



# ROGERS CULTURAL PLAN

SPRING 2022

WXY

The Rogers Cultural Plan outlines a vision, objectives, and strategies for implementation for arts and culture in the City of Rogers. The City's first ever Cultural Plan focuses on strategic planning over the next five years, and on three cultural drivers the City has selected to emphasize in the near term: public art, music and performing arts, and wellness and culinary arts.

## Author Team

WXY architecture + urban design  
City of Rogers  
CACHE (Creative Arkansas Community Hub and Exchange)

## Acknowledgments

This Plan would not be possible without the many collaborators, advisors, and engagement participants who helped bring it to life. We would like to thank:

### CITY OF ROGERS

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Walton Family Foundation

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And the hundreds of residents who participated in focus groups, interviews, and the public survey.

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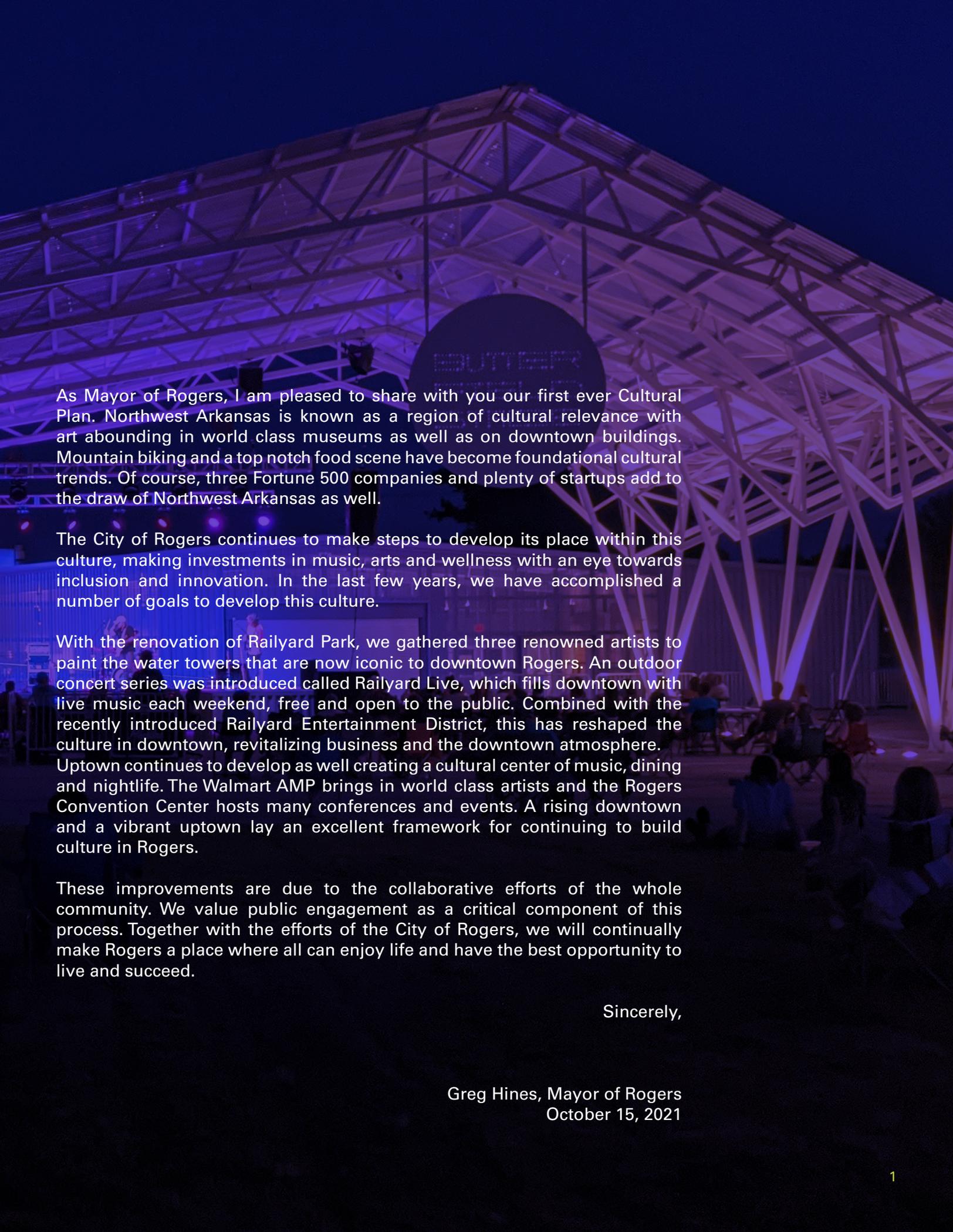
# Acronyms

AAA - Arkansas Arts Academy  
ACS - American Community Survey  
AMP - Walmart Arkansas Music Pavilion  
APA - American Planning Association  
CACHE - Creative Arkansas Community Hub and Exchange  
CSA - Community Supported Agriculture  
DTR - Downtown Rogers, Inc.  
F2B - Farm to Business  
FFA - Future Farmers of America  
FH - Food for the Hungry  
GDP - Gross Domestic Product  
LULAC - League of United Latin American Citizens  
MWBE - Minority/Women-Owned Business Enterprise  
NWA - Northwest Arkansas  
RFP - Request for Proposals  
RFQ - Request for Qualifications  
RPAC - Rogers Public Art Commission  
SNAP - Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program  
TASC - Teen Action & Support Center  
UA CAFF - University of Arkansas Center for Arkansas Farms and Food  
WIC - Women, Infants, Children (supplemental nutrition program)  
WFF - Walton Family Foundation



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As Mayor of Rogers, I am pleased to share with you our first ever Cultural Plan. Northwest Arkansas is known as a region of cultural relevance with art abounding in world class museums as well as on downtown buildings. Mountain biking and a top notch food scene have become foundational cultural trends. Of course, three Fortune 500 companies and plenty of startups add to the draw of Northwest Arkansas as well.

The City of Rogers continues to make steps to develop its place within this culture, making investments in music, arts and wellness with an eye towards inclusion and innovation. In the last few years, we have accomplished a number of goals to develop this culture.

With the renovation of Railyard Park, we gathered three renowned artists to paint the water towers that are now iconic to downtown Rogers. An outdoor concert series was introduced called Railyard Live, which fills downtown with live music each weekend, free and open to the public. Combined with the recently introduced Railyard Entertainment District, this has reshaped the culture in downtown, revitalizing business and the downtown atmosphere. Uptown continues to develop as well creating a cultural center of music, dining and nightlife. The Walmart AMP brings in world class artists and the Rogers Convention Center hosts many conferences and events. A rising downtown and a vibrant uptown lay an excellent framework for continuing to build culture in Rogers.

These improvements are due to the collaborative efforts of the whole community. We value public engagement as a critical component of this process. Together with the efforts of the City of Rogers, we will continually make Rogers a place where all can enjoy life and have the best opportunity to live and succeed.

Sincerely,

Greg Hines, Mayor of Rogers  
October 15, 2021

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# Introduction

Plan  
Overview



Children play on a sculpture in Railyard Park

# Introduction

## Purpose

The purpose of the Rogers Cultural Plan is to provide a framework and a Roadmap for arts and cultural planning in Rogers, Arkansas. The Plan defines priorities for the City's newly formed Arts and Culture Division, headed by a team of specialized Coordinators in the areas of Public Art, Music and Performing Arts, and Wellness.

As the first municipal Cultural Plan in the Northwest Arkansas (NWA) region, this Plan aims to demonstrate the importance of strategic planning and of dedicated arts and culture staff in Rogers and in the region.

This Plan seeks to:

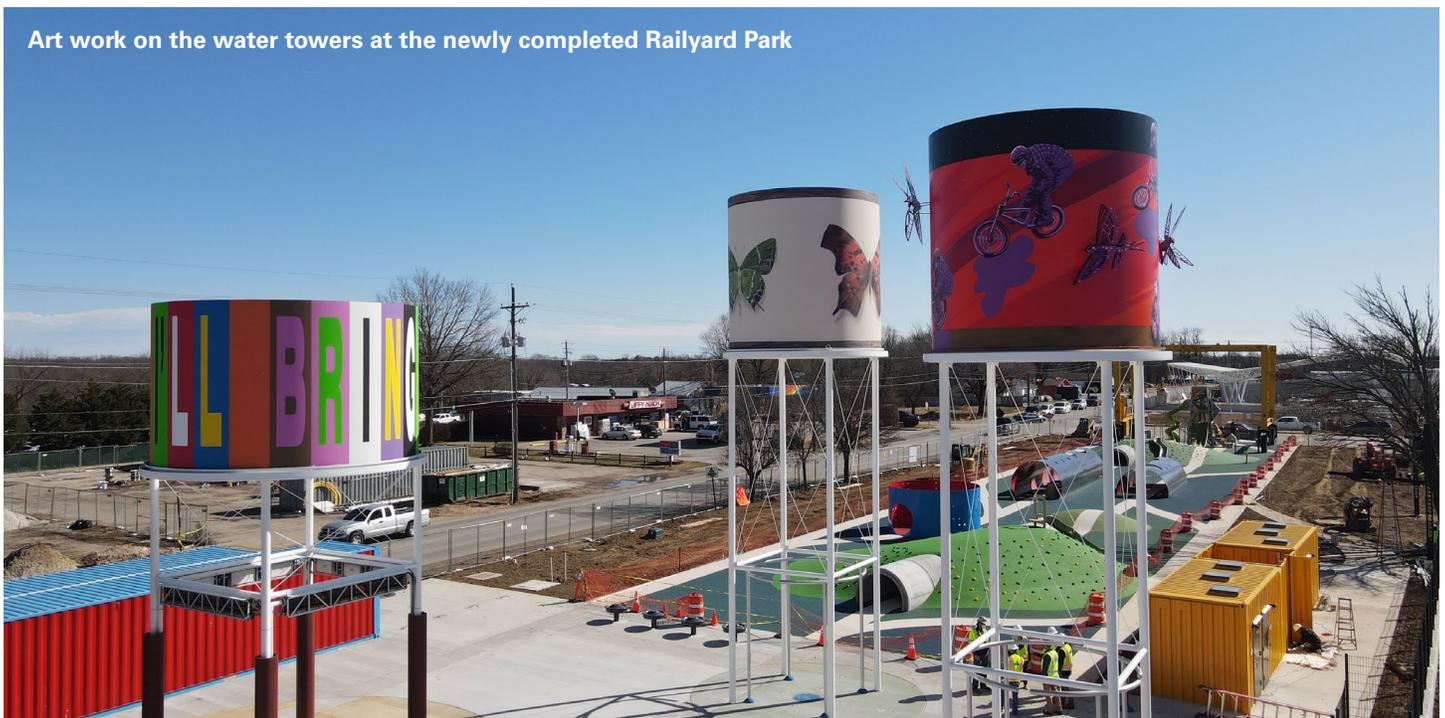
- Document existing assets, challenges, and opportunities for arts and culture in Rogers.
- Propose a vision for the City of Rogers as a place where creativity happens and is for everyone.
- Define a strategic framework to activate the vision, including priorities that highlight public art, music and performing arts, and wellness, including culinary arts, as current cultural and economic drivers.

- Identify opportunities to enact the Plan’s vision and test its framework through pilot projects and related recommendations, with particular focus on public art, music and performing arts, and wellness, including culinary arts.
- Promote cultural planning at the city and regional level; this includes continued funding and support for arts and cultural planning in Rogers, as well as cultivating a broader understanding of the value of strategic cultural planning and of having dedicated staff in municipalities throughout Northwest Arkansas.

## Who is this plan for?

This Plan was developed with three audiences in mind:

- This Plan was developed to guide staff and leadership at the **City of Rogers** who will be implementing it and updating it in the coming years.
- Next, this Plan is meant to inform **arts and culture stakeholders** in Rogers and throughout the region who may benefit from, expand upon, collaborate with, and otherwise interface with this Plan and the programs, policies, and processes it results in.
- Most importantly, this Plan is intended for ***all residents of Rogers***. Arts and culture are about people, and it is the community of Rogers who will shape the direction of arts and culture there. Every resident has valuable cultural insights and experiences, and it is our hope that those who have not yet participated in this process will have an opportunity to take part in the coming months and years.



Art work on the water towers at the newly completed Railyard Park

# Process

As the population of Rogers has experienced rapid growth, the community has also grown more diverse. Beloved for its historic architecture, pristine outdoor access, and community feel, Rogers is increasingly known as a hub in the region for quality local food, live music and entertainment, and outdoor recreation.

This plan grows out of many efforts that have taken place at the local and regional level over the past five to ten years. The City of Rogers began to invest in cultural planning with the formation of the Rogers Public Art Commission (RPAC) in 2014. Six years later, the City hired its first Arts and Culture Coordinator, demonstrating a commitment to leveraging City policy and leadership to support a thriving arts and cultural environment in Rogers. The City has since hired dedicated staff members to lead planning in the areas of Music and Performing Arts and Wellness.

In the meantime, NWA has seen an increase in interest, investment, and activity in arts and cultural projects. Since 2015, three major reports have been published exploring the potential for arts and cultural planning in Northwest Arkansas. In 2019, the Creative Arkansas Community Hub and Exchange (CACHE) was formed with the support of the Walton Family Foundation, to support arts and cultural workers in NWA, and promote a thriving cultural ecosystem at the regional scale.

As part of wider efforts to promote cultural planning in the region, CACHE led a research and engagement process between Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 that served as the beginning of this plan's development. This included engagement conversations with RPAC, as well as dozens of arts and culture stakeholders engaged through focus groups and interviews. In Spring 2021, WXY architecture + urban design was brought on to build off work completed to date, continue the engagement process, and develop the final plan.



# Approach

This cultural planning process consists of a set of key elements, all of which are connected. These elements form the backbone of this plan and will continue to guide the City's process in implementing it. They are illustrated in the diagram on page 9.

## INPUTS

The insights, history, and information that shape our understanding of arts and culture in Rogers. This includes insights from past plans and studies in the city and region, input from surveys and other engagement, feedback from key stakeholders and City leaders, and available datasets about Rogers and Northwest Arkansas. See the Context section (page 13) and the Engagement section (page 37) for more on the key inputs used in this plan.

## VISION

A broad idea of what residents, stakeholders, and City leadership envision for the future of arts and culture in Rogers. The vision in this report reflects what we have learned so far and is meant to evolve over time in response to the changing needs, priorities, and aspirations of all of Rogers's residents, workforce, and stakeholders, and as fuller stakeholder feedback is received from them. See page 48 for the full Vision Statement.

## GUIDING OBJECTIVES

Through strategic planning and policy making, and robust engagement and partnership building, we can harness the power of arts and culture to:

- Strengthen **community** and celebrate Rogers's unique **character**
- Promote **economic vitality** and enhance **quality of life** for all of Rogers's residents
- Shape a dynamic and inspiring **built environment**



## GUIDING OBJECTIVES

To pursue this vision, what are the aspects of life in Rogers where we hope arts and culture can have an impact? The guiding objectives offer three broader objectives, related to **community and character**, **economic vitality and quality of life**, and the **built environment**. These objectives form the basis for concrete goals, which in turn can help the City measure the progress and impact of this plan. See page 49 for more on the plan's guiding objectives and goals.

## CULTURAL DRIVERS

To focus the City's efforts in the near term, this plan is centered around a set of three arts and culture domains that play an important role in Rogers today: **public art, music & performing arts**, and **wellness** (including culinary arts). The City's Arts and Culture Division is structured around these three drivers, and so it is important that this Plan should offer a clear strategy for planning in these three areas. It should be noted that these are not the only three themes shaping art and culture in Rogers. In addition to presenting a clear Roadmap for each driver, this plan attempts to offer a holistic approach to cultural planning that will include a broad range of other disciplines. See the Arts and Culture Roadmap (page 57) for more on the cultural drivers, and specific recommendations for each.

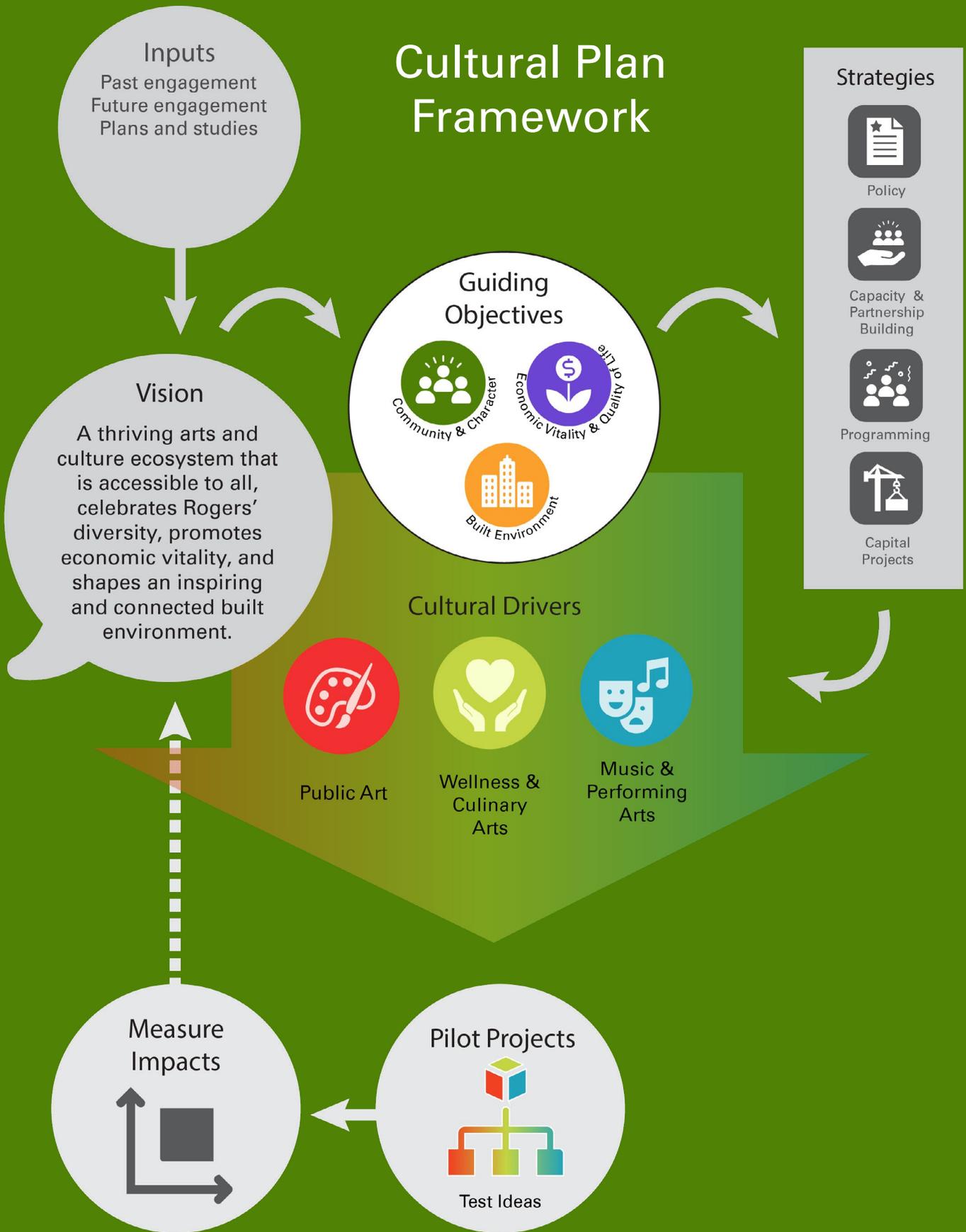
## STRATEGIES

With an understanding of the plan's vision, objectives, and the key forms of arts and culture that will lead the way, we consider the question: "how do we get there?" This Plan considers four main kinds of strategies: **policy, programming, capacity- and partnership-building**, and **capital projects** (improvements, changes, or additions to the city's physical infrastructure). See the Arts and Culture Roadmap (page 57) and the Implementation Plan (page 86) for more on the proposed strategies.

## EVALUATING IMPACT

It is essential that the City continually monitors the impact of this plan, and learns from this process. We can evaluate impact by collecting quantitative (numerical) data or written or verbal feedback. This information can be gathered through public and stakeholder engagement and through the efforts of City staff who track specific indicators to measure the outcomes of programs, policies, and partnerships. Over time, as the City and its partners evaluate the plan's impact, they may adjust the plan's vision, objectives, and strategies to reflect what they have learned.

# Cultural Plan Framework



# Why Make a Cultural Plan?

This is the first municipal Cultural Plan in Northwest Arkansas, but many cities across the country and world have cultural plans. Usually, a cultural plan is developed by or for a city or town to define their priorities and recommend key actions to take with regard to arts and culture. Cultural plans typically involve extensive engagement with local residents and arts and culture workers. We view a cultural plan as a living document – one that should grow and change in response to the needs, visions, and aspirations of the people of Rogers.

The positive impacts of arts and culture in communities have been widely documented. Arts and cultural engagement are proven to have “remarkable impacts” on outcomes for children<sup>1</sup>, improve community cohesion<sup>2</sup>, and improve the beauty and the livability of cities and towns.<sup>3</sup> In cities, art and culture contribute to a strong sense of place, enriching the lives of residents through public art, free or accessible programs, and vibrant and active public life.

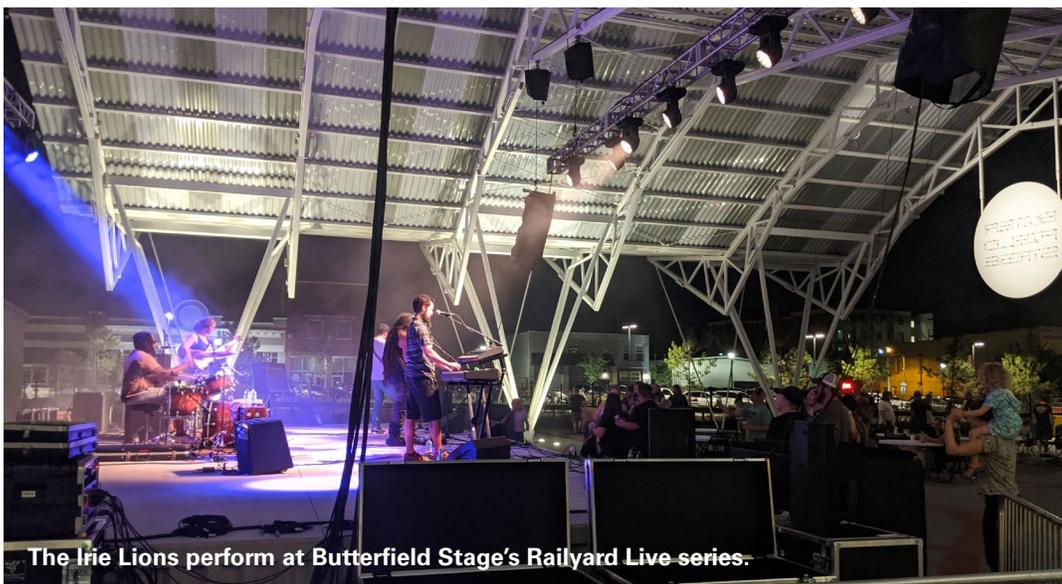
Cultural engagement has a proven effect on the wellbeing of communities, in particular for seniors and people living with disabilities,<sup>4</sup> and to the extent cultural programming and public art encourage people to be physically active

1 Brookings Institution, 2019. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2019/02/12/new-evidence-of-the-benefits-of-arts-education>.

2 Engh, Rachel, Ben Martin, Susannah Laramie Kidd, and Anne Gadwa Nicodemus. “WE-making: How arts & culture unite people to work toward community well-being,” Easton, PA: Metris Arts Consulting, 2021.

3 “Social Impact of the Arts Study,” ArtsFund, 2018. [https://www.artsfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/ArtsFund\\_2018\\_SIS\\_11.6.pdf](https://www.artsfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/ArtsFund_2018_SIS_11.6.pdf).

4 American Journal of Public Health, “The Connection Between Art, Healing, and Public Health: A Review of Current Literature,” <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2804629/>.



and interact with the environment around them, arts and culture can significantly influence community health and wellness.<sup>5</sup>

Arts and culture are also powerful economic engines. In Arkansas, the arts and culture sector provides over 89,000 jobs and makes up 2.5% of the state's GDP; in 2019 alone, arts and culture generated approximately \$3.3 billion dollars to the state's economy.<sup>6</sup> A cultural plan can help harness the economic power of arts and culture and ensure that the benefits are shared by all residents.

In light of COVID-19, it is more important than ever before to recognize the value arts and culture provide to our communities and to invest in the sector's recovery. The pandemic has had devastating impacts on the cultural sector. According to research by Brookings Institute, 52% of creative workers nationwide, and 44% in Arkansas, reported becoming unemployed as a result of the pandemic as of July 2020. Impacts to the cultural sector in Arkansas have resulted in a loss of at least \$450 million in revenue since the start of the pandemic.<sup>7</sup>

Arts and culture are driven by a constellation of stakeholders including non-profit organizations, foundations and funders, educational institutions, independent creators, and the general public. Municipalities like the City of Rogers can play an important role in ensuring different parts of this ecosystem have access to the spaces and support they need to thrive. Through a framework of policies, procedures, and programs that encourage arts and culture to serve all residents, the City has opportunities to address broader objectives, including improvements to infrastructure, increased tourism and foot traffic, and positive public health outcomes.

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5 "Arts and America: Arts, Culture, and the Future of America's Communities: Arts, Health, & Wellness," Americans for the Arts, 2015. [https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/Arts%26America\\_HealthWellness.pdf](https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/Arts%26America_HealthWellness.pdf).

6 Arts Action Fund, 2020. <https://www.artsactionfund.org/sites/artsactionfund.org/files/2021-04/AR%202021.pdf>.

7 Brookings Institute, 2020. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/lost-art-measuring-covid-19s-devastating-impact-on-americas-creative-economy/>.

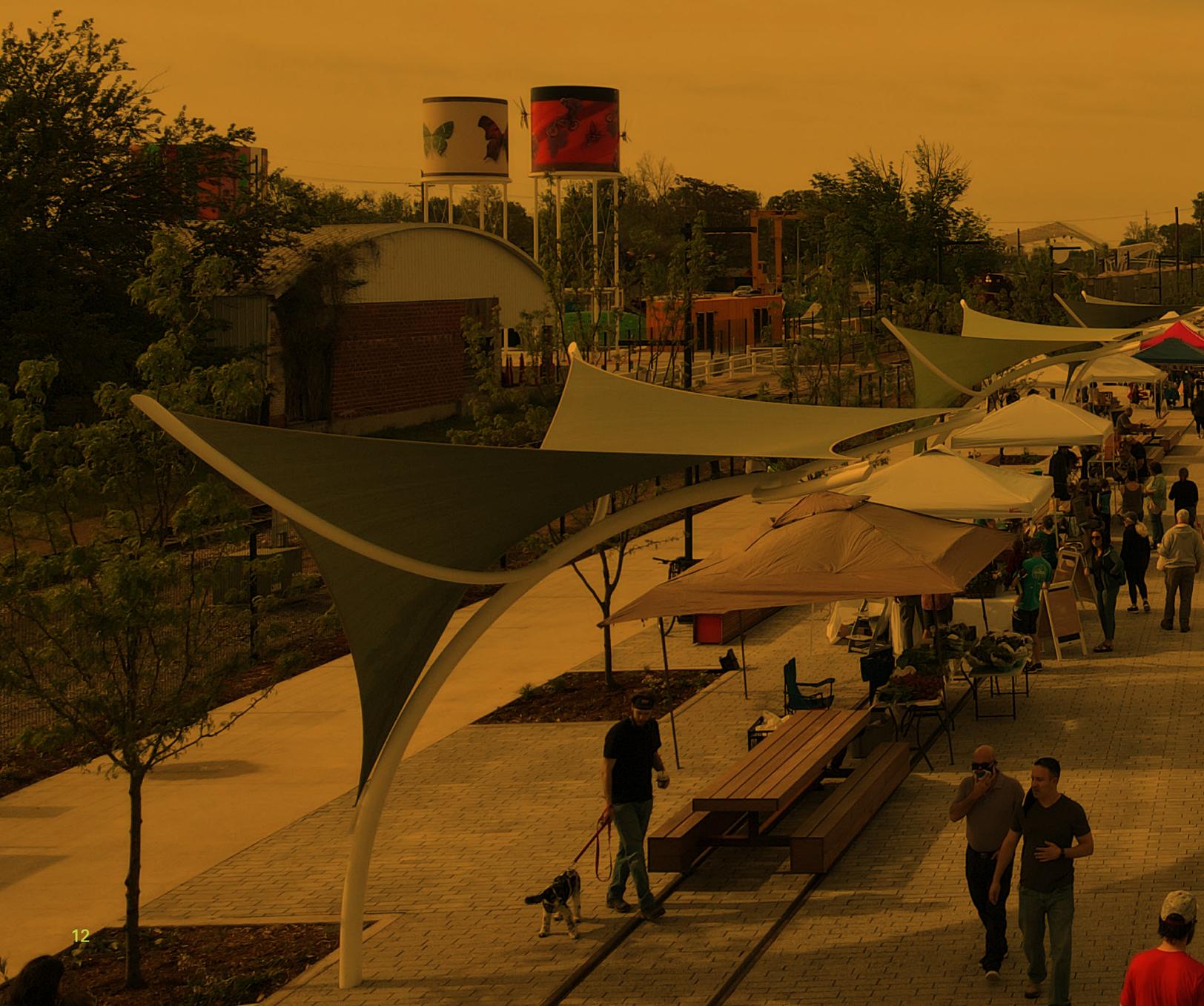
## What is culture?

Culture refers to anything that is shared and communicated between people. This includes everything from language, to customs and traditions, to the way we dress, the celebrations we share, and the foods we eat. Culture is what connects us to those with whom we share a neighborhood, a religion, an ethnicity, a lifestyle, a hobby, or other commonalities. It is also what makes each one of us unique from our neighbors in a place like Rogers, where many different cultures coexist. Rogers does not have one unified culture, but is a place made up of many overlapping kinds of culture. *What does culture mean to you?*

## What are the arts?

The arts are one way that people express themselves and communicate with one another. In that sense, art is a form of culture. The arts can include any form of creative expression. Sometimes, they are tied to specific cultural traditions or parts of the world. Other times, they are unique to an individual style or process. People make art in a wide variety of ways: visual art and sculpture, fashion and tattoos, design, crafts, film, music, culinary arts.... just to name a few. *What do the arts mean to you?*

# 3



# Context

Getting  
to Know  
Rogers

# Welcome To Rogers

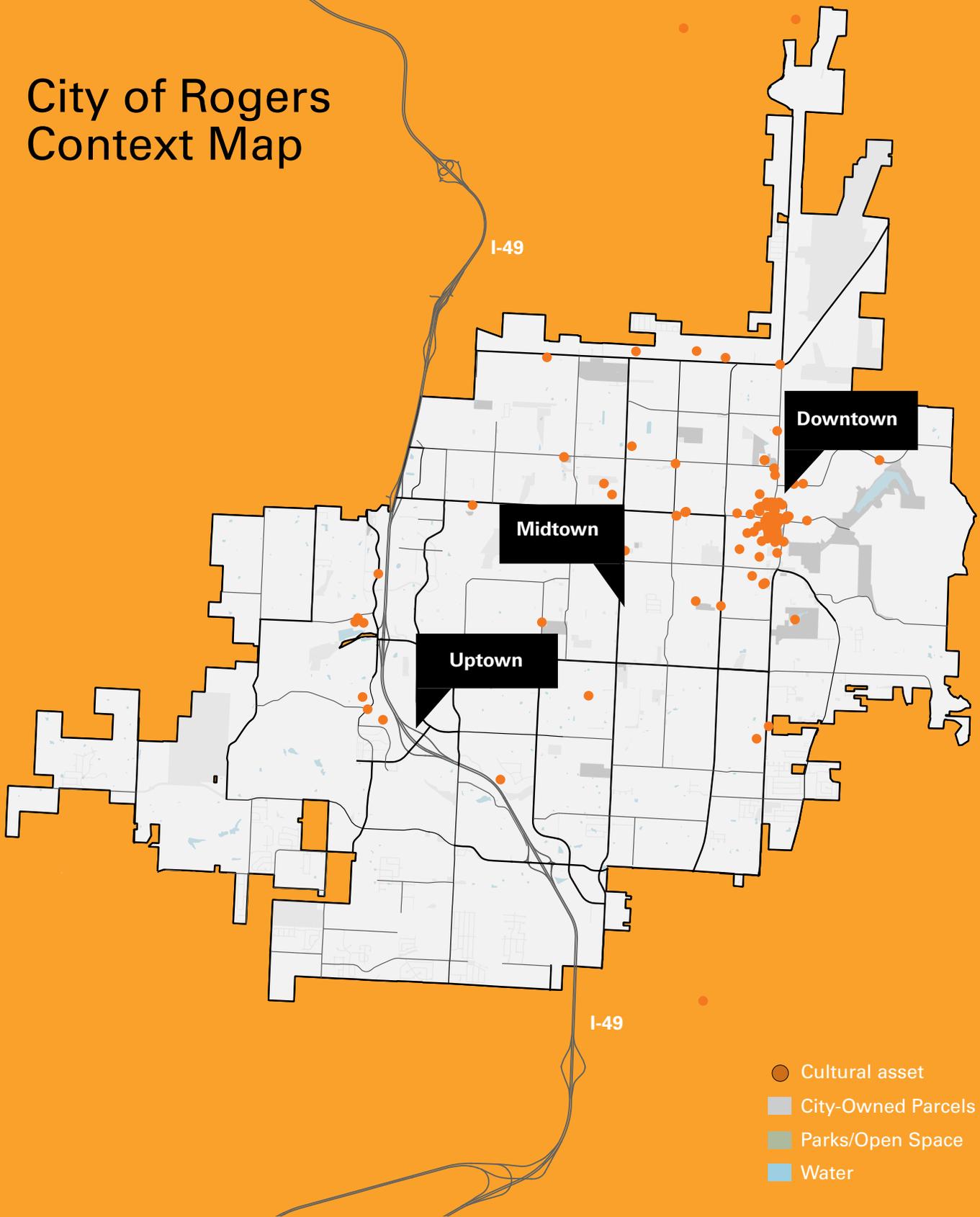
Throughout its history, the City of Rogers has acted as a place of connection. Founded in 1881 as a stop along the St. Louis - San Francisco Railway, the city has experienced growth and prosperity over time. The city's population more than doubled in the first decade after its founding. Rogers has continued to get bigger; since 2010, its population has grown by over 20% (U.S. Census). Rogers still maintains the feel of a small town, but with the workings of an up-and-coming urban destination. Beloved for its historic architecture and natural beauty, Rogers has welcomed an increasingly diverse cross-section of residents in recent years, attracting visitors and residents alike from Northwest Arkansas and beyond. This is a Plan for all of Rogers, and it is framed through three progressively focused scales: regional, city-wide, and at the scale of Rogers's Downtown.

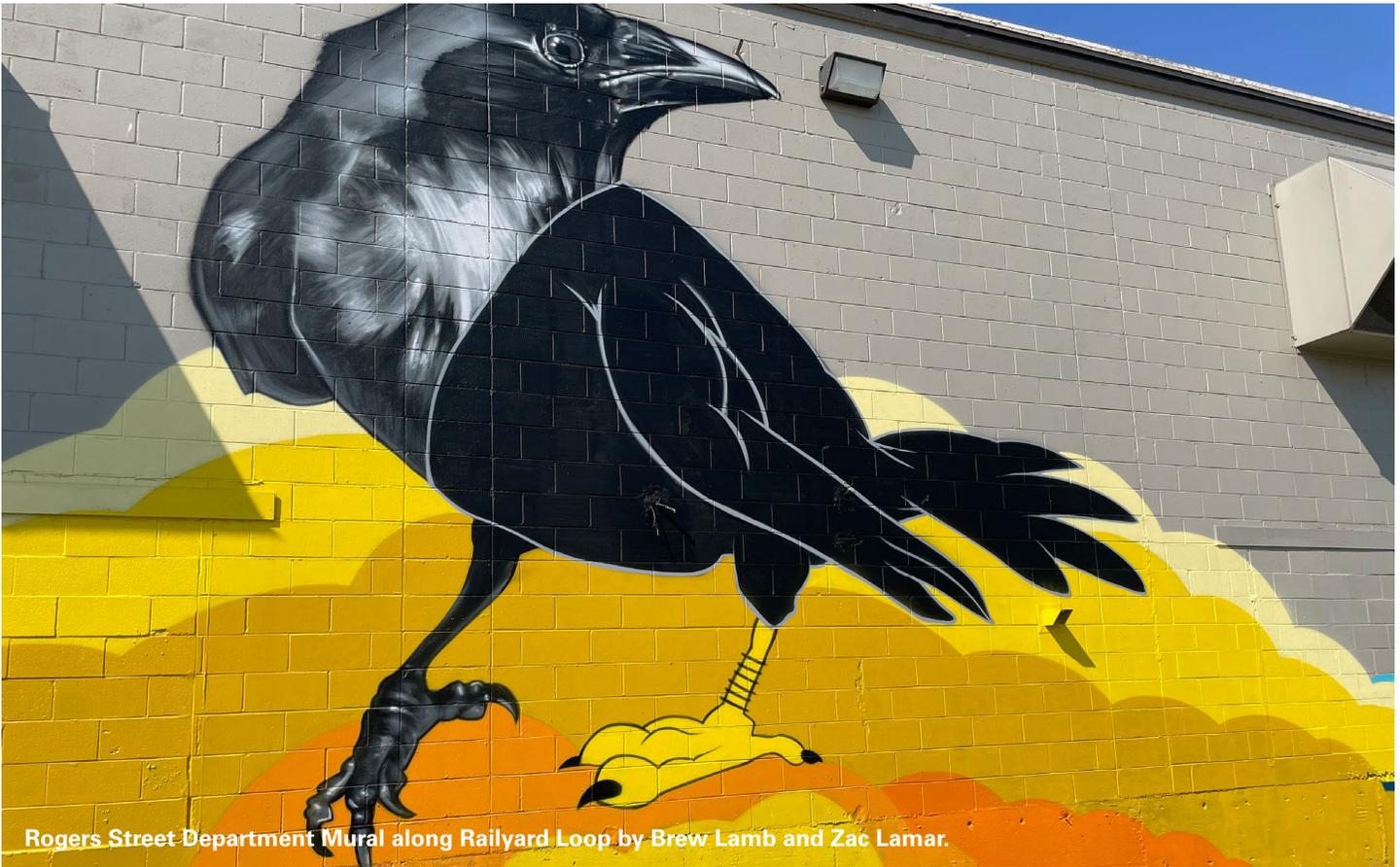
Rogers is spread across nearly 38 square miles of land historically belonging to the Osage Nation of Indigenous Americans, in a highly active and fast-growing portion of Northwest Arkansas adjacent to the Ozarks. The area has accumulated a rich and energetic history, shifting from a largely agricultural settlement to a hub of industry and commerce. Daisy Manufacturing Company, now Daisy Outdoor Products, helped fuel the city's growth starting in the 1950s. In 1962, Rogers became home to the first ever Walmart, which now has its corporate headquarters in neighboring Bentonville.

As the population of Rogers has grown, it has also become increasingly diverse. More than one third of the population of Rogers (34%) identifies as Hispanic or Latinx, with the majority of residents (59%) identifying as white and non-Hispanic. Alongside these groups are a mix of other races and ethnicities: 2% are Asian, 2% of the population is Black, and fewer than 1% are Indigenous Americans; 1% identify as a Pacific Islander, and 3% identify as mixed-race (American Community Survey 2019).

City-wide, the median household income is \$61,551, considerably higher than the state-wide median income of approximately \$47,600 (American Community Survey 2019).

# City of Rogers Context Map





Rogers is known for its well-preserved Downtown, and several other key features of the built environment help lend the city its strong sense of place. Rogers’s railway is still used for freight purposes, and a newly designed Railyard Park anchored around it celebrates that history and helps to define the walkable Downtown area. Featuring a playground and water park, the park’s centerpiece is Butterfield Stage, a new outdoor performing arts venue that drew crowds from across the region during its first summer season in 2021 (see *Vision 100, Rogers and Lowell, Arkansas* p. 24 for more information on how Butterfield Stage enhances Rogers’s public realm). Rogers boasts a growing network of establishments for dining and nightlife Downtown, extensive bicycle trailways connecting at the Railyard Bike Park, the recently renovated Lake Atalanta Park, and several notable assets Uptown, including Pinnacle Hills Promenade and the Walmart Arkansas Music Pavilion.

Rogers’s Downtown is a key focus of this Plan because it already serves as a gathering place concentrated with diverse cultural attractions, and features a concentration of City-owned land and structures. Building off more immediate opportunities for cultural planning Downtown, this Plan encourages a vision of a more connected Rogers, where Uptown, Downtown, and Rogers’s many residential neighborhoods are all better connected, and where arts and culture thrive both in and beyond existing centers of activity.

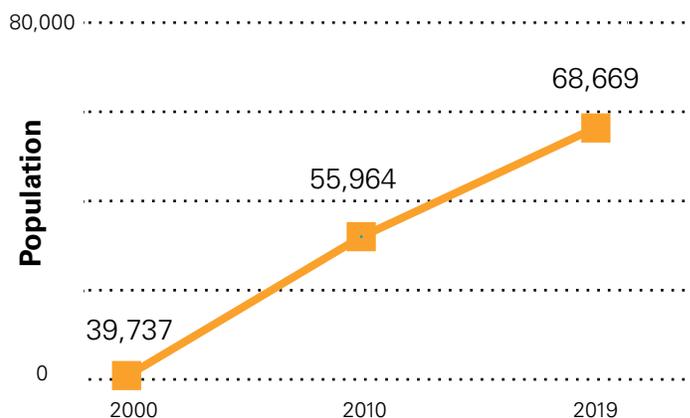
“

Rogers is fast becoming a major and booming art center. There is active involvement and support among the art galleries and a strong positive attitude of community involvement and support of the arts.

– Public Survey Respondent

”

Rogers Population Growth (2000-2019)



Source: U.S. Census 2000, 2010; ACS 2019



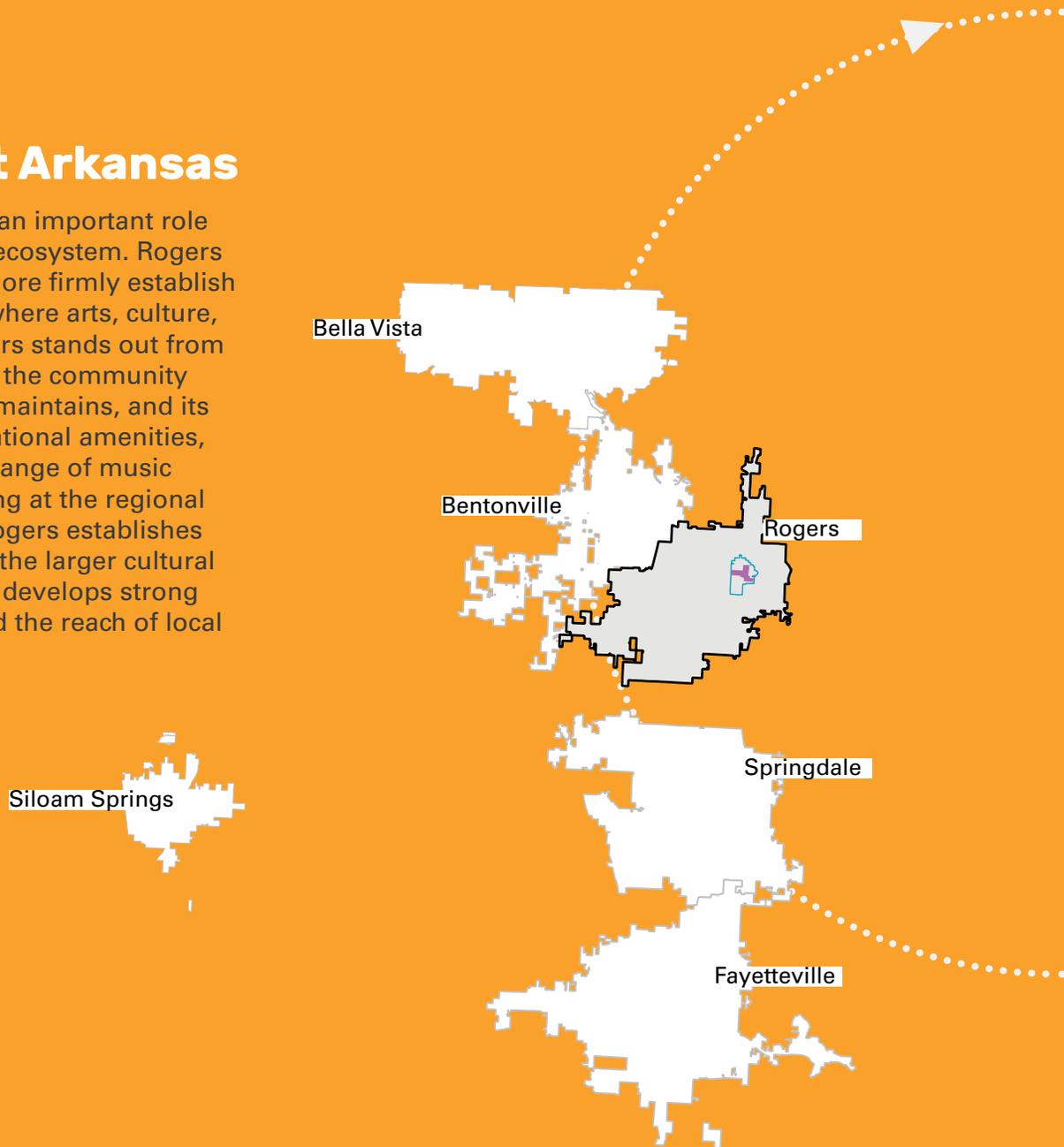
Concert goes at Butterfield Stage in Railyard Park.

# A Plan at Three Scales

This Plan is organized around three scales, each of which plays a vital role for arts and culture in Rogers. All three scales make up an important part of this plan's context and its recommendations.

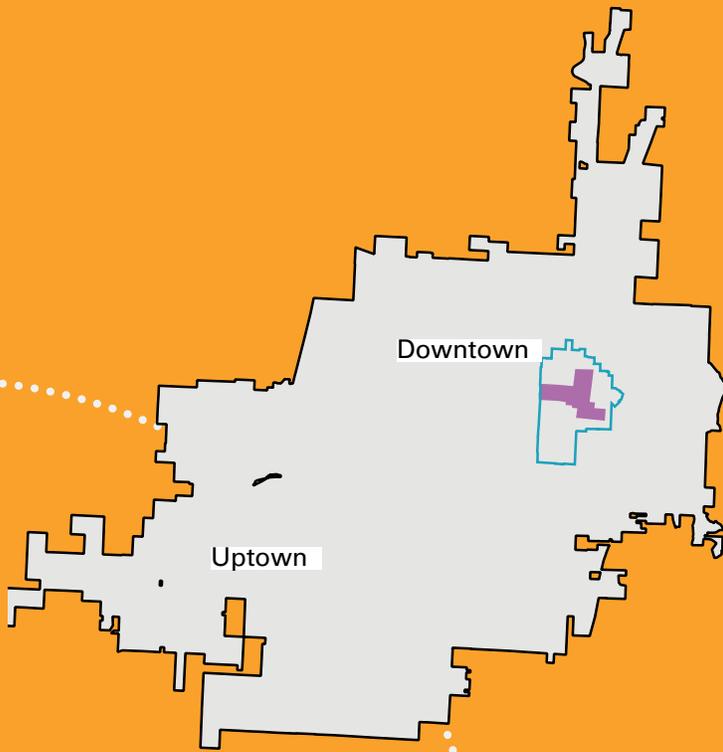
## 1. Northwest Arkansas

Each city in NWA plays an important role in the regional cultural ecosystem. Rogers has an opportunity to more firmly establish its foothold as a place where arts, culture, and people thrive. Rogers stands out from its regional partners for the community and 'small town' feel it maintains, and its cultural diversity, recreational amenities, culinary offerings, and range of music venues. Cultural planning at the regional scale will ensure that Rogers establishes a strong identity within the larger cultural landscape of NWA, and develops strong partnerships that extend the reach of local arts and culture.



## 2. Rogers

This Plan is for the entire City of Rogers and it is critical that its benefits reach the city's full range of residents and neighborhoods. Rogers is largely suburban, and is anchored by two more densely developed activity centers: Downtown and Uptown. This Plan considers the roles these anchors play, and the potential for other areas to be further activated to advance arts, culture, and community wellness. Connectivity and access are key considerations at the city-wide scale.



## 3. Downtown Rogers

Downtown Rogers is a gathering place. It hosts a diverse cross-section of establishments where Rogers's residents come together and cultural programs take place. Downtown contains a concentration of cultural assets and a range of publicly owned land and facilities that can be leveraged to advance arts and culture. Many immediate and short-term opportunities for arts and culture exist in Downtown, so the area is referenced often throughout this Plan.



-  Downtown Zoning
-  Downtown Boundary (Master Plan)

# In Context: NW Arkansas

While Rogers stands on its own as a unique and storied place, it is important to understand the city as part of the interconnected region of Northwest Arkansas (NWA), with its five neighboring cities of Bentonville, Springdale, Fayetteville, Siloam Springs, and Bella Vista. Bentonville is notable for its centers of arts and culture and as the headquarters of Walmart, with a population of 54,909. Springdale is slightly larger than Rogers, with a population of 81,125. The most populous city in the region is Fayetteville, home to the University of Arkansas, with a population of 87,590. Two smaller cities also make up an important part of this region: Bella Vista, which has a population of 28,872, and Siloam Springs, which has a population of 17,101.

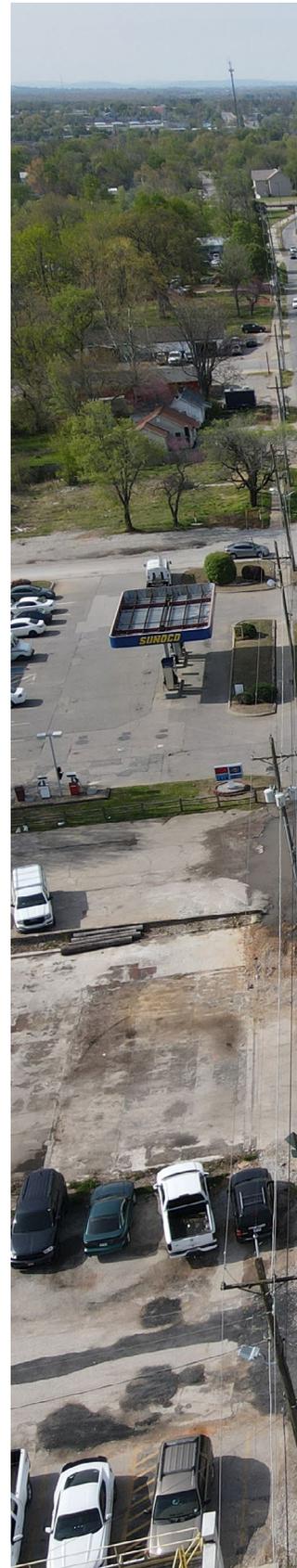
Median household income among these six cities varies within a range of \$43,690 in Fayetteville to nearly twice that—\$80,392—in Bentonville. While the entire region shares in rapid growth, Bentonville has outpaced other cities in the region, increasing in population by over 55% in the last decade. Rogers is the fastest-growing city in Arkansas aside from Bentonville, which was the fifth most rapidly growing city in the United States as of 2019 (U.S. Census).

NWA is recognized nationally for its significant and sustained growth: in the decade starting 2010, the population of Benton County increased by 26%. Springdale is the most diverse city among the six in terms of race and ethnicity, followed closely by Rogers, each with a Hispanic / Latinx population of roughly one third.

All six cities in the region have a rate of unemployment below 5%, which is consistent with Arkansas’s unemployment rate of just over 4%. Nationally, the rate of unemployment is nearly 6%.<sup>1</sup> Bentonville and Rogers have the largest outflow of workers among cities in NWA, suggesting that the majority of those working there reside elsewhere. Only 21% of workers in Bentonville live in that city, while 26% of workers in Rogers also live in Rogers.

NWA is home to significant arts and cultural institutions. The Crystal Bridges Museum, which opened in 2011, is nationally renowned, as is its recent offshoot cultural space, The Momentary; both are located in Bentonville. There are many other performing arts spaces in NWA, including the Walmart Arkansas Music Pavilion and the Arkansas Public Theatre, both in Rogers. From small businesses to larger-scale corporations and institutions, NWA offers a range of opportunities for commerce as well as cultural participation, including the presence of schools, performance groups, and an impressive mix of restaurants.

<sup>1</sup> See: <https://governor.arkansas.gov/news-media/press-releases/arkansas-unemployment-rate-stable-at-4-4-for-3rd-straight-month-still-lower>.





Railyard Park, with the Water Tower art installation and splash pads in the foreground and Butterfield Stage in the background.



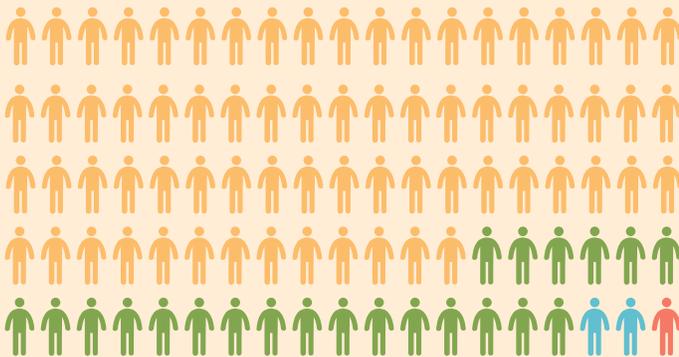
# Community & Character

Rogers is vibrant and rapidly growing. Understanding who lives there and how this population has changed over time is central to the success of this Cultural Plan.

In the last twenty years, Rogers has grown more populous and racially and ethnically diverse, and has seen the gap widen between low and high median household incomes. These shifting demographics point to the importance of including diverse voices in cultural planning, and ensuring that cultural programs are accessible to the full range of residents who call Rogers home.

## LANGUAGE

There is a steadily growing presence of several immigrant communities, particularly from Latin America as well as Asia, including Pacific Islanders. 23% of residents primarily speak Spanish at home, underscoring the importance of engagement and participation among non-English speaking communities as part of this Plan’s recommendations.

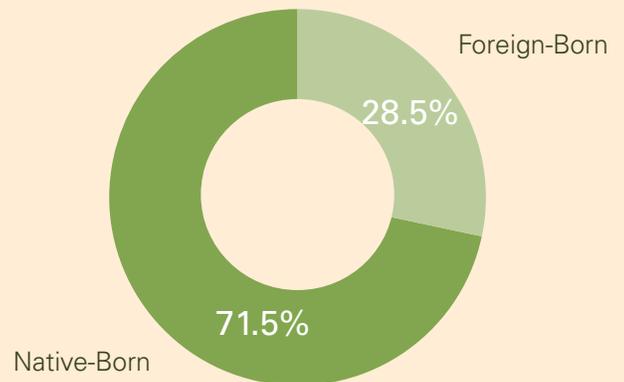


- Only English
- Spanish
- Asian American & Pacific Islander Languages
- Other

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Rogers’s city-wide median household income is \$65,823, compared with \$68,703 nationally. The city has seen a growing disparity in income levels in the past two decades. While top incomes in Rogers have grown by nearly three times over the past twenty years, household incomes at the lower end of the spectrum have remained far more stagnant, rising 26% over the same period.

Residents Born in the U.S. (2019)



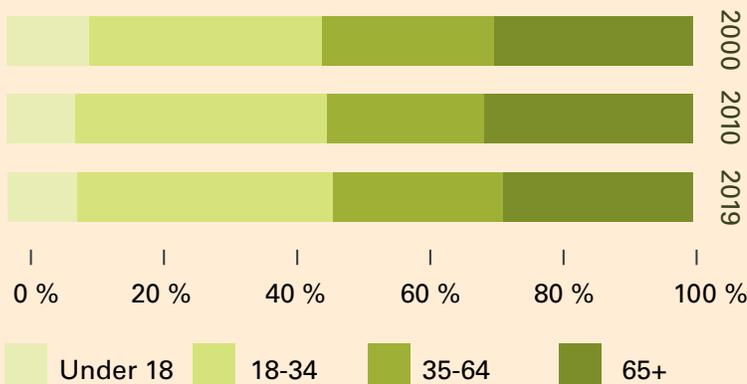
**26%** of residents speak a primary language other than English at home.

Sources: U.S. Census 2019

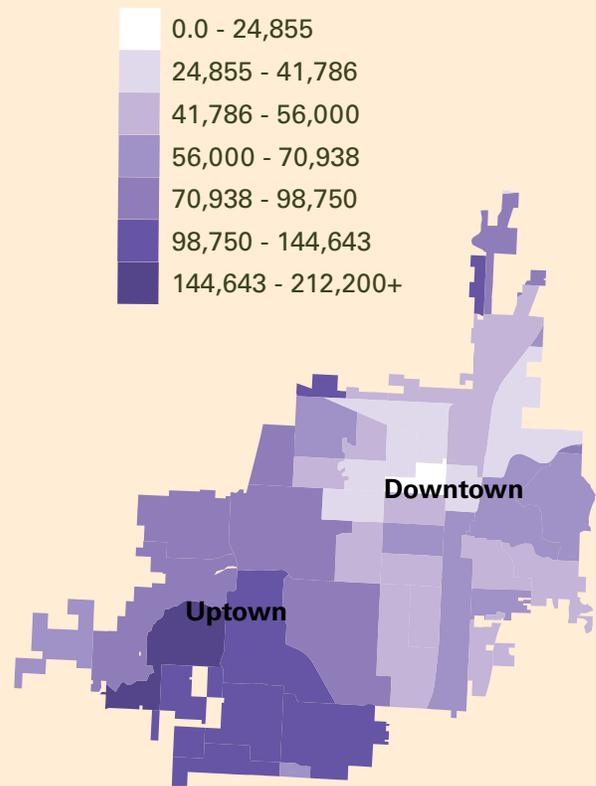
## AGE

The average resident of Rogers is 33--slightly older than those of nearby cities such as Springdale or Bentonville. Home to the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville has the youngest population in the region, with an average age of 27. Over the past twenty years, the distribution of age groups in Rogers has largely remained the same, with no group growing smaller or larger by more than 3%.

Age Demographics in Rogers, 2000-2019

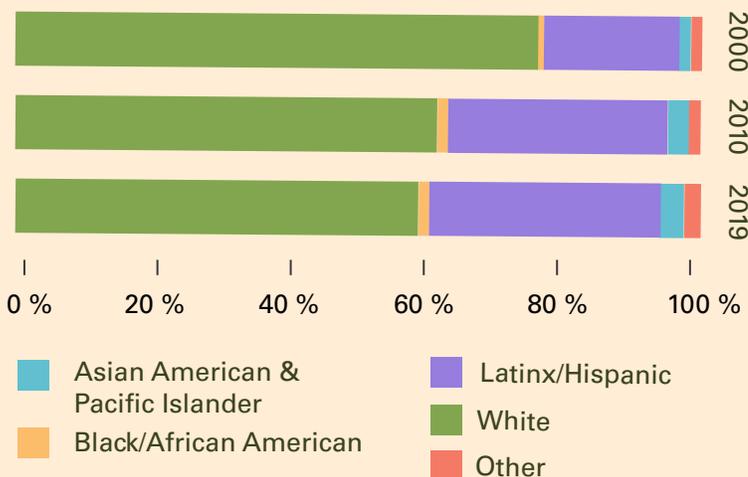


Median Household Income (2019)



## RACIAL AND ETHNIC IDENTITY

Today, more than one third of residents identify as Hispanic or Latinx, while that community comprised only 20% of the population in 2000. While Rogers's non-Hispanic white population has grown by 29% since 2000, communities of color are growing at a far more rapid pace: the number of Black individuals living in Rogers increased by 434% over the same twenty-year period.



## KEEPING CULTURE AFFORDABLE

As seen in the map above, income disparities in Rogers appear geographically linked. The Uptown area has a median household income of just over \$118,000, while median household income in Rogers's Downtown Historic District is below \$40,000.

Engagement participants identified a need for free or low-cost cultural programs and educational opportunities, as well as affordable, high quality food options. These may be particularly important for residents living in and around Downtown.

At the same time, it is important to engage higher-earning residents of Rogers who may leave the city limits for dining and cultural offerings in neighboring Bentonville.

Sources: U.S. Census 2019



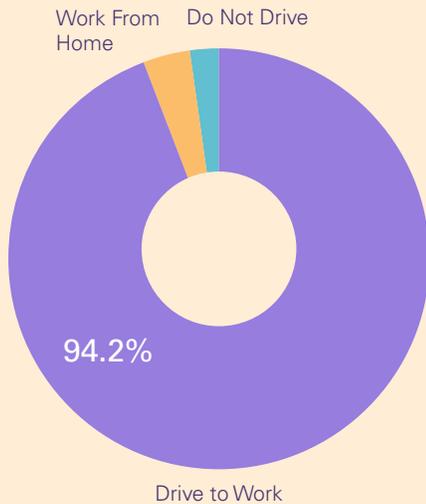
# Economic Vitality

Rogers has an active and growing economy, with a rich history of industry and commerce in the region and locally. Unemployment in the city stands just above 2%, which is significantly less than average unemployment rates in Arkansas and the United States. Major employers in Rogers include Northwest Health, Rogers Public Schools, Mercy Health System, Serco-NA, and Tyson Chick-N-Quick Plant.

## CAR DEPENDENCE

Rogers residents are highly dependent on cars to get around. Over 94% of all workers in Rogers drive to work. Improved access to and use of Rogers's trails and bike paths is one way to improve public health outcomes and quality of life in Rogers.

## Mode of Transportation to Work

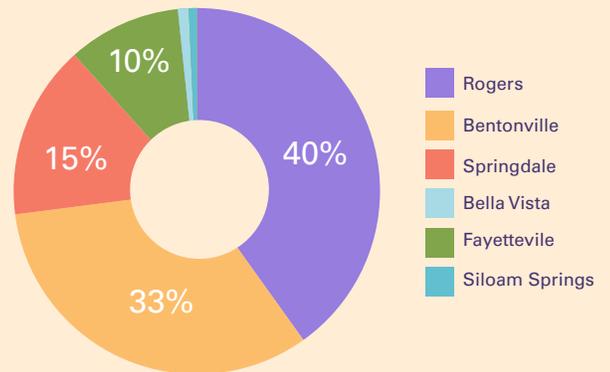


**21,185** workers commute to Rogers from one of the key cities in NWA.

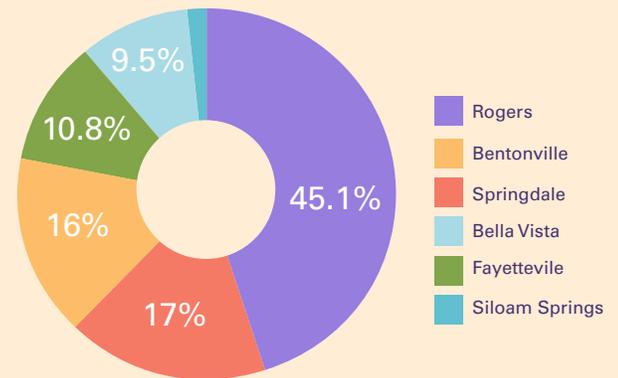
## A REGIONAL ECONOMY

There are strong connections between the economies of the major cities in NWA. Of Rogers residents who work in one of the six key cities, 40% work in Rogers and 33% commute to Bentonville. Over 21,000 residents of NWA cities work in Rogers each day, about a third of whom come from Bentonville or Springdale.

## Where Rogers Residents Work\*



## Workers Commuting to Rogers from Northwest Arkansas



*\*This includes Rogers residents working within one of the six key cities only. Approximately 7,000 Rogers residents commute elsewhere to work, based on 2018 Census Data..*

Sources: U.S. Census 2019, Rogers-Lowell Chamber of Commerce, USDA Food Access Research Atlas (2019); Census LEHD OD data (LODES), 2018.

## ARTS EMPLOYMENT

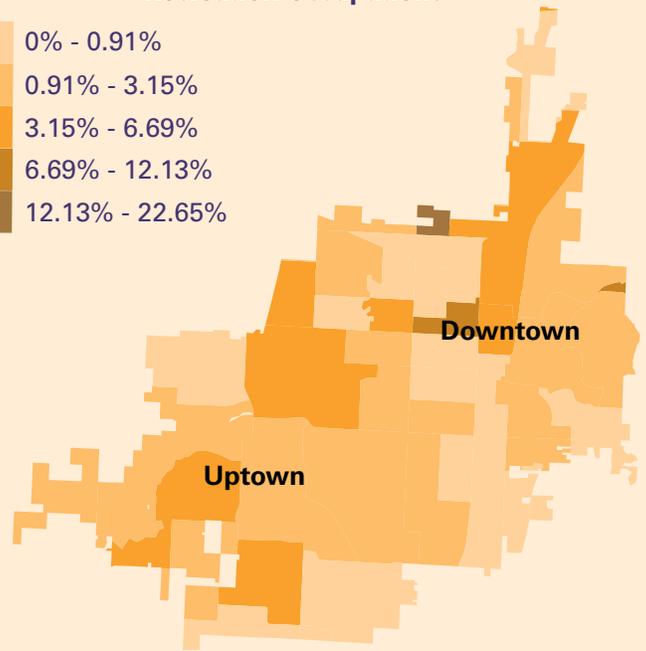
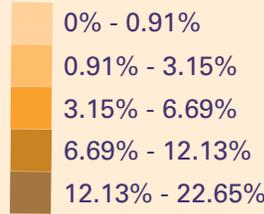
Although 18% of community members surveyed for this Plan identify as professional artists/cultural workers, only 2% of workers in Rogers are employed in fields related to arts, entertainment, recreation, and design. The census block group with the highest concentration of such workers in NWA (17%) is located at the northern edge of Rogers.

## FRESH FOOD ACCESS

Across Rogers, 54%—and in some areas as many as 92%—of households live more than half a mile away from a supermarket. Limited access to fresh foods is particularly burdensome for residents who do not drive: among residents of Rogers, as many as 6% neither live within half a mile of a grocery store, nor have access to a car.

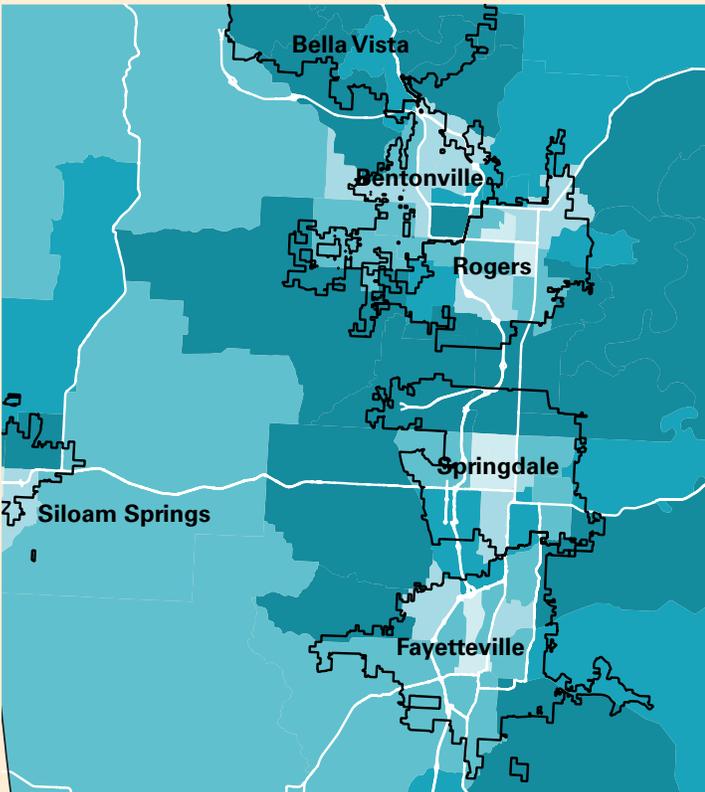
Regionally, the area with the most strained access to fresh foods is located just to the northwest of Rogers, along its border with Bentonville, where about 10% of families neither have access to a car nor access to fresh food within half a mile of their homes.

**% Residents Employed in Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation Occupations**



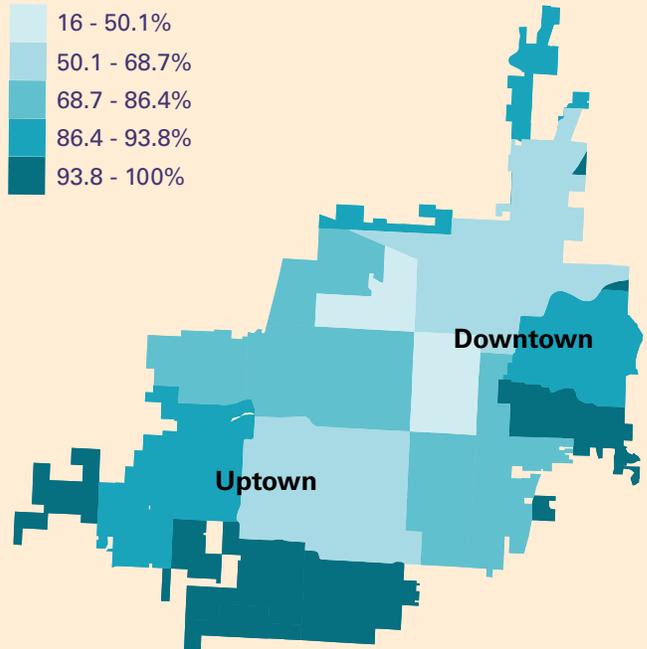
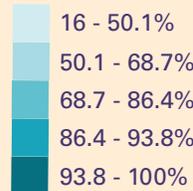
**Food Access in Northwest Arkansas**

% Residents Living More than .5 Miles from a Supermarket



**Food Access in Rogers**

% Residents Living More than .5 Miles from a Supermarket





# Built Environment

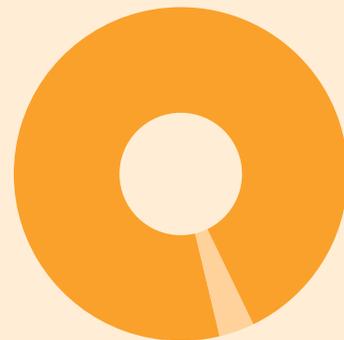
Many recommendations in this plan point to opportunities in the built environment, such as using public art in capital projects, and improving connections between cultural assets in Rogers.

The built density of Rogers is consistent with a suburban, single-family character, at a little over 1 dwelling unit per acre. The Southeastern edge of Rogers has had the greatest increase in population density over the past 20 years due to development activity, going from 1,319 people/sq. mi. in 2000 to 3,653 people/sq. mi. in 2019.

Downtown Rogers is higher in density than the Uptown area. There is a strong presence of City-owned land and recreational uses within close proximity to the walkable core.

## HOME VALUES AND OCCUPANCY

75% of all housing units in Rogers are single-family units. The median home value is \$178,000, though values range widely across census block groups. As of 2019, the two census block groups with the highest median home values across all of Benton and Washington Counties are located in Rogers, with the highest median value around \$598,000. 6% of Rogers's nearly 25,400 housing units were vacant or unoccupied as of 2019.

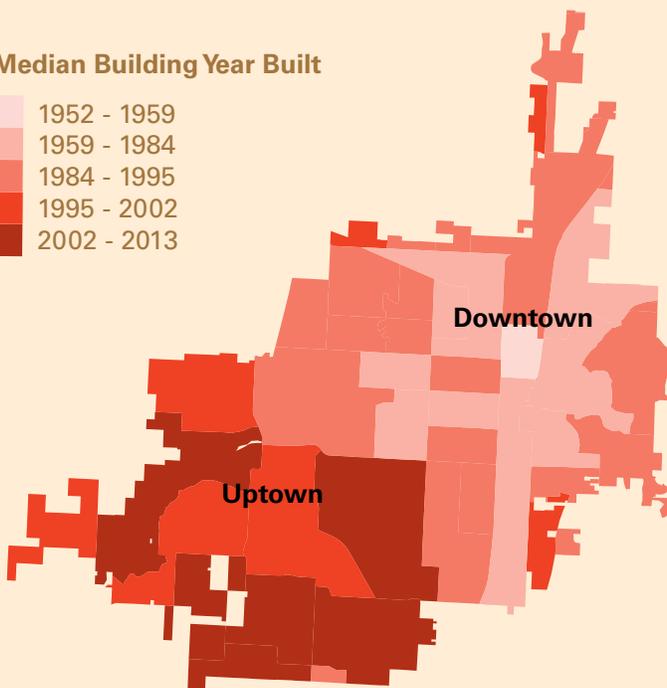


Occupied/Unoccupied Housing Units

- Occupied units
- Unoccupied units

Median Building Year Built

- 1952 - 1959
- 1959 - 1984
- 1984 - 1995
- 1995 - 2002
- 2002 - 2013



## BUILDING AGE

Building ages vary across Rogers, with the oldest structures in and around Downtown, and the newest around Uptown. Downtown has the oldest median year built at 1959, while areas in the southwest of the city, where density has increased the most in recent years, have a median building age around 2012.

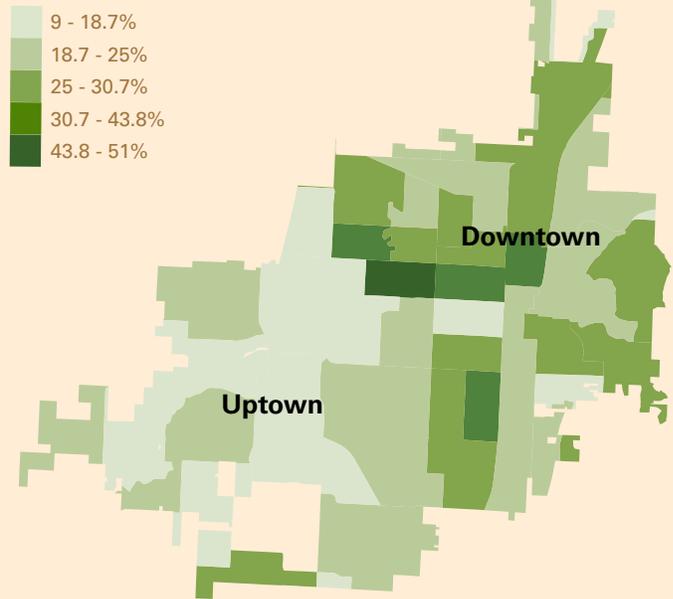
Older structures may present opportunities for historic preservation and tourism. Newer developments also present opportunities to incorporate public art and cultural programs.

Sources: American Community Survey 2019, City of Rogers

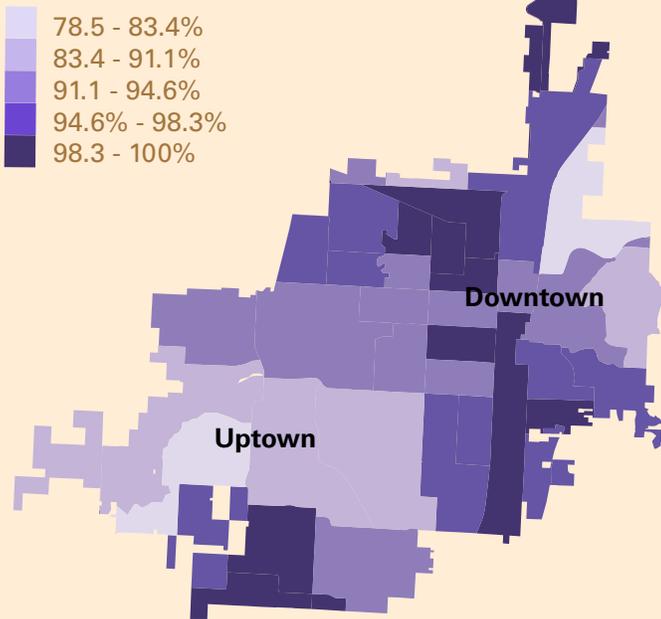
## RENT BURDEN

The median rent varies across Rogers by census block groups, from \$520 to \$2,188. As shown in the map at right some areas of Rogers experience rent burden (over 30% of income spent on rent), and extreme rent burden (over 50% of income spent on rent). Affordable housing for cultural workers and other residents is one need that has been identified through this Plan and in past studies of the region.

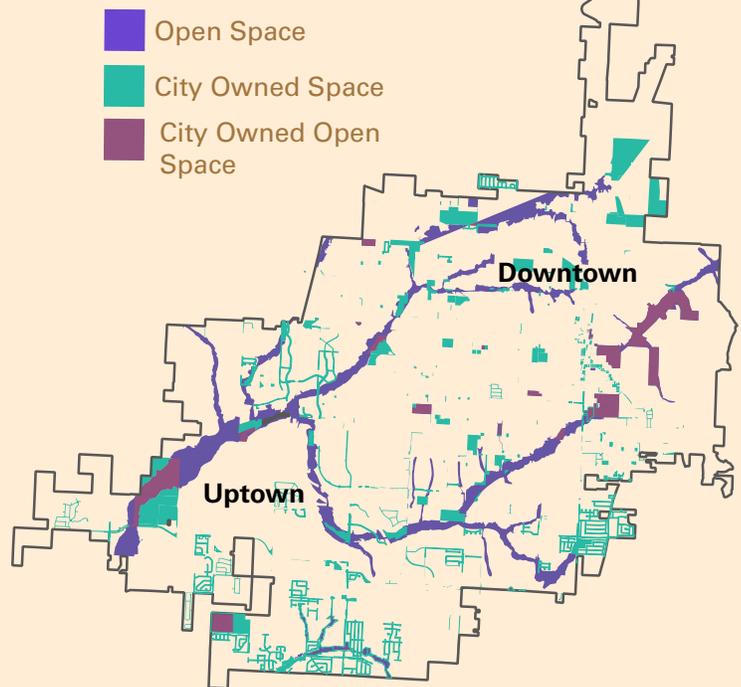
Median Rent as % of Income



% Housing Units Occupied



Land Ownership in City of Rogers



## LAND OWNERSHIP

City-owned space and open spaces throughout Rogers present opportunities for arts and cultural programming, and for enhancing community health and wellness. City-owned land and property present opportunities for cultural planning in the short term, through leasing structures, requests for proposals (RFPs), and other contracts and partnerships.

# State of Arts & Culture in Rogers

## In Perspective: Arts and Culture in Northwest Arkansas

Northwest Arkansas is increasingly seen as a destination for arts and culture. The region is home to larger institutions like the internationally-recognized Crystal Bridges Museum, as well as numerous performing arts groups and spaces, restaurants, and other arts and cultural organizations. Annually, the arts and culture sector in NWA generates \$131.2M in economic activity, supporting 4,647 jobs and delivering \$14.3M in local and state tax revenue.<sup>3</sup> Recent studies and surveys reveal that awareness of, access to, and diversity of programming are areas with room for improvement.

<sup>3</sup>Arts & Economic Prosperity 5, p.3

### State of Arts and Culture: Regional Insights

In recent years, several studies have been conducted about the state of arts and culture in Northwest Arkansas. These studies point to a set of key opportunities and challenges at the regional scale:

#### Key Opportunities

- **A growing creative sector:** creative sector earnings grew by 13% from 2011-2018. Creative job growth maintained an average annual growth rate of 3.6% over the same period (Creative Economies and Economic Recovery 2021).
- **Campus assets:** most performing arts venues in NWA are located on college campuses, pointing to academic institutions' important role in regional arts and culture (Strengthening the Cultural Infrastructure of Northwest Arkansas 2015).
- **People power:** in 2015, 2,254 volunteers donated a total of 101,741 hours to NWA's participating nonprofit arts and cultural organizations, an estimated value of \$2,397,018 (Arts & Economic Prosperity 2017).

## Key Challenges

- **Room for growth at the small scale:** NWA boasts a strong core of large cultural institutions, but there are relatively few independent artists and smaller cultural organizations in the region. (Arts Vibrancy in Northwest Arkansas 2018)
- **Keeping NWA livable and affordable:** many residents are concerned about rising costs of living and a lack of access to affordable housing in the region, which could drive displacement (Millennials, Generation Z, and Northwest Arkansas 2021)
- **Offerings do not reflect the region’s diversity:** Many of NWA’s cultural assets cater to middle-class white families with young children. Hispanic and African American residents report a lack of “culturally relevant” programming, and a lack of information about existing programs (Strengthening the Cultural Infrastructure of Northwest Arkansas 2015).
- **Transportation and access to culture:** car dependence and sprawl in the region can act as a barrier to local access to cultural activity. (Strengthening the Cultural Infrastructure of Northwest Arkansas 2015; Sound Diplomacy Report 2020)

*For a full list of studies and plans reviewed, please see Works Cited on page 110.*

## Rogers Arts & Culture Overview

Within NWA, Rogers is an art and cultural gem. Culturally significant attractions within Rogers include museums, breweries, galleries, and the various restaurants and other gathering places which host live performances and enhance Rogers’s nightlife. The recently completed Railyard Park celebrates the city’s history, and its Butterfield Stage contributes to a growing network of venues. Freely-accessible, the Stage strengthens Rogers’s public realm and hosts robust programming. Downtown’s Frisco Plaza hosts a variety of public programs, including a weekly Farmers Market and various community events. Uptown Rogers is home to the region’s pre-eminent outdoor music venue, the Walmart AMP.

“

**The number of art assets/facilities in Rogers grew 193% from 2014 to 2018, the largest jump by far in Northwest Arkansas.**

*- Vision 100, Rogers and Lowell, Arkansas (2019)*

”

Beyond its organizations and more formal establishments, arts and culture in Rogers is defined by the city’s passionate community, which brings together a dynamic mix of entrepreneurial spirits, creative movers and shakers, dedicated practitioners, devoted educators, and more. The diverse combination of traditions and creative visions brought together by Rogers’s residents often results in a fusion, such as Rogers’s spirited festivals, beloved artisan shops, and a growing number of local businesses and venues that open their doors to community and creative uses.

Diversity is one of Rogers’s greatest strengths. Moving forward, it will be vital to ensure there are opportunities for all community members to meaningfully participate in arts and cultural experiences that they feel represented by, regardless of age, ability, language(s) spoken, or any other identity.

“ It is very important not to try to compete with more established institutions such as Crystal Bridges, and instead to focus on finding and supporting Rogers’s niche in the regional ecosystem.

– RPAC Workshop Participant

”

### SPOTLIGHT: INTO+VIEW Gallery

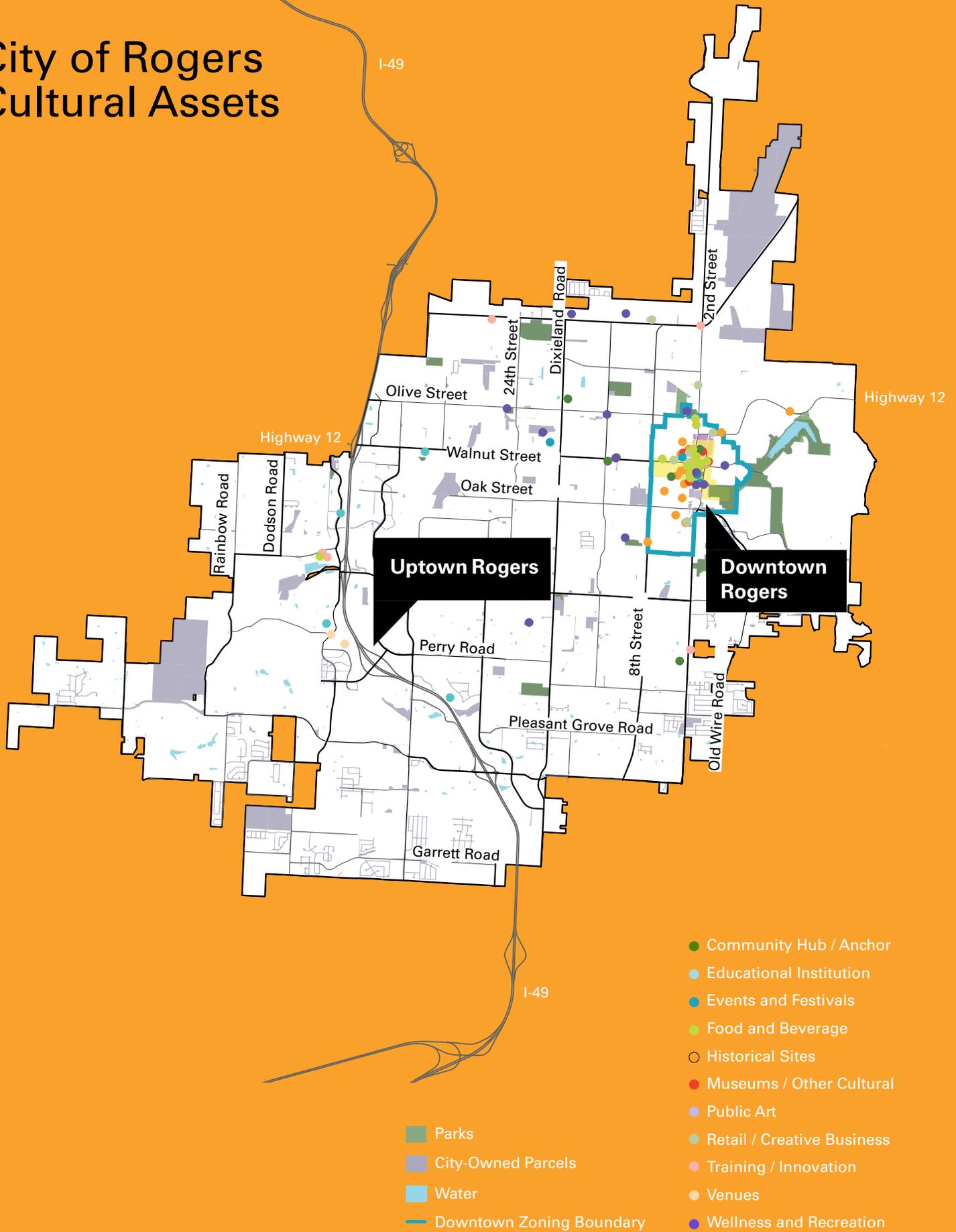
“INTO+VIEW is the art space I wished existed when I moved here in 1999—a gallery and work space that would be welcoming to me as a Black woman, provide representation and a safe space to express myself creatively. This gallery will bring into view under-represented artists of color, women, and artists of advanced age. INTO+VIEW will be a vehicle for establishing critical context connections, solidarity, and a sense of community for the artists by means of exhibitions, musical performances, shared art experiences featuring culinary arts, and resident artists’ workshops.”

- Kinya Christian, CEO/Creative, INTO+VIEW Gallery

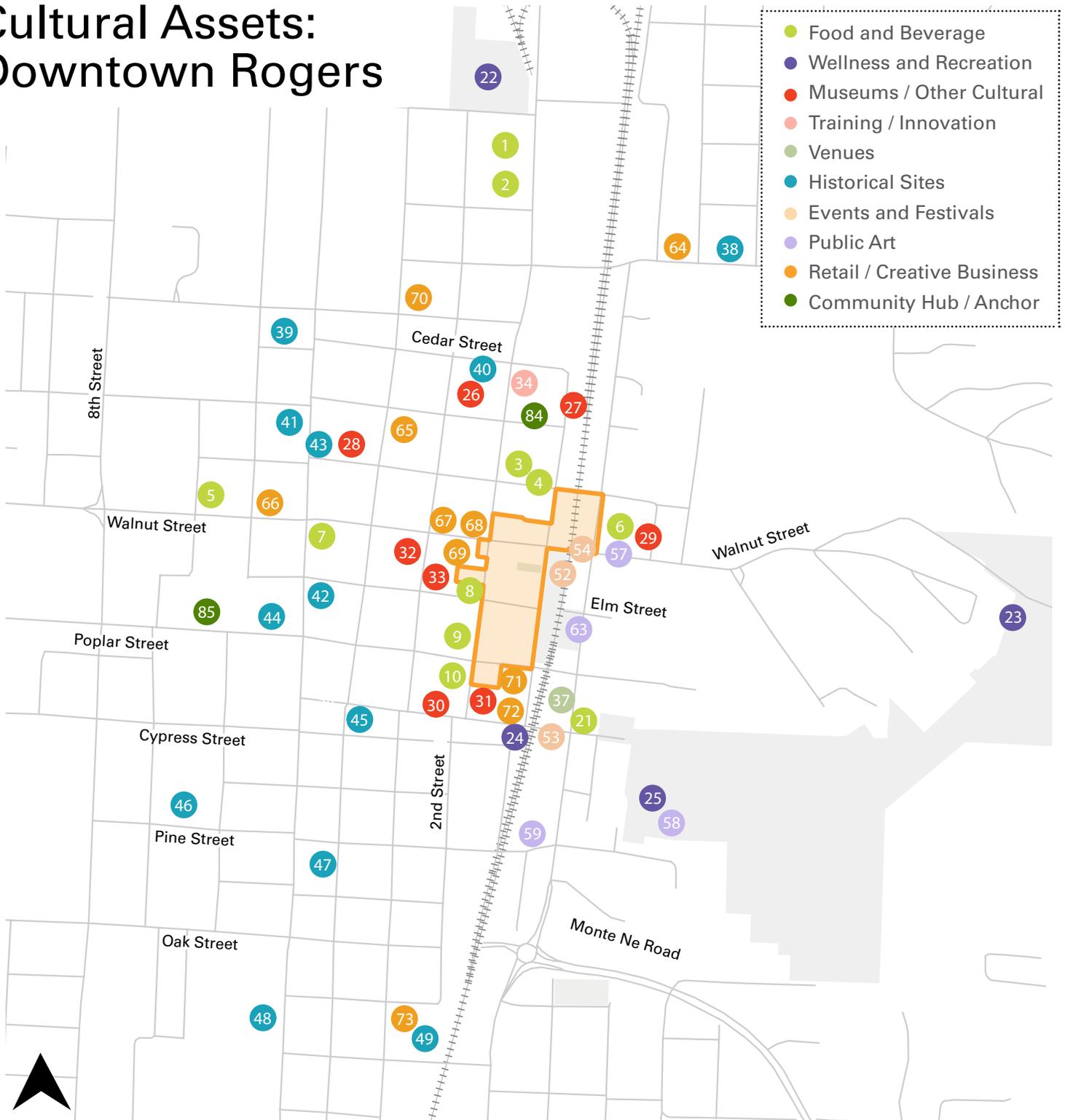


Kinya Christian, CEO of INTO+VIEW Gallery (Photo courtesy of Kinya Christian).

# City of Rogers Cultural Assets



# Cultural Assets: Downtown Rogers



**Food and Beverage**

- 1 Mavis Wine Co
- 2 Hawk Moth Brewery
- 3 Havana Grill
- 4 Wesner's Grill
- 5 City Pump, Food

Trucks & Libations

- 6 Ozark Beer Company
- 7 Hapa's Hawaiian Bar and Grill
- 8 Kirby's Kupcakes
- 9 Levi's Gastrolounge

10 Las Palmas

- 11 Moonbroch Pub
- 12 Yeyo's Mezcaleria y Taqueria
- 13 Onyx Coffee
- 14 Anime Cafe
- 15 Parkside Public

16 Alexander Baking Company

- 17 The Rail Pizza Company
- 18 Iron Horse Coffee Co
- 19 Club Frisco
- 20 The Five6

21 Lo-Intervention by Onyx

- Wellness and Recreation**
- 22 Rogers Activity Center
- 23 Lake Atalanta Park and Trails

# Cultural Assets: Historic District

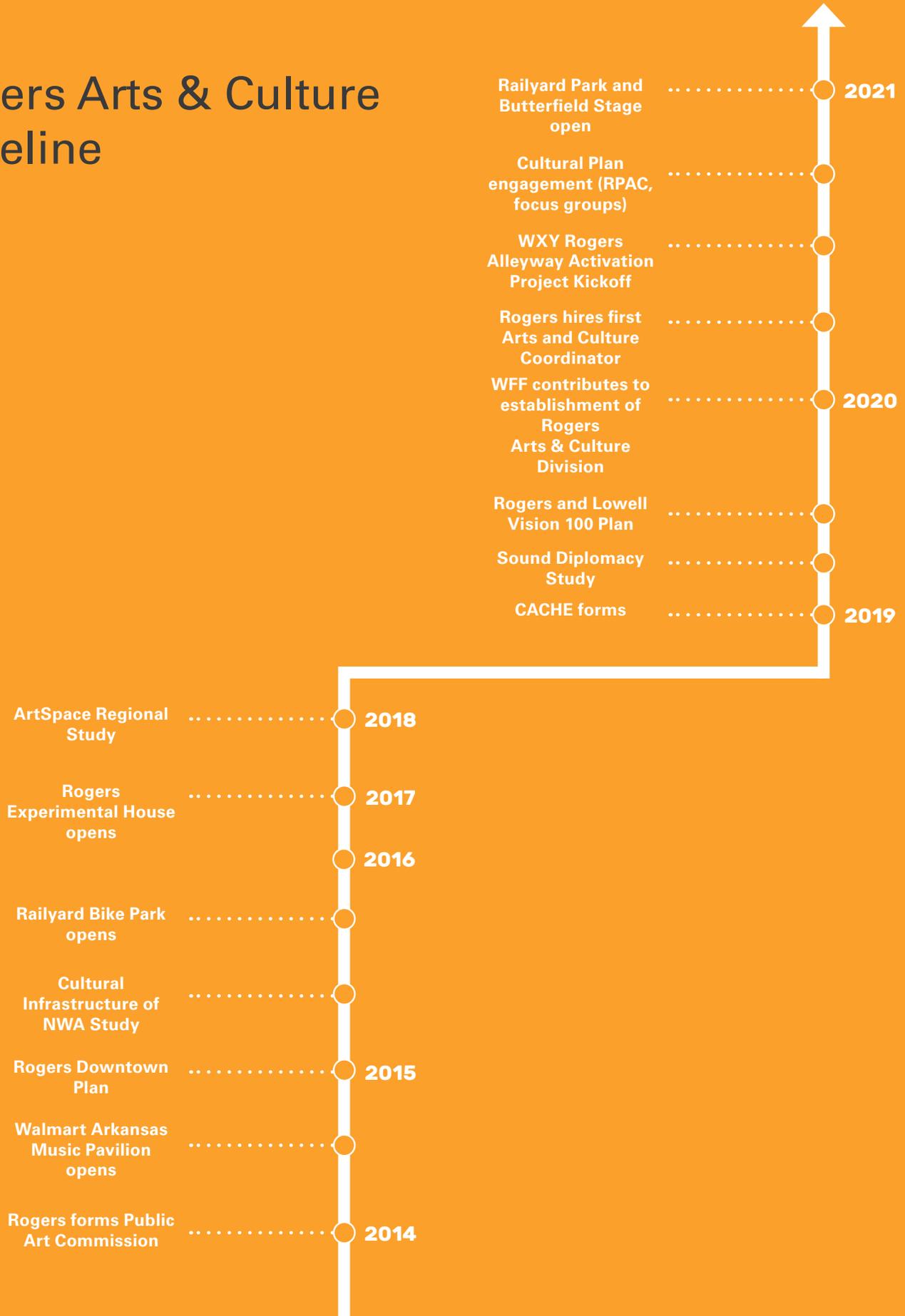


Note: Much of the data in the Cultural Asset Map comes from the Artspace Study of 2018, and may be out of date. This Plan recommends further asset mapping to compile a more complete and publicly available map of cultural assets in Rogers, including engagement with residents and stakeholders.

- **Venues**
  - 36 Victory Theater
  - 37 Butterfield Stage/Railyard Live
- **Historical Sites**
  - 38 Bryan House No2
  - 39 Charles Juhre House
  - 40 Myler House
  - 41 Blackburn House
  - 42 Freeman - Felker House
  - 43 Rogers City Hall
  - 44 Parks-Regan House
  - 45 Kefauver House
  - 46 Merrill House
  - 47 Campbell House
  - 48 Vinson House
  - 49 Rogers Milk Plant Building
  - 50 Bank of Rogers Building
  - 51 Rogers Post Office Building
- **Events and Festivals**
  - 52 Annual Frisco Festival
  - 53 Rogers Cycling Festival
  - 54 Downtown Rogers Farmers Market
  - 55 Art on the Bricks
- **Public Art**
  - 57 Rosa Parks Mural
  - 58 Railcar Mural
  - 59 Icehouse Mural
  - 60 Robert Montgomery Artwork
  - 61 Blue Girl Mural
  - 62 Coca-Cola Mural
- **Community Hub / Anchor**
  - 63 Water Tower Murals
- **Retail / Creative Business**
  - 64 Ozark Collaborative
  - 65 The Frame Shoppe
  - 66 All Things Kindred
  - 67 Fresh Harvest
  - 68 Honeycomb Kitchen Shop
  - 69 Golden's Designer Jewelry
  - 70 Bod High Productions
  - 71 Resource Design & Graphic Design
  - 72 Phat Tire Bike Shop
  - 73 Ecological Design Group
  - 74 White's and Company Jewelry
  - 75 Rusty Chair
  - 76 Dandy Roll
  - 77 Avenue Design Company
  - 78 Molly Love
  - 79 The Dotted Pig
  - 80 The Gathering in Rogers
  - 81 Bodylove Naturals
  - 82 Frisco Tattoo
  - 83 StudioChunky

- **Museums / Other Cultural**
  - 24 Butterfly Garden
  - 25 Railyard Bike Park
  - 26 Studio 300
  - 27 Rogers Fire Department Museum
  - 28 Downtown Rogers Inc.
  - 29 Dance with me Studio by Aura
  - 30 Hawkins House
  - 31 Rogers Historical Museum
  - 32 Daisy Airgun Museum
  - 33 Ed Cooley Gallery
  - 34 Art & Soul Studios
  - 35 Rogers Experimental House
- **Training / Innovation**

# Rogers Arts & Culture Timeline



## State of Arts and Culture: Local Insights

In recent years, local plans and studies at the regional scale have presented findings and recommendations for arts and culture in Rogers. Key insights include:

- **The local sector is growing:** The number of arts assets/facilities in Rogers grew by 193% from 2014 to 2018, the largest jump by far among cities in NWA (Vision 100).
- **An attractive option for creatives:** Rogers ranks second in NWA as the place artists want to have space. According to a 2018 survey, 49% of artists in the region would consider relocating to Rogers (Artspace Arts Market Study).
- **A market for artist housing:** In Rogers, there is a market for up to 24 live/work spaces and up to 22 units of artist studio space (Artspace Arts Market Study.)
- **Making room for music:** Rogers was the only city in NWA as of 2014 with a special exemption from noise complaints for permitted artists and venues, greatly expanding opportunities to perform outside of formal institutions and events (Sound Diplomacy).
- **Historic buildings as an asset:** Downtown Rogers has an abundance of historical buildings that, if revitalized, could help to provide an “attractive housing and entertainment mix” as well as boost tourism (Downtown Rogers Initiative Plan).

*For a full list of studies and plans reviewed, please see Works Cited on page 110.*

## Rogers in Perspective: Comparable Cities

The project team analyzed the approach of a number of comparable cities, including their arts and cultural programming, initiatives, and in many cases, cultural plans of their own. Serving as case studies, insights from the experiences of other cities help to inform the structure and goals of Rogers’s own cultural planning and development. With a range of priorities and perspectives, reflecting on these peer cities and their unique strategies allowed the project team to hone in on a cultural plan best suited for Rogers. This research focused on twelve cities comparable to Rogers across a number of factors, including land area, household income, and population, size, diversity, and growth.

See Appendix B. Comparable Cities Review Table on page 114 for a full overview of comparable cities’ policy and program highlights.

### Comparable Cities Highlights

- Of the twelve cities reviewed, eight have cultural plans.
- Five of the peer cities have arts foundations, partnerships, or commissions that serve as an economic engine for arts and cultural planning.
- Three of the peer cities have percent for art programs, in which taxes are leveraged for public art or other arts and culture funding.

4





# Eng age ment

What We've  
Heard So Far



# Engagement: What We've Heard So Far

## Why is Engagement Important?

Community engagement is critical to this planning process because arts and culture are driven by people. While the City of Rogers is positioned to create ideal conditions for the arts to thrive, local culture has been and will continue to be shaped by members of the community. Artists and cultural workers in particular are experts on Rogers's cultural challenges and strengths, and their insights form a major component of the engagement conducted in anticipation of this Plan. Also essential to this process were a range of other voices from the community, including those of small business owners, cultural advocates and organizers, educators and students, and others who participate in local culture as audiences and participants.

The recommendations formed through the planning process were shaped by engagement efforts specific to this Cultural Plan, as well as insights from past engagement conducted for various initiatives in the region, such as the *Vision 100* plan. Critical ideas were generated at the local scale through engagement with the Rogers Public Art Commission (RPAC) as well as other key stakeholders. At a regional scale, other important insights were contributed by the Artspace Arts Market Study of 2018 and Northwest Arkansas Music Ecosystem Strategy and Action Plan of 2020. It is very important that the City and its partners continue to meaningfully engage with community members moving forward to ensure that cultural planning is aligned with residents' priorities and responsive to shifting needs and challenges.

## ENGAGEMENT CONDUCTED SO FAR

Several types of engagement were conducted as part of Rogers's cultural planning process. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the engagement process was facilitated in large part online. Tools such as a public survey as well as virtual meetings with key individuals and stakeholder groups helped to reveal the community's priorities for arts and cultural planning and development. Several communities have been identified as proportionally underrepresented in this and other engagement processes, including young residents as well as residents who identify as Hispanic or Latinx, Black, and Asian or Pacific Islander. This Plan recommends strengthening efforts to reach out to these groups and continuing to engage residents at large to deepen the City's understanding of arts, culture, and wellness in Rogers.



**Rogers gets lost between Bentonville and Fayetteville, sometimes for the better, but most often as that other city that people can visit or live in when they work elsewhere or drive through on their way to the lake. What an incredible opportunity to carve out Rogers as a unique place in NWA.**



*- Public Survey Respondent*

### Engagement Overview

- 3 Focus Groups led by CACHE (21 participants)
- 5 Workshops with Rogers Public Art Commission (RPAC)
- 2 Focus Groups led by WXY (12 participants)
- Public Survey (504 respondents)
- Related engagement through Alleyway Activation Design Excellence project:
  - 11 Stakeholder Interviews
  - Various stakeholder meetings
  - Public engagement and survey at Frisco Festival

## Major Themes from Engagement

- Arts and cultural diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Supporting arts, culture, and wellness workers
- Importance of community health and wellness
- The arts and culture pipeline
- Preserving and enhancing the built environment

## Key Findings and Priorities

Across engagement activities conducted so far, a set of key priorities emerged among participants. These priorities are outlined below, along with related recommendations and insights that were raised repeatedly across meetings, workshops, and the public survey.

### ARTS AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

- Promoting greater diversity, equity, and inclusion in arts and culture is a critical concern for most engagement participants; members of RPAC seek more leadership opportunities for residents of color, and rank strengthening cultural representation and inclusivity as their top priority.
- Participants feel it is important to engage other groups too often excluded from fully participating in arts and cultural experiences, such as the elderly, non-English speakers, and residents in Rogers experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness.
- Alongside exploring the cultures of fellow residents, participants feel it is important to highlight the region's Indigenous population and regional folk traditions and crafts.
- Current promotion and marketing strategies are described as somewhat limited, especially for non-English speaking communities.

### SUPPORTING ARTS, CULTURE, AND WELLNESS WORKERS

- Many participants cite a need for affordable living and working spaces for cultural workers and all residents. This supports the findings of previous studies such as the Artspace report (2018).
- Participants feel that supporting local creators is essential to the future of arts and culture in Rogers – both through paid opportunities and through mentorship, visibility, and professional development.
- Participants expressed that the City's process to request street closures and other event permitting is complex and could be better streamlined to encourage more activity and partnerships.

## IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS

- Rogers’s extensive network of bicycle and hiking trailways are highly valued regionally and beyond. Most participants agree the City should invest in these resources to pursue wellness goals.
- There is enthusiasm among participants for expanded local dining options and fresh food access, including through expanded farmers markets and community gardening infrastructure.
- The City can support public health by encouraging wellness practices related to arts and culture, from dance and expressive movement to culinary experimentation.

## THE ARTS AND CULTURE EDUCATIONAL PIPELINE

- There is widespread support for engaging students and strengthening arts and cultural education within and outside of public schools.
- Participants suggest partnering with local and regional institutions to strengthen the arts, cultural, and wellness pipeline.

## PRESERVING AND ENHANCING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- Participants treasure Rogers’s historic architecture spread across the Downtown area.
- The great majority of participants support expanding the presence of public art in Rogers, with certain concerns raised, such as prioritizing local artists and ensuring public art does not detract from historic character.
- Engagement with local property owners will be critical to cohesively elevating public art moving forward.

“

**Addressing fragmentation (...) will be important in creating a strong identity for Rogers. Right now, there are just pockets of town, like the retail pocket, the suburban neighborhood pockets, the downtown pocket...but it is very splintered.**

”

*- Public Survey Respondent*

“

**I’ve been in Rogers off and on since birth and the diversity of the area is wonderful. I’d love to see cultural events and festivals that encourage people to interact with others of different backgrounds and find commonalities.**

”

*- Public Survey Respondent*



Among engagement participants identifying as Spanish-speaking or Latinx, key concerns were related to access. These survey respondents experience additional hardship locating healthy food options, and are limited in their knowledge of arts and cultural events because programming is often marketed in places only convenient to some, only in English, or both.

Aside from lack of awareness of local events and resources, Hispanic/Latinx-identifying respondents expressed concern that transportation to and between cultural venues is limited, constraining the ability of some community members to participate in Rogers's festivals and events. Hispanic and Latinx respondents report participating in arts and cultural events at a slightly lower rate than the population overall, which is likely related to these access concerns.

“

**Now is the time to explore new partnerships and broaden our thinking to extend beyond other City agencies, and foster collaboration beyond Rogers's borders... it's time to be thinking about old partners in new ways, cultivate new partners, and grow local cultural leadership, especially people of color.**

”

*- RPAC Workshop Participant*

## Public Survey Insights

- Among residents participating in the survey, 46% have been based in Rogers for more than fifteen years.
- 13% of respondents work in an arts, culture, or wellness related field to earn a living.
- Most respondents learn about events and programming via social media (83%). Other important avenues are: word of mouth, email, advertisements in local media, and physical signage.
- Respondents reported their greatest barrier to participating in arts and culture is not knowing where to locate information (41%).
- 58% of respondents go out to a local restaurant, café or bar and 42% of respondents participate in local recreation more than three times a month. By contrast, only 16% of respondents attend local arts and culture programming more than three times a month; 52% of respondents infrequently, rarely, or never attend such programs.
- Most respondents would like to see increased cultural programming and public art within Historic Downtown Rogers, followed by Lake Atalanta and other public parks, and Uptown.

*Public survey highlights continued on the following page.*

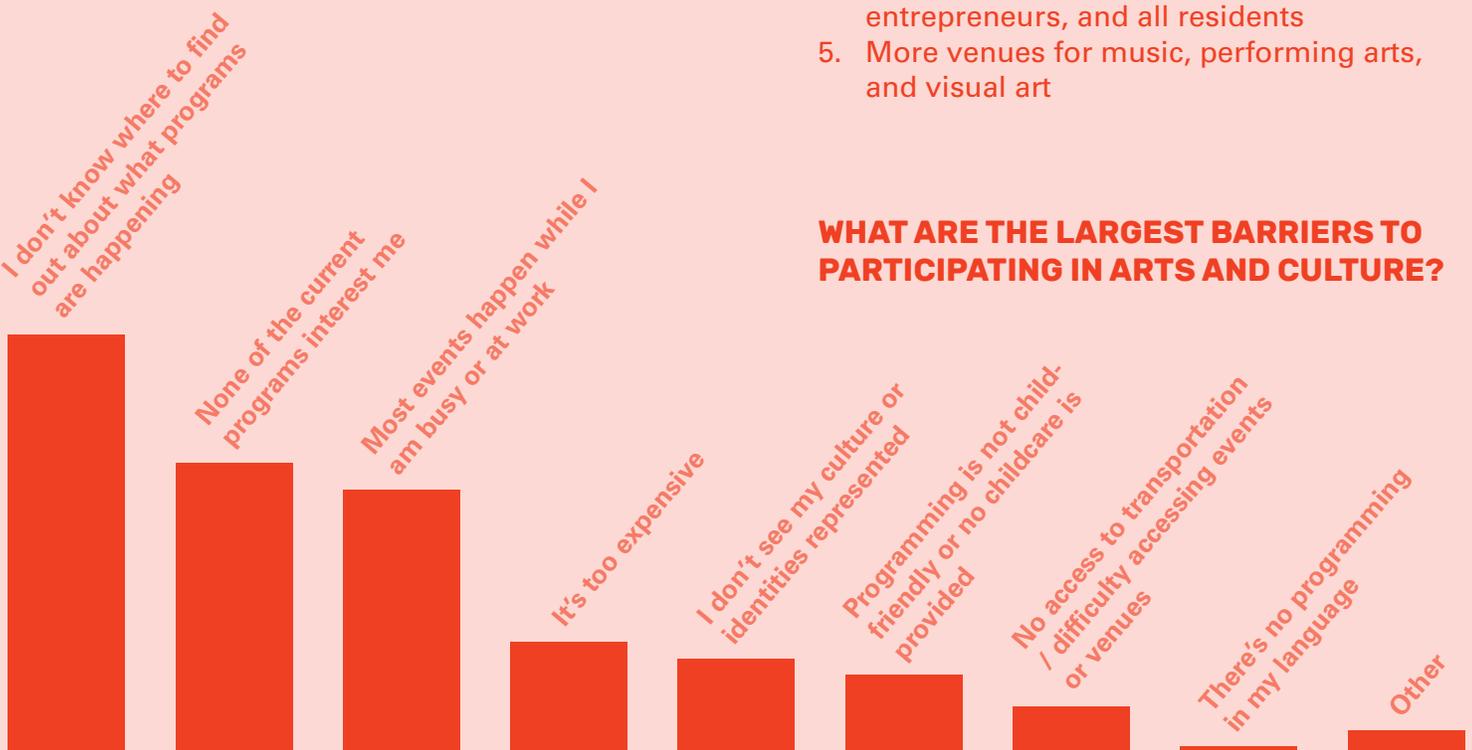
# Public Survey Highlights

## What kinds of programming should the City prioritize?

1. Festivals (i.e. music, art, food festivals)
2. Public performances (i.e. film screenings, concerts, dance, theatre)
3. Markets (i.e. art/craft sales, food markets)

## WHICH PRIORITIES FOR CULTURAL PLANNING IN ROGERS ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU?

1. A wider variety of locally owned restaurants, bars, and cafes
2. Improved and additional free events (i.e. concerts, festivals, performances)
3. Improved opportunities for residents to get fresh, healthy, and local food (i.e. farmers markets, community gardens)
4. Better access to affordable housing and work space for cultural workers, entrepreneurs, and all residents
5. More venues for music, performing arts, and visual art

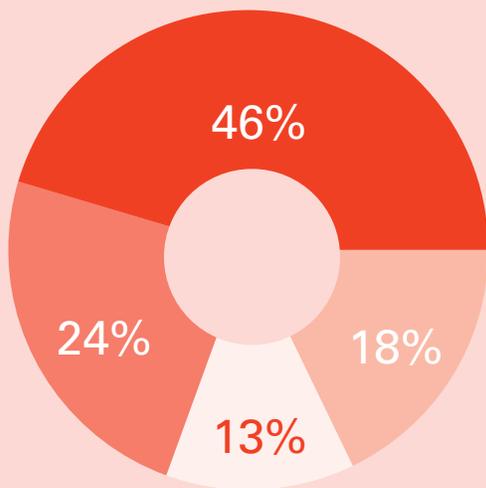


## WHAT ARE THE LARGEST BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATING IN ARTS AND CULTURE?

**For those who practice arts and culture: Which forms of support are of highest priority to you?**

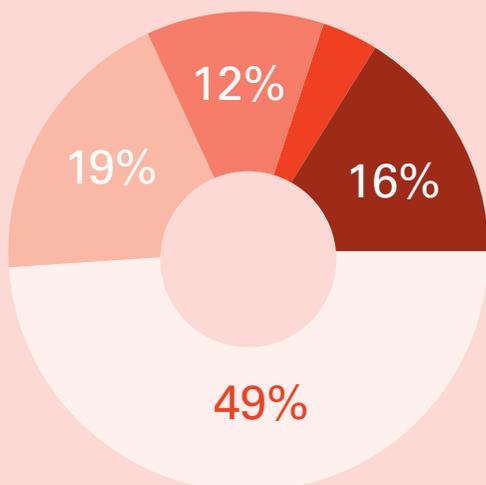
1. Affordable housing\*
2. Publicity and visibility
3. Collaboration (i.e. networking and mentorship opportunities)

**WHAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR ROLE IN RELATION TO ARTS AND CULTURE?**



- I work in art, culinary/food, music/performing arts, wellness, or related field to earn a living/make money
- I practice art, culinary/food, music/performing arts, or wellness, but this is not how I earn a living or make money
- I practice art, culinary/food, music/performing arts, or wellness, but only as a hobby or for fun
- None of the above

**FOR THOSE WHO PRACTICE ARTS AND CULTURE: ABOUT WHAT PERCENTAGE OF YOUR INCOME COMES FROM THIS WORK?**



- My income comes entirely from this work
- This work makes up the majority of my income (more than 50% of my income)
- This work makes up some part of my income but not enough to get by (10-50% of my income)
- I am paid very little or infrequently for this work (Less than 10% of my income)
- None/I am not paid at all for this work

*\*Note: affordable housing received both the greatest proportion of high priority ratings (1-2) and low priority rankings (5-6). More engagement is recommended to better understand housing-related needs and priorities for arts, culture, and wellness workers and Rogers residents more broadly.*

5



# Vision & Objectives

The background image shows a building on the left with a colorful mural featuring a woman's face. To the right, there is a train yard with several black train cars. The sky is blue with white clouds. The text 'Vision & Objectives' is overlaid in a large, yellow, sans-serif font.



# A Vision for Arts & Culture in Rogers

Rogers is a vibrant center of cultural activity where arts are highlighted throughout the landscape and positively impact all who visit, live, or work in the city. Rogers will be a regional leader and a national example for its strong engagement with and support for local culture. With particular focus on public art, music and performing arts, and wellness, Rogers will be a place where a wide range of creative individuals and enterprises can collaborate and thrive. True to its roots as a railway town and commercial hub, the city will leverage its points of connection to establish a thriving cultural environment for residents, visitors, and creative workers near and far.

Living up to its slogan as the city *where possible lives*, Rogers supports innovation in arts and culture, and fosters an environment where new ideas, programs, and collaborations can flourish. Public spaces are activated regularly, creative workers and enterprises access resources and opportunities with ease, and the city hosts a strong pipeline of opportunities for young people and all residents to develop their creative skills and interests. Rogers's well-preserved Downtown provides a rich and meaningful backdrop for a dynamic cultural atmosphere cultivated by a growing and diversifying population.

One of Rogers's greatest assets is its diversity, and future arts and cultural activity will celebrate this diversity and invite residents to share in one another's practices and traditions. All members of the community can access, feel

represented by, and benefit from arts and culture. Barriers to participating in initiatives and events are reduced so all groups can meaningfully participate in local culture, regardless of age, income, ability, or language.

A thriving arts and cultural ecosystem in Rogers will place the well-being of community members at the center. Rogers's existing network of mountain trailways and bicycle paths will be expanded, strengthening local connectivity and further encouraging healthy, active lifestyles among residents. Widespread wellness infrastructure such as community gardens and farmers markets engage residents in sustainable food practices and support improved public health outcomes. Streets, alleyways, and inviting sidewalks showcase the arts, and public spaces are vibrant, welcoming, and well-used. Public art throughout the city will reflect the diverse values and talents of its residents, and tie together all of Rogers's neighborhoods.

Leveraging its prosperous history and the diversity of the community and its creators, Rogers will be a beacon of arts and culture where creativity is shared by all. Local culture will continue to be driven by members of the community, and as Rogers's arts and culture thrives, the community will benefit as a whole.

*Note: This vision was formed through engagement with residents and stakeholders, with the input of City leaders. It is intended as a living statement and should be updated continually to ensure cultural planning captures and inspires the evolution of arts and culture in Rogers. Ongoing engagement is needed to ensure the vision reflects Rogers's diverse population and residents' various priorities and needs.*

## Guiding Objectives

The following pages outline a set of three guiding objectives to further this vision for arts and culture in Rogers. Within each are a set of goals, accompanied by example of potential impacts for the City to use to measure progress.

## PLANNING PRINCIPLES

### *Originality*

Rogers's unique character should be celebrated and its originality preserved. The community and its history and values should be at the center of expanding on Rogers's sense of place.

### *Inclusivity*

Rogers is a place where creativity is for everyone. Cultural planning should ensure arts and culture reflect and embrace Rogers's diversity, making space for all residents and their cultures to thrive.

### *Vitality*

Arts and cultural resources should be leveraged and creators supported as drivers of Rogers's broader economic development. Cultural planning should cultivate a rich quality of life for all residents.

### *Accessibility*

Opportunities to meaningfully participate in arts and culture should be accessible to all, regardless of age, ability, income, ethnicity, language, or any other identity.



# Community & Character

## Objective 1: Strengthen community and celebrate Rogers's unique character

Arts and culture should reflect the city's diversity, including its residents of many ages, abilities, and various other backgrounds. Groups currently underrepresented in arts and culture should have greater opportunities to take part as creators and participants. Arts and culture that speak to the community's history and values will expand opportunities for engagement and participation while celebrating the unique character Rogers has already cultivated.

While the community's schools host a range of opportunities for cultural education, residents of all ages can benefit for opportunities to learn, both in and beyond the classroom. Strategic partnerships with schools and community organizations can contribute to a more robust arts and culture pipeline in Rogers, expanding the base of cultural audiences, creators, and advocates.

Visitors from across the region and beyond should be made aware of what makes Rogers special. The City and its partners should increase awareness of Rogers's special qualities and the many arts and cultural experiences it has to offer.

### Peer Spotlight: Meridian

Meridian, Idaho organizes several initiatives that recognize the power of art to bring community members together. Meridian displays the artwork of its community in several locations on a juried basis, including in a City-owned gallery. Meridian Art Week took place in September 2021 and included an Art Drop—a “peer-to-peer art exchange”—in which residents engaged with the cultures and traditions of their neighbors through art.



**“Connections”** is part of a series of artworks which have been placed on Meridian's public infrastructure. This piece by Rylie Krahn, a 6th grade resident, speaks to themes of mutual love and respect (Photo credit: Meridian Arts Commission).

# Goals & Impacts

1

## Ensure that arts and cultural programming is inclusive of all residents and that producers and participants reflect the city’s diversity in all its forms

IMPACTS

- Leaders, event organizers, and City partners represent a diverse range of groups, including marginalized communities who have historically been less vocal in cultural activities
- Recipients of public commissions, RFP’s, and partnerships meet rigorous diversity and equity goals established by the City
- Increased opportunities to participate in cultural planning as City advisors and partners, particularly for underrepresented communities

2

## Create opportunities for learning and collaboration – including opportunities for cultural workers, young people, and the general public

IMPACTS

- Increased number and variety of opportunities to collaborate, learn, and expand on residents’ understanding of one another’s traditions and culture
- Expanded physical network for cultural engagement and learning that capitalizes on public facilities and partnerships (i.e. libraries, activity centers)
- Increased access to mentorship, networking, and other forms of exchange among arts, culture, and wellness workers

3

## Define and communicate Rogers’s unique character to create strong recognition throughout the city and region

IMPACTS

- Greater awareness among residents and visitors of Rogers’s unique qualities and cultural offerings, leading to increased business patronage, tourism, and program attendance
- Recognition across the region of Rogers’s unique assets, including outdoor access and trails, cultural venues, restaurants, and historic Downtown
- Increased visibility for Rogers’s creative workers and organizations, leading to expanded opportunities and support



# Economic Vitality & Quality of Life

## Objective 2: Promote economic vitality and enhance quality of life for all residents

Thoughtful cultural planning can improve prosperity and opportunity for all those who live and work in Rogers and contribute to an improved quality of life for all communities.

The City and its partners can promote healthy living through investment in public spaces and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and boosting fresh food access through the Farmers Market and other programs. This Plan recognizes the contributions of food producers and chefs, healthcare workers, and the recreation and fitness community as integral parts of Rogers's culture, and to sustaining a vibrant city.

The following goals seek to support creators and cultural participants in a number of ways, such as increased visibility and funding, strategic partnerships, and use of public spaces and resources when possible. Broadly marketed cultural events could draw thousands of additional visitors to Rogers, boosting several facets of the economy associated with local tourism activity and raising local revenues.

Supportive policies and programs can encourage more creative workers and businesses to form and stay in Rogers, ensuring Rogers is a place where arts, culture, wellness, and the people who fuel them, can thrive.

### Peer Spotlight: Concord

The Cabarrus Arts Council is a non-profit organization and is the state's official arts and cultural partner for Cabarrus County, North Carolina (where Concord is located). With a mix of local, state, and private funding, the Council spent over one million dollars supporting arts and culture in 2019. The Council installs public artworks, but its primary focus is to implement programming and award grant funding that highlights groups previously underrepresented in local arts and culture. In 2019, the Council reached 335,097 participants, exhibited the work of 132 local artists, and awarded thirteen grants to grassroots organizations.



A gallery event hosted by Cabarrus Arts Council (Photo credit: Cabarrus Arts Council).

# Goals & Impacts

# 1

## Leverage Rogers’s unique cultural offerings to increase tourism, boost spending, and grow an audience base

IMPACTS

- More visitors are drawn to Rogers to access its cultural resources and recreational amenities
- Increased resident participation and frequency of meaningful engagement with local arts and culture
- A greater number of partners and participants in local programming, such as at farmers markets or concerts at Butterfield Stage

# 2

## Position Rogers as a place where artists, cultural workers, and all residents can thrive

IMPACTS

- Improved access to cultural infrastructure such as food stalls, maker spaces, or art galleries, supporting the work of local creators and entrepreneurs
- Expanded opportunities for affordable housing and workspace, and employment opportunities, shaping a desirable place for creative residents to live and work
- Increased awareness throughout NWA and beyond of Rogers’s culture and high quality of life

# 3

## Sustain arts, culture, and community wellness in Rogers through funding structures that tap into regional and national funding streams

IMPACTS

- An increasing number of independent artists and cultural organizations are able to sustain themselves in the long-term in Rogers
- A wider variety of paid opportunities are available to creative workers in Rogers through public commissions, grants, residencies, exhibitions, or other events
- A higher variety and caliber of recognition and opportunities are available to the City and its partners through regional funding strategies and national sponsors



# Built Environment

## Objective 3: Shape a dynamic and inspiring built environment

Rogers has already cultivated a unique built environment that is celebrated across the region, and Objective 3 seeks to expand on the city's historic and built assets. Artworks throughout the city will expand on and embrace Rogers's history and the community's values, and performing arts and other events will draw residents and visitors into the public realm with meaningful cultural activity.

Through thoughtful policies and the use of City-owned land, art, culture, and wellness can be more deeply woven into the fabric of Rogers. This includes integrating artists into public works projects, activating City land for food production, community programs, and cultural events, and more.

The ability of cultural spaces and initiatives such as performing arts venues, festivals, community gardens, and public art to succeed and grow will depend on the community's ability to access them. Means of travel to cultural spaces and events that are spread across Rogers's landscape have been described as sometimes limited or burdensome, and Rogers's many assets can be better connected through wayfinding, visual cohesion, and strong transportation infrastructure.

### Peer Spotlight: Tyler and Bismarck

Tyler, Texas and Bismarck, North Dakota have each recently re-purposed one of their downtown alleyways as spaces for celebrating culture and engaging with public art. Bismarck's Arts Alley serves as a public art gallery showcasing the power of the arts to enliven public space. The City of Tyler's goal is to create an art-based destination to showcase local talent. The Alleyway Activation initiative in Downtown Rogers, a project with WXY to re-imagine an alleyway Downtown as a welcoming pedestrian connection and cultural hub, can draw upon these efforts in peer cities to promote arts and culture via the built environment and enhance the built environment through arts and culture.



Art Alley in Bismarck, ND (Photo credit: Chris Burns/Google).

# Goals & Impacts

1

## Improve access to and visibility of cultural assets throughout Rogers

- IMPACTS
- Increased opportunities for informal cultural engagement across the city and its neighborhoods
  - Higher revenues, expanded donor bases, and increased turnout and foot traffic at local businesses and cultural venues
  - Greater awareness among residents and visitors of the range of venues and programs that exist, supported by the reach of the City and its partners' communication platforms
  - More diverse range of participants in cultural events and programs, including those who have faced barriers in the past related to access or lack of information

2

## Enhance transportation networks to improve community wellness, boost foot traffic, and increase access to local businesses

- IMPACTS
- Increased connectivity and transportation to and between local businesses and Rogers's cultural assets
  - Increased use of car alternatives (i.e. bike, foot), decrease in car use and traffic, and increased exercise and outdoor time for residents
  - Improved experience and ease navigating Downtown and greater Rogers for residents and visitors, including through clear and attractive signage

3

## Improve and expand arts, cultural, and wellness infrastructure, including public art, entertainment venues, fresh food sources, and public spaces

- IMPACTS
- Greater visibility, revenue, and other opportunities for local and regional artists
  - Greater number and variety of cultural offerings for residents and visitors, contributing to a sense of place and belonging
  - Increased revenue for existing food producers, and increased quality local food options for consumers throughout Rogers

6



# Road Map



Roadmap  
for Arts &  
Culture



# The Three Drivers

Rogers is home to a wide range of creative pursuits, from woodworking and Ozark quilting, to ballroom dance and hip-hop, to youth theatre and international street food. As a comprehensive vision and strategy for helping arts and culture thrive in Rogers, this Plan should support the full spectrum of arts and cultural practices in Rogers today – and welcome the addition of new ones in the future.

To provide structure to the Plan and to the City’s role in planning arts and culture in Rogers, three cultural drivers were identified: public art, music and performing arts, and wellness (including culinary arts). These are some of the city’s fastest growing creative fields, and they present strong opportunities for City involvement through policymaking, partnership-building, program development, capital improvement, and more. The City’s Department of Community Development has structured their cultural planning arm around these three drivers, hiring coordinators of Public Art, Music, and Wellness over the last three years.

The following pages outline recommendations for cultural planning in Rogers specific to the three drivers described above, starting with a broad vision for the driver, and followed by concrete steps the City can take to support this vision in the coming years.



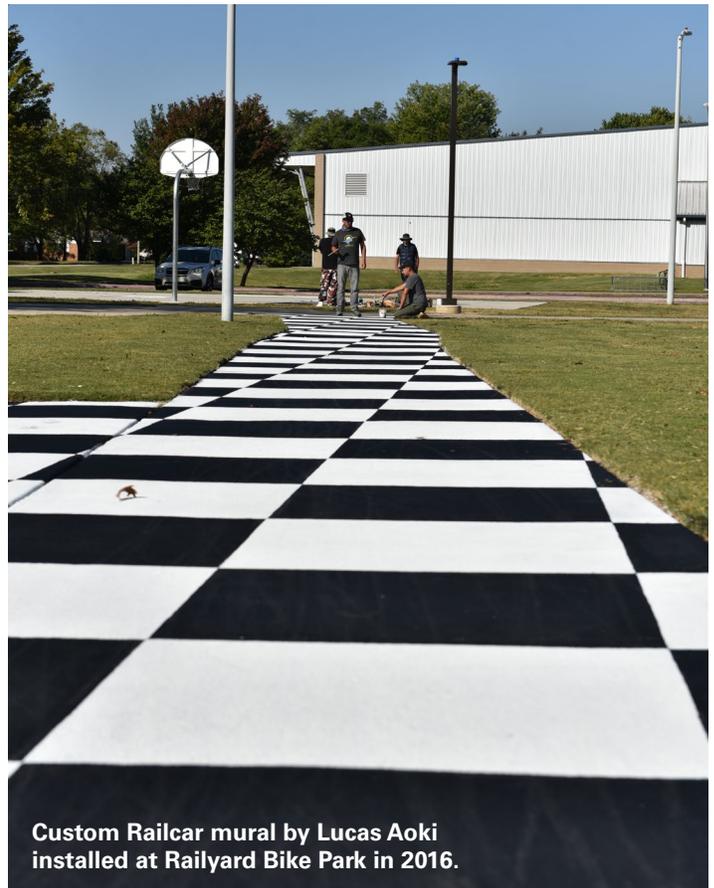
Mural by Graham Edwards at the Rogers Activity Center.



Akeem Kemp performs at Butterfield Stage during the Railyard Live concert series in 2021.



The Rogers Aquatic Center.



Custom Railcar mural by Lucas Aoki installed at Railyard Bike Park in 2016.



# Public Art

## A Roadmap for Public Art

Art is foundational to the economic, social, and cultural vitality of any city. Public art facilitates a sense of place—a connectedness of ideas and people, a visual identity that drives the local economy, and a brand for attracting talent. This medium provides a chance to engage in experiences and perspectives that may be totally unfamiliar in order to better understand the cultures and traditions of one’s neighbors. It’s a way of connecting and documenting our shared past, present, and future.

Vibrant cities invest in public art as a strategy for attracting talent, creating a sense of place, and stimulating the local economy. Through its recent work establishing a Public Art Commission, installing an Arts and Culture Coordinator, and integrating public art into myriad planning projects, the City of Rogers has launched an effort to create amazing places by incorporating public art projects into strategic initiatives.

Through this Plan, Rogers celebrates art as a vital part of the city’s community fabric. The Public Art Roadmap aims to build a more thriving cultural economy in Rogers and establish the City itself as a partner to artists and cultural arts organizations in furthering local and regional arts initiatives. Public art is a critical component of showcasing local talent and highlighting residents’ own values, traditions, and cultures.

A variety of public, City-commissioned murals are installed around Rogers, and a range of other artworks are on display at private businesses. The public art scene is growing both in Rogers and regionally, and the city has several key assets and opportunities which the recommendations in this Roadmap build upon.

Public art is a central component of the revitalization and urban design efforts underway to make Downtown Rogers even more walkable, vibrant, and inviting. The City is currently working to transform five blocks of alleyways Downtown between 1st and 2nd Streets into a

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pedestrian friendly destination focused on arts and culture, supported by a grant from the Walton Family Foundation’s Design Excellence Program. Public art has been integrated into other landmark projects, such as the Water Towers in the newly built Railyard Park.

Rogers can capitalize on a number of other opportunities to enhance public space, bring community members together, and showcase the talents of local, regional, and national artists and creators. These include opportunities within the city’s many publicly owned spaces and buildings, especially around Downtown—including sites like the Old Post Office Building which present opportunities for cultural uses in historic buildings). Another key opportunity is strengthening existing and initiating new partnerships with regional arts and educational institutions.

The recommendations in the Public Art Roadmap aspire toward a range of impacts—including an increase in the presence of public art throughout Rogers; increased opportunities for artists, especially local and regional creators, to exhibit their work and seek commissions; stronger partnerships with arts institutions throughout NWA; greater integration of arts and artists into public works projects and City facilities; and a cohesive vision for public art in Rogers.

## SPOTLIGHT

### The Downtown Alleyway Activation

In 2020, the City of Rogers received a Design Excellence grant from the Walton Family Foundation to re-imagine five blocks of alleyways between 1st and 2nd Streets in Downtown Rogers as a walkable destination for arts, culture, and community. The alleyway presents opportunities for public art and related programs, such as festivals, markets, and exhibitions. The image below illustrates the proposed design for the alleyway, to be implemented over the next five to seven years.



A rendering showing a proposed view of the future Alleyway Activation, including sculpture, murals, and outdoor seating. (Image courtesy of WXY architecture + urban design).



# Immediate Term

## Recommendations (0-12 months)

### 01 PARTNER WITH CACHE TO EXPAND USE OF REGIONAL ARTIST DIRECTORY

Work with CACHE to promote the use of their regional artists directory among artists based in Rogers. Develop a strategy to use this tool to inventory interested local artists for public commissions and other opportunities.



### 02 DEVELOP A COHESIVE PUBLIC ART POLICY, STRATEGY, AND VISION

Partner with CACHE to develop a comprehensive strategy and vision for public art. This includes developing a public art policy and procedure to guide site selection, commissions/procurement process, maintenance for future works of public art, and the City and RPAC's ongoing roles in planning and implementing public art.



### 03 COMMISSION ART IN THE ROUNDABOUTS

Issue RFQ for Art in the Roundabouts program, with focus on a unified vision for roundabouts. Process should incorporate updates to RFQ (Request for Qualifications) and selection process from the cohesive public art policy described above.



### 04 ESTABLISH A UNIVERSAL SCULPTURE MOUNT

Establish universal sculpture mount in Downtown/the Alleyway Activation site.



## 05 CONDUCT ENGAGEMENT FOR OLD POST OFFICE BUILDING RENOVATION

Conduct engagement with stakeholders and residents to determine priorities for Old Post Office Building renovation.



## 06 BUILD RPAC CAPACITY

Build capacity in RPAC for public art commissioning and curation; consider adding a curatorial subcommittee.



### LEGEND

#### Strategy Types

-  Policy
-  Programming
-  Capacity- & Partnership-Building
-  Capital Projects

#### Guiding Objectives

-  Community & Character
-  Economic Vitality & Quality of Life
-  Built Environment



# Short Term Recommendations (1-2 years)

## 01 CREATE DIGITAL ASSET MAP

Document works of public art in digital cultural asset map, and update with new works over time



## 02 COMMISSION ARTISTS FOR THE ALLEYWAY ACTIVATION

Commission local artists for public art installations in Alleyway in alignment with recommendations in the Alleyway Design Excellence Site



## 03 ACTIVATE THE ALLEYWAY

Consider a temporary arts activation of the Alleyway urban design site, focused on engaging and building relationships with local artists, and gaining input on future commissions and RFP processes.



## 04 LAUNCH ART IN THE ROUNDABOUTS

Launch Art in the Roundabouts program, in partnership with artists and designers selected through RFQ process.



## 05 DESIGN ARTS AND CULTURE WAYFINDING SYSTEM

Commission artist/design team to design a wayfinding system for arts and culture assets in Rogers, with a focus on connections to trail system, and between Downtown and Uptown.



## 06 DEVELOP OLD POST OFFICE BUILDING RFP

Develop RFP (Request for Proposals) for renovation of the Old Post Office Building



## 07 PILOT A PLACE LEADERSHIP NETWORK

Work with CACHE to pilot a Place Leadership Network (modeled after program of same name in Boston)



## 08 CREATE ARTIST IN RESIDENCY WORKING GROUP

Establish exploratory committee/working group with key partners for Artist in Residency Program



## SPOTLIGHT Cirro Studio

Studios, galleries, and makerspaces are important parts of Rogers's arts ecosystem. Cirro Studio is a small-batch furniture and design studio offering heirloom quality wood furniture and handcrafted home goods made by co-owners and Rogers residents Monica McCleary and Jesse Duque. Monica, a professionally-trained furniture maker, is featured in the Walton Arts Center's first Regional Visual Artist Exhibition running September 30 - November 5, 2021, and her work was recently featured in *Fine Woodworking*.

Studio founders Monica McCleary and Jesse Duque (Photo courtesy of Cirro Studio).





# Medium Term

## Recommendations (2-4 years)

### 01 MAINTAIN AND EVALUATE PUBLIC ART

Maintain and evaluate impacts of public art installed in years 1-2 (including Roundabouts, sculpture mount, and Alleyway).



### 02 BEGIN OLD POST OFFICE BUILDING RENOVATION

Begin renovation of Old Post Office Building.



### 03 ISSUE WATER TOWERS ARTWORK RFP

Issue call for artists to replace artwork on Water Towers in Railyard Park. Apply new public art policies and vision established in Immediate Term.



### 04 EXPLORE ARTS FESTIVAL FEASIBILITY

Explore feasibility of a Public Arts Festival in Rogers; build relationships with regional arts organizations to explore possible partnerships.



### 05 INSTALL ARTS AND CULTURE WAYFINDING SYSTEM

Install/expand wayfinding system, starting with Railyard Entertainment District and expanding to trail system, Uptown, and other hubs.



### 06 EXPLORE FEASIBILITY OF PUBLIC ART ON THE TRAILS

Explore feasibility of public art on trails / bike paths; develop RFP for art integration in projects to improve or expand trail and bike infrastructure.





# Long Term Recommendations (4+ years)

## 01 ASSESS AND CONSERVE PUBLIC ART

Commission a professional public art conservation assessment to guide priorities for public art maintenance and conservation over the subsequent 3-5 years. Begin development of annual conservation and maintenance plans.



## 03 HOST PUBLIC ART FESTIVAL

Develop regional partnerships with Public Art Festivals; consider hosting festival or related events in Rogers.



## 05 ESTABLISH ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE PROGRAM

Establish artist in residence program that pairs artists with public spaces/facilities and/or with departments in Rogers City government.



## 02 MAINTAIN PUBLIC ART

Perform regular maintenance on all public art in Rogers. Replace artwork on Water Towers in Railyard Park.



## 04 IMPLEMENT PUBLIC ART ON THE TRAILS

Implement public art on trails/bike paths; promote Art Route/Walk to encourage walkers and bikers to discover art pieces along trails/paths.



### LEGEND

#### Strategy Types

-  Policy
-  Programming
-  Capacity- & Partnership-Building
-  Capital Projects

#### Guiding Objectives

-  Community & Character
-  Economic Vitality & Quality of Life
-  Built Environment



# Music & Performing Arts

## A Roadmap for Music and Performing Arts

Music holds an important place in the culture of Rogers due to the strength of the city’s new and existing performing arts resources, public desire for more opportunities to engage with music, and the local music scene’s potential for growth and cultural outreach.

A recent report by ArtSpace revealed that, uniquely among the region, people in Rogers have a significant desire for live music. As a result, the City of Rogers designed and constructed Butterfield Stage—a new outdoor concert venue in the middle of downtown that saw hundreds of attendees for events throughout its 2021 concert season.

With bar and restaurant venues, the Arkansas Public Theatre, Butterfield Stage, and the Arkansas Music Pavilion, Rogers is home to quality music venue options for local, regional, national, and international touring acts and performers. In addition to Rogers’s variety of performance venues, between its public and private schools, the city also boasts strong band, choir, orchestra, guitar, dance, and music technology programs.

The Victory Theater plays a central role in Rogers’s history of performing arts. Established in 1927, the Theater served as a venue for film, vaudeville theatre, and community gatherings for many years. Now owned by the City, the historic space has been home to the Arkansas Public Theatre (APT) for over three decades. The only volunteer-run theatre in the region, APT produces a dynamic annual season of plays and musical entertainment—from cutting edge new plays to family-friendly seasonal productions. In the colder months, the City programs events in Victory Theater, expanding the range of programming available to residents throughout the year.

The music and performing arts Roadmap in this Plan envisions Rogers as a place where the city’s existing cornerstone venues—particularly the two that it manages directly—continue to thrive, engaging a broader array of audiences and highlighting residents’ diverse traditions and talents. It also leverages the city’s quality music

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and performing arts institutions and programs to position Rogers as a place where creative residents of all ages and walks of life have the opportunity to hone their musical abilities, and enjoy programming that reflects their age group, interests, and cultural backgrounds. Finally, this Plan aims to create an environment in Rogers where independent music and performance venues can flourish, through venue-friendly policies, strong support networks, and access to funding, publicity, and partnership opportunities facilitated by the City and its partners.

## **SPOTLIGHT** **Arkansas Arts Academy**

Arkansas Arts Academy is a public charter school in Rogers that serves students from across the region. The academy has an arts focus, offering specialized programs in music, dance, visual arts, and theatre.

The Modern Music Program at AAA is unique within NWA and the nation. The program offers students a comprehensive music education primarily focused on American popular music, with extensive course offerings in guitar, bass, drums, piano, voice, songwriting, and music technology. A variety of bands and ensembles give students the opportunity to rehearse during school, and perform regularly around the community outside of school hours.



The Arkansas Arts Academy group **The Rockhoppers** during a class rehearsal (Photo courtesy of Arkansas Arts Academy).



# Immediate Term

## Recommendations (0-12 months)

### 01 PROGRAM RAILYARD LIVE SEASON

Program Railyard Live performances at Butterfield Stage for April-October 2022.



### 02 PROGRAM VICTORY THEATER CONCERTS AND EVENTS

Program up to 10 concerts/events in late fall-winter 2021-22.



### 03 EXPLORE COMMUNITY "OFF-NIGHT" PROGRAMMING

Explore feasibility of community or educational programs on limited "off nights" at Butterfield Stage, including procedures for allowing schools & community groups to use or rent the stage.



### 04 ESTABLISH STAGE PARTNERSHIP EVENTS CALENDAR

Establish Stage Partnership events line-up for 2022 to complement Railyard Live concert series.



### 05 DEVELOP MUSIC-FRIENDLY POLICIES TO SERVE AS A MODEL FOR THE REGION

Develop a set of forward-thinking music policies to be tested and used as a model for the region and beyond.





# Short Term

## Recommendations (1-2 years)

### 01 UPDATE PERMITTING PROCESS FOR PUBLIC EVENTS

In alignment with the set of policies developed with Sound Diplomacy, create/update permitting process for public concerts/performances and publish fact sheet or toolkit to communicate process to residents, venues, and organizations.



### 02 EXPAND USE OF CACHE ARTIST DIRECTORY

Work with CACHE to expand use of regional artist directory by local music/performing arts orgs, individuals, and venues in Rogers; share this and other tools to encourage organizations and venues to share opportunities.



### 03 PILOT ROGERS MOVEMENT SERIES

Pilot Rogers Moves event series at Butterfield Stage focused on dance, movement, and fitness, in tandem with existing Railyard Live Program. Evaluate interest and impacts.



### 04 EXPLORE FEASIBILITY OF LIVE MUSIC AT RAILYARD BIKE PARK

Consider music and other live performance at the Railyard Bike Park. Work with the Parks and Recreation Department to coordinate a pilot event, potentially live DJ focused.





# Medium Term

## Recommendations (2-4 years)

### 01 EXPLORE A MUSIC PILOT AT SLING STATION PARK

Consider use of Sling Station for public music programming, as part of effort to connect music venues along Razorback Regional Greenway. Evaluate impact and explore potential of making music on the trails an ongoing program.



### 02 ESTABLISH PARTNERSHIPS AND GOALS FOR MUSIC IN SCHOOLS

Establish partnership with schools and other relevant partners to evaluate role/potential of music in cultural education and community settings in Rogers and determine a set of goals.



### 03 INCORPORATE MUSIC IN ARTS AND WELLNESS PROGRAMS

Coordinate with Public Art Coordinator and Wellness Coordinator to incorporate music elements in new or ongoing public art and wellness programs (including Art Festival or Alleyway activations).



### 04 EVALUATE EXISTING PROGRAMMING AND SET GOALS

Evaluate City music programming (Butterfield Stage, Victory Theater, Farmers' Market) and set 5-year plan/goals for diversity, engagement levels, etc.





# Long Term Recommendations (4+ years)

## 01 COORDINATE WITH ARTIST IN RESIDENCE PROGRAM TO INCORPORATE MUSIC / PERFORMING ARTS

Coordinate with Public Art Coordinator on development of Artist in Residence Program to integrate/pilot a musician, composer, dancer, or other performer in residence.



## 02 EVALUATE POTENTIAL FOR CRAWLING FESTIVAL / MUSIC ON THE GREENWAY

Evaluate Crawling Music Festival program and develop into a series with different thematic focus (Latinx community/food; children's music).



## 03 INVENTORY MUSIC LEARNING HUBS

Inventory existing cultural music learning and exchange hubs in Rogers and establish partnerships to determine strategies to support, publicize, or offer a platform to lesser represented forms of music (i.e. mariachi, Marshallese music, gospel, hip-hop).



### LEGEND

#### Strategy Types

- Policy
- Programming
- Capacity- & Partnership-Building
- Capital Projects

#### Guiding Objectives

- Community & Character
- Economic Vitality & Quality of Life
- Built Environment



# Wellness

## A Roadmap for Wellness

Rogers has strong ties to food, deeply entwined with its historically agrarian culture; earliest records of Rogers’s modern history date back to the 1830s, when settlers came from the Upper South States to establish their roots in farming. Tobacco was the first cash crop in the region, quickly followed by a booming industry of apple farming. The arrival of the railroad breathed life into additional apple orchards and apple processing facilities, putting Rogers on the map with its apple produce houses, dehydrators, and cider vinegar operations. By the 1930s, a series of years of harsh weather and disease wiped out the majority of apple orchards, making room for a new top crop: poultry.

Fast forward to today’s Rogers, which has a population of 69,908 (2020 US Census) and a new crop of culinary entrepreneurs, branching out from traditional products and protein processing with their own unique interpretations and fusions of culinary practice. Rogers boasts a 2020 James Beard nominated chef, the top winner of the 2020 United States Barista Competition (Specialty Coffee Association), and a husband-wife team whose brewery routinely earns national recognition.

Rogers is a growing and changing community, with an ever-evolving set of citizen needs. With rising healthcare costs and longer lifespans across the country, it is increasingly important that cities provide an environment that supports health and wellness. According to the American Planning Association’s (APA) Planning and Community Health Center, *active living* and *healthy food systems* are two of the five domains in which cities can intercede to meet needs and improve the health of residents, along with priorities of *environmental exposure*, *emergency preparedness*, and *social cohesion*.

This Roadmap envisions Rogers as a place that encourages *active living*—including through APA recommendations such as intermodal and active transportation (walking and biking), prioritizing funding for pedestrian/bike facilities, and recreational resources, such as the built environment’s high ratio of acres of parkland to population and network of wellness centers and facilities (see *Vision 100, Rogers and Lowell, Arkansas* p. 26 for more information on strengthening

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pedestrian connectivity in Rogers.)

The Roadmap also prioritizes a *healthy food system* in Rogers, with APA indicators including the percentage of low-income residents living within walking distance of a full-service grocer, the city’s density of fast-food outlets, its number of local agricultural producers and distribution points, and the availability of farmers markets that accept food benefits (i.e. SNAP or WIC). Another impact of this Plan’s recommendations to promote *healthy food systems*, as defined by the APA, is an increase in acres of public land being used to grow food via community gardens and urban agriculture.

Rogers recognizes the importance of food, exercise and recreation, mental healthcare, and other wellness practices as important pieces of the local cultural fabric. Many of Rogers’s wellness and culinary leaders—from restaurant and café owners to cycling organizations—already tap into exciting intersections between art and wellness in their work today. The wellness roadmap presented in this Plan seeks to build on Rogers’s existing partnerships and programming, including the Farmers’ Market and the Alleyway, to celebrate fresh food and the city’s diverse culinary traditions, and to leverage City policies and land more broadly to promote healthy living and a thriving culinary sector. It also proposes new programs and partnerships with community members, employers, and wellness and food security organizations to support an environment that encourages healthy living and wellness.

## **SPOTLIGHT** **Arkansas Latinas en Bici**

Arkansas Latinas en Bici is a cycling non-profit organization serving the multicultural communities in Arkansas through weekly road and mountain bike rides, cultural events, and health and bike maintenance workshops. Everyone is welcome to join ARLB and enjoy the physical, mental, and emotional benefits of cycling.



Arkansas Latinas en Bici cycling event (Photo courtesy of Arkansas Latinas en Bici).



# Immediate Term

## Recommendations (0-12 months)

### 01 CONDUCT A FOOD SOURCE INVENTORY

Inventory existing local fresh food source and identify gaps and needs, particularly in underserved parts of Rogers.



### 02 ESTABLISH A WELLNESS ADVISORY BOARD

Establish a wellness advisory board to refine objectives/gather input on potential pilot projects and priorities.



### 03 GROW THE FARMERS MARKET

Expand vendor base for weekly Farmers Market at Frisco Plaza, with a target of 50 or more vendors, including greater variety of fresh food options and greater vendor diversity.



### 04 ESTABLISH AN EVALUATION MATRIX AND PROCESS

Establish an evaluation matrix and a regular data collection process to assess variety of fresh food options in Rogers; variety of market vendors; and diversity/representation of licensed vendors and businesses.



## 05 DEVELOP A FOOD STALL CONCEPT

Develop a pilot food stall concept for the Alleyway Design Excellence site; coordinate with Public Art Coordinator to ensure it is integrated in design.



## 06 IMPROVE AND PUBLICIZE FOOD VENDOR APPLICATION PROCESS

Create & publicize fact sheet or toolkit on Mobile Food Vendor application process and connect applicants to resources and support.



### LEGEND

#### Strategy Types

-  Policy
-  Programming
-  Capacity- & Partnership-Building
-  Capital Projects

#### Guiding Objectives

-  Community & Character
-  Economic Vitality & Quality of Life
-  Built Environment



# Short Term

## Recommendations (1-2 years)

### 01 PILOT ALLEYWAY FOOD STALLS

Explore feasibility of a food stall concept (i.e. shipping container) in the Alleyway with short-term lease rotation of local food businesses/vendors that reflect diverse food traditions in Rogers; evaluate economic and social impacts of this concept.



### 02 CONDUCT FOOD INCUBATOR ENGAGEMENT

Support Public Art coordinator on engagement with stakeholders and residents to determine priorities for Old Post Office Building renovation, with a focus on potential of Food Incubator use.



### 03 PILOT A NIGHT MARKET

Consider piloting a Night Farmer's Market in Downtown Rogers, integrating Frisco Plaza, Railyard Park, and Alleyway; possibly in alignment with Butterfield Stage or other programming.



### 04 CONSIDER DESIGNATING A BEVERAGE DISTRICT DOWNTOWN

Engage local beverage companies (breweries, roasters, distilleries) in an exploratory committee on development of a Beverage District in Rogers.



## 05 DEVELOP A TOOLKIT FOR LAND OWNERS ON FRESH FOOD PRODUCTION

Develop and publicize a factsheet or toolkit for land owners on the process for turning your lot into a local fresh food source (i.e. garden or farm).



## 06 PILOT ROGERS MOVES PROGRAMMING

Work with the Music Coordinator to pilot a Rogers Move event/event series at Butterfield Stage, to engage the public in free exercise and movement, in tandem with live music series.



## SPOTLIGHT The Rogers Adult Wellness Center

“The City of Rogers Adult Wellness Center provides a wide variety of physical activities and fitness classes to assist individuals to live healthier and more active lifestyles. Our programming also includes educational and recreational opportunities for social engagement. Through our ever changing programming, we help individuals actively age, improve quality of life, and achieve whole person wellness.”

Lesli Ossenfort,  
Director of The Rogers Adult Wellness Center



Participants in a dance class at Rogers Adult Wellness Center (Photo source: Rogers Adult Wellness Center)



# Medium Term

## Recommendations (2-4 years)

### 01 CONSIDER FARMERS MARKET EXPANSION

Explore feasibility of expanding Farmers Market to feature smaller markets in other Rogers neighborhoods (aligned with needs assessment); engage market vendors as part of this process.



### 02 IDENTIFY A FOOD INCUBATOR SITE

Coordinate with Public Art Coordinator on integration of Food Incubator or commercial kitchen element in Old Post Office Renovation.



### 03 DEVELOP CSA AND F2B PROGRAMS

Develop CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) and/or F2B (Farm to Business) programs at Farmers Market.



### 04 CONSIDER A LIVING AGRICULTURE LAB

Assemble set of partners to explore feasibility of a public land Living Agriculture Lab in Rogers or other program to activate City-owned land for small-scale agriculture; Identify city-owned properties to be activated through such a program.



## 05 PILOT COMMUNITY FOOD EVENTS

Use existing City-managed programs, including Farmers Market and Railyard Live series, to pilot food-based cultural programs in partnership with local businesses (i.e. Taco Festival, Rabbit Cook-off); evaluate the impact of these programs and work with partners to determine how City can support them.



## 06 EXPAND THE FOOD STALLS

Evaluate progress of food stall concept in the Alleyway, and consider other locations for food stalls and trucks (i.e. Lake Atalanta, Railyard Park, Frisco Plaza).



### LEGEND

#### Strategy Types

-  Policy
-  Programming
-  Capacity & Partnership Building
-  Capital Projects

#### Guiding Objectives

-  Community & Character
-  Economic Vitality & Quality of Life
-  Built Environment



# Long Term Recommendations (4+ years)

## 01 ESTABLISH A FOOD INCUBATOR

Work with regional partners to encourage establishment of a Food Incubator in the Old Post Office Building, or in another appropriate location. Engage emerging local food and wellness businesses to assess needs and interest.



## 02 LAUNCH LIVING AGRICULTURE LAB

Initiate Living Agriculture Lab program on select public properties to activate city owned property for agriculture through leasing agreements with partner organizations.



## 03 CREATE 5-10 YEAR PLAN FOR FRESH FOOD AND WELLNESS

Evaluate impact of expanded Farmers Market programming, and create 5-10 year plan for strengthening and expanding Farmers Market and related programs (CSA, F2B).



## 04 EXPLORE CULTURAL PROGRAMMING AT RAILYARD BIKE PARK

Coordinate with Rogers Parks and Recreation Department to explore programming potential at Railyard Bike Park to promote recreation and create opportunities for artists to engage with Bike Park programming (i.e. music/DJing, visual art or film exhibitions).



## **SPOTLIGHT** **Rafael Rios**

Rafael hails from a farming family who moved to Rogers from California to grow roots and establish their family farm. In addition to providing area chefs and local markets with fresh produce, the family operates two brick and mortar restaurants (Yeyo's Mezcaleria y Taqueria in Rogers and Yeyo's Mexican Grill in Bentonville) and two food trucks. Rafael was a 2020 James Beard Award semi-finalist.



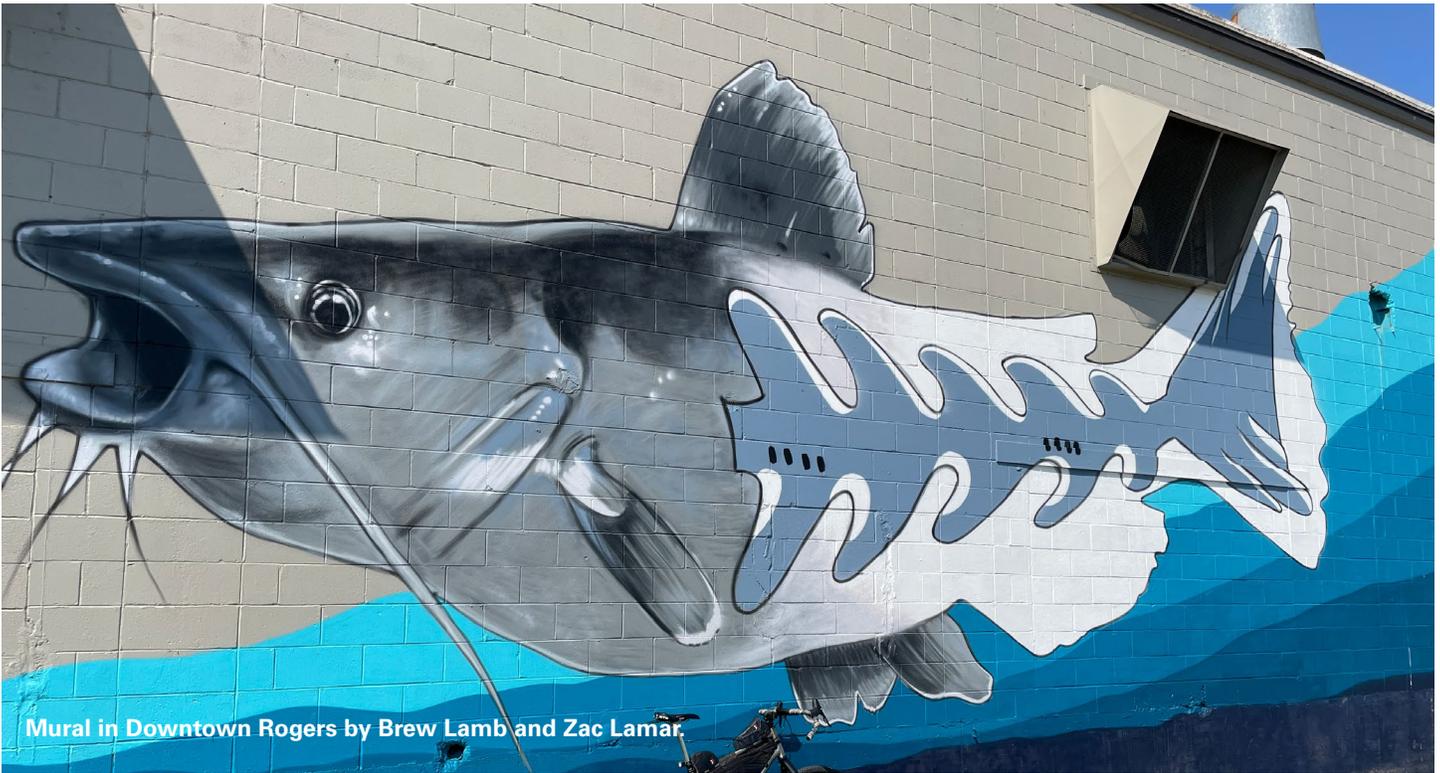
Rafael Rios (Photo courtesy of Rafael Rios)

# 7



# Implementation





# Implementation Plan

The following pages outline specific strategies to guide the City of Rogers and its partners through the implementation of this Cultural Plan. These strategies are organized around the three Guiding Objectives of this Plan (see page 49 for more on the Guiding Objectives).

This Plan focuses on four types of strategies:

- **Policy:** these strategies include changes to Rogers’s policies and procedures.
- **Programming:** these strategies involve specific events and initiatives in which Rogers can play a direct or indirect supportive role.
- **Capacity- and partnership-building:** these strategies increase Rogers’s ability to effectively support and plan arts and culture, through both strengthening internal processes and building strategic partnerships across the public and private sectors.
- **Capital projects:** these strategies relate to investments in Rogers’s physical environment, such as improvements to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, or the integration of art in public spaces.

This Implementation Table on the following pages was designed as a tool to help the City of Rogers implement this Cultural Plan and to provide guidance on conducting further engagement and planning. While intended for use by the City itself, potential partners including arts, culture, and wellness stakeholders in Rogers and beyond are encouraged to draw from this work in their own planning, or use this table to understand opportunities to coordinate cultural planning efforts, whether as funders or sponsors, community partners and ambassadors, or creative collaborators.

This Plan focuses on cultural planning strategies over the next five years, with some long-term strategies which fall beyond this time frame and many strategies which might be implemented in as few as six months. It will be critical for Rogers to evaluate the impact of each strategy over time, as well as to conduct comprehensive evaluation of the progress of this Plan's implementation. The following table offers starting points for evaluating impact, but it is recommended that monitoring and evaluation be integrated more fully into the City's cultural planning team and work processes.



# 1. COMMUNITY AND CHARACTER

Objective	Strategy	Strategy Type	Time Horizon
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Policy</li> <li> Programming</li> <li> Capacity- &amp; Partnership-Building</li> <li> Capital Projects</li> </ul>	<p><b>Immediate</b> (6-12 months)</p> <p><b>Short</b> (1-2 years)</p> <p><b>Medium</b> (2-5 years)</p> <p><b>Long</b> (5+ years)</p>
<p><b>1. Ensure that arts and cultural programming is inclusive of all residents and that producers and participants reflect the city’s diversity in all its forms.</b></p>	<p>1.1.A. Build capacity for translating communications from the City in all major local languages and for better informing non-English speaking populations.</p>		Immediate
	<p>1.1.B. Establish strategic working groups to advise on cultural planning and strategies.</p>		Immediate-Short
	<p>1.1.C. Conduct engagement to gather input on specific recommendations in this Plan.</p>		Immediate-Short
	<p>1.1.D. Expand existing programming at Butterfield Stage to engage new and underrepresented audiences, including a range of disciplines of performance.</p>		Immediate
	<p>1.1.E. Establish a Stage Partnerships program at Butterfield Stage to make facilities available for community programs and events.</p>		Immediate-Short
	<p>1.1.F. Clarify and standardize processes and procedures for partnerships, commissions, and RFPs, including establishing equity targets.</p>		Immediate-Short
	<p>1.1.G. Establish standards for contracting minority and women-owned businesses (MWBE) as part of ongoing commissioning and RFPs.</p>		Short
	<p>1.1.H. Streamline event permitting processes to encourage public cultural events and reduce barriers to organization and participation.</p>		Short
	<p>1.1.I. Create an Arts and Culture city services portal to make it easier for partners to host programming in Rogers.</p>		Short-Medium

Cultural Drivers			Sample Impact/ Indicators	Cost (\$- \$\$\$\$)	Notes
<b>Public Art</b>	<b>Music / Performing Arts</b>	<b>Wellness</b>		( >> ) Indicates ongoing expense	
X	X	X	# of registrants/recipients on non-English lists	\$ >>	Conduct outreach to build list of recipients with diversity targets in mind.
X	X	X	Policies, programs, and partnerships formed through working groups	\$	May include: Latinx resident working group; youth and/or educator working group; Wellness Advisory Board.
X	X	X	# of participants; qualitative input of participants	\$	Including those related to the Old Post Office Building renovation, Butterfield Stage Programming, Farmers Market.
	X		Increased demographic diversity of audiences and performers	\$\$	Feature smaller-scale acts with local musicians and other performers from underrepresented groups.
X	X	X	# events; range of new partnerships; reported impacts for partners	\$	Consider programming in more informal venues, such as the Downtown Square or alleyway.
X	X	X	Level of interest / response to RFPs; diversity of applicants	\$	Such as Butterfield Stage programming, Farmers Market vendors, or public art commissions.
X	X	X	# MWBE RFP applicants; registered MWBEs in arts, culture, wellness in Rogers	\$	Streamline pathways for creative workers and businesses to qualify as MWBEs.
X	X	X	Increase in # of public cultural events; # permits requested	\$	Including in signature event spaces as well as public space throughout Rogers.
X	X	X	Usage of portal; increase in applicants for RFPs, events, etc.	\$\$/\$	Including clear point of contact; dashboard for opportunities; rules, regulations, and resources.

# 1. COMMUNITY AND CHARACTER (CONTINUED)

Objective	Strategy	Strategy Type	Time Horizon
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Policy</li> <li> Programming</li> <li> Capacity- &amp; Partnership-Building</li> <li> Capital Projects</li> </ul>	<p><b>Immediate</b> (6-12 mo.)  <b>Short</b> (1-2 years)  <b>Medium</b> (2-5 years)  <b>Long</b> (5+ years)</p>
<p><b>2. Create opportunities for learning and collaboration—including opportunities for cultural workers, young people, and the general public.</b></p>	<p>1.2.A. Work with public libraries and community centers to inventory existing programs and set goals for new or expanded free or low-cost public educational programming</p>		<p>Short-Medium</p>
	<p>1.2.B. Develop an artist-in-residence program based in City facilities or within City departments.</p>		<p>Medium</p>
	<p>1.2.C. Partner with CACHE to promote arts education in Rogers’s public and private schools and connect local schools to regional arts education resources.</p>		<p>Short-Long</p>
	<p>1.2.D. Work with regional partners to leverage city-owned land for fresh food production or Living Agriculture Program.</p>		<p>Medium-Long</p>
<p><b>3. Define and communicate Rogers’s unique character to create strong recognition throughout the city and region.</b></p>	<p>1.3.A. Develop a digital cultural asset map, including existing works of public art.</p>		<p>Short</p>
	<p>1.3.B. Create a strategy to promote arts and culture in Rogers at the regional level and beyond.</p>		<p>Short</p>
	<p>1.3.C. Conduct further engagement to create a regional campaign that communicates what residents celebrate about Rogers.</p>		<p>Medium</p>
	<p>1.3.D. Consider hosting an Art Festival in Rogers in coordination with regional partners, incorporating wellness and music elements.</p>		<p>Long</p>

Cultural Drivers			Sample Impact/ Indicators	Cost (\$-\$\$\$\$)	Notes
<b>Public Art</b>	<b>Music / Performing Arts</b>	<b>Wellness</b>		( >> ) Indicates ongoing expense	
X	X	X	# and variety of available public educational offerings in Rogers; specific metrics to be set in coordination with partners	\$\$	
X	X	X	Residents engaged; measured impact on residency facility or department based on targeted goals	\$\$ - \$\$\$	Potential to pair artists with Parks and Recreation Department, Fire Department, etc. to develop programs that serve the public and support the work of that department. See Boston AIR for an example of this approach.
X	X		# Rogers students participating in arts programs at school; # schools offering arts programs	\$\$	Help to identify arts liaisons in Rogers schools; promote the use of regional arts education resources and tools developed by CACHE; serve as a liaison between local schools and CACHE to encourage uptake of arts partnerships in K-12 schools.
		X	Acres of land used for local food production; resident distance to fresh food sources	\$	
X	X	X	Usage of digital tool; increased public awareness of cultural venues and public art	\$ - \$\$	
X	X	X	# of out of town attendees at cultural programs; # of out of town subscribers to arts and culture communications and	\$\$ >>	Including ongoing collaboration with the Rogers Advertising and Promotion Commission.
X	X	X	Increased awareness of arts and culture in Rogers among local & regional residents	\$\$ >>	Make efforts to highlight artists and creators from underrepresented groups.
X	X	X	Funding, sponsorships, and partnerships formed.	\$\$\$	

## 2. ECONOMIC VITALITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Objective	Strategy	Strategy Type	Time Horizon
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Policy</li> <li> Programming</li> <li> Capacity- &amp; Partnership-Building</li> <li> Capital Projects</li> </ul>	<b>Immediate</b> (6-12 mo.) <b>Short</b> (1-2 years) <b>Medium</b> (2-5 years) <b>Long</b> (5+ years)
<b>1. Leverage Rogers’s unique cultural offerings to increase tourism, boost spending, and grow an audience base.</b>	2.1.A. Create an Arts and Culture communications suite, including a website or web portal, a newsletter, and social media.		Immediate
	2.1.B. Encourage regional media coverage and storytelling to highlight cultural assets and initiatives in Rogers.		Short
	2.1.C. Develop an annual award to recognize the impact of individuals, organizations, and local businesses on arts and culture in Rogers.		Immediate
<b>2. Position Rogers as a place where artists, cultural workers, and all residents can thrive.</b>	2.2.A. Promote or partner with CACHE’s Artist Resource Desk to connect cultural workers to available resources.		Immediate
	2.2.B. Partner with CACHE on its annual Canvas process to assess existing support systems for small businesses and organizations in Rogers, and survey arts and culture organizations and small food businesses to identify gaps.		Immediate-Short
	2.2.C. Partner with CACHE to encourage independent artists and arts organizations in Rogers to participate in the CACHE Artist Resource Desk directory.		Immediate-Short
	2.2.D. Partner with CACHE and Sound Diplomacy to develop and test a set of forward-thinking music policies to serve as a model for the region.		Short
	2.2.E. Communicate event permitting processes and other regulations related to public events through a fact sheet or toolkit.		Short

Cultural Drivers			Potential Partners	Sample Impact/ Indicators	Cost (\$-)	Notes
<b>Public Art</b>	<b>Music / Performing Arts</b>	<b>Wellness</b>			( >> ) Indicates ongoing expense	
X	X	X	A&P Commission; CACHE	Web traffic; increases in attendance at City and other cultural programs; CACHE Super Calendar usage	\$\$ / \$ >>	Integrate and promote CACHE's regional Super Calendar.
X	X	X	A&P Commission; CACHE; NPR affiliates; other local media	Media coverage for local artists, businesses, and programs; out of town attendance at cultural programs & local businesses	\$	With CACHE, this could be scaled up as a regional effort.
X	X	X		Increased recognition & appreciation for contributions of arts and culture	\$	Incorporate unique recognition for public art, music, and wellness.
X	X	X	CACHE	Impacts reported by artists (i.e. satisfaction with support; resulting opportunities; professional advancement)	\$ >>	
X	X	X	CACHE	Number of new businesses & non-profits registered in arts/culture/wellness; longevity of & feedback from existing businesses	\$	Create a strategy for sharing findings and resources from the survey with local organizations and independent creative workers.
X			CACHE	Opportunities generated through the portal; number of artists and orgs inventoried	\$\$ / \$ >>	
	X		Sound Diplomacy; CACHE	Adoption of policies; increased music and performance events	\$	
X	X			# of arts, culture, and wellness events permitted; attendance at permitted public events	\$	Connect this effort to that of the potential city services concierge.

## 2. ECONOMIC VITALITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE (CONTINUED)

Objective	Strategy	Strategy Type	Time Horizon
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Policy</li> <li> Programming</li> <li> Capacity- &amp; Partnership-Building</li> <li> Capital Projects</li> </ul>	<b>Immediate</b> (6-12 mo.) <b>Short</b> (1-2 years) <b>Medium</b> (2-5 years) <b>Long</b> (5+ years)
	2.2.F. Renew conversations with ArtSpace to strategize the implementation of their Plan’s recommendation for 24 affordable live/work units in Rogers.		Short-Medium
	2.2.G. Incorporate grant or funding opportunities for arts, culture, and wellness into the City’s online portal.		Medium
	2.2.H. Assess existing zoning tools, development incentives, and City-owned properties to identify opportunities to develop affordable live/work or studio space for artists and cultural workers.		Medium-Long
<b>3. Sustain arts and culture in Rogers through funding structures that tap into regional and national funding streams.</b>	2.3.A. Establish a public-private partnership and/or quasi-governmental foundation to support local funding for arts and culture (i.e. Rogers Arts and Culture Foundation).		Immediate
	2.3.B. Identify key sponsors and funders for a Rogers Arts and Culture Foundation at the regional and national scale.		Short
	2.3.C. Develop an inventory of regional and national grant opportunities to fund relevant aspects of this Plan.		Short-Medium
	2.3.D. Explore the feasibility of a Percent for Art program to encourage investment in public art in City-funded development and infrastructure projects.		Long

Cultural Drivers			Sample Impact/ Indicators	Cost (\$- \$\$\$\$)	Notes
<b>Public Art</b>	<b>Music / Performing Arts</b>	<b>Wellness</b>		( >> ) Indicates ongoing expense	
X	X		Expanded access to affordable housing and work space in Rogers; exact indicators and goals to be determined as part of this strategy	\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$	Consider launching a fundraising campaign for pre-development costs.
X	X	X	Increase in grants/funding opportunities secured by artists and organizations in Rogers	\$-\$	
X			# working artists / cultural workers living in Rogers; # housing and work units available	\$	
X	X	X	Funds raised through foundation; projects and initiatives supported through foundation; # donors contributing to foundation	\$-\$	Consider contracting CACHE to assess options and collaborate on the establishment of this fund.
X	X	X	Number and variety of funding sources identified	\$	This could include national foundations or endowments as well as larger corporations with a regional presence.
X	X	X	Number and variety of funding sources identified	\$ >>	
X			Revenue generated for public art; increase in number of public art pieces in Rogers	\$	

### 3. BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Objective	Strategy	Strategy Type	Time Horizon
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Policy</li> <li> Programming</li> <li> Capacity- &amp; Partnership-Building</li> <li> Capital Projects</li> </ul>	<p><b>Immediate</b> (6-12 mo.)</p> <p><b>Short</b> (1-2 years)</p> <p><b>Medium</b> (2-5 years)</p> <p><b>Long</b> (5+ years)</p>
<b>1. Improve access to and the visibility of arts, culture, and wellness assets throughout Rogers.</b>	3.1.A. Partner with CACHE to develop a comprehensive public art vision and strategy, including public art policy to guide site selection, procurement processes, maintenance for future works of public art, capacity-building, and the role of RPAC.		Immediate-Short
	3.1.B. Develop a digital public art, culture, and wellness asset map.		Short
	3.1.C. Design wayfinding systems within and around the Railyard Entertainment District Downtown.		Medium
	3.1.D. Expand wayfinding systems to highlight cultural and wellness assets, including special districts (i.e. Entertainment District, Beverage District).		Medium
<b>2. Improve and expand arts, cultural, and wellness infrastructure, including public art, entertainment venues, fresh food sources, and public spaces.</b>	3.2.A. Establish a universal sculpture mount in Downtown Rogers.		Immediate
	3.2.B. Inventory existing local fresh food sources (i.e. farms, community gardens, markets) and identify gaps and needs.		Immediate
	3.2.C. Implement recommended designs for the Alleyway; identify opportunities for permanent and temporary installations of various media/disciplines.		Short
	3.2.D. Streamline event permitting processes to encourage public cultural events and remove barriers to entry.		Short

Cultural Drivers			Sample Impact/ Indicators	Cost (\$-)	Notes
<b>Public Art</b>	<b>Music / Performing Arts</b>	<b>Wellness</b>		( >> ) Indicates ongoing expense	
X			Increase in local applicants & commissions for public art; stronger cohesion for public art; greater awareness of public art procedures	\$ >>	Public art policies should consider equity and representation, including measures to prioritize local artists.
X	X		Public awareness of public art/artists; Foot traffic to/ around public art and adjacent businesses and sites	\$\$/\$ >>	
X	X		Greater awareness of & foot traffic to cultural assets and local businesses	\$\$\$	
X	X	X	Greater awareness of & foot traffic to cultural assets and local businesses	\$\$-\$\$\$	Expand wayfinding on trails and bike paths, and connections between Uptown and Downtown.
X			# artists and works added to public realm; increased foot traffic around sculpture mount	\$\$-\$\$\$	
		X	Clear goals for increased fresh food access; benchmarks and indicators for wellness programs	\$-\$\$	Focus effort particularly in underserved areas of Rogers.
X			WXY, Walton Family Foundation - Design Excellence	\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$	Opportunities include lighting design, sculpture, wall murals, ceiling structure murals, community-generated art pieces.
X	X	X		\$	

### 3. BUILT ENVIRONMENT (CONTINUED)

Objective	Strategy	Strategy Type	Time Horizon
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Policy</li> <li> Programming</li> <li> Capacity- &amp; Partnership-Building</li> <li> Capital Projects</li> </ul>	<p><b>Immediate</b> (6-12 mo.)</p> <p><b>Short</b> (1-2 years)</p> <p><b>Medium</b> (2-5 years)</p> <p><b>Long</b> (5+ years)</p>
	<p>3.2.E. Contract local and regional artists for specified elements of Alleyway design, including murals, sculpture, and lighting installation.</p>		<p>Short-Medium</p>
	<p>3.2.F. Issue a RFQ for the renovation of the Old Post Office Building.</p>		<p>Short-Medium</p>
	<p>3.2.G. Explore the feasibility of expanding the Farmers Market to feature satellite markets throughout Rogers’s neighborhoods.</p>		<p>Medium</p>
	<p>3.2.H. Conduct an assessment of vacant and under-utilized buildings downtown to identify potential sites and partners for creative work space (e.g. work-share, space rental).</p>	 	<p>Medium</p>

Cultural Drivers			Sample Impact/ Indicators	Cost (\$-)	Notes
<b>Public Art</b>	<b>Music / Performing Arts</b>	<b>Wellness</b>		( >> ) Indicates ongoing expense	
X			Number of local and regional artists who apply/ are hired	\$\$\$	Commission a lighting artist for lighting design for the alleyway downtown.
X				\$	
		X	Market attendance; # of vendors; demographics of vendors and attendees	\$\$	
X	X			\$-\$\$	Expand wayfinding on trails and bike paths, and connections between Uptown and Downtown.



# Sustaining Arts & Culture

One of the key questions facing Rogers is how to sustain the vision of this Cultural Plan over the long term.

## Stewardship and Partnerships

At the core of arts, culture, and wellness is people. Because people are the force behind arts and culture, arts and cultural stewardship relies on active participation by members of the community. One of the strongest roles the City can play in supporting thriving arts and culture is to support those individuals creating and participating in local initiatives. Strategic partnerships will help the City build its cultural capacity and cultivate a wider audience of potential cultural leaders and participants.

Arts and cultural organizations and resources already exist at various scales, and partnerships among them will widen the impact of this Cultural Plan. At the scale of the City of Rogers, outside its agencies and public arts and culture staff, groups such as the Rogers Public Art Commission (RPAC), a City of Rogers Commission, have been the guiding force in arts and cultural planning and development, including enhancing Rogers's built environment with

public art. Much cultural education and engagement occurs within Rogers's school system, including at the Arkansas Arts Academy, an arts-focused public charter school; many opportunities exist for cultural education outside of the classroom as well, such as with Rogers's various performing arts groups and nonprofit arts organizations.

At the scale of the Northwest Arkansas region, there is a robust ecosystem of potential creative partners, including the Creative Arkansas Community Hub & Exchange (CACHE), arts institutions ranging from smaller galleries to the Crystal Bridges Museum, and educational institutions including the University of Arkansas, based in the neighboring City of Fayetteville.

Two recommendations related to partnerships and collaboration have the potential to be implemented right away. At the scale of the City of Rogers, working groups such as a Wellness Advisory Group and a Latinx/Hispanic Community Advisory Group might further engage these stakeholders in meaningful conversations around how to ensure arts, culture, and wellness initiatives in Rogers are beneficial to all (see Recommendation 1.1.B). Subcommittees could also be created within Rogers's existing Public Arts Commission (RPAC), such as a curatorial committee to more intentionally commission, install, and maintain public art, or a music and performing arts committee to help craft events that are geared towards all of Rogers.

In order to encourage strong and maintained cultural participation and stewardship on the part of the community, it is critical that further community engagement seek to clarify residents' priorities and needs, in particular those of groups previously underrepresented in cultural planning and activities. Surveys posted either online or made available in public places can help to gather feedback from the community at large, while more targeted efforts such as focus groups could engage key stakeholders.

## Funding for Arts, Culture and Wellness

The creation of funding streams which would support arts and culture are critical to their development and continued success in Rogers. On one hand, there is much the City itself can do to support arts, culture, and wellness, such as programming public spaces or installing public art. Additionally, the City recently hired three Coordinators dedicated to the key drivers of public art, music and performing arts, and wellness, including the culinary arts.

While the City is committed to building its own cultural capacity, culture is made up of and driven by the community, and likewise, community members themselves will be its most vocal supporters. For those generous members of the Rogers community who have expressed a desire for greater opportunities to support arts, culture, and wellness, financially and otherwise, it is critical that the City should devise strategies and funding streams which are able to accept donations, including perhaps loaned or donated works of art. Recommendation 2.3.A in this plan speaks to the establishment of a quasi- or non-governmental entity or public-private partnership for the purpose of facilitating donations towards arts, culture, and wellness in Rogers.

In addition to residents of Rogers, there are a host of other supporters of arts, culture, and wellness that the community might tap into, but only after a system has been developed to facilitate private donations towards the promotion of local arts, culture, and wellness. Such a strategy is already in place at the Rogers Public Library; established in 1997, the Rogers Public Library Foundation works with the Library to provide more robust resources and programming with support from private individuals and businesses.

Through public-private partnerships or other structures, many cities across the U.S. benefit from working with arts and culture foundations; in many cases, one non-profit partner is featured in particular to work more closely with a city to fundraise or distribute funding. Potential supporters of Rogers's arts and culture who do not necessarily live in the city include its local businesses and business-owners, workers, national and international corporations which have a presence in the region, and regional and national foundations, endowments, or other funds which provide grants or otherwise lend support to the growth of arts, culture, and wellness.

## Precedents: Arts Foundations and Alliances

**\*Mount Pleasant, South Carolina:** The City commissions public art through public contests, and private benefactors established the Mount Pleasant Cultural Arts Center Fund in early 2020; additionally, the Cabarrus County Arts Council is the State's official cultural partner for the region, and receives funding from many sources, including private individuals, to support County-wide arts and culture. See: <https://cabarrusartscouncil.org/>.

**\*Bismarck, North Dakota:** Dakota West Arts Council is a non-profit organization that has been working through a public-private partnership with the City of Bismarck for several decades to support local arts and culture. The Council offered twenty-three grants to local artists and organizations in 2021, with funding from individuals, corporate donors, foundations, and the North Dakota Council on the Arts. See: <http://www.artscapital.org/about.html>.

**\*Hillsboro, Oregon:** The Hillsboro Arts and Culture Endowment was established in 2012 to serve as a sustainable funding source for arts and culture in the city. The Endowment is overseen by the Hillsboro Arts and Cultural Council, a citizen advisory committee, and is the result of a partnership between the Arts and Cultural Council and two non-profits: Hillsboro Community Foundation and Oregon Community Foundation. See: <https://www.hillsboro-oregon.gov/city-services-overview/cultural-arts/hillsboro-arts-culture-council-/hillsboro-arts-culture-endowment>.

**Houston, Texas:** The non-profit Houston Arts Alliance has been contracted by the City of Houston to support and facilitate investment in local art and realize the City's vision for arts and culture. It is overseen by the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs. In 2019, the Houston Arts Alliance awarded \$6.9 Million in grants to support the work of independent arts and culture workers and organizations. See: <https://www.houstonartsalliance.com/>.

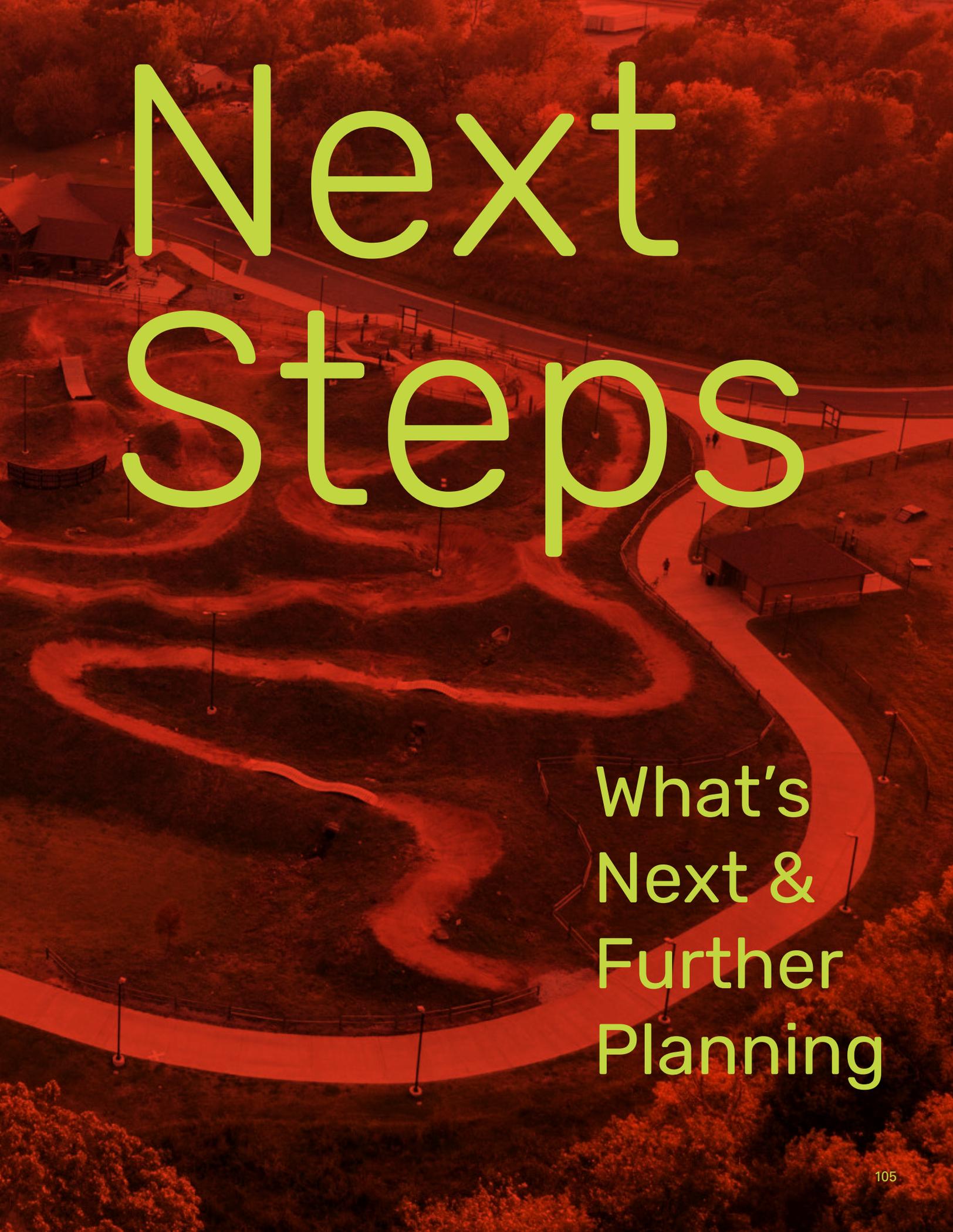
*\*Rogers peer city identified in this Cultural Plan.*

# Sample Timeline for Developing an Arts and Culture Foundation in Rogers



8



An aerial photograph of a roller coaster track, overlaid with a semi-transparent red color. The track winds through a wooded area with several buildings and structures. The text 'Next Steps' is written in a large, light green, sans-serif font across the top half of the image.

# Next Steps

What's  
Next &  
Further  
Planning



# Conclusion & Next Steps

The City of Rogers has ample opportunity to grow and support its already-dynamic arts and culture ecosystem. By evaluating and improving upon the City's existing programs, clarifying policies that promote widespread participation and advance the livelihood of creative residents, and building strategic partnerships locally and throughout the region, Rogers can realize its vision as a place where arts and culture thrives and is for everyone.

This Plan provides a vision and set of objectives to guide the City's cultural planning efforts, and a set of Roadmaps outlining concrete steps for the City's leadership to pursue in the next five or more years. As the city's first ever Cultural Plan, the recommendations in this document are meant to be re-evaluated periodically, including through program monitoring and evaluation, public and stakeholder engagement, and pilot projects and initiatives to test and refine ideas.

In recent years, the City of Rogers has made strong investments in Arts and Culture, including the establishment of the Rogers Public Art Commission (RPAC), the formation of the Arts and Culture Division in the Department of Community Development, with Coordinators of Public Art, Music, and Wellness, the opening of Butterfield Stage and its inaugural Railyard Live season, and several initiatives to incorporate public art in the City's public works projects and the planning of Downtown.

In the months and years to come, the City will build upon these efforts while responding to the challenges and needs of its growing and increasingly diverse population. This includes meeting the needs of local artists and creative workers who express a desire for more access to affordable housing and workspace, professional development and collaboration opportunities, and paid opportunities to share their work or practice their craft. Along the way, the City can position arts and culture as an engine to promote broader objectives, including stimulating economic development, improving quality of life across all communities, planning more vibrant and better-connected streets and public spaces, and improving community cohesion to make Rogers an even more welcoming place for people of all backgrounds, ages, and abilities.

Some of the key next steps this Plan recommends for the City of Rogers and its partners include:

- Stand up a non-profit arts and culture foundation to serve as a fundraising engine
- Evaluate and improve the City’s signature arts and culture programs: Railyard Live series, Farmers’ Market, and the Public Art program
- Establish working /advisory groups to gain further input from key stakeholders and further shape the Roadmaps presented in this Plan
- Clarify and create City policies and procedures to facilitate participation in arts, culture, and wellness by local organizations, including music and public event policies (supported by Sound Diplomacy), food vendor and Farmers’ Market, and public art policies and procedures (supported by CACHE).
- Partner with CACHE and across agencies within City of Rogers to improve access to information and resources about arts, culture, and wellness.
- Partner with ArtSpace to strategize and fundraise for the development of affordable artist housing units, as recommended in their 2018 study.

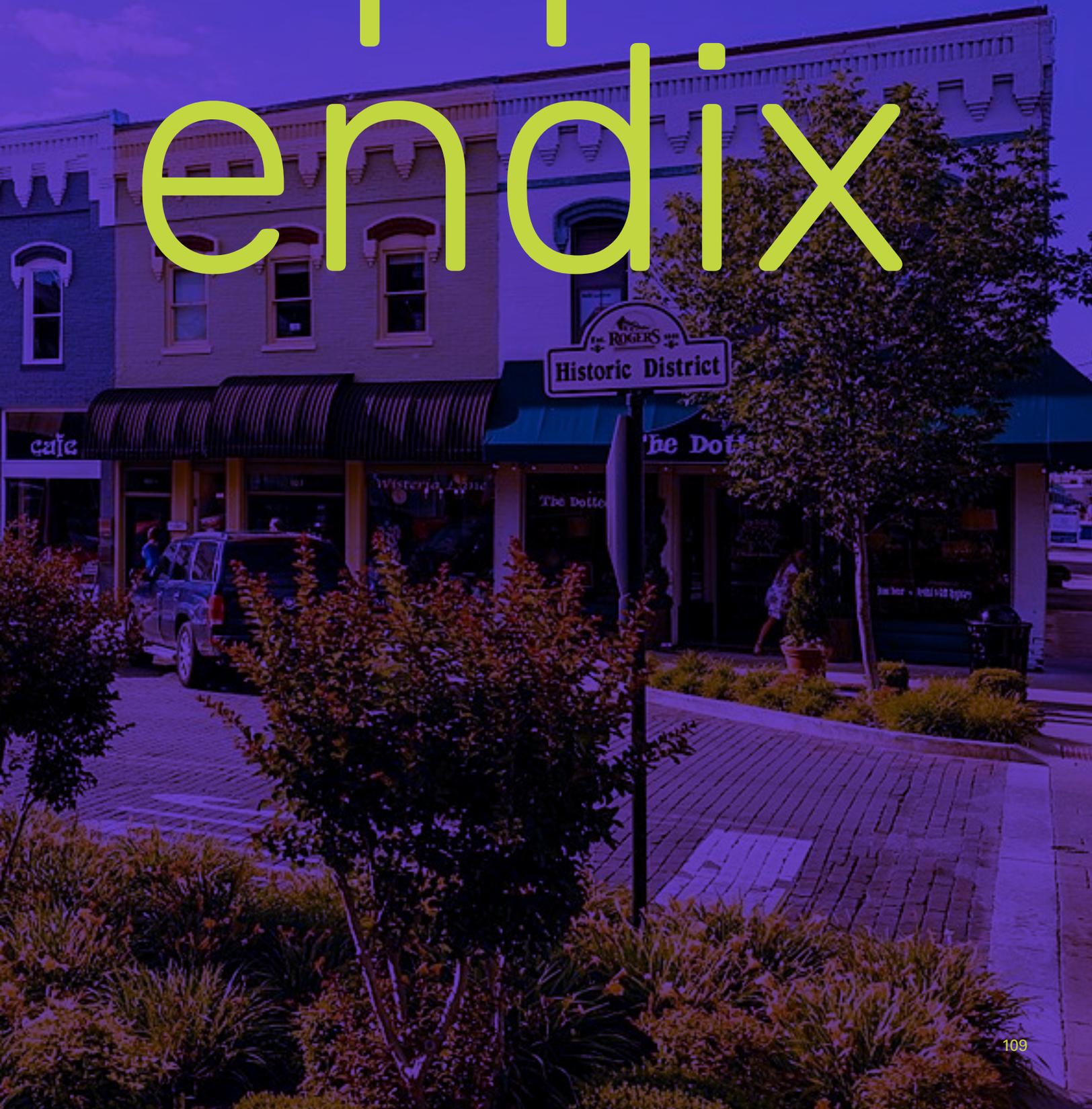


Opal Agafia and the Sweet Nothings perform at Frisco Fest.

# 9



# Appendix



# Appendix A. Works Cited

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# Appendix B. Comparable Cities Review Table

<b>City</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Area (sq miles)</b>	<b>Population Growth 2010-2020</b>	<b>Arts and Culture Governance Structure(s)</b>	<b>Cultural Plan (year)</b>
<b>Hillsboro, Oregon</b>	105,000	25	52%	Cultural Arts Program Manager	2018
<b>Tyler, Texas</b>	104,000	54	25%	Cultural planning is an element of broader master planning	N/A
<b>Asheville, North Carolina</b>	90,531	45	33%	Public Art and Cultural Commission	2000/2008
<b>Fort Myers, Florida</b>	76,591	49	66%	Public Art Committee	N/A
<b>Concord, North Carolina</b>	89,729	64	64%	Public Art Advisory Committee & Carrabus County Arts Council	N/A
<b>Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina</b>	83,700	59	82%	Culture, Arts, and Pride Commission	N/A
<b>West Des Moines, Iowa</b>	65,606	48	41%	West Des Moines Public Arts Advisory Commission, City of West Des Moines Public Art Program, Arts, Culture, and Enrichment Facility Supervisor	2015
<b>Flower Mound, Texas</b>	73,300	44	51%	Town of Flower Mound Cultural Arts Commission	2018
<b>Boynton Beach, Florida</b>	75,700	17	27%	Public Art Manager, Art Advisory Board	2005-2007

<b>Notable programs and planning outcomes</b>	<b>Other insights</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hillsboro Arts Month celebrates local creators</li> <li>- Funding and other resources are available for artists</li> </ul>	Resources are widely available for non-English speakers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tyler is infused with public art of varying traditions, and has completed a Downtown Art Alley project</li> </ul>	The city is notable for its historic architecture, which the master Plan seeks to preserve
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gateways have been developed to define areas and invite people into them</li> <li>- Public art is considered along several factors including permanence, scale, content and material</li> </ul>	1% of the Capital Improvement Program funding is directed towards public art
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Created an annual cultural grant program</li> <li>- 10-25% of funds are reserved for maintenance</li> </ul>	Zoning includes a 1% for public art stipulation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Arts Council curates four galleries across the first floor of their 1876 courthouse</li> <li>- Art Walk on Union is a day-long festival for artists and other creators to showcase their work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Arts Council distributes grant funding on an annual basis</li> <li>- The Arts Council formed a group for young adult creators, Art on Tap</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mt. Pleasant has a strong history of public art, including commissioned artworks</li> <li>- Cultural mapping and a cultural calendar are available</li> </ul>	The Mount Pleasant Cultural Arts Center Fund was established through private donations in early 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- West Des Moines has made strides towards greater connectivity to and between its arts and cultural assets</li> <li>- A public-private partnership helps to facilitate gifting and donations directly towards the arts</li> </ul>	Rigorous procedures set out the process for the showcasing or acquiring of public art, including provisions for maintenance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are a multitude of resources online showcasing local creators and events</li> <li>- Created an Art in the Park festival</li> </ul>	Flower Mound has incorporated strong language around the need for inclusivity and embracing the cultural diversity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Art in Public Places program was formally adopted via zoning ordinance</li> <li>- Boynton Beach has gone to great lengths to broaden their definition of art and accessibility to it</li> </ul>	The Art in Public Places program is funded through a 1% for public art provision; 30% of funds must be directed towards programming

# Appendix B. Comparable Cities Review Table (cont'd.)

<b>City</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Area (sq miles)</b>	<b>Population Growth 2010-2020</b>	<b>Arts and Culture Governance Structure(s)</b>	<b>Cultural Plan (year)</b>
<b>Bismarck, North Dakota</b>	71,731	35	31%	Dakota West Arts Council	2014
<b>Franklin, Tennessee</b>	75,400	43	86%	Williamson County Arts Council, & "Policies and Procedures for Artwork Donations, Loans, and Exhibitions on Public Property"	2018
<b>Meridian, Idaho</b>	97,000	27	192%	Meridian Arts Commission	2019

<b>Notable programs and planning outcomes</b>	<b>Other insights</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- City has created an Arts Alley, transforming an alleyway downtown into a vibrant public space and connector showcasing the work of local creators</li> </ul>	<p>Bismarck is looking to promote artists with marketing, management, financing and other support</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are many City-sponsored events and festivals, as well as publicly-owned gallery spaces</li> <li>- There are highly specific criteria that any proposed public art must satisfy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Franklin has attempted to streamline its process for special event permitting</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meridian’s downtown Art Week hosts a multitude of programming, including free classes</li> <li>- City has been essential to efforts to increase local performing arts</li> <li>- A City of Meridian Public Art Tour is available online through GIS</li> </ul>	<p>Diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts include experiences for individuals who are facility-or home-bound or otherwise immobile</p>







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