

# Waupaca Cultural Plan 2018-2021

## Executive Summary

Throughout 2017, the Waupaca community has participated in cultural planning - a place-based planning process to generate a vision and action plan towards strengthening and growing arts and culture assets and the impact of creativity in and for the community. With support from the City of Waupaca and involvement by a wide range of community members, the planning process has aimed at helping the arts sector and the overall community:



*Arts on the Square*

- Understand the current landscape for the arts and the community, and determine ways to expand and enhance artistic and cultural opportunities for all residents.
- Strengthen, leverage, and integrate artistic, cultural and creative resources to advance broader objectives related to economic vitality, education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, civic engagement, and a vibrant quality of life for all.

The process has involved:

- Convening a working group to review information and inform plan development, outreach, and engagement, with representatives from arts, education, business, government, and political sectors.
- Conducting an inventory and assessment of key findings from: individuals, organizations, institutions, and other arts and culture assets, through focus groups and individual interviews.
- Developing an action plan, informed by the outreach and engagement process. The action plan includes identification of strategies and actions to strengthen arts and culture resources, establishing a governance model to monitor and assess progress in implementing the plan, and determining a funding plan to promote implementation.

The Waupaca Cultural Plan focuses on four key areas which were determined via a March 2016 community planning session hosted by the Waupaca Community Arts Board and over the course of the 2017 planning process:

- **The arts as a community resource:** this includes strengthening the economy through arts and creative industries, enhancing local historic preservation efforts, and bolstering local industry; it also includes the arts as part of addressing significant local social challenges.
- **The arts as a family resource:** this includes strengthening arts programming in the schools and increasing youth involvement in arts activities.
- **The arts and quality of life:** this includes enhancing public arts programs as community resources are developed.
- **Connecting and strengthening the arts sector network and the community,** and building a bridge between the arts community and business, education, government, civic issues, and residents.

The plan provides goals and strategies that address these topics:

- Social cohesion; access and community engagement; arts and culture programming
- Services for the creative community
- The arts as integral to the health and well being of everyone in the community
- Cultural economic development
- Cultural facilities development
- Resources for arts and culture.

The arts and culture of the Waupaca community are integral to success in supporting these aspirations and play a significant role in the economic and civic health of the city and the surrounding area. Waupaca benefits from linking arts and culture with the community's aspirations, accomplishments, resilience and its very character.

Aspirations for the Waupaca community are multi-faceted:

- Establishing Waupaca as a regional center and destination for economic vitality, educational opportunities, and a good quality of life for all
- Offering a diverse and vibrant business environment
- Respect for local culture and heritage
- Supporting the arts, artistic individuals and institutions
- Fostering stronger engagement in arts and culture
- Creating arts education opportunities that teach creativity, problem-solving skills, leadership and collaboration
- Nurturing a vibrant community strengthened by artists, arts entrepreneurs and activities
- Investing in economic strategies based on a diverse and creative workforce.



*Waupaca Community Arts Center*

*This plan is really an agenda for action over the next few years.* It is a living breathing document that will evolve because of changing local and global issues. Several strategies are already in process; others will require the creation of coalitions, commitment and momentum to be accomplished over time. This is where real collaboration happens, and where the shared vision, mission and purpose provided by the Waupaca Cultural Plan will create and sustain partnerships that help drive the local economy, stimulate imaginations, foster a creative culture and enhance quality of life.

The planning process has involved:

- A working group to review information and inform plan development, outreach, and engagement, with representatives from arts, education, business, government, political sectors.
- Conducting an inventory and assessment of key findings: individuals, organizations, institutions, and other arts and culture assets, through focus groups and individual interviews.
- Development of an action plan, as informed by the outreach and engagement process, which includes strategies and actions to strengthen arts and culture resources, establish a governance model to monitor and assess progress in implementing the plan, and determine a funding plan to promote implementation.

# Waupaca Cultural Plan

## Community Profile

Waupaca, incorporated in 1875, is a city in and the county seat of Waupaca County, in east central Wisconsin.

Native American mound builders lived in the area prior to European settlement. At one time there were 72 earthwork mounds in the area, some of them ancient prehistoric works. Before the 19th century, this area was occupied by the historic Menominee and Potawatomi tribes, both of whom spoke Algonquian languages. They had long traded with French colonists who traveled here from New France (Quebec).

European Americans began to settle here in the mid-19th century as part of their westward movement from New England and New York, sometimes after settling for a period in Ohio or Indiana. In June 1849 Capt. Augustus Hill Sr. and his sons settled at a small waterfall along the Waupaca River, beginning what became known as the city of Waupaca. The settlement was named either for the Menominee term *waubuck seba*, meaning "pale water", or after Sam Wapuka, a local Potawatomi man who was also known as Chief Waupaca.



*Danes Hall*

The population was 6,069 at the 2010 census, and the racial makeup of the city was 96.6% White, 0.9% African American, 0.7% Native American, 0.3% Asian, 0.5% from other races, and 1.0% from two or more races. Hispanics of any race were 2.3% of the population. The overall population grows to over 16,000 annually with summer residents.

Major area employers include Waupaca Foundry, ThedaCare, Filter Materials, the School District of Waupaca, Waupaca County, and the Wisconsin Veterans Home, which is also an important landmark for the community.

Tourism is also a major industry for the Waupaca area. With a residential population estimated at 6,047, the summer seasonal population is estimated to be five times that at approximately 30,000. With 45% of City land open spaces, including 16 public parks, Waupaca offers a variety of activities drawing visitors from across the Midwest. Allowing for a variety of water activities, Waupaca is also the base for the well-known spring fed Chain 'O Lakes which is comprised of 22 lakes and a total of 728 acres. The Waupaca area offers five public golf courses, 14 tennis courts, two public swimming beaches, one indoor recreation complex, a country club and Hartmann Creek State Park.

## Arts and Culture and the Planning Process

Creativity has been inherent in human expression since the beginning of time. Everyone is creative in some way, whether or not they call themselves an artist. And, creativity is a critical 21<sup>st</sup> century resource for economic vitality, educational advancement, healthy, vibrant communities, and engaged residents, beyond the arts sector. A strong arts sector providing opportunities for its residents is an important community asset, and, creativity, innovation and imagination are involved in success in the business, education, political, governmental and civic worlds as well. Communities looking to a strong future are wise to strategically plan for arts and culture growth and engagement.

According to cultural planner Tom Borrup, "cultural planning focuses on broad community needs and applies cultural solutions to community problems, envisioning greater community benefit, civic engagement, and movement toward social, cultural, and economic equity." Cultural planning is a way of enabling policy-makers and the broader community to think strategically about the application of the culturally distinctive resources of localities to economic and civic

development, together with the establishment of policies that respond to local needs, aspirations and perceptions of place.

Waupaca is leading the way as a small community involved in the cultural planning arena, and the city to be commended for engaging the community this way. There are few cities of Waupaca's size in Wisconsin, at least, that have dedicated time, money and resources towards cultural planning. The planning process has already benefitted Waupaca by bringing people together to discuss the community's assets, issues, and opportunities. As the plan becomes reality, it will enhance the community as a vibrant and welcoming place to live, work and play.

**A note on terms:** This report and the community's ongoing conversation about the Cultural Plan involve these terms, and their general meaning:

- **Arts:** The arts are composed of many creative endeavors and disciplines. It is a broader term than "art," which usually refers only to the visual arts. The arts encompasses visual arts, literary arts, and the performing arts – music, theatre, dance, spoken word, and film, among others.
- **Creativity:** The act of turning new and imaginative ideas into reality. Creativity is characterized by the ability to perceive the world in new ways, to find hidden patterns, to make connections between seemingly unrelated phenomena, and to generate solutions.
- **Creative economy:** "The creative economy involves both individuals and entities who engage in activities that add value to society in one or more ways through the provision of goods and/or services that are inextricably linked to human creativity manifesting itself in one or more dimensions throughout the process of ideation, creation, production, distribution, and use." (*America's Creative Economy: A Study of Recent Conceptions, Definitions, and Approaches to Measurement Across the USA*, 2013)
- **Creative placemaking:** Creative placemaking seeks the full and robust integration of arts, culture, and community-engaged design into the decisions that define the ebb and flow of community life. (ArtPlace America)

## Strategic Cultural Plan: Goals, Strategies, Actions

Interviews, focus groups and steering committee meetings all focused on themes that were developed prior to the planning process, particularly at an Arts Summit presented by the Waupaca Community Arts Board in March 2016. The three themes from this meeting were:

1. The arts as a community resource
2. The arts as a family resource
3. The arts and quality of life

After feedback from interviews and the steering committee, a fourth theme was added to the cultural plan:

4. Connecting artists and arts organizations, to more effectively plan, program and achieve organizational goals

The progress of this plan will depend upon the involvement and hard work of stakeholders and the availability of resources. Judging from the enthusiasm shown during the planning process, we're confident that the vision and goals outlined in the plan will continue to move forward.

Feedback from interviews, focus groups and steering committee meetings resulted in the following priorities for arts organizations within each theme:

### 1) The Arts as a community resource

- Creating economic opportunity for artists, arts organizations, local businesses and the region overall

- Providing administrative support and capacity for programs and services connecting the arts and community members
- Strengthening the connection between Waupaca's history and its future
- Strengthening opportunities for all residents in the area to participate in arts programming
- Addressing local social issues.

Year 1:

1. Continue to research community issues and trends to continue to understand and serve local needs
2. Consider infrastructure needs to grow arts and culture in the community – i.e., staffing
  - Assess community needs and arts sector needs to know the need for, potential scope and priorities of the job
  - Create a plan for start up and ongoing potential resources
  - Create job description, qualifications, etc.
3. Develop attendance and data collecting tool that all event scan use to measure important event data

Years 2-3:

- Strategically increase the number of and/or collaboration by events and activities, in response to research on community needs

3 years and beyond:

- Establish a physical space to be used by the coordinating group, and by the arts community and general community as needed
- Maximize the use of facilities in the area

**2) The Arts as a family resource**

- Strategically incorporating arts programming in schools and community for access and participation
- Enhancing public arts programs, including creative design, as community resources are developed

Year 1:

- Partner with youth organizations to broaden involvement
- Assess and catalogue community options for youth, to discover and address gaps in programming and communication that makes it hard for them to get involved
- Gather baseline data about points of availability, interaction and involvement, who participates



*Waupaca Fine Arts Festival*

Years 2-3:

- Involve youth in community arts planning and programming
- Increase/expand connections via social media
- Increase connections to 18-35 age group
- Create an advisory council with the new STEAM/STEM charter school in 2019
- Learn more about the community problems (opioid addiction, bullying), and determine ways for arts sector to be involved in community solutions

**3) The Arts and quality of life**

- Strengthening and expanding quality of life for all in the community, schools, businesses and arts organizations

Year 1:

- Measure arts event attendance – who is participating?

Years 2-3:

- Expand connections in the arts to community issues and activities

3 years and beyond:

Launch participatory, accessible, and enjoyable community arts projects

- Launch a Business Improvement District (BID) or Main Street program, which would involve enhancement/promotion of arts and quality of life in mission, vision, and purpose
- Potentially establish a paid staff position that focuses on connecting and growing arts, education, and commerce
- Make recommendations for public art, to include a potential wall mural on a mutually agreed upon place downtown and beyond

**4. Connecting the arts sector and the community**

- Increasing cooperation and effective collaboration between arts organizations
- Strengthening the relationship between arts organizations and educators, policymakers, civic leaders and families
- Lobbying for and launching a public art program, examples include: 1% for art

Year 1:

- Determine a coordinating organization that represents the arts in Waupaca and is concerned with policies, programs, and opportunities for Waupaca residents. This organization can oversee these issues and programs, among others:

- Establish group procedures and policies
- Act as central location for arts sector promotion and information, including calendaring, programming, opportunities
- Act as central resource for arts involvement in community issues
- Seek partnerships with business, education, political, government and civic sectors that benefit the community through the arts
- Recommend the involvement of artists in civic process
- Establish subcommittees on policies and legislation (such as a Percent for Art/Public Art program), involving representatives from city government, Chamber and tourism industry, arts groups, education leaders, business leaders, other civic leaders



*Waupaca High School chorus*

Years 2-3:

- Lobby for and launch public art programs, including 1% for art program, Art on the Corner program and/or Art on the Bump-out
- Involve artists in civic processes, such as the “way making” project to enhance city signage.

3 years and beyond:

- Complete a wall mural on the book arts building

## Acknowledgements

**Participants:** The Waupaca Cultural Plan is an investment by people who were thoughtfully engaged, active and committed to the process. We appreciate the partners who served on our steering committee, and others who provided valuable input through interviews, focus groups and online feedback opportunities.

### **Cultural Agenda Steering Committee:**

- Barb Achten - Local Artist
- Terry Achten - Local Artist
- Jessica Beckendorf - UW Extension Office, Community Development Educator
- Tracy Behrendt - Waupaca Historical Society, city Plan Commission
- Brigid Ferkett - Waupaca Area Library, Waupaca Farmers Market
- Brennan Kane - Waupaca Economic Development Director
- Jack Kohler - Danes Hall
- Steven Laedtke - Waupaca Community Arts Board
- Barb Laedtke - Waupaca Community Arts Board
- Dennis Lear - Waupaca Historical Society
- Ann Linden - Winchester Academy
- Pat Phair - Winchester Academy, Waupaca School Board, City Plan Commission
- Mary Phair - Waupaca Common Council
- Dave Pogrnt - Local Artist
- Marci Reynolds - Waupaca Community Arts Board
- Henry Veleker - Waupaca City Administrator
- Dan Wolfgram - Waupaca Fine Arts Festival

### **Special thanks to the City of Waupaca for its support and encouragement:**

- Brian Smith, Mayor
- Henry Veleker, City Administrator
- Brennan Kane, Economic Development Director

### **Interviews and Focus Groups were conducted with:**

- Vicki Poeschl
- Ann Buerger Linden, Winchester Academy
- Brian Smith, Waupaca Mayor
- Jessica Beckendorf, UW Extension Waupaca County
- Grey Nyen, Superintendent, School District of Waupaca
- Ian Teal, Wega Arts
- Fine Arts Festival Board focus group
- Waupaca Historical Society focus group
- Waupaca Community Arts Board focus group
- Waupaca Arts Center focus group
- Waupaca Chamber of Commerce focus group
- Tammy and Rick Wolter

**Meetings were held at:**

- Danes Hall
- Holly History and Genealogy Center
- City Hall

**Timeline:**

- Community meetings in April, May, July, October, 2017
- Focus groups and individual interviews with arts, business, civic, education, government, political leaders, and members of the community, spring-summer-fall 2017
- Small group sessions and individual interviews over the summer of 2017
- Steering Committee Meeting to determine next steps in October 2017
- Steering committee Meeting in January 2018 to finalize action items determined in October 2017
- Presenting the Cultural Plan to the City Council, spring 2018
- Connecting the Cultural Plan to the Waupaca Comprehensive Plan, 2018-2019.

**Consultants:**

- Anne Katz, Arts Wisconsin
- Megan Matthews, UW-Whitewater

**Sources**

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*America's Creative Economy: A Study of Recent Conceptions, Definitions, and Approaches to Measurement Across the USA*, 2013

**Attachment:** Graphic representation of ideas from October 2017 meeting: Each cultural organization is a spoke, working on each of the goals in ways that fit their mission/programming, when it makes sense – the center circle coordinates, the others do the programming as it works for them.



