HASTINGS ARTS

AN ARTS & CULTURAL PLAN FOR THE COMMUNITY OF HASTINGS, MINNESOTA

2020
We offer a heartfelt **THANK YOU** to our major sponsors.

So many people contributed their time, effort, and creativity toward the development of this community-driven arts and cultural plan, and we offer each and every one of them a heartfelt thank you as well!

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Our vision is to encourage a future filled with collaborative efforts between arts organizations, artists, creative workers, the local government, institutions, businesses, and residents. A future aimed at achieving robust and accessible arts and cultural experiences. And richer, more creative business and workforce prospects for all members of the Hastings community, regardless of age, gender, household income level, racial or ethnic background, or ability.

This community-driven arts and cultural plan celebrates the initiative and creative assets of the community of Hastings. And with insight and input from that community, our plan offers guidance for the future sustainability and growth of the city’s many arts and cultural artifacts and activities, and creative economic opportunities.
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Arts and culture foster amenity-rich landscapes, exciting, inspiring and thought-provoking experiences, and interesting opportunities to learn, engage, express, reflect and heal. The transformative and inviting power of creative activity is reflected in the way cities increasingly employ arts and culture in community and economic development planning. Arts and cultural activity enlivens physical space, improving property values and tax revenues. It draws people to events, producing customers for nearby restaurants, bars, and shops. It invites people to visit and consider living in artistically and culturally vibrant neighborhoods, towns and cities.

Creative activity is also increasingly recognized as an important economic engine all its own. At the center of the growing knowledge economy, creative skills fuel the design and performance needs of the digital age in communications, marketing and promotions, and entertainment. The creative economy is rich in for-profit businesses, entrepreneurship, and non-profit organizations that produce solid revenues, and foster business, organization, and job growth. Artistic entrepreneurs, small business owners, and non-profit staff lease and own space and purchase supplies and services. They hire, develop and improve the skill sets of numerous workers. They produce products and generate sales revenues, and increasingly, they are at the center of all forms of engagement, supplementing outreach efforts by cities, institutions, and non-arts businesses.

This plan recognizes the value of this multifaceted creative endeavor and the special skills of the artists and cultural bearers who bring vibrancy, in its many forms, to communities throughout the U.S. As performers, practitioners, freelancers, contractors, business owners, organizational leaders, employees, teachers, advocates, and volunteers, creatives and the creative endeavor; offer far-reaching economic and community rewards!
A COMMUNITY PLAN, BY THE COMMUNITY

This community-driven arts and cultural plan is the product of several years of education, planning, fundraising, and engagement. The collaborative process was initiated by the Hastings Prescott Area Arts Council (HPAAC) which was founded by local residents in 2008. HPAAC works diligently to support and promote a host of arts programming in the area. They operate the Orange Dragon gallery where local artists can sell their wares, and over the years they’ve launched a community band, organized and sponsored numerous concert series, art classes, and writing workshops, collaboratively developed youth arts programming, and they’ve created and endowed a scholarship fund for artists of all ages.

Throughout, HPAAC has sought collaborations and partnerships with institutions like the City of Hastings, Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, Community Education, and YMCA. They’ve sought to recognize and elevate the wealth of arts and culture bearers like Hastings Arts Center, Artspace Hastings River Lofts, Black Dirt Theater, (lumin)theater lab, and the LeDuc Mansion.

HPAAC learned how to grow stronger and more sustainable collaborations and partnerships within and beyond the creative sector, bolstered by their participation in Arts Midwest’s intensive ArtsLab workshop. In 2017 they funded a study by Creative MN (creativemn.org) to better understand the role and value of arts in Hastings. The findings showed a $2.4 MILLION ECONOMIC IMPACT from arts and cultural organizations and their audiences in the city, and a $57 MILLION IMPACT from artist spending in Dakota County. It was clear; Hastings could benefit as a hub for the area’s vital creative workforce and activity, and was host to an already dynamic creative scene.

But how could the community celebrate and grow their creative endeavor of arts and cultural experiences and business and workforce opportunities, while ensuring access for all members of the community, regardless of age, gender, household income level, racial or ethnic background, or ability? An arts and cultural plan could offer guidance so that the diversity of stakeholders with interest in the arts, and the community’s economic and social well-being could prioritize, and partner and collaborate on a community informed set of goals and objectives.
In late 2018 HPAAC enrolled Urbane DrK Consulting as the plan consultant and began securing funding from the St. Paul and Xcel Energy Foundations. They also began gathering and collaborating with the community to inventory and understand what assets existed and what was needed to ensure continued success and growth in the city’s arts and cultural experiences and business and workforce opportunities.
**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

**VITALITY**

**GOAL** Achieve a vibrant and multifaceted creative sector and economy

- Foster synergies between the creative sector and other non-arts businesses and public institutions
- Focus resources and efforts on sustaining and growing Hastings’s community of artist entrepreneurs, creative businesses, and arts and cultural nonprofit organizations
- Leverage the city’s arts and cultural assets to stimulate interest in Hastings from visitors, new businesses, a younger skilled creative workforce, and a younger demographic of households

**PLACEFULLNESS**

**GOAL** Achieve a strong sense of place and place identity through beautification and the creative activation of arts and culture

- Promote an inclusive place identity drawing on the city’s rich and diverse history, heritage, and arts and cultural assets; to attract visitors and to welcome residents and businesses
- Sustain and grow the inventory of distinctive public art and architectural assets in Hastings
- Animate the physical realm with beautification of arts throughout the city, crafting distinctiveness through community design and cultural references for district identification
The knowledge gained during roughly eight months of outreach and engagement was analyzed and the insights provided helped establish a set of guidelines for what can be achieved (goals) and tangible strategies for success (objectives).

**ENGAGEMENT**

**GOAL**

Achieve a healthy and empowered community of lifelong learners and creative innovators

- Foster a diversity of accessible opportunities for cultural expression and exchange to build community cohesiveness, understanding, and well-being
- Expand opportunities to engage in a multiplicity of arts and cultural experiences for all members of the community regardless of age, gender, household income, race or ethnic background, or ability
- Enable accessible opportunities for lifelong learning in the arts, from youth to senior programming

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

**GOAL**

Achieve a strong foundation of people, resources, and spaces to support arts and cultural experiences and business and workforce opportunities

- Assess, inventory, market and promote the wealth of arts and cultural assets, opportunities, and activities that exist in Hastings, within the city and wider region
- Identify, cultivate and strategize with arts and cultural allies to build stronger and more visible networks of opportunity to grow the creative economy, arts and cultural experiences, and educational activities in Hastings
- Foster public, private and philanthropic partnerships that engage the creative sector, inviting arts and cultural leaders to conversations about policy and resource allocations
So, what collaborative ideas and tools can Hastings use to craft an economic development plan rich in creative opportunity?
We knew from the 2017 Creative MN study that arts and cultural non-profits created a $2.4 million economic impact in Hastings, but that study only looked at the expense budgets and audience totals of 16 area non-profits to understand the breadth and potential of the creative endeavor in the city. To better understand the breadth and potential of the creative endeavor in the city, we needed to inventory the entire sector.

Using Bureau of Labor Statistics definitions for industry and job types as our guide, we accessed multiple resource lists and relied on local knowledge to identify and locate the city’s artist entrepreneurs, for-profit businesses, and arts and cultural non-profits and institutional programming within the creative sector. The list grew to 166 entries, which we mapped and analyzed.

In summary, the city is rich in artists and creative workers who generate incomes and revenues within the creative economy. Nearly 73% of those we were able to identify and locate are for-profit enterprises, including full or part-time employees, contractors, and freelancers. Independent entrepreneurs and business owners are also identified. Moreover, Hastings is home to non-profit arts and cultural organizations and institutional venues and activities.

Visual arts and design account for the greatest number of practitioners, followed by music. Artists practicing multiple genres, and literary arts, mapping the creative endeavor in Hastings demonstrates a solid and diverse creative sector upon which the city is set in the visibility of Dakota County’s revenue-producing creative sector and workforce.
The Dakota County data demonstrates the creative economic vibrancy in the region and the asset map shows the strength and diversity of artist entrepreneurs, businesses, and organizations in Hastings. To further develop our understanding of the creative endeavor in Hastings, we conducted an online survey to see how residents, workers and business owners viewed arts and cultural experiences and opportunities.

We offer this summary from the 520 responses we received.
71% of respondents indicated they lived or worked in Hastings, while 17% were from a nearby township. Many of the respondents were older (42% were 61+) but we had a good show of Millennials (19% were 31-40) and other age groups as well.

A majority (63%) have a great deal of experience with arts and cultural opportunities in the area, having lived and/or worked in Hastings for 20+ years. Average household incomes trended higher, but a broad range of respondents are represented, nonetheless.

On average, Minnesotans attend arts and cultural events 4 times per year, according to Creative MN. Respondents to the Hastings survey appear to be much more active! 38% attend 9 or more events per year, and more than 40% attend 4-8. These enthusiastic participants most commonly seek music (52%), performance (22%) and the visual arts (15%) but, they often leave Hastings to find activities and events.
The survey responses offered a wealth of community knowledge; to shape the plan’s main goals and objectives, to guide the plan’s recommendations, and later, this information can help the community come together around near and long-term priorities.

Here are some highlights:

Respondents demonstrated a keen knowledge of the arts and cultural landscape. When asked to name arts and cultural groups, institutions, or artists, 322 respondents shared, on average, the names of 5 creative assets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>% Mentioned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black Dirt Theater</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hastings Art Center</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School programs</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hastings Prescott Area Arts Council</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Valley Band</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artspace Hastings River Lofts</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The creative thought and experience ran the gamut from theater troupes to art centers, schools and churches, shops and restaurants, history and nature centers, studios and classes, and numerous individual artists. Some respondents provided more general references like the “arts building that was just built” or the “mural under the bridge” but most were specific, highlighting experiences, places, and activities like shopping for local art at Quaint and Quirky, listening to a band at Spiral Brewery, or attending dinner theater at the Onion Grille.

Venues like the Hastings Art Center, LeDuc Historic Estate, Carpenter Nature Center, the Rotary Pavilion and downtown were offered as centers for events, fairs and concerts, while Alexis Bailly Vineyard and visual arts centers like the Orange Dragon Art Gallery were favorite destinations. A host of bands and individual musicians, authors, and visual artists got acclaim, as did many programs and classes ranging from dance to author discussions to writing groups.

Respondents also felt an affinity for the city’s public art, describing the playfulness and character these assets bring to Hastings. They attributed public art with sparking conversations and being an essential element in the city’s visual identity.

In sum, respondents shared a knowledge of and appreciation for a diverse creative milieu in the area.

Respondents were also queried about the different ways they engage with arts and culture, for example, as audience members, as practitioners, as volunteers, as parents, and to earn income.

As audience members, most respondents shared that they attend a restaurant before or after an arts and cultural event, and they often visit bars, cafes, and coffee shops as well. According to Creative MN audience members in the region spend, on average, $27.58 over and above the event price at local non-arts businesses when participating in arts and cultural events.

There are many reasons to leverage the benefits of the arts – from community well-being to beautification – but the survey clearly demonstrates that the economic benefit to nearby businesses cannot be overlooked.

Respondents noted their own creativity with 62% indicating they are practitioners themselves. This non-paid participation fuels classes and teaching jobs for artists, as well as sales tax revenues from the purchase of supplies.

10% of respondents stated their primary source of income came from their creative practice. Another 37% indicated they earned income from their work through occasional opportunities, gigs, and part-time employment. And 23% of this income from creative enterprise was earned in the city and surrounding area.
A COMMUNITY SURVEY

DEFICITS
Overall, most respondents view living and/or working in Hastings in a positive light, rating it as good (58%) or excellent (33%). But when asked if there were interesting things to do, only 20% stated there were a lot of options. About 56% found some interesting things to do but over 22% found few things to do in the city.

In other words, there is room to grow and according to respondent comments, that effort requires an eye toward reaching all potential audiences and participants, regardless of age, gender, household income level, racial or ethnic background, or ability.

OFFER OPPORTUNITIES THAT CAN’T BE FOUND ANYWHERE ELSE. THERE IS A GROWING PRESENCE OF MILLENNIALS AND GEN Z WHO ARE LOOKING FOR THESE SORTS OF UNIQUE EXPERIENCES.

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES THAT ARE EQUITABLE AND FEASIBLE FOR VARIOUS POPULATIONS IN OUR COMMUNITY.

INSTEAD OF CHARGING FOR EVERYTHING, HAVE PEOPLE GIVE A FREE WILL OFFERING FOR THE ACTIVITY. I WOULD LOVE TO GO TO MANY MORE THINGS BUT CAN’T AFFORD THEM.
When asked to consider the barriers to arts and cultural experiences and opportunities, respondents indicated they were unaware of upcoming events, noted they were short on time, and suggested the offerings were not affordable and did not reflect their interests.

Yet the levels of satisfaction among parents indicated there is room for improvement as only 12% were ‘very satisfied’, while 56% were ‘somewhat satisfied’ and 32% were ‘not too’ or ‘not at all’ satisfied.

Cost was a barrier for 22% of respondents, and location (15%) and the child’s time spent on activities (13%) were also solid considerations. Time spent on the activity was considered the primary barrier if parents were participating in the activity with the child. Further, a diversity of voices suggested there were not enough offerings outside of schools or for families to do together. Yet parents also offered a host of ideas for improving current offerings and getting the word out about what is already available – and as strong advocates, they should prove to be enthusiastic community allies.

**Find space for children to create and learn outside of school**

**Weekend showtimes that are family-friendly are wonderful.**

**I want our hometown to offer something for every member of my family.**

**Most of what comes home in the Friday Fliers are opportunities that cost money.**
In the online survey, we offered 12 short answer questions and 43% of respondents took the extra time to share their thoughts and suggestions. In total, that’s 2,685 comments on the state of arts and culture in Hastings! This rich trove of insights and helpful recommendations supplement what is highlighted in this planning document and this detail should be revisited often as the community collaborates on near- and long-term priorities and actions.

The community voice is also reflected in insights garnered during several information sessions, interviews, and an arts forum that was held for 27 arts and cultural leaders and participants.

The main take-away from the forum was a desire to develop better networks within the arts and cultural community and to cross-pollinate this creative sector network with the wider business, institutional, and residential community networks. The aim would be to improve communication, share knowledge and resources, and foster more and ongoing collaborations and partnerships.
Participants also worked through concepts like place identity, the physical environment, knowledge sharing, equity and inclusion, and the creative economy, leading to discussions about lost or missed connections. For example, although the river is an important part of the community's identity, efforts to amplify and celebrate the river through various arts and cultural formats is limited. Beautification efforts also fail to ‘stretch’ to and connect every neighborhood in the city.

Forum participants saw a need to foster closer ties between downtown businesses and the artist entrepreneurs at Artspace River Lofts. Geographic proximity suggests strong mutual benefits. Participants also noted that arts and culture can be creatively employed to support business activity throughout the city and this can be facilitated through educational and workforce programs as well as through more traditional forms of arts and cultural events and experiences.
As noted, these highlighted insights represent just a small portion of the community’s knowledge that was shared with us during the planning process. We drew upon this wealth of knowledge to build a framework of goal areas and attainable objectives. Presented in their entirety on pages 8 and 9 we re-present these goals and objectives in the table that follows, reframing them as actionable strategies for community consideration.

It will be the community’s task to take on the mantle of plan execution! So, the first plan recommendation is to form a collective: of advocates and creative practitioners, of institutional staff and business owners, and of community representatives.

**Note: the scaffold for outreach has been established as part of the planning process - with the branding of Hastings is Arts and the establishment of a website, email address, and social media presence on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter!**

Together, find the intersections – the sweet spots – where the wider community benefits from arts and culture and where arts and cultural experiences and opportunities can be offered space to grow.

Then, using the framework provided, establish an achievable set of near- and long-term priorities. And get to work on forming the collaborations and partnerships needed to make things happen.

### EXECUTING THE PLAN

**In the main, the goals and objectives in this plan provide a guide for how to:**

- Identify and further develop economic intersections
- De-silo and connect the creative sector, non-arts businesses and organizations, and local institutions
- Cultivate and strategize allies
- Foster regional networks
- Brand and promote the arts and the city
- Explore innovative policy and planning solutions
- Animate the physical realm
- Seek inclusive narratives and opportunities
EXECUTING THE PLAN

VITALITY

1. WELCOME CREATIVE BUSINESSES, NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS, AND ATTENDANT JOB GROWTH
   » Promote Hastings at the regional and county level as friendly to creative enterprises
   » Include creative enterprise in the city’s economic and development planning language and policies
   » Develop business and organizational resources and business supports for creative enterprises
   » Ensure regulatory policy fosters creative workspace opportunities
   » Facilitate creative workforce development strategies and programming with the Chamber, job training organizations, and educators

2. FOSTER SYNERGIES BETWEEN THE ARTS, NON-ARTS BUSINESSES, INSTITUTIONS, AND THE COMMUNITY
   » Educate the wider community about the economic and social value in all creative endeavors
   » Create opportunities for sharing and discussing the findings in this report and other regional and national studies about the creative economy and workforce

3. NURTURE AND GROW ONGOING COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS
   » Look for and document the positive impacts of collaborative events such as Hootenanny which benefits local businesses and musicians
   » Encourage and facilitate more opportunities for the creative sector to join in business, planning, and community development idea generation and problem-solving discussions

4. PROMOTE CREATIVE SECTOR ASSETS
   » Highlight the arts to grow tourism in Hastings
   » Emphasize existing creative businesses and organizational assets to attract and grow the creative sector and workforce
   » Use the vibrancy of arts and cultural activity and creative economic opportunities to invite a younger demographic of households to live in the city
PLACEFULLNESS

1. DEVELOP A SENSE OF PLACE
   » Engage ideas and skills of ered by local creatives to develop a contemporary identity and brand for the city
   » Highlight an inclusive representation of the city's history, heritage, and present-day arts and cultural assets to:
     • Promote Hastings within the region
     • Welcome and unify all residents

2. BEAUTIFY THE CITY
   » Preserve and grow the city's public art assets and opportunities
   » Preserve and grow the city's distinctive architectural assets
   » Incorporate creative community design elements in all neighborhoods throughout the city
   » Emphasize unique cultural and historical references to create distinct districts
   » Consider temporary and pop-up opportunities such as murals on construction fences and art in vacant store windows

The plan illustrated on the following pages is a deeper dive into suggested strategies in each goal area. The strategies are aimed at meeting the objectives outlined on pages 8 and 9. While it seems like a lot to consider, remember that many of the goals and objectives are intertwined, sharing the same desired outcome in economic and social success. So, think of these strategies as representing various stages of achievement, and when an objective related to the Infrastructure goal area is met it will likely propel forward the work on an objective in the Vitality goal area. Thoughtful near- and long-term prioritization will produce the most efficient plan outcomes and successes.
1. IMPROVE ACCESS TO ARTS AND CULTURAL EXPERIENCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

» Work collaboratively to reach all potential audiences for arts activities and education

» Improve affordability of events, activities, and education through sponsored ‘pay as you can’ or free programming

» Consider suitable and accessible times and locations for a diverse variety of arts and cultural opportunities

» Invite arts and cultural purveyors to offer inclusive narratives and programming relevant to all populations and household types

2. EXPAND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

» Sustain and grow lifelong learning opportunities for all populations and household types

» Grow educational options both within and outside of institutional settings

» Develop more paid job opportunities for arts educators

» Advance fellowship and internship prospects within the creative sector for youth

» Foster volunteer mentorship opportunities
1. BUILD KNOWLEDGE AND DATA BASES THAT FACILITATE INTRODUCTIONS, INTERACTIONS, COLLABORATIONS, AND PARTNERSHIPS

- Maintain and use a comprehensive inventory of creative businesses, organizations, and jobs in the city to develop, grow, and cross-pollinate professional and community networks
- Draw on the city’s community of business, organizational, educational, and community opportunities and networks to cultivate and grow arts advocates
- Work collaboratively and in partnership to develop local and regional relationships
- Assess what is missing in the city’s creative inventory by reviewing the Hastings-Is-Arts survey feedback

2. UPDATE POLICIES, REGULATIONS, AND PRACTICES TO BE INCLUSIVE OF THE CREATIVE SECTOR

- Reduce regulatory barriers to re-purposing vacant and underutilized real estate for creative sector occupants and activities
- Strategize new design opportunities in mixed-use developments
- Consider policy to encourage creative temporary and pop-up activities and land-use opportunities
- Consider roles for the arts and the inclusion of creative enterprise in all policy recommendations

3. INSTITUTIONALIZE AND SUSTAIN THE CITY’S CREATIVE ASSETS

- Collaboratively develop support staff within governmental and educational institutions and within business and fraternal associations that can regularly engage and coordinate with creatives and creative sector organizations to:
  - Improve the creative sector’s capacity to contribute their work to the community
  - Promote the creative sector’s work within the community and the region
- Embed more and ongoing arts and cultural activities in institutional events and programming
- Offer sustained year-over-year institutional sponsorships to ensure seamless programming and uninterrupted staffing for art and cultural organizations

4. DEVELOP AND EXPAND RESOURCES FOR THE CREATIVE SECTOR

- Consider sustainable business and institutional policies to fund percent for art initiatives or creative place making projects in the city
- Design collaborative public, private, and philanthropic grant opportunities
- Enlist resource provider partnerships with organizations such as Springboard for the Arts to expand access to resource lists and business technical assistance opportunities in the city
The assets this plan celebrates could not be more in need of the community’s support. The COVID-19 pandemic’s impacts have been devastating to the creative endeavor. In a national survey, Americans for the Arts found that 94% of artists and creative workers have lost income and 62% have become fully unemployed due to the strategies needed to remain healthy as a nation. 96% of non-profit arts and cultural organizations have cancelled their calendar of events through the end of the summer resulting in a loss of 339 million admissions and $10.7 billion in non-profit ticket revenues. Recently, Senator Klobuchar introduced national legislation aimed at protecting the for-profit venues that have closed their doors due to the pandemic, so that the whole industry does not collapse and artists will have spaces to perform in once the health risk ends.

We can be hopeful, however, as the creative sector was a leader in the economic recovery after the 2008 recession with job growth that was higher and more sustained than in many other industries.

This arts and cultural plan for the community of Hastings can help guide the work of the recovery for this sector, enabling it to lead and grow once again.