

The background of the entire page is a grayscale photograph of a construction site. In the lower right, a worker wearing a hard hat and safety gear is using a jackhammer on a concrete surface. The overall scene is somewhat hazy and overcast.

GRMN

CREATES

an arts and culture
roadmap

City of Grand Rapids, MN
Grand Rapids Arts and Culture Commission
Spring 2015

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GRMN Creates

an arts and culture roadmap



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Dear Friends,

As Mayor of Grand Rapids, it gives me great pleasure to present *GRMN Creates: An Arts and Culture Roadmap*. This plan provides a roadmap for the City of Grand Rapids and the Grand Rapids Arts and Culture Commission to follow over the next 10 years, as we as a city work to nurture and grow our arts and culture offerings.

The arts and culture have always been an integral part of our city. From the Minnesota Forest History Center, and the Judy Garland Museum, to the Reif Performing Arts Center, and MacRostie Art Center, Grand Rapids is known for the strength and diversity of its cultural organizations and institutions.

This plan arose from the input and effort of its citizens. Through interviews, focus groups, an online survey, and community meetings, the team worked to gather the ideas and visions of the City's residents. The result is a plan that gives direction to the City in setting policy and allotting the resources needed to advance municipal arts and culture. The plan also recognizes the role diversity plays in a creative economy and highlights the importance of creating a welcoming environment to all who live here and visit.

Our City's cultural life is the cornerstone of its identity and a fundamental component of its economy. Whether it is the jobs created by cultural organizations such as the Reif Performing Arts Center, or the cultural vitality supported through the efforts of our many artists, writers, and performers, our economy and our City's cultural vitality are intimately linked.

We encourage you to read the plan, get inspired, and get involved.

Sincerely,



Dale Adams
Mayor
City of Grand Rapids
Minnesota



Introduction

Executive Summary

The Importance of Arts and Culture for Grand Rapids

Arts and cultural offerings have always been a core component of Grand Rapids’ distinctiveness and an important component of its economy and its ability to attract creative entrepreneurs to the area. Area residents have a strong understanding of the vital role that arts and culture play in promoting the area’s unique identity. Ninety-four percent of GRMN Creates community survey respondents recognized the important role that arts and cultural activities play in improving quality of life for the area.

Much of Grand Rapids’ strength as a city lies in the depth and breadth of the organizations, institutions, and individual artists that call Grand Rapids home. From cultural organizations, such as the Minnesota Forest History Center and the Judy Garland Museum that celebrate Grand Rapids’ unique heritage, to the renowned Reif Performing Arts Center that draws people from across the region, arts and cultural offerings help the City’s standing as an attractive place to live, work, and visit.

Grand Rapids’ residents also recognize that the arts are not confined behind institutional walls, but that citizens’ own personal development (from school age through to retirement) is inextricably linked to access to and support for creative expression. The fact that the City is home to an array of community-serving organizations—two choruses, a symphony orchestra, student dance and strings programs, a community theater, a community radio and television station, and First Friday Art Walks—underscores this point.

The Planning Process

To help focus emerging ideas and aspirations for the development of the City’s arts and culture sectors, the Grand Rapids Arts and Culture Commission brought in a consultant team to work with local residents to develop a set of recommendations to guide the City’s efforts. Over a nine-month process of community engagement, a broad swath of Grand Rapids residents expressed their desires and recommendations. From the directors of local arts and culture organizations, to citizens who gave their input at community meetings and through the project’s online survey, the ideas held within this plan represent the wisdom of the many Grand Rapids’ citizens who work to make the city a vital and inviting place.

Major Opportunities

To help advance the City's goals for arts and culture, this plan outlines five major goals, which capture the major themes that emerged through the public planning process:

GOAL 1 - Enhance Grand Rapids' distinctive identity through arts and culture: Grand Rapids has a unique history and heritage, along with a diverse set of cultural institutions and individual artists. This distinctiveness attracts and keeps residents, visitors, highly skilled workers, and entrepreneurs.

- OBJECTIVE: Connect arts, heritage, and the natural environment to help promote Grand Rapids' distinctive identity
- OBJECTIVE: Promote Grand Rapids' distinctive local cultural and arts identity
- OBJECTIVE: Foster regional networking to explore opportunities for collaborative programming and promotion

Goal 2 - Expand opportunities for lifelong arts learning: An essential component of any healthy community is the opportunity to create and express – both individually and collectively. Fostering opportunities to develop and foster creative skills helps ensure a dynamic and vibrant city in both the present and the future.

- OBJECTIVE: Youth—Celebrate and expand opportunities for in-school and outside-of-school arts learning
- OBJECTIVE: Adults & Community—Increase access to arts-based enrichment and healing

Goal 3 - Foster inclusive arts and cultural offerings and expand access: As a city, Grand Rapids does not escape the strong socio-economic divisions that define our national economy. Cities need to take strong policy and programmatic steps to ensure that all citizens have equal access to municipal arts and culture resources and foster a welcoming and inclusive environment.

- OBJECTIVE: Facilitate community spaces and programming that welcome the entire community
- OBJECTIVE: Increase the amount of inclusive arts and cultural offerings through public-private partnerships
- OBJECTIVE: Expand arts and cultural offerings to all people, regardless of family income

Goal 4 - Use the arts to animate the physical realm and improve connectivity: The arts are essential building blocks for creating a strong and vibrant public realm (particularly in the downtown area) that can serve to engage both residents and visitors, communicate a sense of local identity, and ensure that all have access to high-quality artistic assets.

- OBJECTIVE: Infuse and align Grand Rapids' existing city policies, plans, and projects with arts and culture to help achieve broader community health and connectivity goals
- OBJECTIVE: Embed public art into existing and future streetscapes to create a dynamic and vital physical environment
- OBJECTIVE: Create initial public art policies and develop a program that consistently contributes to the vitality and economic development of the city





Stairwell Painting, Central School by Ted Tinquist (1958)

Goal 5 - Foster support for artists and arts and cultural organizations: None of the above goals can be reached without nurturing a healthy and vibrant arts and culture community. As cultural entrepreneurs, artists and cultural organizations can benefit from access to training and space resources that can be offered by the City and through public-private partnerships.

- OBJECTIVE: Cultivate and strategize with allies in the business community to increase opportunities for cultural entrepreneurs/practitioners
- OBJECTIVE: Tap existing spaces to create opportunities for creative practitioners to affordably live, work, and share their work

Top Priorities

While the list of Goals and Objectives within the plan is comprehensive, it is also recognized that strategic “first steps” are necessary for creating the networks and momentum needed to carry out larger initiatives. To help with this process, the plan recommends four initial action steps: 1) Achieve “Quick Wins” (such as creating an annual arts award); 2) Address Critical Cultural Space Opportunities (such as creating performance opportunities at Central School); 3) Initiate Public Private Partnerships (for example partner with Get Fit Itasca on joint goals); and 4) Integrate with other City Policies (such as with the Downtown Plan).

Going forward, this plan will serve as a roadmap for the Grand Rapids Arts and Culture Commission, providing it with both short-term and long-term objectives. The realization of goals and strategies will require commissioners’ leadership and the support and combined efforts of City of Grand Rapids council members, department staff, artists, partner organizations in the private and nonprofit sectors, and general citizens who will help to achieve the vision of creating a vital, vibrant, and inviting city.



Background

Cultural Planning in National Context

During conversations with local stakeholders, numerous people articulated a common sentiment—they saw this as arts and culture’s “time” in the City of Grand Rapids. Aligning arts and culture-based strategies with other community priorities just made sense, given opportunities, needs, and political will. It builds on recent momentum, such as Grand Rapids Arts’ popular First Fridays and the Reif Performing Arts Center’s state bonding-backed expansion.

The GRMN Creates planning effort also takes place within a national groundswell of interest in the ways in which arts and culture can advance diverse community objectives. For instance, since 2010, the National Endowment for the Arts, ArtPlace (a new consortium of 12 philanthropic foundations and 6 major financial institutions, with diverse federal agencies participating as strategic partners), and the Kresge Foundation have invested over \$80M in “creative placemaking” projects all across the country (National Endowment for the Arts 2015; ArtPlace 2015; The Kresge Foundation 2015). In addition, both the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the US Department of Education have revised funding guidelines to encourage arts strategies as part of the Choice and Promise neighborhood programs (Markusen and Gadwa Nicodemus 2014). The National Endowment for the Arts’ 2010 white paper provided the following initial framing for creative placemaking (Markusen and Gadwa 2010):

In creative placemaking, partners from public, private, nonprofit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, tribe, city, or region around arts and cultural activities. Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local businesses viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired.

Cultural planning processes are one important means to holistically plan for sustainable arts and cultural offerings at the local level and prioritize synergies with other community priorities. The Creative City Network of Canada defines cultural planning as (2010 Legacies Now and Creative City Network of Canada 2015):

Cultural planning is a process of inclusive community consultation and decision-making that helps local government identify cultural resources and think strategically about how these resources can help a community to achieve its civic goals. It is also a strategic approach that directly and indirectly integrates the community’s cultural resources into a wide range of local government planning activities.

Cities ranging from Chicago, IL, and Providence, RI, to Mankato and St. Cloud in Minnesota have created arts and cultural plans in recent years (City of Chicago, Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, and Lord Cultural Resources 2012; Dreeszen & Associates, New Commons, and City of Providence Department of Art, Culture + Tourism 2009; City of Mankato 2007; WolfBrown). Congratulations, Grand Rapids, you are in good company.

Local Context

Community Profile

Grand Rapids, MN, population 10,869 (U.S. Census Bureau 2010), is located on the banks of the Mississippi and is the Itasca County seat. It's situated among 1,000 lakes in northeastern Minnesota. A small city known for, logging, regional services, the arts, and its Native American and settler cultures — Grand Rapids is a place of many narratives.

Grand Rapids is predominately white (96.5%), with Native American (3.1%), Latino (1.2%), Black (1.1%), and Asian (.9%) racial and ethnic minorities (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). Fifteen miles west of Grand Rapids lies the edge of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Reservation, and Native Americans are also the largest racial/ethnic minority in Itasca County (4.9%).

The City's name hails from its 3.5-mile stretch of rapids (now replaced by a dam from the UPM Blandin Paper mill). Whereas much of the "Iron Range" region historically focused on mining, Grand Rapids emerged as a logging town. The Mississippi provided an optimal means of shipping logs to southern population centers. The hydropower generated by the rapids attracted UPM Blandin's predecessor in 1902.

Assets

Today, Grand Rapids benefits from numerous assets. Forestry, mineral recovery enterprises, and tourism help diversify the economy, as well as its serving as a retail, government, health, and education hub for the surrounding region. Although fewer than 11,000 people live within Grand Rapids, it serves an estimated market of 50,000 people. The Blandin Foundation grants \$9-12M per year in the Itasca County area. Many stakeholders spoke of Grand Rapids achieving an ideal balance. It's large and resourced enough to sustain retail and cultural amenities, small enough to change quickly and effectively, and (as Bud Stone, Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce, said), "in five minutes you could be lost where nobody could ever find you."

Arts and cultural expression constitute a core part of community life and enhance Grand Rapids' distinctiveness. Ninety-four percent of GRMN Creates community survey respondents thought that arts and cultural activities play an extremely or moderately important role in improving the quality of life of Grand Rapids area residents.

Some cultural organizations, like the Minnesota Forest History Center and the Judy Garland Museum, celebrate Grand Rapids' unique heritage (logging, forestry, and the birthplace of Judy Garland). These, and the renowned Reif Performing Arts Center, not only serve locals, but also draw people from across the region.

Other organizations promote fine arts and expand accessibility. For instance, MacRostie Art Center, Northland Counseling Center, and Grand Itasca Hospital have promoted links between art and healing.

Community-focused organizations, often powered heavily by volunteers, also offer opportunities to participate in or enjoy creative expression. These include two choruses, a symphony orchestra, student dance and strings programs, a community theater, a community radio and television station, and First Friday Art Walks.



Artists that range from amateur to professional create works of beauty and inspiration. They celebrate and preserve cultural traditions, and help bring diverse people together. Over half of community survey respondents self-identified as some sort of artist. They work in diverse forms, with over 10% working in each of the forms of music, craft, visual arts, and photography. A strong “maker” culture predominates—from home beer brewing to woodworking to crafting fishing lures, and these skilled crafts people may or may not see themselves as artists.

Challenges

Despite Grand Rapids’ relative wealth, many families have not been able to meet basic needs. An estimated 13% of Grand Rapids’ population falls below the federal poverty line (2009-2013 5-Year American Community Survey), and nearly 50% of Itasca County youth qualify for the free and reduced lunch program (Kootasca Community Actions Partnership 2014). High paying union jobs have contracted out to other workers and big-box retailers pay minimum wages and often do not offer full-time work. These are major contributors to the working poor (Winkler, Markusen, and Moe 2014). As council member Barb Sanderson relayed, people have gone “from good paying jobs in the mines to working in Walmart or resorts, so it’s not enough to sustain families.”

Grand Rapids is also not immune from racial tensions. Historically, incursion by Euro-Americans and displacement of Native Americans from their lands and resources has created ongoing subtle (and not-so subtle) hostilities between the two groups. Despite inroads made by organizations such as the Human Rights Commission, the Circle of Healing, Itasca Community College, and Northern Community Radio, intolerance towards Native Americans persists.

Lastly, Grand Rapids is geographically divided by railroad tracks, the Mississippi River, and Highways 2, 169, and 38. Although these features connect Grand Rapids to regional markets, they also present challenges. A sense of fragmentation deters walking and impedes efforts to retain a vital, historic downtown center.

GRMN Creates goals and strategies speak to Grand Rapids’ unique attributes. For instance, numerous community leaders saw cultivating an inclusive and welcoming Grand Rapids as critical community objective, with a key role for arts and culture. Others emphasized how arts and culture contribute to Grand Rapids’ ability to attract and keep people and businesses—highly skilled workers, young families, and entrepreneurs. They linked a vibrant arts and cultural milieu to the City’s ongoing economic competitiveness. Other goals and strategies advance the intrinsic benefits of arts and culture—such as its role in human development—and seek to expand access for youth and adult populations. Other strategies nurture core arts and cultural providers with space, training resources, and validation. All the arts and culture-centered strategies outlined in GRMN Creates seek to draw on Grand Rapids’ assets and address its challenges.

History of Planning Efforts

As a plan, GRMN Creates is not an island. As a part of other urban planning efforts within the City of Grand Rapids, it supports a larger vision for the creation of a vibrant and vital city.

In particular, the plan works in support of, and along side, the City of Grand Rapids’ Comprehensive Plan (2011) that recognizes the City’s “small town hospitality and character with big city conveniences and opportunities.” Many of those opportunities that are so valued, and that give Grand Rapids its distinct identity as a regional hub, are from the arts and culture sector. In particular, GRMN Creates advances the comprehensive plan’s core value of supporting Cultural & Recreational Opportunities, and Economic Opportunities.



Photo By: John Connelly

This plan also works in concert with other existing plans and strengthens the strategies they outline:

- Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan (2006): In recognizing the importance of a dynamic public realm, GRMN Creates advances the plan’s core principles of developing the downtown area as a core community Gathering Space, a Place of Character and Quality.
- Riverfront Framework Plan (2009): GRMN Creates’ recognition of the vital role that arts and culture play for the city’s economy supports the plan’s objectives to “Achieve greater utilization of the riverfront as a central feature and economic asset of the community,” and “Stimulate the private sector investment and redevelopment of vacant and under utilized City-owned property.”
- Parks and Trail Master Plan (2014): As one of the key city departments for providing community resources, the City’s Parks and Recreation Department is a key player in maintaining both the strength and the accessibility of municipal cultural amenities. GRMN Creates strongly supports the Parks and Trails Master Plan goals for “Serving people of all ages and abilities,” and “Offering flexible space for performances that bring community together.”

Ideally, the recommendations contained within the report will also become integrated into plans currently under development.

Closely integrating arts-based planning and policy recommendations is a critical step towards the City’s efforts to harness the power of the arts and culture to support and sustain larger goals for economic and community development, from downtown revitalization to community development to pedestrian safety. If left at the margins of municipal capital planning and design efforts, citizens and City leaders will miss opportunities to find existing or additional funding sources, and leverage the power of the arts to meet multiple development goals.

Arts and Culture Commission: History and Vision

The City Council established the Arts and Culture Commission in 2013 to assist the City of Grand Rapids in its efforts to become a community in which arts and cultural activities:

- are recognized as vital components of community life that are worthy of investment and support from the public, private and non-profit sectors;
- are valued and promoted for their economic benefits and development potential, especially in the downtown;
- represent an integral part of Grand Rapids' educational mission for young people; and
- cooperate with other community organizations to enhance Grand Rapids' cultural identity and quality of life in the community, the surrounding region, and beyond.

It currently functions as a volunteer commission, reporting to City Council, with nine members and a city staff liaison. Commissioners are selected by Council and serve a three year term.

Building from the overall mission established within the founding ordinance, the Arts and Culture Commission has adopted a compelling vision statement that serves as the foundation for the GRMN Creates recommendations:

The Grand Rapids Arts and Culture Commission envisions a community inspired by the power of its abundant arts and culture. We believe:

- the arts pave the way to a welcoming environment for all regardless of age, race, ethnic origin, gender and sexual orientation
- arts and culture combined with recreational opportunities define Grand Rapids as a regional creative destination for relocation, shopping, tourism and entertainment
- the arts contribute to health and well-being by creating aesthetically pleasing places to walk, bicycle, hike and play
- engagement in the arts helps vulnerable populations build confidence, cope with stress and aid with healing
- carefully planned and artistic street design contributes to a vibrant downtown and accommodates all modes of transportation helping to make movement accessible to all
- the beauty of the natural environment of the Mississippi River, lakes and forests is a defining and valued characteristic of our community
- accessible, quality arts educational opportunities cradle through career and on through retirement, are essential to the development of a creative community
- communities with robust arts and culture are more prosperous and attract large and small businesses, reward entrepreneurship, and provide meaningful careers to residents

The GRMN Creates planning process represents the Arts and Culture Commission's first major initiative, which will guide its work over the next ten years, and provide a leadership framework to coordinate the efforts of vital partners in other areas of city government, and the nonprofit and private sectors. As a currently unfunded, volunteer commission, these relationships will be pivotal for advancing the GRMN Creates vision.



Planning Methodology

Timeframe and Approach

The Arts and Culture Commission launched efforts in early 2014 to develop a ten-year strategic Arts and Culture Plan that could give direction to the City in setting policy and allotting resources in support of municipal arts and culture.

The planning process was based on an in-depth analysis of the perceived needs articulated by Grand Rapids' community members and key arts and culture stakeholders, including:

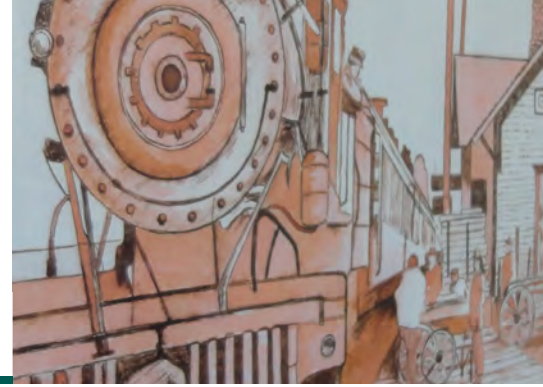
- Interviews: 44 interviews were completed with key local stakeholders within arts and culture sectors, along with area service providers, and business representatives.
- Focus Groups: 3 primary focus groups were held – City Department Head Staff, Artists and Cultural Producers, and Social Service Providers. Each focus group asked participants to identify both concerns and aspirations for the arts and culture sectors in Grand Rapids.
- Survey: For 6 weeks, an in-depth community survey was made available online. It was promoted through digital and print media and through an insert into the local utility mailer so that all residents received notification. (For Survey highlights and response rates, see Appendix D).
- Community Meetings: Evening community meetings were held on September 16th, 2014 and October 27th, 2014. At the first meeting, community members mapped their desired arts and culture amenities. At the second community meeting, attendees discussed specific policy recommendations and added their thoughts about both the opportunities and the challenges that would confront the City as they worked to grow municipal arts and culture resources.
- Strategic Visioning Discussion: To ensure the opportunity for strong input from the local business community, a strategic planning session was convened with Arts and Culture Commissioners and key stakeholders from the local economic and business sectors.

The GRMN Creates consultant team synthesized stakeholders' ideas, observations, and visions and integrated them with knowledge of exemplar national models. The consultant team collaborated with the Arts and Culture Commission to create a series of recommendations that reflect community concerns, hopes, and visions, while at the same time providing a framework to tie Grand Rapids' efforts to regional and national initiatives. Commission members, city staff, and Council members reviewed research leading to the final recommendations and drafts of the report. In addition, the plan was made available for public review prior to adoption via an online open comment period.

Recommendations



This section outlines GRMN Creates' five goals, details their supporting objectives, and lists the strategies that will be used to realize them. For prioritization and strategy-level details necessary for implementation, including project leads and potential partners, see the subsequent Implementation Roadmap section.



Goal 1

Goal 1: Enhance Grand Rapids' distinctive identity through arts and culture

Community stakeholders saw arts and culture's ability to enhance quality of life as closely linked to Grand Rapids' ability to attract and keep people and businesses, including young families, highly skilled workers, job-creating entrepreneurs, and tourists. Arts and culture not only intrinsically enhance community life, they can also help reinforce and promote other defining community attributes, all adding up to a process of "placemaking," or fostering a distinctive culture to which people want to belong (John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and Gallup, Inc. 2010). For Grand Rapids, these elements include its rich and diverse cultural influence (Ojibwe, logger, and settler cultures), historic architecture, and the economic and recreational opportunities afforded by the river, lakes, and forest.

The strategies below seek to enhance Grand Rapids' existing assets. For instance, they seek to transform the landmark Central School into a welcoming, community hub through increased cultural programming. They recommend capitalizing on Grand Rapids' natural beauty, mild summer climate, and existing cultural assets by hosting more summer arts residencies. Grand Rapids has a strategic opportunity to embrace and celebrate Native American arts and culture, on both inclusivity grounds and to enhance the community's distinctiveness and draw tourists, businesses, and residents. A majority of survey respondents (65%) expressed interest in future opportunities to participate in Native American arts and culture.

Via a proposed cultural center, Grand Rapids could celebrate the diversity of local cultural practices (e.g. Finnish, Scandinavian, Native American, German, Latino, etc.). It would draw in area residents and tourists who seek exposure to these traditions and desire to learn to appreciate and create. It would bring artists, culture bearers and amateurs together to share equipment, learn from each other, and view exhibits. A cultural center could provide local artists with teaching income, host visiting artists, and include a juried gift shop.

"I would love to have people, if they talked about Grand Rapids, they would talk about this beautiful community in the north woods; what beautiful clean water we have with places to camp, but it's also fun because so we have much in terms of art. It's all part of the package."

–Karen Walker, Independent School District 318 Community Education

"As a community, we need to embrace art and use it as a differentiator in terms of our economy, harness it as something that makes the community a better place to live."

–Ed Zabinski, Grand Rapids City Council



The strategies also recognize that regional networks can help to expand audiences and build the capacity needed to support vibrant local arts and culture. Through regional collaborations, Grand Rapids may enhance the reputation for not just the city, but also the entire area. Organizations may gain efficiencies through co-promotion and find unique opportunities for collaborative programming.

OBJECTIVE: Connect arts, heritage, and the natural environment to help promote Grand Rapids’ distinctive identity

- 1.1 Foster cultural/family-oriented programming at the landmark Central School (interior and grounds)
- 1.2 Nurture public-private partnerships to expand arts-related offerings at the Forest History Center
- 1.3 Nurture public-private partnerships to celebrate connections between art and lakes, rivers, forestry, sporting, and recreational activities (artistry of creating fishing lures, canoe building, gunsmithing, tanning, etc.)
- 1.4 Celebrate Ojibwe cultural heritage through city signage in English/Ojibwe
- 1.5 Nurture public-private partnerships to develop history or nature-centered tours
- 1.6 Create a larger, citywide public policy conversation about the mechanisms for the support and preservation of historic buildings

OBJECTIVE: Promote Grand Rapids’ distinctive local cultural and arts identity

- 1.7 Promote existing cultural offerings to residents and potential visitors (Annual arts awards, electronic message board, centralized web calendar/e-blast)
- 1.8 Develop a cultural center to celebrate diverse local cultural practices (e.g. Finnish, Scandinavian, Native American, German, Latino, etc.), draw area residents and tourists, and link artists with shared resources, teaching, and exhibition opportunities
- 1.9 Plan for a city staff position to coordinate city-supported cultural programs/events and work with other organizations such as Visit Grand Rapids

“The arts and culture piece is one of the things that draws people to our area that creates the opportunities for economic development...if we work really, really hard at building that culture of our community...we will attract the people we need...culture, businesses, they go hand in hand.”

–Bud Stone, Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce

“We should get used to talking about arts and culture more broadly than we do—all of the farmers at the farmers market—many of them are artisans. There are a lot of fishermen and outfitters who are very artistic and creative who are not seen as part of our current narrative.”

–Sonja Merrild, Blandin Foundation



Artist Delina White, Photographer Dan Dennehy

OBJECTIVE: Foster regional networking to explore opportunities for collaborative programming and promotion

1.10 Create a workgroup to explore opportunities for collaborative regional programming and promotion among specific arts and culture venues

1.11 Facilitate connections between local arts and cultural nonprofit organizations and local and regional Ojibwe artists and organizations with experience exhibiting Native American visual and performing art

1.12 Nurture public-private partnerships to explore opportunities for summer residency programs, building on the strength of the successful collaboration with the Minnesota Orchestra



Goal 2

Goal 2: Expand opportunities for lifelong arts learning

Community stakeholders linked arts learning to being a “whole-person,” with the creative thinking needed to be competitive as an employee or entrepreneur, and healing and empowerment. They saw youth arts learning as a particular priority, both on intrinsic grounds, and because of issues of equal access—they wanted low-income youth to have access to arts learning and enrichment within the public schools and through outside of school offerings. Stakeholders’ interest in arts learning did not stop at youth. It extended to elders, professional artists, other adults, and in particular, people in challenging situations, such as homelessness, mental illness, disabilities, substance abuse recovery, and domestic abuse.

Grand Rapids currently connects people with arts learning experiences through a range of providers—Independent School District 318 (both K-12 and community education), MacRostie, Reif, the YMCA, Itasca Orchestra and Strings, private instructors, and others. City government, through the Arts and Culture Commission, can play a role as a convener. It can bring arts education stakeholders together to identify gaps and realize opportunities through public-private partnerships and coordinated fundraising efforts.

OBJECTIVE: Youth—Celebrate and expand opportunities for in-school and outside-of-school arts learning

- 2.1 Coordinate a roundtable workgroup to address youth arts learning (in and outside-of-school)
- 2.2 Identify and remedy gaps in existing outside-of-school offerings and barriers to access such as cost and transportation
- 2.3 Increase youth art offerings via the park system, such as a “fun wagon” or arts summer camps
- 2.4 Coordinate public and private fundraising efforts (including grant applications and individual donations) to expand youth-arts learning opportunities

“I teach several art classes and my drive behind that is that I fully enjoy watching others discover their talents of self-expression. It’s a gift of empowerment that helps reduce mental health symptoms and promotes the healing process.”

–Survey Respondent

“For many families, it’s a generational thing. It can tie us to each other, our future, our past, and even a place. Raising children now, I really feel the importance and impact for young ones to have access to arts and mediums to help them develop, grow, express, and find themselves.”

–Survey Respondent

2.5 Raise awareness of existing in-school arts offerings, including arts integration into class curricula, residencies, and the Reif-Kennedy Center Partners in Education program

2.6 Match artists and arts organizations interested in providing paid or volunteer school residencies and/or classroom teacher professional development via an online directory annual and creative resource fair

2.7 Develop an internship program that places high school students with local artists

OBJECTIVE: Adults & Community—Increase access to arts-based enrichment and healing

2.8 Convene a roundtable workgroup to identify and reduce gaps in arts learning opportunities for college students, adults, elders, etc.

2.9 Coordinate public and private fundraising efforts (including grant applications and individual donations) to expand arts-based enrichment and healing

2.10 Promote healing and empowerment by matching artists and arts organizations interested in providing paid or volunteer residencies with nursing homes, assisted living homes, medical providers, social service providers, etc. (Online directory and annual creative resource fair)

“Elementary schools do a good job with music through 4th grade, but they don’t offer good, consistent access to tactile [visual] arts. It depends on the school, depends on the year, and once you get to middle school, it just is dead.”

–Beth George, ICTV

“In the schools around here, there is no arts curriculum in primary school! It’s really a shame. Some teachers can do an arts project, if it’s part of the approved curriculum, meaning if it can be considered math or science. Yet we know that kids who have arts backgrounds do better on college entrance exams. They are more whole, and they do better on interviews for jobs.”

–Steve Downing,
Northern
Community Radio



Goal 3

Goal 3: Foster inclusive arts and cultural offerings and expand access

Numerous community stakeholders lauded art’s ability to bring people together, but also articulated a pressing need to do more along these lines. They desired art offerings that encouraged people of all walks of life to mix and forge connections, particularly people of different races, ethnicities, income levels, ages, and disabled and non-disabled people.

By embracing Native American art forms, residents may help break down persistent racism towards Native Americans and increase the visibility of this important part of the community. Prior research (Rendon and Markusen 2009) and GRMN Creates stakeholder interviews suggest that Minnesota’s Native American artists desire full mainstreaming (i.e., to be invited to exhibit/perform at major arts venues vs. in a separate Native American craft center).

Overall, community stakeholders want to see access to arts and culture expand to serve low- and moderate-income residents and seek opportunities to more fully integrate populations hidden from view—such as people with disabilities or mental illness—with the greater community. They seek intergenerational opportunities and offerings suitable for families with children.

The objectives and implementation priorities outlined below advance a vision of inclusive and diverse arts and cultural offerings. The Arts and Culture Commission and Grand Rapids’ city departments, however, will most likely not directly produce cultural events. Therefore, the Arts and Culture Commission will advance this vision by working in partnership with the private and nonprofit sector, as well as indirectly as a convener, creator of rules and regulations, and provider of services.

“It is one of our goals to engage Native artists in our work, but it is a constant challenge that we are not very good at addressing. Our Grand Rapids’ address feels like a wall when reaching out to the Native population. Creating meaningful relationships takes time and real, personal connections. It can’t (and shouldn’t) be manufactured.”

–Survey Respondent

“There’s no place to sell our work...A lot of people are selling tourist stuff, but not engaging in finer quality work. There has to be a quality control person, so they’re not just buying junk [to sell].”

–Anonymous Native American artist

OBJECTIVE: Facilitate community spaces and programming that welcome the entire community

- 3.1 Clarify and streamline city rules related to street festivals, performances in parks, and street performers via fact and FAQ sheets and a volunteer arts help desk
- 3.2 Identify a new, prominent location for the Farmers' Market to strengthen its role as a social gathering place and artisan-incubator
- 3.3 Develop a rink for recreational figure skating, preferably in the downtown area

"The top issue in Grand Rapids is income inequality... Those that have more power haven't come to realize the extent of the problem."

–Isaac Meyer,
Kootasca
Community Action

OBJECTIVE: Increase the amount of inclusive arts and cultural offerings through public-private partnerships

- 3.4 Convene a diversity and inclusion workgroup to informally share updates and explore opportunities for collaboration
- 3.5 Nurture public-private partnerships to create opportunities to link people of different ages, ethnicities, income levels
- 3.6 Nurture public-private partnerships to integrate more art (music, visual and performing art, literature, and design) by regional Ojibwe artists
- 3.7 Nurture public-private partnerships to provide more arts offerings suitable for families with children through tailored programs, child-care provisions, and/or varied hours
- 3.8 Nurture public-private partnerships to offer arts opportunities for people with disabilities or mental illness to create and connect with the greater community

"The arts scene should focus on creation of social gathering places, improving the ambiance of the downtown area, and creating a sense of acceptance of all people."

–Survey Respondent

OBJECTIVE: Expand arts and cultural offerings to all people, regardless of family income

- 3.9 Compile, seasonally update, and disseminate information about existing scholarship/subsidized arts and cultural opportunities
- 3.10 Seek opportunities to expand scholarships, subsidies, and passes
- 3.11 Cultivate opportunities with developers interested in integrating art installations and community-oriented space suitable for arts programming into affordable housing developments



Goal 4

Goal 4: Use the arts to animate the physical realm and improve connectivity

Every city strives for a welcoming and vibrant built environment, and the arts are a key component of the public realm’s vitality. While the private and nonprofit sectors primarily produce and promote arts and cultural programs and venues, city government typically leads efforts to integrate artworks into capital and infrastructure improvement projects. Such artworks can add greatly to streetscapes, trail networks, and civic buildings, bringing visual interest, community history, and vitality to many areas of the city. Because such pieces occur outside or in public spaces and there is no fee charged to view, they also help expand accessibility.

One way the City of Grand Rapids can animate the physical environment is by incorporating GRMN Creates’ goals and strategies into existing and upcoming city plans. This ensures that arts and culture do not become siloed, but integrated as central components of the City’s efforts to foster a healthy and vibrant community (Redaelli and Haines 2014). Additionally, it helps ensure that city staff considers arts opportunities when beginning work on soon-to-be-launched projects, such as improvements to the City’s trail system.

Often cities will create a public art policy to frame and guide the financing and administration of public artworks. However, creating a full-fledged public art policy can be a large undertaking for a municipality. Although cities can create public art programs through ad hoc efforts, they are best served when supported through a formal city ordinance that can help to frame the program’s administrative procedures and community goals. Municipal public art programs use a percentage of the project budget (typically .5% to 2%) for capital construction projects to support the creation of visual or performing artworks throughout the city.

Fortunately, a city does not need to wait to adopt an official policy before it begins to actively develop its public art collection. A smaller project may serve as first steps towards policy development and simultaneously animate the public realm. The “Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper” approach developed by Project for Public Spaces offers a strong model for developing such projects. It prioritizes creating projects in the public realm (which can often be expensive and cumbersome) in ways that start

“Little things like the architecture of the library, the big red chair, the Wizard of Oz mural, yellow brick road, little artsy things that make our town pop are wonderful. And of course the Wizard of Oz things are fun little plugs for our town’s history.”

–Survey respondent

“We have such an amazing story to tell our locals and our tourists as they walk and drive through our village...We desperately need to showcase more of our visually appealing architecture, art, culture, and nature.”

–Survey respondent

small and builds on early successes (Project for Public Spaces 2014). The City and its Arts and Culture Commission can also help to foster public-private partnerships that can support the development of other civic artworks. Many ideas for such pieces emerged from community stakeholders who advocated for a wide range of potential projects from working to animate vacant downtown storefronts with temporary displays (see Goal 5), to creating murals along existing infrastructure (such as bridge underpasses). These projects transform often neglected and uninviting structures into vital spaces.

Before adopting a formal Public Art Policy, the City can also elect to adopt policies that help frame the City’s discussion about public art and the Art and Culture Commission’s role in vetting and administering such efforts. For instance, an Arts Acquisition policy helps lay out the parameters for how the City would officially accept donated artworks into its collections. An Arts Inclusion policy outlines parameters for private developers when they incorporate artwork into the new large-scale residential, commercial, and institutional projects.

“The City of Grand Rapids is a great partner! I hope they will continue to be open to creative ideas for enhancing the aesthetics of the town, bringing art out into the open (more MURALS!), and projects for redevelopment of underutilized buildings and lots that involve art and artists.”

–Survey respondent

OBJECTIVE: Infuse and align Grand Rapids’ existing city policies, plans, and projects with arts and culture to help achieve broader community health and connectivity goals

- 4.1 Consider the creation of arts-specific amendments to integrate the objectives and strategic priorities of GRMN Creates within the City of Grand Rapids Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan and Riverfront Framework Plan
- 4.2 Consider the creation of an amendment to the Downtown Plan that specifically addresses issues of fragmentation and pedestrian wayfinding through artistic streetscape interventions and additional infrastructure
- 4.3 Collaborate with Get Fit Itasca to identify potential arts-based interventions that help to meet community health goals
- 4.4 Develop a pedestrian bridge over the Mississippi and enhance with artistic elements and good design
- 4.5 Explore opportunities to use art to promote walking and bike use within the upcoming Grand Rapids Trails Plan and that can help to activate key areas and trail heads, and effectively promote local history and identity
- 4.6 Integrate artistic crosswalks into Complete Streets Plan implementation



Judy Garland Mural, Artist John Kelsch (1997)

OBJECTIVE: Embed public art into existing and future streetscapes to create a dynamic and vital physical environment

- 4.7 Identify upcoming City of Grand Rapids’ Capital Improvement Projects where city staff, with support from Arts and Culture Commission members, can integrate artistic components along with their continued maintenance (e.g. 5th Street redesigns and existing and future roundabouts)
- 4.8 Create murals and art installations along existing infrastructure, such as bridges and railroad crossings, to help animate points of entrance into town and beautify neglected areas
- 4.9 Encourage the donation of privately funded art into Veteran’s Park to help celebrate heritage and identity
- 4.10 Organize a sculpture walk that highlights work from regional artists and provides opportunities to animate downtown area and promote Grand Rapids as a regional arts center

OBJECTIVE: Create initial public art policies and develop a program that consistently contributes to the vitality and economic development of the city

- 4.11 Create City of Grand Rapids “Art Adoption/Acquisition/Loan” policy that would create a clear understanding of what type of artworks to accept into the city’s collection and to establish guidelines around the conversations about maintenance, insurance, and other administrative necessities
- 4.12 Create a City of Grand Rapids “Arts Inclusion” policy to help frame conversations between the city and private developers who might be looking to develop artwork within their own developments
- 4.13 Create a formal City of Grand Rapids Public Art Policy



Goal 5

Goal 5: Foster support for artists and arts and cultural organizations

The final goal of GRMN Creates focuses on supporting arts and cultural producers—the artists and arts and cultural organizations responsible for generating Grand Rapids’ creative milieu and cultural vitality.

GRMN Creates participants expressed far-ranging ideas for the ways in which the Arts and Culture Commission and larger city government might foster support for these entities. Many strategies connect underutilized assets with perceived needs, such as the idea to convert vacant storefronts into pop-up galleries, which would simultaneously animate the downtown and provide artists with increased exhibition spaces. Others leverage the public sector’s convening ability, such as bringing arts and cultural producers together to seek opportunities for shared programming and co-promotion, or facilitating increased support for artists and arts and cultural nonprofits from non-arts businesses. Some ideas focus on linking artists and small cultural nonprofits with business training, to help them build capacity as creative entrepreneurs. Other ideas are more capital intensive, such as the development of affordable artist live-work spaces (Gadwa 2010) or artists’ centers (Markusen et al. 2006).

These strategies will be advanced through partnerships with the private and nonprofit sector. We outline more incremental, first steps, as well as more ambitious visions. By supporting collaborative efforts between commercial, nonprofit, and community sectors, the City of Grand Rapids can help foster sustainable and vibrant arts and cultural resources.

OBJECTIVE: Cultivate and strategize with allies in the business community to increase opportunities for cultural entrepreneurs/practitioners

- 5.1 Via an annual award, honor and celebrate an exemplar arts-supportive business
- 5.2 Create a roundtable to serve as a business arts leadership and advocacy board to help: increase public and private funding,

“There are a lot of arts organizations in the city right now. We need someone to help us take advantage of the resources we do have. There’s good work being done by organizations – but they aren’t talking with each other.”

–Ed Zabinski, Grand Rapids City Council

“I’d like there to be an understanding of what can and can’t happen...A couple years ago an artist was told he couldn’t sit and play at Central School... People have to understand where and how they can express themselves.”

–Beth George, ICTV

coordinate business volunteers for the arts, identify event sponsors, facilitate art displays at area businesses, and help cultural entrepreneurs build capacity

5.3 Via an online artist directory, link local businesses to local cultural entrepreneurs with marketable services (exhibitions, performances, design, etc.)

5.4 Offer Springboard for the Arts' Work of Art series and strategize with local partners on ways to disseminate the knowledge more broadly and over the long-term

OBJECTIVE: Tap existing spaces to create opportunities for creative practitioners to affordably live, work, and share their work

5.5 Advocate for re-purposing of Central School interior to include performance opportunities (e.g. live music within a "brew pub")

5.6 Explore possibility of the use of the Showboat site by other artists/groups

5.7 Investigate models for public-private partnerships (pop-up programs, etc.) to animate vacant/under-utilized storefront windows and commercial spaces to support galleries and creative entrepreneurs

5.8 Sustain and support the Artist-In-Residence program, in Central School or elsewhere (Seek public and private funds, including grants and individual donations to offer a stipend in addition to space)

5.9 Create a workgroup to investigate the adaptive reuse of the Rialto Theater and Township Hall as arts and cultural spaces

5.10 Assess feasibility of an artist live-work project development and pursue implementation

5.11 Partner with affordable housing developers to explore including artist-appropriate units within proposed projects

5.12 Nurture public-private partnerships to develop facilities in which artists share equipment, access work and exhibition space, teach the broader community, and gain training

- a. Specific models include cultural centers (see Goal 1), makers' spaces, artist centers, folk schools, and cooperative galleries/workspaces. Community members expressed specific interest in a culinary institute, machine/woodshop cooperative, and folk school.¹

5.13 Investigate opportunities to expand the Itasca County Fairgrounds as a performance venue

"I found for years and years we didn't have a formal place...that could foster relationship between small business owners and artists and help them understand that arts can help their personal economy. We could create a restaurant brewpub in Central School where musicians can play. That would support the other shops. Then it also creates a gathering space and that community helps foster the arts."

–Sam Miltich, Musician

¹In practice, folk schools often emphasize traditional crafts (vs. contemporary) and may focus on singular culture heritages. Cultural centers may be more inclusive of multiple cultural heritages. The latter is thought to be a more inclusive term with regards to Native American cultures.



Implementation Roadmap

This section specifies top strategy priorities, outlines the Arts and Culture Commission’s process to create annual work plans and evaluations, and articulates strategic roles to be fulfilled by the Commission. An accompanying matrix provides critical strategy-level details necessary for GRMN Creates implementation: who (project leads and potential partners), how (outlines first steps, estimated resources, links to precedent models from other communities), and when (specifies priority level).

Strategies: Top Priorities

The recommendations included within the report support a broad range of project and policy opportunities, but a ten-year plan cannot be accomplished all at once. Strong first steps are critical for long-term success and initial, small-scale accomplishments create the vital networks and community support needed to bring longer-term visions to fruition.

To help focus the Commission’s initial efforts at implementing the recommendations found within this plan, GRMN Creates recommends that the Commission pursue the following strategies as initial action steps:

Achieve “Quick Wins”

- 1.2 Nurture public-private partnerships to expand arts-related offerings at the Forest History Center
- 1.7 Promote existing cultural offerings to residents and potential visitors (Annual arts awards, electronic message board, centralized web calendar/e- blast)
- 3.1 Clarify and streamline city rules related to street festivals, performances in parks, and street performers via fact and FAQ sheets and a volunteer arts help desk
- 5.1 Via an annual award, honor and celebrate an exemplar arts-supportive business



Photo By: Kelly Klatt, Reif Performing Arts Center

Address Critical Cultural Space Opportunities

- 1.1 Foster cultural/family-oriented programming at the landmark Central School (interior and grounds)
- 5.5 Advocate for re-purposing of Central School interior to include performance opportunities (e.g. live music within a “brew pub”)
- 5.6 Explore possibility of the use of the Showboat site by other artists/groups
- 5.7 Investigate models for public-private partnerships (pop-up programs, etc.) to animate vacant/under-utilized storefront windows and commercial spaces to support galleries and creative entrepreneurs

Initiate Public-Private Partnerships to Begin to Advance Larger Goals

- 2.1 Coordinate a roundtable workgroup to address youth arts learning (in and outside-of-school)
- 2.3 Increase youth art offerings via the park system and library, such as a “fun wagon” or arts summer camps
- 3.4 Convene a diversity and inclusion workgroup to informally share updates and explore opportunities for collaboration

4.3 Collaborate with Get Fit Itasca to identify potential arts-based interventions within community health goals

5.2 Create a roundtable to serve as a business arts leadership and advocacy board to help: increase public and private funding, coordinate business volunteers for the arts, identify event sponsors, facilitate art displays at area businesses, and help cultural entrepreneurs build capacity

Integrate with other City Policies

4.1 Consider the creation of arts-specific amendments to integrate the objectives and strategic priorities of GRMN Creates within the City of Grand Rapids Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan and Riverfront Framework Plan

4.2 Consider the creation of an amendment to the Downtown Plan that specifically addresses issues of fragmentation and pedestrian wayfinding through artistic streetscape interventions and additional infrastructure

Stairwell Painting, Central School by Ted Tinquest (1958)



Annual Work Plan and Evaluation

We recommend that the Arts and Culture Commission adopt a yearly practice of work plan creation, evaluation of past progress, and external accountability.

Using GRMN Creates as a guiding plan, the Commission should prioritize which goals and strategies it would like to pursue for the upcoming year. The selection process can take into account momentum and opportunities/synergies with other municipal planning efforts/capital projects and, alternatively, areas in which little progress has been made in prior years, where an infusion of dedicated energy may be necessary. In addition, work plan creation may prioritize the Commission's laying incremental groundwork in the near-term, so that it may realize ambitious, capital intensive efforts down the road.

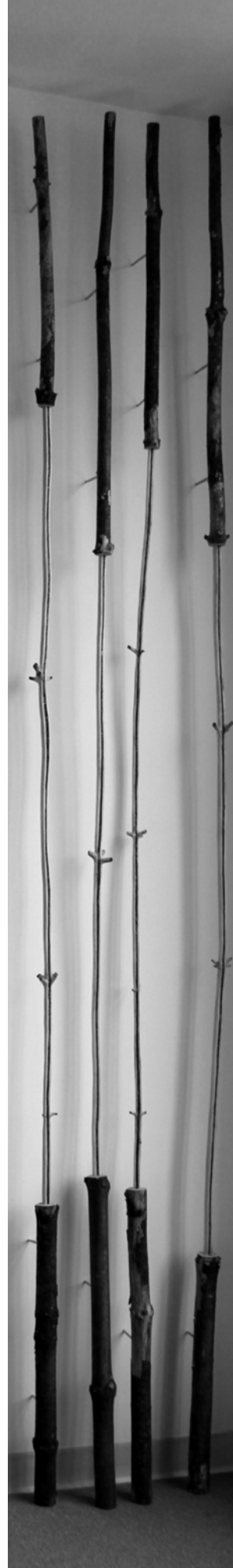
We also recommend that the Commission conduct a simple internal evaluation, on an annual basis—to reflect on accomplishments and lessons learned to date. We suggest the following questions, as a starting framework:

- What strategies did we set out to implement (over the past year and/or since GRMN Creates adoption)?
- To what degree were we successful? How do we know?*
- What lessons have we learned from this effort?
- Have these initiatives helped advance the larger goals outlined in GRMN Creates? How do we know?*
- How does this inform our work, moving forward?

These questions (or similar) should be asked via the Commission at large and at the level of public-private workgroups formed to advance specific goals. The commission may also periodically convene focus groups with external stakeholders to reflect on visible progress made in relation to the Goals and Strategies outlined in GRMN Creates.

Using these techniques, the Arts and Culture Commission can make annual progress reports to City Council to ensure accountability to elected officials and the community at large.

*A Note on Evaluation: Evaluation approaches run the gamut from sophisticated theories of change and logic models (Mackinnon and Amott 2006) to detailed indicator systems (Gadwa Nicodemus 2012) to ethnographic observations (Alvarez 2009; McGarvey and Volkman 2006) to informal “post-mortem” discussions to reflect on what worked and what didn't for a particular project/initiative. Given that formal evaluations conducted by outside evaluators are often resource intensive, and that the commission is currently unfunded, we recommend internal evaluation techniques. Evidence of degree of effectiveness with one's approach (a process evaluation) or the impacts of one's efforts (impact or summative evaluation) can be qualitative or quantitative as available/appropriate. Some possibilities include: quotes from the external focus group, succinct narrative storytelling about a particular initiative, or relevant quantitative indicators—such as an increase in the number of scholarships, subsidies, or arts passes available to low-income families.



Ongoing Strategic Roles for the Arts and Culture Commission

As a newly enabled, volunteer commission, with no designated funding, the Arts and Culture Commission will need to take a proactive role to advance the goals outlined in the GRMN Creates plan. To do this, commissioners can assume several vital roles to advance their vision: convener, facilitator, liaison, and advisor to council.

Convener

The Arts and Culture Commission fulfilled its convening role by initiating the GRMN Creates planning process. It formally convened a public dialogue about the role of the arts in the city and will now work to advance a consensus vision.

A number of goals outlined in GRMN Creates will take concerted action from diverse public private partners, to move the needle. In Goal 3, for instance, “Foster inclusive arts and cultural offerings and expand access,” twelve different stakeholder groups were identified by the consultant team as potential partners in a diversity and inclusion workgroup. They range from the Human Rights Commission, to Itasca Community College, to Northland Counseling Center, to nonprofit arts and cultural providers. Though the Arts and Culture Commission can not independently increase the amount of inclusive arts and cultural offerings, as a convener, it can bring crucial players to the table, frame conversations, and exert gentle pressure through the bully pulpit to effect change.

Even beyond the specific strategies outlined in GRMN Creates, the Arts and Culture Commission may co-host public forums with other community partners to convene dialogue on arts-related public policy issues. For instance, in relation to youth arts in-school learning, potential items include:

- The school board’s adoption of a voter-approval exempt \$1M levy in 2015 and with funds dedicated to strengthening arts offerings
- The school board’s proposed future facilities levy with funds dedicated to arts facilities and an emphasis on arts training and enrichment in the accompanying long range plan
- A STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) center developed potentially in partnership with ICC and Trade Unions to offer high school students specialized training, including in art, culinary arts, technical trades, science, engineering, and math

Commissioners can also informally and formally help to promote the values and visions put forward by community stakeholders and represented in the Commission’s vision statement. For instance, through one-on-one conversations, letters to the editor, social media posts, and/or sponsored workshop/discussion forums, commission members may be able to influence diversity and inclusivity goals. They might, for example, help non-profit and private arts producers increase their awareness of culturally insensitive content and the ways in which it runs counter to the goal of cultivating a welcoming environment within the City.



Facilitator

Another important role played by the Commission is that of facilitator of others' initiatives. They can help citizens and organizations understand how to navigate city rules and regulations related to arts and culture. They can pen letters of support for grant applications. They can help connect people with information on resources (City and other) that can help them advance their ideas.

With the adoption of GRMN Creates and the establishment of the Arts and Cultural Commission, the City of Grand Rapids may receive more frequent requests for City-level support of arts and cultural offerings (be it technical assistance from the Commission, funding, promotion, public works services, letters of support, space assistance, etc.). Initiatives that advance GRMN Creates goals and strategies should receive priority.

Liaison

The arts often remains siloed and are misperceived as “extras” vs. essential components of many municipal projects. For these reasons, the Commission can strategically develop its standing as a governmental advisory board and actively pursue ways in which its members can add to the on-going policy and programmatic conversations across the many different departments within the city.

One such way to accomplish this is to encourage a subset of Arts and Culture Commissioners to sit on other city commissions. This also helps ensure that art representatives are at the table during decision making about citywide capital improvement and planning projects. The Arts and Culture Commission can also build its capacity by encouraging commission members to concurrently sit on boards, or be representatives, of other strategic development organizations such as the Itasca Economic Development Corporation, the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce, Visit Grand Rapids, Get Fit Itasca, and Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation.

Advisor to Council

Lastly, the Arts and Culture Commission can draft proposed ordinances (as with the public art policies outlined in Goal 4), and serve as a sounding board for arts and culture related issues that may come before the general City Council.



Recommendation Matrix

GOAL 1 Enhance Grand Rapids' distinctive identity through arts and culture

Strategies	Potential Partners	Priority	First Steps	Estimated Resources	Tie Ins to Other City Plans	Precedent Models	Desired Outcomes
OBJECTIVE Connect arts, heritage, and the natural environment to help promote Grand Rapids' distinctive identity							
1.1 Foster cultural/family-oriented programming at the landmark Central School (interior and grounds)	Arts and Culture Commission (lead), Central Business Association, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, Central Square Tenants' Association, Grand Rapids Arts	High	Arts and Culture Commission liaison with Central Business District Association on the master plan in development	Dependent upon scale of program. Basic outdoor infrastructure will need to be considered such as lighting, and access to electricity and water.	GR Comp Plan: Economic Goal - Build the City's economic sustainability		Seasonal and singular events available to cross-generational audiences. Also an increase in the number of events that would strengthen family tourism sector.
1.2 Nurture public-private partnerships to expand arts-related offerings at the Forest History Center	Arts and Culture Commission (lead), Forest History Center, Grand Rapids Arts	High	Informal meeting to discuss Forest History Center's planned programming and opportunities to collaborate/deepen/expand	Potential grant funding possible given strong history of Forest History Center's programs and activities within the community	GR Comp Plan: Public Infrastructure Goal - Educational excellence for all	Bloomington, MN Valley National Wildlife Refuge (and other Placebase Productions work) http://placebaseproductions.com/minnesota-valley-national-wildlife-refuge-in-bloomington-south-loop/	Increased offerings that connect arts and the natural environment
1.3 Nurture public-private partnerships to celebrate connections between art and forestry, sporting, and recreational activities (artistry of creating fishing lures, canoe building, gunsmithing, tanning, etc.)	Arts and Culture Commission (lead), Forest History Center, Get Fit Itasca, Goods from the Woods, Visit Grand Rapids, MacRostie Art Center, MN Dept. of Natural Resources, UPM Blandin Paper Co.	Medium	Research and present precedent models to potential partners as a means of inspiration	At first, Commissioner's time. Then dependent upon the scale of the potential programming. City land resources, such as parks and maintenance capacities can be leveraged as part of matching grants to bring in additional funding.	GR Comp Plan: Land Use Goal - Maintain balance of urban and rural character within the City; Riverfront Framework Plan: Attract private investment	Art Shanty Project (MN): http://artshanties.com/ ; New York Mill's Annual Decoy Art Exhibit (MN): http://www.kulcher.org/category/in-the-galleries/ ; Art Sled Rally (MN): http://artsledrally.com/	Programs and activities that provide a larger understanding for what the "arts and culture" are in Grand Rapids
1.4 Celebrate Ojibwe cultural heritage through city signage in English/Ojibwe	Arts and Culture Commission (lead), Public Works, Human Rights Commission, Circle of Healing (Blandin), ICC, Leech Lake Tribal Council.	Medium	Coordinate with Public Works to determine planned signage updates and explore opportunities	Pricing of signage dependent upon number, scale of intervention, and design	Library Strategic Plan: Library will mount exhibits and displays that reflect diversity	Louisiana: http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2014/05/21/this-southern-state-could-get-bilingual-road-signs-the-proposed-second-language-might-surprise-you/	Increased feeling of welcomeness by surrounding Native American populations. Grand Rapids' Native heritage is more widely appreciated by Euro-American residents and visitors
1.5 Nurture public-private partnerships to develop history or nature-centered tours	Arts and Culture Commission (lead), Itasca County Historical Society, Visit Grand Rapids, private entrepreneurs	Low	Research and present precedent models to potential partners as a means of inspiration	Tours could begin as singular events (such as with the Gilbert House)	GR Comp Plan: Land Use Goal - Maintain balance of urban and rural character within the City; Riverfront Framework Plan: Attract private investment	Lancaster, SC: http://www.lancastercitysc.com/information-citysites.aspx	Increased number of events that highlight the history of Grand Rapids and its relationship to the natural environment
1.6 Create a larger, citywide public policy conversation about the mechanisms for the support and preservation of historic buildings	Arts and Culture Commission, Itasca County Historical Society	Low	Informal meeting with Itasca County Historical Society to review current regulatory environment and plan Grand Rapids specific strategy for helping to augment efforts at historic preservation	Time to research / evaluate / formulate potential policy recommendations	GR Comp Plan: Land Use Goal - Incorporate character and design in land use categories and regulations; Riverfront Framework Plan: City should require land dev. and bldg. appearance requirements, could offer facade improvement grants.	Fergus Falls, MN http://imaginefergusfalls.tumblr.com/	Increased number of historically significant preserved buildings. Augmented city-wide conversation about the role of historic preservation in city development

GOAL 1 Enhance Grand Rapids’ distinctive identity through arts and culture

Strategies	Potential Partners	Priority	First Steps	Estimated Resources	Tie Ins to Other City Plans	Precedent Models	Desired Outcomes
OBJECTIVE Promote Grand Rapids’ distinctive local cultural and arts identity							
1.7 Promote existing cultural offerings to residents and potential visitors. (Annual arts awards, electronic message board, centralized web calendar/e-blast)	Arts and Culture Commission, Visit Grand Rapids, Reif Center, Grand Rapids Arts	High	Gather information about research and progress to date. Work with Visit Grand Rapids to plan overall strategy	Potential web development costs which can range from \$20 - 80K depending on size of project. Ongoing site maintenance needs to be accounted for.			Increased visibility of artistic enterprises
1.8 Develop a cultural center to celebrate diverse local cultural practices, draw area residents and tourists, and link artists with shared resources, teaching, and exhibition opportunities	Arts and Culture Commission, Artspace, Economic Development Authority, Grand Rapids Arts, MacRostie, ICC American Indian Studies Program, Independent School District 318’s Indian Education Staff, Itasca County Historical Society	Medium	Nurture public private partnerships to identify an existing managing entity and/or encourage the formation of a nonprofit membership organization. Explore incubating the cultural center within the walls on an existing cultural organization’s space. Identify a space with strategic assets (downtown storefront space with good street visibility and foot traffic and/or a space that leverages strong natural amenities)	Modest staffing and financial costs for the City. Comparable models show, city governments (or building owners) donating vacant buildings, with cities paying for renovation costs typically running (in last decades dollars) less than \$100,000. Managing nonprofit organizations have raised additional funding at multiples of these amounts from state and private foundations. Centers outside of the Twin Cities studied in a 2006 McKnight Foundation study cited 2004/5 operating budgets running between \$133,700 and \$ 650,000, a good share of which is generated annually from earnings from classes, equipment and space rentals, margins on sales of artworks, and modest attendance fees.	GR Comp Plan: Economic Goal - Build the City’s economic sustainability	- West Valley City, UT: http://www.culturalcelebration.org/ ; New York Mills, MN: http://www.kulcher.org/	Celebrate the diversity of local cultural practices (e.g. Finnish, Scandinavian, Native American, German, Latino, etc.); Attract tourists, and increase street traffic and patronage for downtown businesses. Provide resource sharing and training for artists; Provide a space for artistic innovation and excellence through joint learning. Generate incomes for professional artists
1.9 Create a staff position (city or private) to coordinate downtown cultural programs/events and liaise with other organizations such as Visit Grand Rapids	Arts and Culture Commission, Central Business Association	Low	Work with downtown stakeholders to identify potential sources for both public and private ongoing funding	Annual full-time salary	GR Comp Plan: Economic Goal - Develop and enhance the City’s Business/Industrial districts		Increased number of public events and festivals
OBJECTIVE Foster regional networking to explore opportunities for collaborative programming and promotion							
1.10 Create a workgroup to explore opportunities for collaborative regional programming and promotion among specific arts and culture venues	Arts and Culture Commission, Itasca Economic Development Corporation, Reif, MacRostie, Judy Garland Museum & Children’s Discovery Zone, MN Forest History Center, Regional: Duluth Playhouse, Edge Theatre, DECC	Medium	Research and present precedent models to potential partners as a means of inspiration. Identify and reach out to regional partners.	Time for fostering cross-organizational conversations	GR Comp Plan: Guiding Principle - Enhance Grand Rapids’ regional role.	The Berkshires (MA) (Berkshire Visual Arts, http://berkshirevisualarts.org/berkshires.html ; Mass MoCA, http://massmoca.org/berkshires.php ; Clark Art Museum, http://clarkart.edu/visit/pla nvisit/visit-berkshires)	Increased number of artistic and cultural programs created at multiple regional venues. Increased number of regional events promoted locally and local events promoted regionally

GOAL 1 Enhance Grand Rapids' distinctive identity through arts and culture

Strategies	Potential Partners	Priority	First Steps	Estimated Resources	Tie Ins to Other City Plans	Precedent Models	Desired Outcomes
1.11 Facilitate connections between local arts and cultural nonprofit organizations and local and regional Ojibwe artists and organizations with experience exhibiting Native American visual and performing art	Arts and Culture Commission (lead), Artists/Culture Bearers: Delina White, Melvin Losh, Anton Treuer, Jim Northrup, Lyz Jaakola, Karen Savage-Blue, Jeff Savage, Dewy Goodwin. Organizations: Northern Community Radio, ICC, Independent School District 318's Indian Education Staff, Regional Galleries and Museums	Medium	Identify commissioner to research and network with local and regional artists and organizations experienced exhibiting Native American visual and performing art. Disseminate findings to arts and culture providers.	Time for research and networking.	Library Strategic Plan: Library will offer programs on various aspects of different cultures, beliefs and lifestyles	Red Earth: http://www.redearth.org/ab out/	Increased number of art exhibits and performances featuring or including Native American artists
1.12 Nurture public-private partnerships to explore opportunities for summer residency programs, building on the strength of the successful collaboration with the Minnesota Orchestra.	Arts and Culture Commission, Reif, MN Orchestra	Medium	Investigate lessons learned from Minnesota Orchestra residency	Time for research into precedents and potential partners	GR Comp Plan: Guiding Principle - Enhance Grand Rapids' regional role.	Saratoga Performing Arts Center (NY)'s annual summer residencies with the New York City Ballet and Philadelphia Orchestra (http://www.spac.org/about/history)	Increased opportunities to highlight Grand Rapids as a seasonal (and regional) arts destination.

GOAL 2 Expand Opportunities for Lifelong Arts Learning

Strategies	Potential Partners	Priority	First Steps	Estimated Resources	Tie Ins to Other City Plans	Precedent Models	Desired Outcomes
OBJECTIVE Youth—Celebrate and expand opportunities for in-school and outside-of-school arts learning							
2.1 Coordinate a roundtable workgroup to address youth arts learning (in and outside-of-school)	Arts and Culture Commission (lead), Independent School District 318, Independent School District 318 Community Ed, Itasca Networks for Youth, Parks and Recreation, YMCA, Library, MacRostie, Reif, Grand Rapids Arts, Itasca Orchestra and Strings program, Children's Discovery Museum, other arts and cultural orgs that have youth programming, Scouts, 4H, business leaders	High	Research and present precedent models to potential partners as a means of inspiration	Time for fostering cross-organizational conversations	GR Comp Plan: Public Infrastructure Goal - Educational excellence for all	The Right Brain Initiative, http://therightbraininitiative.org (Portland, OR), Big Thought ArtsPartners, http://therightbraininitiative.org (Dallas, TX), Amarillio Window on a Wider World, http://windowonawiderworld.org/ (Amarillo, TX), MindPOP, www.mindpop.org (Austin, TX)	Increased number of Grand Rapids youth who have access to arts-based enrichment activities
2.2 Identify and remedy gaps in existing outside-of-school offerings and barriers to access such as cost and transportation	Arts and Culture Commission (lead), Independent School District 318, Independent School District 318 Community Ed, Itasca Networks for Youth, Parks and Recreation, YMCA, Library, MacRostie, Reif, Grand Rapids Arts, Itasca Orchestra and Strings program, Children's Discovery Museum, other arts and cultural orgs that have youth programming, Scouts, 4H, business leaders	High	Convene youth program organizations within Grand Rapids to identify gaps in arts access and envision mechanisms for expanding access	Initially - research and meeting time. Potential for city or grant funding to help meet gaps once identified.	GR Comp Plan: Public Infrastructure Goal - Educational excellence for all	Venice, CA: http://www.bgcvc.org/Websites/bgcvc/images/Documents/After%20School%20Transportation_REV.%208-9-11.pdf	Increase in number, and access to, out-of-school arts programs
2.3 Increase youth art offerings via the park system and library, such as a "fun wagon" or arts summer camps	Arts and Culture Commission (lead), Independent School District 318, Independent School District 318 Community Ed, Itasca Networks for Youth, Parks and Recreation, YMCA, Library, MacRostie, Reif, Grand Rapids Arts, Itasca Orchestra and Strings program, Children's Discovery Museum, other arts and cultural orgs that have youth programming, Scouts, 4H, business leaders	High	Convene youth program organizations within Grand Rapids to identify gaps in arts access and envision mechanisms for expanding access	Idea has potential for grant funding for youth/arts/access program as collaborative public-non-profit venture with the Parks Department	GR Comp Plan: Public Infrastructure Goal - Educational excellence for all	Morris, MN partnership between the Prairie Renaissance Cultural Alliance and the Morris Wetlands Management http://www.prairierenaisance.org/2012/04/15/morris-to-host-twin-cities-artists/	Increased capacity within the Parks Department to offer cultural programming for youth
2.4 2.4 Coordinate public and private fundraising efforts (including grant applications and individual donations) to expand youth-arts learning opportunities	Potential Funders: Kennedy Center, IRRRB, Blandin Foundation, Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation, Regional Library System (legacy amendment funds)	Medium	Consider applying for Kennedy Center's Any Given Child strategic planning initiative	Time for organizing cross-organizational conversations	GR Comp Plan: Public Infrastructure Goal - Educational excellence for all	California, Wallace Foundation http://www.wallacefoundation.org/learn-about-wallace/GrantsPrograms/our-initiatives/Past-Initiatives/Pages/Community	Increased number of philanthropic funds targeted towards youth-arts within Grand Rapids
2.5 Raise awareness of existing in-school arts offerings, including arts integration into class curricula, residencies, and the Reif-Kennedy Center Partners in Education program	Arts and Culture Commission (lead), Independent School District 318, Reif, Grand Rapids Arts, Northern Community Radio, Itasca Community Television, Grand Rapids Herald Review, business leaders	Medium	Gather school and media representatives to discuss current offerings	Time for fostering cross-organizational conversations	GR Comp Plan: Public Infrastructure Goal - Educational excellence for all		Increased community-wide access to information about arts programs for youth

GOAL 2 Expand Opportunities for Lifelong Arts Learning

Strategies	Potential Partners	Priority	First Steps	Estimated Resources	Tie Ins to Other City Plans	Precedent Models	Desired Outcomes
2.6 Match artists and arts organizations interested in providing paid or volunteer school residencies and/or classroom teacher professional development. (Online directory & annual creative resource fair)	Arts and Culture Commission and Grand Rapids Arts, Independent School District 318 (leads), MacRostie, Reif, Itasca Orchestra and Strings program, Children's Discovery Museum, other arts and cultural orgs that have youth programming, business leaders	Medium	Transition Grand Rapids Arts' existing artist directory to capture additional residency fields	Dependent on scale of intervention. Simple speed matchmaking activities can be done at the scale of volunteer labor and donated facilities and resource. Online directory creation could range from \$20 - 80K and require ongoing updating and maintenance	GR Comp Plan: Public Infrastructure Goal - Educational excellence for all	http://www.dallasartspartners.org (Dallas, TX)	Increased quality and quantity of arts-based educational opportunities offered in ISD 318
2.7 Develop an internship program that places high school students with local artists	Arts and Culture Commission and Grand Rapids Arts, Independent School District 318 (leads), MacRostie, Reif, Itasca Orchestra and Strings program, Children's Discovery Museum, other arts and cultural orgs that have youth programming, business leaders	Low	Transition Grand Rapids Arts' existing artist directory to capture additional internship fields	Organizing meeting with high school guidance counselors to identify potentially interested students and constraints to their schedules - eventual program costs could range from \$20 - 40K	GR Comp Plan: Public Infrastructure Goal - Educational excellence for all	Color Squad, Austin, TX http://creativeaction.org/programs/youth-ensembles/	Increased arts professional development opportunities for youth
OBJECTIVE Adults & Community—Increase access to arts-based enrichment and healing							
2.8 Convene a roundtable workgroup to identify and reduce gaps in arts learning opportunities for college students, adults, seniors, etc.	Arts and Culture Commission (lead), ICC, Independent School District 318 Community Ed, YMCA, MacRostie, Elder Circle, Library	Medium	Identify appropriate leadership within organizations	Initially - research and meeting time. Potential for city or grant funding to help meet gaps once identified.	GR Comp Plan: Public Infrastructure Goal - Educational excellence for all	Cambridge: http://www.ccae.org/	Increased number of Grand Rapids adults who have access to arts-based enrichment activities
2.9 Coordinate public and private fundraising efforts (including grant applications and individual donations) to expand arts-based enrichment and healing	Potential Funders: IRRRB, Blandin Foundation, Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation, Regional Library System (legacy amendment funds)	Medium	Research specific grant opportunities	Time for organizing cross-organizational conversations	GR Comp Plan: Public Infrastructure Goal - Educational excellence for all	Browards County, FL, Community Arts Education Partnerships http://www.broward.org/Arts/Funding/Programs/Pages/CAEPGrant.aspx	Increased number of philanthropic funds targeted towards arts enrichment and healing in Grand Rapids
2.10 Promote healing and empowerment by matching artists and arts organizations interested in providing paid or volunteer residencies with nursing homes, assisted living homes, medical providers, social service providers, etc. (Online directory and annual creative resource fair)	Arts and Culture Commission and Grand Rapids Arts (leads), Elder Circle, social service providers (Northland Counseling Center, Kootasca Community Action, etc.), Grand Itasca Hospital and Clinic	Medium	Transition Grand Rapids Arts' existing artist directory to capture additional residency fields	Dependent on scale of intervention. Simple speed matchmaking activities can be done at the scale of volunteer labor and donated facilities and resources. Online director creation could range from \$20 - 80K and require ongoing updating and maintenance	GR Comp Plan: Public Infrastructure Goal - Educational excellence for all	Southern CA: http://www.engagedaging.org/about-us/	Targeted adult populations achieve healing and empowerment through increased arts-based enrichment activities

GOAL 3 Foster inclusive arts and cultural offerings and expand access

Strategies	Potential Partners	Priority	First Steps	Estimated Resources	Tie Ins to Other City Plans	Precedent Models	Desired Outcomes
OBJECTIVE Facilitate community spaces and programming that welcome the entire community							
3.1 Clarify and streamline city rules related to street festivals, performances in parks, and street performers (fact and FAQ sheet; volunteer arts help desk)	Arts and Culture Commission	High	Identify commissioner to research policies and draft FACT/FAQ sheets. identify current regulations. identify local artists who can discuss historic difficulties with creating public programming within the city	Time for policy research and precedents.	GR Comp Plan: Economic Goal Build the City's economic sustainability	CultureLA: http://www.culturela.org/events/Festivals/festivalproducer/Festival_Handbook.pdf ; Master Gardeners' Program (for Arts Help desk)	Increased number of small scale, volunteer initiated, events and performances within the City
3.2 Identify a new, prominent location for the Farmers' Market to strengthen its role as a social gathering place and artisan-incubator	Community Development Dept. (lead), Arts and Culture Commission, Grand Rapids Farmers' Market, private property owners	Medium	Convene a strategy session and outline prospects and barriers. Conduct site visits. Negotiate with private land owners, even if on short-term basis	Dependent upon land ownership. Site might have needs for additional infrastructure investments	GR Comp Plan: Economic Goal Build the City's economic sustainability	Minneapolis, MN Mill City Market http://millcityfarmersmarket.org/	Increased Farmers' Market visibility strengthens its functions as a social gathering place and artisan incubator
3.3 Develop a rink for recreational figure skating, preferably in the downtown area	Arts and Culture Commission, Public Works, Community Development Dept., Parks and Recreation, Central Business Association, Private land owners	Medium	Raise funds for a temporary "lighter, quicker, cheaper" rink installation. Identify parcel for short-term use. Negotiate use of site	Dependent on land ownership. Temporary rink materials. Long term: dependent on scope of identified project	GR Comp Plan: Economic Goal Build the City's economic sustainability; Parks and Trails Plan - New outdoor community skating rink	Richmond, VA: http://rvaonice.net/	Increased community access to a centrally located, iconic cultural amenity
OBJECTIVE Increase the amount of inclusive arts and cultural offerings							
3.4 Convene a diversity and inclusion workgroup to informally share updates and explore opportunities for collaboration	Arts and Culture Commission & Human Rights Commission (leads), Circle of Healing (Blandin Foundation), social service providers (Northland Counseling Center, Kootasca Community Action, Itasca Resource Center), ICC, Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation, MacRostie, Library, YMCA, other nonprofit arts and cultural providers	High	Identify appropriate leadership within organizations	Time for fostering cross-organizational conversations	Library Strategic Plan: Library will offer programs on various aspects of different cultures, beliefs and lifestyles	NAMI workgroup: http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=Newsletter&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=112016	Cross-sector collaborations increase the amount of inclusive arts and cultural offerings
3.5 Nurture public-private partnerships to create opportunities to link people of different ages, ethnicities, income levels	Diversity and inclusion workgroup, arts and cultural nonprofit organizations	High	Investigate lessons learned from past efforts and how to build on success	Time for fostering cross-organizational conversations	Library Strategic Plan: Library will offer programs on various aspects of different cultures, beliefs and lifestyles	Philadelphia, PA: http://www.artreach.org/who-we-are/mission-history/	Cross-sector collaborations increase the amount of inclusive arts and cultural offerings
3.6 Nurture public-private partnerships to integrate more visual and performing art by regional Ojibwe artists	Diversity and inclusion workgroup, arts and cultural nonprofit organizations	Medium	Via diversity and inclusion workgroup invite Marcie Redon and Ann Markusen to present their <i>Native Artists</i> research and invite local arts and cultural organizations to attend. Schedule to coincide with ICC powwow	Time for fostering cross-organizational conversations. Stipend for speaker	Library Strategic Plan: Library will offer programs on various aspects of different cultures, beliefs and lifestyles	NEFA: http://www.nativeartsandcultures.org/capacity/2011/new-england-foundation-arts ; Rapid City, SD First Peoples Fund http://www.linnet.net/1761	Increased number of art exhibits and performances featuring or including Native American artists

GOAL 3 Foster inclusive arts and cultural offerings and expand access

Strategies	Potential Partners	Priority	First Steps	Estimated Resources	Tie Ins to Other City Plans	Precedent Models	Desired Outcomes
3.7 Nurture public-private partnerships to provide more offerings suitable for families with children through tailored programs, child-care provisions, and/or varied hours	Diversity and inclusion workgroup, arts and cultural nonprofit organizations	Medium	Research and present precedent models to potential partners as a means of inspiration	Time for fostering cross-organizational conversations. Private grant funding or donations to implement offerings	GR Comp Plan: Public Infrastructure Goal - Educational excellence for all	Colorado: http://www.cpr.org/news/story/family-friendly-cultural-events-colorado-during-may-and-june ; Guthrie Theatre On-Site Child-Care (Minneapolis): http://www.twincities.com/ci_22473498 ; Pillsbury House Theatre Free On-Site Childcare (Minneapolis): http://www.startribune.com/local/minneapolis/115798079.html	Increased number of family-friendly art offerings
3.8 Nurture public-private partnerships to offer opportunities for people with disabilities or mental illness to create and connect with the greater community	Diversity and inclusion workgroup, arts and cultural nonprofit organizations	Medium	Investigate lessons learned from MacRostie and Northland Counseling Center collaboration. Explore sponsoring a VSA Minnesota training workshop	Time for fostering cross-organizational conversations. Stipend for workshop	GR Comp Plan: Public Infrastructure Goal - Educational excellence for all	Connected Communities: http://www.ahr.ac.uk/Funding-Opportunities/Research-funding/Connected-Communities/Scoping-studies-and-reviews/Documents/Building%20resilience%20through%20collaborative%20community%20arts%20practice.pdf ; VSA Arts of MN: http://vsamn.org/arts-education/professional-development/	People with mental illness and disabilities gain skills, confidence, and visibility within the larger community
OBJECTIVE Expand arts and cultural offerings to all people, regardless of family income							
3.9 Compile, seasonally update, and disseminate information about existing scholarship/subsidized arts and cultural opportunities	Arts and Culture Commission (lead), Social service providers (Northland Counseling Center, Kootasca Community Action, Itasca Resource Center), Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation, ISD 318 Community Education, nonprofit arts and cultural providers	High	Compile information. Investigate potential mediums: inserts into utility mailers, District 318's Community Ed. brochure, or even an electronic or traditional arts message board at the Itasca Resource Center	Time to compile information. Cost of dissemination method(s)	GR Comp Plan: Public Infrastructure Goal - Educational excellence for all		Increased access to art for economically disadvantaged populations
3.10 Seek opportunities to expand scholarships, subsidies, and passes	Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation, Library, Reif, Itasca Orchestra and Strings Program	High	Investigate lessons learned from past efforts and build on success.	Time to research. Grant funding and/or individual donations to expand programs	GR Comp Plan: Public Infrastructure Goal - Educational excellence for all	Arts for All Pass (Oregon): http://racc.org/advocacy/%E2%80%9Carts-all%E2%80%9D-provides-5-tickets-low-income-oregonians ; Memphis Arts for Everyone: http://www.memphisflyer.com/memphis/arts-for-everyone/Content?oid=3085132	Increased access to art for economically disadvantaged populations

GOAL 3 Foster inclusive arts and cultural offerings and expand access

Strategies	Potential Partners	Priority	First Steps	Estimated Resources	Tie Ins to Other City Plans	Precedent Models	Desired Outcomes
3.11 Cultivate opportunities with developers interested in integrating art installations and community-oriented space suitable for arts programming into affordable housing developments	Arts and Culture Commission, Housing and Redevelopment Authority, Community Development Dept.	Low	Convene cross-sector working group to identify opportunities and bring on necessary partnerships	General recommendations are for .5-1% of project construction budgets	GR Comp Plan: Housing Goal - Provide a mix of affordability in the City's housing infrastructure	Opa-Locka, FL: http://arts.gov/exploring-our-town/opa-locka-community-gateways	Increased access to art for economically disadvantaged populations

GOAL 4 Use the arts to animate the physical realm and improve connectivity

OBJECTIVE	Strategies	Potential Partners	Priority	First Steps	Estimated Resources	Tie Ins to Other City Plans	Precedent Models	Desired Outcomes
	Infuse and align existing Grand Rapids' city plans and policies with arts and culture to help achieve broader community health and connectivity goals							
4.1	Consider the creation of arts-specific amendments to integrate the objectives and strategic priorities of GRMN Creates within the City of Grand Rapids Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan and Riverfront Framework Plan	Arts and Culture Commission, Planning Commission, Park and Recreation Board, Community Development Dept., Engineering Dept.	High	Form an inter-commission workgroup to help identify potential areas of opportunity	Arts and Culture Commission member time. City of GR staff support			Closely linked city priorities that are clearly outlined for staff and elected officials
4.2	Consider the creation of an amendment to the Downtown Plan that specifically addresses issues of fragmentation and pedestrian wayfinding through artistic streetscape interventions and additional infrastructure	Arts and Culture Commission, Planning Commission, Community Development Department, Engineering Dept., Public Works Dept.	High	Form an inter-commission workgroup to help identify potential areas of opportunity	Arts and Culture Commission member time. City of GR staff support	GR Comp Plan: Transportation Goal - Strive to become a walkable city; Riverfront Framework Plan: Integrate design themes and linkages between the downtown Central Business District and the Riverfront; Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan: Public Realm	Colorado Springs: http://springsurbanintervention.wordpress.com/2014/05/08/finding-our-way-to-walkability-with-pedestrian-signs/ ; Wayfinding Art Bikes http://www.creativeenterprizezone.org/blog/wayfinding-art-bikes-get-noticed	Closely linked city priorities that are clearly outlined for staff and elected officials
4.3	Collaborate with Get Fit Itasca to identify potential arts-based interventions within community health goals	Arts and Culture Commission, Get Fit Itasca, Planning Commission, Engineering Dept.	High	Have Get Fit Itasca make a presentation to the Arts and Culture Commission on their activities and strategies	Arts and Culture Commission member time	GR Comp Plan: Transportation Goal - Strive to become a walkable city	American Trails: art & health: http://www.americantrails.org/resources/art/medmileart.html , Easton, PA Artistic Bike Rack Program: http://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WMGXAZ_Meet_Eastons_Newest_Bike_Rack_Art_Easton_PA ; Sioux Falls, ND Artistic Bike Rack Program: http://www.siouxfalls.org/bikesmart	Clear arts and culture advocacy plan that intersects with community-based interest in health objectives
4.4	Develop a pedestrian bridge over the Mississippi and enhance with artistic elements and good design	Arts and Culture Commission, Planning Commission, Engineering Dept., Public Works	High	Work with City Administrator to build off of current efforts		GR Comp Plan: Transportation Goal - Strive to become a walkable city / Riverfront Framework Plan - Connections Across the River	Providence River: http://www.gcpvd.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/providence-river-pedestrian-bridge-resize.pdf (although the scale is different the same design questions can be asked in Grand Rapids)	Well designed structure that serves both functionally and aesthetically
4.5	Explore opportunities to use art to promote walking and bike use within the upcoming Grand Rapids Trails Plan and that can help to activate key areas and trail heads, and effectively promote local history and identity	Arts and Culture Commission, Get Fit Itasca, Planning Commission, Engineering Dept.	Medium	Convene working group of city staff and local supporting organizations to identify immediate and long-term opportunities		GR Comp Plan: Transportation Goal - Strive to become a walkable city; Parks and Trails Plan - Provide signs at regional trail entry points & Add wayfinding signs for trails	Lexington, KY: http://www.americantrails.org/resources/art/Lexington-KY-Legacy-Trail-art.html	Clear arts and culture advocacy plan that intersects with community-based interest in health objectives
4.6	Integrate ideas for artistic crosswalks into the current efforts to plan for pedestrian safety	Arts and Culture Commission, Get Fit Itasca, Planning Commission, Engineering Dept., Public Works	Medium	Work with City Administrator to build off of current efforts of Safe Streets Plan		GR Comp Plan: Transportation Goal - Strive to become a walkable city; Downtown Redevelopment Master Plan: Public Realm	Baltimore, MD: http://www.npr.org/blogs/tetwo-way/2013/12/03/248461489/something-cool-a-hopscotch-crosswalk-in-baltimore ; http://www.crookedbrains.net/2010/01/design_09.html	Vibrant streetscape designs that serve both residents and visitors

GOAL 4 Use the arts to animate the physical realm and improve connectivity

Strategies	Potential Partners	Priority	First Steps	Estimated Resources	Tie Ins to Other City Plans	Precedent Models	Desired Outcomes
OBJECTIVE Embed public art into existing and future streetscapes to create a dynamic and vital physical environment							
4.7a Integrate artistic components into 5th Street redesign	Arts and Culture Commission, Engineering Dept.	Medium	Have an artist serve on the city supported design team	Potential volunteer role for local artist - future artists on design teams would be supported through budget allotments made early on in the project planning process	GR Comp Plan: Transportation Goal - Strive to become a walkable city	General Article: http://weburbanist.com/2008/11/14/street-art-pedestrian-crosswalks/	Vibrant streetscape designs that serve both residents and visitors
4.7b Integrate artistic components into existing and future roundabouts	Arts and Culture Commission, Engineering Dept.	Low	Incorporate an artist onto the project planning team	Potential volunteer role for local artist - future artists on design teams would be supported through budget allotments made early on in the project planning process	GR Comp Plan: Transportation Goal - Maintain, expand, and enhance the transit system	Bloomington, IN: https://bloomington.in.gov/media/media/application/pdf/19185.pdf	Dynamic roundabout designs that serve as identifiable nodes within the city
4.8 Create murals and art installations along existing infrastructure, such as bridges and railroad crossings, to help animate points of entrance into town and beautify neglected areas	Arts and Culture Commission, MacRostie Art Center; Blandin Foundation; Public Works Dept.	Medium	Convene primary stakeholders to look at precedents, outline vision, and identify potential sources for local support	General public art mural work (depending on scale) can range from approximate 15K - 75K including artist fees, materials, and artist insurance	GR Comp Plan: Transportation Goal - Provide a safe, convenient, efficient, continuous, and aesthetically pleasing transportation environment that is conducive to both recreational bicycling and using the bicycle for a commuting purpose	Portland, OR: http://racc.org/public-art/mural-program	Revitalized infrastructure areas throughout the city
4.9 Encourage the donation of privately funded art into Veteran's Park to help celebrate heritage and identity	Arts and Culture Commission, Park and Recreation Department	Low	Convene primary stakeholders to look at precedents, outline vision, and identify potential sources for local support	Dependent upon scale of donation	GR Comp Plan: Economic Goal - Development of the Riverfront; Riverfront Framework Plan - Attract private investment	Fergus Falls, MN http://imaginefergusfalls.tumblr.com/post/98855482953/online-gallery-the-kirkbride-cycle-pop-up	Vibrant Veteran's Park that celebrates the histories and stories of local veterans
4.10 Organize a sculpture walk that highlights work from regional artists and provides opportunities to animate the downtown area	Arts and Culture Commission, Bemidji Sculpture Walk	Medium	Reach out to Bemidji Sculpture Walk for possible collaboration and/or info sharing	Time for policy research and precedents. Trip to Bemidji to discuss their program.	GR Comp Plan: Economic Goal - Develop and enhance the City's Business/Industrial districts	Bemidji Sculpture Walk: http://www.bemidjisculpture.org/ ; Sculpturewalk Sioux Falls: http://sculpturewalksiouxfalls.com/about/	Increased vitality to the downtown area
OBJECTIVE Create public art policies and a program that consistently contributes to the vitality and economic development of the city							
4.11 Create City of Grand Rapids "Art Adoption/Acquisition/Loan" policy that would create a clear understanding of what type of artworks to accept into the city's collection and to establish guidelines around the conversations about maintenance, insurance, and other administrative necessities. Policy should address: objective for creating a public art donation policy, advisor selection process, artwork selection criteria, placement or re-siting of artworks, maintenance	Arts and Culture Commission, Public Works Dept., Planning Commission	High	Gather policy precedents from other municipalities to identify components for a Grand Rapids specific policy	Arts and Culture Commission member time, City of GR staff support	GR Comp Plan: Land Use Goal - Incorporate character and design in land use categories and regulation	Dover: http://www.ci.dover.nh.us/Assets/government/boards-commissions/arts-commission/document/R-2008.10.22_PublicArtAcquisitionManagementProcess.pdf	An initial policy framework that begins to aid the Arts and Culture Commission in laying out clear guidelines and expectations for the creation of City of Grand Rapids Public Art Collection
4.12 Create a City of Grand Rapids "Arts Inclusion" policy to help frame conversations between the city and private developers who might be looking to develop artwork within their own developments. Policy should address: objective for creating public art on private development sites, proposed contribution (typically .5 - 2%), definition of appropriate public art, framework for appropriate application of funds, suggested contributions (on site, on City-owned property, to Public Art Fund), artist selection criteria, project selection criteria	Arts and Culture Commission, Planning Commission, Community Development Dept.	Medium	Gather policy precedents from other municipalities to identify components for a Grand Rapids specific policy	Arts and Culture Commission member time, City of GR staff support	GR Comp Plan: Land Use Goal - Incorporate character and design in land use categories and regulation	San Diego: http://docs.sandiego.gov/council/policies/cpd_900-11.pdf ; Sewanee: http://www.sewanee.com/pdfs/public%20art%20development%20guide.pdf	An initial policy framework that begins to aid the Arts and Culture Commission in laying out clear guidelines and expectations for the creation of City of Grand Rapids Public Art Collection

GOAL 4 Use the arts to animate the physical realm and improve connectivity

Strategies	Potential Partners	Priority	First Steps	Estimated Resources	Tie Ins to Other City Plans	Precedent Models	Desired Outcomes
4.13 Create a formal City of Grand Rapids Public Art Policy. Policy should address: criteria for public art projects, artist selection process, funding (typically .5% - 2% of construction cost of municipal public improvement projects), public art acquisition process (see 4.11), artwork documentation specifications, maintenance and conservation parameters – with particular attention to the northern Minnesota climate, deaccession procedures	Arts and Culture Commission	Low	Gather policy precedents from other municipalities to identify components for a Grand Rapids specific policy	Arts and Culture Commission member time, City of GR staff support	GR Comp Plan: Land Use Goal - Incorporate character and design in land use categories and regulation.	Public Art Network - Americans for the Arts: http://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/networks-and-councils/public-art-network	A strong public art program that contributes on a continual basis to the vitality and economic development of the city

GOAL 5 Foster Support for Artists and Arts and Cultural Organizations

Strategies	Potential Partners	Priority	First Steps	Estimated Resources	Tie Ins to Other City Plans	Precedent Models	Desired Outcomes
OBJECTIVE Cultivate and strategize with allies in the business community to increase opportunities for cultural entrepreneurs/practitioners							
5.1 Via an annual award, honor and celebrate an exemplar arts-supportive business	Arts and Culture Commission, Grand Rapids Arts, City Council, Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce	High	Gather business related stakeholders to form a Business/Arts advisory group to work on this and other initiatives	Could be handled primarily through in-kind donations	GR Comp Plan: Economic Goal - Build the City's economic sustainability	Colorado: http://cbca.org/programs/business-for-the-arts/	Increased private-sector support for the arts
5.2 Create a roundtable to serve as a business arts leadership and advocacy board to help: increase public and private funding, coordinate business volunteers for the arts, identify event sponsors, facilitate art displays at area businesses, and help cultural entrepreneurs build capacity	Arts and Culture Commission, Itasca Economic Development Corp., Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce, Magnetation, Grand Rapids State Bank	High	Gather business related stakeholders to form a Business/Arts advisory group	Commission member time	GR Comp Plan: Economic Goal - Build the City's economic sustainability	North Texas Business Council for the Arts: http://www.ntbca.org/	Cultural entrepreneurs receive more support from the private sector and increase their capacity
5.3 Via an online artist directory, link local businesses to local creative entrepreneurs with marketable services (exhibitions, performances, design, etc.)	Arts and Culture Commission, Grand Rapids Arts, Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce	Medium	Transition Grand Rapids Arts' existing artist directory to capture additional business services fields	Potential web development costs which can range from \$20 - 80K depending on size of project. Ongoing site maintenance needs to be accounted for.	GR Comp Plan: Economic Goal - Build the City's economic sustainability	http://www.creativeground.org (New England); Creative Enterprise Zone in St. Paul http://www.creativeenterprisezone.org/creative-rolodex ; Richmond, VA, Creative Change Center's (C3) Creative Directory http://www.c3richmond.org/directory/ ; New England, Creative Ground http://www.creativeground.org/	More local businesses hire local cultural entrepreneurs
5.4 Offer Springboard for the Arts' <i>Work of Art</i> series and strategize with local partners on ways to disseminate the knowledge more broadly and over the long-term	Arts and Culture Commission, Springboard for the Arts, Arrowhead Regional Arts Council, Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce, Itasca Economic Development Corporation, Library, MacRostie	Medium	Designate commission member or commission workgroup to interface with Springboard for the Arts organization	Initially, commission member time; later resources dependent on scale of dissemination efforts	GR Comp Plan: Economic Goal - Build the City's economic sustainability	Elk River and Moorhead, MN: http://springboardforthearts.org/professional-development/workshops/on-the-road/ ; Rapid City, SD First Peoples Fund http://www.lincnet.net/176	Grand Rapids' artists become more successful entrepreneurs
OBJECTIVE Tap existing spaces to create opportunities for creative practitioners to affordably live, work, and share their work							
5.5 Advocate for re-purposing of Central School interior to include performance opportunities (e.g. live music within a "brew pub")	Arts and Culture Commission, Central Business District Association, Grand Rapids Arts	High	Convene cross-sector working group to identify opportunities and bring on necessary partnerships	Commission member time	GR Comp Plan: Economic Goal - Build the City's economic sustainability	Jackson, MS: http://dulinghall.com/about.php	Local musicians have increased performances opportunities within a landmark community hub
5.6 Explore possibility of the use of the Showboat site by other artists/groups	Arts and Culture Commission, Showboat, Community Development Dept., Engineering	High	Convene cross-sector working group	Commission member time	GR Comp Plan: Economic Goal - Development of the Riverfront; Riverfront Framework Plan: Draw tourists and residents to the river; Parks and Trails Plan: Offer flexible space for performances that bring community together	Granite Falls, MN paddling theater http://placebaseproductions.com/research-phase-for-paddling-theatre/	Local artists and arts groups have expanded access to a performance venue. An underutilized venue is animated

GOAL 5 Foster Support for Artists and Arts and Cultural Organizations

Strategies	Potential Partners	Priority	First Steps	Estimated Resources	Tie Ins to Other City Plans	Precedent Models	Desired Outcomes
5.7 Investigate models for public-private partnerships (pop-up programs, etc.) to animate vacant/under-utilized storefront windows and commercial spaces to support galleries and creative entrepreneurs	Arts and Culture Commission, Grand Rapids Arts, Central Business District Association, MacRostie Art Center, Economic Development Authority, Community Development Dept., private property owners/lease-holders	Medium	Research precedent examples that can inform the challenges specific to Grand Rapid. Work with Economic Development Authority to identify potential project leaders	Time to investigate models and for exploration with partners. An initial program could be funded with \$100 - 200K private grant funding	GR Comp Plan: Economic Goal - Build the City's economic sustainability	New Haven CT's Project Storefronts: http://arts.gov/exploring-our-town/project-storefronts ; Chashama, NYC: http://www.chashama.org/ ; Arts on South: https://artsonsouth.wordpress.com/	Increased foot traffic in the downtown area. New/expanded creative businesses. Underutilized spaces are animated
5.8 Sustain and support the Artist-In-Residence program, in Central School or elsewhere. (Seek public and private funds, including grants and individual donations to offer a stipend in addition to space)	Arts and Culture Commission, Grand Rapids Arts, Central Business District Association	Medium	Seek funding for additional residences from private foundations interested in the intersection of arts promotion and economic development	Donation of city-owned space. Additional monies needed for artists' stipend	GR Comp Plan: Economic Goal - Build the City's economic sustainability	Fergus Falls, MN http://imaginefergusfalls.tumblr.com/artistresidency	Local artists create more work. Underutilized spaces are animated
5.9 Create a workgroup to investigate the adaptive reuse of the Rialto Theater and Township Hall as arts and cultural spaces	Arts and Culture Commission (lead), MacRostie, Itasca Economic Development Corp., Artspace	Medium	Convene cross-sector working group	Cost dependent on scale of renovations. Initial feasibility study could cost from 30 - 75K depending on needed engineering or other sub consultants	GR Comp Plan: Economic Goal - Build the City's economic sustainability	Mohawk Theater: http://arts.gov/exploring-our-town/mohawk-theater ; Fox Theater: http://www.foxtheatreinstitute.org/	Underutilized spaces are animated. The public gains new access to cultural amenities
5.10 Assess feasibility of an artist live-work project development and pursue implementation	Arts and Culture Commission (lead), Artspace, Itasca Economic Development Corp.	Medium	Contact Artspace to discuss potential for an artist housing feasibility study	Initially Commission member time. Later costs dependent on available tax credits and public/private funding arrangements which would be estimated by Artspace	GR Com Plan: Housing Goal - Provide a mix of affordability in the City's housing infrastructure	Brainerd, MN: http://www.artspace.org/our-places/franklin-arts-center ; Memphis TN: http://arts.gov/exploring-our-town/south-main-artspace-lofts	Increased affordable artist live-work spaces
5.11 Partner with affordable housing developers to explore including artist-appropriate units within proposed projects	Arts and Culture Commission, Housing and Redevelopment Authority, Community Development Dept.	Low	Convene cross-sector working group to identify opportunities and bring on necessary partnerships	General recommendations are for .5-1% of project construction budgets	GR Com Plan: Housing Goal - Provide a mix of affordability in the City's housing infrastructure	Pinnacle Housing: http://www.pinnaclehousing.com/images/art_in_public/art_in_public_places.htm	Increased affordable artist housing
5.12 Nurture public-private partnerships to develop facilities in which artists share equipment, access work and exhibition space, teach the broader community, and gain training	Arts and Culture Commission (lead), Artspace, Grand Rapids Arts, MacRostie, Itasca Economic Development Corp.	Low	Convene cross-sector working group to identify opportunities and bring on necessary partnerships	Dependent on scale of initiative envisioned by working group	GR Comp Plan: Public Infrastructure Goal - Educational excellence for all	Hamilton, OH: http://arts.gov/exploring-our-town/artspace-hamilton-lofts	Artists are better able to create their work and earn income. The public gains access to new cultural amenities



Appendices

A. Acknowledgements

B. Potential Grand Rapids / Itasca County Cross-Sector Partners

C. References

D. GRMN Creates Community Survey: Highlights

E. GRMN Creates Community Survey: Full Results

F. Cultural Asset Maps

G. Consultant Profiles

H. Image Credits

Appendix A. Acknowledgements

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Grand Rapids City Council

- Dale Adams, Mayor
- Ed Zabinski
- Dale Christy
- Jon Toivonen
- Bill Zeige
- Barb Sanderson (former council member)
- Joe Chandler (former council member)

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- Lois Bendix
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- John Connelly
- Todd Driscoll
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- Sonja Merrild
- Ashley Kolka
- Carissa Grosland
- Brian Carlson
- Michael Davis

Interviewee and Focus Group Participants

- Dale Adams, Mayor, City of Grand Rapids
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- Marcia Anderson, Director of Library Services, Grand Rapids Area Library
- Nathan Bergstedt, Grand Rapids Herald-Review, Uncommon Loons
- Meghan Bown, Community Health Director, Get Fit Itasca
- Anne Campbell, Activities Director, Independent School District (#318)
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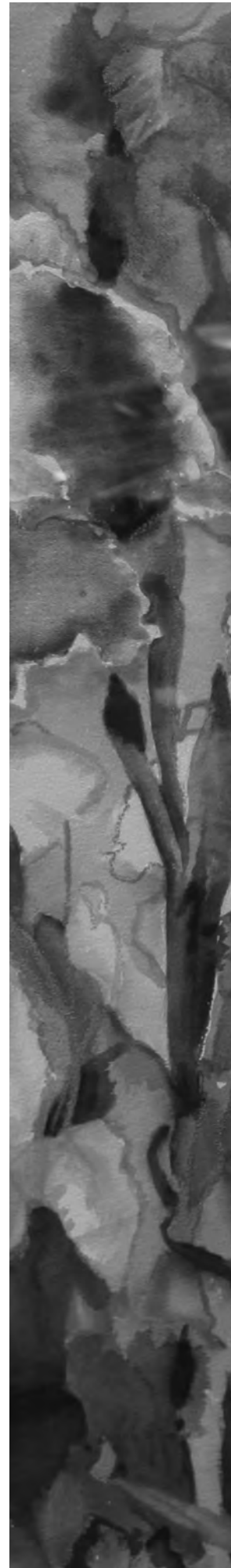


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Appendix B.

Potential Grand Rapids / Itasca County Cross-Sector Partners

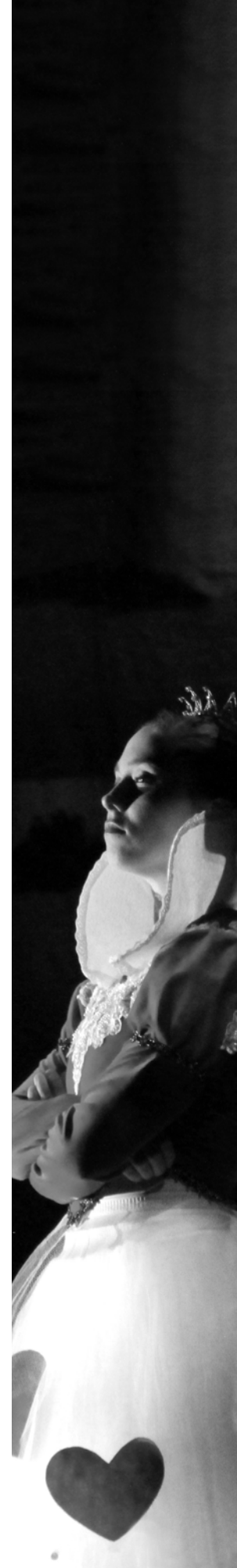
- 4H
- Arrowhead Regional Arts Council
- Artspace
- Bemidji Sculpture Walk
- Blandin Foundation
- Central Business District Association
- Central Square Tenants' Association
- Circle of Healing (Blandin Foundation)
- Duluth Entertainment Convention Center
- Duluth Playhouse
- Economic Development Authority
- Edge Theatre
- ElderCircle
- Forest History Center
- Get Fit Itasca
- Goods from the Woods
- Grand Itasca Hospital and Clinic
- Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce
- Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation
- Grand Rapids Arts
- Grand Rapids Farmers' Market
- Grand Rapids Herald Review
- Grand Rapids State Bank
- Itasca Community College (ICC)
- ICC, American Indian Studies Program
- ICTV
- Independent School District 318
- Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board
- ISD 318 Community Education
- Itasca County Fair Board
- Itasca County Historical Society
- Itasca Economic Development Corporation
- Itasca Networks for Youth
- Itasca Orchestra and Strings Program
- Judy Garland Museum & Children's Discovery Zone
- Kootasca Community Action
- MacRostie Art Center
- Magnetation
- Minnesota Orchestra



- MN Department of Natural Resources
- Northern Community Radio
- Northland Counseling Center
- Reif Performing Arts Center
- Boy Scouts of America / Girl Scouts
- Showboat
- Springboard for the Arts
- Uncommon Loons
- UPM Blandin Paper Co.
- Visit Grand Rapids
- YMCA

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Appendix D.

GRMN Creates Community Survey: Highlights

Introduction

The GRMN Creates consultant team administered a community survey to gain insights into how Grand Rapids community members engage in the arts, ideas for the most effective things the City of Grand Rapids could do to foster arts and culture, and how arts and cultural activities could advance other community priorities.

332 people took the survey, or about 3% of the town's population.² The survey was delivered online via SurveyMonkey, for a 6-week period (September 16-October 30, 2014). City staff and arts and culture commissioners disseminated the survey link through the city website, the GRMN Creates Facebook page, flyers at area businesses, announcements at GRMN Creates community meetings, word of mouth, and a utility bill insert mailed to every Grand Rapids household. To encourage participation, respondents were offered an opportunity to enter a raffle for gift certificates to local businesses and performances.

Below, we present key findings, followed by the full survey results.

Key Findings

Why arts and culture matter: quality of life, economic vitality, and intrinsic benefits

Survey findings suggest that Grand Rapids residents value arts and culture for a variety of reasons, from improving quality of life to economic vitality to the intrinsic benefits that arts and culture offer. Impressively, 94% of respondents thought arts and cultural activities play an extremely or moderately important role in improving the quality of life of Grand Rapids area residents (Q41).

In terms of economic vitality, over 80% of survey respondents rated arts and culture as extremely or moderately important for helping Grand Rapids attract and keep businesses (83%), workers (82%) and retirees (88%) (Q37). Strong majorities of respondents also rated artists' contributions to Grand Rapids' economy as extremely or moderately important: 80% for their role as entrepreneurs, and 76% for their role as workers (Q37). Majorities of respondents think that arts and cultural enterprises are extremely or moderately important generators of income (67%) and jobs (65%) (Q36).

²As a sample of convenience subject to selection bias, survey findings may not be representative of the entire population of Grand Rapids residents. Respondents may be those with more passionate views (pro or con) about Grand Rapids' arts and culture



Respondents also value arts and cultural activities for a variety of intrinsic reasons, especially exposure to other cultures and artists/art forms, being emotionally transported, and socializing (Table 1).

Table 1: Why People Value Participating In Arts and Cultural Activities

<u>I value arts and cultural activities because they help me:</u>	
	%
find insights into other cultures or circumstances	86
discover new artists and arts forms	84
feel emotions through art	82
make new friends and expand social networks	82
develop my creativity	81
support a spiritual life through arts and culture (including listening to music, singing in church, reading)	71
develop a greater understanding of local history	70
help in healing processes	61

Percentage of respondents selecting strongly agree to agree. Based on a 5-point scale. Source: Q12.

How people participate in arts and culture

Survey findings suggest that Grand Rapids residents participate in a diverse range of cultural activities and do so often. Music (79%) and art festivals (66%) are the most popular forms, followed by theatre (57%) and visual arts (55%) (Q1). Fifty-eight percent of survey respondents participate in arts and cultural activities monthly or more frequently (Q3).

Evidence from the survey indicates that Grand Rapids is home to numerous artists, who work in all sorts of disciplines and stages of profession development. Over half of respondents (53%) self-identify as some sort of artist (Q4). They engage in a diverse range of artistic disciplines/creative practice. Over 10% of respondents work in each of the disciplines of music, craft, visual arts, and photography (Table 2). A majority (50%) of artists consider themselves at the amateur/hobby stage, followed by emerging (22%), established (17%), and mid-career (10%) (Q7).

Table 2: Artist Respondents' Range Of Disciplines/Practices

	%
music	15
craft	11
visual art	11
photography	10
writing & literature	8
theater	8
fiber arts	5
dance	4
culinary arts	4
arts education	3
cultural management & administration	3
community arts	3
graphic design	3
performance art	3
media arts	2
film & video	2
other	2
fashion	2
specialized technical	1

*Calculated from Q5: What is your primary artistic practice/discipline (N=154) and Q6: What are your secondary artistic practices/disciplines (N=140).

Priorities for arts and culture

Findings from the community survey suggested clear community priorities for arts and culture, specifically:

- 94% of respondents think that arts and culture should play an extremely or moderately important role in Grand Rapids' regional identity (Q38)
- Strong majorities of respondents want to see the City of Grand Rapids use art to improve the physical environment, with particular support for parks, city buildings, and natural areas (Table 3)

Table 3: Priority Areas For Art Improving The Physical Environment

In the future, I would like to see the City of Grand Rapids use art (visual and/or performing) to improve:

	%
parks	88
city buildings	79
natural areas (such as trails and their signage)	77
city infrastructure (such as bridges and railways)	71
streets	68

Percentage of respondents selecting strongly agree to agree. Based on a 5-point scale. Source: Q32.

- 89% percent of respondents wanted to see closer links between Grand Rapids’ arts and cultural offerings and education, more than any other option; and 75% wanted closer ties between art and healing (Table 4)

Table 4: Arts and links to other domains

I’d like to see closer links between Grand Rapids’ arts and cultural offerings and:

	%
education	89
healing in general	75
civic engagement	71
environmental activities	69
poverty alleviation	68
recreational activities	67
reduction in addiction	65
agriculture and forestry	57
sporting activities	42

Percentage of respondents selecting strongly agree to agree. Based on a 5-point scale. Source: Q29.

- Only 37% of respondents rated arts access at the public elementary school level as adequate, 41% for the high school level, and 40% for area colleges (Table 5)

Table 5: Youth Arts Access

Grand Rapids' youth have adequate access to arts and culture through:	
	%
public elementary schools	37
public high schools	41
area colleges	40
non-school providers (non-profits, churches, private lessons, etc.)	51

Percentage of respondents selecting strongly agree to agree. Based on a 5-point scale. Source: Q23.

- Arts and cultural offerings appear to be most inclusive of people of different ages, less so for people of different income and education levels, and the least for minorities (Table 6)

Table 6: Arts And Inclusivity

Grand Rapids' current arts and cultural offerings are inclusive of:	
	%
people of different ages	72
people of different income and education levels	51
minorities, such as Native Americans	41

Percentage of respondents selecting strongly agree to agree. Based on a 5-point scale. Source: Q25.

Survey findings suggest particular opportunities to strengthen Native American arts and cultural offerings. For instance, only 41% of respondents rated Grand Rapids' current arts and cultural offerings as inclusive of minorities, such as Native Americans (Q25). Over half (58%) of respondents indicated that they have participated in Native American arts and culture, and even more (65%) expressed interest in future opportunities (Q14-15). Lastly, only 45% of arts or cultural organization respondents reported that they had engaged Native Artists or performers in their arts and cultural offerings (Q19).

The above values also came through via the free response submissions. When asked, "What are the most effective things the City of Grand Rapids can do to foster vital arts and cultural resources for everyone?" (Q42), many respondents (13) suggested that the City can play an important role in promoting arts and culture (individual artists and arts activities), locally, regionally and statewide. Other respondents (10) noted that the City can take steps to make arts and culture more generally accessible, including offering affordable events, as well as making people generally feel welcome. Some respondents proposed reducing roadblocks and making policies more transparent at the city level (4). Respondents also would like the City to offer more—and more diverse—events and activities, such as festivals, public art, and music (9). Other responses include investing in public art (6), offering financial support (6); and generally providing space for arts and culture to happen (6).

Appendix E. GRMN Creations Community Survey: Full Results

Below, we include full results for the quantitative survey findings, as well as select summaries of free response submissions. Numbers in parenthesis indicate how many respondents address a specific theme via free response comments.

Q1: In the Grand Rapids area, I participate (including at home) in: (check all that apply)

Answer Choices	%	#
music	79	256
arts festivals	66	214
theater	57	185
visual arts	56	183
dance	31	100
literature/writing	27	88
other	12	40

*percentages based on answers from 324 respondents.

Free responses (40)

Q2: In the Grand Rapids area, I would like to participate more actively in: (Please check all that apply)

Answer Choices	%	#
music	52	140
arts festivals	51	139
theater	40	108
visual arts	37	101
literature/writing	23	62
dance	23	61
other	10	26

*percentages based on answers from 270 respondents.

Free responses (26): Several respondents would like to participate more actively in hands-on learning opportunities (7), for example fiber arts, pottery, and quilting. Respondents also mention interest in multicultural activities (3) and food and culinary arts offerings (3).

Q3: In a typical year I participate in artistic and cultural activities in the Grand Rapids area: (Please check all that apply)

Answer Choices	%	#
weekly	24	77
monthly	34	111
about every other month	21	68
once or twice a year	21	67

*percentages based on answers from 323 respondents.

Q4: Are you an artist, or do you engage in creative expression in any artistic disciplines (visual, literary, design, dance, theater, music, new media, or other)?

Answer Choices	%	#
yes	53	176
no	47	156

*percentages based on answers from 332 respondents.

Q5: What is your primary practice/discipline? (choose one)

Answer Choices	%	#
music	26.0	40.0
visual art	16.2	25.0
craft	9.7	15.0
photography	9.1	14.0
writing & literature	8.4	13.0
fiber arts	7.1	11.0
theater	5.2	8.0
cultural management	3.3	5.0
performance art	2.6	4.0
dance	2.6	4.0
arts education	2.0	3.0
specialized technical	2.0	3.0
media arts	1.3	2.0
culinary arts	1.3	2.0
community arts	1.3	2.0
graphic design	0.7	1.0
fashion	0.7	1.0
film & video	0.7	1.0

*percentages based on answers from 154 respondents.

Free responses (13)

Q6: What is your secondary practice / discipline? (you may choose more than one)

Answer Choices	%	#
photography	23	14
music	20	28
craft	20	15
theater	19	8
writing & literature	16	13
visual art	14	25
culinary arts	11	2
dance	10	4
fiber arts	9	11
arts education	9	3
community arts	9	2
graphic design	8	11
cultural management	6	5
performance art	6	4
film & video	5	1
media arts	5	2
fashion	4	1
specialized technical	1	3

*percentages based on answers from 140 respondents.

Free responses (7)

Q7: At what stage are you in your artistic practice?

Answer Choices	%	#
amature / hobby	50	80
emerging	22	35
established	18	28
mid-career	10	16

*percentages based on answers from 159 respondents.

Q8: In what ways can the city of Grand Rapids help you advance your artistic/cultural practice?

Free responses (71): Although the question was intended to probe what support creative practitioners would like from the City of Grand Rapids, many respondents interpreted this question as how “the community, in general” and not “city government” can be supportive. Quite a number of respondents (17) want access to more classes and workshops. A few respondents focused on advance training (e.g., professional dance classes, mentorships with photographers, workshops with professional theater directors); others want more “wine and paint” events. Several respondents (12) desire more promotion and marketing. A few respondents (7) suggested shared facilities/resources and/or affordable space for artists to practice and showcase their work. More specifically, several respondents want performing/exhibition opportunities for local and/or emerging artists.

Q9: I can easily access information about Grand Rapids area arts and cultural offerings:

Answer Choices	Percentage of Respondents					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
in local print media	22%	57%	11%	6%	2%	2%
through local broadcast news	17%	40%	21%	15%	2%	6%
in tourism literature	8%	36%	30%	9%	2%	15%
through internet/social media	24%	54%	12%	4%	1%	4%

*percentages based on answers from 299 respondents.

Q10: Please share any details on how you access information about arts and culture. For instance, what are the most important sources? Are there particular kinds of arts offerings for which you wish you had more/better access to information?

Free responses (128): Respondents mentioned Northern Community Radio (27), Reif (specifically mailings) (20) and the print media (specifically the Grand Rapids Herald Review (22) as ways to access information about arts and culture. Other important sources included social media and word of mouth. Respondents also mentioned First Friday Street banners, the Itasca Community Television bulletin board, church bulletins, fliers in local businesses, IOSP, and Visit Grand Rapids. Many people offered suggestions for improved communication about arts and cultural offerings, such as greater emphasis on internet/social media, an electronic bulletin board, having one centralized repository website/email directory, and sending out a First Friday-specific email with details about participating artists.

Q11: I value arts and cultural activities because they help me:

Percentage of Respondents

Answer Choices	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
develop my creativity	38%	43%	15%	3%	1%	0%
discover new artists and arts forms	35%	48%	14%	1%	1%	0%
feel emotions through art	34%	48%	15%	1%	1%	1%
support a spiritual life through arts and culture	32%	39%	22%	3%	3%	1%
develop a greater understanding of local history	19%	51%	26%	3%	3%	1%
make new friends and expand social networks	26%	56%	16%	1%	1%	1%
find insights into other cultures or circumstances	29%	58%	11%	2%	2%	0%
help in healing processes	22%	38%	30%	4%	4%	2%

*percentages based on answers from 291 respondents.

Q12: What other reasons motivate you to participate in arts and cultural activities in the Grand Rapids area?

Free responses (95): Though responses varied greatly, the following quotes illustrate some of the range and key themes that community members voiced:

The arts keep life interesting -- small towns can feel stagnant but the influx of new artists and ideas keeps this one feeling alive and vibrant.

I fully enjoy watching others discover their talents of self-expression. It's a gift of empowerment that helps reduce mental health symptoms and promotes the healing process.

Arts and cultural activities are as important to the mental health of a community as green spaces and the visibility of water.

For many families, it's a generational thing. It can tie us to each other, our future, our past, and even a place. Raising children now I really feel the importance and impact for young ones to have access to arts and mediums to help them develop, grow, express, and find themselves.

The arts build community. They build networks between individuals and organizations. Theatre especially is an art that unites performing arts with visual arts, music, graphic design, fashion, dance, and just about every other art. Theatre brings diverse individuals together to work together on a project in spite of differences they may have.

Q13: What deters you from participating?

Free responses (111): Respondents overwhelming named time conflicts and family obligations as the biggest deterrent from participating in arts and cultural offerings (70). Individual family-related responses suggest the potential for more family-oriented arts and cultural events and adult offerings with childcare provided. Other deterrents that respondents mentioned include cost (34), lack of awareness (13), distance for rural respondents (7), and lack of interest/relevance (5).

Q14: I have had past opportunities to participate in Native American arts and culture:

Percentage of Respondents						
Answer Choices	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Yes	10%	48%	20%	14%	4%	3%

*percentages based on answers from 284 respondents.

Q 15: I am interested in future opportunities to participate in Native American arts and culture.

Percentage of Respondents						
Answer Choices	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Yes	21%	44%	25%	5%	2%	2%

*percentages based on answers from 288 respondents.

Q16: Do you work at an arts and cultural organization or serve as a volunteer or board member?

Answer Choices	%	#
employee	9	26
board member	9	27
volunteer	15	45
none of the above	66	195

*percentages based on answers from 293 respondents.

Q17: In Grand Rapids, there is an appropriate balance of opportunities for:

Percentage of Respondents

Answer Choices	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
funding for smaller arts organizations and large arts organizations	7%	33%	32%	21%	2%	7%
funding for one-time events and recurring events	5%	34%	30%	20%	1%	10%

*percentages based on answers from 93 respondents.

QUESTIONS ASKED OF ARTS ORGANIZATION RESPONDENTS:

Q18: Please feel free to elaborate on the balance of funding opportunities.

Free responses (19): Several respondents (5) expressed appreciation for existing funding (e.g., Blandin, the Legacy Amendment, and individual generosity). Others (4) think more funding is needed, specifically for smaller organizations (3). Respondents noted the need for fundraising training (2).

Q19: Has your organization engaged Native artists or performers in your arts and cultural offerings? (please answer for the organization with which you are primarily affiliated)

Answer Choices	%	#
yes	45	41
no	25	23
don't know	30	28

*percentages based on answers from 92 respondents.

Q20: Please feel free to elaborate on Native content. (For instance, is this a programmatic focus, and why/why not?)

Free responses (18): Responses range from general validations that this focus is important (5) to some specific examples of ways in which arts and cultural organizations are including Native programming (7), to some insights into the importance, yet challenges. For instance:

Because Native Americans are the second largest ethnic group in the area, we want our programming to include Native artists so as to accurately reflect our population. We have engaged Native artists in the past, but it has been a challenge to develop a long-term relationship or reputation in the Native community as a place for art and artists.

We want to be sure our programming represents our community, and that means including work by artists with a diversity of backgrounds and experiences. It is one of our goals to engage Native artists in our work, but it is a constant challenge that we are not very good at addressing. Our Grand Rapids address feels like a wall when reaching out to the Native population. Creating meaningful relationships takes time and real, personal connections. It can't (and shouldn't) be manufactured.

Q21: What opportunities do you see for helping Grand Rapids' arts and culture organizations collaborate more?

Free responses (25): A number of respondents (6) pointed out opportunities for organizations to plan complementary events instead of competing offerings and double bookings. Other interesting ideas included summer camps for artists, shared multi-discipline art spaces in vacant buildings, an arts help desk, and shared bookkeepers for small organizations.

Q22: In what ways can the City of Grand Rapids help your organization to succeed?

Free responses (25): The most common response involved promotion of local arts events and organizations (6), including through an electronic reader board, on the city website, social media, and via the chamber of commerce. Other respondents (4) emphasized public art (mural and statutes) and/or street-related infrastructure design and beautification (3). A few respondents desire a larger arts focus at Central School (3) and funding for organizations (3).

Q23: In Grand Rapids, there is an appropriate balance of opportunities for:

Percentage of Respondents

Answer Choices	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
public elementary schools	8%	29%	13%	25%	7%	19%
public high schools	9%	33%	17%	21%	3%	18%
area colleges	7%	33%	24%	12%	2%	23%
non-school providers	9%	41%	22%	9%	2%	16%

*percentages based on answers from 272 respondents.

Q24: Please share any suggestions for how youth could have improved access to the arts in Grand Rapids.

Free responses (75): Respondents expressed high levels of support for more focus on art in K-12 class time (25), and some perceived that arts has been cut in the schools and is hard to fund (6). For example:

Local school districts need to make art a primary activity in the elementary schools especially. As it stands, there is no coordinated effort to teach kids art; it's basically at the teacher's discretion how much time they spend with anything artistic. The general arts education begins to expand in the middle school, but by then the schools have already squandered some of the most creative years in a person's life. It's shameful, absolutely shameful.

Art isn't an "extra," art is a way of life! Connections to both visual and performing arts prepared our children for very successful careers that are actually, not very arts related at all! They became creative thinkers, able to use their imaginations to solve problems; to use music and an art medium to relieve stress or think outside of a box. The arts expanded how they think and enhances their perspectives on life.

A minority of respondents (4) voiced opinions that Grand Rapids youth already had robust arts opportunities (e.g., music, theater, Reif performances, IOS, the Library).

Q25: Grand Rapids' current arts and cultural offerings are inclusive of:

Percentage of Respondents

Answer Choices	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
minorities, such as Native Americans	6%	35%	35%	10%	1%	13%
people of different ages	10%	62%	14%	8%	1%	6%
people of different ages	9%	42%	19%	17%	4%	8%

*percentages based on answers from 270 respondents.

Q26: Please share any suggestions of area Native artists, Native arts organizations or other potential resources that might help Grand Rapids arts and culture be more inclusive of Native American traditions.

Free responses (28): Many respondents expressed interest in programming, such as dance and drumming, and space, such as an Ojibwe gallery, specific to Native art so as to learn more about Native arts and culture (12). Other respondents offered ideas of specific people or organizations to contact that could be helpful in making Grand Rapids more inclusive to Native American traditions (12). These specific suggestions have been integrated into GRMN Creates strategies.

Q27: Please share any suggestions or resources that might help Grand Rapids arts and culture be more inclusive of people of different age levels.

Free responses (27): Many respondents (9) reported a desire for more programming for the older adult population, including collaborations with ElderCircle and ArtSage. Several respondents (6) think Grand Rapids would benefit from more offerings for youth, including more opportunities for art in school. Others (6) mentioned activities and programs for teenagers and young adults. Finally, some respondents (6) voiced interest in intergenerational programming, including art classes with participants of a variety of ages.

Q28: Please share any suggestions or resources that might help Grand Rapids arts and culture be more inclusive of different income and education levels.

Free responses (36): Some respondents proposed free or discounted offerings (6) or offering scholarships or grants (9) as ways to increase access. Others (5) articulated positive work already being done in Grand Rapids on inclusive arts and culture, such as the ICC, the Library, and Reif. However, Reif also was held up as an example of an unaffordable place to experience arts and culture. Respondents also prioritized creating a more welcoming culture so everyone feels comfortable participating in arts and culture (3), overcoming transportation challenges (2), and offering more free outdoor events (1).

Q29: I'd like to see closer links between Grand Rapids' arts and cultural offerings and:

Answer Choices	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
poverty education	20%	48%	25%	2%	2%	4%
reduction in addiction	23%	43%	26%	3%	1%	5%
healing in general	27%	48%	19%	2%	1%	4%
agriculture and forestry	16%	41%	36%	3%	1%	4%
environmental activities	22%	47%	25%	3%	2%	2%
sporting activities	10%	32%	40%	11%	2%	5%
recreational activities	19%	42%	25%	4%	1%	3%

*percentages based on answers from 267 respondents.

Q30: Please share PAST EXAMPLES of how you've see arts and culture supporting community development in Grand Rapids?

Free responses (50): Over half of the respondents (27) mentioned First Fridays; some respondents articulated that this event brings a variety of people downtown and allows people to experience local businesses that they otherwise might not patronize. Many respondents (10) also mentioned Reif and several (10) recognized MacRostie for its work around art and social issues.

Respondents also mentioned other specific organizations and events that they believe have supported community development in the past. These include murals/public art (8), Northern Community Radio concerts and on-air programs (7), art fairs and music festivals (5), Goods from the Woods (5), Tall Timber Days (5), Central School (4), and the Library (4).

Q31: Please share any IDEAS you have for how arts and culture could support community development in Grand Rapids in the FUTURE.

Free responses (43): Several people (15) responded that festivals, events, and tours could support community development in Grand Rapids. Ideas include an art scavenger hunt, free public concerts, art walks, and theater in the parks. Other respondents (12) emphasized public art, specifically artwork that includes public engagement and has a connection to the natural surroundings. Several respondents (6) mentioned that vacant spaces could be animated using art and culture. Other ideas include capitalizing on arts and culture for tourism and boosting the regional reputation (4); promoting social inclusion through arts and culture (3); and using Central School as an asset (2).

Q32: In the future, I would like to see the City of Grand Rapids use art (visual and/or performing) to improve:

Answer Choices	Percentage of Respondents					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
streets	31%	37%	21%	7%	2%	2%
parks	42%	46%	8%	2%	1%	1%
city buildings	34%	44%	15%	4%	1%	1%
city infrastructure	31%	40%	22%	5%	1%	1%
natural areas	35%	42%	16%	5%	1%	1%

*percentages based on answers from 271 respondents.

Q33: Please share PAST EXAMPLES you've seen of how the arts and culture improves Grand Rapids' physical environment.

Free responses (58): Many respondents mentioned specific artworks, such as the MacRostie murals (18), the big chair (5), sculptures at the library (5), and the mosaics at Northern Community Radio (2). Two respondents did not think the big chair contributes to the physical environment. Other respondents provided examples of flower baskets in downtown Grand Rapids (6), signs and other infrastructure, such as roundabouts and bike lanes (8), and art-infused natural areas (8).

Q34: Please share any IDEAS you have for how the arts could support Grand Rapids' physical environment in the FUTURE.

Free responses (58): Respondents most frequently cited public art (17), such as sculptures and murals, as how arts could support Grand Rapids' physical environment. Several respondents mentioned the natural environment and the desire to increase the number of and strengthen existing green spaces (7), and incorporate art and interactive components (such as a chess board) into parks and trails. Some respondents also named excellent architecture and design as a way to improve the physical environment (5). Others commented that art could provide solutions to spruce up the outdoors during winter months (4); better promote biking and walking (3); help create safer and more beautiful street intersections, such as creatively augmenting roundabouts (3); and animate vacant spaces to create more vibrant streetscapes (3).

Q35: How important are Grand Rapids' arts and cultural enterprises (including non-profits) as generators of:

Percentage of Respondents

Answer Choices	Extremely Important	Moderately Important	Slightly Important	Not at all Important	Don't Know
income	32%	37%	20%	2%	9%
jobs	27%	38%	21%	3%	9%

*percentages based on answers from 264 respondents.

Q36: How important are artists' contributions to Grand Rapids economy as:

Percentage of Respondents

Answer Choices	Extremely Important	Moderately Important	Slightly Important	Not at all Important	Don't Know
workers	31%	45%	13%	3%	8%
entrepreneurs	41%	39%	11%	1%	8%

*percentages based on answers from 264 respondents.

Q37: How important are the arts and culture for helping Grand Rapids attract and keep:

Percentage of Respondents

Answer Choices	Extremely Important	Moderately Important	Slightly Important	Not at all Important	Don't Know
businesses	47%	35%	9%	3%	6%
workers	44%	38%	9%	4%	5%
retirees	54%	33%	6%	1%	5%
students	46%	35%	12%	3%	4%

*percentages based on answers from 264 respondents.

Q38: How important a role should arts and culture play in Grand Rapids' regional identity?

Answer Choices	Responses
Extremely important	60%
Moderately important	34%
Slightly important	6%
Not at all important	1%
Don't know	1%

*percentages based on answers from 262 respondents.

Q39: Please share PAST EXAMPLES you've seen of how the arts and culture supports Grand Rapids' economy.

Free responses (49): Respondents emphasized the importance of events as a way that arts and culture has supported Grand Rapids' economy. Nearly half (21) of the respondents mentioned offerings at Reif that attract both people who live in Grand Rapids and visitors from out of town. Several respondents noted that visitors attending Reif offerings spend money on food, lodging, and shopping while they are in town. Respondents also noted other events that add to the Grand Rapids' economy, including First Fridays (9) Goods from the Woods (5), MacRostie (5), Tall Timber Days (4), and the Wizard of Oz record event (2). Respondents also voiced other economic impacts, for instance the jobs creation during new arts facility construction, that downtown festivals can help boost sales at ancillary businesses, and that arts and cultural offerings attract people to live in Grand Rapids.

Q40: Please share any IDEAS you have for how the arts and culture could support Grand Rapids' economy in the FUTURE.

Free responses (27): Respondents had many unique ideas of how arts and culture could support Grand Rapids' economy in the future. A few respondents (4) mentioned a place to offer classes on folk arts and creative activities connected to Grand Rapids' natural assets, such as tanning pelts and making fishing lures. Several respondents (8) think more events in the community would add to Grand Rapids' economy, with one respondent noting that events specifically tied to the Mississippi River might draw people to the area. On a related note, some respondents (4) would like to see better promotion and marketing of the existing arts and cultural offerings.

Q41: Overall, how important a role do arts and cultural activities play in improving the quality of life of Grand Rapids area residents?

Answer Choices	Responses
Extremely important	65%
Moderately important	29%
Slightly important	5%
Not at all important	1%
Don't know	1%

*percentages based on answers from 258 respondents.

Q42: What are the most effective things the CITY of GRAND RAPIDS can do to foster vital arts and cultural resources for everyone?

Free responses (58): Many respondents (13) think that the City can play an important role in promoting arts and culture (individual artists and arts activities), locally, regionally and statewide. Other respondents (10) noted that the City can take steps to make arts and culture more generally accessible, including offering affordable events and transportation, as well as making people generally feel welcome. Some respondents proposed reducing roadblocks and making policies more transparent at the city level (4). Respondents also would like the City to offer more—and more diverse—events and activities, such as festivals, public art, and music (9). Other responses include investing in public art (6), offering financial support (6); and generally providing space for arts and culture to happen (6).

Q43: What are the most effective things INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS can do to foster vital arts and cultural resources for everyone?

Free responses (65): Over 60 respondents weighed in how individual Grand Rapids citizens can foster arts and cultural resources for everyone. Most respondents (43) believe that attending, financially donating to, and participating in arts and cultural offerings can help achieve this goal. Several respondents (10) think that individual citizens should buy art made by local artists. Other respondents (12) think that sharing information about cultural offerings with friends, family, and neighbors and providing opportunities for them to get involved will foster more cultural resources. Other respondents (5) expressed support for citizens' general engagement and their keeping up to date about cultural offerings.

Q44: What are the most effective ways that LOCAL ARTS AND CULTURAL NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS can contribute to the quality of life in Grand Rapids?

Free responses (48): In terms of how local arts and cultural nonprofit organizations can contribute to quality of life, some respondents (12) emphasized more partnerships among nonprofits and collaboration across sectors. Others (11) believe that better promotion and communication about nonprofit offerings and about the value of these offerings will add to quality of life. Other respondents (11) noted that providing accessible offerings for specific populations and communities (e.g., older adults and amateur artists) would allow more people to participate and enjoy arts and culture. Additional answers include that local nonprofit arts and cultural organizations can enhance Grand Rapids' aesthetic beauty (4), offer more events and activities (3), provide education (2), and provide innovative and original programming (3).

Q45: What are the most effective ways that INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS AND CULTURAL WORKERS can contribute to the quality of life in Grand Rapids?

Free responses (33): In terms of how individual artists and cultural workers can contribute to the quality of life in Grand Rapids, respondents suggested that they should showcase—through exhibitions, giving lectures or teaching classes—their work, so that more people can view and appreciate their craft (8). Other respondents encouraged creative workers to be more involved in the community, from engaging the church community to Central School, and participating in cross-sector work (7). Some respondents believe artists and creative workers should advocate for themselves and other creative workers (4). In contrast, other respondents suggested that artists can contribute to quality of life by offering their time and work for free (4). Other responses focus on artists taking time to create quality work (6), working collaboratively with other artists (4), and more effectively promoting their work (2).

Appendix F. Cultural Asset Maps

Introduction

As part of the information gathering stage for the cultural planning process, community members geographically identified arts and cultural assets in order to both create a basic listing of current assets, and to reveal their spatial distribution to help locate areas of opportunity and need. As part of this initial phase of analysis, the consultant team created six primary maps:

- MAP 1: All Arts and Cultural Assets - Existing
- MAP 2: Cultural Venues, Organizations, and Institutions
- MAP 3: Public Art
- MAP 4: Identified Areas of Personal Expression
- MAP 5: Community Envisioned Arts and Cultural Asset Ideas
- MAP 6: All Arts and Cultural Assets - Existing and Envisioned

The first three maps identify existing arts and culture assets both in terms of existing event venues, organization, and institutions; and existing public art assets. These layers are brought together in Map 1.

Maps 4 and 5 present information gathered in the first Community Meeting held in September of 2014. In this meeting, community members identified specific locations of cultural and artistic asset both in terms of local organizations/institutions, and in terms of areas where they found “their own spot for individual expression.” Map 4 identifies these areas of personal areas of expression. Attendees at the community meeting also named and located potential new ideas for arts and cultural assets in Grand Rapids. In reviewing the maps, stakeholders did not always clearly link ideas with specific geographies (some ideas were written in the margins of the maps / other dots were unlabeled). Map 5 captures this data.

A comparison of Map 1 with Maps 3 & 4 reveals that Grand Rapids has a strong foundation of arts and cultural assets and that they are fairly evenly distributed across the city with an expected density of amenities located downtown. The increased pattern of spatial dispersion in Map 6, which includes envisioned assets, suggests that many proposed ideas and undeveloped assets exist in areas that help to “fill out” the areas that are not covered in Map 1. Such a pattern of distribution speaks to a strong potential for the City of Grand Rapids to be able to develop future resources in a geographically equitable manner whereby all citizens can benefit from living in close proximity to area resources.



Grand Rapids Cultural Asset Map Keys

MAP 1: All Arts and Cultural Assets - Existing

See keys for Maps 2 and 3

MAP 2: Cultural Venues, Organizations, and Institutions

South Grand Rapids:

- 1 - Sawmill Inn
- 2 - Children's Discovery Museum and Judy Garland Home
- 3 - St. Joseph's Church
- 4 - Forest History Center
- 5 - Grand Itasca Clinic and Hospital

East Grand Rapids:

- 6 - Davies Hall (Itasca Community College Campus)
- 7 - Lakes Inn
- 8 - Itasca County Family YMCA

Riverfront:

- 9 - Grand Rapids Area Library
- 10 - Rotary Tent
- 11 - Northern Community Radio
- 12 - Blandin Foundation

Downtown:

- 13 - VFW (jazz club on Wednesdays)
- 14 - Galleries: Frame Up & Wings n' Willows
- 15 - Galleries: MacRostie Art Center
- 16 - Itasca County Historical Society
- 17 - Brewed Awakenings (venue)
- 18 - Central School (National Register of Historic Places)

North Grand Rapids:

- 19 - Fairgrounds/Bike Trail
- 20 - IRA Civic Center
- 21 - St. Andrew's Church
- 22 - Reif Performing Arts Center

West Grand Rapids:

- 23 - Showboat
- 24 - Farmers' Market location

MAP 3: Public Art

Data taken from the MacRostie Art Center's Grand Rapids Public Art Map, which was created by Caleb Wood, Gretchen Yell, and Krista Matison.

1 – MacRostie Art Center

Artwork: Community Murals (2012)

Artists: Thomas Page, Sherry El-Nashaar, Paula Swenson, and students from Bovey/Coleraine, Deer River, & Grand Rapids

2 – U.S. Post Office

Artwork: Life in Grand Rapids and Upper Mississippi (1940)

Artist: James S. Watrous

3 – Grand Rapids State Bank

Artwork: Whitetail Deer (2002)

Artist: Bill Davis

4 – Central School

Artwork: Stairwell Paintings (1958)

Artist: Ted Tinquist

5 – Grand Rapids Fire Station

Artwork: Fireman Statue

Artist: unknown (donated by the family of Jack Dowell, former Fire Chief)

Artwork: 9/11 Memorial (2012)

Artist: Ken Steel

6 – Site of the Former Children's Museum

Artwork: Judy Garland Mural (1997)

Artist: John Kelsch

7 – Brewed Awakenings

Artwork: Mosaics (2006)

Artist: Peter Gordienko

8 – Glorvigen, Theis, Lind, & Co Office

Artwork: Hope (2004)

Artist: Thomas Page

Artwork: The Grand Rapids (2005)

Artist: Keith Thompson

Artwork: The Grand Rapids

Artist: Michael Tonder

Artwork: Stained Glass Doors (2005)

Artist: Ken Patzoldt and Jo Manbeck

9 – Grand Rapids Area Library

Artwork: Rotation (1992)

Artist: Jon Strom

Artwork: Flight of Knowledge (2000)

Artist: Thomas Page

Artwork: Rapture of Reading (2000)

Artist: Thomas Page

Artwork: Revolving River Batik (2008)

Artist: Diane Rutherford

Artwork: Blue Iris (2008)

Artist: Donna LaBeau

10 – KAXE, Northern Community Radio

Artwork: Mosaic Sculpture (2006)

Artist: Madga Kearns and Northern Community Radio volunteers

11 – Mississippi Riverwalk

Artwork: Mural (1989)

Artist: Mark Marino

12 – Blandin Paper Mill

Artwork: Grinder Man Sculpture (2001)

Artist: Thomas Page

13 – Blandin Foundation

Artwork: The Papermaker (1986)

Artist: Ray Wattenhofer

14 – Janicke Bakery

Artwork: Four Seasons of Activity in Grand Rapids (1995)

Artists: Various

15 – Reif Performing Arts Center

Artwork: The First Strike (2012)

Artist: Thomas Page

16 – Grand Itasca Clinic and Hospital

various

MAP 5: Community Envisioned Arts and Cultural Asset Ideas

New Ideas –Specified on Map

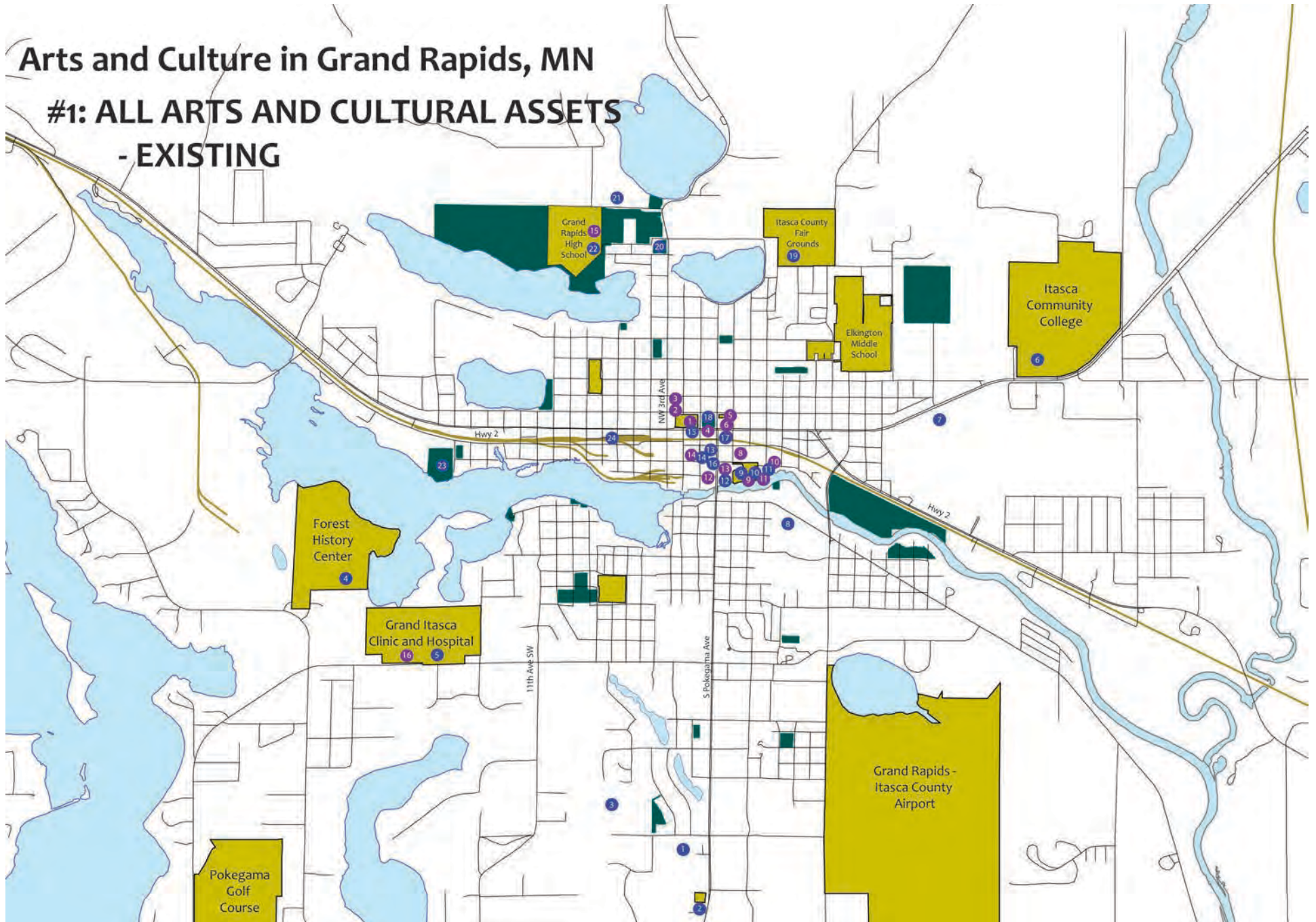
- 1 - Organized graffiti art under the K Horn Bridge
- 2 – Cross-generation biographies
- 3 – Native American arts and culture downtown
- 4 – Pedestrian bridge over Hwy 2
- 5 – Music by the river
- 6 – Develop Vets Park
- 7 – Machine/Wood shop co-op
- 8 – Art in the parks
- 9 – Amphitheater downtown
- 10 – Food trucks
- 11 – Winter Wonderland skating all over lakes and rivers
- 12 – Artist lofts
- 13 – Outdoor amphitheater
- 14 - Labyrinth at GICH
- 15 - Updated / expanded Showboat venue
- 16 - Christmas market on Block 21
- 17 - Resurrect the Rialto Theater

New Ideas – Written Down but not Located on Map

- Public art in roundabouts.
- Tribal history center
- Sculpture/rose garden
- Highway 2 beautification
- Arts journal
- Walkability
- Folk School
- Tap room / brew pub / wine café
- More competitions for art and design
- Aesthetic standards for buildings
- Senior arts center
- Art in the parks
- Sculptures needed
- Low cost opportunities for children and adults
- Flowers / sculpture in front of businesses
- Fountains based on lakes/rivers
- Attract a chef to the riverfront
- Small power generating wind mills on top of art buildings
- Aesthetically pleasing walking path through downtown
- Art covered school buses and public transit

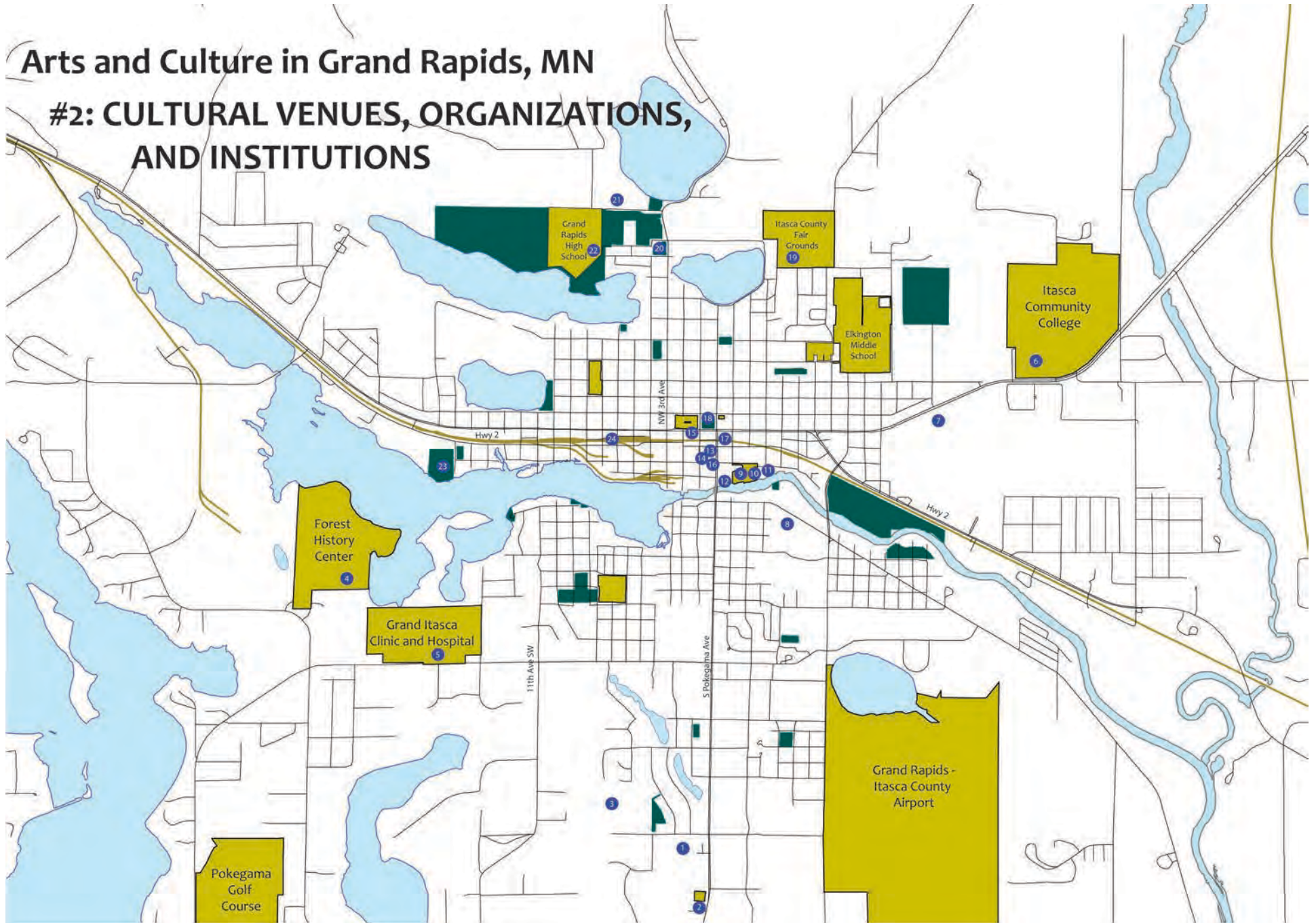
Arts and Culture in Grand Rapids, MN

#1: ALL ARTS AND CULTURAL ASSETS - EXISTING



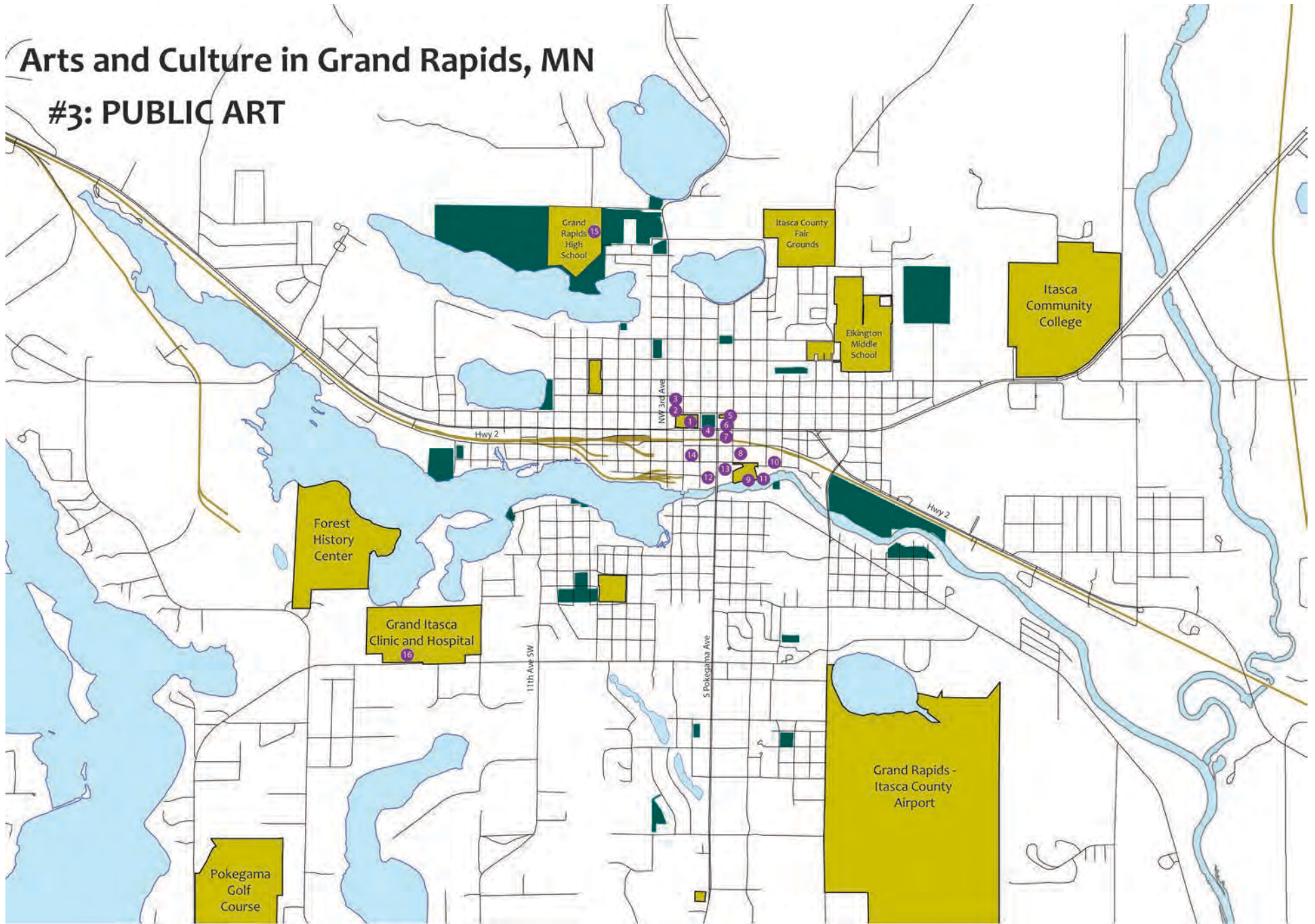
Arts and Culture in Grand Rapids, MN

#2: CULTURAL VENUES, ORGANIZATIONS, AND INSTITUTIONS



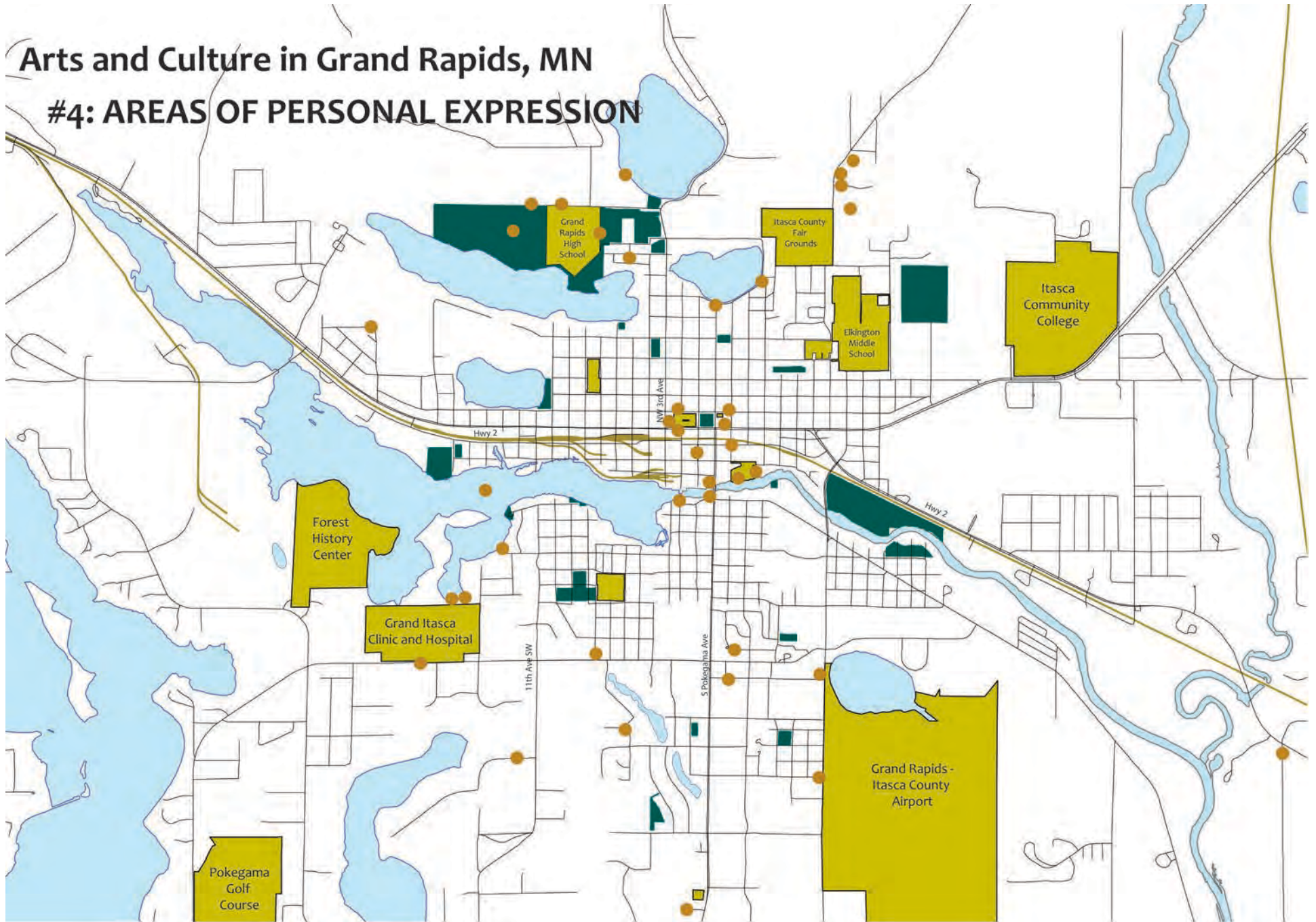
Arts and Culture in Grand Rapids, MN

#3: PUBLIC ART



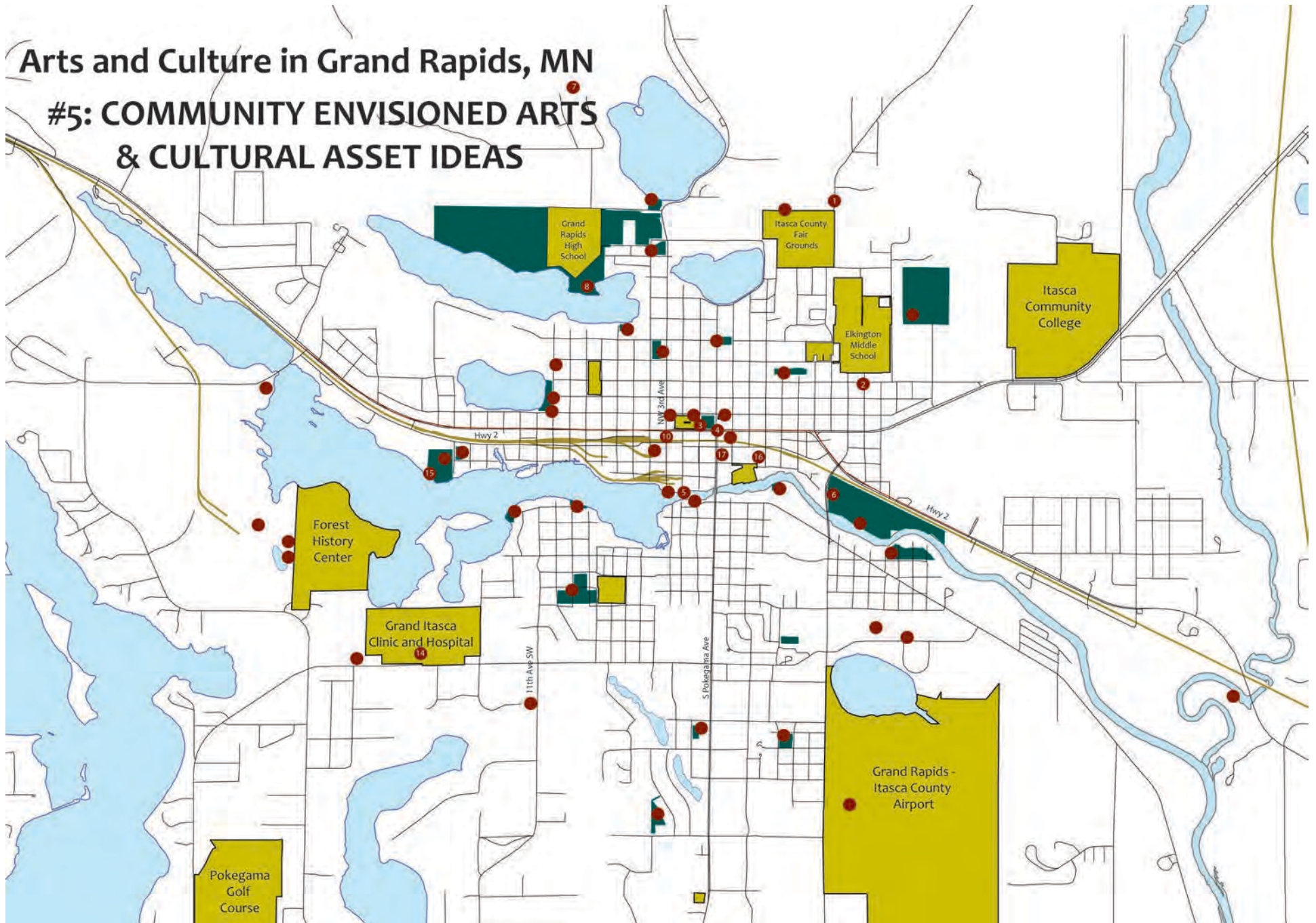
Arts and Culture in Grand Rapids, MN

#4: AREAS OF PERSONAL EXPRESSION



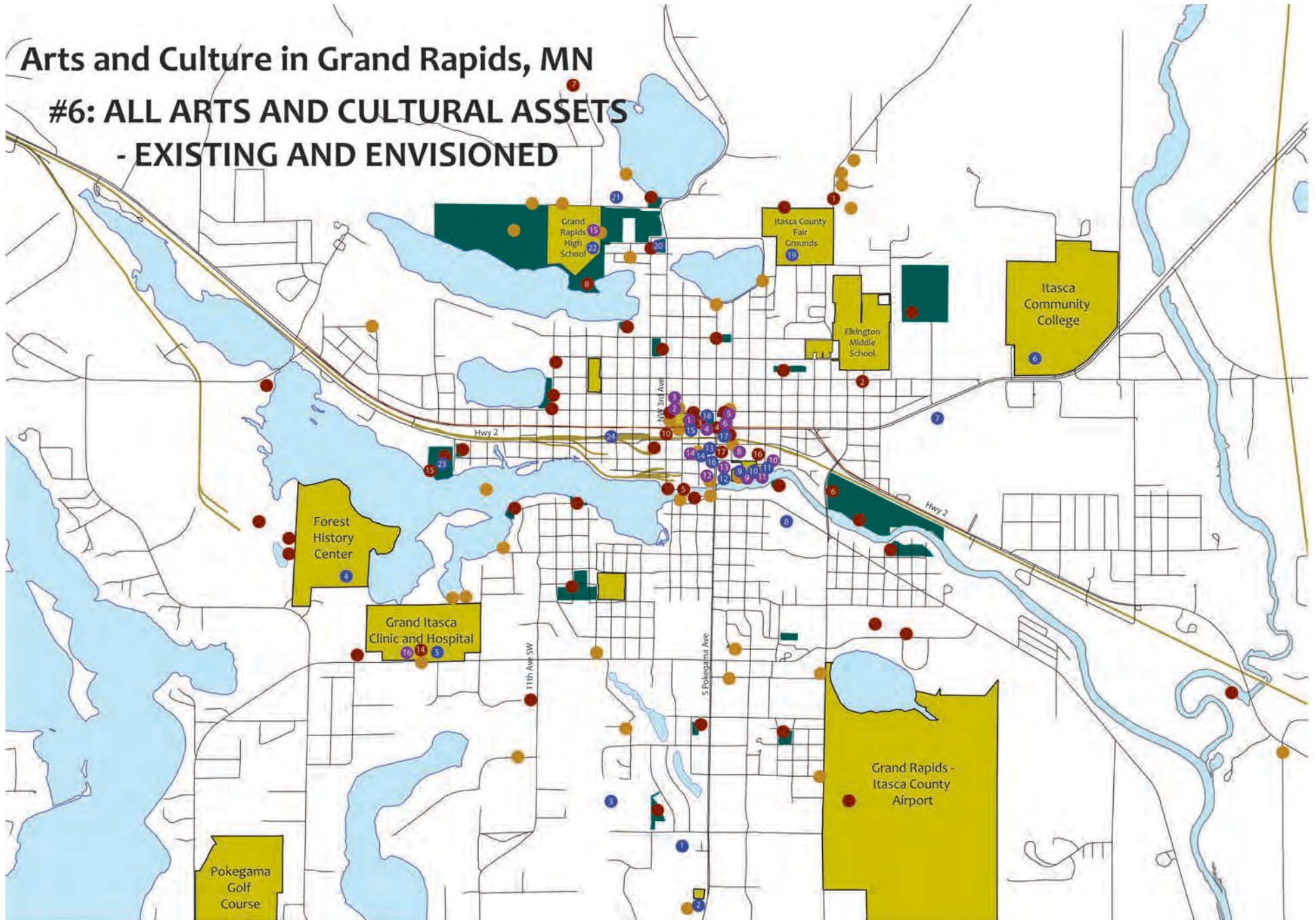
Arts and Culture in Grand Rapids, MN

#5: COMMUNITY ENVISIONED ARTS & CULTURAL ASSET IDEAS



Arts and Culture in Grand Rapids, MN

#6: ALL ARTS AND CULTURAL ASSETS - EXISTING AND ENVISIONED



Appendix G. Consultant Profiles

Metris Arts Consulting

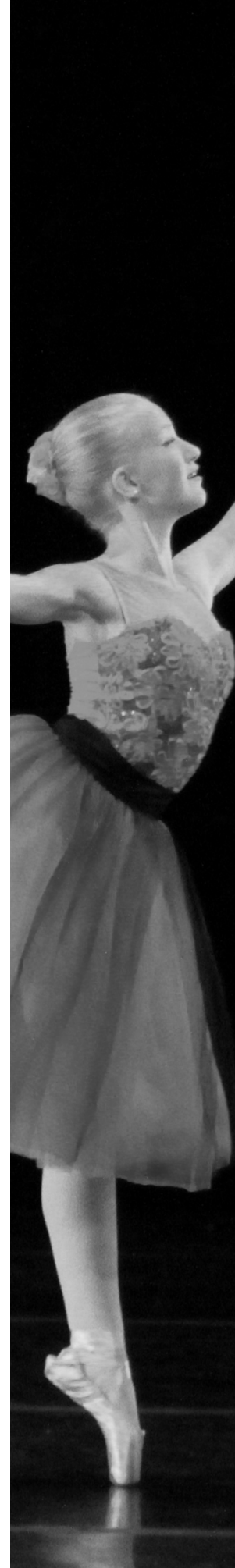
Metris Arts Consulting is a collaborative consulting practice led by Principal Anne Gadwa Nicodemus. Metris provides research, analysis, and planning support related to all aspects of arts-based community and economic development. The firm works with a range of clients from across the country, including philanthropic organizations, government agencies (local to federal), and arts and community development nonprofits. Metris provides them with critical resources, including think pieces and presentations, needs assessments, impact evaluations, cultural plans and asset maps, white papers, and indicator systems. Its approach is collaborative—Metris views clients as active partners and desire relationships with entities that are open to critical learning and innovation.

GO collaborative

GO collaborative is a woman-owned (WBE/HUB) design and planning firm focused on creative, community design and development. Their services range from early project planning to policy adoption and implementation, including visioning, feasibility analysis, community engagement, architectural programming, master planning, and evaluation. Founded by Sarah Gamble, architect, and Lynn Osgood, urban planner and researcher, the firm combines their complementary backgrounds and passion for the public realm. GO collaborative embodies the strengths of their diverse professional training with experience providing creative and innovative services to connect people in meaningful ways with the places they care about. The firm led the NEA's efforts to create Exploring Our Town, a new online resource that highlights its Our Town grant program and provides insights into how creative placemaking projects come together.

Markusen Economic Research

Based in Cromwell, Minnesota, Markusen Economic Research conducts research on artists, arts organizations and creative placemaking appropriate to clients' missions and in close consultation with clients. With teams of two to ten, the firm develops framing concepts (e.g. artistic dividend, crossover, creative placemaking) and uses mixed methods (interviews, surveys, secondary data analysis) to answer key questions about the relationship between arts organizations, host communities, artists and designers, and arts participants. Markusen's research clients over the past decade include the McKnight Foundation, Leveraging Investments in Creativity, James Irvine Foundation, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Center for Cultural Innovation, City of San José (CA), National Endowment for the Arts, Otis College of Art and Design, and Ewing and Marion Kauffman Foundation. The firm's published research is professionally designed and complemented by graphics and photographs. Principal Ann Markusen is a frequent public keynote speaker (see annmarkusen.com); consults for foundations, city and state governments, and arts organizations; and writes for larger publics on city arts strategies, arts policy, and creative placemaking.



Appendix H. Image Credits

- Page 5 - *Grinder Man Sculpture*, Artist Thomas Page (2001)
Page 6 - Mosaics, Artist Peter Gordienko (2006)
Page 7 - Stairwell Painting, Central School, Artist Ted Tinquist (1958)
Page 8 - Photo By: John Connelly, Courtesy of Reif Performing Arts Center
Page 9 - Artist Delina White, Photographer Dan Dennehy
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Page 13 - Photo By: Jessica Setness
Page 15 - *The Old Depot*, Artist Beverly Slatton
Page 16 - *Life in Grand Rapids and Upper Mississippi*, Artist James S. Watrous (1940)
Page 17 - Artist Delina White, Photographer Dan Dennehy
Page 18 - *The Papermaker*, Artist Ray Wattenhofer (1986)
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Page 22 - Community Mural, Artist Paula Swenson (2012)
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Page 25 - Stained Glass, Grand Rapids Area Library
Page 28 - Photo By: Kelly Klatt, Reif Performing Arts Center
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Page 30 - *Pine Forest*, Artist Kevin Giese (2013)
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Page 33 - *The Grand Rapids*, Keith Thompson (2005)
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Page 50 - *Blue Iris*, Artist Donna LaBeau
Page 52 - Photo By: Angie Ulseth, Courtesy of Reif Performing Arts Center
Page 54 - Mosaic Sculpture, Madga kearns and Northern Community Radio volunteers (2006)
Page 75 - Stained Glas Doors, Artists Ken Patzoldt and Jo Manbeck (2005)
Page 86 - Photo By: Angie Ulseth, Courtesy of Reif Performing Arts Center

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