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MANCHESTER

MANCHESTER WORKING PLAN



*Initial steps for
implementing the
Washtenaw County
Cultural Master
Plan in the
MANCHESTER Area*

ArtsAlliance

Arts, culture, and creativity are among the core elements that make Washtenaw County a special place. Look at any of the “best of” awards that the communities in this county regularly win and there’ll doubtlessly be listed a reference to the area’s high quality of life, with its arts and cultural assets typically highlighted.

Arts and culture have a long history in Washtenaw County. This longevity and the lively appearance of the arts and cultural community, however, mask the true fragility of this sector. Peer behind the polished facades of many arts and cultural organizations or talk to the artists practicing their craft here and you’ll find a vulnerable industry struggling to survive.

The Washtenaw County Cultural Master Plan is a response to that challenge.

Cultural Plan Background Information



The Washtenaw County Cultural Master Plan is the result of an 18-month, community-based planning effort that emphasized the participation of cultural, educational, civic, business, and government representatives from each of the county’s key population centers: Ann Arbor, Chelsea, Dexter, Manchester, Milan, Saline, and Ypsilanti.

The plan reflects the direct input of nearly 5,000 Washtenaw County residents as captured in an online survey, an artists’ census, a study of the area’s creative economy, and in 29 interviews and community forums.

From the master plan, each population center has worked to customize the plan to its own local needs and interests.

The Manchester Area Working Plan is a local response to this county-wide challenge.

The overall planning process has been coordinated by the Arts Alliance, an organization serving the arts and cultural sector of Washtenaw County.

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LOCAL PROCESS



**Manchester Farmers
Market & Mill**

The Arts Alliance partnered with its Manchester Community Leaders, Ken Kozora, musician, and Mark Palms of the Riverfolk Music and Arts Festival, to arrange three public meetings in Manchester to discuss the future of arts and culture in the local community. Manchester area residents participated in each of these meetings. As part of these discussions, more than 20 Manchester residents identified the key strategic areas from the Washtenaw County Cultural Master Plan that their community needed to address. They then developed and prioritized specific action steps, identified key implementation partners, discussed next steps, created a time line, and detailed measures of success for their community over the course of the next five years.

The six strategic areas in the Washtenaw County Cultural Master Plan include:

- Lifelong Arts and Education
- Creative Economic Development
- Capacity Building, Funding, and Investment
- Communications, Audience Development, and Advocacy
- Cultural Facilities
- Diversity and Access

Manchester area residents decided to focus on the following strategic areas in Manchester:

- Communications, Audience Development and Advocacy,
- Capacity Building, Funding and Investment, and
- Cultural Facilities

The group identified specific recommendations to address each of these strategic areas.



**Halloween
Apple Tradition**

Community leaders understand that the future growth and success of the county is inextricably tied to the health and well-being of arts and culture that contribute to the area's quality of place. In a true collaborative effort, these leaders along with hundreds of grassroots individuals, have played and will continue to play a critical role in identifying the challenges outlined in the Washtenaw County Cultural Master Plan and Manchester Area Working Plan and will continue to help develop the recommended actions.

MANCHESTER PRIORITY ACTIONS

Recommendations for Communications, Audience Development and Advocacy

Communications, Audience Development and Advocacy Vision Statement

To communicate the value of arts and culture to area residents, public officials, and visitors in a way that engages them and increases their awareness and understanding.

To foster a sense of creative community amongst cultural organizations and individual artists where communication can exist through media outlets, gathering spaces, and affinity groups.

To create an environment where all potential and current audience members feel welcome, comfortable, and invited to produce, support, and participate in arts and cultural experiences.

*-Vision statement taken from
Washtenaw County Cultural
Master Plan*

- **Increase arts and cultural media coverage in Manchester (local and non-resident markets).**

What? Strong partnerships will exist between artists, arts and cultural organizations, and the local media in Manchester. There will be strong arts and cultural media coverage and arts and cultural awareness will increase in Manchester. Arts and cultural articles will be archived in a centralized location and a seamless process will exist to connect the arts and cultural sector with the media.

Why? The future of print media in the County is undergoing rapid changes, and as a result, there is a need to ensure that the arts and cultural sector in Manchester will continue to receive strong coverage. A reduction to arts and cultural coverage will impact the livelihood of local community, the attendance of local events and programs, and will make it harder for artists and arts and cultural organizations to generate income.

- **Create a centralized place for communications resources (media lists, sample press releases, media tips...etc.)**

What? Communications resources, including sample press releases, media tips and media contacts, will be available in a centralized location and utilized by the arts and cultural sector. Collaborations will exist with the Arts Alliance and with other organizations to collect and distribute this information. Increased access to communications resources will increase the quality and quantity of arts and cultural media coverage in Manchester.

Why? While it is easy to find communications resources online, it is often overwhelming and time consuming to determine which resources are the most relevant for use by the arts and cultural sector. Artists and arts and cultural organizations in Manchester could benefit from having communications resources available in one location. A centralized resource will strengthen the communications efforts of the arts and cultural sector in Manchester, and help ensure better media coverage.

- **Create an inventory of arts and cultural organizations, artists, and venues in Manchester**

What? A list of arts and cultural organizations, artists, and venues in Manchester is completed and updated on a regular basis. The list is available online and offline. As a result of this inventory, there is an increased awareness of and visibility for the arts and cultural assets of Manchester.

Why? A system to connect artists, organizations, and venues is not in place. Artists often do not know where to access information about available venues or how to connect with each other and arts and cultural organizations. Arts and cultural organizations are not always aware of the artists and other organizations that are located in the Manchester area.

- **Increase collaborations and partnerships between arts and cultural organizations and other entities.**

What? Increased collaborations, partnerships, and communications exist between arts and cultural organizations and other Manchester entities. In the current economic climate, it is important to leverage collaborations and partnerships in order to build a stronger arts and cultural community in the Manchester area. These collaborations and partnerships spur the engagement of new audiences and help drive business to the downtown area of Manchester.

Why? Arts and cultural organizations are not always aware of the opportunities that are available to them and how they can partner with entities inside and outside of Manchester. It is necessary for the arts and cultural community in Manchester to more proactively seek opportunities to partner and collaborate with other entities.

- **Develop a campaign to communicate the value of the creative sector in Manchester.**

What? The creative sector in Manchester is valued and appreciated by residents and non-residents alike. The Manchester area is known for its unique and authentic arts and cultural events and activities and attracts new audiences and volunteers. There is increased arts and cultural activity in the downtown area.

Why? It is difficult to communicate the value of the creative sector, although necessary to keep the sector alive and thriving. Manchester is home to numerous arts and cultural activities that cannot be found elsewhere in the County. Many Manchester area residents already recognize the value and significance of the village's arts and cultural offerings and their impact on the local economy. It is

necessary to extend this recognition to additional residents and non-residents.

- **Strategize ways to use the "Chicken Broil" brand to attract more visitors and drive business to the downtown area.**

What? The Chicken Broil grows in significance as artists become involved in producing chicken-related arts activities, such as a parade or downtown installation. Attendance at the Chicken Broil grows and Manchester gains recognition as a creative place.

Why? The Chicken Broil is a unique and authentic event that is synonymous with Manchester in the minds of many. The cultural sector can build on this brand to capture attention for itself while at the same time drawing new audiences to the Chicken Broil and downtown Manchester.



Manchester Chicken Broil

Recommendation for Capacity Building, Funding and Investment

Capacity Building, Funding and Investment Vision Statement

To envision a publicly and privately financed fund that exists in perpetuity to support a stable, vibrant arts and cultural environment that will contribute to the economic and personal well-being of Washtenaw County residents, workers, and visitors.

—Vision statement taken from Washtenaw County Cultural Master Plan

- **Establish a group of volunteers / "Manchester Artists Guild" to help with event planning, building relationships for potential collaborations and partnerships, and to implement this plan's recommendations.**

What? A dedicated group or guild of Manchester volunteers will be responsible for the implementation of the Manchester cultural plan. This group or guild will meet regularly to discuss potential partners, gather information and research, and discuss next steps and planning efforts. It will be this group's responsibility to ensure that the plan's recommendations are implemented effectively.

Why? A coordinated group or guild responsible for administering and ensuring that the recommendations of the Manchester cultural plan are implemented does not exist. Without having a designated group or guild charged with implementing the plan's recommendations, the work may not be completed in a timely fashion or at all. Riverfolk Music and Arts Festival could be an important resource for this undertaking.

Recommendations for Cultural Facilities

Cultural Facilities Vision Statement

To provide better access to new and existing facilities (both arts and non-arts facilities and empty buildings); to enable artists to pursue their craft at all levels; and enable arts and cultural organizations to fulfill their missions in a stable and resource-efficient environment.

-Vision statement taken from Washtenaw County Cultural Master Plan

- **Develop a list of what spaces and venues are available to artists and arts and cultural organizations.**

What? New and existing spaces and facilities in Manchester will be utilized by artists, arts and cultural organizations, creative businesses and the community for arts and cultural purposes. A centralized list of the spaces and venues that are available, along with detailed information pertaining to the space will be available. Lively use of space will attract residents and visitors to Manchester and spur economic activity in the downtown area.

Why? A list of the spaces and buildings that can be used for arts and cultural purposes in Manchester is not currently available. The Manchester area is scattered with vacant store fronts and available space that could be utilized by the creative sector. Currently, artists, arts and cultural organizations, and creative businesses are not aware of the spaces and venues that exist that are available for use.

- **Survey area artists to determine their level of interest in participating in a shared local arts space.**

What? A list of available spaces and venues for arts and cultural purposes will be established and a consensus will be reached on whether or not it is necessary to have a local arts space specifically designed to meet the needs of Manchester area artists. Artists and other creative individuals will be surveyed about their needs and interests, and a decision on how to best move forward will be established based on the feedback.

Why? A handful of artists have expressed an interest in having a shared local arts space in Manchester. However, it is not known if substantial interest in such space exists, and if so, what type of facility and amenities would be needed. More research is necessary to determine next steps.



Downtown Manchester Area

Recommendation	Implementation Partners	Start Date	First Steps	Resources
Communications, Audience Development and Advocacy				
Increase arts and cultural media coverage in Manchester (local and non-resident markets)	Riverfolk, Library, Media	Near term: 6 -12 months	Develop partnerships between artists, community, writers and media; develop a template/questionnaire; define next steps to having articles printed & archived	Arts Alliance, library
Create a centralized place for communications resources (media lists, sample press releases, media tips...etc.)	Arts Alliance, media	Near term: 6 -12 months	Determine what resources are most needed and what resources are currently available on other sites; collaborate with the Arts Alliance as they develop county-wide website	Arts Alliance, NEW, library, other resources
Create an inventory of arts and cultural organizations, artists, and venues in Manchester	Arts Alliance, village, arts & cultural organizations; chamber	Near term: 6 -12 months	Create a complete list of organizations, artists and venues that are in town and identify what they do; (medium term) identify shared services and/or resources that are available	Arts Alliance, Artists' Census data, Creative Connections
Increase collaborations and partnerships between arts and cultural organizations and other entities	Library, DDA, arts and cultural organizations, village, Riverfolk	Near/Medium term: 6 months - 3 years	Establish a centralized location/point for information and opportunities to be found; increase communications between groups/individuals; incorporate music/art into Farmers market or another event (Artisan market)	Arts Alliance, Howell Chamber of Commerce (Farmers Market)

Recommendation	Implementation Partners	Start Date	First Steps	Resources
Develop a campaign to communicate the value of the creative sector in Manchester	Arts and cultural organizations, Ann Arbor Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, village, library, Chamber	Near/Medium term: 6 months - 3 years	Near term: Partner with the Library to highlight local artists and assist with "Creativity" summer reading program; Medium term: Partner with local businesses to display artwork from local artists of all ages in downtown storefronts; incorporate art in existing events	Arts Alliance, arts and cultural organizations, Ann Arbor Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, Chamber
Strategize ways to use the "Chicken Broil" brand to attract more visitors and drive business to the downtown area	Riverfolk, Wild Acorn, village, schools, library, Manchester Chicken Broil volunteers	Near/Medium term: 6 months - 3 years	Brainstorm ways to incorporate the "chicken" into upcoming events, public art, calls for artists and the marketing of Manchester; implement 'chicken' component to Riverfolk Festival	Riverfolk, local creative talent, library, DDA
Capacity Building				
Establish a group of volunteers / "Manchester Artists Guild" to help with event planning, building relationships for potential collaborations and partnerships, and to implement the plan's recommendations	Riverfolk, village	Near/Medium term: 6 months - 3 years	Determine who should be involved in process and arrange meetings. Approach interested parties and invite them to participate.	Arts Alliance, other population centers in the county, library, schools
Cultural Facilities				
Develop a list of what spaces and venues are available to artists and arts and cultural organizations	DDA, Village	Near/Medium term: 6 months - 3 years	Determine what spaces are currently available and develop a comprehensive list to be circulated and available	DDA, Village, local businesses
Survey area artists to determine their level of interest in participating in a shared local arts space	Riverfolk, Library, Village	Medium term: 1 - 3 years	Determine what spaces are available and what community artists' needs exist	DDA, Village, other communities

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT ARTS AND CULTURE IN WASHTENAW COUNTY

Arts and culture are important to the quality of life and well being of Washtenaw County. This fact was well documented in the data collected to create the Washtenaw County Cultural Master Plan.¹ The following provides highlights of what we know about arts and culture in Washtenaw County and comes from the information gathered in the cultural plan's online survey, focus groups, artists' census, and creative economy analysis.

People in Washtenaw County Value Arts and Culture

- 63% said arts and cultural programs were very important to their choice to live in Washtenaw County.
- 75% said that business support for arts and culture made a difference when they chose what businesses to patronize.

Many Businesses Recognize the Value of Arts and Culture to the Bottom Line

- 63% said that access to arts and culture was important in their decision to locate or keep their businesses in Washtenaw County.
- 57% thought access to arts and cultural programs was important in helping to recruit and retain qualified workers.

The Creative Sector Plays a Distinct Role in the County's Economy

- 4.6% of the county's total workforce works in the creative economy.
- 10% of the county's total payroll is generated by the creative economy.
- 823 students from the University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University earned degrees related to the creative economy in 2007.

The Quality of Our Cultural Offerings is Generally High, but not Everyone has Access to Them

- 88% were satisfied with the quality of arts, heritage, and interpretive science programs in their community.
- 66% felt that good science and arts education is not equally available to students throughout the county.

Artists (visual, performing, and literary) are a Significant Force in Washtenaw County

- 2,530 individuals responded to the Artists' Census and were classified as *Washtenaw County Artists*. Of these, 1,173 individuals satisfied criteria and were identified as *Working Artists*.

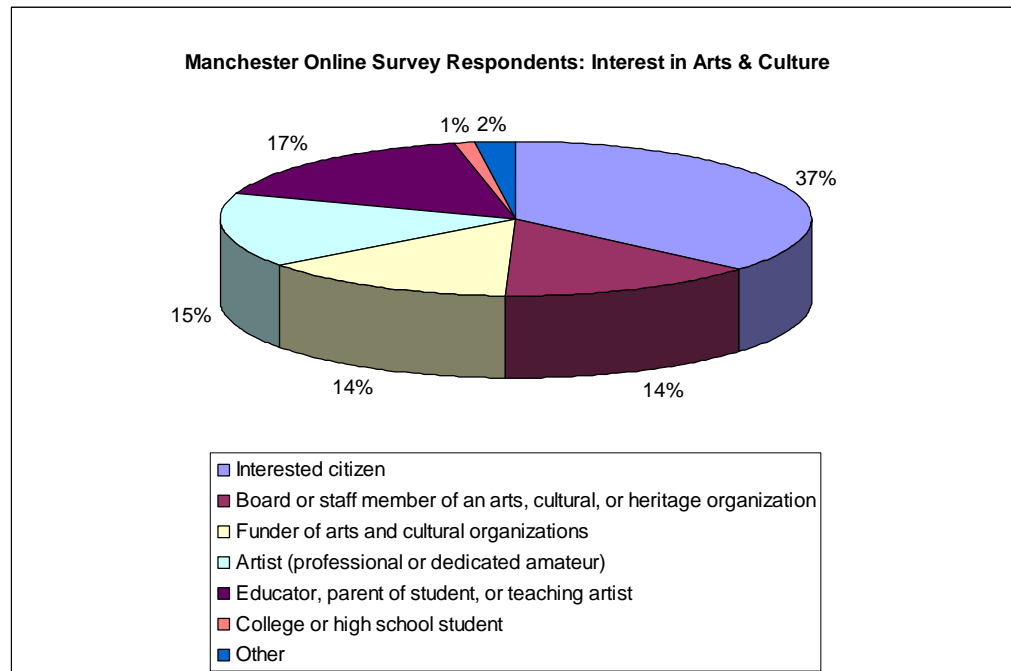
¹ This data is reported in the following documents, which can be accessed at http://a2artsalliance.org/initiatives_culturalplan.asp:

- *Washtenaw County Cultural Assessment Online Survey Report*
- *Washtenaw County Cultural Assessment Community Forums Full Archival Report*
- *2008 Artists' Census Report*
- *The Creative Economy Analysis conducted by Ann Arbor SPARK, 2008*

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT ARTS AND CULTURE IN MANCHESTER

ONLINE SURVEY

The Arts Alliance conducted an online survey between October 2007 and January 2008 to gather information about residents' attitudes toward arts and culture in Washtenaw County. Forty-six Manchester residents responded to the 52-question survey, representing 3% of the 1,535 survey respondents who completed the survey. Manchester residents identified themselves as follows:



ARTISTS' CENSUS

The Washtenaw County Artists' Census was administered by the Arts Alliance as part of the cultural plan. This census ran from April 1 through May 17, 2008. Forty-nine artists from Manchester responded to the census, representing more than a 2.25% response rate relative to Manchester's population. Nineteen Manchester artists were identified as *Working Artists*.²

²*Working Artists* were classified based on meeting all of the following criteria: 1) self-defines as an artist; 2) works as a visual, performing, or literary artist; 3) spends 40 or more hours a month on his/her creative field; and 4) shares his/her artwork beyond family and friends. Criteria was adapted from *Crossover: How Artists Build Careers across Commercial, Nonprofit and Community Work*, a publication produced by Dr. Ann Markusen of the University of Minnesota.

FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

As part of its research for the Washtenaw County Cultural Plan, the Arts Alliance held three small discussion groups, or “community forums,” in Manchester to gather in-depth resident input. These forums were held between October 2007 and January 2008. Some of the key issues that came up in these forums included:

MANCHESTER CULTURAL ASSETS – WHAT’S SPECIAL ABOUT MANCHESTER?

- **Small town feel** Forum participants described Manchester as quiet, quaint, attractive, and welcoming. People are helpful and find it comfortable.
- **Artists** There are many artists in the area. Studios are affordable. Music programs in the schools are good.
- **River** Many spoke of the beautiful river as a resource and defining feature of the community. Federal and state funds will be updating roadways and sidewalks, as well as lighting the cross-streets of downtown. River access may be addressed at this time.
- **Festivals** Manchester hosts a number of festivals including: Riverfolk Festival and the Chicken Broil. Neighbors attend barn dances.
- **History and heritage** The community’s German heritage is apparent. Downtown building stock is historically significant in that buildings are all made from local bricks. The architecture is preserved through historic legislation.

MANCHESTER CHALLENGES

- **Economy** There are fewer local jobs after Uniloy factory left. Manchester is becoming more of a bedroom community. Commuters have less time to volunteer and to participate in civic affairs.
- **Growth uncertain** People have differing opinions about the value of encouraging growth.
- **Visual and performing arts needs** There may be fewer opportunities for visual artists. Two galleries closed. Riverfolk Festival is suffering from funding challenges, because of the loss of Pfizer.

A VISION FOR MANCHESTER: WHAT MIGHT THIS COMMUNITY LOOK LIKE IN FIVE YEARS?

- **Mostly stays the same** Most forum participants hoped that 2013 would find Manchester much the same, preserving the small town quality of life that people value. Farms and working landscapes are preserved. You still won't find a strip mall or McDonald's fast food restaurant.
- **Small arts hub** People would like to see artists working downtown and would like to have an active gallery. Some hope for higher end restaurants and more retail businesses downtown.

The above data about Manchester drawn from the Washtenaw County Cultural Assessment Online Survey Report, Washtenaw County Cultural Assessment Community Forums Full Archival Report, 2008 Artists' Census Report, and The Creative Economy Analysis conducted by Ann Arbor SPARK, 2008.

Data from forums collected and narrative written by Cultural Plan Associate Consultant, Susan Badger Booth



**Music on the Manchester Mill porch
(Hurricane Katrina Benefit Concert)**

MANCHESTER COMMUNITY INPUT

The following individuals participated in at least one of the three public meetings held in Manchester to work on the Manchester Working Plan. Meetings included a public forum and two working group meetings.

These individuals have demonstrated a strong interest for arts and culture in their community. They could serve as the nucleus to oversee the implementation of this plan.

Neal Billetheaux
Therese Bossory
Bryan Cunningham
Nancy Feldkamp
Sandy Knapp
Linda Knox
Peter Knox
Ken Kozora
Peter Lynch
Dee Miles
Roger Miles

David Nelson
Carol Palms
Mark Palms
Gail Quaderer
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Special thanks to all the individuals who have helped the Manchester Working Plan come to fruition.

Every effort was made to include the names of those individuals that participated in this process. Please excuse any omissions, misspellings or other oversights.

Photo Credits

Front Cover:

Row (from left to right)

Riverfolk Festival – Photo courtesy of Riverfolk Festival

Riverfolk Festival – Photo courtesy of Riverfolk Festival

River Raisin Canoe Race – Karl Racenis

Column (from top to bottom)

Manchester Bed Race – Karl Racenis

Manchester blacksmith – Karl Racenis

Alber Orchard – Mark Palms

Background Information:

Manchester Duck Race – Karl Racenis

Manchester Community Brass Band on Mill Porch – Karl Racenis

Contents of Plan:

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Ray Berg

The Manchester Working Plan, Initial Steps for Implementing the Washtenaw County Cultural Master Plan in the Manchester Area was written in June 2009 by Angela Martín-Barcelona, Marketing Director, Arts Alliance. Susan Badger Booth, Assistant Professor, Department of Communication & Theater Arts at Eastern Michigan University wrote the summation of the Manchester focus group meetings. Tamara Real, President, Arts Alliance, served as Project Manager.

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The Arts Alliance serves all of Washtenaw County, working to create an environment where culture and creativity can flourish and the arts are accessible to all.

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