



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.

This document is a condensed version of the complete Rogers Cultural Plan. To view the complete Rogers Cultural Plan, please visit www.rogersar.gov/culturalplan or contact the Arts and Culture Division.

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

Greg Hines, Mayor
John McCurdy, Director of Community Development
Anna Watson, Arts & Culture Coordinator
Justin Pounds, Music & Events Coordinator
Fran Free, Food & Wellness Coordinator
Amber Long, Planner
Rogers Public Art Commission
Rogers City Council

PLANNING & ENGAGEMENT CONTRIBUTORS

Julie Burros
Philip Barash
CACHE
Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce
Arkansas Arts Academy
Whole Health Institute
Walton Family Foundation

CONSULTING TEAM

WXY architecture + urban design

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

CONTENTS


1	Foreword	1
2	Introduction	2
3	Roadmap	12
4	Implementation	40
5	Next Steps	60
6	Appendix	64

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

1





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

2



Introduction

The background image is a photograph of a construction site, overlaid with a semi-transparent green filter. In the foreground, a large, dark, abstract sculpture made of metal rods and plates is visible. In the background, there are several multi-story buildings, some of which appear to be under construction or renovation. A sign with the letters 'DPBC' is visible on one of the buildings. The overall scene suggests a project involving urban development or public art.

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.

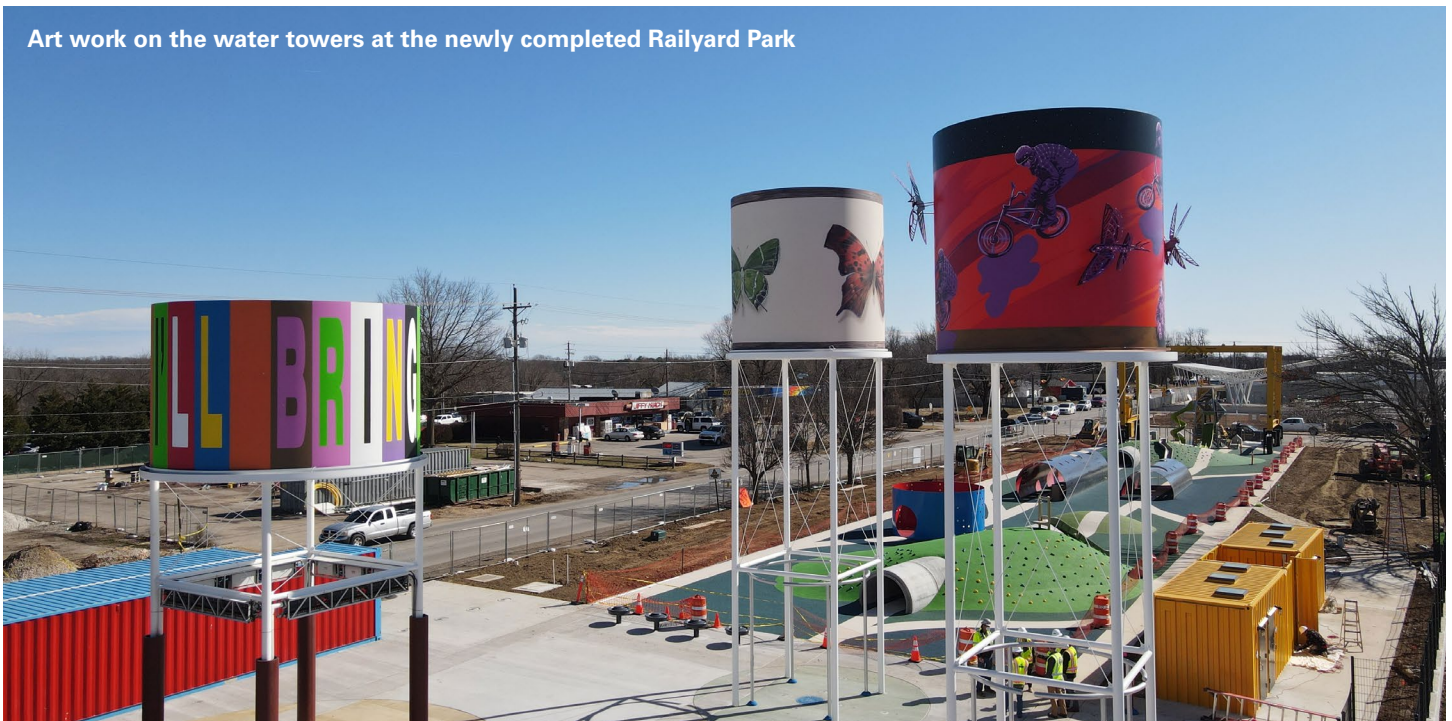
- Identify opportunities to enact the Plan’s vision and test its framework through pilot projects and related recommendations, with particular focus on public art, music and performing arts, and wellness, including culinary arts.
- Promote cultural planning at the city and regional level; this includes 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.

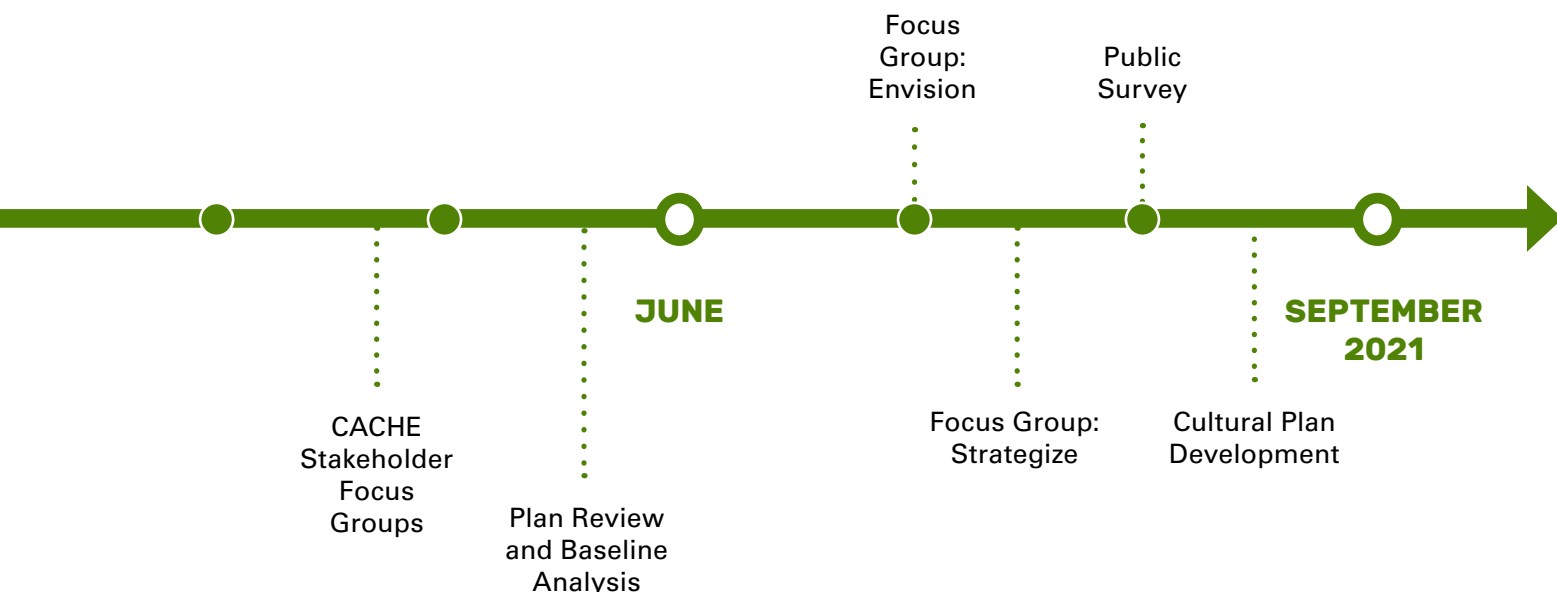
VISION

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.

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.

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 13) 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 13) and the Implementation Plan (page 42) 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 children¹, improve community cohesion², and improve the beauty and the livability of cities and towns.³ 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.

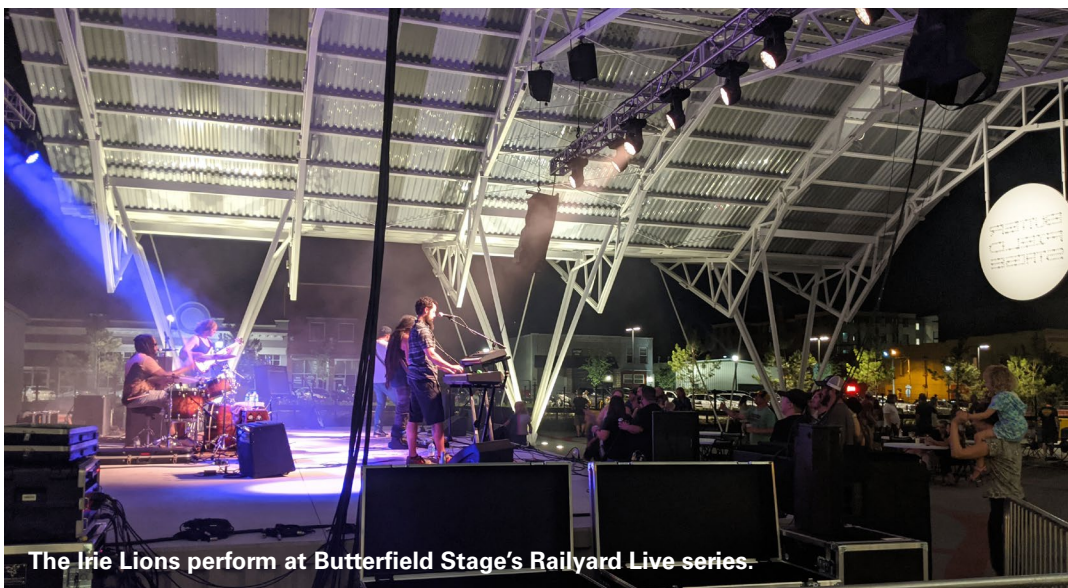
Cultural engagement has a proven effect on the wellbeing of communities, in particular for seniors and people living with disabilities,⁴ and to the extent cultural programming and public art encourage people to be physically active

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.

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.⁵

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.⁶ 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.⁷

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.

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.

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



Road Map

The background of the slide is a photograph of a water tower. The tower is white and has a large, detailed mural of a brown and orange butterfly on its side. It is supported by a white metal lattice structure. To the left, another water tower is partially visible, with the letters 'G', 'Y', and 'O' in green, yellow, and orange respectively. The scene is set in an industrial or construction area with various structures, pipes, and a clear blue sky.

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

/ ROADMAP

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

/ ROADMAP

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/performance 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

/ ROADMAP

pedestrian connectivity in Rogers.)

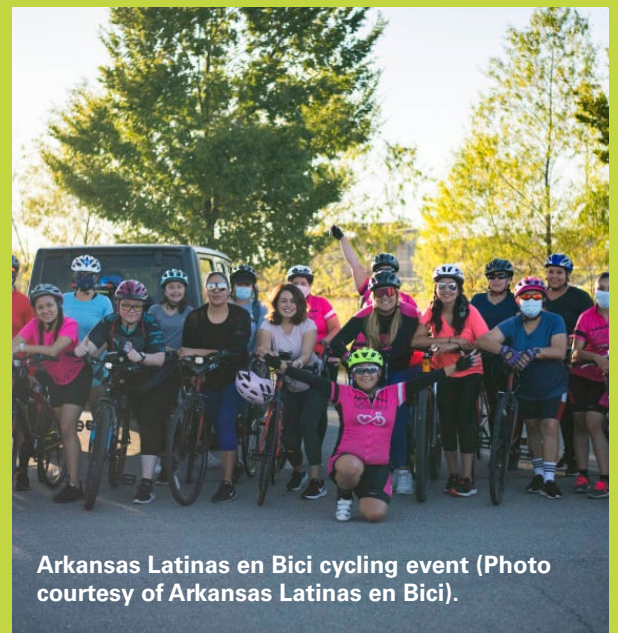
The Roadmap also prioritizes a *healthy food system* in Rogers, with APA indicators including the percentage of low-income residents living within walking distance of a full-service grocer, the city's density of fast-food outlets, its number of local agricultural producers and distribution points, and 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.



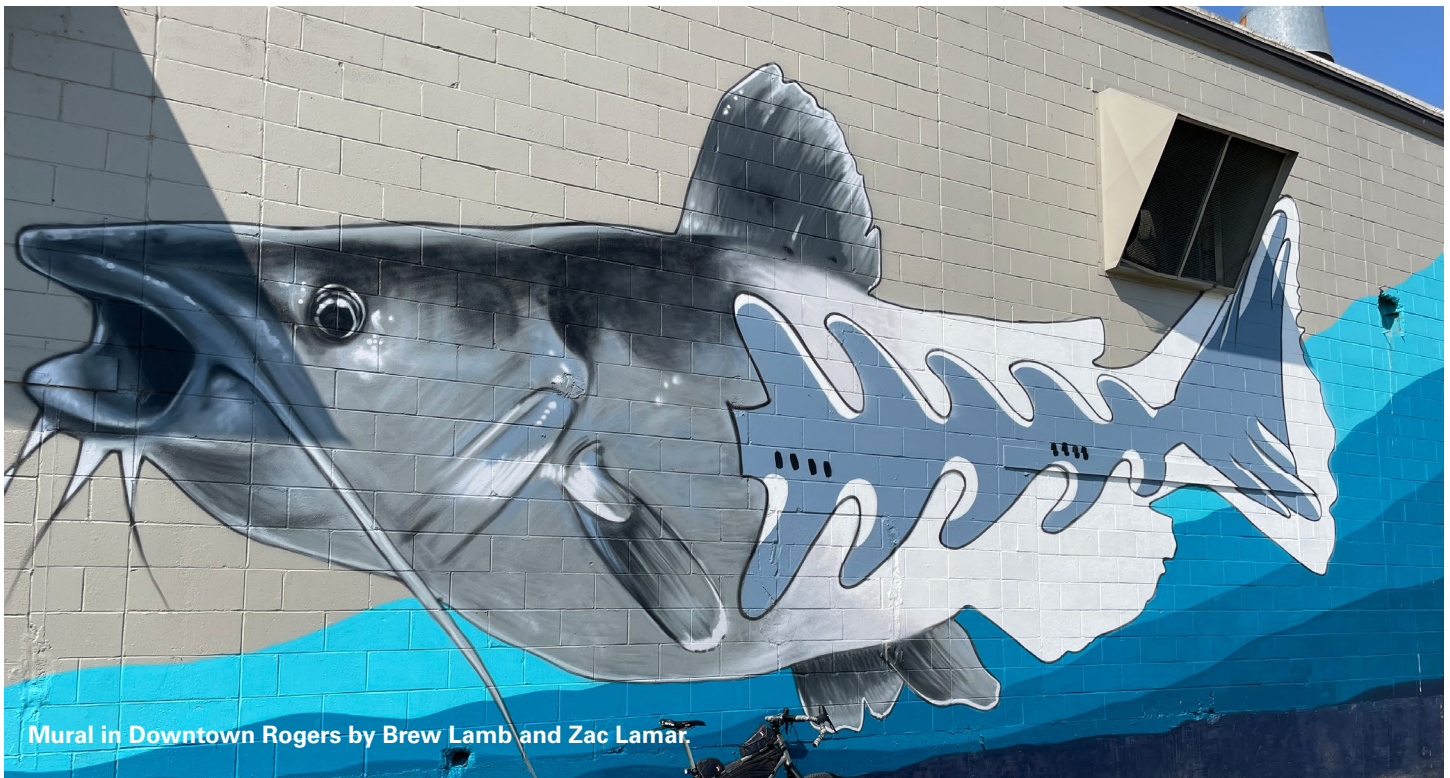
Rafael Rios (Photo courtesy of Rafael Rios)

4



Implementation

A large, dark-colored butterfly sculpture is mounted on a white, curved rooftop structure. The butterfly is positioned centrally, with its wings spread. The structure is part of a larger architectural installation on a flat roof. In the background, a residential neighborhood with houses and trees is visible under a clear blue sky. To the left, another part of the installation is visible, featuring a circular platform with a colorful, segmented design and the letters 'G' and 'VO'.



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 47 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.











Mural in the Skate Park in Downtown Rogers.

1. COMMUNITY AND CHARACTER

Objective	Strategy	Strategy Type	Time Horizon
		 Policy  Programming  Capacity- & Partnership-Building  Capital Projects	Immediate (6-12 months) Short (1-2 years) Medium (2-5 years) Long (5+ years)
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.	1.1.A. Build capacity for translating communications from the City in all major local languages and for better informing non-English speaking populations.		Immediate
	1.1.B. Establish strategic working groups to advise on cultural planning and strategies.		Immediate-Short
	1.1.C. Conduct engagement to gather input on specific recommendations in this Plan.		Immediate-Short
	1.1.D. Expand existing programming at Butterfield Stage to engage new and underrepresented audiences, including a range of disciplines of performance.		Immediate
	1.1.E. Establish a Stage Partnerships program at Butterfield Stage to make facilities available for community programs and events.		Immediate-Short
	1.1.F. Clarify and standardize processes and procedures for partnerships, commissions, and RFPs, including establishing equity targets.		Immediate-Short
	1.1.G. Establish standards for contracting minority and women-owned businesses (MWBE) as part of ongoing commissioning and RFPs.		Short
	1.1.H. Streamline event permitting processes to encourage public cultural events and reduce barriers to organization and participation.		Short
	1.1.I. Create an Arts and Culture city services portal to make it easier for partners to host programming in Rogers.		Short-Medium













Cultural Drivers			Sample Impact/ Indicators	Cost (\$- \$\$\$)	Notes
Public Art	Music / Per- forming Arts	Well- ness		(>>) 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
		 Policy  Programming  Capacity- & Partnership-Building  Capital Projects	Immediate (6-12 mo.) Short (1-2 years) Medium (2-5 years) Long (5+ years)
2. Create opportunities for learning and collaboration—including opportunities for cultural workers, young people, and the general public.	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		Short-Medium
	1.2.B. Develop an artist-in-residence program based in City facilities or within City departments.		Medium
	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.		Short-Long
	1.2.D. Work with regional partners to leverage city-owned land for fresh food production or Living Agriculture Program.		Medium-Long
3. Define and communicate Rogers's unique character to create strong recognition throughout the city and region.	1.3.A. Develop a digital cultural asset map, including existing works of public art.		Short
	1.3.B. Create a strategy to promote arts and culture in Rogers at the regional level and beyond.		Short
	1.3.C. Conduct further engagement to create a regional campaign that communicates what residents celebrate about Rogers.		Medium
	1.3.D. Consider hosting an Art Festival in Rogers in coordination with regional partners, incorporating wellness and music elements.		Long












Cultural Drivers			Sample Impact/ Indicators	Cost (\$- \$\$\$\$)	Notes
Public Art	Music / Perform- ing Arts	Well- ness		(>>) 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
		 Policy  Programming  Capacity- & Partnership-Building  Capital Projects	Immediate (6-12 mo.) Short (1-2 years) Medium (2-5 years) Long (5+ years)
1. Leverage Rogers's unique cultural offerings to increase tourism, boost spending, and grow an audience base.	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
2. Position Rogers as a place where artists, cultural workers, and all residents can thrive.	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
Public Art	Music / Performing Arts	Wellness			(>>) 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
		 Policy  Programming  Capacity- & Partnership-Building  Capital Projects	Immediate (6-12 mo.) Short (1-2 years) Medium (2-5 years) Long (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
3. Sustain arts and culture in Rogers through funding structures that tap into regional and national funding streams.	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
Public Art	Music / Perform- ing Arts	Well- ness		(>>) 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
		 Policy  Programming  Capacity- & Partnership-Building  Capital Projects	Immediate (6-12 mo.) Short (1-2 years) Medium (2-5 years) Long (5+ years)
1. Improve access to and the visibility of arts, culture, and wellness assets throughout Rogers.	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
2. Improve and expand arts, cultural, and wellness infrastructure, including public art, entertainment venues, fresh food sources, and public spaces.	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
Public Art	Music / Perform- ing Arts	Well- ness		(>>) 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
		 Policy  Programming  Capacity- & Partnership-Building  Capital Projects	Immediate (6-12 mo.) Short (1-2 years) Medium (2-5 years) Long (5+ years)
	3.2.E. Contract local and regional artists for specified elements of Alleyway design, including murals, sculpture, and lighting installation.		Short-Medium
	3.2.F. Issue a RFQ for the renovation of the Old Post Office Building.		Short-Medium
	3.2.G. Explore the feasibility of expanding the Farmers Market to feature satellite markets throughout Rogers's neighborhoods.		Medium
	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).	 	Medium

Cultural Drivers			Sample Impact/ Indicators	Cost (\$-)	Notes
Public Art	Music / Perform- ing Arts	Well- ness		(>>) 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



5



An aerial photograph of a roller coaster track, overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter. The track winds through a wooded area, featuring several loops and drops. A small building is visible near the bottom right of the track. The text "Next Steps" is written in a large, light green, sans-serif font across the upper 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:

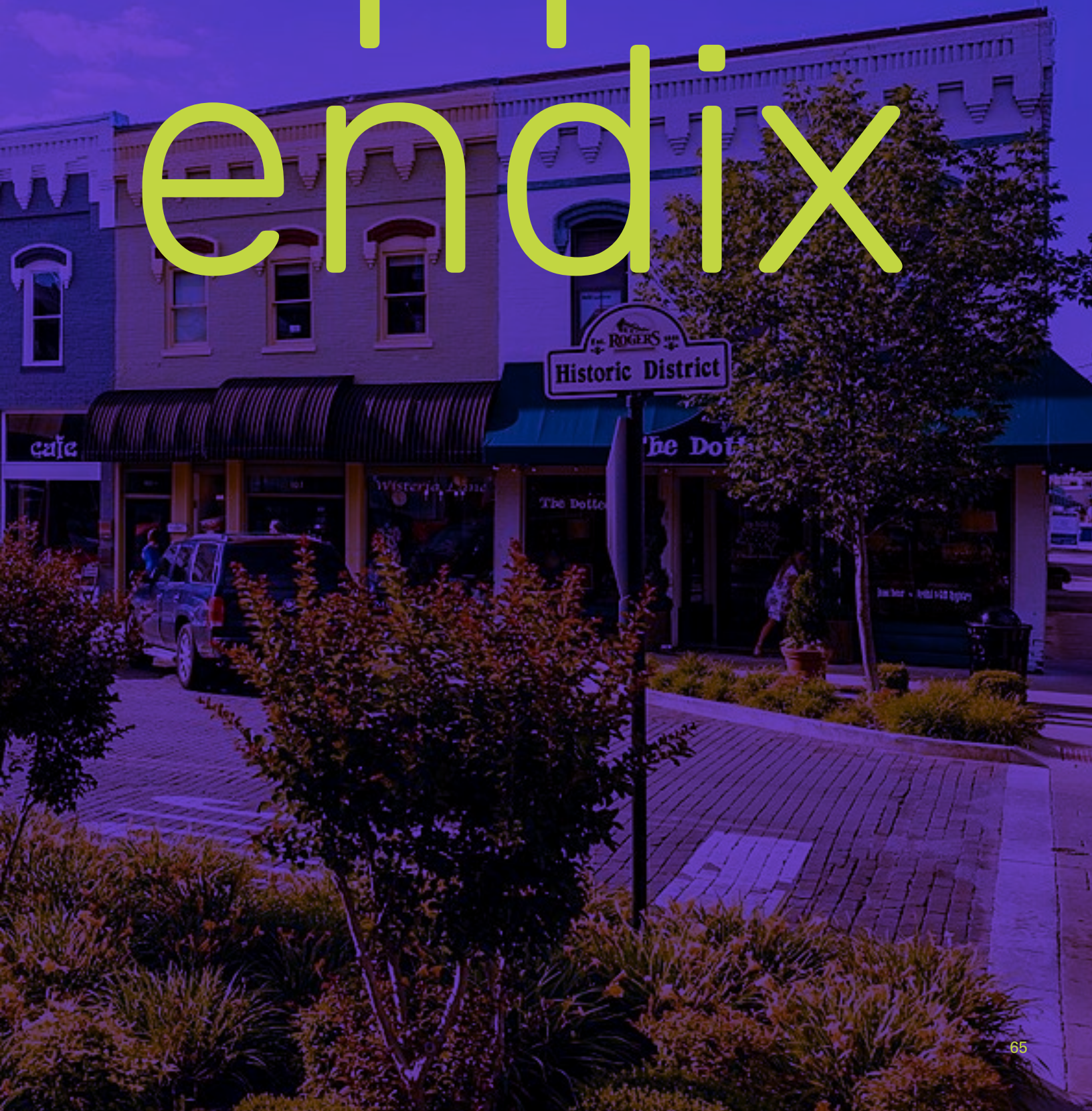
- Stand up a non-profit arts and culture foundation to serve as a fundraising engine
- Evaluate and improve the City's signature arts and culture programs: Railyard Live series, Farmers' Market, and the Public Art program
- Establish working /advisory groups to gain further input from key stakeholders 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 & The Sweet Nothings perform at Frisco Fest.



Appendix



Appendix A. Works Cited

1. Americans for the Arts Action Fund. "Why the Arts Matter in Arkansas," 2021. <https://www.artsactionfund.org/sites/artsactionfund.org/files/2021-04/AR%202021.pdf>.
2. Americans for the Arts. *Arts & Economic Prosperity 5: The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts & Cultural Organizations & Their Audiences in the Northwest Arkansas Region*, 2017.
3. Arkansas Arts Academy. "Modern Music Program," 2021. <https://www.artsk12.org/modern-music-program>.
4. Asheville Area Arts Council. "Keeping the Arts at the Heart of Our Community," 2021. <https://ashevillearts.com>.
5. BERK. *Social Impact of the Arts Study*, ArtsFund, 2018. https://www.artsfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/ArtsFund_2018_SIS_11.6.pdf.
6. Brown, Alan, Carnwath, John, and the Walton Family Foundation. *Strengthening the Cultural Infrastructure of Northwest Arkansas: Needs Assessment and Gap Analysis*, 2015.
7. Cabarrus Arts Council. "Energizing our community through arts excellence," 2021. <https://cabarrusartscouncil.org/about>.
8. City of Boynton Beach. "Art and Culture," 2021. <https://www.boynton-beach.org/art-and-culture>.
9. City of Fort Myers. "Arts & Culture," 2021. <https://cityftmyers.com/1743/Arts-Culture>.
10. City of Franklin. "Franklin Public Arts Commission," 2021. <https://www.franklintn.gov/government/board-of-mayor-aldermen/boards-and-commissions/public-arts-commission>.
11. City of Hillsboro. "Cultural Arts," 2021. <https://www.hillsboro-oregon.gov/city-services-overview/cultural-arts>.
12. City of Meridian. "Meridian Arts Commission," 2021. <https://meridiancity.org/mac/>.
13. City of Rogers & Gateway Planning Group. *ROGERS: Downtown Rogers Initiative Plan*, 2015.
14. City of West Des Moines. "Public Arts Advisory Commission," 2021. <https://www.wdm.iowa.gov/residents/get-involved/boards-commissions/public-arts-advisory-commission>.

15. Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. "Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and the Momentary Report on 2020 Efforts to Expand Outreach and Diversify the Museum," 2021. <https://crystalbridges.org/news-room/crystal-bridges-museum-of-american-art-and-the-momentary-report-on-2020-efforts-to-expand-outreach-and-diversify-the-museum/>.
16. The Daisy Airgun Museum. "Visit the Rogers Daisy Airgun Museum in Beautiful Historic Downtown Rogers," 2021. <https://www.daisymuseum.com>.
17. Dakota West Arts Council. "Art Alley 5.5 in Downtown Bismarck," 2021. www.artscapital.org/alleyart.html.
18. Echelon Insights & Walton Family Foundation. *Millennials, Generation Z, and Northwest Arkansas*, 2021.
19. Engh, Rachel, Martin, Ben, Kidd, Susannah Laramée, and Nicodemus, Anne Gadwa. "WE-making: How arts & culture unite people to work toward community well-being," Easton, PA: Metris Arts Consulting, 2021.
20. Florida, Richard, and Seman, Michael. "Lost art: Measuring COVID-19's devastating impact on America's creative economy," Brookings Institution, 2020. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/lost-art-measuring-covid-19s-devastating-impact-on-americas-creative-economy/>.
21. Heartland Forward & Walton Family Foundation. *Northwest Arkansas Economic Recovery Strategy*, 2020.
22. Houston Arts Alliance. "About HAA," 2021. <https://www.houstonartsalliance.com/about-us>.
23. Kisida, Brian and Bowen, Daniel H. "New evidence of the benefits of arts education," Brookings Institution, 2019. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/brown-center-chalkboard/2019/02/12/new-evidence-of-the-benefits-of-arts-education/>
24. Office of the Governor of the State of Arkansas. "Arkansas Unemployment Rate Stable at 4.4% For 3rd Straight Month, Still Lower Than National Rate," 2021. <https://governor.arkansas.gov/news-media/press-releases/arkansas-unemployment-rate-stable-at-4-4-for-3rd-straight-month-still-lower>.
25. PolicyLink. "Building a Cultural Equity Plan," 2021. <https://www.policylink.org/our-work/community/arts-culture/plan>.
26. Rogers-Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce. *Vision 100, Rogers and Lowell, Arkansas*, 2019.

Appendix A. Works Cited, Continued

27. Rogers Public Library Foundation. "About Our Organization," 2021. <https://rpl.foundation/about/>.
28. Rollins, Judy, and Lynch, Robert L. *Arts & 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.
29. Sound Diplomacy & Northwest Arkansas Council. *Northwest Arkansas Music Ecosystem Strategy and Action Plan*, 2020.
30. Southern Methodist University National Center for Arts Research. *Arts Vibrancy in Northwest Arkansas: Trends and Recommendations for Future Investments*, 2018.
31. Stuckey, Heather L., and Nobel, Jeremy. "The Connection Between Art, Healing, and Public Health: A Review of Current Literature," *American Journal of Public Health*, 2010. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2804629/>.
32. Town of Mount Pleasant. "Culture, Arts, & Pride Commission," 2021. <https://www.tompsc.com/564/Culture-Arts-Pride-Commission>.
33. Town of Flower Mound. "Cultural Arts," 2021. <https://www.flower-mound.com/1821/Cultural-Arts>.
34. Walton Family Foundation. *Artspace Arts Market Study*, 2018.
35. Western States Arts Federation & National Assembly of State Arts Agencies. *Creative Economies and Economic Recovery: Case Studies of Arts-Led Recovery and Resilience*, 2021.

