessica “Decky” Alexander  
Peter Allen  
David Allen  
Karen Attaway  
Sherlyna Augustine  
Jill Ault  
David Austin  
Leslie Austin  
Barbara Bach  
Rose Bailey  
Barbara Balbach  
Richard Ball  
Guy Barast  
Cindy Barnett  
Mary Baru  
Danielle Bass-Smith  
Kent Baumkel  
Dennis Beagan  
Molly Belhaj  
Marolin Bellefleur  
Lynda W. Berg  
Jesse Bernstein  
Lee Berry  
Joan Binkow  
Daniel Bishop  
Dan Blades  
Mary Steffek Blaske  
Martha Bloom  
DJ Boehm  
Susan Badger Booth  
Margie Bovee  
Susan Bozell  
Kim Bradburn  
Wendy Brightman  
Deb Brow  
Shary Brown  
Sarah Brunette  
Kevin Bullfont  
Barton Bund  
Marianne Cenko  
Marsha Chamberlin  
Martha Churchill  
Deb Clancy  
Gary Alan Clark  
Newcombe Clark  
Andrew Claydon  
David Clifford  
Melanie Colaianne  
Keny Colligan  
Jeff Colton  
Pat Cousins  
Paul Cousins  
Tom Crawford  
Constance Crump  
Byran Cunningham  
Sharon Curtis  
Carl Curtis  
Phil D’Anieri  
Martha Darling  
Gordon Darr  
Eva Davis  
Neeta Delaney  
Rick DeTroyer  
Madeline Diehl  
Linda Dintenfass  
J. Paul Dixon  
Thomas Dodd  
Paula Doe  
Bob Dopkowski  
Dennis Doyle  
Darilyn Draper  
Gretchen Driskell  
Mel Drumm  
Robert Duha  
Sean Duval  
Nathalie Edmunds  
Cheryl Elliott  
John Eman  
David Esau  
Terry Farmer  
Cheryl Farmer  
Peter Faryoian  
Ann Feeney  
Chris Fegan  
Cal Fette  
S. Fielder  
Brian Filipiak  
Ken Fischer  
Lynne Friman  
Susan Katz Froning  
Patricia Garcia  
Cindy Gardner  
Mike Garrahan  
Barbara Gergely  
Linda Gibson  
Debra Gidden  
Astrid Giese  
Teresa Gilloth  
Kevin Gilmartin  
Cindy Glahn  
Karen Goldbaum  
Jennifer Goulet  
Gerie Greenspan  
Robert Haeske  
Stacy Hanna  
Hannah Hansel  
Amy Harris  
Calesta Harrison  
Karen Hart  
Bob Hart  
Patty Hart  
William Hayes  
Verna Hayes  
Ariana Haynes  
Mary Hays  
Suzie Heiney  
Jason Heinrich  
Kamila Henderson  
Carl Herstein  
David Herzig  
Laurie Higgins  
Rod Hill  
Jim Holland  
Barbara Hollosy  
Judith Hommel  
Scott Hucklestein  
Janet Hughes  
Lynda Hummel  
Kathryn Huss  
Deb Hutton  
Sean Ike  
Andrew Ingall  
Derrick Jackson  
Charlene Jacobsen  
Marianne James  
Debbie Johnson  
Lola Jones  
Val Kabat  
Janet Kahan  
Chris Kanta  
Jane Kartje  
Diane Keller  
Heather kellstrom  
Mary Kerr  
Karen King  
Richard King  
Bill Kinley  
Miraik Kirsch  
Linda Klenczar  
Sandy Knapp  
Peter Knox  
Bill Knudstrup  
Anne Koch  
Paul Koch  
Cindy Koppelman  
Ken Kozora  
Holly Kreg  
Daniel Lai  
Janet Larson  
Barry LaRue  
Christine Laughren  
John Laurence  
Jamie Lausche  
Jerald Lax  
Kathy Legatski  
Leo Legatski  
Nancy Lennson  
Linette Leo  
Shawn Lewis-lakin  
Carolyn Lichter  
Christina Lirones  
Debbie Locke-Daniel  
Don Leppnow  
Jill Love  
Jane Lumm  
Peter Lynch  
Maud Lyon  
Shelley MacMillan  
Dave MacPherson  
Kira Macyda  
Michael Madison  
Becca Mangani  
Heather Mapstone  
Christine Marsh  
Kristie Martin  
Phyllis Martin  
Aubrey Thornton  
Martinson  
B. Massen  
Lindsay McCarthy  
Susan McClanahan  
Brian McClemens  
Carolyn McKeever  
Lynda McMillin  
Deb Mexicotte  
Dr. William C. Miller  
Melissa Milton-Pung  
Remedios Montelbo  
Young  
Jill Morey  
Mary Morgan  
Molly Most  
Karim Motawi  
Kym Mucker  
Barbara Murphy  
Richard Murphy  
Erica Nelson  
Larry Newhouse  
Kari Newman  
William Nichols  
Larry Nisson  
Lucie Nisson  
Michael Nisson  
John Northup  
Pam O’Hara  
Jesse O’Jail  
Joe O’Neal  
Mark Palms  
Margaret Parker  
Josie Parker  
Elizabeth Parkinson  
Bonnie Penet  
Shawn Personeke  
John Petz  
April Pickrel  
Robert Pierce
Mary Pierie
Dennis Platte
Deb Pollock
Peter Pollack
Susan Pollay
Pat Pooley
Jeanie Power
Dennis Power
Monica Prince
Karl Raenis
Ron Raiford
Astrid Reed
Theresa Reid
Jerry Renning
Mark Reynolds
Kathy Rhadigan
David Rhoads
Adam Riccinto
Anita Rich
Kelly Rich-Narumi
Kathy Roberts
Hilary Robinson
Matt Rolfe
Prue Rosenthal
Kathy Roth
Anne Rubin
Sandy Rupp
Meriah Sage
Michelle Sanford
Jane Schmeideke
Marni Schmid
Angela Schmidt
Paul Schreiber
Ann Schriver
Joe Schultz
Patti Schwarz
Kay Seaser
Ellie Serras
Eleanor Shelton
Terri Sibo-Koenig
Martin Sirundult
Emily Slade
Shelly Smith
Lance Smith
Terry Soave
Leslie Sobel
Nathan Sparks
Peter Sparling
Judith Spike
Richard Spring
Sarah Stanton
Zoe Starkweather
Bennet Stein
Ken Stevens
Britten Stringwell
Trevor Stone
Deborah Strong
Dennis Sullivan
Mona Sylvester
Peg Talbutt
Christine Tanner
Pat Taylor
Christopher Taylor
Gayle Thomas
Art Trapp
Ian Reed Twiss
Patricia Vaillancourt
Tony VanDerworp
Ellen Vaughan
Coy Vaughn
Tom Venner
Brian Vosburg
Jeffery Wallace
Eric Walters
Marlies Wandres
Rebekah Warren
Stephanie Weaver
Sandy Webster
John Weiss
Brandon Wiard
Jane Wilkinson
Jean Wilson
Adam Gabriel Winnie
Dave Woike
David Wolber
Susan Wood
Ronald Woods
Wendy Ann Woods
Robb Woulfe
Jason Wright
Amy Wright-Olsen
Remy Montalbo Young

Special thanks to all the individuals who have helped the Washtenaw County Cultural plan come to fruition.

Every effort was made to include the names of those individuals who participated in this process. Please excuse any omissions, misspellings or other oversights.

Arts Alliance Board
David Esau,
Chair
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Vice Chair
J. Matthew A. Pollock,
Treasurer
Robb Woulfe
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Jill Ault
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Arts Alliance Staff
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Arts Alliance Volunteers
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Katja Thomakos

Eastern Michigan University Interns
Jessica Bond
Brian Carbine
Mike Cichon
Charlie Jabour
Kristin Moser
Amber Rostkowski
Adam Rzepka
APPENDIX 2

PROJECT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE & TIMELINE

Community & Culture:
Creating a Plan for Washtenaw County was a community-based effort, driven by the energy and enthusiasm of scores of volunteers.

- A Leadership Committee is endorsing the project and will receive the final plan on behalf of the community at large.
- A Steering Committee is providing hands-on direction.
- Leadership Teams are forming in each participating community to encourage local participation in the online survey and the community forums.
- Interns from Eastern Michigan University’s Arts Administration program are providing tactical support.
- Task forces composed of interested citizens will recommend action steps to achieve specific goals.
- The Arts Alliance is coordinating the project and serving as its financial manager.

Project Timeline

**Sept. 2006 - Sept. 2007**  
Initial planning, background research on County & communities, and establishing connections with organizations in partner communities

**October 16, 2007**  
Public Launch of Community & Culture

Data Gathering Activities Take Place throughout the County (community forums and online survey)

**March 2008**  
Leadership & Steering Committees meet to review Dr. Dreeszen’s analysis of data, confirmation of key issues, and establishment of task forces to recommend action steps to address each issue

**April 2008**  
Public report on progress to date

**April – May 2008**  
Task Forces develop recommendations

**April – May 2008**  
Artists’ Census, census of artists living and working in Washtenaw County, takes place

**June 2008**  
Leadership & Steering Committees meet review task force recommendations and 1st draft plan

**September 2008**  
Leadership & Steering Committees review and approve 2nd draft plan

**October 2008**  
Final plan presented to Leadership & Steering Committees

**Oct. – Dec. 2008**  
Implementation process begins

**February 2009**  
Participating communities customize County to address local needs

**Participating communities present customized plans to local governments for endorsement**
Many cultural opportunities
Washtenaw residents enjoy a relatively large number of high-quality programs in arts, heritage, and interpretive science for a moderately sized region. The quality, diversity, and number of cultural opportunities in the county are unusual outside of a major urban center.

Many cultural organizations
There are a substantial number of professional and amateur cultural organizations providing opportunities to experience arts, culture, heritage, and interpretive science in the county. The Eastern Michigan University inventory of cultural organizations identified 244 such organizations in the county, among them nonprofit organizations, creative businesses, and informal creative organizations.

Influence of higher education institutions
The University of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University, Concordia University, and Washtenaw Community College contribute significantly to the cultural vitality of the county. These institutions provide cultural education to students and cultural programming to the community. They offer venues for community organizations and provide audiences, board members and other support to cultural organization in the county.

Significant economic impact
The Economic Impact of Arts and Culture in Washtenaw County, published by the Arts Alliance in 2005, documents the substantial role the nonprofit arts and culture sector plays in the economic wellbeing of the county. According to the study, the total economic impact of nonprofit arts and cultural organizations in Washtenaw County was $165 million in the study year of 2002. Arts and cultural organizations generated over 2,600 jobs in the community and almost $57 million in household income. Arts expenditures produced $2.8 million in local government revenues and $5.2 million in state government revenue.

Citizens' engaged and active
Forum participants in nearly every community repeatedly observed that Washtenaw county residents were unusually active in civic affairs. Many volunteer, create, and participate in cultural programs.

People proud of their communities
Washtenaw County residents tend to be proud of their communities. Most people have a clear “sense of the place” regarding the community in which they live.

Smaller cities and towns
Washtenaw County has largely avoided the ungainly urban sprawl that has engulfed communities in many parts of the country. Cities and towns are of a human scale. Many have compact, well defined, and walkable downtowns.

History and heritage apparent in communities
The region’s history is obvious in its preserved architecture, historic sites, and well-defined city centers. The patterns of settlement echo early industrialization along the region’s rivers. The population’s demographics reflect the area’s history of immigration.

Diverse cultures
Washtenaw communities are enlivened with many cultures. These are apparent in the diversity of festivals, grassroots community groups, and the ethnic diversity of the population.
Many active artists and creative workers
There are many talented professional artists (visual, performing, and literary) in Washtenaw County. Ann Arbor and the surrounding communities have long attracted creative people and many creative businesses are attracted to locate to and remain in the county.

Beautiful environment
The County enjoys open spaces with farmland, numerous rivers, lakes and preserved natural areas. Greenways connect some communities and plans for expanding and preserving green space are actively being developed.

Audience development
Audiences are loyal, but the size of the potential audience is relatively small, given the large number of cultural organizations offering programs. Cultural tourism has not yet been fully developed. Most people who attend cultural events frequently, indicate they usually do so in their own communities. However, leaders of some smaller communities with many commuting residents, indicate that commuters are less engaged in civic and cultural affairs in their communities.

More access to programming
Some county residents have more opportunities to attend cultural programming than others.

More diversity in programming, arts education, and participation
While diverse cultures are getting more attention in programming, there is need for improvement. As exemplified in the demographics of the online survey respondents, audiences tend more often to be white, educated, and affluent, while Washtenaw communities are more diverse.

Facilities development
Community leaders often described the need for new or improved cultural facilities. Artists wanted music and visual arts venues. Ann Arbor is dependent on University of Michigan facilities. Many smaller communities want community arts centers. Galleries have closed in some communities.

Retaining sense of community
Civic leaders want to retain community pride and a sense of community in the face of developmental pressures and increasing numbers of commuting residents (this latter is particularly the case outside of Ann Arbor). Across the board, cities want more downtown retail and commercial development. Respondents noted a tension between those who wish to preserve historic features and those who wish communities to grow. Participants wish for more art in public places connected to the richness of the area’s green space. Perceptions of crime and safety issues limit some participation in cultural programming and the development of creative enterprises in communities such as Ypsilanti. Creative economic development could have the potential to address these issues.

More equitable access to arts education
Opportunities for a good education that includes the arts are not equally accessible throughout the county. While music education is relatively strong, the same is not true for visual arts, theater, or dance. There is no coordinated, county-wide arts education advocacy or coordination among cultural organizations and artists to provide services that enrich students’ education. Outside Ann Arbor, there are few opportunities for youth and teens to take part in youth-driven recreational and social programs such as those offered by the Neutral Zone. Academic Service-learning opportunities do not generally include the nonprofit arts and cultural organizations.

Cultural Assessment Highlights, Washtenaw County Cultural Assessment Survey Report, and Washtenaw County Cultural Assessment Community Forums Report present data collected from the online survey and community forums executed on behalf of this cultural planning process. See Appendix 6.
Online Survey Highlights

- The Arts Alliance recruited participants using email announcements. Invitations to participate were distributed by the Arts Alliance and by more than a dozen partnering organizations, including cultural groups, chambers of commerce, and educational institutions.

- Respondents included artists, educators, funders, and non-profit organizations. Among them:
  - 186 artists and creative workers spending 50% or more of their time or earning 50% or more of their living through their art work.
  - 296 nonprofit cultural representatives
  - 661 parents and educators
  - 265 business and foundation representatives
  - 143 students

- Survey respondents represented a good sample of residents interested in the culture of their communities, but were not statistically representative of the entire population of Washtenaw County.

- Two-thirds of respondents (63%) stated access to arts and cultural programs was very important in their choice to live in Washtenaw County.

- More than eight in ten respondents (88%) were satisfied with the quality of arts, heritage, and interpretive science programs in their community.

- Nearly nine in ten respondents (89%) agreed that public tax funding through local governments (county, city or township) should help support nonprofit arts and cultural programs.

- Nearly all respondents (98%) agreed that local foundations should include culture (arts, heritage, and interpretive science) among their funding priorities.

- Three-quarters of all respondents (75%) reported that business support for culture made a difference when they chose what business to patronize. 41% indicated “yes, somewhat” and 34% reported “yes, certainly.”

- Cultural organizations reported their greatest challenge in achieving their missions is reliable, sustained funding for operations, programs, staff, or facilities.

- Artists indicated their most important needs are: networking with others with similar interests, increased sales or other earnings, marketing, and validation of their work.

- About two-thirds of parents and educators (66%) felt that good science and arts education is not equally accessible to students throughout Washtenaw County.

- Access to cultural programs was important for nearly two-thirds of business owners and funders (63%) in deciding to locate or retain their businesses in Washtenaw County.

- Over half of business respondents (57%) thought access to cultural programs was important in helping to recruit and retain qualified workers.

- Drawn from the online survey executed on behalf of this cultural planning process and reported in Cultural Assessment Highlights and Washtenaw County Cultural Assessment Survey Report.
CULTURAL ASSESSMENT

Between November 2007 and February 2008, the Arts Alliance conducted a cultural assessment of Washtenaw County to gather data for the cultural plan.

In all, over 2,000 responses were gathered via an online survey and small group forums held in communities throughout Washtenaw County.

1,535 people completed online surveys and another 193 submitted partially completed surveys.

Over 260 residents attended 29 community forums and interviews in seven communities.
SUMMARY OF THE ISSUES ADDRESSED BY THE CULTURAL PLAN

Need for funding
The number one concern for nonprofit cultural organizations is funding. Organizations of all sizes and disciplines are struggling to sustain their operations and programs. Public funding from all sources has been diminished. State funding has been dramatically cut in recent years, and, surprisingly for a region so rich in cultural activities, the county’s municipalities offer little if any funding for cultural programs. Contributions and sponsorships from businesses and corporations are mostly down. While earned revenue is generally up, competition for funding is fierce as social needs increase and public sources diminish. We need to cultivate a new generation of generous donors and philanthropists.

Nonprofit cultural organization capacity
There is a notable disparity in capacity between the larger, more established organizations and the smaller organizations running on passion and hope. Nonprofit organizations need help with funding, marketing, and overall organizational development. Some cultural organizations need training and board development to build their capacity for fundraising. A number need training, assistance, and information that will develop their capacity to fulfill their missions and serve their constituencies. As leaders of cultural organizations start to retire, there is a need to prepare the next generation of arts administrators. Like workers in other sectors in Michigan, emerging arts leaders report trouble-finding jobs.

Economy
Michigan’s economy has been buffeted for some time by the difficulties in the auto industry. The current economic situation is challenging as the auto, housing, and financial industries suffer. As resulting consumer confidence is diminished, so is the capacity to buy tickets and make contributions. In response, economic development is a high priority and many communities are trying to strengthen their downtowns. While the 2002 economic impact study by the Arts Alliance documents a $165 million dollar impact of the nonprofit cultural sector, it isn’t always clear how to translate the idea of creative economic development into practical outcomes.

Artists’ support
Many artists are struggling and need help with networking and marketing, among services. Artists report a need for more affordable studios, housing, and health insurance. Younger artists need opportunities to show their work or perform. Young artists also long for more of the visibility that more established artists enjoy.

Creative business development
A concentration of highly skilled technical businesses need help to convert inventions into marketable products. Small creative businesses need encouragement, financing, and technical assistance.

Public awareness and advocacy
While nonprofit executives describe increased public awareness and support as factors that have strengthened their capacity, declining public funding indicates the need for more advocacy and awareness. Artists also wish for more awareness and respect. Participants grappled with the question of how to inspire audiences.
Need for funding
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Better communications and marketing
Participants wished for a central source of information on cultural programs and events, although few surveyed respondents used central websites to find information. Some wished for more informed criticism in local news media.

Audience development
Audiences are loyal, but the size of the potential audience is relatively small, given the large number of cultural organizations offering programs. Cultural tourism has not yet been fully developed. Most people who attend cultural events frequently, indicate they usually do so in their own communities. However, leaders of some smaller communities with many commuting residents, indicate that commuters are less engaged in civic and cultural affairs in their communities.

More access to programming
Some county residents have more opportunities to attend cultural programming than others.

More diversity in programming, arts education, and participation
While diverse cultures are getting more attention in programming; there is need for improvement. As exemplified in the demographics of the online survey respondents, audiences tend more often to be white, educated, and affluent, while Washtenaw communities are more diverse.

Facilities development
Community leaders often described the need for new or improved cultural facilities. Artists wanted music and visual arts venues. Ann Arbor is dependent on University of Michigan facilities. Many smaller communities want community arts centers. Galleries have closed in some communities.
Retaining sense of community
Civic leaders want to retain community pride and a sense of community in the face of developmental pressures and increasing numbers of commuting residents (this latter is particularly the case outside of Ann Arbor). Across the board, cities want more downtown retail and commercial development. Respondents noted a tension between those who wish to preserve historic features and those who wish communities to grow. Participants wish for more art in public places connected to the richness of the area’s green space. Perceptions of crime and safety issues limit some participation in cultural programming and the development of creative enterprises in communities such as Ypsilanti. Creative economic development could have the potential to address these issues.

More equitable access to arts education
Opportunities for a good education that includes the arts are not equally accessible throughout the county. While music education is relatively strong, the same is not true for visual arts, theater, or dance. There is no coordinated, county-wide arts education advocacy or coordination among cultural organizations and artists to provide services that enrich students’ education. Outside Ann Arbor, there are few opportunities for youth and teens to take part in youth-driven recreational and social programs such as those offered by the Neutral Zone. Academic Service-learning opportunities do not generally include the nonprofit arts and cultural organizations.

Cultural Assessment Highlights, Washtenaw County Cultural Assessment Survey Report, and Washtenaw County Cultural Assessment Community Forums Report present data collected from the online survey and community forums executed on behalf of this cultural planning process. See Appendix 7.
CULTURAL ASSESSMENT REPORT DOCUMENTS

The following describes the supporting documentation for the Washtenaw County Cultural Master Plan and can be accessed online at: www.a2artsalliance.org.

**Community & Culture: Online Survey Report (Available by request)**
The Washtenaw County Cultural Assessment Online Survey was designed to help shape the region’s cultural plan. More than 1,535 Washtenaw County citizens responded to this online survey, which launched on November 1, 2007 and closed on January 15, 2008. This report includes all respondents’ answers to the survey along with a summary and analysis.

**Community & Culture: Online Survey, Executive Summary (PDF)**
This report summarizes the findings of the Washtenaw County Cultural Assessment Online Survey Report. (See above)

**Community & Culture: Community Forums Report (Available by request)**
The Washtenaw County Cultural Assessment Community Forums used small group meetings, or “community forums,” to gather in-depth resident input for the cultural plan project. Over 260 community representatives participated in 29 forums held between October 2007 and February 2008 in Ann Arbor, Dexter, Chelsea, Manchester, Milan, Saline, and Ypsilanti. Attendees included government, civic, and business leaders, educators, funders, students, artists, and leaders of cultural and heritage organizations. The forums also included two county-wide interest groups of educators and historic preservation advocates. The report is a synthesis of the opinions expressed by participants in the community forums and one-on-one interviews.

**Community & Culture: Community Forums, Executive Summary (PDF)**
This report summarizes the findings of the Washtenaw County Cultural Assessment Community Forums Report. (See above)

**Community & Culture: Cultural Assessment Highlights (PDF)**
The Washtenaw County Cultural Assessment Highlights report summarizes and synthesizes the findings of: the Washtenaw County Cultural Assessment Online Survey Report and the Washtenaw County Cultural Assessment Community Forums Report. This document outlines the key challenges facing the County and provides the framework used by Cultural Plan Steering Committee to establish its strategic goals.

**Community & Culture: Facilities Report (PDF)**
Jessica Bond, Brian Carbine, Michael Cichon, Charlie Jabor, Kristin Moser, Amber Rostokowski, and Adam Rzepka
Seven arts administration students from Eastern Michigan University inventoried performance facilities in the county’s seven population centers (Ann Arbor, Chelsea, Dexter, Manchester, Milan, Saline, and Ypsilanti) as cultural assessments interns. The inventory was conducted from September December 2007. WaLouisa Hubbard assembled and completed the information collected by students.
Community & Culture: 
Roster of Nonprofit Cultural Organizations
Seven arts administration students from Eastern Michigan University inventoried cultural organizations in the county’s seven population centers (Ann Arbor, Chelsea, Dexter, Manchester, Milan, Saline, and Ypsilanti) as cultural assessments interns.

Creative Economy Report, Ann Arbor SPARK (PDF)
The Creative Economic Analysis report provides the first-ever analysis of Washtenaw County’s creative economy. The study utilizes established methodology followed by economic developers and researchers recognizing, however, that consistent methodologies have not been developed to analyze the creative economy, so this study followed the methodology applied to traditional industry sectors.

Community & Culture: 
Task Force Notes (Available by request)
The five task forces that were established as a result of the findings of the online survey, community forums and cultural assessment highlights met in April and May 2008. Each task force met at least three times to provide recommendations for the strategic areas of:

- **Lifelong Arts & Education**
  This task force produced recommendations to insure that students and adults throughout Washtenaw County have equitable access to quality lifelong arts instruction and cultural enrichment programs.

- **Creative Economic Development**
  This task force produced recommendations to stimulate creative economic development to increase the prosperity of Washtenaw County communities and to enhance the economic viability of the County’s individual artists.

- **Capacity Building, Funding and Investment; Cultural Facilities**
  This task force produced recommendations to strengthen the capacity of nonprofit cultural organizations through increased and sustainable funding, improved governance, and better use of cultural facilities.

- **Communications, Audience Development, and Advocacy**
  This task force produced recommendations to increase the visibility and public awareness of the cultural sector, enhance marketing to residents and cultural tourists, and increase participation.

- **Diversity and Access**
  This task force produced recommendations to reduce barriers to cultural participation and further diversify nonprofit cultural organizations’ management, governance, programs, and audiences.

The Economic Impact of Arts and Culture in Washtenaw County, The Arts Alliance (PDF)
This report describes the economic impact of the nonprofit arts and cultural community in Washtenaw County. The study examines the activities and expenditures of not-for-profit cultural organizations as well as the attendance and spending patterns of arts patrons who attend its performances and exhibitions. The result provides a detailed picture of the economic impact of arts-related activities in Washtenaw County. The research model used for this study parallels that used by the Americans for the Arts. Organizational information was gathered in two ways: via an online survey and through an examination of the IRS Form 990, which is filed annually by non-profit organizations with annual revenues in excess of $25,000.
The Economic Impact of Arts and Culture in Washtenaw County, The Arts Alliance (PDF Highlights Brochure)
This brochure describes and highlights the economic impact of the nonprofit arts and cultural community in Washtenaw County.

Arts Space Needs, The Arts Alliance (PDF)
This white paper reports the results of a survey conducted by the Arts Alliance in 2005 to assess the space needs of area nonprofit cultural organizations and artists. The findings show a need for approximately 50,000 sq. ft. of affordable arts space – a size roughly equivalent to that of a small supermarket.

Consumer Travel and Visitor Assessment Study, prepared for the Ann Arbor Area Convention & Visitors Bureau by Equation research, Feb. 28, 2008 (PDF)
This research study was conducted to clarify the Ann Arbor visitor profile and preferences, evaluate attitudes and awareness among prospective audiences, and assess destination strength and weaknesses.

The Creative Industries of Washtenaw County, Michigan (2006), Americans for the Arts (PDF)
A research report using Dun & Bradstreet data to describe the scope and economic importance of arts-centric businesses in Washtenaw County.
Academic Service-Learning
Academic Service-Learning is a teaching methodology that utilizes community service as a means of helping students gain a deeper understanding of course objectives, acquire new knowledge, and engage in civic activity. (Taken from EMU AS-L program description.)

Adaptive Reuse
Adaptive reuse refers to altering the original purpose of a building for another use. Generally projects that use adaptive reuse depend on significant architectural renovations and strive to preserve some of the original architectural details and ambience.

Artist Incubators
Artist incubators, more specifically artist business incubators are buildings where artists can rent space and work together at a very affordable cost. Generally other services are provided and may include financial counseling, general business support, shared purchasing and shared use of expensive specialty equipment such as ceramic and glass blowing kilns.

Artist Residency Program
Artist residence programs are when artists are contracted to work with a specific population sharing and teaching in their creative field. Examples of such a program would be if a songwriter spent several weeks working with an area elementary school students helping them develop lyrics and put them to music. Often residency programs conclude with some kind of join performance or exhibit.

Capacity Building
Capacity building is the process of assessing community needs and then organizing individual and/or organizational assets to address these needs. Capacity building can happen at different levels either within an organization, within a sector or as part of broader community development plan.

Creative Businesses
Creative Businesses are those individuals, companies and organizations that make up the Creative Economy. Please see definition below.

Creative Economy
The Creative Economy is a vibrant sector of our national economy that continues to be recognized for its growth and economic impact. Generally this sector is defined in the broadest way including both for-profit and non-profit businesses including but not limited to design, music and performing arts, media, publishing and fine arts and crafts.

Creative Economic Development
Creative Economic Development is when communities appreciate the impact of the creative sector and use it as a catalyst for revitalization. Creative Economic Development is generally used most effectively when included in a broader community development plan.

Cultural Organizations
Broadly defined to include organizations focusing on visual, performing, and literary arts; heritage, history, and interpretive science,

Cultural Providers
Anyone who creates and offers cultural programs or products to the public, including cultural organizations, artists, and creative businesses

Cultural Sector
Includes the entire range of cultural providers, both for profit and not-for-profit, individual and organizational, and across all disciplines in the arts, history and heritage, and interpretive science
Cultural Tourism
Cultural Tourism is a segment of the broader tourism sector that uses the unique arts and cultural offerings of a city, county or broader region to attract visitors to an area.

Downtown Development Authority (DDA)
Downtown Development Authorities (DDA) was created to address the growing loss of businesses, residents and cultural activities in cities across the U.S. as suburban communities began to redistribute our population. DDA depend on leveraging community assets by creating public-private partnerships that encourage businesses and developers to work in downtown districts.

Emerging Leaders
Emerging Leaders are the young professionals who are new to leadership positions within their organizations, or are positioned to take over from long-time leaders or founding executives of their organization. Currently, there is lots of concern over the need to prepare these professionals since many of our current leaders are due to retire over the next decade.

Heritage
Generally seen as the preservation of physical places and objects or historical traditions developed by a specific community with the intent of sharing them with future generations.

Interpretive Science
Interpretive Science includes institutions such as natural history museums, nature centers, botanical gardens, hands on science centers and zoos, which provide informal opportunities for audiences to learn about or engage in science.

Public Art
Public Art describes art that is exhibited in common space, often in or adjacent to green space, so that the entire community may enjoy it. Often public art is paid for in part with public support. Public Art recently has been used to describe a growing number of community art projects conceived by one artist, but created by many members of a community.

Stakeholders
Stakeholders are members of a community that will be affected by our programs, organizations and planning.

Teacher Professional Development
Teacher Professional Development programs are created by arts and cultural organizations, often offered for credit to K-12 teachers who are looking to update their skills or learn information on a specific topic. School districts often fund and accredit these programs for large groups of their teachers.
CONSULTANTS

Consultants

Dr. Craig Dreeszen is a national authority on cultural planning who has facilitated 44 community cultural assessments or plans; conducted research, written, and taught; and advised state and federal agencies on cultural planning policy. He has worked with arts producing and presenting organizations as well as local, state, and national arts alliances, arts centers, foundations, and service organizations throughout the United States. Since 1986, he has provided strategic planning support to 50 cultural organizations. Dr. Dreeszen is editor of Fundamentals of Arts Management 4th Edition, and author of Cultural Planning: A Guidebook for Community Leaders. He is providing overall guidance for the project.

Susan Badger Booth is Assistant Professor of Arts Administration & Management in the Department of Communication and Theatre Arts at Eastern Michigan University. Prior to joining EMU in 2006, Ms. Booth was an Instructor in the Department of Theatre and Film at Bowling Green State University (BGSU), where she worked with the BSGU College of Business Administration’s Entrepreneurship Program to develop a new multidisciplinary minor in arts management. In addition to overseeing the interns working on this project, Ms. Booth facilitated community forums throughout the county and co-authored the cultural master plan with Dr. Dreeszen.

Report Editor/Project Manager

Tamara Real is Executive Director of the Arts Alliance, a position she has held since 2002. From 1994 through 2007, Ms. Real also served as principal of Get Real! Communications, a marketing firm she founded to help cultural organizations achieve their audience development goals. Prior to starting her own business, Real managed marketing activities at Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village (now known as The Henry Ford), The Museum of Modern Art in New York City, and the Smithsonian Institution. She has also served as the Director of Cultural Affairs for the City of New Haven, CT.
CREDITS

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Top right: Mark J. Wanless, courtesy of the Ypsilanti Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
Top center: Danna Segrest, courtesy of the Purple Rose Theatre Company

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