



# **CultureSpark Master Plan**

## **The Ten-Year Plan for Arts, Culture and Heritage in Erie County**

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**[www.culturesparkerie.org](http://www.culturesparkerie.org)**

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## INTRODUCTION

Why does a region undertake cultural planning? To take stock of existing cultural resources and the many ways in which they benefit the community; to assess cultural strengths, challenges and opportunities; to gain community and stakeholder input in setting future cultural priorities; to further integrate cultural development as a tool for building prosperity, vitality, creativity and community.

CultureSpark leadership chose to examine culture broadly – from artistic expression, performance and design, to heritage, ethnic traditions and hands-on involvement, to culinary traditions and cultural education. An important value of this Plan is that culture both reflects and celebrates the diversity of the region – and all have the opportunity to participate. Together, participants in the planning process framed a number of wide-ranging recommendations that promise to transform our relationship with arts, culture, and heritage throughout the county over the next decade.

The Erie region is, indeed, home to a diverse range of arts, culture and heritage resources: large, established organizations and venues in downtown Erie; smaller organizations throughout the county; heritage venues and sites in nearly every community; many artists, representing a broad range of disciplines; colleges and universities with significant arts and cultural programming; church-based cultural activity; arts councils in Corry and North East; both newer and established ethnic communities and traditions.

*“People like me who come from elsewhere see an art museum, the Philharmonic, the Tullio Arena, hosting Broadway shows, etc. and are surprised at the breadth and quality. Also Libraries, the waterfront, Youth Symphony. The fabric of community that expands your horizons: jazz festival; outdoor concerts. Classic things: ballet, Children’s Museum. These affect the restaurant industry – they are broad based things outside business life, that make you want to live here.”* Key interview quote.

These cultural resources contribute indelibly to the Erie region’s identity, quality of life and economy. A recent Americans for the Arts study pegged the economic impact of the arts and culture in Erie County at nearly \$15 million per year, counting only a limited range of nonprofit cultural activity. Dun & Bradstreet estimates that almost 1700 individuals are employed in creative sector enterprises in Erie County, encompassing nonprofit arts, film, architecture, design, radio and TV. Neither estimate includes the many self-employed artists/creators.

*“Arts and culture are so important to a city and to companies like us. We tout our arts programs to entice employees. It’s very important to attract good people.”*

*“The arts can be part of an economic engine that transforms the city.”*

Nearly 600 CultureSpark community survey respondents were asked to rate the importance of 12 impacts that the arts, culture and heritage have in Erie County. The top ranked impacts (all scoring over 8 on a scale of 1-10) were:

1. Makes Erie County a desirable place to live;

2. Helps our children with academics and other important life skills;
3. Provides safe and healthy activities for our youth;
4. Fosters downtown and neighborhood revitalization;
5. Contributes to economic prosperity;
6. Stimulates innovation and new ideas. (Survey Report, P. 2)

69% of community survey respondents reported that the arts, culture and heritage are important to their lives; 40% said they were very important; older residents feel the arts are more important than younger residents. (Survey Report, P. 3). When provided the space to remark openly about how and why the arts, culture, and heritage are important, the survey comments focused on quality of life, bonding among families and community, economic development, and youth and education.

*“Employment helps us to live...but art is what we live FOR!”*

*“Give quality, balance, and mental wellness to our lives.”*

*“Bringing together people of various socioeconomic and racial classes and breaking down barriers in our community.”*

*“Attract creative class to live in Erie, PA.”*

*“How can we stimulate innovation and ideas with schools cutting back on music, art, and drama?”*

### **CultureSpark Planning Process:**

The CultureSpark process featured exhaustive research and community dialog in order to assess cultural strengths, challenges, opportunities and community context, as a basis for developing specific recommendations and implementation suggestions. The yearlong cultural planning process kicked off with appointment of an oversight Steering Committee in May 2009. Planning was designed and facilitated by Bill Bulick of Creative Planning, from Portland, Oregon, assisted by research specialist Surale Phillips, of Decision Support Partners, Bozeman, Montana. Planning elements included:

- Extensive and ongoing review of background materials and data on the Erie region and its cultural sector.
- Almost 40 key interviews with key civic and cultural leaders.
- Focus groups with cultural organizations, heritage organizations, youth arts programs, educators, Project Blueprint, and the ArtsErie board.
- Forums with artists/creators and cultural organizations.
- Five open community meetings held in different parts of Erie County.
- Surveys of artists/creators, cultural organizations and the general public.

- Market research: a geodemographic analysis of the regional market for cultural activity and the audiences of major cultural and heritage organizations.
- Development of research profiles of communities and their cultural programs to provide comparisons and examples: York County, PA; Scranton/Lackawanna County, PA; Reading/Berks County, PA; Allentown/Lehigh Valley, PA; Peoria, Illinois; Asheville, North Carolina; Pawtucket, Rhode Island.
- Created a CultureSpark website, [www.culturesparkerie.org/](http://www.culturesparkerie.org/) and Facebook page as access points for information, review of documents and notices of opportunities to participate.
- The consultants worked with several advisory groups:
  - CultureSpark Steering Committee: a diverse group of over 30 civic and cultural leaders who met roughly bimonthly, to review research and community input, shape and ultimately, approve the Cultural Master Plan.
  - A small Working Group of cultural leaders and staff who met regularly to advise on planning process and outreach.
  - Six Task Forces, made up of Steering Committee members, cultural professionals, community members, and civic leaders, who met 4 - 6 times during January and February, 2010 to review the findings from research and public engagement, and develop strategies to address the six priority opportunities of planning, chosen by the Steering Committee as offering the greatest opportunities for productive cultural strategy development: Joint Marketing, Countywide Services, Cultural Education, Individual Artists and Creators, Community Development, and Resources and Infrastructure.

The Steering Committee also identified four crosscutting issues – Leadership and Advocacy, Multicultural Communication and Inclusion, Capacity Building, and Economic Development – to be addressed during the task force phase and throughout the planning document.
- Development of a Draft Cultural Master Plan, reviewed by the Steering Committee, Task Forces and in a public meeting.
- Presentation of the Final CultureSpark Master Plan to the community.

Findings from interviews, forums, surveys and other research are referenced throughout this document. Research reports are provided as appendices to the CultureSpark Master Plan.

## **The CultureSpark Master Plan Document:**

This document is comprised of an introduction, the six topical chapters containing plan recommendations, a section on implementation first steps and appendices.

- Introduction: describes why and how planning occurred, includes the Steering Committee Values and Vision statements, outlines top CultureSpark priorities and summarizes community context.
- Six topical chapters present research findings, recommendations and implementation suggestions, reflecting the deliberations of the Steering Committee, Task Forces and consultant team. The Topics are the same as the task force topics.

In the chapters, each recommendation includes suggestions for lead and partner implementers, timeline, resources, first steps, models if available, outcomes and benefits.

Lead and partner organizations to implement the recommendations are suggested, based on input from planning participants and research as to possible roles and responsibilities. While it was not possible to confirm all commitments, we hope they will accept this invitation to join CultureSpark implementation in a spirit of collaboration – and help to define appropriate roles as well as other potential implementers.

Three time frames are suggested for implementation: Immediate, 1-4 Years, and Long Term.

- The Implementation First Steps chapter suggests the initial work in energizing and focusing leadership to communicate the Plan to the community, organize for tactical work, gain support and maintain momentum with early successes.
- Appendices provide lists of CultureSpark participants, background information about the consulting team and summaries of research studies.
- Direct quotes from key interviews, focus groups and meetings are used to reflect prevailing opinions expressed during planning, and are cited *in italic*.

This is a Cultural Master Plan, reflecting a “big picture” overview of cultural resources, challenges, opportunities and recommendations, based upon the research and community dialog that was possible during our planning timeframe. In some cases recommendations are concrete and specific, in other cases, more tactical planning and assessment are needed. It is important to consider this a “living document” whose vision, values and overarching recommendations will provide a lasting framework that will embolden leaders to respond to new challenges and opportunities, as they arise.

## **Community Context:**

Each cultural plan must grow from its region’s unique history, values, issues, assets, aspirations and decision-making dynamics. Key interviews and forums

were used to probe the Erie region's character and identity, critical community issues and leadership dynamics -- in order to provide context for the cultural assessment. The following are emblematic quotes from key interview and meeting transcripts.

### **The Erie Region's Character and Identity**

**Right-sized town, big small town** - *"Very little congestion; easy to live in and get around, no traffic congestion, not intimidating."*

*"Well contained city, all the elements of rural, suburban and urban all in the county, high quality vineyards, historic neighborhoods, business district, a sense that you could be in a city bigger than Erie, a tight cross-section."*

**Natural Beauty** - *"Presque Isle State Park is the most visited park in PA. 10 miles of white sand beaches"*

*"Abundant natural beauty is an inspiration for arts"*

#### **Family friendly**

**Water/Lake focused-** *"Activities in summer revolve around beach and water access."*

**Community: Vitality, passion and resiliency** of the people, *"they have learned to do more with less, people do a lot with a little."*

*"People feel passionate about Erie, I noticed it right away."*

**Diversity** - *"Erie is a melting pot culture, dozens of ethnic clubs, small but a lot of flavor"*

**History** - *"Small communities hang on their history and are proud of it."*

*"Revolutionary, French and Indian War and War of 1812 - every era represented."*

*"Maritime and manufacturing history."*

**High nativity rate, but population is aging, declining** - *"people born here stay, people who leave come back"*

*"65% of young people want to stay in Erie."*

*"Population is aging, Pennsylvania is second only to Florida"*

### **Critical Community Issues**

**Economy is in transition** - *"Jobs, jobs are on people's minds. Last recession lost a lot of jobs. We are trying to figure out what is next economically, from making stuff that hurts when you drop it on your toe to the information economy. Things that aren't so hard core, gritty."*

*"Focus on the natural resource of water; have invested \$300 mil in cleaning up. Learn to leverage."*

*"We've come through knothole of being a smoke stack community to what were going to become next. It will include a manufacturing base with smaller companies. Have stabilized; the hardest part has been accomplished but will take 10 years to complete the shift."*

*"We need smaller industries here now, like data centers, microbreweries."*

*"A strong healthcare system is something to build on, tourism and hospitality are fastest growth industries now."*

*"City is distressed, bankrupt, budget cutbacks like elsewhere. Lots of fighting over revenue."*

**Haves and the have-nots** – *"there is a split between the haves and the have-nots. Mental as well as financial split - and how they use the arts."*

*Erie has the highest poverty level of any city in Pennsylvania; it has the third-highest level of child poverty for cities its size in the US (Pennsylvania Children's Trust Fund Report, 2002).*

*"There is disparity in schools and geographic locations in the city. If you live on the east side you are poor, uneducated, struggling blue collar, catholic. West side, business owners, shopping best homes, best schools."*

*"There is a lack of integration of minority groups, to the point of broad rampant exclusion, oversight, overlook. A growing sense of frustration."*

**How do we raise level of education?** – *"less than 15% HAVE college degrees. In today's workforce 83% require postsecondary education. Gap in preparation: postsecondary education. Affects every aspect of the community: standard of living, tax base, etc."*

*"Lack of community college for retooling resilient workforce."*

*"How do we get more access to advanced training. People aren't dumber, but we need more training"*

**Need vital urban cores, in Erie and other towns** – *"Without it we're hollow. It's vital for relocating businesses. We need differentiation beyond availability of land, workforce, and favorable taxation. Need vitality, identity. Condos, apartments, downtown amenities."*

**Learn to respect past, but build future.** *"Erie has a tendency to want to live in the past. We have to transform dialog from where we've been to where we're going. " "Respect our history and honor but realize that we live in the future. Go from the status quo to the status go."*

## **How Things Get Done – Leadership and Social Capital Dynamics**

**Slowly** – *"You have to be patient, it doesn't happen within two to three years, usually a ten-year plan."*

*"The convention center was done by 2-3 people who were key people. We can't have the same 2-3 people solve every problem in Erie. Now things don't get done."*

*“We used to have lots of corporations who could go back to their staffs to get help getting things done; we don’t have that kind of staffs anymore.”*

*“There are more smaller businesses with less time and money to give to the arts.”*

**Very influential people** - *“can kill or move something forward. They are not shy about expressing their opinion, so if you don’t have their support (4-5 influentials), it will stop in its tracks. You need buy in from the leaders to get traction.”*

**Many layers** – *“history of back room boxing matches to determine civic direction, as opposed to public engagement. Now we need a blend of political compromise, tied around a vision for how all the public will benefit.”*

**Complex nature of collaboration** – *“We are, by nature complex: 38 municipalities in a large County. Can we gain efficiencies; consolidate? Very parochial. Need for regional thinking. We can’t have parochial attitudes about boundaries if we are one region.”*

**Community foundation** – *“Now the community foundation has some successes in community leadership roles. Examples: focusing on poverty, community college as issues, focusing on access to health care, early childhood, workforce initiatives.”*

**Leadership for the arts** –

*“Strong political leadership is missing, as evidenced by the loss of the gaming revenue.”*

*“Political leaders don’t attend arts events and aren’t familiar with what is happening.”*

*“Leadership. I’d like to look at that, who is going to take us to the next level. People like to follow, so we need someone to lead.”*

## **CultureSpark Values and Vision**

During its first few meetings in May and June of 2009, the CultureSpark Steering Committee developed a values statement to guide planning, and a vision for cultural development, over a 10-year time frame.

### **Values Statement**

The CultureSpark planning process and Plan:

1. Affirms the intrinsic value and relevance of arts, culture and heritage to humanity and to our communities.
2. Is inclusive and reaches out to all peoples, ethnic communities and all ages in the Erie Region to promote exchange, trust, connections and commonalities.
3. Engages, enriches and encourages the youth of our communities.

4. Includes the voices of artists, creators and others who provide arts and cultural experiences, in addition to those who partake in them.
5. Embraces creativity, entrepreneurship, risk-taking and out of the box thinking.
6. Is grounded in cultural development best practices, drawing from other, comparable communities and regions.
7. Is an actionable Plan, with big picture vision and concrete steps and tasks for diverse groups of all sizes. Leaders will be able to report on progress, based upon implementation checkpoints.
8. Celebrates and builds upon current arts, cultural and heritage assets and strengths, recognizes existing supporters and encourages further commitments.

### **Vision Statement**

In 2020, as a result of our work together on CultureSpark:

1. Arts, culture and heritage are celebrated for their contribution to community and regional identity, vitality and prosperity.
2. Arts, cultural and heritage activities are accessible to all. They celebrate and promote exchange and understanding of the Erie Region's past and present, as well as its rich cultural diversity.
3. Hubs of cultural vitality exist in downtown Erie and in communities throughout Erie County, linked through robust communications and collaborations, to each other, and to schools and other community institutions.
4. Information about arts, cultural and heritage activities is widely available through easily accessible web, media and social networking sources.
5. All youth have access to arts, cultural and heritage learning opportunities because they are integrated into K-12 core curriculum and available in community settings. College and university arts training programs are sustained and strengthened.
6. The Erie Region retains and has become a "magnet" for young, talented creative individuals, because of its cultural opportunities, support and quality of life.
7. Artists and creators are successful entrepreneurs whose work and presence is valued and sustained in our region.
8. Arts, cultural and heritage organizations are valued and sustained by growing participation in their activities, strong public and private financial support and the commitment and capacity of board and staff.
9. The Erie region has fostered its international ties through artistic and cultural exchanges that enrich the region and reflect the presence of immigrants and global business relationships.

10. Leadership for arts, culture and heritage is diverse and strong among educators and education leaders.
11. Arts, culture and heritage are fully integrated into other community, education, and regional planning and development efforts.
12. Arts, culture and heritage activities in Erie County provide unique opportunities for intergenerational connection and mentoring that will foster individual growth, mutual appreciation and personal commitment to community.

### **CultureSpark Top Priorities:**

The Steering Committee's Values and Vision statements informed research and dialog throughout the CultureSpark process, from key interview, forum and survey questions to the deliberations of the Task Forces. What is important about cultural development for the Steering Committee is clearly important to the community, as well. Top ranked CultureSpark priorities for community survey respondents were (Each scored over 7 and on a scale of 1-10) (Survey Report, P. 17):

1. Integrate arts, culture and heritage into tourism promotion.
2. Arts, culture and heritage should be higher priorities within our educational system.
3. The Bayfront is a good place for development of more cultural activity.
4. Create a website with information, calendars and links.
5. Develop programs to enhance entrepreneurship and sustainability of individual artists.
6. Cultural development should address needs and opportunities in the entire County.
7. More opportunities for youth to participate in cultural activities.
8. Reliable sources of public funding for arts, culture and heritage nonprofits.
9. Attract and nurture individual artists.
10. More public art.
11. Cultural opportunities should reflect the ethnic diversity of our community.

Top ranked CultureSpark priorities for cultural organizations and artists were, in order (Survey Report, P. 14):

1. Promote arts, culture and heritage opportunities to increase participation.
2. Increase and stabilize public funding for arts, culture and heritage.

3. Integrate arts, culture and heritage opportunities more strongly into tourism promotion efforts.
4. Build a stronger cultural brand identity for Erie County.
5. Enhance arts education in pre-K-12 schools.
6. Increase private philanthropy for organizations and artists.
7. Advocate for arts, culture and heritage to governments.
8. Expand cultural opportunities for youth outside of school.
9. Facilitate collaborations and shared resources among arts, culture and heritage organizations.
10. Enhance linkages between colleges and university programs and community-based cultural activities.

In response to open-ended questions about desired outcomes of CultureSpark, cultural organizations and artists voiced the following themes (Survey Report, P. 15-16):

- Advocate and communicate the public value of arts, culture and heritage to governments and the general public.
- Revitalize arts, culture and heritage through strong leadership and cooperative activities that follow through on planning goals.
- Create sustainable resources for arts, culture and heritage.
- Increase promotion, access and participation in the arts, culture and heritage.
- Focus on cultural opportunities for youth.
- Embrace and advance cultural diversity in Erie County.

#### **CultureSpark Top Recommendations:**

Based upon research, stakeholder and community input, Task Force deliberations, Steering Committee review, and the perspective of the consultant team, the following recommendations, all equally important, are highlighted as having the greatest potential impact on the 10 year CultureSpark vision for cultural development:

1. **Launch a joint marketing initiative** to increase and diversify participation in cultural activity, and increase earned income for arts, cultural and heritage organizations. Convene a Marketing Advisory Committee to create a marketing plan addressing opportunities surfaced in CultureSpark market research, such as cross promotions, targeted marketing and cultural tourism. (SEE JOINT MARKETING, #2, 3.)
2. **Create a Central Cultural Website** as a primary tool for communication, marketing and networking, with links to other important sites. It would include a directory of artists, cultural and heritage organizations, venues, events, education and youth programs; a calendar for scheduling and

- marketing purposes; and information on training, service and funding for the arts, culture and heritage sector. (SEE JOINT MARKETING #2, COUNTYWIDE SERVICES #3, CULTURAL EDUCATION #1, INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS #1.)
3. **Countywide Cultural Development:** increase the number and visibility of cultural activities in communities throughout Erie County to promote greater access, participation and community vitality. Integrate CultureSpark strategies into other civic and public planning initiatives. (SEE COUNTYWIDE SERVICES #1, 4.)
  4. **Increase cultural education opportunities** in K-12 schools and community settings, through concerted advocacy to education, community, business and government leaders – this is key to the Erie regions future cultural and economic vitality. (SEE CULTURAL EDUCATION #6.)
  5. **Enhance professional development, marketing and support for individual artists and creators** to sustain their presence and impact in Erie County. Develop an artists/creators alliance under ArtsErie, for networking, collaborations and marketing. (SEE INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS AND CREATORS #1, 2, 3,4.).
  6. **Develop a Cultural Center, or centers** to provide additional spaces for exhibition and performance, to raise the visibility of culture in the region and to contribute to revitalization of downtowns through rehabilitation of vacant or underutilized buildings. (SEE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT #1.)
  7. **Increase private fundraising** capacity and activity of arts, cultural and heritage organizations, particularly planned giving to endowments, in order to strengthen and stabilize them. (SEE RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE #2.
  8. **Secure a sustainable government/public dedicated funding source** for the arts, culture and heritage In Erie County to provide a balanced, stable mix of earned income, private and government/ public support. (SEE RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE #3.)
  9. **Develop new partnerships that improve and enhance the relationship among community leadership, governments, civic organizations, colleges/universities and arts, culture and heritage.** (SEE IMPLEMENTATION FIRST STEPS.)

## CULTURESPARK FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The principal Findings and Recommendations of the CultureSpark planning process are organized under six categories of critical issues chosen by the Steering Committee as offering the best opportunities for strategy development. These topics were the basis for deliberations during the Task Force phase:

- Joint Marketing
- Countywide Services
- Cultural Education
- Individual Artists and Creators
- Community Development
- Resources and Information

Each chapter findings from research and community engagement and recommendations of CultureSpark with implementation factors following each recommendation: lead and partner implementers, timeline, resources, first steps, models, concrete outcomes and benefits.

### JOINT MARKETING

The top priority expressed by arts, culture and heritage organizations and by artists participating in the planning process was “promote arts, culture, and heritage opportunities within Erie County to increase participation.” (Survey Report, P. 14). To address this, a Task Force on Joint Marketing was established to outline strengths, weaknesses and opportunities and to make recommendations in this area.

*“We have a lot of culture, art, and heritage, but it lacks promotion and awareness in any organized fashion.”*

Joint marketing is a key element of this plan that bridges all of the planning areas. The Task Force charged with addressing joint marketing outlined key strengths on which to build as well as critical issues and needs that could be addressed through collective activities and solutions that would benefit the whole cultural sector. The Task Force saw its primary charge as facilitating opportunities for arts, culture and heritage organizations to “get the word out” to the community more effectively through a centralized information source that is well managed, connected to local media, integrated into tourism efforts, reflective of the ethnic and racial diversity in the region, and uses technological innovations. Secondly, the Task Force identified a need for an overarching campaign, message, or brand for arts, culture, and heritage in Erie County—a unified voice that continually reinforces a message that our cultural opportunities are vast, vibrant, and accessible. Quotes from Task Force deliberations:

*“People want to know what’s going on and we need to think globally to get information out.”*

*“We need a webmaster, one person or group responsible for getting information out into the community.”*

*“We need to market to arts organizations too, so they are all participating. Regional marketing too. We need to be diverse in the marketing options, offering multiple choices.”*

*“No common look, seal, an insignia, a logo that has a regional meaning that is used in a coordinated way among all groups.”*

*“[We are] lacking multicultural communication and inclusion.”*

On the CultureSpark Cultural Organizations Survey, arts, culture, and heritage organizations scored their need for audience development/marketing as very high (Survey Report, P. 12). There are many strengths on which to build joint marketing efforts. Erie offers a wide variety of entertainment, arts, and recreational activities that if promoted together carry a message of vitality and offer opportunities for cross-promotion of cultural activities through venues such as sports, recreation, and leisure. The Joint Marketing Task Force identified Erie’s key strengths for marketing as:

- Diversity in offerings-festivals, college programs, countywide events.
- Regional appeal to the tri-state area with Presque Isle, the Niagara, and the Tom Ridge Environmental Center.
- Inexpensive and free events.
- Access to electronic marketing tools that are the new wave in communication and are affordable.
- Geographic routing as a stop for tourists on the way to larger markets and connections to Chautauqua, wine trails, regional heritage routes.

Participants in key interviews and forums pointed out some marketing challenges and opportunities: AND

*“[We] use expensive paper media more often than cheaper electronic media.”*

*“[We need to] have more cohesiveness in the presentation of an events calendar, some place to see everything listed, on one place like the Internet or wherever, a number to call perhaps.”*

They also spoke to the breadth, depth and quality of arts, cultural and heritage venues and activities in Erie:

*“Small-town feel – with big town amenities.”*

*“First thing I noticed were the arts. Primarily performing arts, Playhouse, quality of entertainment options: the Art Museum, Children’s Museum, Philharmonic. The quality is better than what you might think for a city of this size, it wasn’t expected.” “Talent in a city without pretense”*

*“There is strong vitality and diversity in college programs; retaining and inviting different people.”*

*“Many heritage sites – the Flagship Niagara is one of Erie’s major attractions.”*

The community survey revealed that festivals, musical concerts, social events, multi-cultural/ethnic events, hands-on participatory activities, family-friendly events, historical programs, and events that involve food are types of activities that make meaning for Erie County residents, without mention of specific organizations. (Survey Report, P. 6). These are also strengths of the cultural sector that should be addressed in joint marketing. (For example, one of the outcomes of an effort like this in York County is a collaborative Summer Youth Arts Catalogue currently in production representing the programs of multiple organizations. This catalog will be promoted collectively to new households identified as “interested in arts and culture” through the research. CULTURESPARK RECOMMENDS AN ONLINE DIRECTORY: SEE CULTURAL EDUCATION, RECOMMENDATION # 1)

There is a general belief within this Task Force that part of what limits the cultural community in many ways is organizations working at odds with one another, some self-deprecation, lack of value for the cultural industry among leadership, lack of access to multi-racial, multi-cultural communities, and extremely scarce financial and human resources. Joint marketing efforts suggested by the Task Force are cost-effective, win-win activities that can help overcome a climate of fear and competition, boost overall awareness and participation, and leverage resources.

*“[Our] mindset is limiting in the arts... ‘it’s good enough.’ How do we change it?”*

*“Marketing groups in Erie promote mostly hot-ticket items that make a lot of money; need for variety of offerings.”*

*“An open mind to change. [I wish for] folks to stop bashing events and start supporting...quit complaining and start enjoying”*

*“Power struggle in community for control. Organizations don’t want to give up what they have now.”*

*“Duplication of services by separate organizations.”*

*“Some comprehensive central listing or promotional organization, as many ‘activities’ are scattered all over, have conflicting times, and one cannot be sure who is sponsoring or is presenting the activity. I would like to have one simple map, maybe in the phone book, where all the ‘cultural facilities are.”*

*“Get major arts organizations on board. Incentives to benefit all. Barriers equate to turf wars. Major organizations have a fear of loss and by cooperating may lose. Bigger organizations can help smaller ones. Build like a pyramid in a positive way.”*

*“Multicultural participation as audience. [It is] mostly white. No vehicle to reach the ethnic market. Need leadership among the people we want to reach.”*

Further input from key interviews, forums, and surveys outlines other marketing challenges that can be addressed through cooperative/joint activities:

*“How do people know about what’s going on? We need the community to appreciate it.”*

*“Consistent good marketing isn’t there – smaller organizations don’t have this. Websites aren’t dynamic – a centralized website would be beneficial.”*

*“Media coverage is good at the event – pre-advertising isn’t.”*

*“Website consolidation- I believe it ought to.... But, no one wants to give up the website they have. None are user friendly or decisively dominant...”*

*“One of the main challenges is advertising outside of the area so people know about this stuff. We don’t draw outsiders to the events.”*

*“For our region to move forward it needs to expect all heritage groups to be involved in the planning of such events.”*

*“Diversity and ethnicity should be overarching to be inclusive of all people, all ages, and all arts.”*

Many noted what they called a “bifurcation of interest and participation.”

*“80% of arts are enjoyed by 20% of the people. We need the others to participate. Arts should not be economically biased.”*

*“In Erie there is the blue-collar mentality, they don’t believe the arts are part of the fabric of society. It is seen as extras or fringe. The library should be funded well to change the color of your collar.”*

*“University programs: working class don’t access.”*

*“There is a fear about participation – trying something new and not knowing whether you’ll fit in.”*

Some organizations suggested that data “integrity” is an issue among the customer databases used for direct marketing promotions. For example, old data that has not been updated in many years as well as a lack of tracking many customers that purchase individual tickets to events, attend free events, or make walk-up purchases. This issue can be addressed through the Joint Marketing Plan as it unfolds through technical assistance and capacity building programs needed to support better marketing by improving data infrastructure and maintenance.

While the planning process clearly led to the need for joint marketing strategies, CultureSpark research also supports the recommendations put forth by the Joint Marketing Task Force. Geodemographic market research, conducted for CultureSpark, provides a good foundation for marketing strategy development:

Collective market penetration by the participating organizations into Erie County is 19 percent. Estimates of untapped demand show potential to reach an additional 14,277 households interested in arts, culture, and heritage, but not currently affiliated. Connecting with these households would bring market penetration up to 33 percent. (For comparison purposes, similar studies to this one have shown market penetration between 10 and 28 percent. (Geodemographic Assessment, P 9)

Collaborative and cross-promotional activities using existing databases could be the single-most productive means of increasing participation because within the database of 20,000 household studied, 80 percent are each affiliated with only one organization. (Geodemographic Assessment, P 6)

Limiting marketing to the “usual suspects” for arts, culture and heritage means missed opportunity. While market penetration is not high into each of the 24 different MOSAIC clusters that dominate the Erie market, there is some reach into each one of them, including diverse and low-income audiences. Geodemographic cluster attributes can inform choices of media and messages to reach these potential participants. (MOSAIC is a geographic-based segmentation system used for the analysis. It summarizes household demographic, lifestyle interests, and media use.)

Web-based and electronic collaborative promotions should be integrated with traditional media so that they support one another because several MOSAIC clusters with good latent demand are not heavy Internet users. (Geodemographic Assessment, P 38)

Arts, culture and heritage organizations should develop relationships and offers for countywide faith-based, professional/business, recreational, fraternal, and ad-hoc social groups as these are the lifestyle connectors of the majority of untapped households that show demand for arts, culture, and heritage activities. (Geodemographic Assessment, P 38)

Messaging and triggers to reach the largest amount of latent demand in the county should focus on dignity, heritage, stability, and include financial incentives/discounts and include the values inherent to “local” products/service. (Geodemographic Assessment, P 41).

From the community perspective, arts, culture and heritage opportunities are perceived as high quality, accessible, and welcoming. But, survey respondents feel they are not informed well about what is taking place. (Survey Report, P. 9). Other survey findings include:

Better marketing and coordination of schedules and events of arts groups were mentioned on the community survey as top ways of increasing participation. (Survey Report, P. 11)

When asked openly to express what is most important for the future of arts, culture and heritage development in Erie County, community survey respondents mentioned “increasing visibility, marketing, and media coverage almost the most often, second only to “secure adequate, sustainable funding resources.” (Survey Report, P. 19)

Community survey respondents named “better information about where and when activities are taking place” the most often when asked what would encourage increased attendance at arts, culture, and heritage activities in Erie County. (Survey Report, P. 45)

Community survey respondents ranked the need for the arts, culture, and heritage to be integrated into Erie’s tourism promotions of extremely high

importance. They ranked agreement with the statement “Arts, culture, and heritage should be integrated into our tourism promotion efforts” the highest among 21 other statements related to plan with a score reflecting agreement of 8.35 out of 10. (Survey Report, P. 83)

When asked to rate their agreement with the statement “I would be likely to use an Erie County entertainment, arts, culture, and heritage website with information, calendars, and links to a variety of opportunities”, community residents scored this item on average at 7.83 out of 10 (#4 out of 22 items rated). (Survey Report, P. 83)

Many communities engage in the use of collective arts calendars, collaborative cultural promotions, and a branded approach to the cultural sector. The CultureSpark planning process has already identified key recommendations and actions needed to implement joint marketing. Specific strategies to address the opportunities surfaced during Task Force planning are detailed below.

### **Overarching Goal**

**Increase collaborative marketing of arts, culture and heritage activities and venues in order to increase participation and impact.**

### **Recommendation 1:**

**Establish an arts and business stakeholders group through ArtsErie to build alliances and collaborations for joint marketing.**

Organizations and artists rated “PR/working with the media, and joint marketing and promotions” as the most important service to be provided by ArtsErie. (Survey Report, P. 29). The Joint Marketing Task Force believes that by creating more formal alliances, such as a stakeholders group between arts, culture and heritage organizations and the business and tourism development community that an effective joint marketing program can grow strategically. The first real step to this process is to establish the group and its leadership, outline the benefits of such an alliance and the rules of engagement, then to create a sample “program” on which to build. For example, the Task Force suggests a “cultural concierge” program modeled after Kansas City’s arts and business program model as a place to start.

- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** ArtsErie
- **Partners in Implementation:** arts, culture and heritage organizations, Regional Folk Art Support Center at the Erie Art Museum, VisitErie, Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership, Manufacturers & Business Association, municipal and County governments, media, Joint Marketing Advisory Committee Members, Multicultural Resource Center, The International Institute of Erie.
- **Timeline:** Immediate

- **Resources:**
  - Funding to increase ArtsErie marketing staff time, currently only seven hours per week.
  - Investment of time from leadership and the development of a presentation. Presentation(s) should describe the partners and the benefits of the program to all stakeholders.
  - Guidance from professionals doing these programs in other cities.
- **First steps:**
  - Identify and get buy-in from stakeholders.
  - Ensure countywide perspective and multicultural representation in group.
  - Define role of the alliance and establish rules of engagement and benefits of participation and the concierge program.
  - Create presentations about the alliance and concierge program.
  - Identify lead organizations to make presentations.
  - Identify key businesses and communicate the benefits of the concierge program.
  - Task arts, culture and heritage stakeholders to communicate benefits of the program to local businesses.
  - Task key stakeholders to communicate the benefits of the alliance to all levels/sizes of arts, culture and heritage groups.
- **Models:**
  - Realize Bradenton, a culture and business alliance, was formed out of a recent cultural planning process, in order to lead implementation and promote culture [www.realizebradenton.com](http://www.realizebradenton.com)
  - The Cultural Concierge program of the Cultural Alliance of Southeastern Michigan <http://www.theculturalconcierge.org/concierge/about-us.html>
  - The Arts Council of Metropolitan Kansas City [www.artskc.org](http://www.artskc.org)
  - The Philadelphia Cultural Alliance Campaign for Culture <http://www.philaculture.org/campaign/campaign.htm>
- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:**
  - Successful buy-in and ownership by arts, culture and heritage community resulting in a cooperative, enthusiastic group of stakeholders willing and able to participate in joint marketing programs.
  - Successful buy-in by businesses/tourism entities resulting in funding sponsorships and willingness to adopt the concierge program.

- Program develops revenue source to sustain it.
- **Benefits/Rationale:**
  - Commitment by business/ tourism stakeholders and arts, culture and heritage stakeholders to work towards the successful implementation of the Joint Marketing Program.

**Recommendation 2:**

**Create a website that would be a central resource for Erie County arts, culture and heritage venues and activities.**

While the Joint Marketing Task Force recommends the creation of this website as a separate recommendation, it ultimately would fall under the responsibilities of the marketing entity referenced in recommendation #3, below. The pent-up demand for such a website argues for immediate action, advised by the culture and business stakeholders suggested in recommendation #1. This group will evolve into the more formalized Joint Marketing Advisory Committee, referenced in the next recommendation.

The Joint Marketing Task Force specifically recommends that this website include all ethnicities, activities, events calendar, places, pages for artists, resources, travel packages, and sponsors and related links. It will be important for the site architecture to be carefully considered and designed looking at what existing resources might make good jumping off points versus adopting a new system or architecture. It is also believe by the Task Force that user-generated content and management on the input side would be an asset.

- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** ArtsErie
- **Partners in Implementation:** Arts, culture and heritage organizations, VisitErie, Joint Marketing Advisory Committee Members, Regional Folk Art Support Center at the Erie Art Museum, Multicultural Resource Center, The International Institute of Erie, media, local governments.
- **Timeline:** Immediate
- **Resources:** Funding for architecture and site support
- **First steps:**
  - Determine most viable model and website host.
  - Create funding/ sustained funding model.
  - Issue RFP for site development, hosting, management.
- **Models:**
  - [www.santafeartsandculture.org](http://www.santafeartsandculture.org)
  - [www.artsmemphis.org](http://www.artsmemphis.org)
  - [www.kazzoart.org](http://www.kazzoart.org)

- Artsopolis: cultural calendar sites: <http://www.artsopolis.com/>
- Lehigh Valley Arts Council comprehensive arts calendar and ticketing service: <http://www.lvartsboxoffice.org/>
- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:**
  - Central source of information and resource links.
  - Web hits
  - Organizational/artist site users
  - Increased awareness and attendance
- **Benefits/Rationale:**
  - Increased interest in the arts, culture and heritage activities and venues will result in increased attendance and ticket sales
  - Increased community awareness
  - Platform for community interactive site with blogging and posting
  - Ease of access to information

**Recommendation 3:**

**Create a centralized marketing entity overseen and staffed by ArtsErie that can serve as the marketing arm for the arts, culture and heritage organizations.**

The Joint Marketing Task Force suggested the following marketing elements might be included within the responsibilities of such an entity. These ideas might form the basis of the entity's first marketing plan to which subsequent timelines and budgets would be attached based on how this entity is funded, staffed, managed, and governed.

1. Identify an Advisory Committee of arts, cultural and heritage professionals from large, small, and ethnically-specific organizations with countywide perspective, and representation also from business/marketing professionals, technology, media, commercial arts, and educational institutions. (It is the members of this committee that will be referenced in all subsequent joint marketing plan items as "Advisory Committee Members".)
2. Create an Erie arts, culture and heritage brand for use on all participants' marketing materials and signage. Explore the viability of ArtsErie as this brand before investing in new brand identity. (Many communities, after significant branding exercises have landed on this moniker.) The community survey revealed moderate public familiarity with ArtsErie (Survey Results, P. 90.)
3. Use the findings in CultureSpark reports to drive collaboration and cross-promotion among and between organizations and their existing audiences (e.g. list exchanges, advertising trades, showcasing/speaking

- opportunities, programming partnerships, value-added opportunities for patrons, packaging opportunities, etc.)
4. Expand and develop regional and joint marketing initiatives, including efforts to broaden the ethnic diversity of participants and attract younger audiences.
    - **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** ArtsErie
    - **Partners in Implementation:** Joint Marketing Advisory Committee Members, arts, culture and heritage organizations, VisitErie, Regional Folk Art Support Center at the Erie Art Museum, Multicultural Resource Center, The International Institute of Erie.
    - **Timeline:** 1-4 years
    - **Resources:** further staffing, budget for ArtsErie expanded role; ethnic-specific marketing professionals.
    - **First Steps:**
      - Set up convening schedule to plan for future cross-promotional opportunities on upcoming as well as longer-term events and programs.
      - Identify branding team members and secure resources and a vendor to assess/create brand.
      - Secure funding source for implementation.
      - Hire/contract Joint Marketing Director or Manager.
      - Prioritize activities for the first 1-4 years.
    - **Models:**
      - “Destination York” <http://www.culturalalliance-york.org/calendar/>
      - KCLiveArts [www.kclivearts.org](http://www.kclivearts.org)
      - Penn State York Arts Festival (Partnership between PSU-Y and Local Arts Organizations) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P6VRFsSidIc>
      - [www.culturalheritagetourism.org/steps](http://www.culturalheritagetourism.org/steps)
      - [www.mobiledocent.com](http://www.mobiledocent.com)
      - [www.Guidebycell.com](http://www.Guidebycell.com)
    - **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:**
      - Advisory Committee and Lead Agency Roles Identified
      - Brand is developed
      - Joint marketing programs emerge and are launched and measured
      - Organizations are working together in new ways

- **Benefits/Rationale:**
  - The arts, culture, and heritage will speak with one clear voice eliminating marketplace confusion.
  - Organizations will benefit by shared cost opportunities for marketing and promotions while opening up pathways to new audiences.
  - Collaborative ideas and supported by implementation.

**Recommendation 4:**

**Create a detailed Joint Marketing Plan that prioritizes specific activities outlined by the Joint Marketing Task Force**

The following activities put forth by the Joint Marketing Task Force outline a series of specific activities that the centralized marketing entity would do. However, it was inferred that prioritizing, budgeting, and coordinating these activities would be the responsibility of the new joint marketing entity, therefore the priority, resources, and timeline for each recommendation is considered preliminary.

1. Develop a shared, centralized audience database for use in collaboration marketing and audience development.
2. Create and implement an integrated ad campaign (print, radio, TV, print publications) that supports the brand.
3. Create a variety of unique packages designed for specific local target markets (see first steps below) as well as external markets (visitors). Include cross promotions with non-arts/cultural organizations and efforts to reach ethnically diverse market segments.
4. Coordinate with efforts associated with marketing the Route 6 Artisan Trail, Chautauqua County Wine Trail, Seaway Trail, and similar regional marketing initiatives.
5. Organize a countywide artist studio tour, or tours, including the performing arts, if possible.
6. Leverage exposure for arts, culture, and heritage organizations through linked marketing of existing ethnic and heritage festivals (this could be an early “win,” led by VisitErie).
7. Address transportation needs associated with broadening access to cultural activity. Approach the Erie Metropolitan Transit Authority and other transportation providers.
8. Investigate working with VisitErie to expand “Be a tourist in your own backyard.”
9. Explore opportunities for a “Made in Erie” program.
10. International marketing of Erie region arts, culture and heritage.

- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** ArtsErie, Joint Marketing Advisory Committee
- **Partners in Implementation:** VisitErie, media partners, local governments, artists/artist organizations, arts, culture and heritage organizations, Regional Folk Art Support Center at the Erie Art Museum, Multicultural Resource Center.
- **Timeline:** 1-4 Years
- **Resources:**
  - Marketing entity established and capitalized; funding for implementation.
- **First Steps:**
  - Review past joint marketing initiatives, such as the Erie Community Foundation sponsored shared marketing services project with the Elliott Marketing Group, to evaluate what worked and what didn't.
  - Marketing plan to identify specific strategies and required implementation partners for these specific target markets (based on CultureSpark Geodemographic Market Analysis)
    - A. High demand market within 100-miles of Erie
    - B. Moderate demand market in Erie County
    - C. Weak demand, close, in inner City Erie
  - Identify the creative resources and media partners for an integrated campaign that can speak to these target markets, including diverse audiences.
  - Investigate opportunities with the Marketplace Gazette of Erie, PA
  - Investigate technology sponsors such as Verizon for Mobile App.
  - Build an e-mail database of people interested in arts, culture and heritage through collective efforts of all organizations.
  - Work with artists to assess the viability, and roadmap for an artists' studio tour.
  - Research "made in" programs from other cities/states.
- **Models:**
  - Chautauqua – Lake Erie Art Trail: [www.chautauquaartrail.com](http://www.chautauquaartrail.com)
  - York County collaborations and cross promotions with hospitality industry, York Fair, The Expo Center, and York Revolution baseball team. Cultural Alliance of York County ([www.culturalalliance-york.org](http://www.culturalalliance-york.org))

- “Turner to Cezanne” in Syracuse, NY (Involved CVB packaging, thematic programs between Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse Opera, Syracuse Stage, Syracuse Symphony, and other lead organizations.) <http://www.syracuse.com/sites/realdeals/cvb/>
- Open Studios:
  - Santa Cruz Open Studio Tour, [www.ccscc.org/index.php/open-studios.html](http://www.ccscc.org/index.php/open-studios.html)
  - [http://www.kansascityartistscoalition.org/open\\_studios/open\\_studios\\_participating\\_artists.html](http://www.kansascityartistscoalition.org/open_studios/open_studios_participating_artists.html)
- ArtsMemphisTV (partnership with Live from Memphis) <http://www.livefrommemphis.com/>
- ArtsMemphisApp [http://about.artsmemphis.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=278&Itemid=40](http://about.artsmemphis.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=278&Itemid=40)
- ArtsFest United Arts of Central Florida <http://www.artsfestfl.com/>
- ERI Jams Online Magazine <http://greatlakesfilm.org/ERI%20Jams%20Magazine/About%20Us.htm>
- Made in Montana <http://www.madeinmontanausa.com/>
- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:**
  - Ongoing consistent visibility.
  - Package usage by local population and visitors.
  - Studio tour launched and attended.
  - Broader representation of local arts, culture, heritage organizations in other types of exiting festivals.
  - Branded program and sales mechanism for local/regional arts, crafts, and products.
- **Benefits/Rationale:**
  - Packages and promotions will be designed with specific consumers in mind.
  - Targeted campaigns reach more potential patrons for less cost
  - Innovative complementary programs will foster cross-promotion and cross-pollination of audiences of people already affiliated with arts, culture and heritage.
  - Integrated media supports a broad strategy and connects with the population through multiple touch points.
  - Increased interest in activities and venues will result in increased attendance and ticket sales

- Increased stakeholder participation of community organizations
- Diversity in offerings available in Erie region
- Ease of information access for those interested in arts, culture and heritage opportunities.
- Develop a comprehensive signage plan. For example, develop outdoor directional and informational kiosks and place at large public gathering places and at major transportation hubs. Locations: mall, airport, Tom Ridge Environmental Center. Place community bulletin boards at clubs, coffee shops motels, gathering places.
- More opportunities for Made in Erie artists/ craftsmen to sell work and for residents and visitors to purchase local Made in Erie work.

**Recommendation 5:**

**Develop a comprehensive signage and wayfinding plan.**

The Joint Marketing Task Force referenced several opportunities for visibility for arts, culture, and heritage that ranged from informal bulletin-boarding to expansion of existing signage programs.

- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** PennDOT, Erie County Signing Region Trust
- **Partners in Implementation:** governments, Joint Marketing Advisory Committee, VisitErie, ArtsErie, local businesses
- **Timeline:** 1-4 years
- **Resources:** Staffing and implementation funding
- **First steps:**
  - Encourage countywide expansion of the existing Signage Trust program.
  - Inventory key locations for region and local signage and outdoor communications including neighborhoods identified in the geodemographic research as underserved.
  - Assemble a volunteer team to outline low cost and free signage opportunities such as bulletin boarding and postering at key community locations.
  - Ensure some tracking is in place such as audience surveys “where did you hear about...”
  - Identify key locals for signage that speaks to all target markets.
- **Models:**
  - ArtsMemphis Billboard and bus, and airport programs [www.artsmemphis.org](http://www.artsmemphis.org) (call for information.)

- Route 6 Artisan Trail  
<http://www.paroute6.com/static/index.cfm?action=group&contentID=13>
- Seaway Trail <http://www.seawaytrail.com/about.html>
- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:** Signage is consistent, clear, and outdoor/bulletin promotions are widespread and up to date.
- **Benefits/Rationale:** More clear and targeted visibility leads to more residents and visitors participating in arts, culture and heritage.

### **Recommendation 6**

#### **Establish a marketing capacity building and shared services program.**

The Joint Marketing Task Force suggested that programs could be put in place through ArtsErie to help arts, culture, and heritage organizations with basic marketing and information management needs. In addition, it was suggested that arts, culture, and nonprofit organizations be convened to more thoroughly identify areas in which services might be shared or brokered by multiple organizations, however, the specifics of those services was not provided by the Task Force.

- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** Joint Marketing Advisory Committee, ArtsErie
- **Partners in Implementation:** The Nonprofit Partnership, National Arts Marketing Project, arts, culture and heritage organizations.
- **Timeline:** 1-4 years
- **Resources:** Funding and technical assistance providers, vendor partners
- **First steps:**
  - Assess specific topics of interest (PR, database, diversity, youth, digital strategy, marketing plan development).
  - Identify available community resources or national service providers.
  - Identify desired delivery system (class/workshop, webinar, technical assistance, etc.)
  - Assess shared services and price points to develop potential delivery system and cost structure.
  - Identify service providers.
- **Models:**
  - National ArtsMarketing Project  
[http://www.artsmarketing.org/training\\_workshops](http://www.artsmarketing.org/training_workshops)
  - Shared services/database <http://www.artscouncil.org/artsopolis/>
  - Shared resource listings <http://www.giffordslist.org/>

- Shared services/incubator: <http://www.artsbridge.org/>
- Shared administration: <http://www.mtarts.com/index.htm>
- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:**
  - Improved databases, individual marketing, and capacity of arts, culture and heritage organizations.
  - Increased efficiencies and cost sharing.
- **Benefits/Rationale:** Improved capacity of organizations.

## COUNTYWIDE SERVICES

Cultural planning began with a commitment to explore cultural resources and strategies for the whole of Erie County. Although the region is served by Pennsylvania's fourth largest city with a population of over 100,000 and cultural venues and programs beyond most cities its size, significant portions of the county are rural and/or small towns – there are 38 municipalities in Erie County. Residents attend and value cultural services in the City of Erie, but also want opportunities for cultural participation in their own neighborhoods and communities, such as those in Corry, Union City, Edinboro, North East and Girard. This includes the inner city neighborhoods of Erie, which are home to large numbers of the region's low income and ethnic minorities. Efforts should be made to raise awareness of existing cultural activity, enhance levels and promote participation, including neighborhood/regional exchanges. The Countywide Services Task Force inventoried cultural venues and activity in municipalities throughout the county and produced a spreadsheet listing them to inform its deliberations and as a resource for CultureSpark implementers.

Everyone wants more information about what is going on in their own and other communities.

*"I live in North East where there are wineries, etc. people go in to the Philharmonic, but they have their own arts council, and would like to improve the arts in North East, they want easier access to things out here sometimes, and not have all the money going to downtown Erie."*

Corry has been engaged in a community planning process, Corry 2020, that has surfaced significant interest in "increased cultural opportunities." Among the priorities voiced are: more concerts, festivals and other cultural activity; more arts programs for youth and teens; live/work spaces for artists; incentives to attract more artists, such as financing for homes and studios; create an arts center for performances, exhibitions, recording and a radio station.

The new Union City Arts Network occupies a storefront, and is using it as a studio and teaching facility for area artists and youth to undertake art projects for community benefit. Girard and Lake City are just beginning work towards creating a cultural center. A Fairview group is trying to coordinate recreational and historical activities for youth, and the North East Arts Council is working with the Chautauqua County Wine Trail.

Almost every community in the region has a history museum and/or heritage site. Each of the region's five major universities provides cultural programs and services for its nearby communities and the County. Most invest significant subsidies in their programming to make it accessible to community participants. Mercyhurst College is convening a task force of high school students to design and run programming for their peers.

*"We need to have enough in the small towns to keep kids from that "wait till I'm 18 and can get out of here" mentality."*

The Countywide Services Task Force rotated its meetings around the county in order to catalog cultural activity and assess needs and opportunities. Their notes

– beyond what can be referenced in this plan document – will prove valuable during implementation.

*“The cultural plan should be place-based; it ought to look very carefully at the unique assets of the different parts of the region.”*

CultureSpark surveying and research support these community engagement findings.

Community survey respondents ranked “it is important that cultural development address needs and opportunities in the entire county” as number 6 of 22 CultureSpark priorities, scoring it 7.49 on a scale of 1-10. Their measure of agreement was 5.28 on a scale of 1-10 about the statement, “there is an abundance of arts, culture, and heritage opportunities throughout Erie County – outside of downtown Erie.” (Survey Report, P. 17)

Community survey respondents ranked the need for more cultural venues outside of the City of Erie slightly higher (15<sup>th</sup>) than the need for more venues within the City of Erie (16<sup>th</sup>). They ranked the statement “I would like to see more arts, culture, and heritage opportunities in my own neighborhood” as 18<sup>th</sup>, with a score reflecting agreement of 6.16 out of 10 - still a high score. (Survey Report, P. 17)

Our geodemographic research suggests there are significantly large numbers of households showing untapped potential (good demand/low penetration) such as Steadfast Conservatives and Urban Commuter Families (Geodemographic Assessment, P 27), and while they can be found in and adjacent to the City of Erie, they are also located in smaller communities throughout the county.

In communities and neighborhoods throughout Erie County, interest and volunteerism are high, but support, funding, capacity and, especially communication for and among these actual and potential cultural hubs has been limited. The CultureSpark planning process has already opened doors to greater communication, collaboration and coordination that will help to realize the potential and benefits of greater cultural participation throughout the County. Specific strategies to address the opportunities surfaced during planning are detailed below.

### **Overarching Goal**

**Increase cross-fertilization of arts, culture, heritage and creative activities in Erie County in order to share activities and enhance participation and impact in communities throughout the County.**

### **Recommendation 1:**

**Increase cultural activity and cross-cultural collaborations in communities throughout Erie County by fostering linkages and collaborations and building capacity.**

There are several elements to this:

1. Connect local arts councils and other cultural program sponsors from throughout the county to foster awareness, communication and program collaborations.
2. Build organizational capacity through training and workshops – especially in fundraising, marketing and presenting – peer networking and mentoring from more experienced presenters.
3. Encourage City of Erie based cultural organizations to take their programming to new locations and audiences in the County.
4. Strengthen partnerships between cultural and heritage organizations and municipalities. Integrate cultural issues and strategies into civic planning.
5. Strengthen partnerships between cultural/heritage organizations and colleges and universities.
6. Work towards identification and/or development of more cultural spaces, suitable for programming, in communities outside the City of Erie, including use of libraries, schools, community centers, Intermediate Unit 5 facilities. (SEE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT #1.)
7. Work towards developing new and increased sources of funding for community/ neighborhood-based cultural programming.

- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** ArtsErie, Erie County Historical Society, Erie County Public Library system, and independent libraries.
- **Partners in Implementation:** Local Arts Councils and other local presenters, Erie based cultural organizations, municipalities, Erie County, schools, libraries, Intermediate Unit 5, colleges and universities, Erie County Poet Laureate Program, Erie Community Foundation, The Nonprofit Partnership, local community foundations and other funders.
- **Timeline:** 1-4 Years
- **Resources:** training and technology; support from foundations, businesses and corporations, ArtsErie, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Intermediate Unit 5, municipalities.
- **First steps:**
  - Increase representation on the ArtsErie board of representatives from municipalities outside the city of Erie.
  - Convene community-based cultural program presenters to discuss the implications of CultureSpark, create a linked network, identify capacity building priorities and identify opportunities for collaborations. Suggest the group might meet quarterly, thereafter.
- **Models:**
  - Lehigh Valley Arts Council - [www.lvartscouncil.org](http://www.lvartscouncil.org) serves the region surrounding Allentown, PA.

- Asheville Area Arts Council, North Carolina  
<http://www.ashevillearts.com/about.php?subpage=home> (SEE COMPARABLE COMMUNITIES PROFILES)
- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:**
  - Establishment of a community-based cultural programming network.
  - Workshops held on fundraising, grant writing, marketing and programming.
  - New collaborations among organizations, such as cultural events at heritage sites.
  - City of Erie-based cultural organizations to do more programming out in the county.
  - Communities develop local and joint programming to celebrate the 1813 Bicentennial of the Battle of Lake Erie.
  - Development of more cultural venues and programs outside of the City of Erie.
- **Benefits/Rationale:**
  - Skills developed in fundraising, grant writing and programming.
  - More and more visible programming; increased participation in cultural activity.
  - ArtsErie and The Nonprofit Partnership are appropriate organizations to lead and support these efforts.

**Recommendation 2:**

**Increase and improve communication, collaborations, capacity and marketing among heritage groups that currently exist throughout Erie County.**

One of the indelible cultural strengths of the region is its large, rich and dispersed array of history museums and heritage sites. As stated above, nearly every corner of the region has at least one heritage resource. Some require improvements to their interpretation and accessibility. Erie Yesterday is an umbrella organization that has connected some sites and organizations, convened networking meetings and produced promotional materials. But it was expressed many times in CultureSpark meetings that greater communication, coordination and capacity are needed, among these mostly volunteer run groups. There is also a challenge in recruiting new and younger leadership and volunteers to these heritage organizations.

Now, new leadership at the Erie County Historical Society has signaled an interest in greater involvement. There is great potential to infuse Erie Yesterday with new energy and purpose. Likewise the County's network of libraries should be integrated into this effort to foster coordination of schedules, collaborations, better promotion and capacity building for the sites and organizations.

- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** Erie County Historical Society, Erie Yesterday.
- **Partners in Implementation:** ArtsErie, The Nonprofit Partnership, local historical museums and heritage sites, libraries, cultural groups, community funders that support projects of historical significance.
- **Timeline:** Immediate and ongoing.
- **Resources:** Funding for the Historical Society and Erie Yesterday to manage coordination, promotion training, and fee-for-services programs.
- **First steps:** Convene heritage groups and library representatives to review the status of collaborative efforts and establish further priorities.
- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:**
  - Regular meetings of the heritage network to coordinate scheduling, marketing and programming.
  - Online directory of historical and library entities in Erie County (SEE CULTURAL WEBSITE IN JOINT MARKETING CHAPTER).
  - More collaborative programming, including with arts and cultural groups. (SEE ALSO RECOMMENDATION #5, IN RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE CHAPTER).
  - Assistance for heritage groups in fundraising, grant writing, marketing, collections management via fee for services and training.
  - Coordinated planning to take full advantage of the 1813 Bicentennial of the Battle of Lake Erie.
- **Benefits/Rationale:**
  - Erie County Historical Society has staff capacity and expertise that volunteer groups do not have, and can facilitate meetings, coordination, training and fee-for-services programs.
  - Heritage entities partner with each other and share resources.
  - More visibility for heritage sites and activities; greater public participation.

**Recommendation 3:**

**Increase and improve information sharing about countywide arts, cultural and heritage activities within Erie County and to visitors/tourists. (SEE ALSO: JOINT MARKETING, RECOMMENDATIONS #2, 5.)**

This recommendation encompasses enhanced web-based promotion as well as wayfinding signage:

- Creation of a new master cultural website with a comprehensive calendar and listings and links to cultural and heritage organizations. This would also link with the VisitErie website.
- Other, non-web, low-tech means to promote cultural events must be continued also.
- Improved signage for cultural and heritage sites throughout the county, including advocacy for full implementation of the Greater Erie Guide Way Sign System. (SEE JOINT MARKETING RECOMMENDATION # 5.)
  
- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** VisitErie, ArtsErie, Joint Marketing Advisory Committee (RECOMMENDED IN JOINT MARKETING CHAPTER)
- **Partners in Implementation:** arts, cultural and heritage organizations, artists groups, municipalities, Erie County, local chambers of commerce, Greater Erie Guideway Sign System.
- **Timeline:** Immediate
- **Resources:** Staff and funding to build and maintain websites.
- **First steps:**
  - Institute regular communication with VisitErie staff to coordinate better use of websites.
  - Launch effort to design and build the master cultural website.
  - Coordinate and advocate to the Pennsylvania Department Of Transportation about implementation of the signage program.
  - Coordinate with Route 6 Artisan Trail promotional efforts to integrate appropriate Erie County venues, sites and events. (SEE ALSO: JOINT MARKETING)
- **Models:**
  - Handmade in America, based in the Blue Ridge Mountains, was founded in 1993 with a belief that economic revitalization wasn't necessarily tied to luring "modern" industry to the region but in making known the hidden heritage and craftspeople that are so vitally a part of Western North Carolina. Today, HandMade is a nationally recognized, multidimensional institution that has sparked initiatives and creative collaborations in education, small town revitalization and community development, economic development, environmentally sustainable strategies and enhanced opportunities for makers of the handmade object, heritage tourism, and incorporating crafts into building design and furnishing.  
<http://www.handmadeinamerica.org/>
- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:**
  - Measurable increased use of websites.

- Fewer cultural event scheduling conflicts.
- Adequate signage in place.
- **Rationale:**
  - VisitErie website is underutilized.
  - Erie County lacks signage for small museums, heritage sites and art/wine trails.
- **Benefits:**
  - Increase communication, countywide.
  - Better informed public; increased attendance at cultural events.
  - Improved self-image in communities.
  - Celebration of Erie's diverse communities, cultural activity and heritage.

**Recommendation 4:**

**Integrate CultureSpark planning with the County Comprehensive Plan, Erie Five Year Consolidated Plan, 2010-15, Erie Vital Signs, Envision Erie, Corry 2020 and other planning efforts, as appropriate.**

- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** CultureSpark Implementation Action Team, Erie County Planning Department, ArtsErie, The Nonprofit Partnership, Black Family Foundation.
- **Partners in Implementation:** Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership, Erie Community Foundation, regional elected officials, civic leadership, Erie Times-News and other media.
- **Timeline:** Immediate and Ongoing
- **Resources:** Staff time to support volunteer leadership for advocacy.
- **First steps:**
  - Identify planning initiatives and timelines.
  - Identify a cadre of advocates to track and participate in each planning effort.
  - Meet with plan leaders to present CultureSpark, including relevant portions to integrate.
- **Models:**
  - Realize Bradenton, a culture and business alliance, was formed out of a recent cultural planning process, in order to lead implementation and integrate strategies with broader community development: [www.realizebradenton.com](http://www.realizebradenton.com)

- CreateAustin cultural plan website, tracking implementation, including integration with other planning efforts:  
[www.ci.austin.tx.us/culturalplan/](http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/culturalplan/)
- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:** Each plan addresses arts, culture and heritage development with a section and strategies derived from CultureSpark.
- **Benefits/Rationale:**
  - CultureSpark could have its greatest impact by providing a platform to successfully integrate cultural strategies into broader community plans that will help to shape regional resource allocations, growth and development over the next decade.

## CULTURAL EDUCATION

In the Erie region, kids resonate – as a hope, as a concern, and as an opportunity for the arts, culture and heritage to have a huge impact. Many in the Erie region know that national research has confirmed the positive correlation between cultural education and school attendance and motivation, academic achievement and positive youth development<sup>1</sup>. Creative learning equips our young people to develop the creative thinking and problem-solving skills needed to flourish in the 21<sup>st</sup> century “economy of ideas.” And today’s youth – if they have the benefit of creative education – will become tomorrow’s cultural participants, patrons and parents who will continue the cycle as strong advocates.

Many examples of quality cultural education were mentioned in CultureSpark meetings and forums: programs of the Playhouse, Art Museum and Philharmonic; Inner-City Neighborhood Arts House; ArtsErie’s Artist in Residence Program; JazzErie Programs; Union City Art Network; the Erie Arts Opportunity Program in McKinley Elementary and efforts by some schools and some districts – Girard, McDowell High School, Wattsburg School District – to enhance arts, culture and heritage education.

*“Art allows students to grow and be successful and contribute to society, church, family etc.; provide an opportunity where they can be safe and take risks where they might not be able to anywhere else. Teach them to use free time in a positive way. It offers them success. Success for one person is success for everyone.”*

Reliable, comprehensive data as to the quantity and reach of arts and cultural education programs in Erie County could not be found. Nevertheless, there is a perception of declining opportunities for cultural education both in school and out of school, pressured by policy priorities and the focus on standardized testing, limited awareness of the benefits of cultural education, perennial funding crises, inconsistent leadership, and lack of communication, collaboration and advocacy.

*“The fear of ‘no child left behind,’ moved us all away from the arts.”*

*“Arts and music teachers are vanishing. My perception is that it has become a token activity.”*

*“There is little or no professional development offered for art specialists or for classroom teachers who wish to integrate the arts.”*

There are few places for youth and young adults to “hang out” and engage in constructive creative activities, and few opportunities for artistic talent to be showcased and recognized.

*“There used to be city recreation programs that have vanished. Parks programs are not there or under the radar. The school district used to offer free art classes on Saturday, but not any more. The museum has some, but they miss the ones that really need it.”*

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<sup>1</sup> Among the many sources: Americans for the Arts: Arts Education Facts, [http://www.americansforthearts.org/public\\_awareness/artsed\\_facts/001.asp#](http://www.americansforthearts.org/public_awareness/artsed_facts/001.asp#) Arts Education Partnership: <http://www.aep-arts.org/> YouthARTS Development Project, Americans for the Arts: <http://www.americansforthearts.org/youtharts/about/>

*“If we are creative, the work will not be exported to India. Your job will be safe if you are an entrepreneur. People who think creatively about solving problems and what we will need in the future are people who can question the status quo and have the values, smarts and competitiveness. We need inventors now, that kind of a thinker. Our schools are turning out conformists.”*

Yet, CultureSpark Survey findings confirm the importance of cultural education to both community participants and arts and cultural stakeholders:

Ranked number 2 among perceived cultural benefits and impacts, out of 13 choices, at 8.5 on a scale of 1-10 was: “help our community’s children and youth with academics and other important life skills;” and ranked number 3 at 8.43: “provide safe and healthy activities for our youth.”(Survey Report, P. 2)

Community survey respondents ranked “arts, culture and heritage should be priorities within our educational system” as the second-highest priority / outcome of CultureSpark. Number 7 out of 22 choices, scored at 7.92 on a scale of 1-10, was “there should be more opportunities for youth to participate in arts, culture and heritage in Erie County.” (Survey Report, P. 2)

“Enhance arts education in the Erie County pre-K-12 schools” was ranked as the number one CultureSpark priority by artists and creators, and as the number 5 priority of cultural organizations, out of 22 choices. “Expand arts, culture, and heritage opportunities for children and youth outside of school” was ranked number 13 by artists and number eight by cultural organizations. (Survey Report, P. 14)

Geodemographic research indicates there are large numbers of untapped households characterized by a “young family” demographic that show moderate demand for participation in cultural activities. (Geodemographic Assessment, P. 11). Much of the youth market, particularly within the City of Erie resides in very young, ethnically and racially diverse households with relatively low income; median is below \$30,000. Geodemographic cluster attributes can inform target marketing to these households.

The stakes are high – there is much to gain by enhancing cultural education. But the challenges are daunting. How best to focus the energy and efforts of advocates? The recommendations below concerning access, policy, programs and advocacy are designed to build incrementally upon existing strengths. Moving forward will require a stronger leadership role from ArtsErie and, in turn, additional staff and financial resources.

### **Overarching Goal**

**Increase the quantity, quality and access to cultural education opportunities in Erie County.**

**Recommendation 1:**

**Create a Cultural Education Advocacy Group to advocate for stronger arts, culture and heritage education with education, community, business and government leaders.**

Persistent, effective, targeted advocacy for CultureSpark education priorities is needed to superintendents, school boards, principals and their leadership groups, community and business leaders in leadership groups and elected officials. Parents of school-age children are the most passionate advocates for quality education. They must be cultivated, motivated and galvanized to lead this effort. A unified voice and consistent and constant messages are essential. Appropriate forums, timing and messages for each must be strategized.

- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** ArtsErie.
- **Partners in Implementation:** Parents, PTAs, PA Council on the Arts, PA Music Educators Association, PA Arts Education Association, Intermediate Unit 5, sympathetic superintendents, colleges and universities, Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership, Manufacturers and Business Association, other business leadership groups, major businesses, Erie Community Foundation, Black Family Foundation, The Nonprofit Partnership, Cultural Education Task Force members.
- **Timeline:** Immediate
- **Resources:** staff time to coordinate meetings and generate advocacy message materials; funding for staff and materials.
- **First steps:**
  - Recruit Cultural Education Advocacy Group to begin strategizing opportunities to meet and present, key messages and who should deliver them.
  - Develop fact sheets outlining key benefits and outcomes of strong cultural education programs.
  - Conduct research on the status of cultural education and trends.
  - Design dynamic presentations with a mix of demos and testimonials and research-based facts, and practical recommendations about how to better integrate cultural education.
- **Models:**
  - Keep Arts in Schools, a national web-based information resource for arts education advocates  
[www.keepartsinschools.org/index.php](http://www.keepartsinschools.org/index.php)
  - Americans for the Arts, “The Arts: Ask for More” Campaign:  
[www.americansforthearts.org/public\\_awareness/](http://www.americansforthearts.org/public_awareness/)
  - Ohio Alliance for Arts Education offers good materials on

advocacy, planning, NCLB response, candidate interview questions, etc. <http://oaae.net/download/ADVOCACY/>

- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:**
  - Arrange presentation to at least one superintendents' monthly meeting through IU5 during the first year.
  - Arrange an annual special event for superintendents.
  - Increased resources from school districts, private funding and government for cultural education.
  - Document programs and partnerships established as a result of the increased advocacy.
- **Benefits/Rationale:**
  - Access to cultural education programming varies drastically from district to district, school to school. The intent is to influence decision-makers who can establish greater and more equitable access.
  - Better promotion of existing programs and services whose reach could be expanded.
  - Advocacy for community-based cultural education programs, such as those discussed above, is also needed.
  - Cultural education has been shown to increase school attendance and achievement, promote positive youth development and inculcate the creative thinking and problem solving skills needed to flourish in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy of ideas.

**Recommendation 2:**

**Create a dynamic directory of arts, culture and heritage education resources, accessible in print and on-line.**

This cultural education services directory could be part of the comprehensive cultural website, recommended in nearly every conversation about cultural development during the CultureSpark process (SEE JOINT MARKETING #2 AND COUNTYWIDE SERVICES #3). Organizations and individuals who offer services would craft entries according to a structured template. The directory would be used by teachers, school districts, community-based providers and parents. ArtsErie, The Nonprofit Partnership and Gannon University will be working on an initial cataloguing of arts learning opportunities to feed into the Erie Community Foundation's "Erie Vital Signs" website.

- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** ArtsErie, The Nonprofit Partnership, Black Family Foundation, Gannon University

- **Partners in Implementation:** Intermediate Unit 5, arts culture and heritage organizations, school districts, private schools, colleges and universities, Erie Community Foundation.
- **Timeline:** 1-4 years
- **Resources:**
  - Funding for web design, hosting and upkeep (One of the universities might help).
  - One of the universities with a teacher education program might help with researching and cataloging offerings.
  - Printing donated.
- **First steps:**
  - Begin cataloging and mapping available programs and services.
  - Convene a cultural education directory design team to develop website and template.
- **Model:** York County stART Something program, a partnership with Pennsylvania Council on the Arts: [www.startsomething-aie.org/](http://www.startsomething-aie.org/) has created a regional directory.
- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:**
  - Directory operational and accessible via Web and print.
  - Increased participation in programs.
  - Fewer scheduling conflicts and program overlaps.
- **Benefits/Rationale:**
  - Greater awareness of available programs and services.
  - Opportunity to better integrate cultural education with school curriculum.
  - Promotes awareness of the role and value of cultural education.

**Recommendation 3:**

**Enable and support public school districts and private schools in Erie County to implement curriculum based arts instruction according to established standards such as the Opportunity to Learn Standards (94/95), and other state and national arts education standards.**

Erie Arts Opportunity, [www.erieartsopportunity.org/](http://www.erieartsopportunity.org/) provides curriculum-based programs in McKinley elementary school, in partnership with the Greater Erie Youth Symphony Orchestra, as a pilot. Currently, third-graders received 30 minutes of instruction in strings per week plus dance instruction during PE, some instruction from Erie Art Museum education staff, and field trips. The program is designed to expand a grade and school at a time, as students' progress – and carefully document student attendance, attitudes and

achievement. The intent of this recommendation is to surface and support such pilots that promote curriculum based arts instruction.

- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** Erie Arts Opportunity Education Fund, Greater Erie Youth Symphony Orchestra, other pilots.
- **Partners in Implementation:** School districts, Intermediate Unit 5, State Department of Education, school boards, PTAs, parents, private schools, ArtsErie, arts, culture and heritage organizations, artists, colleges and universities, business sponsors, chambers of commerce.
- **Timeline:** 1-4 years.
- **Resources:** Funding for instructors and to add time into schedules; space; supplies; funding to continue program evaluation.
- **First steps:**
  - Research and bring forth successful models from every Erie County School District and private schools.
  - Strengthen partnerships with colleges and universities around teacher training, curriculum development and evaluation.
- **Models:** Rhode Island Arts Learning Network [www.riartslearning.net](http://www.riartslearning.net)
- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:**
  - Programs expand a grade and school at a time.
  - Evaluation systems track positive gains in student behavior, attendance and achievement.
  - Students are interested in and pursue out of school cultural activities.
  - Increasing school time devoted to arts instruction.
  - Increasing efforts to implement curriculum based arts instruction. Decreased inequities in access to cultural education among schools and districts.
- **Benefits/Rationale:**
  - Implements existing, recognized standards for curriculum based arts instruction.
  - Promotes equitable access to cultural education and its benefits to all students.
  - Success will enhance “buy in” of education and community leaders.
  - Develops the creativity, discipline and problem solving skills needed by Erie youth to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy of ideas.
  - Develops the artists, cultural participants and patrons of the future.

**Recommendation 4:**

**Increase the quantity and quality of teacher – artist partnerships that integrate arts, culture and heritage into school curricula and instruction strategies.**

ArtsErie manages the Artists in Residence Program in partnership with the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. The program places teaching artists in classrooms and community-based settings in 11 counties in northwestern Pennsylvania. Other entities such as the Erie Art Museum also manage artist residencies. It is hoped that CultureSpark’s emphasis on the importance and benefits of cultural education will provide a platform to increase awareness of artists in residences services (through the directory of recommendation 2 and the advocacy of recommendation 1), resources and training for teaching artists (IU5, colleges and universities).

- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** ArtsErie, other residency providers, Intermediate Unit 5, school districts, private schools.
- **Partners in Implementation:** teaching artists, arts, culture and heritage organizations, Erie County Poet Laureate Program, teachers, principals, curriculum directors, superintendents, PTAs, colleges and universities, social service and community organizations.
- **Timeline:** 1-4 years.
- **Resources:** Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, US Department of Education, ArtsErie, school districts, PTAs, federal title funding, Educational Improvement Tax Credits, foundations and other grants.
- **First steps:**
  - Identify individual teaching artists and those working with cultural organizations to include in the directory.
  - Identify training opportunities and resources: area colleges and universities, Act 48 Training, Philadelphia School for the Arts, ArtsErie.
  - Establish a baseline measure of the number and duration of residencies for future comparisons.
  - Identify an ideal target for the duration of residencies, given the available resources.
- **Models:**
  - The Asheville Area Arts Council funds and collaborates with local schools to provide jazz residency programs, dance, poetry, and visual arts (SEE COMPARABLE COMMUNITIES PROFILES: ASHEVILLE)  
<http://www.ashevillearts.com/education.php?subpage=home>.
  - Pittsburgh Cultural Trust Education and Community Engagement

#### Programs

[http://www.pgharts.org/education/DynamicContent.aspx?content\\_id=60](http://www.pgharts.org/education/DynamicContent.aspx?content_id=60)

- Chicago Arts Partnership for Education (CAPE),  
<http://www.capeweb.org/>

- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:**

- More and longer artists residencies reaching all of Erie County.
- Better and more frequent training opportunities for teaching artists.
- Established and ongoing evaluations and assessments.

- **Benefits/Rationale:**

- The arts, culture and heritage should be integrated with and can help to teach other subjects.
- Residencies can promote broader, more equitable access to cultural learning opportunities for all students in Erie County
- Engagement in creative learning has been shown to increase school attendance, attitudes, behavior and achievement. Students enjoy school, perform better and are more likely to become the artists, participants and patrons of the future.
- The arts, culture and heritage offer gateways to cross-cultural understanding.
- Residencies frequently include a culminating event that engages with the broader community.

#### **Recommendation 5:**

**Develop a continual, curriculum based countywide sister-school program for elementary students that expands the awareness and acceptance of differing cultures throughout Erie County, through joint or simultaneous projects**

The model for this is a partnership this year between Seneca and Strong Vincent high schools in which students from both schools are engaging with the GE sponsored Medal of Honor curriculum. Students are exchanging online and through visits to share perspectives and learning, and promote cross-cultural understanding. The program would be enriched through the integration of artists' residencies.

- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** Intermediate Unit 5, school districts, private schools, superintendents, principals.
- **Partners in Implementation:** ArtsErie, Multicultural Resource Center, 4H, Weed and Seed Program.
- **Timeline:** 1-4 Years

- **Resources:**
  - Technology to connect classrooms.
  - Grant funding for artists residencies, technology, transportation and joint activities: businesses, foundations, school districts, PTAs, Educational Improvement Tax Credits.
  - Community Access Television and WQLN.
- **First steps:** Document model; advocate to principals and superintendents. Determine at least two pilot school partnerships to launch program during first year.
- **Model:**
  - Seneca and Strong Vincent high school partnership (see above).
  - Lehigh Valley Arts Council Arts Education Program: Urban/Suburban Connection, pairing schools to create a joint exhibit <http://www.lvartscouncil.org/education/default.html>
- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:**
  - New sister school partnerships are initiated by year 2.
  - Teleconferencing integrated into program.
  - Opportunities for interaction between schools during field trips to cultural institutions such as Erie Art Museum, Children’s Museum, Asbury Woods, Tom Ridge Environmental Center.
- **Benefits/Rationale:**
  - Better interschool relations.
  - Greater understanding and acceptance of diversity. Students in suburban and rural schools have less exposure to cultural or racial diversity. Students in city schools lack similar exposure to rural communities experiences.
  - The best way to foster cultural understanding is through youth.

**Recommendation 6:**

**Develop technology, film, mural (public art) and music projects for teens, throughout Erie County, that encourage their continued engagement with arts, culture and heritage.**

If leaders wish to engage more with teens, it will be through media and genres that appeal to them. The suggested implementers have facilities that could potentially host more teen targeted programs. The opportunity through CultureSpark is to highlight the need and opportunities for such programs and to create linkages among potential providers and supporters. Programs should be listed on the Directory of recommendation 1.

- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** Edinboro University Film and Animation Departments, Technology Council, new Teen Leadership Group.
- **Partners in Implementation:** Bayfront NATO, Raven Sound, Trinity Center, John F. Kennedy Center, Perseus House, Harborcreek Youth Services, CORE Healthy Youth Development, Sarah Reed Center, 814services.org, SEEDIS group, Project Warehouse, Neighborhood Art House, ArtsErie Arts in Education Program, Union City Art Network, Corry 2020 leadership, Stairways' Center for Arts and Humanities, Erie County Poet Laureate Program, CHAMPS, Erie Horror Film Festival, other youth development organizations other arts councils and cultural leadership groups throughout the County.
- **Timeline:** 1-4 years.
- **Resources:**
  - Grant funding for programs.
  - Sites for programs.
- **First steps:**
  - Identify existing teen groups in Erie County; invite representatives from each to form a Teen Leadership Group, to shape the project
  - Document existing local models.
  - Approach implementers to determine what is needed for them to initiate or enhance such programs.
  - Convene and establish an ongoing network of existing and potential providers of teen cultural programs to share best practices, develop new resources, probe the demand for such programs, and raise awareness about services and their benefits.
- **Models:**
  - The GoggleWorks Center for the Arts is a community art and cultural resource center for Reading, Berks County that offers programs for teens <http://www.goggleworks.org/>
  - The Infinity Performing Arts Program was established in Jamestown, New York in 1998 as an opportunity for aspiring young musicians to enhance their musical talents and performance skills under the supervision and direction of local artists and musicians. <http://www.infinityperformingarts.org>
  - New Urban Arts, a nationally recognized interdisciplinary arts studio for high school students and emerging artists in Providence, Rhode Island. <http://www.newurbanarts.org>
  - [www.creativeliferecords.org](http://www.creativeliferecords.org) A Pittsburgh-based, nonprofit recording studio and musicians support organization offering professional development services, financing, recording and distribution.

- Manchester Craftsman’s Guild, Pittsburgh:  
[www.manchesterguild.org](http://www.manchesterguild.org) internationally recognized arts-based youth development and workforce training programs.
- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:**
  - Documented increase in cultural programs and opportunities for teens.
  - Programs are available throughout the county.
- **Benefits/Rationale:**
  - Provides opportunities for teens to engage in constructive behaviors and learning, develop positive peer and mentor relationships, and be recognized for their talents and accomplishments.
  - New media and genres will reach teens who may not be interested in traditional cultural education programs.
  - Some public art and mural projects also benefit the community.

## INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS AND CREATORS

Artists and creators are the bedrock of a culturally vital region. Painters, poets, musicians, designers, choreographers and dancers, teaching artists, film and video makers, playwrights and actors, sculptors and digital media artists – these are the people that bring their creativity to fruition in order to provide inspiration, evoke history and tradition, vitalize the community, spark new enterprises, and educate old and young. What does it take to attract, retain, enable these creators to realize their visions and maximize their impact on the region?

Based upon input via key interviews and focus groups, there are a lot of artists and creators in Erie County. Fine college and university programs train and graduate them. Edinboro University is a nationally recognized art school offering a Masters Degree in Fine Arts. Gannon University has a strong theater department and Penn State Erie, The Behrend Campus has a music program. Both Mercyhurst College and Edinboro University have exceptional fine and performing arts programs with art and music professors of regional, national and international acclaim - living artists, musicians and performers with worldwide connections to the visual and performing arts. The high quality of life and affordability help to keep artists in the region, if they can sell enough work, or teach, or gain income from other work.

The most critical issues voiced in a forum for artists and creators, held in July 2009, were:

*Space for exhibits, studios and practice;*

*Marketing and communications;*

*Support: adequate pay for work; grants and government funding;*

*Involvement: engaging with community leaders, young people, diverse communities;*

*Bring back arts education in schools; more workshops for continuing education of artists;*

*Healthcare benefits for working artists;*

*The ability to compete at higher levels, including with other cities and regions;*

*Become unified for advocacy, collaborations and communication.*

Needs and issues of artists/creators voiced in key interviews, focus groups and forums include:

*“We have space needs for unorganized individual Artists. How can we incent people to come into our core and stay there? Artist space buildings for live/studio space. We aren’t making money on those old buildings anyway.”*

*“Individual artists are getting scrunched. People don’t stay - no incubator to keep them going, no market to sell their stuff. We have artists who sell their product elsewhere. I see artists in Edinboro selling in NY.”*

*“There is nowhere locally to get quality art supplies.”*

*"I don't think we are paying attention to the artists themselves. We have not embraced the artists within the arts organizations than we could have."*

Of the 57 individuals responding to the CultureSpark Survey of Artists and Creators, 70% identified themselves as professionals, representing a wide variety (20) of disciplines. 60% had a degree; 40% were self-taught. On average 40% of the responding artists' income is derived from their creative work. 72% of that income is derived from Erie County. (Survey Report, P. 35-36)

When surveyed about their greatest needs, artists and creators ranked the following highest (over 7 on a 10 point scale): more places to show/sell/perform their work; critical coverage in the media; and a comprehensive online resource for artists. Also high (6-7) were: networking; grant support; online marketing opportunities; affordable health insurance; and marketing. Ranked near the bottom of the list were: affordable studio space; low-interest business loans; access to live/work space; and affordable retail space (below 5 – Survey Report, p 12-13).

Top CultureSpark priorities ranked on the Artists/Creators Survey were, in order: enhance pre-K-12 arts education in schools; increase and stabilize public funding; integrate arts, culture and heritage development into revitalization of downtowns and neighborhoods; integrate arts, culture and heritage opportunities more strongly into tourism promotion efforts; promote cultural opportunities to increase participation (Survey Report, P. 14-16).

Community Survey respondents ranked support of individual artists/creators as a high priority (Survey Report, P. 17):

Of 22 potential CultureSpark priorities, number 5 and scoring 7.67 on a scale of 1-10, was "programs that develop the entrepreneurship and sustainability of individual artists in Erie County are important."

Priority number 9, scoring 7.36 was "Erie County should attract and nurture individual artists."

The Individual Artists and Creators Task Force boiled this input down to three major needs/opportunities: networking, marketing and space. They noted the existence of networks such as the Northwest Pennsylvania Art Association, gallery nights and block parties, and the relative absence of "turf wars" in the creative community, but lamented the lack of a musicians network, disconnects between galleries and college art departments and the isolation from the national and international art worlds that many artists in the Erie region feel. Artists need to see and have their work be seen by artists and collectors from other communities. Cross-fertilization of artistic vision occurs through exhibits, residencies and public art commissions for international caliber artists in Erie, by enabling Erie artists to travel and exhibit elsewhere and through informed critical writing.

There is no central information and marketing clearinghouse, and a lack of marketing expertise/experience. There are not enough buyers/collectors, particularly for larger, more expensive works. The vacant and/or underutilized buildings in the region present exciting opportunities, and there are numerous examples of other communities rehabbing such buildings for live/work, studio,

exhibit and other cultural spaces -- but this has been difficult to “jumpstart” in the Erie region. The following recommendations address these needs and opportunities.

### **Overarching Goal**

**Enhance networking, promotion and support for individual artists and creators in order to foster excellence, appreciation and grow the local, regional, national and international markets for their creative products.**

### **Recommendation 1:**

**Create a central website resource for individual artists, creators and education/training providers to support networking, professional development, marketing, mentoring and resource development – a place to connect and promote/sell their artworks and services. (SEE JOINT MARKETING RECOMMENDATION # 2.)**

This site could be part of the more encompassing Cultural Website, recommended repeatedly during CultureSpark planning. This portion of the site would serve artists of all disciplines, and include a directory and links to their websites, information on professional development and networking opportunities and a mechanism to enable sales of works.

- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** ArtsErie, The Nonprofit Partnership.
- **Partners in Implementation:** Northwest Pennsylvania Artist Association, Erie Dance Consortium, Erie County Poet Laureate Program, other artists and creators networks, Stairways’ Center for Arts and Humanities, colleges and universities, media, Technology Council.
- **Timeline:** Immediate
- **Resources:** Significant funding to design and maintain.
- **First steps:** Convene a design team; research funding.
- **Models:**
  - Minnesota Artists: <http://www.mnartists.org/article.do?rid=14323> focuses on promoting artists and their works.
  - Fractured Atlas: national service organization for artists: funding, networking, health insurance, etc. <http://www.fracturedatlas.org/>
  - Chicago Artists Resources: <http://www.chicagoartistsresource.org/> a Web resource for information about professional development, funding and spaces.
  - Berkshirecreative.org is the information hub of the Berkshire creative economy-providing resources, news and information. The

mission is to stimulate new job growth and economic opportunity in the region by sparking innovative collaborations between artists, designers, cultural institutions and businesses.

<http://berkshirecreative.org/>

- Lehigh Valley Arts Council Arts Directory

<http://www.lvartscouncil.org/directory/>

- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:**

- Site is up and running; a substantial proportion of Erie County artists and creators are listed.
- Public becomes aware of site; sales document based upon site references.
- Networking increases as evidenced by increased attendance at local events for artists and creators and attraction of artists conferences to Erie.

- **Benefits/Rationale:**

- The public, and especially buyers and collectors inside and outside of Erie County, need a way to find and find out about artists and their works.
- The visibility, promotion and sales will contribute to a sense of valuing the individual artists and creators in the Erie region

**Recommendation 2:**

**Establish an entity under ArtsErie to unite individual artists and creators to foster networking, advocacy, mentoring, resource development, and access to professional development training, such as marketing, business development and use of technology.**

As a result of the connections and comrade sparked during cultural planning, artists and creators expressed a desire to continue meeting, networking and organizing. It was proposed that ArtsErie provide a membership home and staff support for the new coalition, as part of a movement of that organization towards providing more services and resources for individual artists and creators. The emergence of the Edinboro University StART Up Incubator as a vehicle for providing support and professional development services for individual artists and creators was also applauded. This new entity could also take on programs for individual artists such as countywide open studio tours.

- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** ArtsErie, Artists and Creators Task Force Members, StART Up Incubator/Edinboro University, The Nonprofit Partnership.
- **Partners in Implementation:** Individual artists and creators, existing alliances such as the Northwest Pennsylvania Artist Association, Presque

- Isle Artists Guild, Musicians' Union, Erie Philharmonic, Erie Playhouse, Stairways' Center for Arts and Humanities, arts, culture and heritage organizations, Erie County Poet Laureate Program, universities, galleries, festivals, Service Corp. Of Retired Executives (SCORE).
- **Timeline:** Immediate
  - **Resources:**
    - Staff time and funding.
    - The organization would become a membership arm of ArtsErie in order to generate income for services.
    - Tap workforce and small business development funding sources, such as ReTool Erie program.
  - **First steps:**
    - ArtsErie brings individual artists representatives on to its board.
    - ArtsErie Board considers implications for organizational restructuring and staff assignments (SEE RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE, RECOMMENDATION # 7).
    - Convene a working group to launch the organization.
  - **Models:**
    - Asheville Area Arts Council "Artists' Roundtable," initiated in 1996, is a group of local artists who advocate for artists and arts organizations by supporting projects that enhance the arts in the Asheville community  
<http://www.ashevillearts.com/about.php?subpage=home>. (SEE COMPARABLE COMMUNITIES PROFILES P. 51).
    - Greater Austin Creative Alliance, [www.austincreativealliance.org/](http://www.austincreativealliance.org/) formed as a result of cultural planning to ally individual artists and creators with cultural organizations.
    - Springboard for the Arts, Minnesota: Connects artists with the skills, contacts, information and services they need to make a living and a life.  
<http://www.springboardforthearts.org/AboutUs/AboutUs.asp>
    - Kansas City ArtistLink <http://www.kcartistlink.com/>
    - Open Studios:
      - Santa Cruz Open Studio Tour, [www.ccscc.org/index.php/open-studios.html](http://www.ccscc.org/index.php/open-studios.html)
      - [http://www.kansascityartistscoalition.org/open\\_studios/open\\_studios\\_participating\\_artists.html](http://www.kansascityartistscoalition.org/open_studios/open_studios_participating_artists.html)
  - **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:**

- Entity comes into existence. Increased and more visible/ accessible professional development training for artists and creators. Increased networking opportunities.
- Increased resources and support for individual artists and creators.
- **Benefits/Rationale:**
  - Individual artists and creators will be more visible with an entity representing them and their interests.
  - Increasing the visibility, marketing and business management effectiveness of artists and creators will enhance their impact on the region's economy and vitality.

**Recommendation 3:**

**Develop funding sources for individual artists and creators working in all media, to support their projects, professional development training, spaces and marketing.**

In the Erie region, as in most communities, there is very limited funding that individual artists and creators can tap directly to support their work and continued professional development. The new individual artists umbrella organization under ArtsErie recommended above should take this on and research potential sources and mechanisms including national and federal funding sources. Among the common sources of support for individual artists and creators are fellowship programs, project grants and percent for public art programs. A grant writing resource room and online resource should be created, along with periodic grant writing workshops.

- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** ArtsErie and its new artists network (See Recommendation #1.), The Nonprofit Partnership, StART Up Incubator/Edinboro University.
- **Partners in Implementation:** Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Erie Community Foundation, other foundations, corporations and individuals, colleges and universities, arts, culture and heritage organizations.
- **Timeline:** 1-4 years
- **Resources:** volunteers and staff time to research opportunities.
- **First steps:** Form artist umbrella organization and subcommittee to research.
- **Models:**
  - Artist Trust: <http://www.artisttrust.org/> develops resources and provides information and professional development services to individual artists in Washington State.
- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:** New artists entity formed; increased sources of funding are identified.

- **Benefits/Rationale:** Stronger, more directed support for individual artists will enable them to do their best work, manage their business and careers, and market their works more effectively. This will, in turn, increase their contributions to the economy, identity and vitality of the Erie region.

**Recommendation 4:**

**Develop additional cultural spaces in Erie County for exhibition, performance, studios, rehearsal, classes and gatherings. (SEE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, RECOMMENDATION 1, FOR A DETAILED DESCRIPTION.)**

**Recommendation 5:**

**Develop a set of guidelines for the process of donating, soliciting and accepting works of art, be they visual, performing or other types.**

This recommendation is designed to address a persistent complaint that emerged during CultureSpark forums – that artists are frequently asked to donate their work with little or no remuneration, credit or other benefits. Guidelines and standards would be welcomed by the creative community.

- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** ArtsErie, Northwest Pennsylvania Art Association, Erie Dance Consortium, appropriate representatives of the performing and media arts.
- **Partners in Implementation:** Arts, culture and heritage organizations, colleges and universities, beneficiaries of donated works.
- **Timeline:** Immediate
- **Resources:** staff and volunteer time to deliberate, draft and vet guidelines.
- **First steps:** Convene a working group. Solicit input from key stakeholders.
- **Models:**
- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:**
  - Guidelines drafted within first-year.
  - Broad consensus reached on purpose and use of guidelines.
- **Benefits/Rationale:**
  - Artists and creators receive greater benefit/ remuneration from donating.
  - Free, donated or discounted works tend to “devalue” the art and do not help to build the market for art that can be sold at prices that sustain artists

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

CultureSpark participants spoke frequently about the intrinsic values and benefits of the arts, culture, heritage and creativity – the inspiration, meaning, joy, and personal fulfillment they bring. But they are equally cognizant – and eager to promote – the community development benefits. In communities throughout the world, arts, culture and heritage venues and activities have been used to promote cross-cultural understanding and build social capital, revitalize neighborhoods and downtowns, attract businesses and residents to mixed-use urban development, market the unique character of these communities to visitors – and spur economic development as a consequence. Strategies include development of cultural centers and districts, community partnerships, public art, youth programs and festivals and events, throughout the County. Many on the Community Development Task Force and throughout the CultureSpark process expressed the hope that planning would generate excitement, especially among community leaders, about such opportunities in Erie County.

In CultureSpark key interviews and forums, arts, culture and heritage activities, gatherings and venues were cited frequently as important ingredients in creating vital neighborhoods and urban centers, throughout the County.

*“We need vital urban cores, in Erie and other towns – without it we’re hollow. It’s vital for relocating businesses. We need differentiation beyond availability of land, workforce and favorable taxation. We need vitality and identity.”*

*“Creative people in Erie offer something to do - and its something “special” to do. Local artists and creative people give us a sense of space and place and a sense of who we are in our community. You can’t get that from going to the mall.”*

*“Corry, Union City, Edinboro and other towns are interested in cultural revitalization.”*

Downtown Erie is a particular opportunity and challenge:

*“Downtown Erie lacks a concentration of amenities. We need a better mix for people with money to spend downtown. It is starting, but we need a hundred units to get a grocery store, coffee shop and galleries. Residential is only one part of it.”*

*“I wish there were more galleries and studio spaces concentrated in a small area. We have a few condos - downtown development around the park (Griswold) is undergoing a transformation (14<sup>th</sup>). There are lots of nice red brick buildings here.”*

*“One of the big challenges is that there is a real barrier against developing the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> floors of the old buildings, and some want to use them for apartments or businesses or cultural venues, but the codes are not user friendly.”*

*“Erie has a self-esteem issue. When people live here all their life, they get complacent. Building stock is run down, and some people want to level it. Those cities that have redeveloped it are lucky, Erie has those opportunities.”*

*“Redeveloping the Bayfront and continuing to bring it back to life would be a big priority.”*

*“We don’t have anything arts related by the waterfront. The vision is that we have beautiful and tremendous old empty building to become mixed use, gallery, artists in residence, business/residents, etc. for synergy and sparks flying”*

The City of Erie appears to be focusing redevelopment efforts in the area contained within the Downtown Improvement District, including the Bayfront, where a lot of land is owned by the Port Authority. Also the City is hoping to take possession and steer development of the GAF property. Cultural advocates must work with these entities to determine how cultural amenities might fit in.

In several meetings the opportunity to tap into the Route 6 Artisan Trail initiative to develop and market cultural resources of Erie County was noted.

*“Route 6 offers an opportunity to draw visitors to Union City, Edinboro and Corry. We need to tie into synergies we can develop in those communities. They could draw people to programs at the University and local arts and crafts.”*

There was also interest expressed in more public art:

*“I would like to see something on display, that generates buzz, but it could be more useful like garbage cans or park benches, something to incorporate into the downtown.”*

*“I think public art is very important to raise people’s awareness of what is going on.”*

Community Survey respondents (n = almost 600) ranked CultureSpark priorities relating to community development, on a scale of 1-10, as follows, from a list of 22 options:

3<sup>rd</sup>: “the Bayfront is a good place for development of more arts, culture and heritage activities or venues;” score: 7.85 of 10.

6<sup>th</sup>: “it is important that cultural development address needs and opportunities in the entire county;” score: 7.58.

10<sup>th</sup>: “Erie County should have more public art;” score: 7.35. (Survey Report, P. 17.)

In ranking 22 potential CultureSpark priorities, cultural organizations and artists ranked “integrate arts, culture and heritage development into revitalization of Erie County downtowns and neighborhoods” as number 11 and number 3, respectively. They ranked “assess and address issues of cultural facilities/space” as number 16 and number 21, respectively. They ranked “redevelop the Bayfront as an arts, culture and heritage District” as number 18 (cultural organizations) and number 14 (artists/creators) of 22 priorities, with all rankings for these priorities above 7, on a scale of 1-10. (Survey Report, P. 14)

Cultural organizations and artists ranked formation of public art programs fairly low, 18 and 20 on the list of 22 potential priorities, but still scored them higher than 6.5 on a scale of 1-10.

When surveyed about their facilities needs, cultural organizations mentioned specific projects but generally expressed the need for more affordable and accessible space to show their work, and maintenance and security needs.

Cultural organizations ranked “facility/capital improvements” as the 7<sup>th</sup> greatest need of 10, with a 6.39 score out of 10. (Survey Report, P. 12)

### **Overarching Goal**

**Integrate arts, culture and heritage venues, projects and activities more fully into community and economic development in Erie County.**

### **Recommendation 1:**

**Develop additional cultural spaces throughout Erie County for exhibition, performance, studios, classes, offices and gatherings and as a revitalizing strategy for neighborhoods and communities.**

Cultural spaces promote community by enabling gatherings to celebrate heritage, traditions and cultural expressions. CultureSpark surfaced many variations on the theme of needing more spaces for exhibitions, performances and community gatherings. The most frequently voiced aspiration was for a centrally located Art Center that would enable large scale exhibitions of local artists – and perhaps accommodate performances and classes, for all ages. Such a space would further cross-fertilization of artistic vision and a quest for excellence, by exhibiting works of local artists side by side with works of artists from other communities.

Other priorities included a small, intimate performance/rehearsal space for dance and music, artists’ studios, artists’ live/work spaces, an independent movie house, office space and using vacant storefronts for exhibitions. A center or centers could provide a vital link to youth, teens and diverse artists and audiences. An arts center or centers could also accommodate and spur shared space and service collaborations among cultural organizations.

There is a plethora of vacant and or underutilized buildings throughout Erie County, such as have been rehabilitated for cultural spaces in other communities as a revitalization strategy. CultureSpark participants are aware of, and have visited, many of these cited below. Typically, these projects come together with the right building at the right time, with the right leadership, and the right partnership between the nonprofit sector, philanthropic community, developers and government to arrange the right financing. It is a delicate alchemy that is difficult to predict or reproduce exactly.

This recommendation encompasses the need to find a suitable location for the Erie County Historical Society, which will be leaving the Erie Art Museum building. A possible new home is the top floor of the Maritime Museum on the Bayfront, which would make the site an even more compelling heritage resource. While efforts towards this goal proceed, the "Bayfront Cultural Collaborative" will work on mounting a series of collaborative exhibits that will create buzz around their plan to fold the two museums together with the library and serve as a magnet for the development of more commerce and restaurant trade on the Bayfront. Exhibits will travel to county branch libraries as well.

It is important to stress that needs and aspirations for cultural spaces are evident all over Erie County to serve the broad diversity of artists and audiences. The Union City Arts Network space is a promising precedent – they have obtained use of a vacant storefront at discounted rent, for use as a studio and teaching facility for area artists and youth to undertake art projects for community benefit. Leaders in Lake City/Girard are exploring rehabilitation of an unused office building connected with a manufacturing plant into a Torpedo Factory type arts center, with studios and exhibition space. Meanwhile, the Stairways' Center for Arts and Humanities has moved into their beautiful, large space.

In downtown Erie the most promising opportunities are within the Downtown Improvement District near State in between 10<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, along lively commercial corridors such as Peach Street between 23<sup>rd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, and the GAF complex on the Bayfront, where civic leadership most wants to see the kind of vital, mixed-use development that would benefit from an arts and cultural presence.

Two ideas for the redevelopment of parks for cultural uses also surfaced during CultureSpark deliberations. Some planning has already occurred for the development of McLelland Park green space into a more usable park for underserved East side residents. Community Development Task Force members expressed hope that it could accommodate cultural uses, such as Cain Park in Cleveland, [http://www.cainpark.com/arts\\_festival.asp](http://www.cainpark.com/arts_festival.asp) There is also a plan to involve artists in the design of new amenities for Frontier Park to tell the history of the Erie region.

Again, such projects will only come together if and when the stars align around the available space, program use, financing and leadership. It is hoped that CultureSpark will provoke interest in leadership to move some of these projects forward.

- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** CultureSpark Implementation Action Team
- **Partners in Implementation:** private developers, Economic Development Corp. City of Erie Department of Economic and Community Development, Downtown Improvement District, State of Pennsylvania Economic Development Agencies, Erie Community Foundation, Small Business Development Center at Gannon University, Port Authority, ArtsErie, Erie County Historical Society, Maritime Museum, governments, philanthropic community, Corry 2020, and other planning initiatives.
- **Timeline:** Long-term
- **Resources:** mix of private funding, government economic and community development sources, such as Main Street Program, Keystone Opportunity Zone's Community Development Block Grants.
- **First steps:**
  - Support existing efforts.
  - Study and identify those models or parts of models that could be considered for Erie County.

- Meet and continually advocate with appropriate government and economic development agencies.
- Develop leadership group to forward this agenda.
- **Models:**
  - Artspace, the nation's premier nonprofit developer of cultural spaces, has done projects in dozens of communities [www.artspace.org/](http://www.artspace.org/)
  - The YorkArts center anchors the Cultural District; galleries, classes and events, [www.yorkarts.org](http://www.yorkarts.org)
  - The GoggleWorks Center for the Arts is a community art and cultural resource center for Reading, Berks County and central Pennsylvania, providing studio space, classes, exhibits, performances, youth and arts ed programs, and events <http://www.goggleworks.org/>
  - The BOTTLE WORKS Ethnic Arts Center [www.bottleworks.org](http://www.bottleworks.org) is located in a former industrial building, the Tulip Bottling Company, in a historically designated neighborhood of Johnstown PA.
  - ArtsQuest, a nonprofit arts center at the Banana Factory, serving the Lehigh Valley region <http://www.artsquest.org/>
  - Allegheny Center for the Arts, in Warren, PA [www.acaofwarrenpa.com/home](http://www.acaofwarrenpa.com/home). It is part of the Main Street program <http://www.warrenpamainstreet.org/>
  - Peoria Arts Guild, a nonprofit arts center <http://www.peoriaartguild.org/>
  - Torpedo Factory Arts Center, Alexandria, Virginia: open studios and galleries, classes <http://www.torpedofactory.org/>
  - MASS MOCA (Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art) in an old North Adams industrial site, as a model for revitalization of the GAF property <http://www.massmoca.org/>
  - Artist Recruitment and Relocation Programs (SEE COMPARABLE COMMUNITIES PROFILES):
    - The York City Artist Homestead Program <http://www.artisthomestead.com/> is offering several incentives to juried artists who move to the city and purchase a home that includes workspace.
    - Peoria, Illinois Artist Relocation Plan: <http://artistrelocation.blogspot.com/>
    - Pawtucket Arts Collaborative <http://www.pawtucketartscollaborative.org/>.

- Oil City, Pennsylvania Arts Revitalization and Artists Relocation Program: <http://www.artsoilcity.com/>
- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:**
  - Cultural space projects move forward and come to fruition.
- **Benefits/Rationale:**
  - Cultural spaces animate neighborhoods and communities, adding to mixed-use vitality that attracts businesses, residents and visitors, contributing to the prosperity and quality of life of the region.
  - Vibrant cultural spaces are needed for artists to create their best work, bring it to the public and gain visibility and income to sustain themselves. These spaces enable the public to have access to culture, heritage and creativity.

**Recommendation 2:**

**Explore collaborative use of existing facilities, e.g. parks, hospital auditoriums and meeting rooms, the planetarium, commercial spaces and vacant storefronts in urban areas and malls for arts, culture and heritage events and activities.**

There are a lot of facilities and spaces in Erie County that could be used more and more frequently for cultural activities and gatherings – even on a temporary or occasional basis. One such example was a Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation commission for artist, Bonnie Gale, to create Willow in Community, a planting in the Lake Erie Arboretum forming arches and leaf shaped sculptures.

An inventory of available spaces, capacities and contact information could be uploaded into an online directory, linked to the central cultural website. This recommendation is meant to spur imaginative program and audience development collaborations and initiatives.

- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** The Nonprofit Partnership
- **Partners in Implementation:** Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership, Port Authority, Erie County, municipalities, hospitals, commercial real estate sector, parks, Erie Cemetery Association, Northwest Commission.
- **Timeline:** 1-4 Years
- **Resources:**
  - Staff time and funding to conduct inventory and create directory.
  - Funding to rehabilitate vacant properties.
- **First steps:**
  - Identify staff and funding resources.

- Establish the advisory committee to proactively brainstorm and conduct outreach about possible spaces.
- Liaison with the group designing the central cultural website.
- Put out a call for information about potential spaces for cultural activity.
- **Models:**
- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:**
  - Inventory completed and directory available.
  - Examples of new and innovative use of spaces – cultural programming in non-arts spaces, e.g. malls, parks, hospitals.
- **Benefits/Rationale:**
  - Addresses space needs of cultural and heritage organizations.
  - Reaches new audiences.
  - Imaginative use and rehabilitation of space may attract and/or increased funding.

**Recommendation 3:**

**Explore the development of a program to designate cultural districts in neighborhoods and communities of Erie County to promote culturally based revitalization.**

Several states and municipalities – Maryland, Rhode Island, Kentucky, Minneapolis, Peoria, Pawtucket, Asheville – have created programs to designate and market cultural districts where there is an opportunity to integrate clusters of cultural venues and programs within mixed-use development. Ingredients to spur development may include special zoning overlays; incentives to attract cultural development and recruit artists, such as sales and property tax rebates, tax credits and economic development funding for storefront improvements and capital projects; marketing the district to the region and tourists; signage and wayfinding; and creation or partnership with an umbrella entity to oversee these functions.

- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** ArtsErie, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, CultureSpark Implementation Action Team, The Nonprofit Partnership, Erie County Planning Department.
- **Partners in Implementation:** State of Pennsylvania, municipalities, economic development entities, developers, businesses, artists and creators, cultural businesses.
- **Timeline:** 1-4 years
- **Resources:** economic development funding, business improvement District self-assessment, private funding.

- **First steps:** Explore models; liaison with Pennsylvania Council on the Arts; form a working group to oversee.
- **Models:**
  - Maryland Arts and Entertainment District Program  
<http://www.msac.org/artists.cfm?sec=Artists&id=232>
  - Gateway Arts District in Prince George's County, Maryland  
[www.mygatewayarts.org/template/index.cfm](http://www.mygatewayarts.org/template/index.cfm)
  - Rhode Island Tax Free Arts Districts  
<http://www.arts.ri.gov/special/districts/>
  - ArtistLink site on Art and Cultural Districts & Zoning Overlays  
<http://www.artistlink.org/?q=spacetoolbox/formunicipalities/zoningforartists/artdistrictsoverlays>
  - Northeast Minneapolis Arts District:  
<http://www.northeastminneapolisartsdistrict.com/about.php>
  - Pawtucket : Article: ABC's of Creating an Artist Friendly Community by Herb Weiss,  
<http://www.artinruins.com/stories/essays/> on the Art in Ruins website, along with an interview  
<http://www.artinruins.com/interviews/weiss/>
  - The Asheville River Arts District (RAD)  
<http://www.riverartsdistrict.com/>, which consists of old warehouses along the French Broad River that have been renovated by private owners and are rented as studio or live/work space for artists and creative businesses. The artists renting spaces in the RAD have joined together to create the River District Artists Association.
  - IndieBound, an initiative to promote and support independent businesses, including independent bookstores and music stores:  
[www.indiebound.org/](http://www.indiebound.org/)
- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:** Guidelines drafted; one or more districts designated.
- **Benefits/Rationale:**
  - Cultural amenities help to attract businesses, housing, retail and visitors to vital, mixed-use commercial corridors and urban centers, sparking revitalization and economic development. These amenities help to attract, engage and retain talented, creative workforce.
  - Vital, busy neighborhoods and districts are safer; real estate improves in value, generating property tax revenues.

- Supports the arts, culture and heritage sectors through affordable space, heightened visibility and marketing, creating and supporting jobs and earning power.

**Recommendation 4:**

**Develop Percent for Public Art programs to incorporate artworks into public and private developments in Erie County.**

The Erie region has some experience with art in public places. The Art Museum has sited temporary pieces over the years and there are a few murals in the city of Erie. Public interest in public art increased tremendously in 2003/04 when a group of cultural organizations collaborated to commission artists to paint fish and frogs, placed them all over town and then sold them to raise funds for scholarships and future public art initiatives. Virtually all public art, so far, has been privately funded.

Public art is as old as civilization. Sculptures, murals, paintings, artist designed functional elements such as benches, signage and lighting fixtures beautify and enliven public spaces and transportation corridors. Hundreds of communities, small and large, throughout the US have thriving programs requiring or incenting integration of public art into public capital projects and/or private development. Interest in such a program is increasing in Erie County.

In the public realm the most common funding mechanisms are a direct, yearly allocation or a set aside of 1-2% of public capital construction projects to commission and incorporate public art. Private developers can be required to incorporate public art or encouraged via incentives, such as a zoning exception allowing more floor area ratio, or density. A more effective incentive in Erie County, given vacancy rates, would be the LERTA policy, which forgives a portion of taxes on improvements for 10 years, in exchange for such a public amenity. Public art can also be supported via private fund-raising.

Public art programs benefit tremendously by having an agency in place with the expertise to manage selection, siting, maintenance and fund-raising, along with established policies and guidelines. The program could be administered by a new, stand-alone agency, the local arts council, or another existing cultural organization.

- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** CultureSpark Implementation Action Team, ArtsErie, new artists entity (SEE INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS AND CREATORS # 2).
- **Partners in Implementation:** municipal governments, chambers of commerce, other business associations, private funders, developers, Erie Art Museum, artists organizations, SEEDIS group.
- **Timeline:** 1-4 years
- **Resources:** public and private funding, tax rebate incentives.

- **First steps:** Enjoin a working group to study models, advocate for public art policies, flesh out the design of a program and identify first projects.
- **Models:**
  - Americans for the Arts Public Art Network, a good source for model policies, guidelines, advice and networking  
[www.artsusa.org/networks/public\\_art\\_network/default.asp](http://www.artsusa.org/networks/public_art_network/default.asp)
  - Philadelphia Mural Arts Program [www.muralarts.org/](http://www.muralarts.org/)
  - Lancaster, PA public art program  
<http://www.cityoflancasterpa.com/lancastercity/cwp/view.asp?A=1189&Q=631564&lancastercityNav=%7C10436%7C>
  - The Johnstown Public Arts Alliance is working with the City of Johnstown to initiate a public art program  
[www.johnstownartspa.com/assets.html](http://www.johnstownartspa.com/assets.html) Peoria, Illinois: ArtsPartners of Central Illinois Public Art Program (SEE COMPARABLE COMMUNITIES PROFILES, P. 42).  
[http://www.artspartners.net/files/resourcesmodule/@random419cfd28bc9db/1148268958\\_Public\\_Art\\_Catalog\\_2006.pdf](http://www.artspartners.net/files/resourcesmodule/@random419cfd28bc9db/1148268958_Public_Art_Catalog_2006.pdf)
  - WaterFire, in Providence, Rhode Island, is a spectacular waterfront public art festival [www.waterfire.org](http://www.waterfire.org)
- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:**
  - Public art working group created.
  - Pilot projects and funding identified.
- **Benefits/Rationale:**
  - Public art animates and marks public spaces, inside and outside, including gateways, borders and landmarks. It draws people in and increases their enjoyment.
  - Public art reflects the identity and character of the community, telling its stories to residents and visitors. It contributes to a sense of place and vitality.
  - Public art improves the quality of the built environment, increases property values and sparks community and economic development.
  - Public art provides opportunities for the community to showcase local artists and, by commissioning works from visiting artists, enables local artists to engage with international caliber artists.
  - Public art projects can be a way to engage youth artists and mentoring them in community building projects.

**Recommendation 5:**

**Initiate a cultural mapping project to inventory and identify locations for culture and heritage sites, venues, organizations, events, programs and cultural employment in Erie County.**

Cultural inventorying was begun during the CultureSpark process – notably by the Countywide Task Force (see their inventory) -- but a comprehensive effort was not within its scope. The effort should be rebooted as an opportunity to catalog and document the cultural identity and resources of Erie County as a powerful marketing and advocacy tool. Cultural mapping can take many forms, employing different media such as photography, drawing, film and journaling, in addition to inventorying. Some communities have commissioned artists to help them create “visual chronicles” of their communities. GIS technology, if available, can be used to depict and investigate the distribution of cultural resources via “mapping.” This is a good class project for a university planning or urban studies department. Erie Yesterday has already gathered information about heritage sites and venues.

- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** Erie County Planning Department, Black Family Foundation.
- **Partners in Implementation:** Local colleges and universities, Mercyhurst College Civic Institute, municipalities, ArtsErie, Erie Community Foundation, VisitErie
- **Timeline:** 1-4 years
- **Resources:** private funding, university students, governments.
- **First steps:** secure commitment from university or government department to provide support and technology; enlist students to do field work.
- **Models:**
  - One beginning point: Historical Walking Tour of famous buildings and sites in Corry, PA. <http://www.corrypa.com/assets/corry.swf>
  - The *Visual Chronicle of Portland* is a city-owned collection of works on paper—prints, photographs, paintings and drawings—that focuses on artists’ views of the city’s social and urban landscapes. <http://racc.org/public-art/visual-chronicle>
  - Dun & Bradstreet “maps” of cultural employment, available from Americans for the Arts.
- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:** Cultural resources documentation product.
- **Benefits/Rationale:**
  - A comprehensive inventory of cultural resources is a profound reflection of community heritage, identity and vitality.

- It can be used in marketing and advocacy.
- Cultural mapping can also be used to and assess the relative access to cultural participation opportunities.

**Recommendation 6:**

**Initiate partnerships to further cultural development and integrate it into community frameworks. (SEE RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE, # 5.)**

The Community Development Task Force had several good ideas that need further fleshing out:

1. Build upon Erie's formal sister city relationships and informal ties with regions around the world to create cultural exchanges resulting in exhibits and panel discussions to forward cross-cultural understanding and engagement. For example, Erie Playhouse has had an ongoing exchange with the Dungarvan Dramatic Club in Ireland, for several years.
2. Erie expatriate exchange/exhibition: invite artists and creators that have left Erie to return to share their artworks and ideas on civic, cultural and economic development. Could be a yearly event with an exhibit in conference at the Convention Center.
3. Build cultural components into major high school sports events, such as dance competitions, musical performances or poetry slams at half times or before, to connect with youth and families who attend and broaden their interest in cultural expressions. Would be a good partnership between arts, culture and heritage organizations and schools.
4. Build connections between the creative sector and the locally grown food, urban gardening and culinary movements to foster partnerships and understanding of "food culture" and retention of irreplaceable farmland as part of the Erie region's identity and culture. Outcomes could be integration of the arts and performance into farmers markets and culinary events, artist designed food stands, more locally grown and artisan food products at supermarkets and more general awareness of local food resources.

More information and models:

- A good documentary film on the local food movement: <http://ingredientsfilm.com/>
- **Wormfarm Institute, Milwaukee.** [www.wormfarminstitute.org/](http://www.wormfarminstitute.org/) Dedicated to integrating culture and agriculture, the Wormfarm Institute is an evolving laboratory of the arts and ecology and fertile ground for creative work. One project Is Roadside Culture Stands - mobile farm stands designed and built by artists, which are used to display and sell fresh local produce as well as the work of local artists.
- **Growing Power** [www.growingpower.org/](http://www.growingpower.org/) is a national nonprofit organization and land trust supporting people from diverse

backgrounds, and the environments in which they live, by helping to provide equal access to healthy, high-quality, safe and affordable food for people in all communities. Growing Power implements this mission by providing hands-on training, on-the-ground demonstration, outreach and technical assistance through the development of Community Food Systems that help people grow, process, market and distribute food in a sustainable manner, especially in urban areas.

Each of these ideas needs a home base of leadership, resources and accountability. Some additional ideas for implementation can be found in the task force notes.

## RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Erie's rich heritage and creative resources contribute indelibly to the region's identity, vitality, prosperity and quality of life. To bring this creativity to fruition in fine cultural and heritage programs, venues and events requires a balanced mix of earned revenues, private and public funding and the infrastructure of leadership, advocacy and coordination typically provided by a local arts council. Resource considerations should reflect a commitment to promote equitable access to and participation in cultural activity across Erie County's geographic, racial and income strata.

In these pressing economic times, it is not surprising that the need for more resources came up in nearly every CultureSpark interview and meeting. Arts, culture and heritage organizations are reporting downturns in revenue from all sources – and struggling to survive.

The Regional Asset public funding, derived from County taxes on casino revenue, was viewed as an extremely positive support mechanism, but funding was reduced, then eliminated during our planning effort.

*“The Council passed it and immediately we were told they weren't going to get that much, and it has just gotten worse each year. It is a very complex formula, much too complex for what it is. But another problem is that the city and county pulled their general fund support for recipients of regional assets dollars.”*

The privately funded Erie Arts Endowment and the ArtsErie United Fund, both managed by ArtsErie, spin off significant grants to arts and cultural organizations, but have been challenged by loss of principal, growing difficulty in raising funds, and tensions around the collaborative campaign.

*“We raised \$360,000 one year (for the ArtsErie United Fund). We can't raise \$1million in this community? If we could triple our budget we could really make a difference.”*

*“The next generation of potential donors is not connected to the arts as much as parents and grandparents were. We have the resources more than the interest.”*

Corporate funding has declined with the loss of major businesses and headquarters, particularly in the manufacturing industry. Competition for funding is fierce.

Although the Community Foundation is large for the size of the community, and is supportive of cultural projects, there are only a small number of other foundations, which support the arts, culture and heritage. No local foundations provide core operating support to cultural and heritage organizations.

*“There are few foundations to approach for funding. I do worry that arts organizations have an ongoing challenge of sustainability because ticket sales never cover expenses of operating the program.”*

State funding through the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts has been significant but has also declined and been threatened. State funding for heritage, including the Maritime Museum and the Flagship Niagara, has also declined dramatically, as has funding for public broadcasting.

Among the top-ranked needs for artists and creators mentioned in forums and interviews were: marketing, more places to sell their work, funding and bringing arts back into schools.

*“For artists to survive by selling in Erie, you would have to sell outside of Erie to survive. The prices here are too low to survive on your art unless you are a teacher or have another income stream.”*

Erie Yesterday surveyed its member heritage organizations about organizational development and training needs. The greatest needs are volunteer recruitment and training, standards for small museums, marketing, properties and collections management, use of technology and fundraising.

ArtsErie’s role as an umbrella organization to coordinate communication, advocacy and collaborations for the cultural community was discussed frequently in CultureSpark interviews and forums – with both positive and negative comments about its success and the ideal scope of its role:

*“ArtsErie is problematic. Taken a lot more out of the community than it has put back into it; they compete with galas and other community fundraisers.”*

*“It takes a neutral broker to bring organizations together to talk about broad picture thinking and coordinate issues.”*

*“The potential role could be much larger as clearing house, building capacity, a resource and partner more than they are currently doing.”*

Community survey respondents (almost 600) ranked the statement “nonprofit arts, culture and heritage organizations in Erie County should have reliable sources of public funding” as the 8<sup>th</sup> highest of 22 top CultureSpark priorities, with a score of 7.42 on a scale of 1-10. (Survey report, P. 17)

The cultural organizations and artists/creators survey both ranked “increase and stabilize public funding for arts, culture and heritage” as their second-highest CultureSpark priority (both almost 9, on a scale of 1-10 – Survey Report, P. 14).

Cultural organizations and artist/creators both ranked “increase private philanthropy for organizations and artists” as their number 6 priority – both over 8 on a 1-10 scale. (Survey Report, P. 14)

When asked to rank ArtsErie roles and services, cultural organization and artists/creators survey responses were very similar, except that artists ranked “support and services for individual artists” higher, and artists’ overall scores were about a point higher. The top 10 ranked services, all receiving scores of almost 7 for cultural organizations, and over 7 for artists/creators, were (Survey Report, P. 29):

1. PR and working with the media.
2. Joint marketing and promotions.
3. Arts in education.
4. Coordinated advocacy efforts.
5. Serving as a central information and clearinghouse for arts, culture and heritage.

6. United fund raising for arts.
7. Facilitating implementation of the CultureSpark plan.
8. Facilitating professional peer networks.
9. Coordinating festivals and events.
10. United fundraising for heritage.

Ranked as the least important services for ArtsErie were (scores less than 6)

13. Facilitating group purchases.
14. Technical assistance and training.
15. Brokered services.
16. Space for artists.
17. Back-office support services, management.

Cultural organizations and artists were also asked to rank how supportive various “community systems” are to arts, culture and heritage organizations, on a scale of 1-10. Organizations ranked their support higher than did artists, and generally scores were low, suggesting there is opportunity to develop stronger relationships within the community around cultural development. ArtsErie and business assistance organizations were ranked highest (above 7 on a scale of 1-10); colleges and universities ranked above 6; public education systems, professional associations and other civic organizations were ranked lower. (Survey Report, P. 30)

Responses to an open-ended question about how community systems could be more supportive of arts, culture and heritage focused on themes of advocacy, communication, curriculum, participation and promotion.

In addition to the above, the Resource and Infrastructure Task Force also noted the following issues:

- Culture is being defined more broadly than arts for this plan and by the community. How will that impact fundraising and distribution?
- To what extent, if at all, are the 38 municipalities in Erie County supporting arts, culture and heritage programs and venues? What is their role?
- Do new partnerships between arts and healthcare, culture and education, and creativity and workforce development open up new funding sources?
- Consumer participation in culture is shifting with the emergence of new technologies, such as iTunes, digital photography and video and home recording, and encouraging more hands-on involvement and “self-curation” of creative expression.

New resources and support are needed for some – not all – of the initiatives of this plan, including continued administrative support to oversee, track and report on implementation. The following CultureSpark recommendations address resource and infrastructure challenges and opportunities.

## Overarching Goal

Assure an adequate and balanced mix of resources and support to sustain the full diversity of arts, culture and heritage in Erie County.

## Recommendation 1:

Evaluate all aspects of the ArtsErie United Fund.

This annual fund drive originated over 40 years ago and currently raises over \$300,000 per year from private sources. When combined with income from the Erie Arts Endowment, over \$400,000 is distributed to support hundreds of performances, exhibits and educational opportunities by Erie's non-profit arts and cultural organizations each year. Questions for this assessment include:

- Is the United Arts Fund still a viable method for raising support for the arts? If so, what organization should conduct the campaign? How should that organization be compensated?
- Who should be solicited and when should the campaign be held?
- How can the campaign be more effective and raise more funds? What role should arts organizations play in fundraising?
- What organizations should benefit from the campaign? When should the allocations process occur and when should distributions be made?
- Should the United Arts Fund support a broader definition of culture, including heritage? Should the arts programs of higher education institutions be supported through the United Arts Fund?
  
- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** United Arts Fund Assessment Committee led by 1-2 past United Arts Fund Community Campaign Chairs, and including stakeholders.
- **Partners in Implementation:** major donors, government representation, Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership, other chambers, countywide representations, including heritage, end-users (audiences / consumers).
- **Timeline:** Immediate
- **Resources:** staff time for administrative support.
- **First steps:** Form assessment committee; research models; fine-tune research questions; interview ArtsErie program and project funded grant recipients and ArtsErie leaders
- **Models:**
  - Cultural Alliance of York County [www.culturalalliance-york.org](http://www.culturalalliance-york.org)
  - Dayton, Ohio [www.cultureworks.org](http://www.cultureworks.org)
  - Canton, Ohio <http://www.artsinstark.com>

- Greensboro, North Carolina <http://www.uacarts.org/index.html>
- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:**
  - Achieve stakeholder agreement on design and administration of the program.
  - Introduce new techniques and technology into fund-raising.
  - Increase the amount raised.
- **Benefits/Rationale:**
  - Address current issues.
  - Consider broadening the support beyond arts, reflecting CultureSpark directions.
  - Broadening distribution may broaden the appeal of giving.
  - Opportunity to form new partnerships in the community and support more multidiscipline projects.

**Recommendation 2:**

**Develop strategies to ensure long-term stability of arts, culture and heritage through endowment building, especially planned giving initiatives.**

The Erie Arts Endowment was founded in 1981 with a major gift to ArtsErie. Subsequent gifts and established subfunds have brought the endowment to over \$3 million. Yearly income from the endowment is combined with the annual ArtsErie United Fund to provide support to arts and cultural organizations and projects. Subfund earnings go directly to named beneficiaries. The Erie Arts Endowment has not received a major gift since 2002.

Other organizations, such as the Erie Art Museum, Erie Philharmonic and Erie Playhouse also have endowments, with ArtsErie and on their own. The intent of this recommendation is to provide the tools and raise community awareness to increase the size of all endowments.

Individual giving is, by far, the best target for development efforts. Nationally, it accounts for the vast proportion of private sector giving to cultural organizations – 35% of total revenues, compared to 2.5% from corporations and 5% from foundations – and these last two sources are declining in a tough economy.

- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** The Nonprofit Partnership, ArtsErie, CultureSpark Implementation Action Team, Erie Community Foundation.
- **Partners in Implementation:** Financial planners, estate lawyers and banks; outside planned giving firm; arts, cultural and heritage organizations board and staff leadership.
- **Timeline:** Immediate and ongoing.

- **Resources:** Funding for an outside planned giving consulting firm; administration of endowment campaigns.
- **First steps:** Form a Working Group to lead this effort; consult with financial planners; design training for board and development staff of organizations.
- **Models:** Cultural Alliance of York County <http://www.culturalalliance-york.org/Pages/home.htm>
- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:**
  - Arts, culture and heritage organizations are better informed on benefits and techniques of planned giving.
  - Training in planned giving for endowments offered.
  - Better investment management of existing and new endowments.
- **Benefits/Rationale:**
  - Community is not aware of endowments and their purpose; need to educate the public; opportunity to cast the net broadly to high and medium wealth individuals.
  - No current organized plan giving efforts being made.
  - Nationally, donations from individuals are the number one source of contributed income for cultural organizations. Spin off from endowments help to stabilize funding bases.
  - Arts, culture and heritage organizations need to be equipped to capitalize on the impending generational wealth transfer.

**Recommendation 3:**

**Develop a stable, government/public dedicated funding stream for arts, culture and heritage in Erie County.**

In 2008, approximately \$1.5 million in Regional Asset Funding added a critical and stabilizing element to a funding base for Erie County cultural organizations that is made up of – in the order of relative size -- earned income, individual contributions, foundation grants, corporate donations and local government/public funding. The decline of Regional Asset Funding in 2009, and then its loss in 2010, amidst declines in private funding and state funding, became a tremendously destabilizing factor.

Thousands of communities, small and large, across the US provide some form and amount of local public funding to their cultural sectors which, in turn, enhance quality of life, economic development and as a consequence, local tax revenues. Securing a stable, sustainable source of local public funding is one of the most critical recommendations of CultureSpark.

- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** CultureSpark Implementation Action Team, Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership, Manufacturers and Business Association, other chambers of commerce, civic leaders.
- **Partners in Implementation:** regional elected officials, state legislature, VisitErie, ArtsErie, arts, culture and heritage leaders.
- **Timeline:** 1-4 years
- **Resources:** staff time to coordinate advocacy.
- **First steps:**
  - Form working group to lead advocacy.
  - Investigate partnerships with other sectors seeking dedicated public funding.
  - Research models.
  - Choose options. Determine whether state legislative permission is required.
- **Models:**
  - Allegheny Regional Asset District, Pittsburgh, PA: <http://www.radworkshere.org/> supports regional assets in the areas of culture, libraries, parks and recreation, sports and civic facilities and programs, using one-half of the proceeds from the 1% Allegheny County Sales and Use Tax. The District is a special purpose area-wide unit of local government that was authorized by an act of the Pennsylvania Legislature (Act 77 of 1993).
  - Denver Scientific and Cultural Facilities District (SCFD): <http://www.scfd.org/> Since 1989, has distributed funds from a 1/10 of 1% sales and use tax to cultural organizations and facilities throughout the seven-county Denver metropolitan area.
  - Cuyahoga Arts and Culture (CAC) is a Regional Arts and Cultural District in the State of Ohio. It is the result of many years of planning and research. Beginning in 1998, leaders from arts and cultural organizations, foundations, local governments and other private entities cooperated to create an arts and culture plan for the region which called for public funding to strategically support the local arts and cultural sector. Voters in Cuyahoga County approved a 10-year tax on cigarettes to fund Cuyahoga Arts and Culture in November of 2006 and expected to collect about \$17 million in 2007.
  - State of Minnesota: In November 2008, Minnesota voters passed the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment, a ballot initiative to create a dedicated funding source for environmental, arts and cultural funding. The three-eighths of one percent sales tax increase approved by the voters is estimated to capture about \$300 million a year. Thirty-three percent of the new money will go to clean water,

33% to game, fish and wildlife habitat, 20% to arts and culture and the remaining to parks and trails.

- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:**
  - Better, more effective cultural advocacy gains “seats at the table,” increased connection with decision makers.
  - Regional public funding secured, resulting in more stable, balanced mix of funding for arts, culture and heritage.
- **Benefits/Rationale:**
  - Arts, culture and heritage contribute significantly to the Erie region’s vitality, quality-of-life and ability to attract talent and business. The economic impact of the arts, culture and heritage is nearly \$15 million per year. Public funding is a worthwhile investment in this critical area.
  - Public funding is a small but vitally important ingredient in a balanced mix of support, along with earned revenue and private contributions, that enables a stable cultural sector to achieve maximum community benefit.
  - Public funding helps to support audience and program development, such as cultural education and programs for youth; changes perception and reality that arts are only for the elite.

**Recommendation 4:**

**Develop Percent for Public Art programs to incorporate artworks into public and private developments in Erie County. (SEE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATION #3, FOR DETAILED EXPLANATION.)**

**Recommendation 5:**

**Encourage collaborations and partnerships among arts, culture and heritage and other community-based organizations, to broaden funding basis and audiences. (SEE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, # 6.)**

The Resources and Infrastructure Task Force feels strongly that enhanced collaborations – between cultural groups and social service agencies, between heritage and arts groups, between churches and cultural organizations, among the many ethnic festivals in Erie, arranging performances at the Home and RV Shows – will help arts, culture and heritage organizations reach new audiences and funding. The Stairways’ Center for Arts and Humanities is a good example of a collaboration between the cultural and social service sectors.

Another infrastructure need impacting access to culture and heritage activity is transportation. For example, if youth don’t have transport, they may not be able

to get to afterschool events. The cultural sector should partner with the Erie Metropolitan Transit Authority.

For this range of future collaborations, ArtsErie could play a convening role, and The Nonprofit Partnership could provide training and matchmaking in collaborations.

- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** ArtsErie, The Nonprofit Partnership
- **Partners in Implementation:** United Way, Asbury Woods, Erie Zoo, Multicultural Resource Center, International Institute, Chautauqua, Scouts, Project Blueprint, Stairways Behavioral Health, YMCA, School Districts, Churches, Erie Parks and Recreation, Bayfront Convention Center, Port Authority, Tom Ridge Environmental Center (both do events that could expand to include ACH), Scott Enterprises, chambers of commerce, ethnic festivals, arts, culture and heritage organizations, Erie County Poet Laureate Program other community-based organizations, colleges and universities.
- **Timeline:** 1-4 years
- **Resources:** staff time to convene organizations and suggest partnerships; public and private funding to support.
- **First steps:** at regular meetings of arts, culture and heritage organizations leaders, invite representatives from community-based organizations to pursue collaborations.
- **Models:**
  - Stairways' Center for Arts and Humanities:  
[www.stairwaysbh.org/CAH.html](http://www.stairwaysbh.org/CAH.html)
- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:**
  - Successful pilots during the first year, which feature new partnerships that tap new and/or increased funding.
  - Link ethnic festivals for marketing purposes.
  - Cross promotion events, i.e. Zoopalooza.
- **Benefits/Rationale:**
  - In and across integration of arts, culture and heritage activities with community events and organizations.
  - Collaborative planning, fundraising and marketing are cost effective.
  - Opportunities to expand audiences, including diverse audiences.
  - Opportunities to tap new funding sources.
  - Leads to new modes of creative expression, use of new and/or alternative venues.

**Recommendation 6:****Provide management assistance and capacity building training and services for arts, culture and heritage organizations throughout Erie County.**

CultureSpark participants identified capacity building as a critical, cross-cutting issue affecting the health and vitality of the entire cultural sector. If organizations can improve their planning management, fundraising, marketing and other functions, they can increase revenues, reach larger audiences and exert more positive community impact. In some cases it would be advantageous for organizations to share/collaborate on these functions or develop an affordable “fee for services” approach. As noted above, there is a particular need for training in all manner of fundraising – endowment building and planned giving, annual campaigns and capital campaigns.

ArtsErie has just received a Kresge Foundation grant to support capacity building, based upon a preliminary needs assessment provided by CultureSpark.

- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** The Nonprofit Partnership
- **Partners in Implementation:** StART Up Incubator/Edinboro University, Service Corp. of Retired Executives (SCORE), Erie Capacity Building Collaborative, Small Business Development Center at Gannon University, ArtsErie, Erie Community Foundation, and community volunteers.
- **Timeline:** 1-4 Years
- **Resources:** Foundations, workforce development funding, chambers, governments, colleges and universities, internship programs.
- **First steps:**
  - Identify top priority needs for training services.
  - Clarify roles of umbrella organizations such as ArtsErie and Erie Yesterday.
  - Hire an expert in capacity building to assist with implementation.
  - Design process to track organizational follow-through and progress.
- **Models:**
  - Chicago Artists Resources:  
<http://www.chicagoartistsresource.org/> a Web resource for information about professional development, funding and spaces.
  - Technical Assistance for Community Service (TACS), supporting nonprofit success: [www.tacs.org/](http://www.tacs.org/)
- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:**
  - Stronger and more diverse arts, culture and heritage organizations.

- Better business sense / decision making.
- Positive image of organizations that are financially sound and sustainable.
- More effective management and marketing leads to larger audiences and earned revenues.
- **Benefits/Rationale:**
  - Effective management is lacking for many organizations.
  - Specific needs have not been identified or evaluated.
  - Small organizations, especially, need business management guidance and support.
  - Perception of or actual weaknesses deters community support and funding.

**Recommendation 7:**

**ArtsErie should re-examine its roles and structure in light of CultureSpark priorities.**

ArtsErie was not only a major sponsor of planning but is named as a lead or partner implementer for many recommendations. As an umbrella organization and major part of the cultural infrastructure for the Erie region its roles and functions were an appropriate subject for planning. Surveying and other input point to larger roles in marketing and communications, support for the heritage sector, services for individual artists, cultural education and promoting culture countywide. Should ArtsErie change its name and go through another rebranding process to reflect this broader purview? It would be better to focus on support for implementation than the name of the organization.

Another issue that came up was the need for a stronger relationship between the cultural sector and city and county governments. Some even recommended formation of a new cultural body within government. Options for strengthening ties between ArtsErie and governments, such as Board appointments, regular presentations, and establishing an official liaison relationship, should be considered.

- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** ArtsErie Board and Staff
- **Partners in Implementation:** CultureSpark Implementation Action Team
- **Timeline:** Immediate
- **Resources:** Board and staff time
- **First steps:** Thoroughly digest CultureSpark Cultural Master Plan; identify suggested roles for ArtsErie; schedule a retreat to consider implications of CultureSpark.
- **Models:**

- ArtsPartners of Central Illinois, Peoria Illinois (SEE COMPARABLE COMMUNITY PROFILES, P. 36)  
<http://www.artspartners.net/index.php?section=8>
- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:** ArtsErie strategic plan meshes with the priorities of CultureSpark. ArtsErie is able to perform significant implementer roles.
- **Benefits/Rationale:** broad consensus gained on ideal roles and functions of ArtsErie.

**Recommendation 8:**

**Identify and support an organization to be the engine for innovation for arts, culture and heritage.**

The Erie region needs an organization that links arts and creativity, education and industry -- so that innovative ideas can come to fruition as products and services that gain recognition and foster enterprise. The SAM & ED (Science Architecture Math Engineering & Design) sponsored design competition was noted by the Task Force as an example of such collaboration and imagination. The Edinboro University StART Up Incubator is another.

- **Lead Implementation Responsibility:** Science Architecture Math Engineering & Design (SAM & ED), StART Up Incubator, Manufacturers and Business Association,
- **Partners in Implementation:** InnovationErie, Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership, Keystone Innovation Zone, Erie Art Museum, The Nonprofit Partnership, Erie Community Foundation, Black Family Foundation, business community, colleges and universities.
- **Timeline:** 1-4 years
- **Resources:** grant funding
- **First steps:** convene a thinking/working group to flesh out; meet with partners to assess interest and capacity.
- **Models:** Chautauqua Arts Council
- **Concrete Outcomes and Indicators of Success:**
  - New, innovative ideas and products.
  - New partnerships, programs and venues.
- **Benefits/Rationale:**
  - Harness the power of the creative sector to address community and/or global issues.
  - Tap new funding sources for new creative enterprises.

## IMPLEMENTATION FIRST STEPS

The CultureSpark planning process was comprehensive, featuring extensive research and robust stakeholder and community dialog – in order to identify and assess cultural strengths, challenges and opportunities, as a basis for its 35 recommendations. The process was open, porous and engaging -- designed to cultivate and inspire the ongoing community leadership needed to realize its 10-year vision. Though hundreds of people became involved in and committed to the planning process, additional outreach is needed to reach more stakeholders, key community leaders and the general public.

Throughout the CultureSpark process, cultural leaders expressed the need for stronger, better-coordinated advocacy based upon well-articulated messages as to the role and benefits of arts, culture and heritage. The CultureSpark Master Plan provides these “messages,” wrapped in a framework of vision, values and strategies for cultural development with unquestioned benefit to the Erie region’s vitality, livability and prosperity. Some questioned undertaking cultural planning during such a doom and gloom economy, in a region noted for its poverty and plans that sit on shelves. But the CultureSpark process itself challenged us to examine the range and reach of “culture” in the region and what culture means in a changed economy with an altered social fabric. The process also sparked new partnerships and collaborations to address its strategies -- and some resources have already been tapped to begin implementation. As the economy turns around and improves, CultureSpark will provide a good framework and rationales for cultural investment to benefit the citizens of the region.

This chapter suggests the initial steps in energizing, uniting and focusing leadership to communicate the Cultural Master Plan to the broader community, organize for tactical work, gain support and maintain momentum with early successes.

1. Reformulate The CultureSpark Steering Committee as the CultureSpark Implementation Action Team, to provide ongoing oversight, leadership and advocacy for Plan implementation. This diverse group of high-level leaders will include Steering Committee members who wish to continue with the process, as well as new leaders identified during planning, through interviews, focus groups and the task force process.
  - a. The group will meet about once a quarter to review progress on key strategies.
  - b. Members will be spokespersons for the CultureSpark Master Plan, presenting it to key governments and civic groups, the media, editorial boards, etc., seeking adoptions and/or endorsements.
  - c. Members will seek commitments from other key groups and leaders to join the “community of implementers” and take on significant initiatives of the CultureSpark Master Plan.
  - d. Subcommittees will be formed to work on the top recommendations of the CultureSpark Master Plan, such as joint marketing, website development and funding. Subcommittees will

- include members of the CultureSpark Implementation Action Team, as well as former CultureSpark Task Force members and other community leaders whose expertise and leadership is needed.
- e. Subcommittees and groups that commit to leadership will undertake the tactical planning and resource development need to implement recommendations.
  - f. At its quarterly meetings, the CultureSpark Implementation Action Team will provide oversight, tracking forward progress and problem solving as obstacles for challenges arise.
  - g. The group will celebrate and publicize successes and report back to key stakeholders, adopters and funders.
2. The CultureSpark Implementation Action Team must have continuing staff and organizational support, much like the planning process itself, in order to work effectively with volunteer leadership. ArtsErie has committed to this role, provided that sufficient funding is available to support its ongoing involvement.
  3. Two organizations, in particular, are critical to Plan implementation: ArtsErie and The Nonprofit Partnership were both sponsors of CultureSpark, and are named as key implementers throughout. Both organizations should undertake extensive review and planning to map out their leadership, management, funding, advocacy, and programmatic roles in implementation.
  4. Maintain the CultureSpark “brand.” Considerable effort was dedicated to creating a visual identity and visibility for the CultureSpark planning process, including development of a logo, website and Facebook page, cultivating media feature and editorial coverage, and “viral” outreach to stakeholders and the general public. These strategic communication and outreach efforts must continue during implementation to maintain visibility and momentum.
  5. Publish the CultureSpark Master Plan, as quickly and as attractively as possible. Translate the Plan into alternative formats such as PowerPoint and Web versions in order to present its key messages to the public, stakeholders and key civic groups.
  6. Present the CultureSpark Master Plan and seek adoption and/or endorsements from key civic groups such as the Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership, Erie Community Foundation, Manufacturers and Business Association, Rotary Clubs of Erie, Presque Isle, Wesleyville, Corry and Edinboro, Erie County Executive, Council and Planning Department, Erie Mayor and City Council, Erie Area Council of Governments, and others.
  7. Meet with major media editorial boards and reporters to discuss the implications of the CultureSpark Master Plan, and to seek endorsements.

8. Ask arts, cultural and heritage organizations to review and adopt the CultureSpark Master Plan as a set of guiding principles, asking “what does this mean for us and our future evolution and priorities?” And “how can we be involved in leadership and advocacy for implementation?”
9. Work to integrate the CultureSpark Master Plan into major planning initiatives in the region, such as the County Comprehensive Plan, Erie Five Year Consolidated Plan, 2010-15, Vital Signs, Envision Erie, Corry 2020 and other planning efforts, as appropriate.
10. The CultureSpark Implementation Action Team should sponsor a yearly community forum to invite the public to help assess progress, chart desirable “course corrections,” and draw new leadership into implementation efforts.

## APPENDICES

The appendices attached to this document provide listings of planning process participants and bios of the consultant team. Additional appendices, available on the CultureSpark website, [www.culturesparkerie.org/](http://www.culturesparkerie.org/) are:

- Critical Issues: Findings from Qualitative Research
- Erie County Survey Results
- Geodemographic Market Assessment
- Comparable Communities/Programs Profiles
- “Discussion Starters” compilation of research for Task Force process

## CULTURESPARK PLANNING PARTICIPANTS

The following are lists of individuals who participated in the CultureSpark planning process via advisory committees, key interviews, focus groups, forums and community meetings. In addition, almost 600 individuals completed one of CultureSpark’s three surveys, of artists/creators, cultural organizations and the general public.

### CultureSpark Steering Committee

Bruce Arkwright  
Shelly Barnard  
Emily Beck  
Susan Breon  
Shelley Buehler  
Barb Burghart  
Mary Ellen Dahlkemper, Chair  
Donna Douglass  
Wally Faas  
Judy Faustine  
Michael Fuhrman  
Suzanne Gagliardo  
Matthew Grisier  
Leslie Guelcher  
Allen "Kit" Howell  
Tom Kidd

Meera Kumar  
Renee Lamis  
Denise Mosley  
Nakia Pacley  
Lois Pearo  
Amanda Prischak  
Peggy Richardson  
Chuck Scalise  
Chet Sceiford  
Greg Schlueter  
Ann Scott  
Terry Smith  
Gary Viebranz  
Bettye Walker  
Bob Wooler

### Working group

Kelly Armor  
Mary Ellen Dahlkemper  
Tom Ferraro  
Sara Galbreath

Char Mashyna  
Jim Steadman  
Bob Wooler

### **Key Interviews/Meetings**

Jim Barker  
Mike Batchelor  
Tamarah Black  
Susan Breon  
Mary Bula  
Jack Burke  
Rosanne Cheeseman  
Jim Dible  
Mark DiVecchio  
John Elliott  
Tom Ferraro  
Marvin Gold

Rick Griffith  
Barry Grossman  
Gary Horton  
Allen Howell  
Bill Jeffress  
Susan Kemenyffy  
Tom Kidd  
Renee Lamis  
Char Mashyna  
Jim McBrier  
James W. Martin  
Marlene Mosco

M. Holly Nowak  
John Oliver  
Gary Ravetto  
Nick Scott Jr.  
Phil Scrimenti  
Laura Schaaf  
Bill Sutton  
Shiloh Turner  
John Vanco  
Tom & Cheryl Vicary  
Sister Anne Wambach  
Bob Wooler

### **Task Force Members**

#### **Artists and Creators**

Eric Borenstein  
Holly Dhaliwal  
Sara Galbreath  
Ed Grout  
Tom Kidd

Keith Moses  
Marty Mueller  
Jan Niebauer  
Dan Niebauer  
Holly Nowak

Amanda Prischak  
Terry Pytlarz  
Lee Steadman  
Lori Steadman

#### **Community Development**

David Brennan  
Almitra Clerkin  
Stephen Fabian  
Tom Ferraro  
Michael Fuhrman

Suzanne Gagliardo  
Chuck Joy  
Bill Koehle  
Nakia Pacley  
Laura Ryan

Chuck Scalise  
Marie-Christine  
Starfield

#### **Countywide Services**

Mary Ellen  
Dahlkemper  
Donna Douglass  
Corrine Egan

Charles Faulkerson  
Downia Glass  
Dean Maynard  
Bill Roche

Chet Sceiford  
Marjorie Wallace  
Jake Welsh

#### **Cultural Education**

Shelly Barnard  
Noel Burgoyne  
Emily Cassano  
Joy Catania  
Elaine Crandall  
Michaellee Curtze  
Patty Czulewicz

Allen Howell  
Lynn Johnson  
Mary Lubowicki  
Cynthia Muhammad  
Sam Myers  
Sal Parco  
Lois Pearo

June Pintea  
Marlene Radov  
Nancy Sadaly  
Doug Vicary  
Bettye Walker

## **Joint Marketing**

Paul Bates  
Emily Beck  
Judy Faustine  
Sabina Freeman  
Karen Imig

Meera Kumar  
Heidi Mayer  
Theresa Power-Natale  
James Steadman  
Deb Vahanian

## **Resources and Infrastructure**

Tom Aaron  
Bruce Arkwright  
Shelley Buehler  
Doug Burns

Donna Douglass  
Kim Green  
Rick Griffith  
JoAnn Hornaman

Char Mashyna  
Melinda Meyer  
Bob Wooler

## **Community Participants**

This list encompasses participants in community meetings, large forums for artists and cultural organizations, and focus groups with heritage organizations, youtharts programs, educators, cultural organizations, Project Blueprint, and the ArtsErie Board.

Tom Aaron  
Jeanette Alvarez  
Cecile Armor  
Kelly Armor  
Lisa Austin  
Anwarul Azam  
Danny Babcock  
Jay Badams  
Bob Banks  
Diane Banks  
Pete Banks  
Bridget Barber  
Shelly Barnard  
Mike Batchelor  
Karen Beardsley-Petit  
Emily Beck  
Jeremy Beightol  
Missi Berquist  
D. Jason Bishop  
Martha Blair  
Lorri Bland  
Amber Blashak  
Ann Bloxdorf  
Rodney Blystone  
Michael Bocianowski  
Lea Bodine

Eric Borenstein  
Dave Brennan  
Joel Brennan  
Susan Breon  
Christine Brotherson  
Mary Bula  
Noel Burgoyne  
Dennis Burkhardt  
Constance Burnett  
Doug Burns  
Durward Burress  
Rita Burress  
Kirsten Carpenter  
Emily Cassano  
Joy Catania  
Almi Clerkin  
Allison Counasse  
Elaine Crandall  
Heather Cropp  
Darryl Crosby  
Tina Curtis  
Mary Ellen  
Dahlkemper  
Jessica Deppen  
Holly Dhaliwal  
Chuck Dill

David Durst  
Corrine Egan  
Corrine Egan  
Michelle Ellia  
Beth Ennis  
Jennifer Farrer  
Charles Faulkerson  
Judy Faustine  
Kitty Felion  
Thomas Ferraro  
Del Freedline  
Sabina Freeman  
Matt Fuchs  
Michael Fuhrman  
Sara Galbreath  
Joe Giles  
Downia Glass  
Patrick Glass  
Albert Glinsky  
Luka Glinsky  
Marvin Gold  
Stephanie  
Golembiewski  
Rose Graham  
Kim Green  
Barry Grossman

Janet Grossman  
Ed Grout  
Shubhra Gupta  
Bob Hagle  
Joan Harf  
Walter Harf  
Amber Hart  
Carla Hart  
Barbara Hauck  
Arthur Holloway  
Allen Howell  
Carla Hughes  
Mark Hulings  
Tauna Hunter  
Sheeun Huq  
Jason Imig  
Karen Imig  
Regina Jaworski  
Carla Johnson  
Johnny Johnson  
Lynn Johnson  
Tamara Johnson  
Danny Jones  
Chuck Joy  
Mary Lou Karr  
Margo Keefer  
Charles Kennedy, Jr.  
Ehren Knapp  
Linda Kobler  
Jan Kondratic  
Elisa Konieczko  
Julie Kresge  
Joe Krol  
Melanie Kuebel-  
Starkey  
Mike Largenticha  
Michael Leal  
Sue Lechner  
Ed Lesser  
Rick Liebel  
Ed Lu  
Mary Lubowicki  
Dianne Lucore  
Matt Luebbert  
Ray Luniewski  
Michael Malthaner  
Michele Marini

Michelle Martin  
Heidi Mayer  
Stephen Maynard  
Christine McClure  
Erik Meyer  
Melinda Meyer  
Darren Miller  
Maria Millmaker  
Scott Mitchell  
Betsy Monsalve  
Marco Monsalve  
Denise Mosley  
R-Kelly Mosley  
Marty Mueller  
Cynthia Muhammad  
Mark Murphy  
Jim Napier  
Belinda Newell-  
Mosley  
Brett Nichols  
Jamie Niverth  
Barb Nodes-Nakoski  
Victoria Norvaisa  
George Nowack  
Holly Nowak  
Luke Nowak  
John Oliver  
Nakia Pacley  
Lois Pearo  
Mary Peters  
Randall Peters  
June Pintea  
David Poor  
Steve Porter  
Theresa Power-Natale  
Agnes Priscaro  
Suzanne Proulx  
Marlene Radov  
Albert Richardson  
Peggy Richardson  
Bill Riordan  
Jeri Riordan  
William Roche  
David Rosswog  
Laura Ryan  
Nancy Sadaly  
Brenda Sandberg

Mark Santillano  
Sreela Sasi  
Eric Schaufefe  
Ann Scott  
Jude Shingle  
Ed Sitter  
Nadean Sitter  
Michele Smith  
Sharon Smith  
Carolyn Soder  
Viktor Soder  
Bob Spaulding  
Jodi Staniunas  
Hopper  
Marie-Christine  
Starfield  
John Stockard  
Julie Stuczynski  
Barbara Tan  
Kiel Thompson  
Richard Thompson  
Bryan Toy  
James Tracy  
Kathy Travis  
Tom Tupitza  
Deborah Vahanian  
John Vanco  
Karinna Vernaza  
Holly Villella  
Cathy VonBirgelen  
Bettye Walker  
Marjorie Wallace  
Roseanna Ward  
Karin Waskiewicz  
Barbara Weber  
Mike Weber  
Jake Welsh  
Katie White  
Hawk Williamson  
Brian Winslow  
LeAnne Wistrom  
Eliza Wolfe  
David Woledge  
Bruce Wright  
Eileen Zinchiak

## CONSULTANTS' BIOS

### **Bill Bulick, Creative Planning, Inc., Lead Planner and Author**

Bill's 37 year career in cultural and community development includes roles as a musician, founder and producer of multi-cultural arts festivals and concerts, founding Program Director of Pioneer Courthouse Square - a nationally recognized urban public plaza – Director of one of the nation's leading Local Arts Agencies in Portland, board member of Americans for the Arts, chair and member of several NEA panels, and president of the U.S. Urban Arts Federation. As a full time consultant for the last 10 years, he has designed and led cultural planning and assessment in over twenty communities, including Austin, Tucson, Minneapolis, Kelowna, BC, Charlotte, Santa Cruz, Newark, NJ, Portland, Cincinnati and Washington State.. Bill also has extensive experience with broader based community planning through involvement in all of Portland's major planning efforts over the last 30 years and in integrating cultural planning into broader based plans in other communities. He is pioneering efforts to bridge cultural planning with creative economy strategies sparked by the work of Richard Florida, Ann Markusen, Mt. Auburn Associates, Joe Cortright and others and has been a frequent guest speaker on the topic at conferences and meetings throughout the U.S. and Canada. Bill wrote the forward to the Americans for the Arts 1998 publication, *Community Cultural Planning, A Guidebook for Community Leaders*. Bill and was lead writer and editor of the AFTA monograph, *Cultural Development in Creative Communities*.

[www.creativeplanning.info](http://www.creativeplanning.info)

### **Surale Phillips, Decision Support Partners, Inc., Research Specialist**

Surale Phillips has provided audience and market research services to the nonprofit cultural sector for 20 years. Her research and consulting supports marketing plans, community audience development initiatives, community cultural plans, operations plans, and grants programs. Her services have been the foundation for projects supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, Wallace Foundation, James Irvine Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, and scores of individual nonprofit arts and cultural organizations. Recent clients include the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation, Cultural Alliance of York County, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts, Gallo Center for the Arts, Taller Puertorriqueno, and the Oregon Bach Festival. [www.suralephillips.com](http://www.suralephillips.com)