



Bismarck

ARTS & CULTURE

MASTER PLAN - FALL 2025

BOARD OF CITY COMMISSIONERS ADOPTION:
NOVEMBER 13, 2025

ALLEY 5.5 ARTISTS

SUMMER WAHUS	MICHAEL SHEPHERD
BRYCE FEDERER	PAUL NOOT
ECHO FONTENELLE	MOLLY MCLAIN
GRACIE GROTHE	ANDREA FICEK
NICK JESSEN	MITCH SANDER
CORYNNE KRENZ	GRANT HICKS
LILLY LEPP	BAILEY WHITE
KAELEN MACDONALD	ERIKA GALLAWAY
RAYVA MERTZ	SIMEON NELSON
SHELBY ROOKER	ANNE DRAMKO
ROSABEL SEILER	KIM OLSON
EMILY WANGLER	MAHALIA MEES
MELISSA GORDON	CLAIRE WISEMAN
MICHAEL RENNER	MADDIE HANSON
NICOLE GAGNER	BRYAN KROH
WITNEY NIELSEN	ELIZABETH WHITE
THISA QUICK BEAR	DENNIS HOULE

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 DAKOTA WEST ARTS COUNCIL
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BY THE NEA:





CHAPTER ONE: ABOUT THE PLAN

With this Community Art & Culture Plan, the City of Bismarck is following through on its commitment to creating a vibrant local arts community. This chapter introduces what led the city to create this plan and the partners working to make it a reality.



INTRODUCTION

PRIOR PLANNING WORK BISMARCK 2019 STRATEGIC PLAN

Complete Connectivity Strategic Focus Area: Guiding Principles

Cities face an ever-increasing risk of being places where people live near one another, but without the mutual dependence of community. The City of Bismarck will remain cognizant of how actions and policies play a crucial role in either helping or hindering the building of true community.

The City can do very little to make connections between individuals, but we can create opportunities for those connections to take place in our neighborhoods, our organizations, and across the entire community.

The City of Bismarck's years of diligent work to develop its creative community and economy has culminated in this Community Arts and Culture Plan. The effort began in earnest after the city's 2019 Strategic Plan featured "Complete Connectivity" among its Strategic Focus Areas, with a goal to "enhance a vibrant local arts community." Then, on a survey for the Bismarck Together 2045 Comprehensive Plan in 2021, residents ranked the city's art and culture offerings as the lowest out of nine quality of life indicators. Goal T8(a) of that plan addressed this rating by proposing the creation of an art and culture plan that would provide a framework for policies, procedures, programs, systems, and organizational structures to support artists and the integration of public arts in the community. This goal was reinforced in 2023 when an economic impact study by Americans for the Arts found that Bismarck's arts and culture sector generated \$58.1 million in economic activity — a growth of \$14.6 million since 2017 — suggesting that continued investment could prove fiscally sound. In 2024, the City received an Our Town grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and hired a consultant to lead the process to develop this plan, in partnership with the City, Dakota West Arts Council, the Bismarck Parks and Recreation District, and Bismarck Public Schools.

The Bismarck Arts and Culture Plan builds on a series of conversations with artists, performers, culture bearers, and arts administrators in 2024 that resulted in the identification of several themes related to the advancement of Bismarck's arts and

culture: shared resources/community arts locations, advocacy, communication, and artist/performer development, as well as possible next steps to consider. The plan should be used by local public, non-profit, and educational entities as a guide to further public arts within the community in a collaborative and consistent manner.

WHATS AN ARTS AND CULTURE PLAN?

An Arts and Culture Plan helps a city plan for how it wants to support and expand its arts and cultural offerings, including public art, museums, performances, community festivals and events, and more. Such plans translate feedback from artists, community and arts organization leaders, city staff, the business community and members of the general public into a series of action steps that advance their shared vision for art and culture.

Arts and Culture Plans address things like: What is the community's vision for art and culture? Where does arts funding come from and how does it get distributed? What arts organizations already exist, and who is missing from the table? How easy is it for artists and creators to thrive in this place? What barriers do people face to self-expression here, and how can we reduce or eliminate them?

Thinking through questions like these helps make a community's arts and cultural offerings more prevalent, exciting, representative, and accessible to all.



PROJECT PARTNERS

CITY OF BISMARCK

The City of Bismarck's mission is to provide high-quality public services, in partnership with the community, to enhance everyone's quality of life. The city aims to act with integrity, exhibit community pride, welcome diversity, consider environmental impacts and look to the future. Its vision is to be a preferred destination for people who enjoy living, learning, working, and playing in a city with enduring community pride. The city embraces its rich culture, heritage, economic opportunities, and lifelong learning to cultivate a healthy and sustainable environment fostering opportunity for all. It supports efforts that help enhance its vibrant local art community.

DAKOTA WEST ARTS COUNCIL

Dakota West Arts Council (DWAC) advances art and culture in Bismarck through advocacy, community engagement, partnerships, and collaboration. DWAC envisions Bismarck utilizing arts and culture as a catalyst for economic development, personal enrichment, and a community that values appreciation and engagement in the arts. DWAC serves as an umbrella organization for arts in the Bismarck region and serves as the voice of arts and culture in the Bismarck area. For nearly 40 years, the council has administered a re-grant program to advance arts organizations and artists, providing up to \$50,000 to local arts organizations and artists annually. DWAC also develops and finances various programs, such as their public art program.

BISMARCK PARKS AND RECREATION DISTRICT

The Bismarck Parks and Recreation District (BPRD) is committed to providing and facilitating public art of quality and diversity that adds to the community's vibrancy and identity. BPRD has established a Statement of Present Position to set a framework for ensuring the ongoing creation of opportunities for people to experience public art in everyday life. It includes the following objectives:

- Recognize public art as a multifaceted field; from memorials and historical monuments to contemporary installations, performance events, literary arts, paintings, drawings,

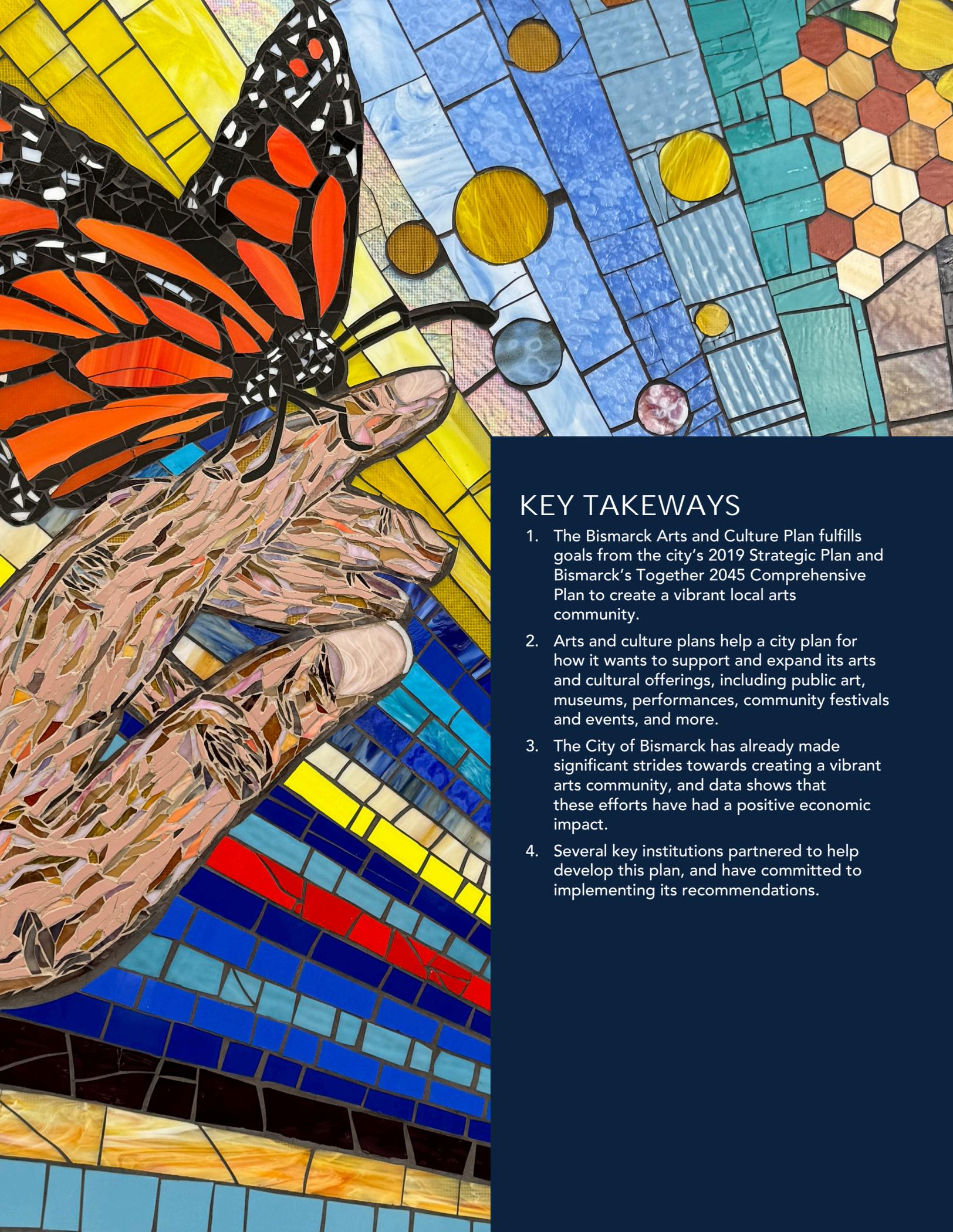
mosaics, parades, on-site cultural programs, films and/or video displays, graphic arts, crafts, art education and lectures, artist-in-residence programs in the arts and special events.

- Make public art and artistic expressions available to the public in and on park district property.
- Use public art as a vehicle to express our unique history, cultural heritage and legacies.
- Educate the community about public art's ability to enhance the quality of daily life and provide a sense of place.
- Use public art to foster the community's sense of spirit, pride and community values.
- Recognize public art's contribution in tourism and economic development.
- Provide an opportunity for artists to advance their art form and connect with the community.
- Support all varieties and forms of public art throughout the Park District, using available resources and partnerships.
- Recognize that the public is the final beneficiary of public arts.
- Utilize both public and private support of public art.

You can learn more at: www.bisparks.org

BISMARCK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Bismarck Public School District and Foundation continue to focus on their mission to Empower Every Learner to Thrive. They recognize that arts in education is a critical component to the enhancement of the values of inclusion, leadership, innovation, and excellence. Both the Bismarck Public Schools District and Foundation can work to align the Community Arts and Culture Plan with their Strategic Plan and to assist in enacting the plan through exposure activities with their students, staff, and parents.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. The Bismarck Arts and Culture Plan fulfills goals from the city's 2019 Strategic Plan and Bismarck's Together 2045 Comprehensive Plan to create a vibrant local arts community.
2. Arts and culture plans help a city plan for how it wants to support and expand its arts and cultural offerings, including public art, museums, performances, community festivals and events, and more.
3. The City of Bismarck has already made significant strides towards creating a vibrant arts community, and data shows that these efforts have had a positive economic impact.
4. Several key institutions partnered to help develop this plan, and have committed to implementing its recommendations.

ABOUT BISMARCK

The City of Bismarck is a place with an undeniably compelling story to tell. This chapter provides a brief overview of the city's history, economy, cultural influences, and modern arts and culture context to showcase the richness of all this special city has to offer.

INTRODUCTION

The City of Bismarck, in the south-central area of North Dakota at the juncture of Highway 83 and I-94, is the state capital, the county seat of Burleigh County, and the second largest city in the state. It is located in the middle of the Great Plains along the Missouri River, 100 miles north of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation and 150 miles south of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation. Bismarck's "sister city" Mandan, immediately across the river, is closely intertwined with the city economically, culturally, and otherwise.

HISTORY

NATIVE TRIBES

The land that is now Bismarck was occupied for thousands of years before incorporation by various Native tribes, including the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara, the Yanktonai, Sisseton, Wahpeton, Hunkpapa and other Dakota/Lakota/Nakota (commonly known as the Sioux) tribes, as well as the Chippewa and Metis. European settlers first arrived in the 1700s as fur traders; by the mid-1800s, Native tribes were located to various reservations by treaties. The outbreak of smallpox, war, and other circumstances further impacted tribes in the region. Nevertheless, today the Bismarck area is home to many Indigenous tribal members, cultural institutions such as the North Dakota Heritage Center and State Museum that tell their story, and major events such as the annual United Tribes Technical College International Powwow.

LEWIS & CLARK

After the United States acquired the territory of Louisiana from Napoleon in 1803, President Jefferson tapped Meriwether Lewis and William Clark set out on an 8,000-mile journey to explore it. The expedition passed through North Dakota twice

— once to wait out winter at Fort Mandan, 38 miles north of Bismarck, and again on their return to camp across the river from the city. The Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center near present-day Washburn offers exhibits and artifacts detailing the expedition's time in North Dakota.

RAILROADS, STEAMBOATS & GOLD

The City of Bismarck was officially founded after the area known as "The Crossing on the Missouri" was declared the terminus of the Northern Pacific Railroad in 1872. At first the new town was named Edwinton, for a rail engineer who first proposed a transcontinental rail line, but soon its name was changed to Bismarck, for German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, in an attempt to attract his investment in the struggling local railroad. What actually attracted people to the fledgling city was the discovery of gold in the Black Hills, as well as the thriving steamboat and rail industries. By 1883, Bismarck had been tapped as capital of the Dakota Territory; it became the capital of North Dakota when that territory was split in two. Today, Bismarck is a regional hub for retail, healthcare, and education, and features a strong economy with jobs in government, technology, transportation, and energy.



Race / ethnicity (NH = non-Hispanic)	Pop. 2000	Pop. 2010	Pop. 2020	% 2000	% 2010	% 2020
White alone (NH)	52,387	56,152	61,714	94.34%	91.64%	83.83%
Black or African American alone (NH)	141	393	2,091	0.25%	0.64%	2.84%
Native American or Alaska Native alone (NH)	1,846	2,678	3,389	3.32%	4.37%	4.60%
Asian alone (NH)	249	340	956	0.45%	0.55%	1.30%
Pacific Islander alone (NH)	15	16	308	0.03%	0.03%	0.42%
Other race alone (NH)	17	32	158	0.03%	0.05%	0.21%
Mixed race or multiracial (NH)	462	849	2,414	0.83%	1.39%	3.28%
Hispanic or Latino (any race)	415	812	2,592	0.75%	1.33%	3.52%
Total	55,532	61,272	73,622	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

DEMOGRAPHICS

Bismarck had a population of 73,662 as of the 2020 U.S. Census — almost 10% of the state’s total — and 77,772 as of the 2024 estimate. Its strong economy and high quality of life have led to steady population growth over the past 25 years. As it has added residents, Bismarck has also grown more diverse. From 2000 to 2020, the city’s percentage of White residents declined from 94.3% to 83.8%, while all other racial groups and Hispanic/Latino populations increased. The city’s median age is 39.8 and 7.7% of its residents are veterans; 39.6% of the population has a Bachelor’s degree or higher.



CHAPTER TWO: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

City leaders were clear that plan recommendations should closely reflect residents' needs, preferences, and concerns in the arts and culture space. This chapter describes the engagement methodologies to elicit this information from community members, and what they shared.





COMMUNITY SENTIMENT

The primary means by which the Bismarck community was engaged in this planning process were stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and an online survey. These are described below; key themes from them can be found on the following pages.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Twenty-three 30-minute, 1-on-1 stakeholder conversations with representatives from arts and culture organizations, city government, the school district, small businesses and economic development organizations, as well as local artists, were held via Zoom during fall 2024. These stakeholders were primarily identified by city staff as those with essential perspectives; some were identified by the consultant team as their discovery process unfolded.

FOCUS GROUPS

Six 60-minute, small-group conversations with 55 representatives from the fields of Education; Visual & Performing Arts, Business, Culinary Arts, and Multicultural Arts were held via Zoom during early winter 2025.

ONLINE SURVEY

A non-scientific survey to discern the community's arts and culture-related preferences was available during fall 2024 and early winter 2025. It was promoted on social media and via the city's email network, and handouts with a QR code. Ultimately, the survey received 267 responses.

PUBLIC WORKSHOP

In the winter of 2024, a group of 35 members of the arts community convened at the Bismarck Downtown Artist Cooperative for small group discussions on the role of arts and culture within the community. The sentiments from this conversation were pulled forward into the themes articulated on the adjoining page.

OVERALL THEMES

The following themes emerged through conversations with stakeholders and focus groups.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ARTS & CULTURE

Stakeholders identified the following areas of opportunity for Bismarck's art and culture, focusing on empowering local organizations and philanthropic efforts:

- Strengthening the non-profit network of arts administrators and creators;
- Encouraging philanthropic investment and community building through the arts;
- Building experiences that draw visitors from around the state;
- Elevating the role that cultural creators play in creating quality of life and worthwhile experiences for community members; and
- Positioning Bismarck and local non-profits to leverage diverse funding sources at the local, state, and national levels

BARRIERS TO EXPERIENCING THE ARTS

Stakeholders identified the following factors when asked to articulate the biggest challenges to creating and experiencing art locally:

- Limited funding to provide arts and culture experiences;
- Limited opportunities for collaboration, especially between nonprofits;
- The perception by members of the public and city leaders that art and culture is a luxury;
- Limited-to-no public art policy and process throughout the city;
- Lack of staff capacity in Dakota West Arts Council to support efforts;
- Limited affordable venue space for rental
- Harsh winters; and
- Lack of communication about what is happening around the community

CULTURAL PROGRAMMING OPPORTUNITIES

Stakeholders most often preferred outdoor cultural events that engage people of all ages and strengthen local social ties. In particular, they identified the following programming opportunities:

- Offering a community-wide outdoor arts festival;
- Bringing back prior community festivals and supporting the development of new events;
- Delivering more/intentional active and passive programming in the riverfront areas;
- Creating or elevating heritage experiences that emphasize cultural stories and shared histories;
- Expanding Art Alley; and
- Offering craft fairs and promoting artisanal goods which invite community members to experience art first-hand and develop a stronger appreciation for artisanal crafts

DESIRES FOR PLAN OUTCOMES

Stakeholders indicated they would like to see the plan achieve the following outcomes:

- More appreciation for and education about the arts;
- Development of more creative spaces, especially those that take advantage of the downtown area and central public spaces;
- Native Arts Council involvement to strengthen relationships between Indigenous groups and city entities;
- Clear public art policy/processes, and especially transparency between artists and opportunities;
- Better utilization of the riverfront;
- Formal guidelines for facility relationships with nonprofit organizations;
- Partnerships between arts and culture organizations; and
- Year-round programming and outdoor winter opportunities for engaging as a community.

WORKSHOP REPORT

WHAT DOES BEING IN COMMUNITY MEAN TO YOU?

The group shared many ideas surrounding feelings of belonging, support and referencing community as a shared "place". There were mentions of valuing common energy, respect and shared goals while embracing diversity within the community. There was an emphasis on shared resources and space, in order to hold events or a place to share the history/values of the community as well as provide the support that is needed to provide the "safety net" that is important to the community.

Key themes:

- Desiring belonging and social connection;
- Shared values and articulating those through the arts;
- Safety for all;
- Multigenerational, diversity, support, and respect;
- Working together, showing up for one another;
- Fostering connection;
- Celebrating history; and
- Having space to gather.

WHAT SHOULD IT FEEL LIKE WHEN YOU EXPERIENCE ARTS AND CULTURE WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITY?

There was a general consensus that any feeling was okay as long as the experience led you to feel. There was an emphasis on accessibility within spaces and experiences, diversity within arts and culture, as well as appreciation of the artist or maker. A few responses focused on the youth, mentioning the importance in bringing art teachers back to elementary schools. There were several mentions of maker spaces (equipment spaces for creative endeavors) or tool libraries, located in schools, public libraries, and other community locations where people can meet up, share creative interests, tinker with new technologies, and learn as they go.

Key Themes:

- Self discovery;

- Thought/emotion provoking;
- Accessibility;
- Representation;
- Diversity; and
- Multi-generational inclusivity.

WHAT IMMEDIATE NEEDS GET IN THE WAY OF BEING IN COMMUNITY, AND EXPERIENCING ARTS AND CULTURE, TOGETHER?

For the barrier aspect of the question, many responses addressed the lack of adaptation to the winter months within arts and culture programming, referencing the large number of residents that leave for the winter and the lack of indoor venues to support winter programming. Another barrier that was frequently mentioned is the ignorance displayed by representatives through lack of support. There were some conflicting views on programming being geared more towards families with kids rather than single residents. Most responses argued for more family events while others encouraged arts activities that are for singles. There was a general consensus that it's hard to know what's going on in the community.

In terms of how the experience of arts and culture could be different, there were many responses addressing the lack of philanthropy as well as funding or resources in the community. These were listed as potential "solutions" to move in the right direction. As per the issues relating to winter weather conditions, one response referenced Winnipeg, Canada as managing "good cold weather arts and activities". Others urged for more indoor public venues or affordable private performance spaces. Supporting "agricultural tourism" was mentioned several times as a solution to foster community. Some examples of agricultural tourism are farmers markets/ farm stands, farm visits or local farms hosting "u-pick" events or pumpkin patches. In terms of keeping up with community events, responses displayed the lack of consistent news or updates on local events. Lastly, responses show that more multigenerational events are desired within the community.

Key Themes:

- Validation of arts and different cultures;
- Cultural integration and experiences;
- Weather/Programming in the Winter versus

;Summer;

- Being “busy”, but really just not making time for the arts and community;
- Ignorance or undervaluing of the impact of artists and culture on community;
- Philanthropy opportunities to support the local scene; and
- Funding needs such as spaces for the arts and gathering

WHAT COMMUNITY VALUES DO WE WANT TO DO? HOW ARE OUR VALUES REFLECTED IN THE ARTS?

Many responses to the first part of this question consisted of caring for everyone in the community outside of your immediate community like family and friends. The 7 Lakota Values* were mentioned several times in responses as well as “potluck culture” meaning individuals making do with what they have and sharing abundantly with one another. Respect and understanding were common themes among the responses, one reading “respect+understanding=representation”.

Some examples of how the arts are reflected are community projects, murals, events such as block parties and music events, and placemaking. There were a couple responses referencing interactive creative outlets that are “not at a bar”.

Key themes:

- Generosity;
- Respect;
- 7 Lakota values*;
- Connection;
- Mental health support;
- Inclusion; and
- Care for all.

*The 7 Lakota Values: Fortitude, Generosity, Kinship, Prayer, Respect, Wisdom, Compassion (<https://aktalakota.stjo.org/lakota-culture/seven-lakota-values/>)

WHAT DOES BEING CREATIVE MEAN TO YOU? WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE WHEN YOU ARE CREATIVE WITHIN A COMMUNITY?

To many participants, being creative is problem

solving, collaborating with others, as well as being open and mindful of your surrounding community and spaces. A general consensus of the group is that being creative within the community means showing up. This means showing up for local artists so they can get the resources they need to continue their creativity for the whole community to enjoy. A few responses also viewed showing up as an important part of collaboration that is necessary within the creative process. There was an emphasis on using existing spaces to the fullest potential, examples being public schools, theaters, parks and the downtown corridor.

Key themes:

- Acceptance;
- Comfort;
- Showing up;
- Problem solving;
- Collaboration;
- Connection; and
- Compassion.

WHAT DOES CULTURE MEAN TO YOU? HOW MIGHT THIS DIFFER FROM PERSON TO PERSON, COMMUNITY TO COMMUNITY?

A common theme within the responses to this question was that culture is not static, it is constantly evolving. Many responses equated culture to celebrating heritage and history. There was a common concern of local artists censoring their creative expression due to “local culture”, one respondent said, “Bismarck culture resists creative thinking”. Many responses referred to Bismarck as having “no culture” or having a work driven culture that was described as “rigid” and not valuing the arts. There was a theme of participants wanting more acceptance of diversity, especially within the immigrant and Native American community. A few participants mentioned food as a form of culture and how that could be a way to promote inclusion and community culture.

Key themes:

- Preservation and respect of traditions;
- Avoiding censorship;
- Community enrichment through arts and culture; and
- Celebration of history, food, music, and language.

SECTION ONE: PERCEPTION OF ARTS & CULTURE

HOW MUCH DO YOU AGREE WITH EACH OF THESE STATEMENTS?

I FEEL THE QUALITY OF THE ARTS THROUGHOUT BISMARCK IS THRIVING.



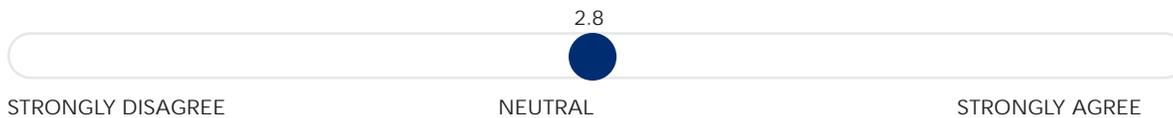
HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE OVERALL QUALITY OF PUBLIC ART IN BISMARCK?



IF THERE WERE MORE SUPPORT FOR ARTS AND CULTURE, WOULD BISMARCK BE A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE?



DO YOU FEEL LIKE THE EXISTING PUBLIC ART IN BISMARCK REFLECTS YOUR



IF THERE WAS MORE PUBLIC ART, WOULD BISMARCK BE A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE?



SURVEY INSIGHTS

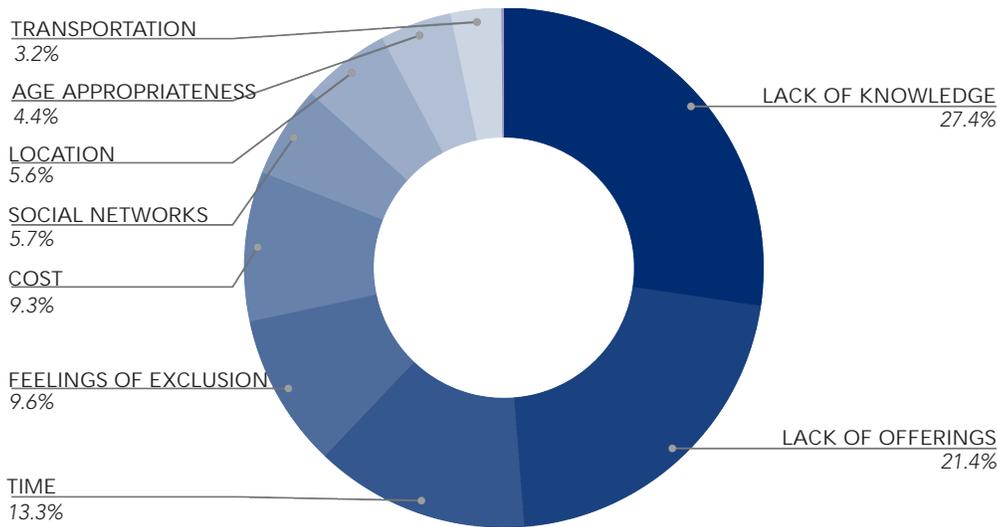
LOW RATINGS FOR BISMARCK ARTS

Survey respondents gave Bismarck relatively neutral ratings in several areas: the quality of its public art, the degree to which they believe the arts is thriving there, whether the city's current public art reflects their values, and whether the arts reflect the Bismarck community.

IMPROVING BISMARCK'S QUALITY OF LIFE

Survey respondents were supportive of the idea that more support for art and culture in Bismarck would make it a better place to live.

WHAT BARRIERS EXIST TO YOU PARTICIPATING IN ARTS AND CULTURE ACTIVITIES WITHIN BISMARCK?



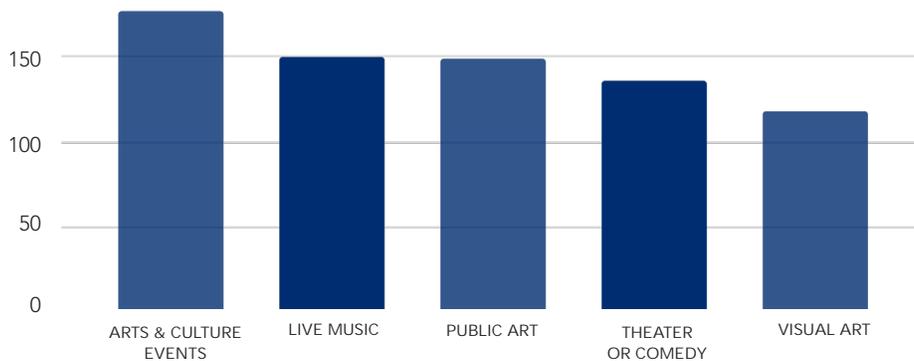
SURVEY INSIGHTS

UNCERTAINTY ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPERIENCE ART AND CULTURE

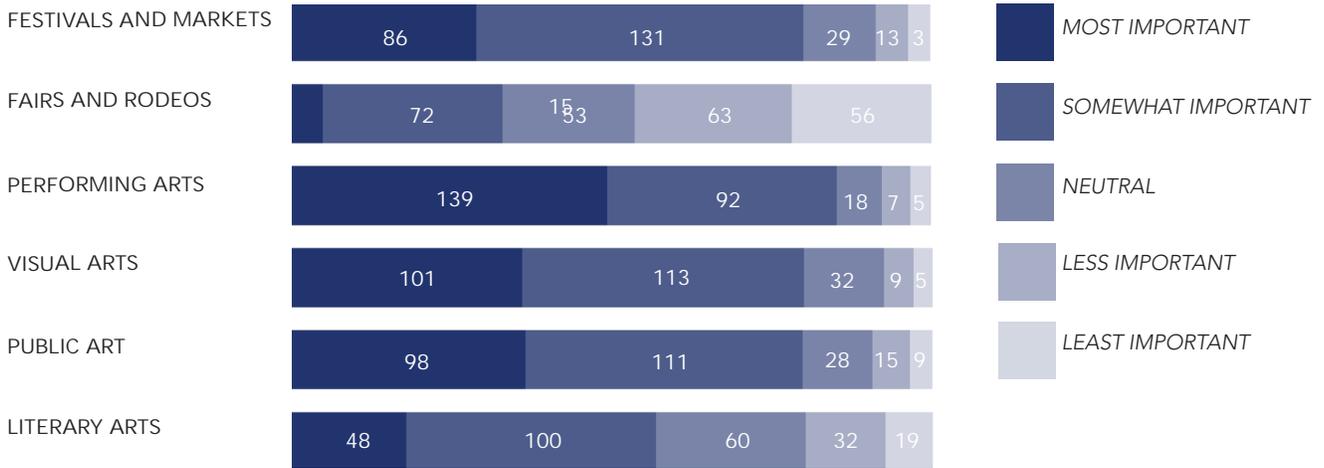
Survey respondents largely reported that lack of knowledge about the opportunities available as their biggest barrier to experiencing art and culture in Bismarck — though they also believe that such opportunities may simply not be available.

SECTION THREE: PLAN DESIRES

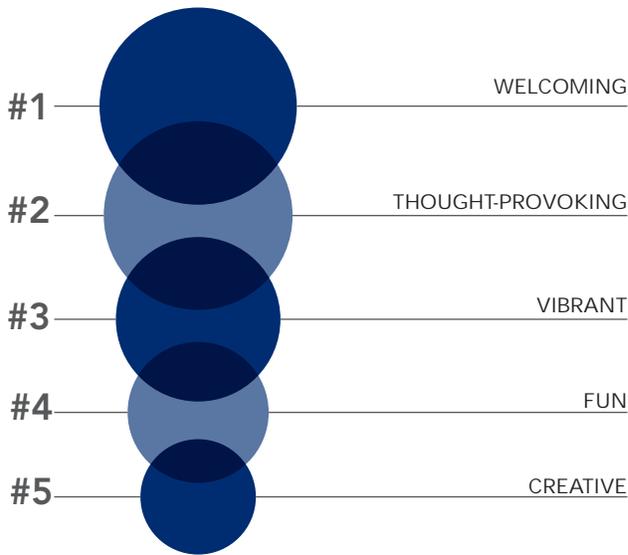
WHAT CULTURAL ACTIVITIES DO YOU WANT MORE OF IN BISMARCK?



WHICH COMMUNITY EVENT OFFERINGS IS MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU?



PUBLIC ART IN BISMARCK SHOULD FEEL:



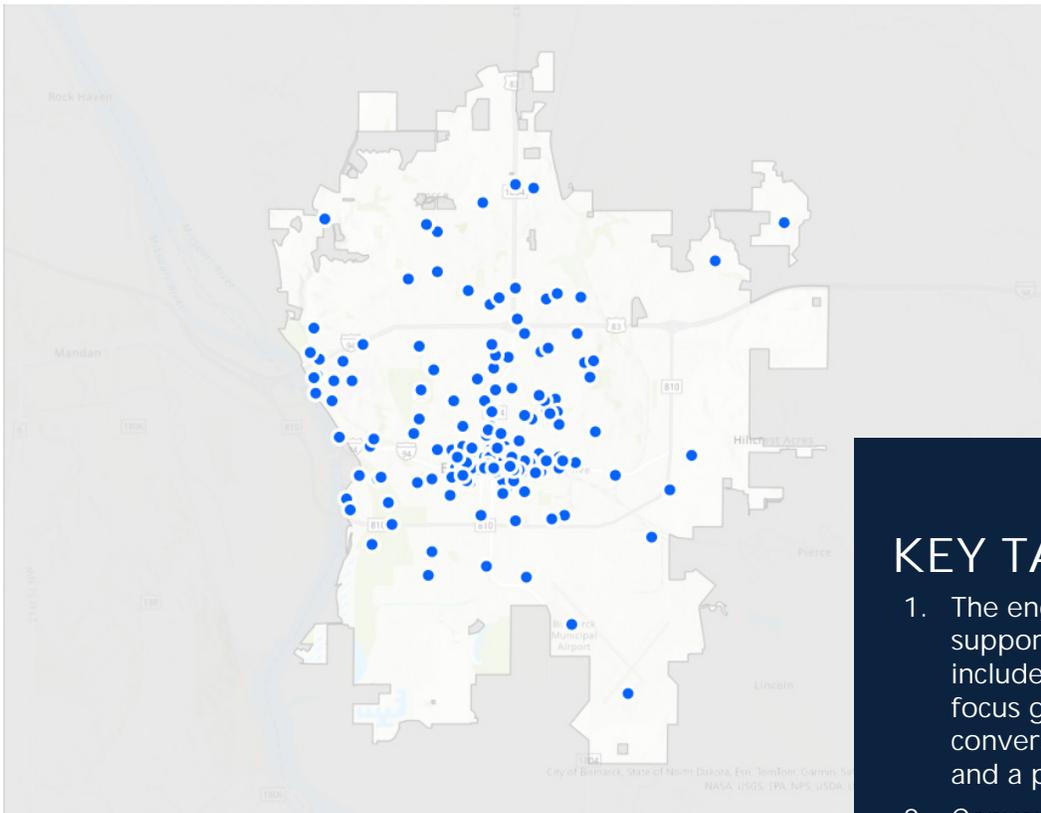
ARTS AND CULTURE IN BISMARCK SHOULD ACCOMPLISH THE GOAL OF:

- #1 CONNECTING COMMUNITY
- #2 CREATING ARTS AND CULTURE-FOCUSED EVENTS
- #3 CREATING ARTS AND CULTURE-FOCUSED EXPERIENCES
- #4 EXPOSING CHILDREN TO THE ARTS AND CULTURE
- #5 CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ARTISTS

ARTS AND CULTURE IN BISMARCK SHOULD FEEL: (SELECT STATEMENTS)

- Authentic to our identity in western ND. Accessible to the public and welcoming to new creators.
- Celebrate our flora and fauna AND local cultures--connect us to this physical location in the prairie, but also to each other.
- open, welcoming, informing, occasionally challenging
- engaging and welcoming
- Refreshing / Reenergize
- like a connection to nature (flowers, landscapes, natural beauty)
- Vibrant and welcoming.
- Comfortable
- unique - not what F, GF or M has accomplished, but "capital" or better
- inspired, free, friendly, accessible, thought provoking, unique
- Original and accessible to everyone
- Welcoming
- Reflective of the community and those who inhabited it before colonization. We should pay homage to those who made living here worthwhile before it became so expansive.
- Historic, traditional, generational
- Vibrant, reflect a variety of cultures and voices.
- Inviting
- Like how a home should - safe to wildly do each: experiment, fail, and succeed.
- Cohesive with people from all backgrounds, upholds the diversity of others and creates a sense of safety for people to express themselves fully.
- Inspiring.
- Bismarck's arts and culture scene should inspire creativity and bring people together.
- Diverse. Providing both mirrors and windows: Something familiar for everyone but also expanding horizons and introducing something new
- Uplifting
- Build a sense of community
- A necessary part of community development. Community development leaders, organizations and funders need to incorporate artists and arts and cultural creative thinkers in planning and building the future of Bismarck
- Arts and culture in Bismarck should give residents a sense of pride
- Inclusive
- Accessible and exciting
- Positive and inspiring
- Diverse, brave, indigenous, vibrant.
- Like you stepped outside of Bismarck and visited another city for a while, to better understand the people and bring awareness
- Representative of everyone
- Creative but not forceful
- Inclusive, joyous, vibrant, necessary, cherished.
- That it shows diversity with our many cultures.
- Easy to view, easy to access and plentiful for everyone
- Modern, rich in diversity, evolving.
- Just as supported as sporting events
- Welcoming, diverse
- Creative, expressive, welcoming
- All inclusive, free spirited, spontaneous, thought provoking
- Diverse
- The feeling should be open to everyone stories, sharing and how we express ourselves. Bismarck is so diverse and there a need to have Native artist be included into gallery shows and have an exposure like the non-natives. Allot of opportunities.
- Open, freedom, thought provoking
- Support
- inviting and inclusive
- More presentable
- Vibrant and supportive
- Abundant, accepting, and alive.
- I feel like Arts and Culture is alive and well

WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE PUBLIC ART IN BISMARCK?



KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. The engagement process to support this plan's development included a robust series of focus groups and stakeholder conversations, an online survey, and a public workshop.
2. Conversations with Bismarck's creative community revealed clear themes around topics including opportunities for art and culture, local barriers to experiencing the arts, and desires for plan outcomes.
3. Survey respondents gave low marks for their current level of satisfaction with art and culture in Bismarck; they indicated a strong desire for more opportunities to experience the arts locally.
4. Feedback from the community was translated into a set of Guiding Values that will orient plan recommendations around increasing Bismarck's: Sense of Place and Identity, Community Building and Connection, Personal Expression and Creativity, and Educational Enrichment and Development.

SURVEY INSIGHTS

DESIRE FOR "WELCOMING, INCLUSIVE" ART

Survey respondents overwhelmingly want art that is welcoming and inclusive. They further indicated a preference for art that is thought-provoking and diverse.

STRONG INTEREST IN KEY ARTS OFFERINGS

Survey respondents reported that murals are what comes to mind when they think of art and their favorite arts and cultural experiences in Bismarck. They expressed the strongest interest in seeing more arts and cultural events, more murals, and more performing arts in the city.

GUIDING VALUES

At the completion of the community engagement process, feedback from all sources was analyzed and compiled into a series of values that would be used to guide the development of plan recommendations. Stakeholder feedback consistently highlighted the role of arts and culture in fostering a sense of community, belonging, and shared identity. Participants believe the arts bring people together, create connections across diverse backgrounds, and enhance the overall quality of life in Bismarck. Recurring themes included the economic benefits of arts initiatives, the importance of arts education, and the need for better coordination and promotion of existing events.

01

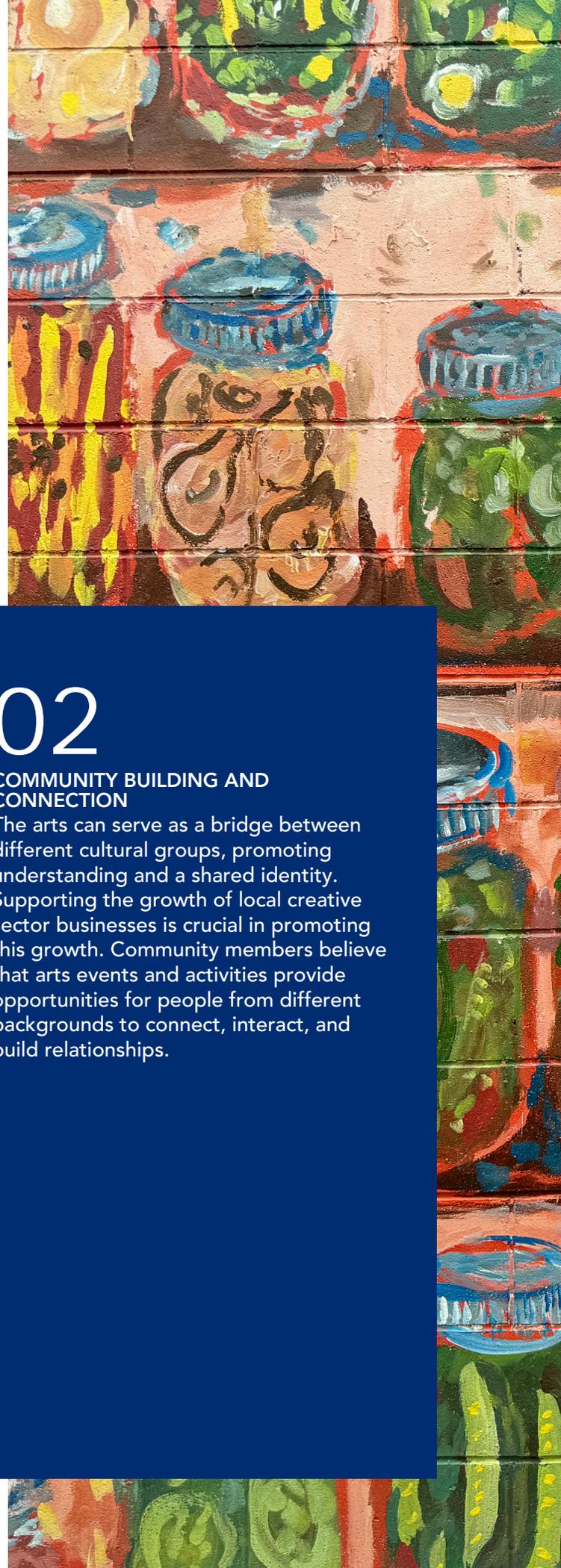
SENSE OF PLACE AND IDENTITY

A thriving arts and culture scene will contribute significantly to the economic growth of the community. Community members value the arts as a way to make Bismarck authentic and differentiate it from other communities, supporting and attracting a talented workforce and drawing in new investment. Arts and culture are essential for reflecting the community's character, history, and aspirations.

02

COMMUNITY BUILDING AND CONNECTION

The arts can serve as a bridge between different cultural groups, promoting understanding and a shared identity. Supporting the growth of local creative sector businesses is crucial in promoting this growth. Community members believe that arts events and activities provide opportunities for people from different backgrounds to connect, interact, and build relationships.





03

PERSONAL EXPRESSION AND CREATIVITY

Individuals value giving voice to underrepresented artists and providing a platform for self-expression, which contributes to a sense of belonging and identity for individuals and the community. They appreciate that the arts allow individuals to explore their own identities, share their perspectives, and connect with others on an emotional level. Creating opportunities for artist development and spaces to create and present arts and culture is crucial to fostering a strong community.

04

EDUCATIONAL ENRICHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Growth and development are crucial for promoting a unified appreciation for the value of the arts. Community members, especially educators, emphasize the important role of the arts in fostering cognitive, emotional, and social development of community members.

CHAPTER THREE: COMPARISON CITIES

Benchmarking Bismarck against creative cities nearby is a helpful way to gauge the relative success of its efforts. This chapter profiles the arts and culture initiatives of several cities similar to Bismarck to invite comparisons and inspire local investment.





Coca-Cola



INTRODUCTION

To provide a sense of how Bismarck’s arts and culture offerings compare against cities of similar population and median household income, the planning team selected five cities in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Montana to profile in the creation of this plan. Given the geographic expanse of these states, the five cities further have in common that they serve as regional economic and cultural hubs for vast rural areas. Each profiled community has something to offer Bismarck as it begins to implement this plan’s recommendations.

COMPARISON CITIES

City	Population*	Median Household Income**	Arts Impact***
Bismarck, North Dakota	73,622	\$75,846	\$58.1m
Grand Forks, North Dakota	59,166	\$63,838	—
Rapid City, South Dakota	74,703	\$70,094	\$204.1m
Billings, Montana	117,116	\$67,028	—
Fargo, North Dakota	125,990	\$61,422	\$55.4m
Sioux Falls, South Dakota	192,517	\$70,925	\$126.1m



GRAND FORKS, NORTH DAKOTA

Grand Forks, North Dakota is a thriving community surrounded by farm country. It’s a hub for cultural experiences, with a flourishing performing arts community and talented artists. Grand Forks boasts performance venues like the Chester Fritz Performing Arts Center, the Empire Arts Center, and the Fire Hall Theatre.

The Public Arts Commission (PAC) spearheads art projects to bring art to everyday spaces. The #GRANDART campaign, in partnership with Visit Greater Grand Forks, catalogs public artworks throughout the community in a digital database. The Mayor’s Choice Artist Award recognizes an outstanding local artist with an exhibition at City Hall.

ArtFest, hosted by the Public Arts Commission, brings artists, artisans, food vendors, and musicians to Grand Forks, attracting more than 20,000 art lovers and festival-goers annually. The Alerus Center Gallery also hosts exhibition openings.

The local Community Foundation disburses funding for arts and culture non-profit programming.

City	Population*	Median Household Income**	Arts Impact***
Bismarck, North Dakota	73,622	\$75,846	\$58.1m
Grand Forks, North Dakota	59,166	\$63,838	—

*2020 DEC CENSUS

**2023 ACS 1-YEAR EST.

***ARTS AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY 6, AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS, 2023

SOURCES: [HTTPS://WWW.GOFOUNDATION.ORG/](https://www.gofoundation.org/) , [HTTPS://WWW.PUBLICARTND.ORG/](https://www.publicartnd.org/), [HTTPS://WWW.VISITGRANDFORKS.COM/THINGS-TO-DO/ARTS-CULTURE/](https://www.visitgrandforks.com/things-to-do/arts-culture/)



RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA

Rapid City, South Dakota is proud of its western and Native American heritage. Throughout the city, you will find Native American history exhibits, fine arts displays, and interactive museums that offer a variety of culture, classes, seminars and free art adventures. Rapid City’s first cultural plan in 1993 inspired the Journey Museum & Learning Center, Dahl Arts Center expansion, and the Performing Arts Center. The city’s attractive and vibrant downtown reflects the original plan’s focus on the power of arts, culture, and history to help define and animate the community.

The arts and culture scene in Rapid City is spearheaded by the support of key organizations and initiatives. The Rapid City Arts Council is designated as the city’s local arts agency, responsible for representing the interests of the cultural community and coordinating the implementation of the Rapid City Cultural Plan. The Allied Arts Fund serves as the city’s united funding agency for the arts, working with the city to increase financial support for arts initiatives. Additionally, Rapid City fosters cultural equity and actively supports Native American artists through instruction, mentoring, funding, and exhibition opportunities.

City	Population*	Median Household Income**	Arts Impact***
Bismarck, North Dakota	73,622	\$75,846	\$58.1m
Rapid City, South Dakota	74,703	\$70,094	\$204.1m

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SOURCES: [HTTPS://WWW.THEDAHL.ORG/](https://www.thedahl.org/), [HTTPS://WWW.RAPIDCITYARTSCOUNCIL.ORG/](https://www.rapidcityartscouncil.org/), [HTTPS://WWW.RCGOV.ORG/INDEX.PHP?OPTION=COM_DOCMAN&VIEW=DOWNLOAD&ALIAS=27416-2023-BUDGET-PRESENTATION-FINAL&CATEGORY_SLUG=FINANCE-DEPARTMENT&ITEMID=149](https://www.rcgov.org/index.php?option=com_docman&view=download&alias=27416-2023-budget-presentation-final&category_slug=finance-department&itemid=149)



BILLINGS, MONTANA

Billings, Montana is a dynamic city with a growing arts and culture scene. Billings serves as a significant economic hub for a large regional population, with its healthcare, education, and recreation sectors drawing visitors from surrounding states. However, despite this vibrant cultural landscape, the city lacks a dedicated municipal budget for public art, relying heavily on partnerships and grants.

Billings is able to support their arts and culture community through several arts and culture initiatives, including public art installations, Space2Place grants, and the Mobilize the MAGIC City project. Public art in Billings includes murals, sculptures, memorials, and community art. The Space2Place grant program supports creative placemaking projects. The Mobilize the MAGIC City project was created to integrate public art into civic infrastructure and develop a long-term public arts plan.

Billings has made significant strides in growing its arts and culture presence through a public art plan and percent for art policy to provide an sustained investment in art.

City	Population*	Median Household Income**	Arts Impact***
Bismarck, North Dakota	73,622	\$75,846	\$58.1m
Billings, Montana	117,116	\$67,028	—

*2020 DEC CENSUS

**2023 ACS 1-YEAR EST.

***ARTS AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY 6, AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS, 2023

SOURCES: [HTTPS://WWW.BILLINGSMT.GOV/DOCUMENTCENTER/VIEW/52853/PUBLIC-ART-COMMITTEE-FEASIBILITY-STUDY](https://www.billingsmt.gov/documentcenter/view/52853/public-art-committee-feasibility-study)

[HTTPS://WWW.BILLINGSMT.GOV/DOCUMENTCENTER/VIEW/52874/PLAYBOOK_UPDATEDVERSION_20241030_FINAL](https://www.billingsmt.gov/documentcenter/view/52874/playbook_updatedversion_20241030_final)

[HTTPS://WWW.BILLINGSMT.GOV/DOCUMENTCENTER/VIEW/51378/FY2023-ANNUAL-COMPREHENSIVE-FINANCIAL-REPORT](https://www.billingsmt.gov/documentcenter/view/51378/fy2023-annual-comprehensive-financial-report)

[HTTPS://BILLINGSARTSASSOCIATION.COM/](https://billingsartsassociation.com/)



FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA

Fargo, North Dakota is a vibrant arts and culture community featuring multiple museums, historical sites, parks, and outdoor amenities. The city dedicated 4.4% of its budget towards recreation and culture in order to support the community’s arts and culture programming. In 2015, the City of Fargo established the Arts and Culture Commission to better integrate art into public spaces.

The City’s Arts and Culture Commission was established to set the stage for the city’s expanded role in arts development. “Fargo supports its arts and culture initiatives through the Arts and Culture Commission, the Public Art Master Plan, city-generated public art, a Public Art Program, funding, and various partnerships” (Fargo Public Art Master Plan). The city balances leadership of city-initiated projects with grassroots efforts and fosters public-private partnerships. Ultimately, Fargo seeks to reinforce and amplify its role as a cultural hub with a vibrant public realm throughout its neighborhoods.

City	Population*	Median Household Income**	Arts Impact***
Bismarck, North Dakota	73,622	\$75,846	\$58.1m
Fargo, North Dakota	125,990	\$61,422	\$55.4m

*2020 DEC CENSUS

**2023 ACS 1-YEAR EST.

***ARTS AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY 6, AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS, 2023

SOURCES: [HTTPS://DOWNLOAD.FARGOND.GOV/0/FARGO_PUBLIC_ART_MASTER_PLAN_USE_V18_SPREADS_12-20-17_UPDATE.PDF](https://download.fargond.gov/0/fargo_public_art_master_plan_use_v18_spreads_12-20-17_update.pdf)

[HTTPS://DOWNLOAD.FARGOND.GOV/0/GENERAL_FUND_RESOURCES_AND_EXPENDITURES_HISTORY.PDF](https://download.fargond.gov/0/general_fund_resources_and_expenditures_history.pdf), [HTTPS://FARGOND.GOV/CITY-GOVERNMENT/BOARDS-COMMISSIONS/ARTS-CULTURE-COMMISSION](https://fargond.gov/city-government/boards-commissions/arts-culture-commission), [HTTPS://FARGOND.GOV/CITY-GOVERNMENT/DEPARTMENTS/PLANNING-DEVELOPMENT/ARTS-CULTURE](https://fargond.gov/city-government/departments/planning-development/arts-culture), [HTTPS://LIBRARY.MUNICODE.COM/ND/FARGO/CODES/CODE_OF_ORDINANCES?NODEID=FARGO_MUNICIPAL_CODECIFANODA_CH20LADECO_ART20-08REDEKIBO_S20-0805ARCUCO](https://library.municode.com/nd/fargo/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeid=fargo_municipal_codecifanoda_ch20ladeco_art20-08redekibo_s20-0805arcuco)



SIoux FALLS, SOUTH DAKOTA

Sioux Falls, South Dakota has a strong historical presence and vibrant recreational presence because of its natural landscapes. While the city is home to around 193,000 residents, the Falls of the Big Sioux River, museums, and Good Earth State Park at Blood Run attract tourists and boost the local economy.

In 2014, the City of Sioux Falls approved Sioux Falls Imagined, a cultural plan to strengthen the cultural and creative sector, enhance the region’s quality of life and unique sense of place, build community, and grow the economy. A central goal is to ensure lifelong access to quality arts education, with sustainable funding and programs for all ages and demographics. The city embraces its arts and cultural scene through support of its galleries, public art, multi-cultural center, and theaters.

City	Population*	Median Household Income**	Arts Impact***
Bismarck, North Dakota	73,622	\$75,846	\$58.1m
Sioux Falls, South Dakota	192,517	\$70,925	\$126.1m

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SOURCES: [HTTPS://ARTSSIouxFALLS.ORG/](https://artssiouxfalls.org/), [HTTPS://WWW.WASHINGTONPAVILION.ORG/](https://www.washingtonpavilion.org/), [HTTPS://WWW.SIOUXFALLS.GOV/GOVERNMENT/BOARDS-COMMISSIONS/ARTS-COMMISSION](https://www.siouxfalls.gov/government/boards-commissions/arts-commission)

CHAPTER FOUR: THE ARTS

The arts come in many forms and community experiences types; this section provides civic leaders with an introduction to the myraid of ways the arts can present themselves for community consumption.





VISUAL ARTS



The visual arts are a broad category of artistic expression, spanning the gamut of painting, printmaking, glass, ceramics, sculpture, mixed media, mosaics and many others. The visual arts may include both highly representational and or abstract works utilized to convey the theme, concept, emotions, and overall experience created by the artist. The visual arts are also often incorporated into public space through temporary and permanent works of public art that remain a testament to the larger creative community.

Visual art programs stimulate creativity and critical thinking across all age groups. For youth, arts education is linked to improved academic performance, problem-solving skills, and higher graduation rates. They provide unique learning experiences and foster a culture of innovation that can extend beyond the arts into other sectors like technology and business. Common visual arts typologies include:

PAINTING

This involves applying pigments to a surface (like canvas, wood, paper, or walls) to create an image. It includes various mediums such as oil, acrylic, watercolor, tempera, and techniques like fresco or encaustic. Painting styles span realism, impressionism, abstract art, cubism, surrealism, and many more.

DRAWING

A fundamental visual art form, drawing involves making marks on a surface using tools like pencils, charcoal, ink, pastels, or digital pens. It's often used for preliminary sketches, studies, or as a finished artwork in itself.

SCULPTURE

This art form creates three-dimensional objects. Sculptures can be made from a wide array of materials like stone, wood, metal, clay, glass, or found objects. Techniques include carving, modeling, casting, assembling, and welding.

PHOTOGRAPHY

The art, application, and practice of creating durable images by recording light or other electromagnetic radiation, either chemically by means of a light-sensitive material such as photographic film, or electronically by means of an image sensor.

PRINTMAKING

This involves creating images by transferring ink from a matrix (like a metal plate, woodblock, or screen) onto another surface, typically paper. Common techniques include etching, engraving, lithography, screenprinting (serigraphy), and woodcut.

DIGITAL ART

A relatively new but rapidly expanding field, digital art is created using digital technology as part of the creative or presentation process. This includes digital painting, 3D modeling, graphic design, animation, generative art, and more.

CERAMICS/POTTERY

The art of making objects from clay and other ceramic materials, which are then hardened by heat. This can range from functional pottery (like bowls and vases) to purely sculptural pieces.

TEXTILE ARTS

This broad category includes art forms created using fibers, threads, and fabrics, such as weaving, knitting, embroidery, tapestry, quilting, and fashion design.

PUBLIC ART



Public art directly contributes to the beauty and visual appeal of a community. It can transform ordinary streetscapes, parks, plazas, and buildings into memorable and engaging environments, making public spaces more inviting and enjoyable for residents and visitors alike. Public art also fosters community identity and pride, reflecting a community's history, values, culture, and aspirations. A public art program can create visual narratives that strengthen a sense of place, generate civic pride, and make a community feel unique and distinctive. Common public art typologies include:

SCULPTURE

Sculptures are three-dimensional original artworks that can be made of any material that offers structural stability and durability. Sculptures are scaled to their surroundings and typically do not move from the location in which they are installed. Whether contemporary, whimsical, traditional or something more, sculptures are often the focal points of civic art. Sculptures may commemorate and celebrate our history, express civic pride, or be established as culturally defining showpieces for the town.

ENVIRONMENTAL ART

Environmental art is any kind of outdoor public art that uses materials with a direct connection to nature, landscaping, or organic materials. Environmental art can be temporary or permanent, and its scale can vary. Its thematic context addresses environmentalism and sustainability.

FIBER

Fiber art is any kind of artwork that uses natural or synthetic fiber materials as the primary component of its overall composition. Fiber art can take the form of wall hangings, tree wraps, suspended sculptures, and beyond. Examples of fiber materials include fabric, yarn, polyurethane materials (like tarp), and mesh.

FUNCTIONAL ART

Functional art is ordinary infrastructure that has been reimagined and designed by an artist. Integrating unique designs into infrastructure may be an affordable and efficient way to create a major visual impact. Some possible options for functional art installations include bike racks, benches, play equipment, medians, subdivision walls, trash cans, transit stops, storm drains, manholes, monument signage, sidewalk treatments and more.

MURALS

Murals are large-scale, two-dimensional compositions that can be: 1) painted onto the surface 2) graphic reproductions printed onto vinyl that is adhered to a surface, or 3) painted onto a panel that is affixed to the building. Environmental conditions, artwork display duration, artist ability, timeline, and budget are all considerations for which mural application style is suitable for a project. While curating permanent works of art as part of the collection is important, ephemeral works such as murals allow for the exposure of many artists over a short period of time rather than a few artists over a long period of time.

MOSAICS

Mosaics come in many shapes and sizes and include glass or ceramics. The relative flexibility of the application of mosaics responds well to many art contexts. Mosaics can be inlaid for flooring or wall elements,

PUBLIC ART PLACEMENT STRATEGIES



ITERATIVE PUBLIC ART PROJECTS

An iterative project is one that has many parts united by the same theme. For example, a park may commission an artist to create a series of sculptures placed in various locations around the park, united by the theme “Larger than Life Flowers.” Another example could be a recurring design motif or symbol placed in a range of sites around a town center. If a city’s symbol is a beehive, then an artist could design a series of beehive images to be printed on vinyl stickers and placed around a town. Iterative projects establish a “trail” for the community to follow across a predetermined area, making them a great option for retail areas, parks, or historic town centers.

SINGLE-PRESENTATION PUBLIC ART PROJECTS

Single-presentation public art projects are those that do not repeat in multiple locations and their compositions are limited to one site. Examples of these kinds of projects include, a large-scale sculpture commissioned for a city hall lawn; a unique mural on the facade of a community center; or light installation that is engineered to complement the detailed architecture of a historic building. Single-presentation projects may be temporary, or long-term, and they are primarily characterized by their function as a landmark in public space.

ART TRAILS

Taking inspiration from the format of Iterative Public Art Programs, art that is placed along trails or integrated into a Public Transit system can shape transportation routes and provide a captivating, continuous experience for travelers. The benefits of art integrated into the mass transit experience includes increased ridership, enhanced system identity, and vandalism deterrence, in addition to an overall stimulating and engaging rider experience.

SITE SPECIFIC ART

Site-specific art is artwork that is aesthetically, conceptually, and/or thematically connected to the unique circumstances, culture, history, and environment of a particular site. Site-specific art can take many forms, and may be permanent or temporary. In this approach to art-making, artists extensively research the place, site, or area where the site-specific artwork will be placed. Site-specific art tells the story of a place through its surroundings, enriching the experience of the place itself.

PERFORMING ARTS



The performing arts are a vital form of expression and storytelling within the community. The performing arts provide artists with a platform for creative expression and artistic communication and audiences with opportunities to engage in diverse and dynamic stories that connect people more widely to cultural themes and human stories. The impact of the performing arts often hinges on the dynamic interplay between the performers and the audience and the fostering of shared experiences as a community. Dance, theater, music, and spoken word are common types of performance and while the scale and scope of these art forms and performance spaces may vary, each of these art forms utilizes the human body, voice, and/or instruments to convey stories, emotions, and ideas.

Live performances, whether a play, a concert, or a dance show, create a communal experience that brings people together. Audiences share laughter, tears, and excitement, forging a collective memory and strengthening social bonds. Participants in community theater groups, choirs, or dance ensembles also build strong connections through shared goals, rehearsals, and performances, often forming lasting friendships and a sense of belonging. Common performing arts typologies include:

LIVE MUSIC

Live music includes solo or group vocal or instrumental performances.

SPOKEN WORD

Spoken word often refers to poetry or other creative works that are intended to be recited aloud. Performances are directed by vocal delivery, potential improvisation, and audience interaction.

MOVEMENT AND DANCE

Movement and dance refers to performances highlighting rhythmic body movement, often set to music. These performances are intended to express ideas, emotions, or stories through movement.

POETRY

Poetry is rhythmic literary work that expresses feelings and ideas through artistic writing. Poetry does not require a spoken performance.

THEATER PERFORMANCES

Theater performances includes plays, musicals, puppet shows, and similar performances, where actors tell a story to an audience.

PERFORMANCE ART

Performance art combines visual art with dramatic performance. It may be live, spontaneous, or scripted.

PARTICIPATORY ART

Participatory art emphasizes interaction between the artist and participants in completing a community art project.

LITERARY ARTS



Literary arts such as poetry, prose, and dramatic scripts are creative forms of artistic expression that rely on language and written text to tell a story, share a perspective, entertain, and inspire audiences. These art forms can be performed, channeled into visual forms of expression, or printed for publication. A thriving literary arts community can serve to promote critical thinking and self-expression, and the preservation of local traditions, culture, and folk themes; this is because literary arts are highly accessible, both to create and experience. Common literary arts typologies include:

POETRY

This form focuses on the aesthetic and rhythmic qualities of language, often employing meter, rhyme, metaphor, and symbolism to evoke emotions or ideas. Poetry can be narrative (telling a story), lyrical (expressing personal feelings), or dramatic (written for performance).

NOVELS, NOVELLAS, AND SHORT STORIES

Novels are typically longer works of fiction that typically explore characters, plots, and themes in depth. They can belong to various genres like fantasy, science fiction, historical fiction, romance, mystery, and literary fiction. Novellas are shorter than novels but longer than short stories, offering a concentrated narrative. Short stories are brief works of fiction that usually focus on a single plot or theme and a limited number of characters.

DRAMA, PLAYS, MUSICAL THEATER AND SCREENWRITING

These are literary works intended for performance on a stage, with dialogue and stage directions. These works may combine with spoken dialogue, acting, and dance to enrich the narrative and experience.

NON-FICTION

While often informational, many non-fiction works are crafted with literary artistry, focusing on narrative quality, voice, and stylistic elegance. This includes but is not limited to essays, memoirs/autobiographies, and biographies.

CHAPTER FIVE: ACTION PLAN

The City of Bismarck is committed to delivering on plan recommendations and enhancing its creative community. This chapter provides an easy-to-understand action plan that supports implementation through timelines, prioritization and partners.



PHASING FRAMEWORK

The Now, Soon, Next framework for plan implementation provides decision-makers with a flexible yet strategic timeline that prioritizes projects and foundational cultural program elements so that future investments can best leverage the momentum and increased capacity in the cultural sector built through prior phases.

NOW (0-3 YEARS)

Recommendations and projects in the Now bucket are generally either foundational elements that are required prior to later investments in arts and culture or low-cost and quick-to-implement project ideas that provide early wins for the community. This might include feasibility studies that provide substantive data to direct capital investments or grantmaking, partnership and organizational capacity building, and the adoption or refinement of policies, processes, or ordinances that create funding streams and lay the groundwork for longer-term strategies.

SOON (3-5 YEARS)

Recommendations and projects in the Soon category typically require additional planning and financial measures compared to items in the Now category. These projects may also take advantage of new and diverse streams of funding and partnerships that have been built during the earlier phase. This category is likely to include priority investments to support the community's vision for arts and culture and to strategies to maintain momentum in growing the local arts and culture ecosystem.

NEXT (5 -10 YEARS)

Items in the Next category may comprise several things, from projects with longer implementation timelines driven by their complexity or funding requirements to provide and strategies that provide a clear value but may still fall as a lower priority compared to projects and recommendations in the earlier phases. These projects are often informed by successes and challenges faced during the early years of plan implementation and may pivot from the early vision after additional stakeholder input provides immediate direction to the current needs and priorities of the community. That said, large-scale investments in the Next category are oftentimes some of the most impactful and galvanizing moments in plan implementation, cementing the local art and culture legacy and serving to fulfill the community vision.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Items in the Next category may comprise several things, from projects with longer implementation timelines driven by their complexity or funding requirements to provide and strategies that provide a clear value but may still fall as a lower priority compared to projects and recommendations in the earlier phases. These projects are often informed by successes and challenges faced during the early years of plan implementation and may pivot from the early vision after additional stakeholder input provides immediate direction to the current needs and priorities of the community. That said, large-scale investments in the Next category are oftentimes some of the most impactful and galvanizing moments in plan implementation, cementing the local art and culture legacy and serving to fulfill the community vision.



NOW

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NOW

STRATEGY 1.1

Adopt the Public Art Policy



DESCRIPTION

A Public Art Policy provides a process for selecting, commissioning, placing, and maintaining art for the benefit of a city, its residents, and visitors. Public Art has the power to influence how people experience and connect with shared spaces by providing a sense of wonder, place, and memory. This policy is subject to revision and updates but on the onset of the policy's adoption, it will provide clear processes and guidance for the permanent art collection through specific policy areas, such as:

- Roles & Responsibilities
- Maintenance
- Donation Procedures
- Artist Selection Process
- Use of Funds

TIMING

Now

PARTNERS

Cultural
Commission,
City of Bismarck,
Bismarck Parks and
Recreation District

PRIORITY

3/5

IMPACT

3/5



STRATEGY 1.2

Consider the dedication of staffing to support arts and cultural programming.

TIMING
Now

PARTNERS
Potential subcontractor or consultants,

PRIORITY
4/5

RELATIVE IMPACT
4/5

DESCRIPTION

Following policy adoption, consider the addition of an Arts Manager to city staff. This individual may be responsible for:

- Bringing more attention to local arts organizations and programming through community and media outreach, maintaining and promoting the community arts calendar (identified in Strategy 1.7) and supporting the development of the creative sector through initiatives like the First Friday Artwalks (identified in Strategy 1.8).
- Partnering with local organizations to develop and implement diverse arts educational programs for all ages. This staff member would collaborate with artists and community partners, design curricula, manage program logistics, evaluate program effectiveness, and actively promote arts education throughout Bismarck with the ultimate goal of fostering lifelong appreciation for the arts and ensuring inclusive access to creative opportunities.
- Managing the city's public art program, including: project management, artist selection, community engagement, management of selection panels and budgets, and policy implementation.
- Seeking out opportunities for collaboration and mutual support for the benefit of the wider community amongst local artists and non-profits, such as Dakota West Arts Council.

STRATEGY 1.3

Formally Accession the Public Art Collection

TIMING

Now

PARTNERS

City of Bismarck

Bismarck Parks and
Recreation District

PRIORITY

3/5

RELATIVE IMPACT

3/5

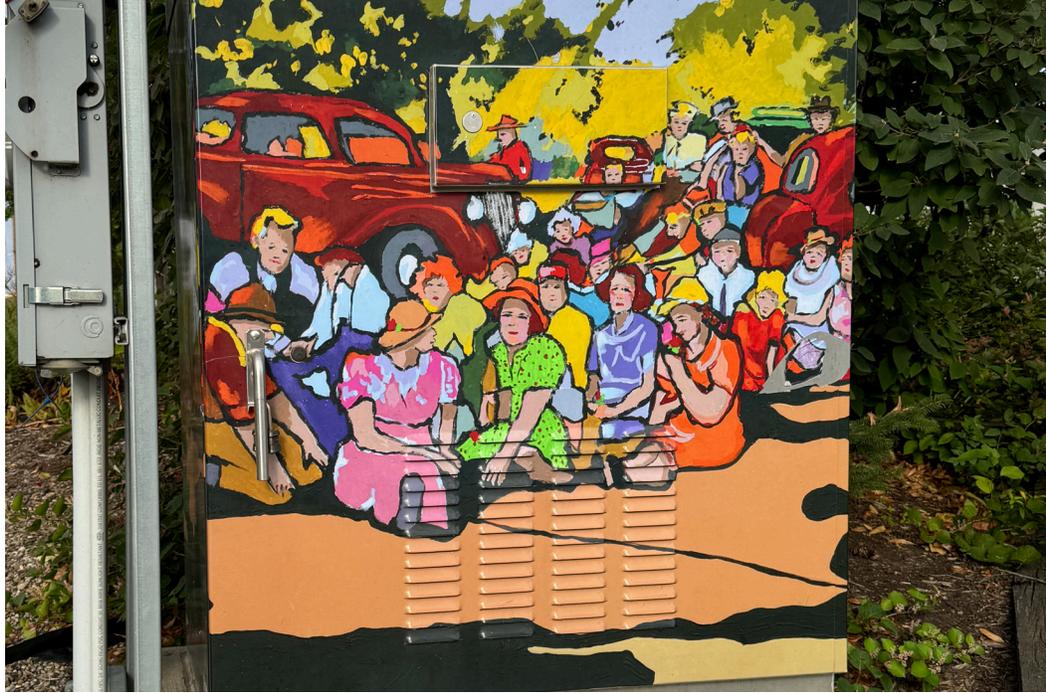


DESCRIPTION

Formally define and record the City of Bismarck Public Art Collection. This will establish the permanent artworks governed by the Public Art Policy and clearly establish who owns the artwork, only accessing into the collection artwork owned by the City of Bismarck. This process should also memorialize the artworks and record details about the collection, such as: typology, artist, date created, site installed, and other relevant details necessary to inventory the collection. At this juncture, it would be appropriate to follow the Public Art Policy's guidance for deaccession and removal of any artworks past their appropriate lifespan and identify upcoming maintenance needs such as repairs and cleaning.

STRATEGY 1.4

Establish the Cultural Commission.



DESCRIPTION

As the advisory body of the Public Art Program and critical overseer of Arts and Culture Plan implementation priorities, the Cultural Commission will reflect the community's desires for arts and culture and work with the city to build cultural capacity at the local level. This commission will be responsible for:

- Acting as an advisory commission to the City Commission on all arts and culture related matters and initiatives;
- Considering studying of and recommending plans for the development of city-wide arts and cultural programs;
- Recommending the selection or acquisition of public art to City Commission as governed by the Public Art Policy;
- Working with Dakota West Arts Council and the Bismarck-Mandan Convention and Visitors Bureau to guide the visibility and promotion of arts and culture with the Capital City;
- Promoting, coordinating, and developing the performing and creative arts by making recommendations for programs for cultural opportunities and experiences for the residents of the city, and further facilitating communications with the North Dakota Council for the Arts and Dakota West Arts Council.

TIMING

Now

PARTNERS

City of Bismarck

PRIORITY

5/5

RELATIVE IMPACT

4/5

This Commission should be made up of no less than (7) members serving three-year City Commission appointed terms and should include:

- One Member of Dakota West Arts Council;
- One Member of the Indigenous Community;
- Two Members of local non-profits focused on history, heritage, arts and/or culture;
- One Member of the Downtown Business Community;
- Two Bismarck Community Members; and
- One City Commissioner.

STRATEGY 1.5

Consider a Strategic Allocation of Hotel, Motel, and Restaurant Taxes.

TIMING

Now

PARTNERS

Cultural Commission, City of Bismarck

PRIORITY

5/5

RELATIVE IMPACT

5/5



DESCRIPTION

Bismarck currently levies two tax measures on accommodations and food & beverage sales, both at the maximum rates allowed by North Dakota state law, they are as follows:

- **2% City Lodging Tax:** Funds the City Visitors' Promotion Fund. This money is solely for general visitor promotion and operational expenses (e.g., marketing, events, CVB operations), not capital construction or real estate purchases.
- **1% City Lodging and Restaurant Tax:** Funds the City Visitors' Promotion Capital Construction Fund. This money is exclusively for tourism-related capital projects (e.g., building/renovating event centers, tourism infrastructure, land acquisition) and associated debt payments.

Currently, these funds, collected by the North Dakota Tax Commissioner, primarily benefiting the Bismarck-Mandan Convention and Visitors' Bureau (CVB) and the Event Center with the ultimate goal of supporting tourism efforts. This represents a critical opportunity for growth both of the arts and culture ecosystem, but also to enhance Bismarck's presence as an arts and culture destination.

Key Opportunities:

The Cultural Commission should make it a priority to collaborate with the Bismarck-Mandan Convention and Visitor's Bureau on strategies to incorporate more arts and culture into expenditures of the combined funding sources and align operations to collectively support the growth of cultural tourism in the region, including:

- Seeking to create arts and culture at the Event Center;
- Incorporating the local arts community and Bismarck's culture, history, and heritage as key promotional opportunities within regional marketing strategies, underscoring the community as an arts destination;
- Expanding the presence of arts and culture on the Visit Bismarck-Mandan website to include upcoming arts and culture programs and events and work with Dakota West Arts Council to cross-pollinate events from their calendar; and
- Direct funding towards arts and cultural activities that drive economic development and tourism within the region.

STRATEGY 1.6

Consider Historical and Cultural Competency Trainings for Staff

TIMING

Now

PARTNERS

City of Bismarck

PRIORITY

4/5

RELATIVE IMPACT

4/5



DESCRIPTION

To cultivate education around the value of arts and culture and bridge awareness gaps at the local level, historical and cultural competency training opportunities for staff should be offered on a biennial basis. These could be conducted in partnership with local organizations that provide community services and programs to diverse communities. This training could also be offered to community partners, non-profit entities, or even members of the business community.

Topics to be explored could include:

- Indigenous history of the region;
- Impact of the American west expansion;
- New American inclusion in community culture.

STRATEGY 1.7

Promote and Strengthen an Arts and Culture Calendar

TIMING

Now

PARTNERS

Bismarck-Mandan
Convention and
Visitors Bureau, City
of Bismarck, Sacred
Pipe Resource
Network, Dakota
West Arts Council,
The Downtowners

PRIORITY

4/5

RELATIVE IMPACT

4/5



DESCRIPTION

As outlined in the Key Opportunities section of Action 1.5, the city should partner with local tourism and arts entities to increase the visibility of arts and culture activities in the community by developing a shared events calendar. This could be in partnership with Dakota West Arts Council, Bismarck-Mandan Convention and Visitors Bureau, Sacred Pipe Resource Network, Bismarck Parks and Recreation District, the Downtowners and other local organizations to promote and elevate cultural activities. These groups can work with the Cultural Commission on community priorities and collaborate with Visit Bismarck-Mandan on current cultural tourism strategies to support the entire sector in bringing visibility to the wealth of activities and programs available to the community.

STRATEGY 1.8

Develop a First Friday Artwalk



TIMING

Now

PARTNERS

The Downtowners,
Dakota West Arts
Council, City of
Bismarck

PRIORITY

5/5

RELATIVE IMPACT

4/5

DESCRIPTION

To cultivate a vibrant and predictable downtown experience, the existing annual Art & Wine Walk hosted by the Downtowners in partnership with local businesses and galleries could be significantly expanded and integrated with other downtown activities to drive the creative sector while supporting downtown businesses. Both downtown businesses and artists could benefit from hosting this event on a routine basis as a First Friday or Second Saturday making it a signature community event. This consistent schedule would not only attract more residents and visitors but also drive significant economic impact downtown by providing a reliable and diverse cultural offering that keeps people coming back. Currently, there are few routine community event opportunities that happen on a more frequent basis than annually, flattening the potential impact community events can have on downtown Bismarck's vitality.

Key considerations:

- Consider developing an arts tour that includes a gallery hop and mural tour and/or partner with a local historian or society to offer a heritage tour of downtown.
- Partner with local performing arts groups to host performances a in public space in conjunction with the event.
- Incorporate local vendors to enhance the event, like artisans/ artists and food trucks and stalls.

ALLEY 5.5 ARTISTS

SUMMER WAHUS	MICHAEL SHEPHERD
BRYCE FEDERER	PAUL NOOT
ECHO FONTENELLE	MOLLY MCLAIN
GRACIE GROTHE	ANDREA FICEK
NICK JESSEN	MITCH SANDER
CORYNNE KRENZ	GRANT HICKS
LILLY LEPP	BAILEY WHITE
KAELAN MACDONALD	ERIKA GALLAWAY
RAYVA MERTZ	SIMEON NELSON
SHELBY ROOKER	ANNE DRAMKO
ROSABEL SEILER	KIM OLSON
EMILY WANGLER	MAHALIA MEES
MELISSA GORDON	CLAIRE WISEMAN
MICHAEL RENNER	MADDIE HANSON
NICOLE GAGNER	BRYAN KROH
WITNEY NIELSEN	ELIZABETH WHITE
THISA QUICK BEAR	DENNIS HOULE

SPONSORED BY

MDU RESOURCES
BASIN ELECTRIC
DAKOTA WEST ARTS COUNCIL
BISMARCK MANDAN-
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOUNDATION
DANIEL COMPANIES
ACE HARDWARE
MCQUADES
KARMIN'S KITCHEN
STARION FINANCIAL
RYAN DODGE
PUKLICH CHEVROLET
AND
HUNDREDS OF
LOCAL RESIDENTS
THROUGH
GOFUNDME!

www.artscapital.org



SOON

Recommendations and projects in the Soon category typically require additional planning and financial measures compared to items in the Now category. These projects may also take advantage of new and diverse streams of funding and partnerships that have been built during the earlier phase. This category is likely to include priority investments to support the community's vision for arts and culture and strategies to maintain momentum in growing the local arts and culture ecosystem.

SOON

STRATEGY 2.1A

Develop an Art Activations Program

TIMING

Soon

PARTNERS

Fort Abraham
Lincoln Foundation,
Dakota West
Arts Council,
Bismarck Parks and
Recreation District,
Artist in Residence,
Sacred Pipe
Resources Network

PRIORITY

5/5

RELATIVE IMPACT

5/5



DESCRIPTION

An art activations program could bring public art and cultural experience opportunities to public spaces around Bismarck. This community-centered program should prioritize park and greenspace programming, engaging experiences for the community in the winter through the arts, downtown community events that drive people to the city's economic center, and programs that excite the community and activate underutilized public spaces. This program should be created as a scalable approach to implementing public art inventions, temporary art activations, and community programming starting with small, routine and predictable opportunities that are well advertised to the community and building towards larger marquee events that provide major impact. The city should seek to work in partnership with local organizations and can grow with the emerging arts and culture sector in Bismarck through these activations.

- The art activations program can draw from program recommendations outlined further in this document, all of which have the opportunity to provide the community with an enriching experience, fostering social cohesion, stimulating economic activity, and promoting artistic expression in Bismarck.

STRATEGY 2.1B

Consider an Arts Discovery Program



DESCRIPTION

A critical opportunity area frequently identified by community members during conversations regarding the development of this plan was the safeguarding of arts education for youth and supplemental experiences to bolster the existing public school curriculum. To address this opportunity, the City of Bismarck can partner with other organizations and agencies such as Bismarck Parks and Recreation District, the Dakota Zoo, the Fort Abraham Lincoln Foundation, the North Dakota Heritage Center and State Museum, Dakota West Arts Council and of course, Bismarck Public Schools to create opportunities for students to experience the arts, culture, and history and heritage through after school programs and field trips that expose them to a variety of these topic areas. These arts discovery lessons can be facilitated in partnership with the above identified organizations as well as local artists and creators to nurture within Bismarck's youth a love and value of heritage, culture, and the arts.

Key programming opportunities:

- Visual arts classes and activities
- Literary arts classes and activities
- History and heritage tours
- Artist facilitated learning experiences
- After school programs occurring in arts spaces

TIMING

Soon

PARTNERS

Fort Abraham
Lincoln Foundation,
Dakota West
Arts Council,
Bismarck Parks and
Recreation District,
Artist in Residence,
Sacred Pipe
Resources Network

PRIORITY

4/5

RELATIVE IMPACT

5/5

STRATEGY 2.2

Join International Make Music Day

TIMING

Soon

PARTNERS

The Downtowners,
City of Bismarck,
Dakota West
Arts Council,

PRIORITY

4/5

RELATIVE IMPACT

3/5



DESCRIPTION

Make Music Day is a grassroots initiative by a team of volunteers born out of the international event started in France aimed at creating a free day of music in cities everywhere accessible to all. Today, thousands of musicians – amateurs and professionals, of all ages and musical persuasions – perform in hundreds of free, outdoor concerts each June 21st. This movement has been growing across America and the parent organization for US based events, Make Music Day, provides communities, businesses, and artists with resources to start, promote, and execute their own Make Music Day events.

The City of Bismarck can tap into this network of resources by joining the Make Music Alliance and partnering with local organizations and performers to begin their own Make Music Day, bringing a full day of free music and celebration to the community.

STRATEGY 2.3

Conduct a Market Study for a Purpose-built Performance Space & Arts Center

TIMING

Soon

PARTNERS

Fort Abraham
Lincoln Foundation,
Dakota West
Arts Council,
Bismarck Parks and
Recreation District,
Artist in Residence,
Sacred Pipe
Resource Network

PRIORITY

4/5

RELATIVE IMPACT

5/5



DESCRIPTION

A critical strength of Bismarck's creative community highlighted by stakeholders throughout the process was the growing performing arts community. Community members felt that stronger integration of the performing arts into the built environment and within community events would create more opportunities for community connection, a better appreciation for the arts locally, and bring more dynamic experiences to the community that could attract and retain new residents. Rehearsal spaces were also a frequently identified need among performing arts groups. A new, purpose-built space that serves multiple functions, such as a combined rehearsal and small-scale performance space, a higher capacity performance space for larger productions and touring acts, and added classrooms and studio spaces with sprung floors for dance groups would take Bismarck's performing arts to the next level.

In order to understand the feasibility and need for a purpose built performance space, the City of Bismarck should seek to conduct a market study to understand the marketability, capacity demands, and operational needs to support such an investment.

Key considerations for the space include:

- Performance capacity demands and potential revenue models
- Rehearsal space demands
- Artist studio, dance studio, and classroom space demands
- Indoor versus outdoor space demands
- Integration with other public spaces and cultural amenities
- The incorporation of a makerspace and tool library
- Operational needs and partnership opportunities
- Funding opportunities

STRATEGY 2.4

Explore a New Green Space in Downtown or Public Plaza in Downtown

TIMING

Soon

PARTNERS

The Downtowners,
City of Bismarck,
Dakota West Arts
Council

PRIORITY

4/5

RELATIVE IMPACT

3/5



DESCRIPTION

A new public space or plaza downtown with routine community programming was rated as the greatest need in a 2022 Survey of Downtown Workers; this strongly suggests the need for a multi-functional public space that can serve as the heart of downtown life. This space could act as a centralized nexus of community activity or the “Community Hub” or the “Downtown Livingroom”, with predictable programming and activities that draws people in regularly such as farmers’ and artisans’ markets, outdoor performances, fitness classes, art installations, pop-up shops, cultural festivals, holiday celebrations, and more. A dedicated space for community gathering would greatly enhance quality of life for those who work, live, or visit downtown by offering amenities, green space, and bolster downtown vitality.

Key Considerations:

- Flexible Programming Space
- Seating and Gathering Areas
- Green Space Integration
- Provide Shade and Shelter
- Incorporation of Public Art & Creative Placemaking Elements

STRATEGY 2.5

Underscore the Presence of the Arts through "Pride of Dakota"

TIMING

Soon

PARTNERS

The Downtowners,
Bismarck-Mandan
Convention and
Visitors Bureau,
Pride of Dakota,
City of Bismarck,
Sacred Pipe
Resource Network

PRIORITY

3/5

RELATIVE IMPACT

4/5



DESCRIPTION

Pride of Dakota was created in 1985 to develop an identifiable state brand that would designate products as "made in North Dakota." Pride of Dakota's goal is to provide local business owners the business development resources and marketing opportunities they need to be successful. By directing local creators towards this resource, the creative community can leverage the "Pride of Dakota" brand to significantly boost the visibility, market access, and economic success of Bismarck's and North Dakota's artists and artisans, while celebrating the unique value of artist and artisan made goods.

Key considerations:

- Partner with creative small businesses and local artists and artisans to foster their growth and success. This could include exploring tax incentives, promoting their work through city platforms/media, and/or facilitating collaborations on creative endeavors
- Elevate the value of handmaid artisanal goods and products where possible, incorporating these enterprises into farmers' and artisans' markets and other community programs
- Building off the proposed "First Friday Artwalk" to bolster small businesses in the community and elevate the creative sector by incorporating an artisan market into the event

STRATEGY 2.6

Explore an Artist-in-Residency Program

TIMING

Soon

PARTNERS

City of Bismarck,
Dakota West Arts
Council, Bismarck
Public Schools,
Bismarck Parks and
Recreation District

PRIORITY

4/5

RELATIVE IMPACT

4/5



DESCRIPTION

The City of Bismarck could consider a series of grant opportunities for a designated artist to facilitate arts-focused experiences and educational opportunities for the community. These grants would support artists in developing community-focused arts programming that engages Bismarck residents in arts and culture experiences and creations.

- Events that these grants could be targeted at could include the first friday/second saturday events in strategy 1.8 or could support artists working in schools or at local festivals. This may be implemented in conjunction with recommendation 2.1B.



STRATEGY 2.7

Create a "Feast on Fifth" Community Dining Experience

TIMING

Soon

PARTNERS

City of Bismarck,
The Downtowners,
Cultural Commission

PRIORITY

4/5

RELATIVE IMPACT

4/5

DESCRIPTION

One sentiment often communicated by community members was excitement at the growing culinary scene in Bismarck which is becoming more and more diverse in culinary choices and establishments over time. One way to bring this to the community as an experience that draws attention to this emerging cultural component of the community is through a "Feast on Fifth" dining event. By the closing the blocks of Fifth Street between Main and Thayer and setting up one large community dining table down the middle of the street, the city and culinary creators can partner to invite the community to experience their city in a new way by highlighting local culinary talent and multicultural dining options.

This could function as a ticketed dining experience that creates revenue to further support arts and cultural activity in the community or act more as a culinary festival with vendor stalls and food trucks that community members can select from before joining the community table.





NEXT

Items in the Next category may comprise several things, from projects with longer implementation timelines driven by their complexity or funding requirements to provide and strategies that provide a clear value but may still fall as a lower priority compared to projects and recommendations in the earlier phases. These projects are often informed by successes and challenges faced during the early years of plan implementation and may pivot from the early vision after additional stakeholder input provides immediate direction to the current needs and priorities of the community. That said, large-scale investments in the Next category are oftentimes some of the most impactful and galvanizing moments in plan implementation, cementing the local art and culture legacy and serving to fulfill the community vision.

STRATEGY 3.1

Explore the Development of a Purpose-Built Artist Co-op & Makerspace

TIMING

Next

PARTNERS

City of Bismarck,
Private Developers,
Dakota West Arts
Council, Sacred Pipe
Resource Network,

PRIORITY

5/5

RELATIVE IMPACT

5/5



DESCRIPTION

In accordance with market study findings, support the development of a central space for arts creation. This may be a new build or adaptive reuse project that may incorporate:

Artist studio spaces for rent

- Dance studios for performers
- Classroom spaces for public and non-profit led arts education
- Office space for local arts agencies, community service organizations, and public services like a library branch
- Integration with other public spaces and cultural amenities
- A makers space
- A tool library

STRATEGY 3.2

Build an Arts Space (in accordance with the market study findings)

TIMING

Next

PARTNERS

City of Bismarck,
The Downtowners,
Bismarck Parks and
Recreation District,
Cultural Commission

PRIORITY

4/5

RELATIVE IMPACT

4/5



DESCRIPTION

If determined feasible in the market study, consider the incorporation of a purpose-built performance space that supports the local demands for rehearsal and studio/classroom spaces for the performing arts. This performance space may be incorporated within the centralized arts space (Action 3.1) as a larger arts center dedicated to supporting arts activities within the region.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Across the United States, funding for art and culture comes most predictably from:

Sales Tax Measures such as:

- *Special Sales Tax*
- *Transient Room Tax*
- *Restaurant Tax*
- *Alcohol Tax*

Development Fees such as:

- *Percent for art in private development*
- *Sustained Public Budget Allocations*
- *General Fund Allocation*
- *Percent for Art in Capital Improvement*

Arts and culture activities, particularly one-time projects and programs, are often supported by the philanthropic community and granting organizations or through municipal budget allocations, such as one-time general fund support or a percentage of public capital improvement projects. Funding sources for the execution of projects and one-off community programs typically include:

Publicly-Funded Grants such as:

- *The National Endowment for the Arts*
- *National Trust for Public Spaces*
- *Federal Grants*
- *State Grants*

Privately-Funded Grants such as:

- *The Mellon Foundation*
- *The Lilly Foundation*
- *The Levitt Foundation*
- *AARP*
- *Local Philanthropic Organizations*

and/or Private Partners & Sponsorships



ARTS ACTIVATION & DISCOVERY OPPORTUNITIES



ARTS IN PARKS

Expanding arts programming within Bismarck's parks and green spaces would greatly impact community life. This could include outdoor performances, art installations, workshops, and festivals. This strategy aims to leverage the city's existing park infrastructure to make arts and culture more accessible to the community.



"MAKE WINTER FOR THE ARTS"

Arts organizations and the city of Bismarck should consider developing programming specifically designed to engage the community during the winter months. This could involve indoor and outdoor performances, exhibitions, workshops, and community events that celebrate the arts and provide entertainment and social opportunities.



FIRST FRIDAY EVENTS

The First Friday events could include a broader range of arts and cultural activities. This could involve collaborations with local businesses, restaurants, and galleries to create a vibrant downtown experience that attracts residents and visitors.



STREET DANCE PROGRAMMING

The City of Bismarck can grow the presence of arts and cultural and build cultural appreciation in residents by introducing regular street dances and festivals to activate public spaces and create a lively and engaging atmosphere in downtown Bismarck.



DOWNTOWN PROGRAMMABLE SPACE

Identifying and developing a dedicated, flexible space in the downtown area that can host a variety of arts and cultural events, such as performances, markets, and festivals should be a priority of the City of Bismarck and local organizations. This space could be a parking lot or other underutilized area that can be transformed into a vibrant community hub through investment.



CHRISTMAS MARKETS AND VENDOR FAIRS

Community organizations like the Downtowners and the City of Bismarck should consider organizing seasonal markets and fairs that showcase local artists, craftspeople, and food vendors, particularly multicultural entrepreneurs. This would provide economic opportunities for local businesses and create a festive atmosphere that attracts residents and visitors.

