



ROCKFORD REGION CULTURAL PLAN

July 2024

Lord Cultural Resources is a global professional practice dedicated to making the world a better place through culture.

We assist people, communities, and organizations to realize and enhance cultural meaning and expression.

We distinguish ourselves through a comprehensive and integrated full-service offering built on a foundation of key competencies: visioning, planning and implementation.

We value and believe in cultural expression as essential for all people. We conduct ourselves with respect for collaboration, local adaptation and cultural diversity, embodying the highest standards of integrity, ethics and professional practice.

We help clients clarify their goals; we provide them with the tools to achieve those goals; and we leave a legacy as a result of training and collaboration.

Our New York office is located on the traditional lands of the Lenape peoples. Our Long Beach office is located on the land of the Tongva/Gabrieleño and the Acjachemen/Juaneño Nations, who have lived and continue to live here. Our Toronto office is located within the traditional territory of many nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishinaabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples.

We encourage you to acknowledge the presence of the people who came before, wherever you are.



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FUNDERS AND PARTNERS



FUNDERS AND PARTNERS



COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS

Funding partners:

Rockford Area Arts Council
Community Foundation of Northern Illinois
Rockford Area Convention and Visitors Bureau
City of Rockford
UW Health
Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA)



Collaborative partners:

Rockford Park District
Region 1 - Planning Council
Transform Rockford
Winnebago County
Northern Illinois Center for Nonprofit Excellence
Rockford Public Schools - District 205
State Representatives West, Sosnowski, and Vella
State Senators Stadelman and Syverson





FOREWORD

Dear Rockford Region residents and visitors,

The Rockford Area Arts Council welcomes you to our vibrant, talented, and proud region! We encourage you to explore arts and culture through our bold public art installations, dynamic performing arts scene, unique neighborhood character, rich cultural experiences, and unconventional creative happenings.

The Arts Council is the collective voice of individual artists and regional arts organizations. We believe in the transformative power of arts and culture and its ability to set the tone for a region's creative and cultural infrastructure. The National League of Cities Foundation member, Jen Hughes, speaks to this transformational process, saying, **"We want to help leaders see the role explicitly that arts and culture can play in weaving connections, and in imagining new ways of doing and being."**

As Hughes noted, the Arts Council's role in the development and implementation of the Rockford Region Cultural Plan is to help our community leaders and organizational partners imagine new ways of doing and being. The Arts Council was asked to lead the cultural plan initiative, as an integral advocate for and supporter of arts and culture in the region. The Arts Council fortified its history as a cultural convener through the cultural planning process. Going forward, **our role is to help our community tell its story, elevating the diverse narratives and history that make up the Rockford Region and cultivating a future that benefits all of its residents and visitors.** Additionally, the Arts Council and its partners will position the Rockford Region Cultural Plan as a data-backed framework that local lawmakers can use to support comprehensive plans for our region's publicly funded agencies, including its school districts, the Park District, City and County governments, and regional planning agencies.

Recent regional data clearly demonstrates the **prioritization of arts and culture in several other key community plans**, detailed in this document. The Arts Council's role is to keep the Cultural Plan's dynamic resources relevant and available to those agencies prioritizing arts and culture; we will act as a push broom that ensures inclusion and alignment with what the community identifies as its priorities.

Funding

The Arts Council is grateful to its funders for their generous contributions to and enthusiasm for the Rockford Region Cultural Plan:

- Community Foundation of Northern Illinois
- Rockford Area Convention and Visitors Bureau
- City of Rockford
- UW Health
- Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA)

Additional supportive community partners include the Park District, Rockford Public Schools District 205, Northern Illinois Center for Nonprofit Excellence, Winnebago County, Region 1 Planning Council, Transform Rockford, and local legislators. Additionally, we assembled a diverse and intentional Project Advisory Committee to ensure we hit important community marks.

The process of this plan was as valuable as the final product because it provided an opportunity for our community to come together, build relationships, and gather inclusive and representative input from throughout the Rockford Region.

This resulting plan highlights our rich and dynamic population and creates a hard-to-resist invitation to those outside of our community to experience life in the Rockford Region. **WELCOME!**

- Mary McNamara Bernstein
Executive Director,
Rockford Area Arts Council

INTRODUCTION





INTRODUCTION

Rockford: A Creatively Resilient Region

Rockford's rich history sets the stage for a transformational future

The Rockford Region is ideally situated at the confluence of four rivers, with the City of Rockford itself positioned on the banks of the Rock River. The Rockford Region boasts tremendous natural beauty, a rich and resilient history as a center for midwestern manufacturing, and a variety of historically important cultural venues. The innovation and ingenuity that have defined so much of Rockford's past runs through its many rich arts and culture assets. These include many historically significant institutions, as well as more recent additions to its cultural landscape, which reflect the region's increasingly diverse population. Since the 2019 debut of the CRE8IV Transformational Arts program, this landscape has expanded to include vibrant public murals and sculptures. Rockford's arts and culture are also celebrated bi-annually through ArtScene, a tradition since 1987 that promotes the arts in both traditional and non-traditional spaces and highlights Rockford's unique identity. For nearly 20 years, the Rockford Area Arts Awards have shined a spotlight on the many ways the arts positively impact Rockford, while elevating impressive local talent. As arts and culture have grown in the region—and are increasingly driving economic growth—community leaders recognize the importance of a Rockford Region Cultural Plan to further strengthen the arts and culture ecosystem for the benefit of all community members.

This is a plan for the entire Rockford Region. While we realize that the City of Rockford is the area of greatest population density, a key goal of the plan is to ensure a regional benefit. While the region is sometimes described in shorthand as Rockford, the intent of this plan is to be inclusive of the full Rockford Region, including Winnebago and Boone counties.

ROCKFORD REGION CULTURAL PLAN LEADERS

In early 2023, the Rockford Area Arts Council (RAAC), supported by partners - including the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois, the Rockford Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, the City of Rockford, engaged the consulting firm Lord Cultural Resources to facilitate development of this cultural plan. With the assistance of the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) representing a cross section of community stakeholders, the consultant team has worked for more than a year to develop this plan. A full list of partners and PAC members is in Appendix A.

Mural by Brett Whitacre, shown on Tuesday, Oct. 4, 2022, is part of the Screw City Steel series in Davis Park in downtown Rockford. (Photo by Kevin Haas/Rock River Current)



The Rockford Region Cultural Plan is the result of extensive community conversations, research, and analysis of Rockford's existing arts and culture ecosystem, as summarized in the State of Culture in Rockford report, which provides background and context for this cultural plan.





Why create a cultural plan? Why now?

A cultural plan allows key community stakeholders — elected officials, organizational leaders, funders, grass-roots activists, and the public —to prioritize community needs around arts and culture, align strategies, and collectively deploy resources in service of the community.

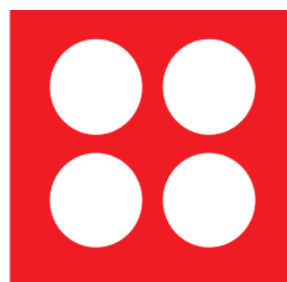
This plan:



**PROVIDES
DIRECTION**



**CREATES
CONNECTIONS**



**FOSTERS
COMMUNITY**

The Rockford Region Cultural Plan is the culmination of years of discussions in Rockford about the role of arts and culture. The seeds of this plan were sown with Transform Rockford, which began in 2013 as a community-driven planning process to leverage Rockford's many assets and make it one of the top places to live in the country — one of Transform Rockford's explicit goals was the development of a cultural plan. Arts and culture also feature prominently among key strategies in several subsequent regional plans. In the post-pandemic landscape, arts and culture are more appreciated than ever for their role in providing social, economic, and wellness benefits to communities.



“When I think about a healthy community, I think about healthy business, healthy schools, healthy environment, healthy arts and culture. Finding that balance and integration make it a great place to live, work, and raise a family.”

—Travis Anderson, President & CEO, UW Health



Rockford Rising

This plan arrives at a moment of great momentum for Rockford. The Rockford Region is currently benefiting from a variety of exciting developments:

- In December 2023, Rockford City Council unanimously approved a five-year capital plan of \$322 million — the largest in city history — to invest in infrastructure projects that will improve neighborhood streets (including Whitman Interchange and Alpine Road) and sidewalks and facilitate a more bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly community.
- In 2023, Rockford's International Airport, for the fourth consecutive year, rose in rankings of the country's top cargo airports.
- The largest investment in the Rockford Region in more than 50 years — more than \$5 billion in public and private funds — has recently been committed to the Belvidere Assembly Plant, in an effort to strengthen the Rockford Region's local economy.
- As of April 2024, Rockford is now America's top housing market (according to WSJ/Realtor.com). Property values are up 52 percent while the property tax rate is down 37 percent.
- Rockford is reducing blight through its Community Development Financial Institution, new Land Bank, revised trustee program, and through a partnership with Habitat for Humanity.
- Violent crime is down 24 percent. Rockford has a holistic plan to continue to address crime, investing millions in intervention and prevention, as well as investing in programs that create hope and opportunity for youth.
- Rockford Public Schools (RPS 205) recently completed a \$279 million facilities plan. In 2023, RPS 205 launched a five-year, \$180 million facilities master plan, with construction to start in 2025. This facilities plan includes allocation for bolstering the arts program.
- The Rockford Promise - Northern Illinois University (NIU) partnership continues to reduce financial barriers to higher education, with more than 300 Rockford youth attending NIU for free. Since the partnership began, GPAs have increased among high school students in RPS 205.



- Rockford is opening the State of Illinois' first Excel Center, in collaboration with Goodwill of Northern Illinois, to help residents who want to further their career trajectories by earning a high school diploma and additional certifications.
- Rockford City Council recently approved three redevelopment projects that will continue the revitalization of downtown with new business and residential living at the Art Deco Building, Trekk building, and the Watch Factory Building.
- At the close of 2023, Rockford boasted a surplus in tax revenue due to faster than expected economic recovery after the Covid-19 pandemic. This funded \$32 million in community investment projects, including the redevelopment of Davis Park.
- In 2023, for the 2nd year in a row, the City of Rockford earned a perfect score on the Human Rights Campaign's annual Municipality Equality Index, which ranks cities' inclusivity for the LGBTQ community.
- The Hard Rock Casino, nearing completion, is expected to bring thousands of visitors and millions of dollars annually to Rockford. In partnership with Ringland-Johnson Construction and the Rockford Park District, the casino has already installed a permanent concert venue in Levings Park. The new venue will include an 807-foot stage, upgraded lighting and sound equipment, and dressing rooms.
- The newly renovated 68,000 square foot Rockford Public Library features grand views of the downtown riverfront. This development could anchor the ongoing revitalization of Rockford's downtown and create a dynamic and resource-rich shared space for residents.
- The 26-acre riverfront former Barber Colman industrial campus is being transformed into Colman Yards, which will offer opportunities for artists and creative businesses, as well as city-center housing and vibrant nightlife.
- Rockford's iconic News Tower is being rehabilitated as a solar panel company by Iconic Energy.
- The new Metra passenger rail service between Rockford and Chicago received state and federal funding allocations; construction is expected to begin in 2027.



Intersecting plans in the region:

The Rockford Region Cultural Plan offers many opportunities to connect with, complement, and amplify recommendations and goals for other plans in the region as noted in the chart below.

Rockford Plan	Key Points, Recommendations, and/or Goals
City of Rockford Comprehensive Plan (2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arts, culture & historic landmarks are priorities Designated six local historic districts and six districts on National Register of Historic Places Lists important historical structures
City of Rockford — Rockford Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighborhood placemaking to provide incubation space for arts and local entrepreneurs Support for local arts and maker community through short-term leases for temporary art installations Studios and galleries in vacant commercial spaces; arts and culture promotion in neighborhoods
City of Rockford Equitable Recovery Assessment (2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investing in minority-owned businesses (MWBEs) historically not included in city business development efforts Covid elevated and inspired many minority entrepreneurs to start creative and artistic businesses Partnership with Think Big, local nonprofit providing business support to MWBEs Recommends a regional Equity Pledge and cross-sectoral approach to tackle long-standing issues
City of Rockford Corridor plans (2009-22): 11 th Street, Auburn St, Keith Creek, Kishwaukee Creek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate public art, placemaking elements, signage, façade programs, and visual branding Integrate art and creativity into civic infrastructure and land use to tell stories about Rockford and strengthen community identity, in collaboration with partners Improve aesthetic experience while providing information, education, and more vibrant spaces
Rockford Public Schools – District 205 Facilities Master Plan (2025-2029)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Five-year, \$180 million plan 2023-24: community feedback; 2024-25: design work; 2025: start project Sept 2023 launch revealed arts in the schools are very important to the community
Rockford Park District 2020 Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arts and culture programming is a key area where the community wants to allocate tax dollars Communities want culturally inclusive programming
Rockford Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (RACVB) Destination Master Plan (2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed in tandem with the Rockford Region Cultural Plan, this plan's goals complement those of the Destination Master Plan and vice versa
Illinois Creative Sector State Policy Agenda (2023-2025)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced by the Arts Alliance of Illinois, this plan advocates lifting Illinois up from its FY2023 status as 25th in the nation in per capita spending on state arts agencies Key action item is to increase the Illinois General Assembly investment in arts and culture to \$30 million Areas of investment would include expand equitable access to the arts, increase local investment, empower artists through workforce development, invest in the creative sectors physical infrastructure, and strengthen and expand creative industries



Telling Rockford's Stories

An overarching finding from the cultural planning process is that the Rockford Region can better tell its own stories. Rockford has a rich and diverse history, and yet does not always fully recognize its assets and treasures. While Rockford has faced many challenges and setbacks, the broader story of the Rockford Region is a trajectory of progress despite past ills. A recent example of Rockford's resilience was Smash Art — a rapid response by artists and the community to vandalism that occurred in downtown Rockford in the fall of 2023. After business windows on East State Street had been smashed by someone suffering from mental illness, artists and community members — led by the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, River District Association, and Rockford Area Arts Council — mobilized to create mini murals that beautified the temporary window covers until they were fully restored. Furthermore, the mini murals were auctioned off to benefit the local branch of

NAMI (the National Alliance on Mental Illness), demonstrating one of the many ways the Rockford Region's arts sector supports small businesses and health & wellness. This kind of resilience is at the core of Rockford's can-do spirit.

"We use art, at the Center for Mental Health, on a daily basis. Art is a form of therapy-in the community, art is effective for all ages and can be a form of communication. The world of art is open to the imagination which means there are no restraints to conform to, this is especially liberating for individuals with mental health challenges."

—Lynn Williams, Director of Adult Inpatient Services UW Health

There is a huge opportunity to better celebrate and elevate Rockford's past, present, and future, and in so doing, to foster a sense of belonging for all who live in, work in, and visit the Rockford Region. Rockford's entrepreneurial spirit has produced many successes. These live on today in the many artists and creative workers in Rockford, both present residents and celebrities who grew up in the area. Like many cities, Rockford grapples with a legacy of racial and ethnic divisions, which often manifest geographically. Public engagement for this plan surfaced past divides between the historically underinvested West Side and the oft-invested-in East Side. Many people were unaware that one of Rockford's three founders, along with Germanicus Kent and Thatcher Blake, was Lewis Lemon, a formerly enslaved African American. A sculpture of these three founders, created by artist Gene Horvath in 1976 as a bicentennial monument,

was previously displayed in Rockford but had been placed in storage during the renovation of Davis Park. As a result of this planning process, Rockford City Council prioritized the refurbishment and reinstallation of the statue. The Founders sculpture is just one potent example of the power of the arts to tell stories that broaden Rockford's historical and present perspectives. Arts and culture can help celebrate Rockford's multicultural past and present, instilling pride and a sense of belonging among its residents, attracting new visitors, and uplifting the entire Rockford Region.



Arts and Culture Benefits for Communities

A key contextual underpinning of this Rockford Region Cultural Plan is the recognition that other sectors impact the arts and culture ecosystem and vice versa. In the last decade, Rockford has made great progress growing its artistic and cultural landscape while grappling with ongoing challenges. Arts and culture can help us rise to meet these challenges. Extensive data demonstrates the tangible positive impacts of arts and culture on communities. Americans for the Arts' Social Impact Explorer Wheel aggregates numerous studies to demonstrate the proven benefits that arts and culture provide in sectors as diverse as workforce development, youth education, aging, technology, community cohesion, tourism, housing, the environment, infrastructure, physical and mental health, and public welfare. Art is especially powerful for healing trauma, which surfaced as a community challenge in the public engagement for this plan, given Rockford's past struggles with domestic violence, exacerbated (as in many communities) by the Covid-19 pandemic.



Note: Sources for all data points can be found at <https://americansforthearts.org/socialimpact>



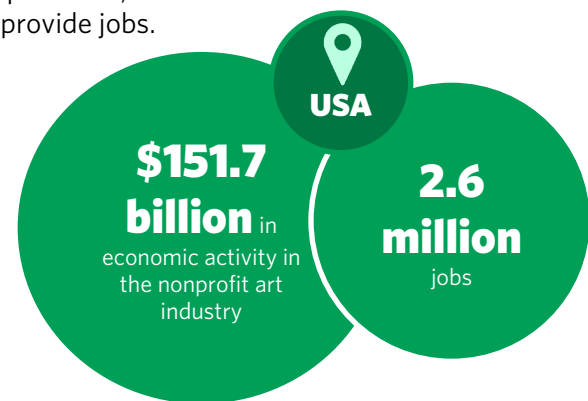
The Economic Impact of Arts and Culture

When communities invest in arts and culture, they are not doing so at the expense of community and economic development. Rather, they are investing in an industry that stimulates the economy, supports local jobs, and contributes to building healthy, vibrant, and more livable communities."

- AEP6, Americans for the Arts

This plan arrives on the heels of several recent studies in the United States, Illinois, and the Rockford Region on the economic impact of arts and culture. At every geographic level, these studies demonstrate the power of arts and culture to boost economies and provide jobs.

UNITED STATES IMPACT: In 2023, Americans for the Arts released its newest Arts & Economic Prosperity Report, known as AEP6, the most rigorous national study of the social and economic impact of the nonprofit arts industry across the United States. The study provides detailed findings on 373 regions across the United States, ranging from small to large populations and representing rural, suburban, and urban communities. The headline message of AEP6 is that art is good business, and a vibrant nonprofit arts and culture community not only keeps residents and their discretionary spending close to home, but also attracts visitors who spend money and help local businesses thrive. **In 2022, the nonprofit arts and culture sector generated \$151.7 billion in economic activity and supported 2.6 million jobs.**



While AEP6 focuses on the nonprofit sector, a March 2023 analysis by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) includes **both the commercial and nonprofit sector and reveals that arts and cultural economic activity in 2021 accounted for 4.4 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), or \$1.02 trillion, in 2021 supporting 4.9 percent jobs.**¹ Arts and culture is a larger segment of the economy than most people realize — making up a larger share of GDP than construction, transportation, and agriculture. In March 2024, the BEA released a report that arts and cultural activity, adjusted for inflation, increased 4.8 percent in 2022 after increasing 10.8 percent in 2021. This outpaced the general economy, which increased 1.9 percent in 2022 after increasing 5.8 percent in 2021². *This is yet another example of how arts and culture serve as an engine of economic growth.*



¹ [https://www.bea.gov/news/2023/arts-and-cultural-production-satellite-account-us-and-states-2021#:~:text=Arts%20and%20cultural%20economic%20activity%20accounted%20for%204.4%20percent%20of,\(tables%20%20and%203\)](https://www.bea.gov/news/2023/arts-and-cultural-production-satellite-account-us-and-states-2021#:~:text=Arts%20and%20cultural%20economic%20activity%20accounted%20for%204.4%20percent%20of,(tables%20%20and%203))

² <https://www.bea.gov/news/blog/2024-03-25/arts-and-culture-economy-grows-48-percent-2022>



"People don't always realize the huge value and return that arts and culture bring to the community."

- Public engagement participant

"Our public murals and wrapped traffic boxes are creating a WOW factor!"

- Public engagement participant

ILLINOIS IMPACT: According to the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA), **in 2021, art and culture production accounted for \$31.1 billion and 3.3 percent of the Illinois economy, with 196,769 jobs** related to the industry. Arts and cultural value added in Illinois ranked third among comparison sectors — more than construction, utilities, education services, agriculture and forestry, and mining. ³



ROCKFORD REGION IMPACT: The 2021 report *The Economic Impact of the Arts Industry in Northern Illinois*, created by Region 1 Planning Council, Rockford Area Arts Council, City of Rockford, and Winnebago County, provides data on the economic impact of arts and culture in four counties: Winnebago, Boone, Ogle, and DeKalb. Key findings from this report include that **in 2019, the arts industry employed roughly 4,000 employees, two-thirds of whom were in Winnebago County**. For every dollar of creative output, \$.58 of additional output is created in eight key sectors: construction, real estate, manufacturing, retail & wholesale, transportation & public utilities, accommodation, food & beverage services, and state & local government.

³ https://nasaa-arts.org/nasaa_research/creative-economy-state-profiles/#nasaa_field_1



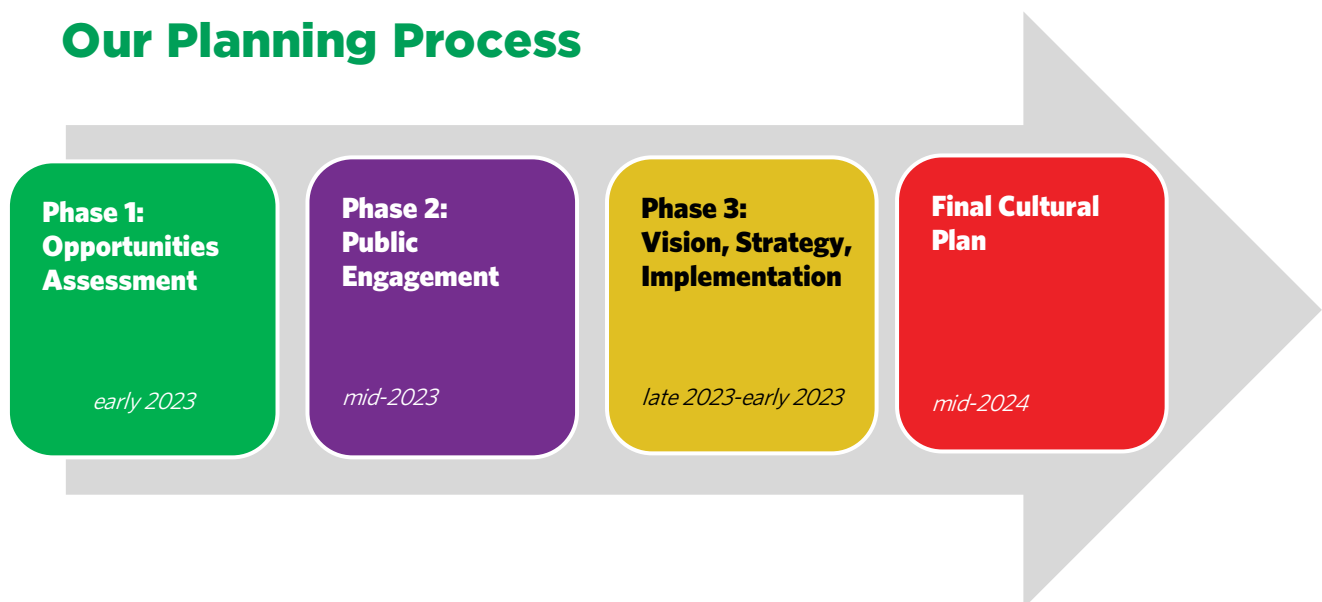
PROCESS OVERVIEW



PROCESS OVERVIEW: LISTENING TO ROCKFORD

The creation of this plan involved more than a year of in-depth research, public engagement, and community discussions. A three-phased approach ensured a comprehensive, inclusive, and achievable roadmap for enriching the cultural life of the Rockford Region.

Our Planning Process



Phase 1: Opportunities assessment

The first step of the planning process included reviewing previous planning efforts for the Rockford Region. By reviewing past planning efforts, the team gained valuable insights and connections when identifying new opportunities. These efforts included:

- Corridor plans (2009-22): 11th Street, Auburn St, Keith Creek, Kishwaukee Creek
- Rockford Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (2019)
- Rockford Park District 2020 Action Plan
- City of Rockford Equitable Recovery Assessment (2021)
- City of Rockford Comprehensive Plan (2023)
- Rockford Public Schools Facilities Master Plan (2025-2029)

“Our cultural events, like ArtScene and Domingos en el Parque, feel really authentic.”

– Public engagement participant



Rockford Region Cultural Plan

Through consultation with the Rockford Area Arts Council and the Project Advisory Committee (PAC), the team crafted a public engagement strategy to ensure that this plan for arts and culture in the Rockford Region created an opportunity for the Rockford community to come together to address challenges and opportunities impacting the arts and culture ecosystem.

This phase also included a rigorous contextual study of comparable regions. The consultant team conducted in-depth research of successful cultural policies, plans, and initiatives in five communities identified by the PAC:

- Des Moines, Iowa
- Fort Wayne, Indiana
- Grand Rapids, Michigan
- Akron, Ohio
- Erie, Pennsylvania

Trends presented included adaptive reuse, culture beyond institutional walls, creating connections to other sectors, creative local history/heritage placemaking, and funding.

Phase 2: Public engagement

More than 1,000 people from the Rockford Region engaged in the cultural planning process. In collaboration with the Rockford Area Arts Council and the Project Advisory Committee (PAC), the consultant team created a process grounded in equitable public engagement.

A variety of engagement opportunities ensured an inclusive, diverse, and representative sampling of Rockford community members. These included:

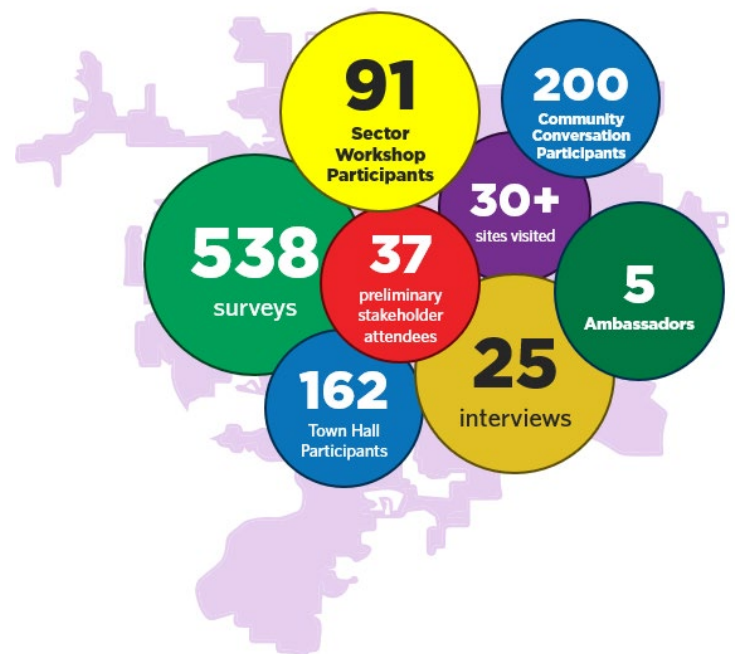
- Preliminary Stakeholder Conversations
- Town Hall Meetings
- Online Survey of Cultural Participation
- Sector Workshops
- Community Ambassador Outreach
- Community Conversations and DIY Tool Kits
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Site Visits

This intentional work of reaching into geographic neighborhoods as well as cultural communities was imperative to ensuring that a multitude of voices came to the table, building trust and legitimacy for the planning process. Surveys and DIY Tool Kits were available in Spanish as well as English.

Working with the PAC (which was diverse across age, race, skillset, and gender) from the outset of the planning process helped to identify and address



1000+
TOTAL ENGAGED





Rockford Region Cultural Plan

potential challenges and concerns and ensure the creation of a plan that is truly representative of the community.

CULTURAL ASSET INVENTORY: Through a variety of data collection methods (such as existing databases and listings, desktop research, conversations both in person and online, and the cultural participation survey), the project planning team inventoried nearly 300 unique arts and cultural organizations and sites that have been categorized under 14 types of activities as well as 14 types of spaces. The graph below gives a breakdown of each.



As a result of this planning process, the Rockford Area Arts Council (RAAC) and the Region 1 Planning Council (R1) are mapping the cultural assets into a GIS system, to be hosted on a publicly accessible website. This mapping allows the region to dynamically layer the cultural assets with other data. This process visually surfaces the distribution of cultural assets throughout the region, making it possible to see who is currently being served and to identify gaps where communities would benefit from more cultural assets.

"Rockford is big enough to have an impact but small enough that you can make a difference - it's a great place for people, including creatives, to find their footing."

—Public engagement participant

The distillation of the extensive research and public engagement in phases 1 and 2 resulted in the State of Culture in Rockford report, which was made available online as well as presented to the Rockford Region community in a public event in November 2023. Community members at the State of Culture event and through a subsequent public survey identified and discussed ten emerging opportunities for cultural improvement in the Rockford Region.



Rockford Region Cultural Plan

These were:

1. Tell Rockford's story better, highlighting Rockford's rich and diverse history
2. Provide more inclusive representation of artists and cultural offerings and welcoming environments
3. Increase creative opportunities for youth and arts education
4. Foster collaboration and connection within the cultural sector and with other sectors
5. Leverage and develop underutilized spaces for cultural uses
6. Strengthen funding/revenue mechanisms and policies for arts and culture
7. Improve advocacy and data capture around arts and culture
8. Strengthen awareness of arts and culture in Rockford
9. Foster brave conversations through arts and culture
10. Further neighborhood development with arts and culture

"The arts in Rockford should be for everyone and should feel welcoming."

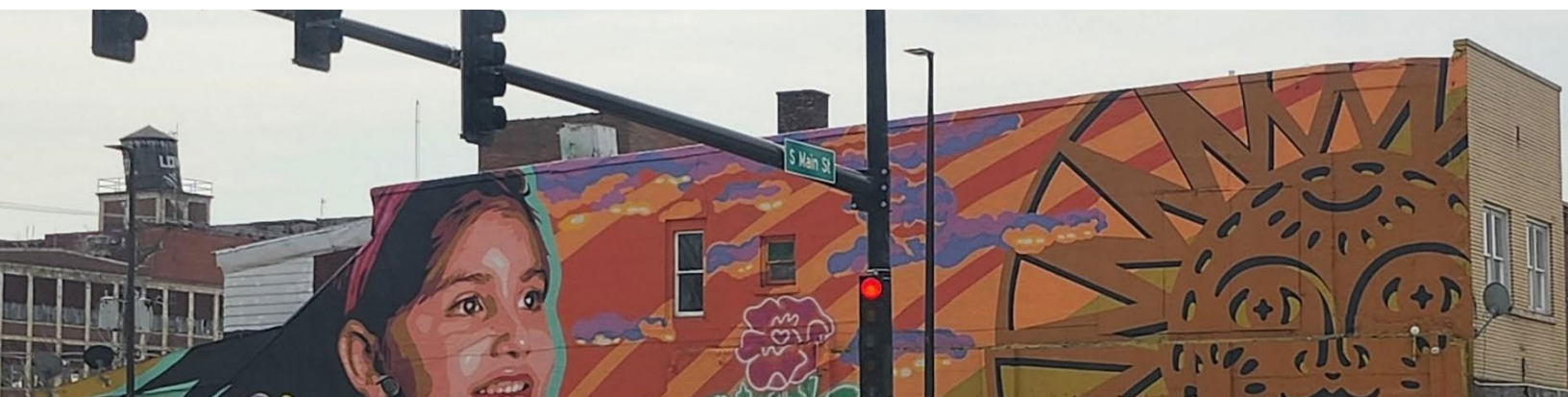
—Public engagement participant

Following the State of Culture event and review of subsequent public feedback, in collaboration with the Project Advisory Committee, the ten opportunities were refined into the four priorities of this plan: inclusivity & intersectional collaboration, neighborhood & space development, youth & arts education, and advocacy & policy.

An overarching goal of this plan is for Rockford to better tell its overall story — a narrative composed of many threads. The power of storytelling weaves through all four priorities, fostering pride and belonging among all community members who make up the Rockford Region's vibrant culture.

Phase 3: Vision, strategy, implementation

Phase 3 focused on developing an implementation strategy for the priorities that emerged from the State of Culture report and feedback. Four community-led taskforces — one for each of the plan priorities — were created to develop strategies and actions to implement the priorities of this plan. All four of these priorities will help with the overarching goal of this plan, which is to celebrate the diverse stories of the Rockford Region and elevate its vibrant future.





VISION AND PRIORITIES

VISION AND PRIORITIES

Vision:

We believe that investing in arts and culture will create more opportunities to tell Rockford's many stories, uplifting the entire Rockford Region. Through arts and culture, we celebrate our diversity, revitalize our neighborhoods, elevate our shared identity, and enrich our lives to create more vibrant, inclusive communities.



Priorities:





Inclusivity & Intersectional Collaboration:

Foster more inclusive cultural representation through greater collaboration and connection.

Rockford's cultural landscape is distinguished by its entrepreneurial spirit and growing connections within and beyond traditional arts and culture spaces. At the same time, the public engagement for this plan surfaced ongoing pain points around racial divisions, as well as the desire to heal those divisions through arts and culture. Growing collaborations between arts and culture and other sectors in Rockford — so long as they offer diverse programming and ensure accessibility — can welcome more community members into Rockford's cultural landscape. There are numerous opportunities for arts and culture to intersect with other sectors, including the faith community, business community, government, higher education, mental and physical health, real estate, sports, public safety, and social services. These collaborations can provide entry points for arts and culture throughout the region, creating pipelines and cultivating a spirit of collaboration for artistic creators and appreciators alike.

Strategy in action: Roundtables

The cultural planning process itself yielded a valuable lesson to the Rockford community: providing opportunities for conversation and knowledge-sharing is deeply empowering to communities and to artists and cultural workers. Inspired by the cultural planning process, the Rockford Area Arts Council began quarterly roundtables for the arts community. These roundtables allowed artists to brainstorm solutions to community issues, while also building relationships and providing skill-building for artists. One of the greatest needs for artists and creatives is professional development and financial empowerment. Midland Bank is a partner in the roundtables, to provide financial advice to artists. This kind of intersectional collaboration also creates greater access to participate in art and creativity, by providing opportunities to build a sustainable career in arts and culture.





Neighborhood & Space Development:

Activate neighborhoods and underutilized spaces with arts and culture.

While Rockford has made great strides revitalizing its downtown and supporting the growth of more public art murals and sculptures, it can expand these publicly accessible placemaking efforts to better tell cultural stories region-wide. Many Rockford stakeholders have also expressed a desire for more spaces for creative pursuits; underutilized spaces, when activated, can meet these needs. Rockford has a strong track record of breathing new life into blighted properties, as demonstrated by the renovation of the Amerock factory, which is now the Embassy Suites and features artwork from local Rockford artisans. The nearly century-old Coronado, restored in 2001, is another gem in Rockford's past and present performing arts scene. Beyond the more ambitious goals of adapting spaces for cultural use, there are many "lower-hanging fruit" opportunities for Rockford to expand its public art programming and build on existing planning recommendations. Taking advantage of these opportunities would ensure that Rockford's creative spirit is physically manifest in all neighborhoods, particularly in the region's historically underserved areas, such as the City of Rockford's West Side, and the region's collar communities.

Strategy in action: Adaptive reuse

Rockford has an abundance of historic properties that can be adapted for cultural use. A prime example of this is the Colman Yards development, approved in 2023 by Rockford City Council for redevelopment. The 26-acre, nine building complex along the South Main Street corridor is being rehabilitated after four decades of neglect. Located in the former factory site for the Barber Colman textile and milling company, Colman Yards exemplifies how blighted property can be transformed to revitalize neighborhoods like downtown Rockford. The new development will create a brand new residential, commercial, retail, recreation, and public green space neighborhood and trade district. Plans also include riverfront access, and common areas which can be sites for arts and culture activations and partnerships. An arts advisory council is working with the developer, J Jeffers & Co, to strategize creative placemaking efforts and cultural partnerships. These can include maker spaces to nurture creativity and retail spaces to house creative businesses.





Youth & Arts Education:

Increase creative opportunities for youth and arts education.

Art and art education can change the very trajectory of someone's life. To ensure that Rockford is fostering a new generation of arts and culture producers and appreciators, it is essential to reach youth. Studies show that providing exposure to the arts to children at young ages results in a wide range of benefits. For example, low-income students engaged in the arts are five times less likely to drop out of school, are twice as likely to graduate college, and 78 percent more likely to vote. Participation in after-school arts programs markedly reduces juvenile crime. To reap these benefits, arts education must be a priority in schools throughout the Rockford Region, and arts must be integrated into other disciplines. Rockford Public School District #205 (RPS 205) can build on its existing strengths by expanding its Creative and Performing Arts program (CAPA) and leveraging the current RPS Facilities Master Planning process. In addition to the school systems, youth need spaces outside of school and home to access cultural and creative activities in safe, affordable, and welcoming settings. These settings can include Rockford Park District parks, the justice system, maker spaces, creative incubators, community centers, libraries, museums, and other spaces including and beyond traditional arts venues.

Strategy in action: Meeting youth where they are

At Auburn High School in Rockford, two art teachers are modeling how the arts can prepare youth for real world careers. Art teachers Judd and Iga Puchalska's pop-up store concept for students garnered attention in March 2024 for its innovative approach. Inspired by Auburn's Business Academy Studio Art (BASA) pathway, the teachers devised a program for students to develop professional skills leveraging their love of the arts. The student-led pop-up store in the school features clothing, jewelry, artwork. In addition to making their artistic products, the students also learn how to market and merchandise them, a crucial skill for creatives. The student pop-up model show promises to grow beyond Auburn High School, with hopes to feature another student pop-up store in downtown Rockford in the future.





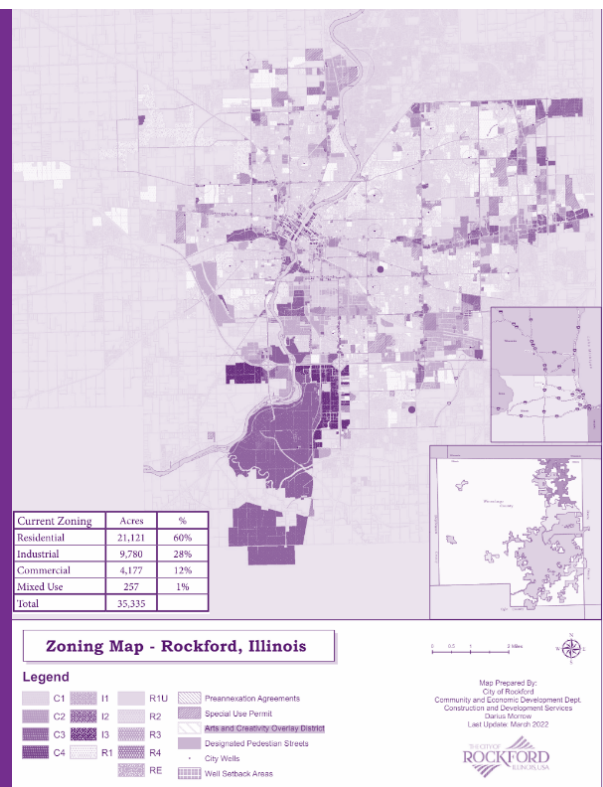
Advocacy & Policy:

Invest in the Rockford Region's cultural identity through funding, policy, and advocacy.

Implementing any of the priorities in this plan requires resources. Rockford agencies have identified priorities connected to arts and culture in several other regional plans, plus there is an existing foundation for such planning in initiatives such as the City of Rockford's Arts Overlay District, outlined in its zoning code. Rockford can also build on recent accomplishments such as the \$400,000 it received in 2023 from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, its position on the Illinois State Cultural District Advisory Committee, and the \$200,000 in public art funding that resulted from this planning process. These wins demonstrate support for the fundamental principle that culture deserves a seat at the policy table and requires ongoing funding streams to ensure that it thrives sustainably and benefits all of the Rockford Region's residents and visitors.

Strategy in action: Rockford Arts Overlay District

In 2009, the City of Rockford adopted an "Arts and Cultural Overlay District" layer to its downtown zoning. The designation was intended to promote development of artist live-work spaces, galleries, and studios throughout downtown Rockford. A broader goal of such initiatives is to inject investment into the downtown core, by incentivizing developers to build projects conducive to artists and creative workers. Many other cities have reinvigorated downtown areas through the arts. While there are often fears of gentrification, additional policies can be put in place to prevent displacement, while the economic vibrancy that often accompanies an increased concentration of artists can be beneficial to the broader community of residents and families. The Arts Overlay in turn can be part of a broader review of zoning and codes that can help spur entrepreneurship, small business development, and residential redevelopment. While the City of Rockford does include the overlay in its current code, thus far it has not been fully utilized, though it was the subject of an Arts Council roundtable event in June 2024, featuring TIF experts, Rockford zoning & planning department representatives, and Midland Bank.



*"The Rockford Region
has always had a
creative, innovator
mindset."*

—Public engagement participant



IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE



IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

This Implementation Guide was developed by the Rockford Region Cultural Plan's taskforces. It outlines specific strategies and actions the community can carry out to achieve the plan's priorities.

The implementation plans focus on four main components:

A. Timeframe: Each action under the strategy is given an estimated timeframe for initiation based on prioritized need for short- (one to three years), medium- (four to six years), and long- (seven to 10 years) term execution.

B. Leadership and potential partners: Specific entities in the Rockford Region were identified as necessary to the implementation of these strategies.

C. Outcomes: The outcomes listed under each strategy begin to identify metrics for evaluating achievement of the strategy.

D. Cost estimates: The cost estimates attributed to these individual actions are presented in a one- to five-dollar sign range and are indicated over the life of the 10-year plan.

COST ESTIMATE

\$ = \$0-\$25,000

\$ \$ = \$25,000-\$50,000

\$ \$ \$ = \$50,000-\$100,000

\$ \$ \$ \$ = \$100,000-\$250,000

\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ = \$250,000+



GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

This guide outlines the implementation strategies for the Rockford Region Cultural Plan, emphasizing the crucial role of organizations and community partners. Recognizing that successful implementation necessitates a collaborative effort, the plan actively engages a broad range of organizations. Both the full names and established acronyms of these partners will be utilized throughout the document to ensure clarity. This glossary works to provide clear definitions for all acronyms used within the implementation guide. This ensures transparent communication and facilitates easy comprehension for all stakeholders.

AE: Artist Ensemble Theater

CFNIL: Community Foundation of Northern Illinois

NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness

NICNE: Northern Illinois Center for Nonprofit Excellence

R1: Region 1 Planning Council

RAAC: Rockford Area Arts Council

RACVB: Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

RDC: Rockford Dance Company

RMTD: Rockford Mass Transit District

RPD: Rockford Park District

RPL: Rockford Public Library

RPS: Rockford Public Schools

YMCA: Young Men's Christian Association

YWCA: Young Women's Christian Association



PRIORITY 1 Invest in Rockford's cultural identity through funding, policy, and advocacy.

STRATEGY 1 Strengthen arts through policy: Cultivate a thriving arts scene through a strategic approach that leverages tax adjustments, like amusement levies, to generate dedicated arts funding, while mandating the inclusion of public art in infrastructure projects and building stronger relationships with the corporate sector.

Action/Cost	Short: 1-3 years	Medium: 4-6 years	Long: 7-10 years	Leaders	Potential Partners	Outcomes
1. Establish advocacy teams for all steps below \$				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Rockford Winnebago County Boone County Rockford Area Arts Council (RAAC) Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) Rockford Park District Cultural Venues Entertainment Venues Developers State Representatives Region 1 Planning Council (R1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy Teams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government Business Owners RAAC partners Arts Educators Partner orgs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased public investment in arts and culture Enhanced visitor spending on arts and culture Enhanced quality of life for residents Increased revenue generation for arts and culture Elevated awareness among decision-makers
2. Finalize language [underway by City of Rockford] and advocate for an increased amusement tax (i.e. including Hard Rock) to be designated for arts and culture; establish a process/structure for distribution \$						
3. Convene a stakeholder meeting with the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) and Rockford Park District (RPD) to explore opportunities for increased non-resident investment in arts & culture \$						
4. Research successful case studies for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expansion of amusement tax Utility bill "round up" program Percentage dedicated to art in new development agreements ("Percent for Art" program) County contributions to local arts agencies Public art policies Other cultural policies \$ 						
5. Develop pro forma revenue models for all possible options based on case studies \$						
6. Draft policy language to support arts such as Percent for Art and a Public Art Comprehensive Plan \$						
7. Ensure advocacy teams marshal policy(ies) through appropriate processes for city and county approval \$						


PRIORITY 1 Invest in Rockford's cultural identity through funding, policy, and advocacy.

STRATEGY 2 Develop sustainable funding models: Establish a trust to provide a sustainable funding stream for Rockford Region nonprofit arts and culture organizations.

Action/Cost	Short: 1-3 years	Medium: 4-6 years	Long: 7-10 years	Leaders	Potential Partners	Outcomes
1. Form a coalition of arts organization leaders + The Rockford Performing Arts Trust Coalition to apply for grants to support research of trust models for the Rockford Region. Performing arts trust group received 10K to do this and is working with a consultant for comps \$						
2. Conduct research of 2-3 trust models in similar communities \$				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rockford Performing Arts Trust Coalition, currently Rockford Symphony Orchestra (RSO) West Side Show Room Rockford Dance Company (RDC) Starlight Artists Ensemble (AE) Rockford Area Arts Council (RAAC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Rockford Winnebago County Rockford Area Arts Council (RAAC) Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) Northern Illinois Center for Nonprofit Excellence (NICNE) Community Foundation of Northern Illinois (CFNIL) Kjellstrom Family Foundation Blazer Foundation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Rockford Performing Arts Trust will be a source of reliable, robust, competition-free operating revenue for established 501(c)(3) performing arts organizations within the City of Rockford
3. Select a model + develop to fit Rockford's needs \$						
4. Evaluate the scope of organizations that will be included in the trust \$						
5. Determine funding sources and mechanisms \$						
6. Educate leaders and funders on the unique economics of different art mediums \$						
7. Apply for funding to support creation and management of the trust \$\$\$						
8. Contract high-profile champion(s), possibly Rockford Region alumni \$\$						


PRIORITY 1 Invest in Rockford's cultural identity through funding, policy, and advocacy.

STRATEGY 3 Elevate Rockford's cultural assets through coordinated marketing: Champion Rockford's vibrant arts scene by investing in a coordinated marketing campaign that ignites participation in existing offerings and celebrates local talent.

Action/Cost	Short: 1-3 years	Medium: 4-6 years	Long: 7-10 years	Leaders	Potential Partners	Outcomes
1. Identify optimal marketing campaign host and define marketing campaign ownership \$				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rockford Area Arts Council (RAAC) Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) RAMP Center for Independent Living Diversity, Equity, Access, Inclusivity (DEAI) Consultant News outlets Marketing consultant Web consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arts/Culture Institution Leaders Faith Institutions Neighborhood Groups/Associations Rock Valley College and Rockford University Northern Illinois University Community Centers Service Clubs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognized and respected central source for information related to all things arts and culture Users recommend hub to others (word of mouth) and report that the platform (UI/UX) is intuitive and helpful Arts/culture institutions take the time to populate the hub Web traffic indicates high and increasing visits from local and non-local users
2. Create scope for a multifaceted platform dedicated to fostering artistic engagement and community-building \$						
3. Develop a slogan for the region's arts and culture community/scene \$						
4. Develop RFP for creation of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing Campaign Online Platform \$\$						
5. Develop a language-inclusive marketing campaign with news stations, publications, and other media outlets to promote diverse community events \$						
6. Develop build-out and maintenance plan \$\$						


PRIORITY 1 Invest in Rockford's cultural identity through funding, policy, and advocacy.

STRATEGY 4 Unite Rockford Region arts leadership: Unite diverse leaders from the Rockford Region to advocate for the sector with a collaborative and cohesive voice.

Action/Cost	Short: 1-3 years	Medium: 4-6 years	Long: 7-10 years	Leaders	Potential Partners	Outcomes
1. Map the capacity gap of current arts and culture leadership and support in the community \$				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rockford Area Arts Council (RAAC) Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) City of Rockford Boone County Winnebago County Sub-Sector Roundtable "Chairs" Key Arts Institutions and Artist Leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Districts Arts Instructors Region 1 Planning Council (R1) Funders Donors Patrons Sponsors/Private Sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boost Advocacy: Secure leader commitments to champion regional arts initiatives Embed Arts in Planning: Integrate arts & culture into regional planning processes Diversify Funding: Implement strategies to increase funding for arts organizations (individual donors, ticket sales, corporate support, grants) Empower Artists & Orgs: Create a resource directory for training, funding, and professional development opportunities Empower Data-Driven Decisions: Establish a system for collecting and analyzing arts & culture data
2. Identify best structure for arts and culture leadership that represents the vast needs of the region \$						
3. Establish a taskforce to support implementation of structure \$\$						
4. Develop scope of leadership structure with a focus on funding for arts and culture \$						
5. Create Cultural Officer Liaison role within county government \$\$\$\$						



PRIORITY 2 Foster more inclusive cultural representation through greater collaboration and connection throughout Rockford.

STRATEGY 1 Connect through culture: Make cultural experiences accessible and welcoming to all, fostering a sense of belonging in the Rockford Region.

Action/Cost	Short: 1-3 years	Medium: 4-6 years	Long: 7-10 years	Leaders	Potential Partners	Outcomes
1. Facilitate workshops at different agencies to co-create events and programs across sectors, and learn about hosting agencies \$				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rockford Area Arts Council (RAAC) Rockford Mass Transit District (RMTD) Rockford Public Library (RPL) Region 1 Planning Council (R1) Rockford Park District (RPD) Blazer Foundation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Creatives Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) Local Organizations City Of Rockford Schools and Churches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New events, projects, art, and resources will be created to promote diversity and inclusivity in the Rockford area Agencies and groups will have more opportunities to connect and collaborate The long-term impact may result in greater diverse representation and more inclusive spaces in our community
2. Develop an annual State of Culture in Rockford with community organizations to update inclusivity and accessibility resources available and provide an overview of the arts and culture community in the region \$\$\$						
3. Expand grant opportunities for diverse artists and cultural practitioners to collaborate on projects \$\$\$\$						
4. Explore possibilities to provide free transportation to community events in partnership with RMTD/Rockford Public Library \$\$						



PRIORITY 2 Foster more inclusive cultural representation through greater collaboration and connection throughout Rockford.

STRATEGY 2 Integrate arts & culture into other sectors: Develop models for increased intersectional collaboration to increase arts & culture collaborations with small businesses, faith communities, health sectors, and government agencies. Additional sectors can be added in the future.

Action/Cost	Short: 1-3 years	Medium: 4-6 years	Long: 7-10 years	Leaders	Potential Partners	Outcomes
1. Identify and research potential partners within each sector (small businesses, faith communities, health sectors, government agencies) \$				● Rockford Area Arts Council (RAAC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sector Partners ● Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) ● City of Rockford ● Rockford Art Museum (RAM) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increased collaboration: Number of partnerships and joint projects implemented ● Enhanced engagement: Increased participation in arts & culture activities and volunteer recruitment ● Economic impact: Revenue generated and increased business for partner organizations ● Social impact: Improved well-being, reduced social isolation, and increased community cohesion ● Resource development: Creation of resources for wider collaboration ● Increased visual art in local agencies/corps ● Consortium of Private Sector Arts Advocates, foundation for Arts and Culture Trust Fund ● Creates community support around shared theme
2. Assess the needs and interests of potential partners within each sector \$						
3. Based on the needs assessments, develop specific models for collaboration with each sector such as common themes for programming across organizations \$						
4. Implement pilot projects with selected partners from each sector to test the effectiveness of the developed collaboration models \$\$						
5. Share successful collaboration models and best practices with other potential partners within each sector \$						



PRIORITY 2 Foster more inclusive cultural representation through greater collaboration and connection throughout Rockford.

STRATEGY 3 Embrace our cultural identity: Celebrate the diversity of the Rockford Region, engaging people from all walks of life and backgrounds.

Action/Cost	Short: 1-3 years	Medium: 4-6 years	Long: 7-10 years	Leaders	Potential Partners	Outcomes
1. Organize targeted events and programs specifically appealing to different age groups, ethnicities, sexual orientation, gender identities, and cultural backgrounds \$				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rockford Area Arts Council (RAAC) Northern Illinois Center for Nonprofit Excellence (NICNE) Rockford Music Academy The Studio Artist Ensemble Theater (AE) Rockford Dance Company (RDC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liam Foundation YMCA Rockford Public Library (RPL) City of Rockford United Way Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) Lifescape Community Services Carpenter's Place YWCA United Way - 211 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New events and programs will specifically cater to groups and individuals of diverse backgrounds Underserved communities will enjoy relevant events, programs, and resources that may have previously excluded them The long-term impact may be that all individuals in the Rockford area feel valued and represented in the arts and culture community Contact list expansion: share lists and borrow lists to ensure representation
2. Partner with social service agencies to reach out to low-income communities and connect them with cultural resources \$						
3. Partner with senior centers and assisted living facilities to provide cultural programming and social interaction opportunities \$						



PRIORITY 2 Foster more inclusive cultural representation through greater collaboration and connection throughout Rockford.

STRATEGY 4 Invest in Rockford's cultural engine: Provide centralized professional development support and organizational training resources, fueling Rockford's cultural initiatives and empowering them to thrive.

Action/Cost	Short: 1-3 years	Medium: 4-6 years	Long: 7-10 years	Leaders	Potential Partners	Outcomes
1. Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to identify the professional development needs of Rockford's cultural organizations \$				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rockford Area Arts Council (RAAC) - Business of Art program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arts and Culture Orgs The Northern Illinois Center for Nonprofit Excellence (NICNE) Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) City of Rockford Chamber of Commerce, Black Chamber, Hispanic Chamber, Arabic Chamber Local Media Outlets Universities/Colleges Rockford Public Library Professional Associations Community Centers RAMP Center for Independent Living IGNITE National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals and organizations will have the resources needed to plan and promote arts and culture events These resources will now be easy to obtain in a centralized location The long-term impact may be creating an expectation that all events be made accessible and inclusive
2. Develop training programs/series based on the needs assessment and focused on cultural competencies \$\$\$						
3. Partner with existing organizations and institutions to leverage expertise and resources for training delivery \$						
4. Ensure training programs are accessible and affordable for all cultural organizations and practitioners in Rockford, regardless of size or budget \$\$\$						



PRIORITY 3 Increase creative opportunities for youth and arts education.

STRATEGY 1 Meet youth where they are: Expand arts programs to reach youth year-round in schools, after-school programs, community centers, and justice-involved programs.

Action/Cost	Short: 1-3 years	Medium: 4-6 years	Long: 7-10 years	Leaders	Potential Partners	Outcomes
1. Identify organizations providing before/after school programs \$				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rockford Area Arts Council (RAAC) Rockford Park District (RPD) Rockford Public Schools Private Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program/Finance directors at cultural organizations Volunteers Municipalities Rock House Kids Northwest Community Center Washington Park Community Center Patriots' Gateway Boys and Girls Clubs Fairgrounds B&G Club 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organized conversation between youth-serving agencies and arts organizations is needed to make sure that programming and services are created with equity. A comprehensive list of youth programming that happens outside of schools Book time with teachers for Institute Day(s) to provide integrative resources and artist recommendations
2. Expand outreach beyond traditional school settings to identify and engage youth who may not be readily accessible through conventional channels \$						
3. Conduct in-depth consultations with identified youth populations to directly understand their strengths, needs, and aspirations \$\$						
4. Form a team with varied backgrounds and expertise to analyze the collected feedback from underserved youth populations \$						
5. Utilize qualitative and quantitative analysis methods to extract key insights, identify recurring themes, and understand the specific needs \$\$						
6. Define clear and measurable objectives for the arts and cultural programs designed for underserved youth populations \$\$						
7. Based on the established objectives and performance indicators, design pilot programs that directly address the identified needs and aspirations of underserved youth populations \$\$\$						
8. Celebrate successes and share the results transparently with the public, including the target youth populations, stakeholders, and funders \$						



PRIORITY 3 Increase creative opportunities for youth and arts education.

STRATEGY 2 Build arts into learning: Partner with school boards, administrators, educators, retirement programs, and caregivers to integrate arts into all disciplines, in private and public programs.

Action/Cost	Short: 1-3 years	Medium: 4-6 years	Long: 7-10 years	Leaders	Potential Partners	Outcomes
1. Strengthen CAPA and arts education programs throughout the region \$\$\$\$\$				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rockford Area Arts Council (RAAC) Rockford University, Center for Learning Strategies RPS 205 RAMP Center for Independent Living IGNITE National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rosecrance 317 Art Collective Brian Harrington Violet Johnicker Mayor's Office CEV Project Winnebago County Community Mental Health Board Region 1 Planning Council (R1) Goodwill of Northern Illinois Workforce Connection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanded Arts Access: Regular arts programming would be available throughout the community for residents and youth, beyond school settings Interdisciplinary Initiatives: Arts projects would connect to other community priorities like history, well-being, and family heritage Enhanced Community Engagement: A central theme would allow additional organizations to participate, broadening the program's reach to families and individuals
2. Analyze successful models of arts integration in education from other communities to establish relevant benchmarks for these programs \$						
3. Collaborate with organizations serving populations with limited access to arts experiences, such as homeless shelters to develop and deliver targeted arts programs \$						
4. Develop resource kits containing arts integration projects readily accessible to various community organizations \$						
5. Organize training programs for employees of community organizations, equipping them with the skills and knowledge to effectively implement arts projects within their programs \$\$						



PRIORITY 3 Increase creative opportunities for youth and arts education.

STRATEGY 3 Align artistic collaboration: Coordinate Region-wide themed programming, open to all, that can showcase various art forms and perspectives.

Action/Cost	Short: 1-3 years	Medium: 4-6 years	Long: 7-10 years	Leaders	Potential Partners	Outcomes
1. Lean into themes that allow for non-traditional arts to be strategically taught/embraced \$				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rockford Area Arts Council (RAAC) THINK BIG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Centers Anchor Rockford Region Arts Organizations Rockford Public Library (RPL) Boys & Girls Club Rockford Park District (RPD) & Partners Liam Foundation Cleta's Stay and Sew Three Ravens Ceramics Tattoo Artist Community Aestheticians- Costume/Event/Theatre Hair and Make-Up Culinary Artists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand The Community's Definition of Art Increase Youth Access to Art Forms
2. Work strategically to identify and include creative endeavors (i.e. storytelling, gardening, movement, step dance, creative placemaking, new technology, animation, sound engineering, poetry, textile arts) \$						
3. Identify community members who have expertise and connections to non-traditional art forms (contract and pay these people for their work/expertise) \$\$						
4. Launch a social media campaign to get the community to weigh in on what kinds of art should be included, and what is already going on that we should know about/work with \$\$						
5. Monitor program participation, resource access, and the effectiveness of arts integration initiatives within community organizations \$\$						



PRIORITY 4 Activate neighborhoods and underutilized spaces with arts and culture.

STRATEGY 1

Art everywhere: Infuse neighborhood infrastructure with public art installations, murals, and artistic elements throughout the region to spark vibrancy and community pride.

Action/Cost	Short: 1-3 years	Medium: 4-6 years	Long: 7-10 years	Leaders	Potential Partners	Outcomes
1. Establish a formal partnership with the Rockford Mass Transit District (RMTD) to explore the feasibility of wrapping buses with murals or other art installations \$				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rockford Area Arts Council (RAAC) Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) Rockford Mass Transit District (RMTD) Rockford Park District (RPD) Rockford Public Library (RPL) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local arts organizations Tour Operators Transportation Providers Community Organizations Funders Volunteers Neighborhood Groups Rockford Art Museum (RAM) Tinker Swiss Cottage Museum Midway Village Museum Burpee Museum of Natural History Erlander Home Museum Elmhurst History Museum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boost Art Awareness: Elevate the public profile of local art and artists through engaging initiatives Strengthen Community Pride: Celebrate local artistic heritage and foster a stronger sense of identity within the community Drive Tourism & Economic Growth: Attract visitors with art-themed bus tours, potentially increasing foot traffic and supporting local businesses Spark Community Connection: Utilize art tours as a platform for resident and visitor interaction, fostering dialogue and strengthening community bonds Resident-Driven Tours: Gather resident input through surveys to identify landmarks, green spaces, and homes for inclusion in neighborhood tours
2. Determine the specific routes for the art-wrapped buses, considering factors like community engagement and potential impact \$						
3. Secure funding for the project and manage the logistics of bus-wrapping, ensuring high-quality execution and adherence to safety regulations \$\$\$						
4. Monitor the program's effectiveness and gather public feedback to inform future iterations \$						
5. Collaborate with local arts organizations, tour operators, and transportation providers to offer the curated tours effectively \$						



PRIORITY 4 **Activate neighborhoods and underutilized spaces with arts and culture.**

STRATEGY 2 Activate public spaces: Transform parks, spaces, and vacant lots into vibrant community hubs through cultural events, performances, and programming.

Action/Cost	Short: 1-3 years	Medium: 4-6 years	Long: 7-10 years	Leaders	Potential Partners	Outcomes
1. Partner with local artists and organizations to host events like chalk art festivals, community mural painting initiatives, or temporary art installations in parks \$				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rockford Park District (RPD) Domingos en el Parque South Main Mercado The Ethnic Heritage Museum Rockford Area Arts Council (RAAC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Artists Local Arts Organizations Community Centers Neighborhood Associations Sound Engineers Park Planning Commission The Music Academy Landscape Architect Teaching Artists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boosted Economic Activity: Increased foot traffic translates to potential business revenue growth Elevated Cultural Tourism: Creates the potential for attracting tourists and enhancing the city's cultural vibrancy Enhanced Funding Opportunities: Increased cultural vibrancy can attract grant funding and sponsorships Strengthened Community Identity: Fosters a stronger sense of place and community pride
2. Secure funding and resources to provide necessary art supplies and equipment for these events, ensuring accessibility and participation \$\$\$						
3. Explore existing models of musical playgrounds and collaborate with designers and sound engineers to create unique and engaging installations \$\$\$						
4. Partner with Park District or community centers to identify suitable locations for these playgrounds \$						
5. Secure funding for Park District construction and installation \$\$\$\$						



PRIORITY 4 **Activate neighborhoods and underutilized spaces with arts and culture.**

STRATEGY 3 Develop strong relationships with real estate sector and leverage Arts Overlay District: Coordinate with developers and landlords to utilize private spaces for cultural activation and live-work-make spaces.

Action/Cost	Short: 1-3 years	Medium: 4-6 years	Long: 7-10 years	Leaders	Potential Partners	Outcomes
1. Research and compile a prioritized list of real estate developers, property management companies, and the City of Rockford, focusing on underutilized spaces, vacant storefronts, rooftops, or mixed-use properties suitable for cultural activations; analyze portfolios and prioritize based on suitability and experience with creative projects \$				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rockford Area Arts Council (RAAC) Region 1 Planning Council (R1) Real Estate Developers and Landlords River District City of Rockford Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) Rockford Apartment Association (RAA) Illinois Landlord Association (ILA) Rockford Art Museum (RAM) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural Organizations Local Artists Local Creative Businesses St. Peter's Cathedral St. Bernadette's Broad Methodist Our Savior's Lutheran 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fostering Strong Partnerships: The Rockford region can leverage private spaces for cultural activation, enriching the community's cultural landscape and potentially generating economic benefits for all involved parties Promote it to real estate developers; market it to creatives; showcase its development thru the RACVB visitorship efforts
2. Identify benefits of cultural partnerships and organize meetings and presentations for key real estate players \$						
3. Bridge the gap between real estate partners and local arts organizations or artists, facilitating mutually beneficial collaborations for specific projects \$						
4. Initiate pilot projects with willing partners to demonstrate the feasibility and positive impact of cultural activations in private spaces \$\$						
5. Activate Arts Overlay District and explore viability and potential inclusion of spaces in the district \$\$						
6. Promote visual art installation in the corporate sector by elevating the Rockford Art Museum's permanent collection leasing program \$\$\$						



PRIORITY 4 Activate neighborhoods and underutilized spaces with arts and culture.

STRATEGY 4 Cultivate neighborhood champions: Recruit and train passionate residents as “Neighborhood Ambassadors” to lead arts initiatives, organize events, and connect neighbors.

Action/Cost	Short: 1-3 years	Medium: 4-6 years	Long: 7-10 years	Leaders	Potential Partners	Outcomes
1. Partner with community organizations, neighborhood associations, or social media groups to identify individuals with a strong interest in the arts and a passion for their community; for example, cultivate public art custodians among nearby neighbors, to grow into becoming potential ambassadors \$						
2. Host informational sessions or workshops to explain the Neighborhood Ambassador program, its goals, and the expected responsibilities of participants \$				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rockford Area Arts Council (RAAC) City of Rockford's Neighborhood Specialist Alderpersons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Organizations Neighborhood Associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of arts initiatives in various neighborhoods
3. Establish a clear application and selection process to identify residents who demonstrate strong leadership potential, networking skills, and a commitment to their neighborhoods \$				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Foundation of Northern Illinois (CFNIL) City of Rockford City of Loves Park City of Machesney Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Artists Rockford Public Library (RPL) Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) Neighborhood Ambassadors Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced community participation and ownership of events Strengthened neighborhood networks Grassroots leadership development
4. Provide comprehensive training on leadership skills, event planning, budgeting, and effective communication to equip Neighborhood Ambassadors with the necessary tools \$\$				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Roscoe City of Rockton 		
5. Collaborate with Neighborhood Ambassadors to identify their areas of interest, available resources in their neighborhoods, and potential arts initiatives they can lead \$						



PRIORITY 4 Activate neighborhoods and underutilized spaces with arts and culture.

STRATEGY 5 Unify neighborhood identities: Develop and support a collaborative process with neighbors to create unique signage and branding for neighborhoods.

Action/Cost	Short: 1-3 years	Medium: 4-6 years	Long: 7-10 years	Leaders	Potential Partners	Outcomes
1. Activate Neighborhood Ambassadors Council to lead the effort for signage and branding for each neighborhood \$						
2. Conduct Neighborhood Forums and surveys through zip code/addresses to collect feedback on potential locations of signs & branding approaches informed by their neighborhood's identity \$\$				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rockford Area Arts Council (RAAC) • Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) • City of Rockford • Boone County • Winnebago County • Neighborhood Ambassadors Council • Public Works • Neighborhood Groups • Community Centers • Local Media Outlets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Artists • Neighborhood Associations • Marketing Support • Local Businesses • Rockford Public Library (RPL) • Community Centers • Nextdoor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened Neighborhood Identity: Increased pride and a stronger sense of community cohesion • Economic Revitalization: Potential for economic development and neighborhood beautification projects • Enhanced Historical Appreciation: Improved awareness and appreciation of unique neighborhood histories and identities
3. Determine the types of signage and branding materials needed (e.g., welcome signs, street banners, neighborhood maps) \$						
4. Secure necessary permits from the city and funding for signage installation \$\$\$						
5. Assign responsibility for ongoing maintenance and upkeep of signage and branding elements \$\$\$						



PRIORITY 4 **Activate neighborhoods and underutilized spaces with arts and culture.**

STRATEGY 6 Develop a signature cultural space: Collaboratively create a new signature cultural space for community use in the Rockford Region.

Action/Cost	Short: 1-3 years	Medium: 4-6 years	Long: 7-10 years	Leaders	Potential Partners	Outcomes
1. Conduct a Needs Assessment for spaces in Rockford Region \$				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rockford Area Arts Council (RAAC) Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) City of Rockford Boone County Winnebago County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Armory Midway Theatre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs assessment will identify and prioritize viable arts and cultural spaces within Rockford neighborhoods, facilitating a phased implementation Feasibility study will create a space utilization plan and analyze funding options, leading to informed decision-making for the long-term development of arts and culture in the region
2. Identify viable spaces and possible phased approaches beginning with spaces directly in neighborhoods \$						
3. Conduct a feasibility study that includes a space plan and funding analysis \$\$\$\$						



APPENDICES



APPENDICES

A. Acknowledgements

A-1

B. Cultural Asset Inventory

B-1

DRAFT



A. Acknowledgements

FUNDING PARTNERS

Rockford Area Arts Council
Community Foundation of Northern Illinois
Rockford Area Convention and Visitors Bureau
City of Rockford
UW Health
Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA)

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

Rockford Park District
Region 1 Planning Council
Transform Rockford
Winnebago County
Northern Illinois Center for Nonprofit Excellence
State Representatives West, Sosnowski, and Vella
State Senators Stadelman and Syverson

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Bethany Bohn, ASM Rockford
Armando Cardenas, State Farm Insurance-Domingos en el Parque
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Gretchen Gilmore, ASM Rockford
John Groh, Director - RACVB
Wally Haas, Director - Transform Rockford
Beth Howard, Friends of the Coronado
Sarah Leys, City of Rockford
Mary McNamara Bernsten, Director - RAAC
Tremayne Meadows, ER815

Yash Musabji, Icon Studios
Danielle Potter, Rockford Park District
Vic Rivera, Artist-Influencer
Dan Ross, Director - CFNIL
Jay Sandine, Director - Rockford Park District
Melissa Santillan, Beauty by Melissa Santillan
Jennifer Smith, CFNIL
Margo Stedman, Rockford University
Jackie Sundquist, RAMP
Manny Tang, Regional Artist
Diego Valdivia, YWCA Northwestern Illinois
Thomas McNamara, Mayor City of Rockford

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Courtney Geiger, Goodwill of Northern Illinois
David Gomel, Rosecrance
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Joyce Higgins, Booker T Washington Community Center
Dr Sheila Hill, Think Big
Ehren Jarrett, Rockford Public Schools
Ed McCullough, The Element
Cathy McDermott, Rock River Development Partnership
Jocelyn McLaughlin, Ethnic Heritage Museum



Rockford Region Cultural Plan

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John Phelps, Rockford Local Development Corp
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Ashley Sarver, Studio GWA
Chip Stoner, Rockford Boys & Girls Club
Tiffani Weatherly, Rockford Public Schools
Lisa Wogan, Economic Development Specialist

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Nick Barelli, Moon Dog Theater
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Ashley Brown, Rockford Memorial Hospital
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Mychall Cornejo, BMO Center
Rhonda Dailing, Burpee Natural History Museum
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Jeremiah Griffin, Pastor - Halsted Road Baptist Church
Laura Gomel, 317 Art Collective
Kaylene Groh, Director - Rockford Promise
Ken Hansen, Pastor - Life Church
Amanda Hamaker, Phantom Regiment
David Hightower, Pastor - New Emmanuel Baptist Church
Rog James, Pastor OSLC
Carrie Johnson, Rockford Art Museum
Matthew Johnson, Reverend Unitarian Universalist Church
Violet Johnicker, Reverend - Rockford Urban Ministries and Brooke Road United Methodist Church
Kimberly Johnsen, Natural Land Institute
Nicole Landreth, Womanspace Coordinator, Artist
Ashley Lange
Frank Langhoff, Faith leader
Mary Gubbe Lee, NAMI
Sarah Leys, City of Rockford
Teraza Malwal
William Martin, Spirit of Truth Church
Jenny Mathews, Artist
Curt McKay, Director of LGBTQ Resource Center

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Barbara McNamara, Artist
Gina Meeks, Rockford Alderperson
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Patrick O'Keefe, Midway Village
Anqunette Parham, Director of Health and Human Services -City of Rockford
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Danielle Potter, Rockford Park District Department
Andre Quintanilla, City of Loves Park
Rachel Bagne, Dietician
Antonio Ramirez, Alignment Rockford and Coalition of Latino Leaders
Nancy Ramos, Carpenter's Place



Rockford Region Cultural Plan

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Pam Clarke Reidenbach, Northern Illinois Center for Nonprofit Excellence
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Jorge Rivera, Rockford Community Trust
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Josiah Sjostrom, City Stage Studios
Sonji, Pastor
Laura Speer, Anderson Japanese Gardens - Marketing & Community Engagement
Margo Stedman, Rockford Symphony Orchestra
Miranda Swanson, Remedies
Shiraz Tata, Psychologist
Asha Kasaraneni Tewani, Dietician
Julie Thomas, Director - Rockford Symphony Orchestra
Jacob Urbelis, Mercy Health
Janelle Vaiden, Collins Aerospace
Joanne Velazquez
David Weber
Anne Weerda, Burpee Natural History Museum
Andrew Wright, Rockford Chamber of Commerce
Sarah Wolf, Discovery Center Museum

MARCH 10, 2023- PRELIMINARY STAKEHOLDER MEETING

Sarah Axelson, RAM
Ginny Barnett, RPS 205
Jas Bilich, Winnebago County

Bob Blosser, Bennie's Gallery
Jacob Bradt, Rockford Buzz
Chris Brady, Starlight Theatre
Armando J. Cardenas, Rockford Area Arts Council - Board Member
Clark Colborn, Clark Colborn Band
Jessica Dobson, Rock&Roll Institute
Laura Eakman, Rockford Music Academy
Tim Farrell, Phantom Regiment
Alix Fox, Swedish Historical Society
Gretchen Gilmore, RAVE/ASM
Roni Golan, The Underground Gallery
John Groh, RACVB
Stephanie Hartman, Tinker Swiss Cottage Museum
Jamie Johannsen, Rockford Dance Company - Board Member
Carly Marinaro, MainFrame
Jenny Mathews, Rockford Illustrating
Patrick Mattison, Artist
Patrick O'Keefe, Midway Village
Laurie Oliver, Artists' Ensemble
Miguel Pascual, Hard Rock - Rockford
Asia Peters, Artist/Severson Dells
Danielle Potter, Rockford Park District
Caitlin Pusateri, Rockford Chamber
Pam Clark Reidenbach, NICNE
Micky Rosenquist, Musician - Underground Squirrel Studio
Ann Rundall, Eliminate Racism 815
Moises Sandoval, Elev8 Culture
Amanda Smith, Rock Valley College
Jennifer Smith, Community Foundation of Northern Illinois
Shiraz Tata, Inscape Collective & Belonging Initiative
Spitty Tata, Transform Rockford
Sarah Wolf, Discovery Center



TASKFORCES

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Kyle Bevers
Marge Bevers
Jhazmine Blakely-Sterling
Chris Brady
Eric Brown
Jen Cacciapaglia
Armando Cardenas
Adam Cengiz
Barb Chidley
Jordan DeWilde
Francisca French
Paulette Gilbert
Gretchen Gilmore
Jennifer Grabowski
John Groh
Valerie Hanserd
Brian Harrington
Beth Howard
Carrie Johnson
Kim Johnson
Epic Jones

Emily Klonicki
Sarah Leys
Jessica MacDonald
Tom McNamara
Trey Meadows
Zoe Norwood
Patrick O'Keefe
Valerie Olafson
Danielle Potter
Jaime Salgado
Melisa Santillan
Jennifer Smith
Virginia Smith
Margo Stedman
Jackie Sundquist
David Sydney
Julie Thomas
Janelle Vaiden
Diego Valdivia
Ann Wasser
Maurice West

And thank you to all who attended the public town hall meetings and community conversations.



B. Cultural Asset Inventory

Annual Event/ Festival

Art Guild	Greenwich Village Art Fair
Bloom Festival	The Mosaic World Film Fest
DeKalb Corn Fest	ArtScene
Rockford Writers' Guild	

Community Center, Cultural Space and Service Organizations

Bennie's Cleaners	Mendelssohn Performing Arts Center
LZ Peace Memorial	Midway Theater
Pearl & Sons Furniture Design	Mr. Belvidere's Ballroom Dance Club and the Marquee Dance Studio
Screw City Steel at Cedar and S. Main	Pec Playhouse Theatre
SPARK! Mosaic and Neighborhood Improvement	Rock Prairie Performing Arts Association
The Salvation Army Rockford Temple Corps Community Center	Rockford City Market
PM Wood Service	Rockford Midtown Market
YMCA of Rock River Valley	Rockford Woman's Club
Swedish American Riverfront YMCA	RPL Nordlof Center
Washington Park Community Center	Starlight and Studio Theatre
Booker Washington Community Center	The Norwegian
The Coronado Theater	The West Side Show Room
Roudnev Ballet Training	Womanspace
Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau	Hendricks Center for the Arts
Guanajuato Rockford	Kilbuck Creek
Boys and Girls Club of Rockford	Rockton Community Center
Harlem Community Center	JR Kortman Center for Design
Northwest Community Center	Ms. LeMaster's School of Dance
Patriots Gateway Community Center	North End City Market
Boone County Arts Council	Tawdry Toast Artcade
Junior League Rockford	Rockford Dance Company
Monroe Arts Center, Inc.	Rockford Harmony Singing Society
Gallery 1	The McPherson
Elizabeth Reinholz Theatre	Rockford Area Arts Council
Encore! Fine Arts Gallery	Hurricane Harbor Rockford



Creative Business

6 Finger Tattoo
A Pigment In Time Tattoo Shop
BAAM Signs and Designs
Baker Recording Studio
Bedroom Recording Studios
Blest Art
Clyde's Comic & Fantasy Shop
Coliseum of Art, Antiques & Americana
Corner Studio
Delicious Ink Tattoo & Piercing
Drewelow's House of Books
Durand Charm
Edgebrook Center/Shops
GEM
Gold Rose Tattoo Gallery
Guzzardo Performance Music
Happily Handmade 815
House of Pain Tattoo co.
In Print Professional Writers
Inscape Collective
J.R. Kortman Center for Design
Maze Books
Octane
Odds & Ends
Old Sandstone Gallery & Arts Center
Pecatonica Antique & Collectible Flea Markets
Roc x Royal Studios
Rockford Art Deli
Rockford Music
Sacred Art Tattoo's
Sandi Kohn at Medicine Man Creative
Signature Ink & Beauty
Stay Rad
Studio Hidalgo Photo & Video Productions
T.V.R. RECORDING STUDIOS
Tall Tattoo
Tattoo Bob's
Tattooed Pawn
THE BOOK STALL OF ROCKFORD INC.
The Devils Grin
The Hub art gallery
The Underground Art Gallery
Three Ravens Pottery
Toad Hall Books and Records
Underground Art Kumas
Walldog Murals

Cultural Facility

AR Workshop Rockford
Cathouse Studio
Cin's Treasures Ceramics & Art Studio
City Stage Studios
Countdown Records Inc
Culture Shock Records
Fatherless
317 Art Collaborative
Adamany Art & Design
Art Matters Co-op
Beloit Art Center
BMO Center
Farm To Market Entertainment
Maddox Theatre
Sinnissippi Park Music Shell
The Norwegian Artist Lofts
The Starline Factory
The Studio
Rockford Theatre
SmARTy Pants Rockford Art Studio
The Music Academy
Rockford MakerSpace



Educational Facility/ Organization

Ellis Elementary

I live in Art

Rock Valley College

Rockford University Clark Arts Center

Jacques and Maria Tango

NIU Rockford

Solee Music Studio

Stix It to the Man Percussion

Historical Building/ Heritage Site

Black Hawk Statue

Blue Star Memorial Highway Rest Area

Cherry Valley Historical Society

Gold Star Memorial Bridge

Swedish Historical Society

The Road House

USS Tuscaloosa Anchor

Veterans Memorial Circle

Veterans Memorial Hall

Victory Street

Natural Heritage

Anderson Japanese Gardens

Atwood Center

Crossroads Blues Society / Lyran Park

Davis Park at Founders Landing

Gensler Gardens

Harrison Market Gardens

Healing Gardens

Highland Park

J Carlson Growers Inc

Jane Addams International Peace Garden

Jeremiah Development Community Garden

Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden

La Paloma Gardens

Levings Lake

Lockwood Park & Trailside Equestrian Centre

Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens

Rock Cut State Park

Rock Valley Garden Center Inc

Rockford Arboretum

Rockford Park District

Roots & Wings Urban Farm at Blackhawk Courts

Searls Park

Severson Dells Nature Center

Sinnissippi Gardens and Park

Libraries and Museums

Oregon Public Library District

Rockford Public Library

Burpee Museum of Natural History

Byron Museum Theatre

Discovery Center Museum

Erlander Home Museum

Ethnic Heritage Museum

Frank Lloyd Wright Laurent House

Midway Village Museum

New Genres Art Space

Nordic Cultural Center

Oregon Depot Museum
Riverfront Museum Park
Rockford Art Museum
Ruby Nash Museum

The American Museum of Junk
Tinker Swiss Cottage Museum and Gardens
Wright Museum of Art

Performing Arts Groups, Public Art and Individual Artists

Aloha Hula Girls
Andrea's Dance Factory
Art Casting of Il Inc
Arthur Murray Dance Studio
Artistic Ambiance Murals
Artists' Ensemble Theater
Beauty in Motion Dance Arts
Byron Civic Theatre
Creative Movement Company
Dance Tonight
Danny'z Fitness & Dance
Evolve Dance Co
Fab Dance & Fitness
Forest City Swing
IACA Special Projects mural at W. State & Winnebago by Ryan Lape
Just For Kix
Kantorei
Kishwaukee Valley Concert Band
Land of Lincoln Theatre Organ Society
Main Street Players of Boone County

Mary Lee's School of Dance
Moon Dog Theatre
Mosaic Towers at Cedar and S. Main
Mural by Jenny Roesel Ustick & Atalie Gagnet at E. State & Water St.
Mural by Thomas Agran on Madison St.
Mural by Yulia Avgustinovich at W. State & Court St.
Murals by Eddaviel and Lisa Frost on Madison St.
Nancie King Mertz & Art DeTriumph
Phantom Regiment
Richard Cody Janes Studio of Fine Art
Rockford Riverwalk
Rockford Women's Suffrage Plaza
South Main St. Mural Corridor, murals by Jenny Ustick & Atalie Gagnet, Anthony Lewellen, Rafael Blanco
Stars of Light-Stepping Stones of Rockford
Steps To Grace Dance Academy
The Arts Connection

Places of Worship

Bahai Center
Brooke Road United Methodist Church
City First Church

St. Peter and Paul Church



ROCKFORD REGION CULTURAL PLAN

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LordCultural



Company/Lord-
Cultural-Resources



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