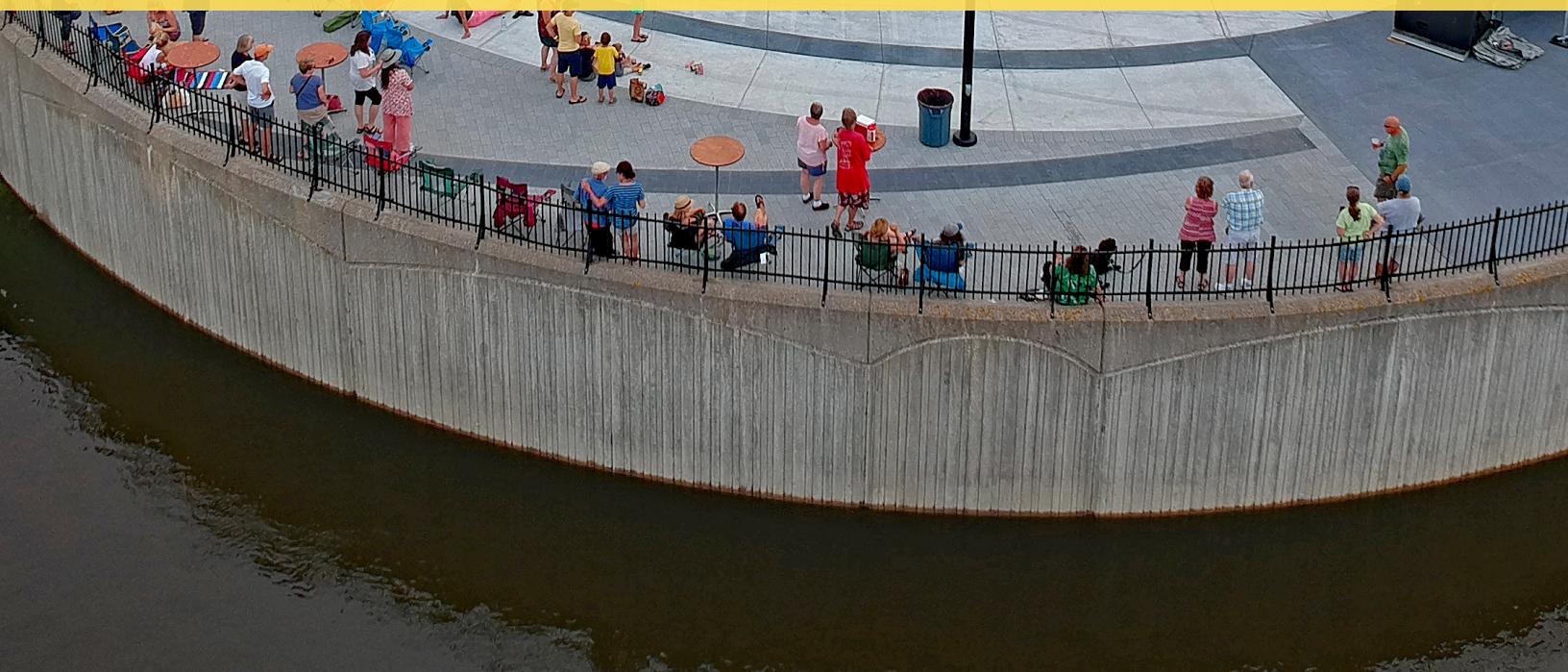




# Winona

Arts and Culture  
Strategic Plan



# Winona Arts and Culture Strategic Plan

## City Council

Scott D. Sherman, Mayor  
Steve Young, 1st Ward  
Eileen Moeller, 2nd Ward  
Pamela Eyden, 3rd Ward  
George Borzyskowski, 4th Ward  
Michelle Alexander, At-Large  
Aaron Repinski, At-Large

## Steering Committee

Margaret Shaw Johnson, Chair	Retired Judge, Playwright	
Michael Doyle	Commissioner	Winona Heritage Preservation Commission
Carrie Frederich	Chair, WinonaFine Arts Commission	Project Organizer & Painter, Pillbox Bats
Jean Mueller	Chair, Board of Directors	River Arts Alliance
Sarah Johnson	Creative Laureate	City of Winona
Carrie Johnson	Executive Director	Winona County Historical Society
Eileen Moeller	Councilperson, 2nd Ward	City of Winona
	Managing Director	Frozen River Film Festival
Greg Neidhart	Associate Professor	Winona State University
Christie Ransom	President and CEO	Winona Area Chamber of Commerce
Jovy Rocky	Owner / Artisan	Jovy Rocky Jewelry, ORNO Gift + Home
Luke Sims	Assistant City Planner	City of Winona
Rebecca Sims	TRIO Support Services	Winona State University
Jon Swanson	Curator of Collections & Exhibitions	Minnesota Marine Art Museum
Jennifer Weaver	Museum Educator	Winona County Historical Society

### Former Members

Vicki English	Chair, Board of Directors	River Arts Alliance
Theresa Remick	Managing Director	St. Mary's University Performance Center
	Member	Winona Fine Arts Commission

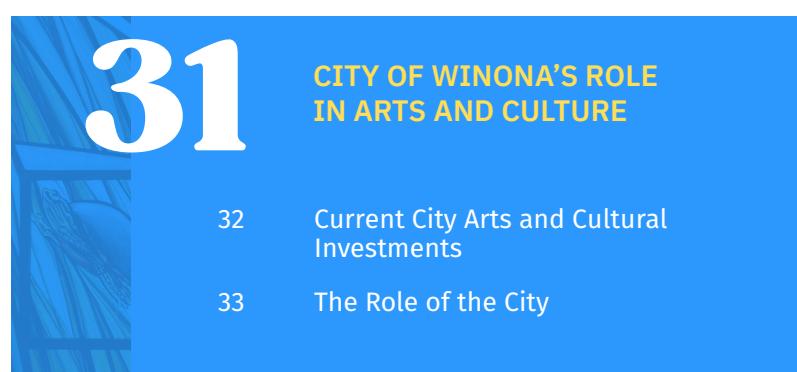
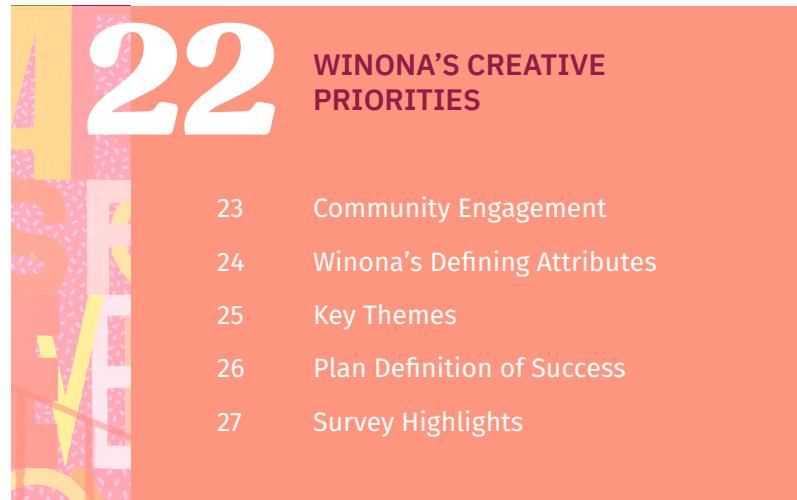
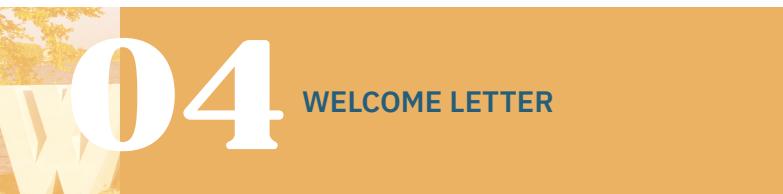
## Staff

Chad Ubl, Interim City Manager  
Lee Gundersheimer, Arts & Culture Coordinator

## Consultants

David Plettner-Saunders, Cultural Planning Group  
Linda Flynn, Cultural Planning Group  
Brian Voerding, Engage Winona

# Table of Contents



# Welcome Letter

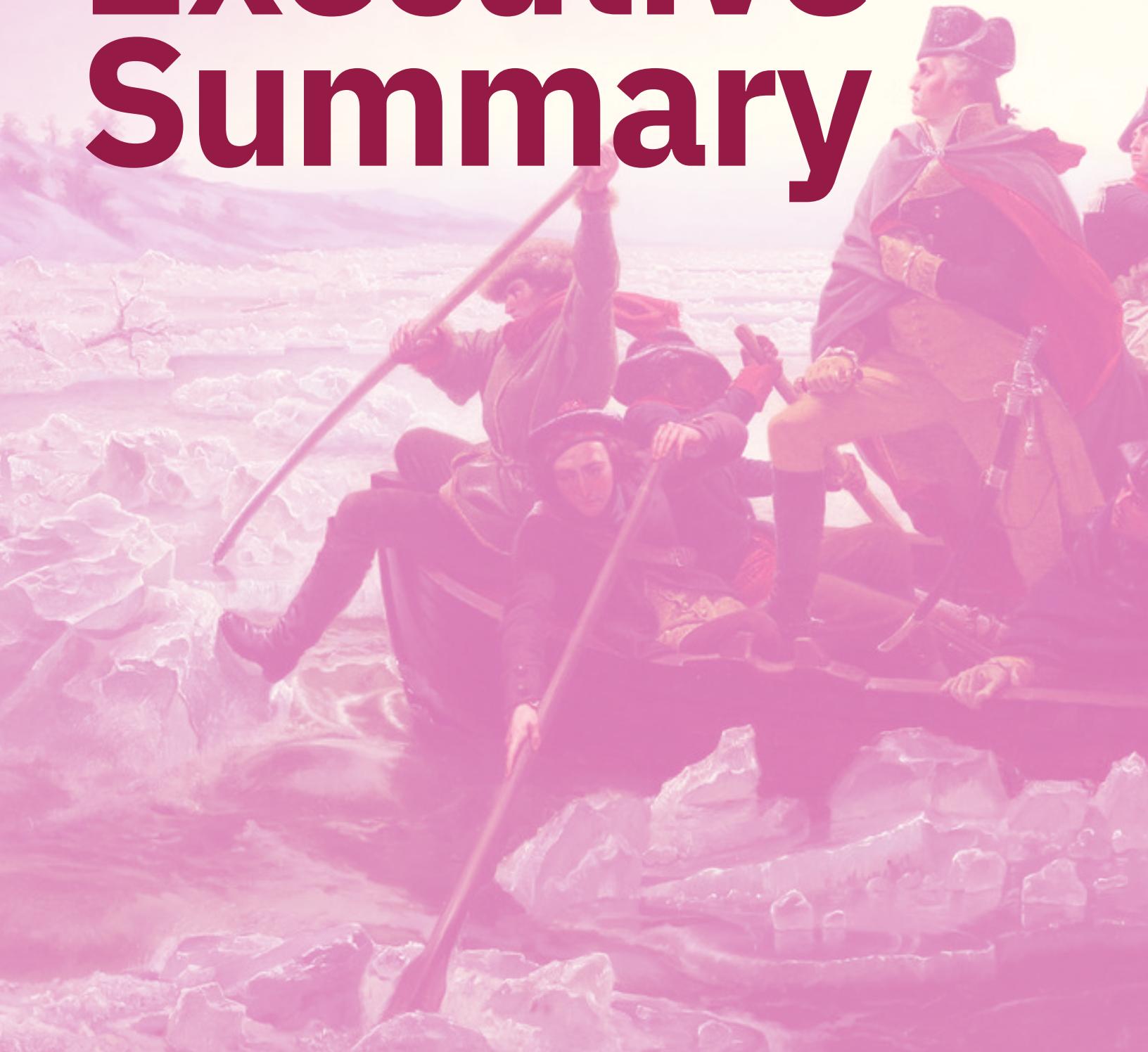
WINON

# Welcome Letter

**[Letter from Scott and Margaret]**

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# Executive Summary



# This plan is for all Winonans.



City Council commissioned a document that would advance the arts and culture leg of Winona's three-prong effort for growth:

- 1 entrepreneurship**
- 2 outdoor recreation**
- 3 arts and culture**

This focus on creativity will grow the economy, attract and retain a talented workforce, and enhance Winona's quality of life. The plan also defines a leadership role for City government, in partnership with the community. Its ideas reflect the vision of other city plans for downtown revitalization, economic development, parks, and trails, and more.

Winona has a uniquely rich and interconnected culture. It is shaped by its entrepreneurship and industries like

manufacturing and composite materials. Winona is the birthplace of successful companies, each one requiring creativity in its start-up and ongoing management.

Moreover, Winona's creative people contribute necessary skills and ideas throughout the local economy. The City is committed to retaining the successful companies present in the community and attracting new ones, with a focus on maintaining the employment and prosperity provided by the city's surprisingly diverse business sectors. This plan supports that commitment by reinforcing the community's desirability so essential to a long-term workforce.

More than 1,000 Winonans participated in development of this plan, across all city wards, and it is based on their vision for the creative future of the community. Arts and culture must be for everyone.

## Economic Impact Of Nonprofit Arts And Culture

Winona's nonprofit arts and culture sector is a vital part of its creative economy and helps drive tourism:<sup>1</sup>

**\$4.7M**



Total economic impact in 2016 was \$4.7 million: \$3.3 million in direct expenditures by 16 nonprofit arts and cultural organizations, and an additional \$1.4 million from event-related spending by audiences.



**118,920**

Total audience was 118,920: 20% of attendees were visitors from outside the 11-county region and 84% said they came to Winona specifically for an arts event.

**40**

These figures are conservative: there are approximately 40 nonprofit arts and cultural organizations in Winona but only 16 were included in the American for the Arts 2016 study referenced.



<sup>1</sup> Arts and Economic Prosperity 5 (2016), Americans for the Arts, <https://www.creativemn.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Winona1PgrComp.pdf>

## Minnesota's nonprofit arts and culture sector is strong and growing:<sup>2</sup>

- Total economic impact in 2016 was \$2.167 billion, supporting 108,755 full time jobs. Minnesota's arts economy is much larger than neighboring states and is growing.
- Public investment in arts and culture is a catalyst that increases government revenues. Minnesota's nonprofit arts and cultural sector generated \$158 million in total government revenues in 2016, including \$32.5 million in local government revenues and \$125.6 million in state government revenues. These amounts are growing.
- Artists contribute to their communities in multiple ways. In addition to their specific economic impact, artists are

entrepreneurial and provide creative work that fuels other economic sectors. Artists also build social capital, in part due to the dynamic social networks they create. Benefits to their communities include poverty reduction, population retention and growth, and increased civic participation. Artists are also often engaged outside the artistic realm on planning committees, working within municipal government, and other forms of community development.

- Artists volunteer their time much more than other Minnesotans and other Americans.
- Only one-fourth of artists work on their art full-time: holding multiple jobs and "gigging" is a normal feature of an artistic career.

<sup>2</sup> Creative Minnesota (2019 & 2017), <https://www.creativemn.org>



*The recognition of a community's arts and culture assets (and the marketing of them) is an important element of economic development. Creatively acknowledging and marketing community assets can attract a strong workforce and successful firms, as well as help sustain a positive quality of life.*

- American Planning Association,

## What Defines Winona?

Residents told us that Winona is defined by...

100+ years of arts and culture	Individual artist community	River community
Vibrant arts and culture scene	International communities	Rooted in traditional arts
The Bluffs	Museums	Sister cities (Japan and Poland)
Edgy, riverfront culture	Music scene	Small town feel
Entrepreneurial spirit	Natural environment/beauty	Social justice minded
Faith community	Performing arts	Strong community relationships
Festivals and events	Philanthropic community	Supportive City government
Higher education institutions	Pride in heritage	Technology & manufacturing industries
History	Visual and literary arts	The community and people



### Winona: The Place

**Winona is a unique community with a desirable quality of life**, punctuated by the outdoor recreation, the natural environmental beauty, arts and culture scene, and diverse workforce industries.

**Winona's rich history** is unique – inclusive of the Dakota, Lakota, and Sioux histories, plus historical and ongoing immigration of Polish, German, Bohemian, Hispanic, Hmong and other peoples. The building of Winona as a city along the river helped it to grow and prosper and provided lasting opportunity for the community.

**Winona is a community of entrepreneurs**, beginning with companies such as Fastenal, Watkins Spice, CodaBow, Pillbox Bat, Winona Canoe, Associated Crafts/Willet Hauser Stained Glass Studio, composite industries, and breweries. Today, the entrepreneurial spirit lives in new small businesses, creatives, and artists.

**Winona's arts and culture sector highlights a vibrant performing arts scene**, especially known for its festivals, theatre, and music performances. There is a large community of individual artists.

## Winona's Creative Vision

Here is how Winonans define success for their arts and cultural future.

### **A wish for all Winonans to experience a rich cultural life.**

Whether they participate, attend, watch, or interact in another way, the opportunities will be broad, engaging, and inclusive. Winona exemplifies a community of inclusiveness, where all are welcome and diversity of the arts flourishes.

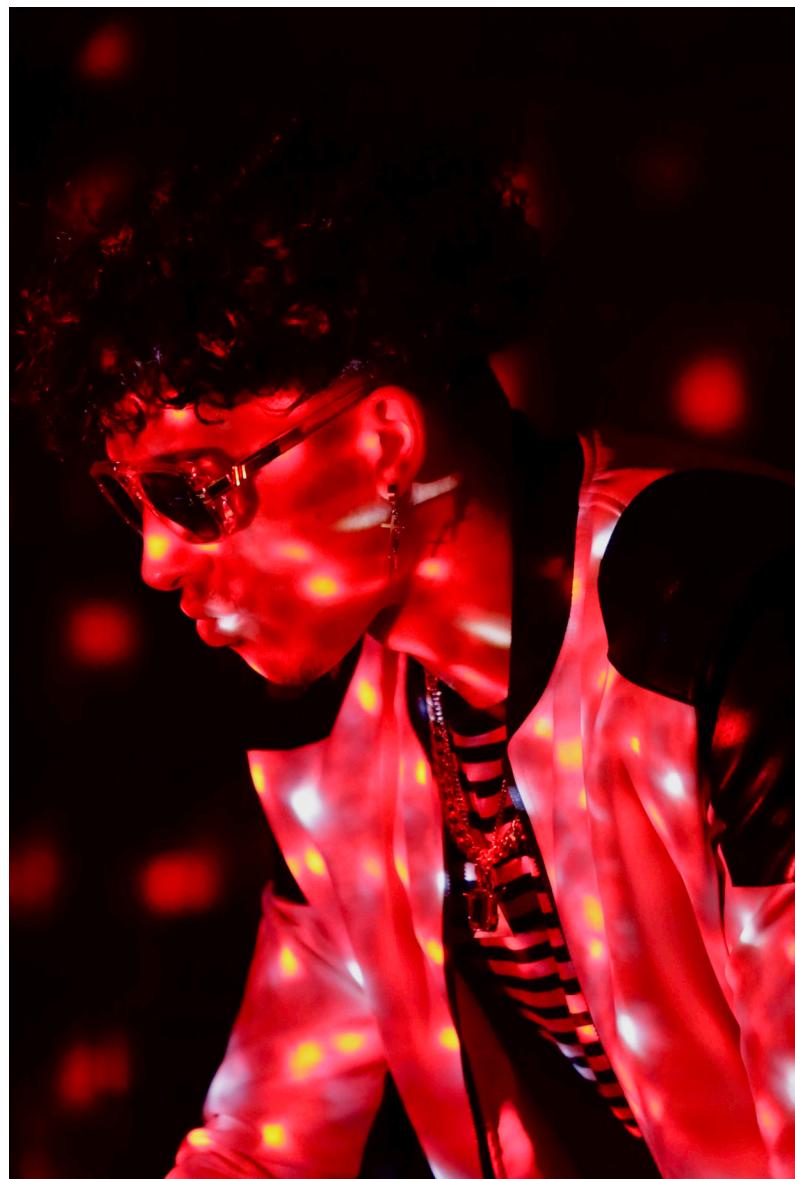
**Winona is enriched with a variety of arts and creative activities engaging residents in their daily lives and enhancing the experience of visitors.** Public art creates vibrant spaces and elevates the value of creativity for residents, while artists are part of the fabric of downtown and working with and in City government to celebrate the past and plan for a vibrant future.

**Enhance and celebrate Winona's character.** From revitalizing downtown to attracting and retaining residents and workers, investment in the creative economy will raise the profile of Winona for the region and the nation. Artist studios and live/workspaces bring creative vibrancy to the city. Cross-over marketing opportunities between the arts and other sectors are a draw for visitors and a benefit for residents.

### **Distinct connections between organizations, sectors, and communities exist and promote success from within Winona.**

Collaborations, shared resources, community-wide information on happenings, and networking create a strong community.

**Arts learning opportunities abound.** Arts education benefits all youth equitably in the community and builds the next generation of artists and arts consumers for Winona.



## The Plan

The Arts and Culture Strategic Plan sets four goals and associated strategies for achieving the community's vision. The plan emphasizes the role of arts and culture in Winona's economic development, as well as their contribution to quality of life. The City's role is defined as supporting the community's efforts.



### GOAL 01

**Enhance City support systems  
for Winona's creative life.**

- 1.1** Refocus the City's leadership role from direct programming to service, support, and leadership of the community's efforts.
- 1.2** Rebuild the Fine Arts Commission as the Creative Winona Commission with updated mission, qualifications, role and membership.
- 1.3** Establish an inaugural citywide Public Art Program.
- 1.4** Develop a long-term public art master plan.
- 1.5** Create an equitable, transparent arts grants program open to all Winona nonprofit arts and cultural organizations and artists.
- 1.6** Expand the Creative Laureate program to have one or more artists work within City departments on collaborative projects.
- 1.7** Refocus the City Arts Office as the Office of Arts, Culture and Creative Economy.
- 1.8** Provide staff support for implementation of this plan.



**Promote and grow Winona's creative economy.**

- 2.1** Increase Winona's capacity to attract and retain creative talent.
- 2.2** Develop an arts and culture strategy to position Winona to attract all age groups, from college students through to retirees, to Winona.
- 2.3** Support growth in Winona's culinary sector.
- 2.4** Continue to promote arts and culture as an important asset for Winona.
- 2.5** Expand arts education and lifelong learning opportunities.
- 2.6** Provide accountability in implementation of this plan through regular community reports and convenings.



**Support inclusive creativity for all residents and visitors.**

- 3.1** Invite the creative community to develop inclusive new activities for all Winonans.
- 3.2** Develop year-round arts and cultural programming.
- 3.3** Develop a communitywide cultural equity and inclusion initiative.
- 3.4** Incentivize cross-over activities for creative and outdoor recreation (see 2.4, above).



**Expand access to creative sector facilities and spaces.**

- 4.1** Complete the former Masonic Temple project as a multidisciplinary performing and visual arts center.
- 4.2** Inventory and make available existing public spaces for creative activities.
- 4.3** Develop live/workspaces for artists and creatives, including mixed use projects.
- 4.4** Develop a Creative Space Program to incentivize new facilities, spaces, and places.

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# Overview



This plan is for all Winonans. City Council commissioned a document that would advance the arts and culture leg of Winona's three-prong effort for growth: 1) entrepreneurship, 2) outdoor recreation, and 3) arts and culture. This focus on creativity will grow the economy, attract and retain a talented workforce, and enhance Winona's quality of life. The plan also defines a leadership role for City government, in partnership with the community. Its ideas reflect the vision of other city plans for downtown revitalization, economic development, parks, and trails, and more. Once the city's new comprehensive plan is completed, this plan will be referenced in it.

Winona has a uniquely rich and interconnected culture. It is shaped by its entrepreneurship and industries like manufacturing and composite materials. Winona is the birthplace of successful companies, each one requiring creativity in its start-up and ongoing management. Some Winona enterprises, like CodaBow International, Knitcraft Corporation, and Wenonah Canoe, are based on craftsmanship and artistry. Winona's outdoor recreation includes a culture rooted in parks, trails, the river, and a deep love of the natural environment. Many of Winona's people share a strong culture – Polish, German, African American, Native American, Hmong, to name just a few – carried forward to the present day. The thriving arts community of festivals, Minnesota Marine Art Museum, university arts faculty and programs, are just

a few of the differentiators from other cities of similar size – making Winona a true arts destination. This web of creativity, culture, artistry, business, and recreation defines Winona and is the foundation for this plan.

Winona is committed to retaining the successful companies present in the community and attracting new ones, with a focus on maintaining the employment and prosperity provided by the city's surprisingly diverse business sectors. This plan supports the strategy by reinforcing the community's desirability so essential to a long-term workforce. Moreover, Winona's creative people contribute necessary skills and ideas throughout the local economy.

Guided by a communitywide Steering Committee (page 1), more than 1,000 Winonans participated in development of this plan, across all city wards, and it is based on their vision for the creative future of the community. They shared comprehensive ideas about how arts, culture and creativity should evolve for the community. They want creativity to play multiple roles downtown, in neighborhoods, in businesses, parks, trails and – above all – in everyday life. They want arts and culture to reflect the many and varied tastes of all groups of people. They appreciate Shakespeare and Beethoven but love all genres of music and swing dancing in the street just as much. The arts must be for everyone.

## Inspiration

### ARTS AS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

#### PADUCAH ARTIST RELOCATION PROGRAM

In Paducah, Kentucky, artists are economic development. In 2002, the City Commission adopted a community plan offering incentives for artists to rehab properties in historic Lowertown. Over 20 years, artists have moved in and renovated many homes and businesses, generating major new investment and revitalizing the neighborhood. The City believes the program "... could be replicated in any community."

[http://paducahky.gov/  
lower-town-artist-program](http://paducahky.gov/lower-town-artist-program)



A photograph of three women in traditional, colorful attire, possibly from a Southeast Asian culture. They are wearing headbands with numerous small, reflective circular ornaments. The women are in a crouched position, with their hands clasped together in front of them in a gesture of prayer or offering. The background is a bright, slightly overexposed outdoor setting with trees and a building.

# Benefits of Arts and Culture

Survey results from 835 Winonans show

**An overwhelming majority of Winona's residents – 94% – consider arts and culture to be important to their community.**

## **What are these benefits?**

## **Why do arts and culture matter?**

## **According to nonpartisan Americans for the Arts:<sup>3</sup>**

### **Arts and culture strengthen the economy**

The arts represent a larger share of the nation's economy – 4.2% of GDP – than transportation, tourism, and agriculture (source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis).

### **Arts and culture drive tourism and revenue to local businesses**

Attendees at nonprofit arts and cultural events spend \$31.47 per person, per event, beyond the cost of admission on items such as meals, parking and babysitters—valuable commerce for local businesses. One-third come from outside the county in which the arts event takes place, and these visitors average \$47.57 in event-related spending. Arts travelers are ideal tourists, staying longer and spending more to seek out authentic cultural experiences.

### **Arts improve academic performance**

Students engaged in arts learning have higher GPAs, standardized test scores, and attendance, and lower drop-out rates. These academic benefits are reaped by students regardless of socio-economic status. Yet, the US Department of Education reports that access to arts education for students of color is significantly lower than for their white peers.

### **Arts and culture spark creativity and innovation**

Creativity is among the top five applied skills sought by business leaders, per the Conference Board's Ready to Innovate report – with 72% saying creativity is of high importance when hiring.

### **Arts and culture unify communities**

67% of Americans believe “the arts unify our communities regardless of age, race, and ethnicity” and 62% agree that “the arts help me understand other cultures better” – a perspective observed across all demographic and economic categories.

## **Arts and culture have social impact**

University of Pennsylvania researchers have demonstrated that a high concentration of the arts in a city leads to higher civic engagement, more social cohesion, higher child welfare, and lower poverty rates.

## **Arts and culture improve healthcare**

Nearly one-half of the nation's healthcare institutions provide arts programming for patients, families, and even staff. 78% deliver those programs because of their healing benefits to patients – shorter hospital stays, better pain management, less medication, shorter recuperation time, and reduced depression.

## **Arts and culture drive the creative industries**

The Creative Industries are arts businesses that range from nonprofit museums, symphonies, and theaters to for-profit film, architecture, and design companies. A 2017 analysis of Dun & Bradstreet data counts 673,656 businesses in the U.S. involved in the creation or distribution of the arts—4.0 percent of all businesses and 2.0 percent of all employees.

<sup>3</sup>Source: adapted from *Ten Reasons to Support the Arts*, Americans for the Arts, 2018, <https://blog.americansforthearts.org/2018/03/09/ten-reasons-to-support-the-arts-in-2018>



## Winona's creative economy

Winona's creative economy is a major driver of the city's overall bottom line. It includes but extends far beyond the nonprofit arts and culture sector. Winona is home to creative corporations like Willet Hauser and Hal Leonard Music Publishing, and to creative workers ranging from individual artists to graphic designers and university arts faculty. It is one leg of the city's "three-legged stool" of economic growth: entrepreneurship, outdoor recreation, and arts and culture.

### Did you know?

**1,014**

Winona's creative economy had 1,014 full-time jobs in 2019.



Top creative occupations are software developers, writers & authors, graphic designers, marketing managers, and musicians & singers.

**25.1M**

Total 2019 earnings for Winona's creative industries were \$25.1 million.



Top creative industries are music publishers; book publishers; artists, writers & performers; antique shops; and breweries.

### What is the creative economy?

The term creative economy is used to describe creativity throughout a whole economy. It is comprised of economic systems where value is based on imaginative qualities rather than the traditional resources of land, labor, and capital. The foundation for a vibrant creative economy is the creative sector of industries and occupations. Creative industries include advertising, architecture, art, culinary, crafts, design, fashion, film, music, performing arts, publishing, research and development, software, toys and games, television and radio, and video games. Creative workers – creatives – are individuals with advanced training and experience in the design and production of a broad range of cultural products and services, including individual artists of all disciplines.

(Source: CV Suite)

## Economic Impact Of Nonprofit Arts And Culture

### **Winona's nonprofit arts and culture sector is a vital part of its creative economy and helps drive tourism:<sup>5</sup>**

- Total economic impact in 2016 was \$4.7 million: \$3.3 million in direct expenditures by 16 nonprofit arts and cultural organizations, and an additional \$1.4 million from event-related spending by audiences.
- Total audience was 118,920: 20% of attendees were visitors from outside the 11-county region and 84% said they came to Winona specifically for an arts event.
- These figures are conservative: there are approximately 40 nonprofit arts and cultural organizations in Winona but only 16 were included in the American for the Arts 2016 study referenced.

### **Minnesota's nonprofit arts and culture sector is strong and growing:<sup>6</sup>**

- Total economic impact in 2016 was \$2.167 billion, supporting 108,755 full time jobs. Minnesota's arts economy is much larger than neighboring states and is growing.
- **Public investment in arts and culture is a catalyst that increases government revenues.** Minnesota's nonprofit arts and cultural sector generated \$158 million in total government revenues in 2016, including \$32.5 million in local government revenues and \$125.6 million in state government revenues. These amounts are growing.

- **Artists contribute to their communities in multiple ways.** In addition to their specific economic impact, artists are entrepreneurial and provide creative work that fuels other economic sectors. Artists also build social capital, in part due to the dynamic social networks they create. Benefits to their communities include poverty reduction, population retention and growth, and increased civic participation. Artists are also often engaged outside the artistic realm on planning committees, working within municipal government, and other forms of community development.

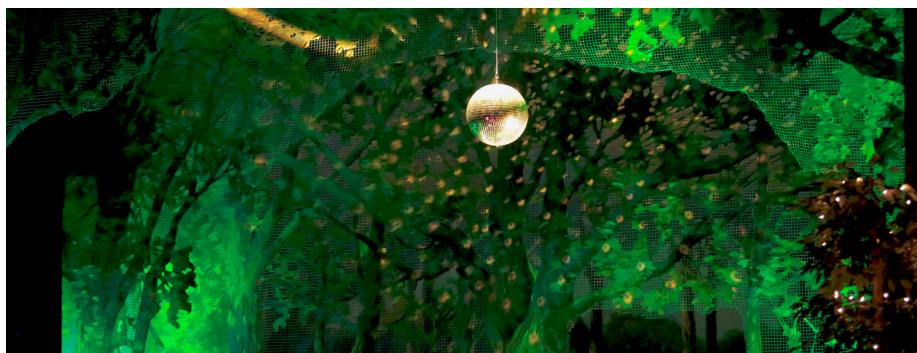
- Artists volunteer their time much more than other Minnesotans and other Americans.
- **Only one-fourth of artists work on their art full-time:** holding multiple jobs and “gigging” is a normal feature of an artistic career.

<sup>5</sup> Arts and Economic Prosperity 5 (2016), Americans for the Arts, <https://www.creativemn.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Winona1PgrComp.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Creative Minnesota (2019 & 2017), <https://www.creativemn.org>

*The Minnesota Arts Board has documented additional benefits of arts and culture in the state.<sup>7</sup>*

- A vibrant arts community is critical to how corporations decide where to locate, and how people decide where to work and live. This is especially relevant in Winona, where downtown is rapidly developing as a residential and commercial center, and the demand for amenities is increasing.
- The arts attract businesses, visitors, and new residents, and encourage consumer spending, all of which result in increased tax revenues. **On average, each government dollar spent on the arts generates more than five dollars in government revenues.**<sup>8</sup> Cultural offerings enhance the market appeal of an area, encouraging business relocation and generation of new jobs.
- **The arts drive tourism, an increasingly important industry in Minnesota.** Travelers who come from other areas for arts-related tourism also spend money shopping, parking, and in hotels and restaurants. Cultural tourists spend more money per trip than the average traveler — **\$614 per trip versus \$425.**
- In greater Minnesota communities, the arts stimulate business development. Small arts towns like Fergus Falls, Grand Rapids, New York Mills, and Lanesboro, for example, “**revive their town centers and reinvent themselves**” through increased commitment to the arts. Lanesboro is also an example of a city, like Winona, with a strong partnership between arts and outdoor recreation.



*The recognition of a community's arts and culture assets (and the marketing of them) is an important element of economic development. Creatively acknowledging and marketing community assets can attract a strong workforce and successful firms, as well as help sustain a positive quality of life.*

— American Planning Association, Economic Vitality Briefing Paper (2021)

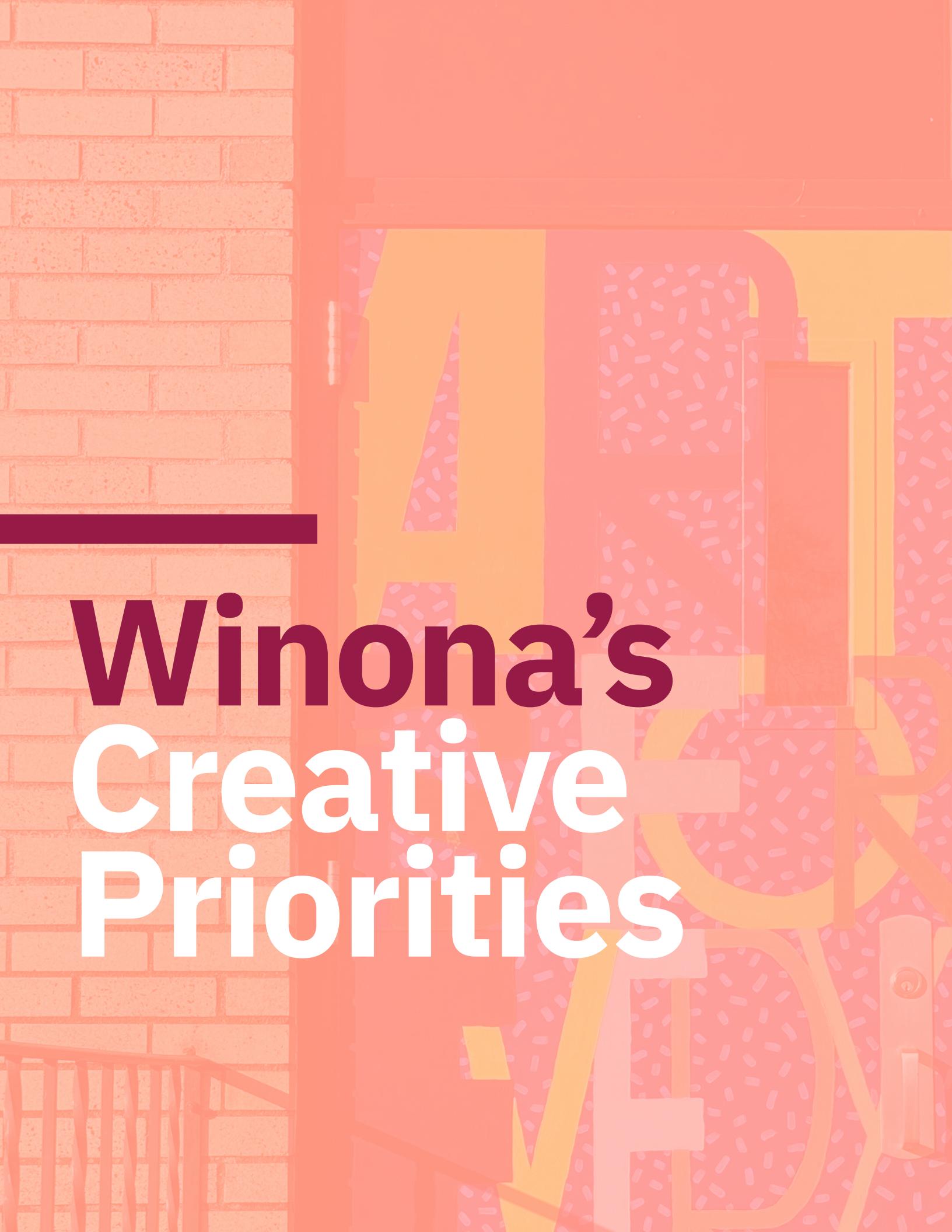
<sup>7</sup> The Arts are Important to Minnesota, Minnesota Arts Board, <http://www.arts.state.mn.us/about/facts.htm>

<sup>8</sup> Arts and Economic Prosperity 5 (2016), Americans for the Arts, <https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program-reports-and-data/research-studies-publications/arts-economic-prosperity-5/learn/national-findings>

## Inspiration

WINONArts, the City's arts and culture initiative, launched its branding by working as the first client with Your-Type, a local sign company creating a new field of public art signage with custom large letters. The original design created a selfie station welcoming sign at the gateway to Winona on Huff Street that could have an “rts” added to it and be used at outdoor events throughout the city. The WINONA sign was so popular it has become a fixture and a must stop photo opportunity for the community. Your-Type has sold hundreds of other public art signage pieces throughout the country. The WINONArts sign was the perfect partnership of business and creativity benefitting all.





# Winona's Creative Priorities

## Community Engagement

**In recognition of the important role creativity and the arts play in Winona, the City appointed a Steering Committee to guide the plan's process and development (see page 1). The Committee includes representatives from local businesses, nonprofit organizations, the universities, artists, and art educators.**

A broad cross-section of the Winona community participated in planning: elected officials and city leadership, artists of diverse disciplines and careers, culinary professionals, design professionals, arts organizations, business and tourism leaders, education leaders, and general residents. The planning process began in June 2020 and included interviews, discussion groups, Zoom meetings, a community survey, and community engagement activities. The CPG team conducted 35 stakeholder interviews, approximately 20 discussion groups, and received 835 responses to the survey. In July 2021, residents had an opportunity to engage and share their opinions in a series of community gatherings.

The results are representative of those who participate often and those who participate less often in arts and cultural events throughout all areas of the city.

### Central Questions

**What is the current state of arts, culture, and creativity in Winona?**

**What do residents want the future to be?**

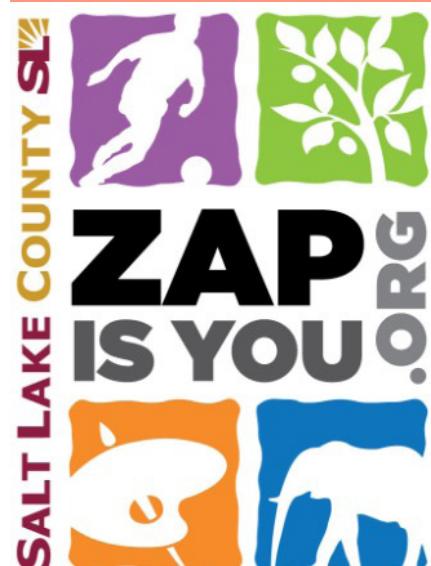
**Where are the opportunities?**

**How do we get there?**

## Inspiration

### UTAH'S ZAP ARTS TAX

Fifty Utah cities and counties, from Salt Lake to tiny rural communities, have enacted a local-option sales tax of one-tenth of a cent for arts, parks & recreation, and other cultural organizations, such as zoos and botanical gardens. Called ZAP Taxes – Zoo, Arts and Parks – they often fund construction of community and recreation centers, nonprofit arts programs, and free admissions to cultural venues and events. Each tax is approved through a voter initiative and are so popular they are almost always reauthorized with higher margins of victory.



## Winona's Defining Attributes

100+ years of arts and culture	Individual artist community	River community
Vibrant arts and culture scene	International communities	Rooted in traditional arts
The Bluffs	Museums	Sister cities (Japan and Poland)
Edgy, riverfront culture	Music scene	Small town feel
Entrepreneurial spirit	Natural environment/beauty	Social justice minded
Faith community	Performing arts	Strong community relationships
Festivals and events	Philanthropic community	Supportive City government
Higher education institutions	Pride in heritage	Technology & manufacturing industries
History	Visual and literary arts	The community and people



*Winona is an amazing confluence of arts and culture, natural environment, diverse industries, universities, and small community.*

## Key Themes

### Winona: The Place

**Winona is a unique community with a desirable quality of life**, punctuated by the outdoor recreation, the natural environmental beauty, arts and culture scene, and diverse workforce industries.

**Winona's rich history** is unique – inclusive of the Dakota, Lakota, and Sioux histories, plus historical and ongoing immigration of Polish, German, Bohemian, Hispanic, Hmong and other peoples. The building of Winona as a city along the river helped it to grow and prosper and provided lasting opportunity for the community.

**Winona is a community of entrepreneurs**, beginning with companies such as Fastenal, Watkins Spice, CodaBow, Pillbox Bat, Winona Canoe, Associated Crafts/Willet Hauser Stained Glass Studio, composite industries, and breweries. Today, the entrepreneurial spirit lives in new small businesses, creatives, and artists.

**Winona's arts and culture sector highlights a vibrant performing arts scene**, especially known for its festivals, theatre, and music performances. There is a large community of individual artists.



### Winona's Creative Vision

Here is how Winonans define success for their arts and cultural future.

#### **A wish for all Winonans to experience a rich cultural life.**

Whether they participate, attend, watch, or interact in another way, the opportunities will be broad, engaging, and inclusive. Winona exemplifies a community of inclusiveness, where all are welcome and diversity of the arts flourishes.

**Winona is enriched with a variety of arts and creative activities engaging residents in their daily lives and enhancing the experience of visitors.** Public art creates vibrant spaces and elevates the value of creativity for residents, while artists are part of the fabric of downtown and working with and in City government to celebrate the past and plan for a vibrant future.

**Enhance and celebrate Winona's character.** From revitalizing downtown to attracting and retaining residents and workers, investment in the creative economy will raise the profile of Winona for the region and the nation. Artist studios and live/workspaces bring creative vibrancy to the city. Cross-over marketing opportunities between the arts and other sectors are a draw for visitors and a benefit for residents.

**Distinct connections between organizations, sectors, and communities exist and promote success from within Winona.** Collaborations, shared resources, community-wide information on happenings, and networking create a strong community.

**Arts learning opportunities abound.** Arts education benefits all youth equitably in the community and builds the next generation of artists and arts consumers for Winona.

## Plan Definition Of Success

Here is how Winona defines success for this plan.

*A plan with agility, flexibility, and risk*

---

*A defined bold vision*

---

*Community involvement*

---

*Long-term plan for arts and creativity*

---

*Visible public art throughout the city*

---

*Preservation of arts and cultural assets  
and development of new ones*

---

*Ultimately...Winona is a place where artists/creatives  
start and nurture careers and remain here to prosper.*

---

## Survey Highlights

### Creative Participation

**Participation in creative activities community-wide is high and varied.** As expected, the participation aligns with the lifestyle and culture of the community – parks/open spaces, performing arts events, museums, and music events.

**Overall, creativity is important to all respondents**, and many think it is more important since COVID-19.

Opportunity exists to improve the ratings of creative events/activities, and to eliminate barriers to participation.

The most-cited barriers to arts and cultural participation are not hearing about activities and opportunities (45%), and the inconvenience of schedules and locations (32%).

25% of respondents say they are not interested in what is currently being offered. 17% report the cost of events is too high and 15% are not socially comfortable at events.



*44% of respondents typically participate in arts and cultural activities 12 or more times a year.*

### Participation

**Almost all respondents report participating in creative activities (pre-COVID-19). The most popular activities are:**

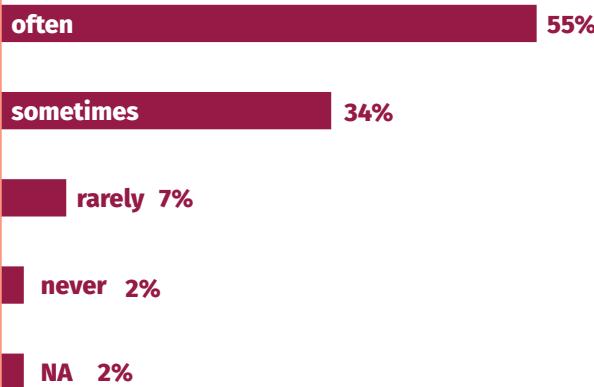
- Reading novels or poetry (54%)
- Making art (51%)
- Cooking creatively (43%)
- Making crafts (42%)
- Making music (41%)

**The most popular places respondents attended or visited (pre-COVID-19) are:**

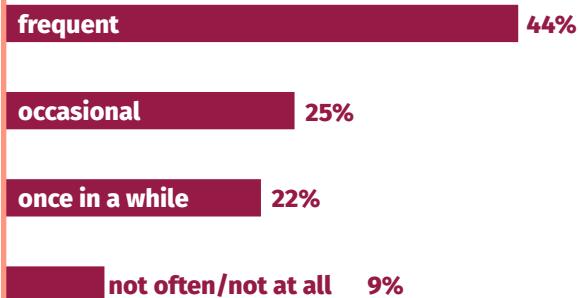
- Parks/Open Spaces (81%)
- Art/history museums (78%)
- Performing arts events (theatre, dance, opera) (65%)
- Musical festival/event (country, bluegrass, folk, rock (59%)
- Visual/arts/craft event (52%)
- Artist/creative studio or business (50%)
- Food/wine/craft beer event (850%)
- Film/video/tech event (47%)
- Musical festival/event (classical, jazz) (43%)

## Personal Participation

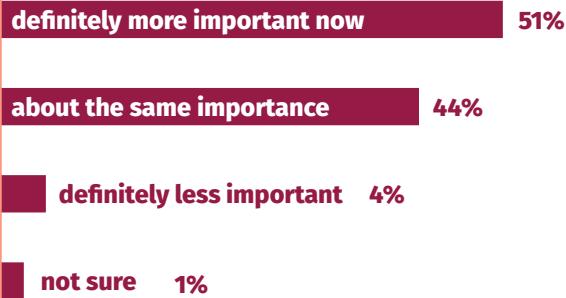
When you have friends or family visit, do you seek out arts or cultural activities to do with them?



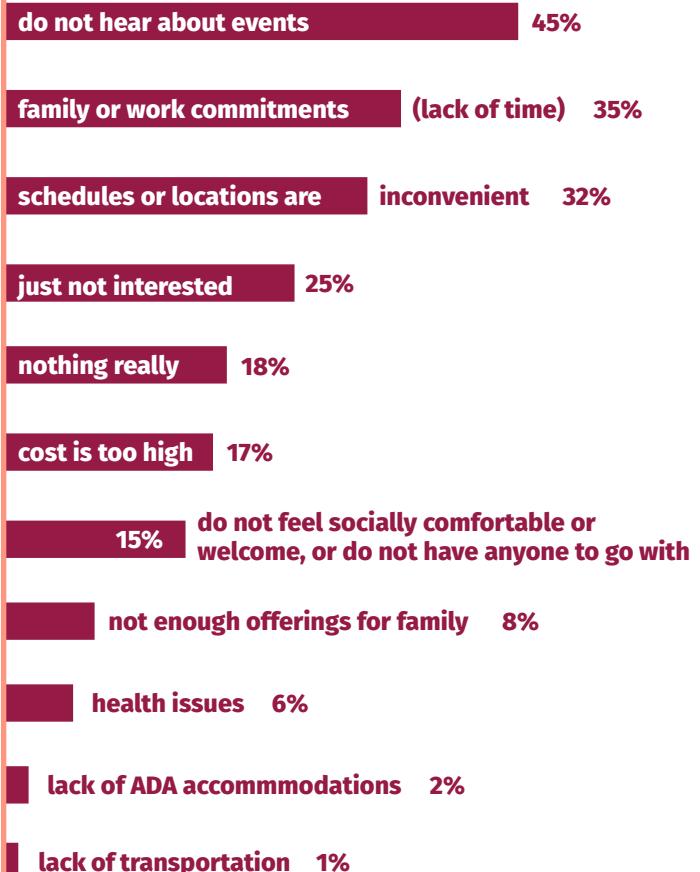
Thinking about how involved you are in arts/cultural events/activities, how would you rate your involvement?



Do you feel creative activities and opportunities are more important, about the same, or less important to you since COVID-19?



What keeps respondents from participating...



## Opportunities and Priorities

**There is significant support from respondents for creative economy initiatives** (creative careers, attracting workforce, better awareness, and information on happenings), including from those who participate less often in arts-related activities. Respondents indicate strong support for arts opportunities for youth and for supporting local artists.

The alignment of initiatives supported by respondents who are highly involved in the arts and those less involved in the arts offer significant insight for plan priorities. And, strong support for artists to work in health and wellness and on social community issues (problem-solving with artists) provides potential for unique strategies.

**Winona's artists represent diverse disciplines.** They are seeking spaces, opportunities for sales, networking, professional development, and opportunities for leadership. This aligns with insight from interviews and discussion groups.

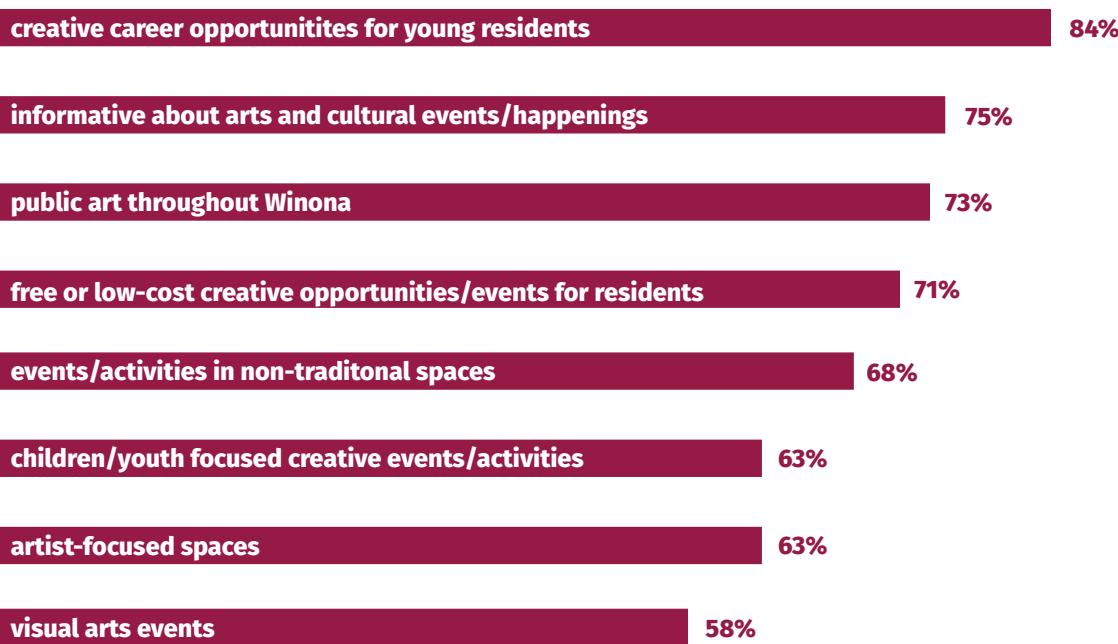
*94% of respondents consider arts and culture to be important to their community.*

*#1 priority for artists:  
More exhibition, performance,  
and sales spaces.*

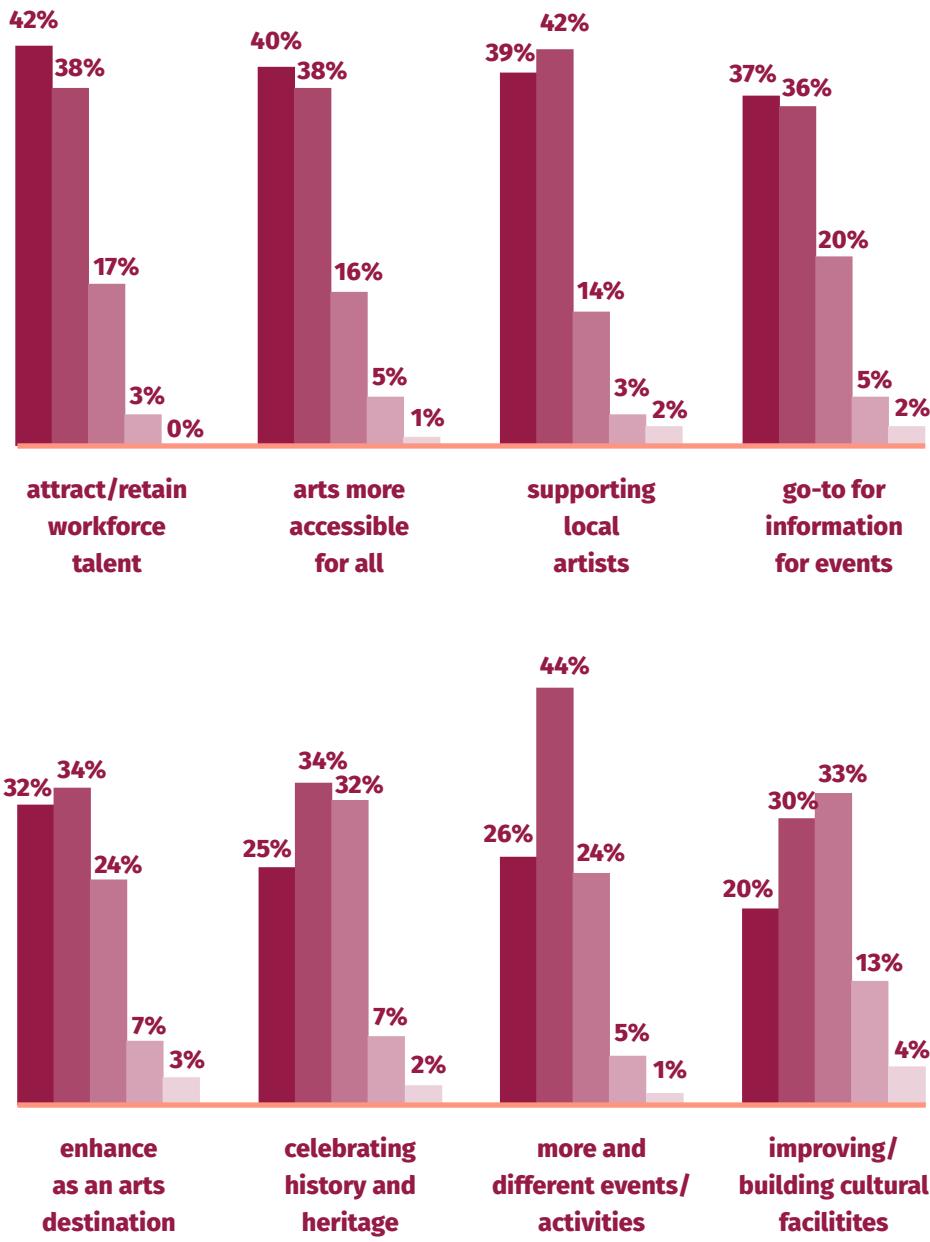
*Over 90% think using artists to address issues related to health and wellness and for social and community problem-solving is a GREAT IDEA.*

## Opportunities

### What Winona needs more of...



## Community Priorities

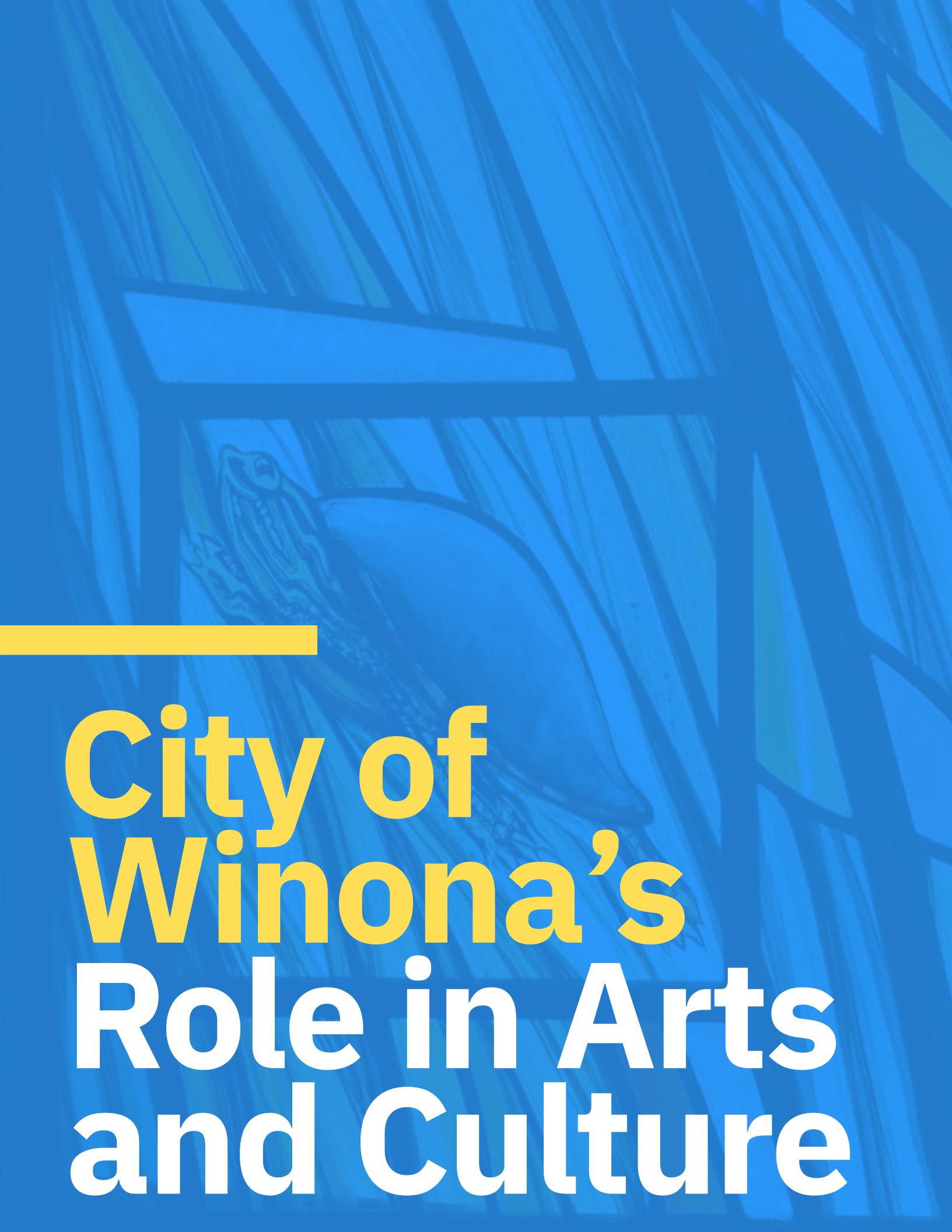


## Inspiration

### ARTISTS WORKING IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

After the long pandemic year, Grand Marais residents faced the loss of their only major highway for necessary but disruptive construction. City government brought in artist Amanda Lovelee to turn the project into something productive for the community. She interviewed residents about detours in their lives and turned their stories into a playful scavenger hunt of road signage. Artists Help Build Empathetic Infrastructure





# City of Winona's Role in Arts and Culture

## Current City Arts And Cultural Investments

The City of Winona has a long history of arts and cultural support and financial investment in its creative sector. For decades, the City has funded the Municipal Band and Fine Arts Commission, and the City has made occasional larger one-time arts allocations. City arts investments include capital projects like the Masonic Theater and Levee Park, community arts programs, organizational support, and staff. Annual ongoing operational expenses total approximately \$100,000 in the most recent year (2020/21) and capital investments exceed \$4 million over several years. There are also one-time costs for organizational support and planning of more than \$400,000. Staff supplement City investments with grants and other outside support.



### City Arts and Cultural Investments

#### Programming, Organizations and Staff (2020/21)

##### **Fine Arts Commission**

\$3,000 annual budget (grants, Creative Laureate, public art, annual awards, promotion)

##### **City Arts Programs**

\$9,000 (Poetry Walk, Sister Cities)

##### **Annual Support to Arts and Cultural Organizations**

\$5,500 - \$7,000 annual operating support (Project FINE, Polish Cultural Institute, Winona History Center)  
\$17,000 Municipal Band

##### **Staff**

\$85,000 Arts Coordinator (Salary plus benefits)  
Inkind support in the form of City staff coordination for events (Frozen River Film Festival, Great River Shakespeare Festival)

## Capital (cumulative)

### Masonic Temple Building/Masonic Theater

\$2+ million renovations to date

\$1.8 million additional renovations budgeted

### Levee Park event space

Portion of \$2.5 million park upgrade for outdoor event space

## One-time Support (2020/21)

\$65,000 Arts & Culture Strategic Plan

\$3,000 (Treedom, Midwest Music Festival)

\$372,000 Great River Shakespeare Festival start-up (over multiple past years)

# The Role Of The City

The City views its role in arts and culture as supporting the community's efforts. Given the strong economic impact of Winona's creative sector and its potential for growth, economic benefit can be one guiding policy. This will include investments with direct economic benefits, such as supporting start-up for successful festivals. Investments can also have indirect benefits, such as increasing community cultural vitality through free community events, the Fine Arts Commission and Sister Cities.

The community also believes the City's role should be to partner with the community in leadership and support of Winona's creative sector. This means, first, holding and implementing the community's vision for the arts and creative opportunities for all. It also means supporting arts organizations and creative businesses in the community to, for example, produce community cultural events, in favor of the City producing these events. The City can become a service organization, providing supports for the nonprofit arts and cultural community, individual artists and creatives, and small business assistance for creative enterprises in the community. Lastly, the City can develop public/private partnerships and access funding for compelling community purposes, such as the Masonic Temple renovation and others identified in this plan.

# Inspiration

## MURALS

Winona has embraced downtown murals and artists continue to propose new projects. Murals are a cost-effective way to jump start a public art program and enliven the cityscape with beauty and visual interest. Murals now help define a place and reflect its unique character. Murals can be in grand scale, tiny size, temporary or permanent, and can even be a festival. Minnesota cities of Mankato, Hutchinson, Stillwater, Red Wing, and Duluth have all created highly-rated and visited murals. [Minnesota's Most Memorable Murals](#)



A vibrant outdoor event at a park. In the foreground, a large white banner with the text "LEVEE PARK" in bold, sans-serif letters is mounted on a metal frame. Below the banner, a paved area is filled with people walking, talking, and looking at various displays. Several white tents are set up, and a stage with a blue and white striped canopy is visible in the background. The park is surrounded by lush green trees and a clear blue sky with scattered clouds.

# The Plan

## Vision

**Winona is a community of entrepreneurs, creative workers, artists, industrial workers, farmers, and others who are connected through their love of Winona.**

This plan represents the community vision of a wish for all Winonans to experience a rich creative life on their own terms.

## Goal Summary

### GOAL

# 01

Enhance City support systems  
for Winona's creative life.

### GOAL

# 02

Promote and grow Winona's  
creative economy.

### GOAL

# 03

Support inclusive creativity  
for all residents and visitors.

### GOAL

# 04

Expand access to creative  
sector facilities and spaces.



# Goals & Strategies



**Enhance City support systems  
for Winona's creative life.**

**The City has a long track  
record of support for  
arts and culture. This  
goal refines the role of  
the City in line with the  
community's vision – as a  
supportive partner  
in the community's  
creative efforts.**

**1.1 Refocus the City's leadership role from direct programming to service, support, and leadership of the community's efforts.**

**1.1.1** Build a partnership model with Winona's arts organizations and creative businesses to provide programming for City events and spaces.

**1.1.2** Provide support services for the creative sector, such as grants, funding information, inkind city services, communitywide marketing, and facilitation.

**1.2 Rebuild the Fine Arts Commission as the Creative Winona Commission with updated mission, qualifications, role and membership.**

**1.2.1** Commission remains advisory to City Council with a broader focus on Winona's creative sector, economic development, culture broadly-defined, and implementation of this plan.

**1.2.2** Recruit members with qualifications and experience in the arts, creative economy businesses, culinary, tourism, community leadership, and education.

**1.2.3** Ensure broad representation of the community in terms of background, cultural identity, occupations and industries.

**1.2.4** Create sub-committees for public art and cultural diversity, as a starting point.

**1.3 Establish an inaugural citywide Public Art Program.**

**1.3.1** Working with the Creative Winona Commission (Public Art Subcommittee), create inaugural public art policies and procedures to support a program that identifies community interests and supports City goals.



**1.3.2** Create an All-Winona Community Activation Program providing short-term, small-scale temporary art projects to enliven all areas of the city - downtown, neighborhoods, industrial areas - and improve blighted areas.

**1.3.3** Partner with non-arts agencies, Parks and Recreation, Community Development, and Public Works to integrate public art into the fabric of Winona's life.

**1.3.4** Consider funding strategies such as allocations of general funds and/or adoption of a percent-for-art ordinance or resolution. This can be addressed through the long-term public art master plan recommended in 1.4.

**1.3.5** Adopt an expansive definition of public art including but extending beyond outdoor sculpture and murals to include a spectrum of art projects.

**1.3.6** For City capital projects, ensure appropriate artists are part of the design team with intentional effort to integrate art at the onset of capital projects.

## **1.4 Develop a long-term public art master plan.**

**1.4.1** Work with Parks and Recreation on short-term goals and implementation of public art as part of the trail system updates (Bluff's Traverse Plan). (Cross reference 3.4)

**1.4.2** Working with a public art professional or firm, develop a long-term vision and master plan for public art in Winona inclusive of comprehensive program policies and guidelines and community vision.

**1.4.3** Consider all areas and populations of Winona, planning for neighborhoods, parks and open space, in addition to downtown.

## **1.5 Create an equitable, transparent arts grants program open to all Winona nonprofit arts and cultural organizations and artists.**

**1.5.1** Expand or replace current City Council allocations and Fine Arts Commission grants with a peer-reviewed, annual grants/funding program that aligns with best practices in arts grantmaking and complies with the State's requirements for funding through the City's budget process.

**1.5.2** Staff will administer the grants program according to adopted policies and procedures, and the Creative Winona Commission will review peer panel funding recommendations and forward to City Council for approval.

**1.5.3** Consider use of an intermediary organization to administer grants for individual artists.

**1.6 Expand the Creative Laureate program to have one or more artists work within City departments on collaborative projects.**

**1.6.1** Consider use of an artist(s) for such roles as part of the design team for facilities projects, part of the Comprehensive Plan planning team, and to enrich community engagement.

**1.6.2** Increase compensation for the Creative Laureate position to better enable his/her work in the community or in city government.

**1.7 Refocus the City Arts Office as the Office of Arts, Culture and Creative Economy.**

**1.7.1** Reorient the office to creative economy development.

**1.8 Provide staff support for implementation of this plan.**

**1.8.1** Staff support will be needed for new or expanded functions as the plan is implemented. Areas may include grant writing, marketing, public art, contracts for services, and special projects.





**Promote and grow Winona's creative economy**

**A key take-away of this plan is that Winona's creative sector helps define and drive its economic prosperity. This goal defines ways to grow the creative sector, including the nonprofit arts and cultural community, individual artists and creatives, and creative for-profit businesses. It also leverages Winona's creative sector to attract and retain talent (of all ages), keep businesses in Winona, increase local vitality, and boost tourism.**

## **2.1 Increase Winona's capacity to attract and retain creative talent.**

**2.1.1** Provide support and incentives for creative entrepreneurs/businesses (including culinary) such as tax incentives, zoning and permitting incentives, technical assistance, an incubator, and small business loans.

**2.1.2** Enhance downtown vitality throughout the year; engage Winona's creative community to program new times and places. Consider partnerships with Winona Chamber and Downtown Winona.

**2.1.3** Convene networks of creatives (artists, creative entrepreneurs, recent graduates).

**2.1.4** Explore development of an Artists' Marketplace in downtown.

## **2.2 Develop an arts and culture strategy to position Winona to attract all age groups, from college students through to retirees, to Winona.**

**2.2.1** Develop artists' live/work spaces, including mixed use projects (see 5.3).

**2.2.2** Consider the needs and interests of residents of every age group in policy and decisions around arts and cultural programming and marketing.

**2.2.3** Consider development of senior living/housing that emphasizes arts and creative activities.

**2.2.4** Consider development of affordable live and workspace for younger workers and students, including incentivizing the reuse of existing rental units and other buildings and improving the quality of current spaces.

## **2.3 Support growth in Winona's culinary sector.**

**2.3.1** Identify a community partner to convene regular meetings of chefs, restaurateurs, suppliers, farmers, investors and others to network, identify issues and opportunities for the sector, and support collective action. Ideas mentioned include increasing food truck activity, cross-promotions, and raising community awareness of restaurants and food options. [Role of Chamber, Visit Winona, Commission?]

## **2.4 Continue to promote arts and culture as an important asset for Winona.**

**2.4.1** Encourage promotion of cross-over activities combining outdoor recreation with arts and culture and incentivize development of new



cross-over activities. Build on Winona's practice of integrating arts into community events and outdoor recreation (see 3.4, below).

**2.4.2** Promote Winona's creative community as part of business attraction and retention.

**2.4.3** Partner with Visit Winona to expand cultural tourism marketing and promotion.

## **2.5 Expand arts education and lifelong learning opportunities.**

**2.5.1** Support expansion and accessibility of arts education for all ages in the community.

**2.5.2** Develop and promote a citywide directory of arts educators, resources and arts learning opportunities in partnership with the universities and schools.

**2.5.3** Convene a network of arts educators.

## **2.6 Provide accountability in implementation of this plan through regular community reports and convenings.**

**2.6.1** The Creative Winona Commission convene an annual creative sector workshop to review progress in implementation of this plan, the current situation, and potential annual priorities.

**2.6.2** Staff develop an annual workplan for implementation of this plan incorporating feedback from the creative sector and the Commission.



**Support inclusive creativity  
for all residents and visitors**

**Winona's culture is broad and includes the arts, creative entrepreneurship, heritage, parks, and the outdoors. Through this plan, Winonans expressed their desires for more arts and cultural activities throughout the year, and reflecting the broad cultural interests of all residents, workers, and visitors. This goal promotes more creative activity of all types and places the City in a partnership role.**

**3.1 Invite the creative community to develop inclusive new activities for all Winonans.**

**3.1.1** Continue and expand Live at the Levee and other inclusive community programming, using partnerships with local arts and cultural organizations and creative businesses (see 1.1).

**3.1.2** Explore expanded partnerships with Winona's Sister Cities program.

**3.2 Develop year-round arts and cultural programming.**

**3.2.1** Analyze the current availability of cultural programming and identify opportunities to fill gaps in the seasonal schedule.

**3.2.2** Partner with local arts and cultural organizations and creative businesses to provide year-round programming (see 1.1).

**3.2.3** Explore a joint project with the Heritage Preservation Commission, a "story map" of Winona.

**3.3 Develop a communitywide cultural equity and inclusion initiative.**

**3.3.1** Work with Project Fine and a task force of the new Creative Winona Commission to guide City policy and recommendations for cultural equity and inclusion.

**3.3.2** Partner with community leaders, such as diversity officers and faculty at WSU and St. Mary's, cultural community leaders, Engage Winona, and others.

**3.3.3** Develop community-based arts projects or initiatives to advance cultural equity and inclusion.

**3.3.4** Engage the City's Creative Laureate in arts projects that focus on cultural equity and inclusion.

**3.4 Incentivize cross-over activities for creative and outdoor recreation (see 2.4, above).**

**3.4.1** Partner with Winona's Parks and Recreation, outdoor recreation businesses, the Creative Laureate, and Visit Winona to identify and promote cross-over activities.

**3.4.2** Develop an arts-in-trails component of the public art program, including the Bluffs Traverse plan. (cross reference 1.6)



**Expand access to creative sector facilities and spaces.**

**Creative sector facilities and spaces are essential to success in many other recommendations in this plan. This goal supports specific existing projects, such as the former Masonic Temple, and lays a foundation for other projects to come forward from the community.**

**4.1 Complete the former Masonic Temple project as a multidisciplinary performing and visual arts center.**

**4.1.1** Develop a facility plan for the former Masonic Temple that addresses mission, programming, users, management, operating budgets, and capital improvements. Acknowledge and address the interdependence of the former Masonic Temple and Eastside Community Center projects.

**4.1.2** Consider the former Masonic as a centerpiece of Winona's downtown creative identity and placemaking (more than a facility).

**4.1.3** Complete the next phase of renovations, including HVAC replacement, so that the entire Masonic can be reopened for public use.

**4.2 Inventory and make available existing public spaces for creative activities.**

**4.2.1** Develop a space inventory and listing as a clearinghouse for users; include a description of the space, availability, and terms of use, and contact information.

**4.2.2** Consider a space subsidy program to support nonprofit and community use of spaces, including rent assistance and promotion of in-kind uses.

**4.2.3** Provide incentives for creative use of existing spaces for small-scale, low-tech and informal gigs and events (e.g., Sofar Sounds, <https://www.sofarsounds.com/about>).

**4.3 Develop live/workspaces for artists and creatives, including mixed use projects.**

**4.3.1** Explore a nonprofit development project with Minneapolis' ArtSpace or private developer.

**4.3.2** Consider a live/work project as another “calling card” promoting Winona’s creative identity and brand.

**4.3.3** Review and streamline permitting and other regulations to facilitate arts uses of existing buildings. Provide incentives to property owners/landlords for arts uses or adaptive reuse of their properties.

**4.3.4** See senior arts housing strategy 3.2.

**4.4 Develop a Creative Space Program to incentivize new facilities, spaces, and places.**

**4.4.1** Provide technical assistance to guide and strengthen facility/space projects, such as Incremental Development Alliance (<https://www.incrementaldevelopment.org>) and Nonprofit Finance Fund (<https://nff.org>).

**4.4.2** Identify incentives and/or a funding source for creative facility and space projects, large and small.



# Funding for the Plan

**The City already makes annual expenditures for arts and culture, and this plan calls for shifts in the use of that funding, emphasizing economic development and the City's role as a service organization for Winona's creative sector. A citywide plan, such as this one, not only identifies the community's vision and priorities, it also raises community expectations for new investment. It is anticipated that spending priorities for arts and culture will be based on available resources as part of the annual budgeting process.**

***The following recommendations can help guide and increase the City's arts and cultural funding.***

- Continue to invest City funds in arts, culture and creative economy initiatives.
- Continue to pursue government and private grants to support implementation of this plan.
- Explore dedicated public revenues for arts and culture.
- Consider a voters' tax initiative in collaboration with partners, such as Parks and Recreation. Voter approval is the strongest policy foundation for arts and cultural funding.
- Potential tax mechanisms include a property tax levy, sales tax, business/property improvement district, or special assessment. Refer to the Funding Models section for additional information on successful approaches in Minnesota and other states.
- Create a public/private investment fund for arts and culture.
- Explore the interests of philanthropists in implementation of this plan and identify opportunities for public/private investments/projects.
- Research the availability of state and federal funding for specific projects.
- Investigate state bond funding and other state sources.
- Explore available state funding sources to support implementation of this plan.

## Inspiration

### MINNESOTA LEGACY FUND

The State of Minnesota and many local communities throughout the US have established a dedicated arts tax through voter initiatives. Arts taxes are typically bundled with other interests, such as the environment, parks, trails, history/heritage, and recreation. This offers the strongest political and community support for municipal arts and cultural expenditures. Once established, arts taxes are almost always renewed by the voters with higher approval margins than when first passed. The Minnesota Legacy Fund is a constitutional amendment to funds arts, heritage, outdoor recreation and environmental conservation with a three-eighths of a cent sales tax.



# Implementation Plan

**Many strategies and actions will be part of a phased implementation timeline. Funding and implementation of the goals will be determined by the City and community partners.**

**Implementation of this plan can start with the following recommendations during the first two years. They combine low- and no-cost actions, requiring only an allocation of staff time, plus additional actions. They offer visible “early wins” as well as structural changes reflecting the community’s vision for the City.**

Rec. #	Action	Resources Needed
1.1	Refocus the City’s leadership role from direct programming to service, support, and leadership of the community’s efforts.	Allocation of staff time
1.2	Creative Winona Commission: rebuild the Fine Arts Commission as the Creative Winona Commission.	Allocation of staff time
1.7	Refocus the City Arts Office as a Creative Economy Office.	Allocation of staff time
3.3	Cultural equity & inclusion: establish a Commission subcommittee; research and develop policy and community initiatives.	Allocation of staff time
2.4 & 3.4	Arts/outdoor recreation: promote cross-sector arts/outdoor recreation activities; begin with staff research and planning with partners.	Allocation of staff time
2.1	Creative entrepreneurs: provide support and incentives for creative entrepreneurs/businesses (including culinary) such as tax incentives, zoning and permitting incentives, technical assistance and small business loans. Begin with review of relevant City policies and research existing technical assistance programs.	Allocation of staff time
4.5	Arts marketing to local community: expand local marketing program (master schedule, events calendar, promotions); begin with staff research and planning with partners.	\$5,000 - \$10,000

Rec. #	Action	Resources Needed
5.1	Former Masonic Temple: advance former Masonic Temple project with 1) next step in capital improvements including HVAC and 2) business plan (if relocation of Friendship Center is confirmed).	\$20,000 one-time request for business plan
2.1, 3.1, & 3.2	Public programming: grants/contracts with Winona arts and cultural producers to provide free public programming to activate downtown and fill gaps in the annual schedule of community events. Should require matching funds.	\$30,000 - \$50,000
1.3	Public art program: establish a Public Art Subcommittee. Initiate a public art program beginning with a Community Activation Program of short-term, small-scale temporary art projects downtown, in neighborhoods, and/or on trails.	\$25,000
1.6	Creative Laureate program: expand existing Creative Laureate program; consider placing artist on comp plan team, managing temporary public art projects, or other art engagement	\$20,000

