




a virtuous cycle

OF ARTS INVESTMENT IN BENTONVILLE



How investment in arts and culture at an ecosystem scale leads to a more successful Bentonville

table of CONTENTS

03 Introduction

- Purpose
- Structure
- Key Concepts
- Background
- By the Numbers
- What is an Ecosystem

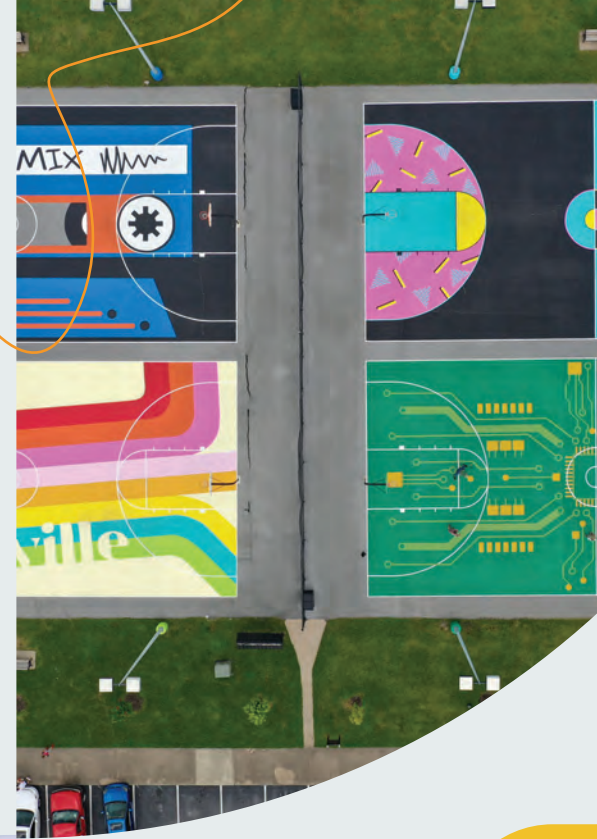
17 Vectors of Growth

- *Strengthening and Diversifying Funding*
- *Public Private Partnerships*
- *Culture Across Agencies*

25 Recommendations and Next Steps

31 Case Studies

- *Case Study: a Thriving Ecosystem in Pittsburgh*
- *Case Study: Building Capacity in Dayton*
- *Case Study: Corporate Real Estate Alliances in Indianapolis*
- *Case Study: Integrated Arts in Santa Fe*





intr*duction*n


PURPOSE

This document is intended as a shared basis of understanding about why arts and culture matter to the success of Bentonville.

While it presents multiple perspectives, it speaks directly to policymakers and other civic leaders. And it offers background, statistics, observations, and tangible recommendations that serve as a foundation for evolving municipal investment and policy.

STRUCTURE

This document comprises four interrelated parts:

- 
01. It celebrates existing accomplishments.
 02. It highlights the most promising areas for continued investment.
 03. It benchmarks against other cities.
 04. It offers specific next steps.

This presentation
will introduce
the following
KEY
CONCEPTS



Arts and culture are
key ingredients in
successful cities



Thriving arts ecosystems are
built around existing assets —
such as Bentonville's
world-class institutions



Strengthening the arts
in Bentonville creates
a virtuous cycle of
expanding the creative
economy, supporting
workforce development,
and driving tourism

A Decade of Public Art

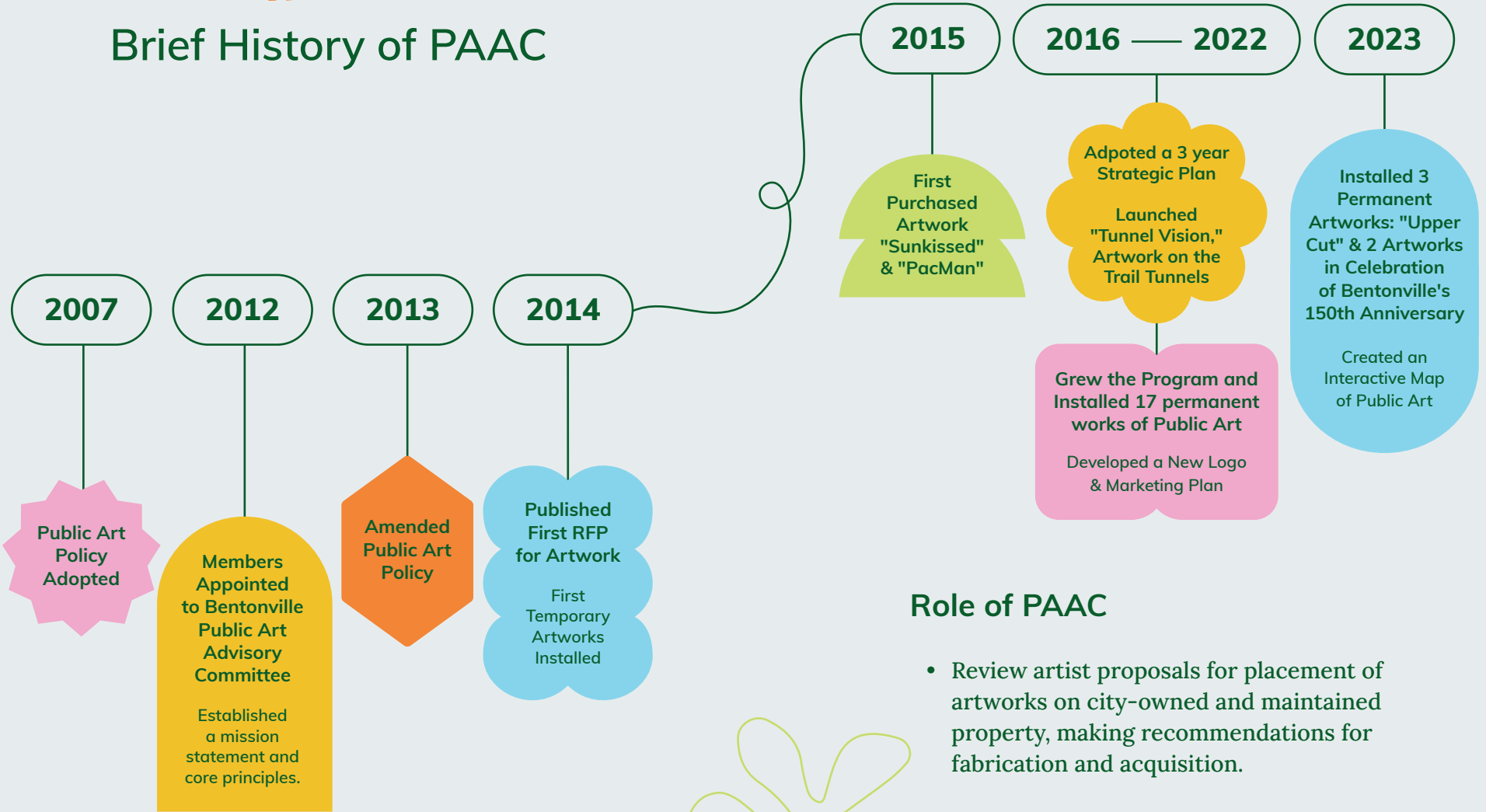
The inception of the Bentonville Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) stands as a testament to the city's rich cultural heritage and its unwavering commitment to artistic expression. Emerging from a historical lineage of fostering creativity and community engagement in NWA, the committee was established to propel the evolution of Bentonville's public art landscape. Recognizing the profound impact of art on urban aesthetics and social connection, the committee's mission revolves around the expansion of the city's public art program through innovative strategies. By forging symbiotic alliances with external entities, harnessing the potential of grant opportunities, pioneering models of public-private collaboration, and embarking on an ambitious public information campaign, the committee aspires to infuse Bentonville's streets with captivating narratives and vibrant conversations, making art an accessible and integral facet of its identity.



Founding PAAC members
on a site tour

Timeline

Brief History of PAAC



Role of PAAC

- Review artist proposals for placement of artworks on city-owned and maintained property, making recommendations for fabrication and acquisition.
- Serve as a jury for artwork competitions, making recommendations of finalists to the City Council.
- Provide technical advisement to staff to develop a public art program.



Foundation for the Future

Current areas of strength —
and strategic opportunities
to build upon them.

Bentonville has gained an international reputation as home for the arts. Through world-class anchor institutions, municipal programs, and other strategic investments, Bentonville has already built key components of a creative ecosystem.

To leverage these assets towards building a sustainable and thriving ecosystem, Bentonville needs to make thoughtful investments for the future.



Current 2023 PAAC
Members celebrating a
new artwork installation

Support for Arts and Culture among Americans

Across the US, people overwhelmingly support the arts — and are drawn to places that feature strong arts, culture, and creative economies. Most Americans even factor the arts in their relocation decisions.

50%+

- Half of people with college degrees (49%) and a majority of Millennials (52%) and Generation Xs (54%) say they would strongly consider whether a community is rich in the arts when deciding where to locate for a job.¹

82%

- of Americans believe arts & culture are important to local businesses and the economy.²
- According to the National Endowment for the Arts, “each \$1 in federal arts funds leverages another \$9 from other public and private sources.”³

58%

- The majority of Americans support municipal and state investment into the arts, according to NAFTA.⁴

6.9%

- A study of 26 communities across the United States found a strong correlation between “Community Attachment” — defined by cultural character — and local GDP growth. Those communities where “attachment” is strongest have experienced GDP increase of up to 6.9%.⁵

¹Why Public art Matters, American for the Arts (https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/PublicArtNetwork_GreenPaper.pdf)

²ARTS PROSPERITY 5, Americans for the Arts(https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/aep5/PDF_Files/ARTS_AEPsummary_loRes.pdf)

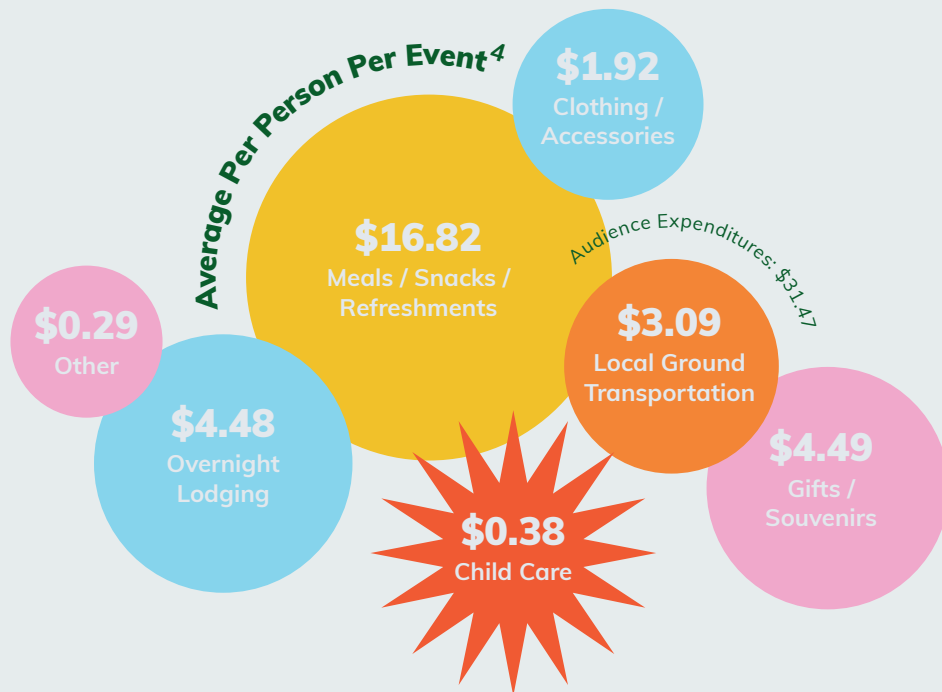
³Why Government Should Invest in the Arts (<https://www.delawareartsalliance.org/government-funding-arts/>)

⁴Americans for the Arts, “Americans Speak Out about the Arts: An In-Depth Look at Perceptions and Attitudes about the Arts in America,” 2016, pp. 42, 45, (<https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/reports-and-data/legislation-policy/naappd/americans-speak-out-about-the-arts-an-in-depth-look-at-perceptions-and-attitudes-about-the-arts-in>)

⁵ Knight Soul of the Community 2010, “Why People Love Where They Live and Why it Matters: A National Perspective” (<https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/SoulCommunity2010.pdf>)

Impact of Arts and Culture on Tourism

Bentonville has already captured global attention with its cultural offerings. This sector will continue to grow in the coming years, with revenues re-invested into the local creative economy.



The Average Audience Expenditure Does Not Include Cost of Admission

68%

- More than two-thirds of travelers included a cultural, arts, heritage, or historic activity or event while on a trip – this equates to 116 million cultural travelers.¹

\$52.42 Billion

- The global art tourism market is estimated to grow to more than \$52 Billion by 2032, from \$43 Billion in 2022.²

5.6 Million

- Crystal Bridges welcomed millions of visitors from all fifty states and abroad in its first 10 years. Another 4 million visitors enjoyed the surrounding grounds and public art.³

¹Americans for the Arts, “Arts & Economic Prosperity 5: The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts & Cultural Organizations & their Audiences,” (https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/aep5/PDF_Files/ARTS_AEPsummary_loRes.pdf)

² Future Marketing Insights, “Art Tourism Market Overview (2022-2023),” (<https://www.futuremarketinsights.com/reports/art-tourism-sector-outlook>)

³Crystal Bridges, “10 Years of Meaningful Memories,” (<https://crystalbridges.org/10-years-of-meaningful-memories/>)

⁴ “Arts & Economic Prosperity 5: How the Nonprofit Arts & Culture Industry Impacts the Economy in Your Community,” (<https://www.americansforthearts.org/2019/05/15/arts-economic-prosperity-5-how-the-nonprofit-arts-culture-industry-impacts-the-economy-in-your>)

Positioning Arts and Culture in Arkansas

Arts and cultural activity in Arkansas accounts for a substantial portion of the overall economy, employment, and income. State and municipal government have a direct stake in the success of this economic sector.

\$3 Billion

- The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that arts and cultural production accounts for \$2,999,510,000 and 2.0% of the Arkansas economy, contributing 30,893 jobs.¹

27k

- The creative industry in Arkansas employs nearly 27,000 individuals and generates \$927 million in personal income for Arkansas citizens.²

#3

- The creative economy in the State of Arkansas is the third largest employer statewide, after logistics and perishable and processed foods.³

¹ National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, “Creative Economy State Profiles - State Arts and Cultural Production 2021: Arkansas (https://nasaa-arts.org/nasaa_research/creative-economy-state-profiles/)

² National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, “Arts & the Economy: Using Arts and Culture to Stimulate State Economic Development,” (https://www.nga.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/0901arts_economy_nga.pdf)

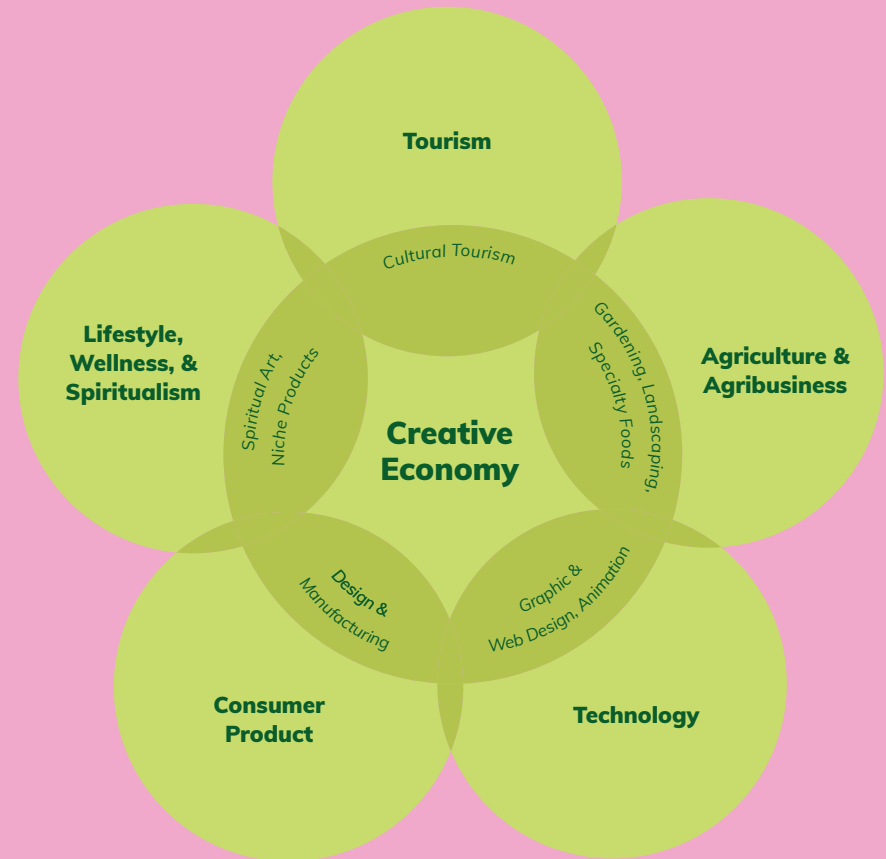
³ Ibid, (https://www.nga.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/0901arts_economy_nga.pdf)

Integrating Arts and Culture across industry sectors

Collaboration with other sectors, such as tourism, urban planning, and economic development, can help build a strong arts ecosystem. For example, integrating art into urban revitalization projects, including public art in urban design, or incorporating art in corporate spaces can foster a symbiotic relationship between the arts and other sectors.¹

Arkansas Creative Economy Connections

A variety of cultural industries and occupations contribute to state vitality, as illustrated by this diagram of Arkansas' creative economy.²



¹“Creating Healthy Communities Through Cross-Sector Collaboration,” (https://arts.ufl.edu/site/assets/files/174533/uf_chc_whitepaper_2019.pdf)

² Image Credit: Economy: Using Arts and Culture to Stimulate State Economic Development,” (https://www.nga.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/0901arts_economy_nga.pdf)

Thriving arts ecosystems are built 🏠 around existing assets — such 🏠 as Bentonville's world 🪐 -class institutions



What is a thriving arts ecosystem?

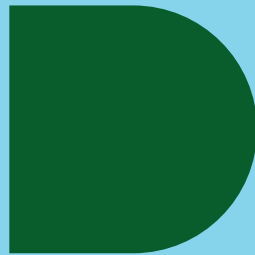
In thriving arts ecosystems, institutional strengths are complemented at multiple layers of public and private support, such as:



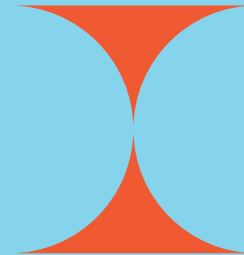
community arts



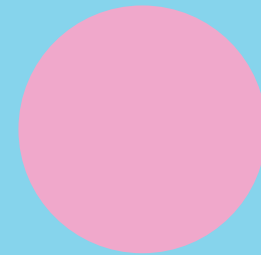
individual arts practitioners



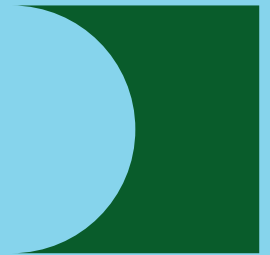
arts education



public arts and culture



private real estate



philanthropy and individual support

The necessary  role of municipal government is to *stimulate*  and *sustain* arts  and creativity for all residents and communities.

Through investing in vibrant and varied cultural programming; elevating local traditions, rituals, and cultural practices; and supporting the livelihoods of artists and artisans, municipal government is a key agent in local creative ecosystems. Rather than amassing showpiece art collections—the way private institutions might—the **work of municipal agencies is to foster a civic ecosystem, including wellness, foodways, performance, folk art, and other forms of creative expression.** Ultimately, municipal art and creative investments contribute to public life and sense of belonging.





**vectors of
growth?**

VECTOR 1




Strengthening and
Diversifying Funding

VECTOR 2

Encouraging Public
Private Partnerships

VECTOR 3

Integrating Culture
Across Agencies

Bentonville already has a  long-standing municipal public art program. Using more dedicated funds from real estate  and tourism revenues can greatly expand that program and  support more local talent.





A public investment of \$200k leveraged nearly 💰 \$500k in public art spending

Over the past decade, the Bentonville Public Art Advisory Committee, along with Visit Bentonville, totalling some \$216k sparked additional corporate sponsorships, institutional gifts, and private donations that more than doubled the total public art spend.

¹Source: Visit Bentonville.

Private 🍌 collections in Bentonville — such as those at Ledger and the 21c Hotel — provide public access to the arts. With greater encouragement 🌸 and a dedicated curatorial body, more private investment can flow into the creative 🌀 ecosystem.





“As a private developer, we recognize the value of high-quality art. It not only makes our building stand out, but also is a strong differentiator for Bentonville.”

– Mary Best
Director of Operations, Ledger Bentonville

Bentonville is already investing in 🌸 public infrastructure such as the Quilt of Parks.

By creating 🖐️ a dedicated city position for cultural activation and programming, Bentonville can take full 🌈 advantage of the opportunity offered by multiple public spaces — in 🌲 parks and beyond — to create cultural belonging.



Bentonville is making an important commitment to integrating ✨ arts and culture in city agencies with the hire of a new ✅ Community Events Manager in Bentonville Parks and 🌲 Recreation.





rec🌸ommendations

Recommendation:

Set the table for public-private partnerships.

Initiate a standing task force, including real estate developers, institutions, and government agencies, around shared priorities in arts and culture.

Across Northwest Arkansas, municipalities are using cultural plans to build coalitions among public and private sector entities. These coalitions can take the form of permanent committees, goal-oriented task forces, or independent entities such as Arts and Business Councils.

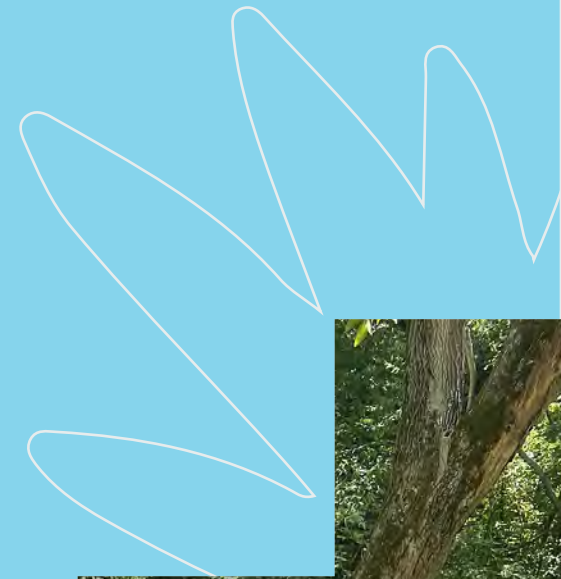


Recommendation:

Invest in a dedicated visual and editorial identity for arts and culture.

Engage a branding partner to develop an identity for arts and culture that can be shared by multiple parties, such as city agencies and Visit Bentonville. An identity might include a suite of assets including photography, statistics, boilerplate language, and other resources for marketers.

An integrated arts and culture brand can help Bentonville build its reputation as a vibrant, attractive city. A toolkit of shared assets — including photography, statistics, and editorial language, can help multiple marketing voices align on a similar message.

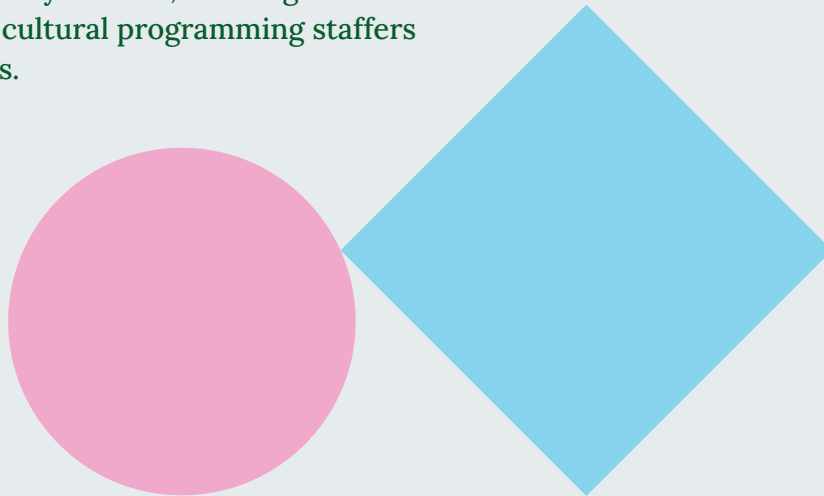


Recommendation:

Strengthen internal capacity within the City of Bentonville.

Explore integrating an arts-and-culture position, role, or department into the municipal infrastructure.

Bentonville has already committed to adding cultural programming staff to its parks department. This is a strong beginning. Across the region, other municipalities are likewise strengthening their capacity with dedicated arts and culture positions, including a director role in Fayetteville, a manager role in Rogers, and two cultural programming staffers in Siloam Springs.



Recommendation:

Draft a comprehensive cultural plan for the City.

Through identifying cultural assets and gaps, convening diverse stakeholders, and aligning on priorities, a planning process will result in a shared roadmap for arts and culture in Bentonville.

Cultural planning is a challenging and rewarding process. It can highlight strengths and reveal areas of tension. Ultimately, by conducting a cultural planning effort, Bentonville stands to gain a common vision for the creative sector in the city, and a clear roadmap for moving towards that vision.





Public Sphere Projects, a placemaking consultancy, led content development for this report. Bentonville-based Millie Cooper Photography was responsible for graphic design. CACHE's Lucas Cowan oversaw the project.

Acknowledgements

This document represents a joint effort between the City of Bentonville and Creative Arkansas Community Hub and Exchange (CACHE). The idea for a vibrant document that highlights public art investment in Bentonville and offers a trajectory into the future was first brought up as part of the Municipal Arts Alliance — a program that convenes city leaders around shared cultural agendas. In addition to the City of Bentonville, Visit Bentonville and the Public Art Advisory Committee contributed data, feedback, and energy.

Funding for the Municipal Arts Alliance is provided by the Walmart Foundation with additional support from the Walton Family Foundation and municipal contributions.





case studies



In Pittsburgh, PA, a complete and complementary ecosystem matches municipal 💰 investments with 🏠 real estate incentives, institutional collections, and scaffolding 🌉 for individual artists.



In the early 2000s, Pittsburgh was struggling with population decline and a sluggish economy. To revitalize the city, municipal leaders partnered with developers to create a series of tax incentives and grants to encourage the renovation and reuse of historic buildings in the city's downtown area.

At the same time, the city invested in its cultural institutions, including the Carnegie Museums of Art and Natural History, the Andy Warhol Museum,

and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. These institutions not only served as anchors for the city's arts scene but also became important partners in the revitalization effort.

To further support the city's artists, the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust established the "Space Program," a program that provided subsidized studio space to emerging artists in the city's downtown area. The Trust also established the "Gallery Crawl," a quarterly event

that showcases the work of local artists in galleries and storefronts throughout the city. The result of these investments and initiatives has been a thriving arts scene in Pittsburgh, with a growing number of artists and creative professionals flocking to the city. Today, Pittsburgh is known for its vibrant arts community and has been recognized as one of the top cities in the country for the arts.

By pairing municipal investments, real estate

incentives, and individual artist scaffolding with institutional collections, Pittsburgh has been able to create a vibrant and sustainable arts scene that has helped revitalize the city and make it a more attractive place to live and work.

Dayton, Ohio,  built capacity in its municipal arts program by developing dedicated, sustainable  revenue streams and by fostering a strong base of community  support.



Recognizing the importance of the arts in promoting cultural vibrancy and economic growth, Dayton embarked on an innovative strategy to secure consistent funding for its arts initiatives. The city established partnerships with local businesses, foundations, and philanthropic organizations, leveraging their support to create a robust grant program specifically designed to fund arts projects and organizations. Additionally, Dayton implemented a small surcharge on certain city services, such as event tickets and hotel stays, directing a portion of the proceeds to the municipal arts program. These diversified revenue sources have not only ensured a stable funding base but have also allowed for continued growth and expansion of the arts program. Furthermore, Dayton has actively engaged with the community, involving residents, artists, and cultural organizations in decision-making processes and fostering a sense of ownership and pride. Through town hall meetings, public forums, and collaborations with community groups, the city

has built a strong network of advocates who actively champion the arts. This grassroots support has not only provided a solid foundation for sustained funding but has also helped generate enthusiasm and participation in various arts events and initiatives. By combining dedicated revenue streams and community support, Dayton, Ohio, has successfully built capacity in its municipal arts program, creating a thriving cultural landscape that enriches the lives of its residents and visitors alike.



In Indianapolis, IN, a creative partnership  between city government and a corporation are yielding extraordinary results — from providing a new form of expression  for artist to enlivening commercial corridors

The Murals with Jiffy Lube project, in collaboration with the Indy Arts Council, is a public art initiative that seeks to bring colorful and creative murals to the streets of Indianapolis. This project showcases the talent of local artists and creates vibrant, eye-catching pieces that add character and charm to the city's urban landscape. The murals, which are painted on the exterior walls of Jiffy Lube service centers, feature a diverse range of styles and subject matter, from abstract designs to realistic portraits, and often reflect the local community's culture and history. The Murals with Jiffy Lube project is a wonderful example of how public art can bring communities together and enliven public spaces, creating a sense of pride and identity in the places we call home. The murals collectively serve to further Jiffy Lube's mission of “growing people through work” as well as beautify the commercial corridors on which the stores reside, and create a sense of place and identity.



By integrating arts and culture throughout its municipal streams of work — from tourism to recreation to parks — the City of Santa Fe has made its cultural heritage the centerpiece of the city's identity.

The city of Santa Fe, New Mexico has created a program aimed at making the public feel a sense of cultural belonging through the arts. Known as the "Culture Connects Santa Fe" initiative, the program seeks to bring together diverse communities within the city through shared artistic experiences. Culture Connects Santa Fe supports a variety of arts-related projects, from public murals and installations to festivals and performances, that celebrate the city's rich cultural heritage and encourage dialogue and understanding between different groups. The program has also established a number of partnerships with local organizations and institutions, such as museums and community centers, to expand access to the arts and to provide opportunities for people from all walks of life to engage with the city's cultural offerings. Through Culture Connects Santa Fe, the city has been able to foster a greater sense of community and shared identity among its residents, while also promoting Santa Fe's unique cultural heritage to visitors from around the world.

