



# INDIANOLA PUBLIC ARTS COMMISSION

## **Packet**

July 23, 2026

6:00 PM

City Hall Council Chambers  
110 North 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Indianola, Iowa

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of June 25, 2026, Meeting Minutes
3. Designation of meeting agenda posting places
4. Art Festival 2026
  - a. Artist Registration updates
  - b. Food truck updates
  - c. Sponsorship
  - d. Kids Activity
5. Review Arts and Culture Masterplan
6. Other Items
  - a. Vacancy
7. Adjourn

## **IPAC Minutes - June 25, 2026**

Meeting in South Conference room, 6 pm

In person attendance – Rachel Terlop, Grant Darrah, Monica Weinman, Jesse McAninch, Jess Lundquist, Cassandra Hofer, Jacob Meshke, Erica Roberts. Absent Kelly Meyers. Al Kratz joined via Teams.

1. Call to Order
  - a. Motion called to order by Rachel at 6:00 PM
2. Approval of April 23, 2026 Meeting Minutes
  - a. Motion by Grant to approve the April 23, 2026 meeting minutes, motion seconded by Jess. Ayes all
3. Donation and Naming Rights Policy
  - a. City Manager Jacob Meshke presented the donation and naming rights policy
    - i. Motion by Rachel to approve the policies, seconded by Jesse, unanimously approved.
4. Indianola Main Street
  - a. Erica Roberts with Indianola Main Street provided a quarterly update.
5. Art Festival 2026
  - a. Currently have 27 artist applications submitted.
  - b. 10 New artists were approved by the jury and one was denied.
  - c. Currently have 8 food trucks
  - d. Sponsorship – Last year there were 4 different levels, need to update flyer for distribution this year.
6. Review Arts and Culture Masterplan
  - a. The Commission decided to review the masterplan at the next meeting.
7. Other items
  - a. Expiring Terms
    - i. Cassandra notated that two terms were expiring. One was a partial and Jess submitted an application re-apply. Monica decided to step down leaving her spot open.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM

THE NORTH RIVER REGION OF WARREN COUNTY ISN'T A RECOGNIZED REGION (YET!)



# North River

*ARTS AND CULTURE PLAN*

2022

DEVELOPED BY GROUP CREATIVE SERVICES



Golden Triangle

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The North River region of Warren County isn't a recognized region (yet!), and the collection of communities on the southern edge of metro Des Moines are not interconnected. Still, they have much in common when it comes to their people, their vision for growth, and their mindset. Residents have a regional loyalty to Des Moines perhaps equal to their own town. These communities generally lack cultural and racial diversity and are mostly comprised of moderate-income single-family home living; there is a relative affluence marked by communities full of automobiles. Each town—Carlisle, Indianola, and Norwalk—enjoys a diverse local service economy, yet there are few large employers. These communities are growing, in part due to their relationships to the metro region. Strong schools and affordable living are the foundation for resident satisfaction. The advantages encourage careful planfulness – working to preserve a way of life

while yearning for growth that brings distinction. The collective aspirations center on social cohesion, especially community events that bring people together. As there is no regional identity beyond county lines or rural-urban divides, the opportunity to create a shared, regional culture is wide open. And there is a case for regional work. Rivers and a growing network of trails connect these towns. Natural resources – public and working lands – attract metro visitors and can be programmed to host more activity. Agritourism seems poised to grow, as there are many independent producers capable of welcoming guests. The rolling countryside seemingly has as much forest as field crops, which is an attractive environment for nearby city dwellers. Moreover, there are charming events and traditions that can evolve to match local and regional ambitions. Each community has cultural assets that can complement the others.

## Building Community Through the Arts

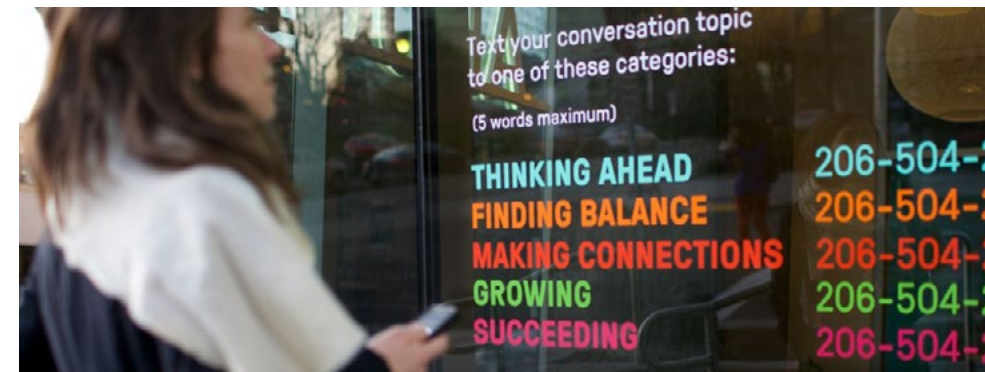
There are many roles for artists in the North River region – expressing common emotions, revealing hidden truths and sharing novel viewpoints. It is work that interprets the region, aiming for community attachment and growth. Residents are asking for social engagement and artists are well-suited to provide it. What follows are ways the arts provide a pathway for communities to articulate needs and organize for change. In these small towns, neighborhood arts projects help to build trust and increase the likelihood that residents will participate in the community in other ways. It is proven that people feel safer in communities with art and communities thrive when they put their best foot forward. Providing resources for the arts to work organically supports the creation of a unique sense of place. The culture of a community entices visitors to come for pleasure and spread the word to others.



*Gong Bath*



*Polyglot Theatre*



*Public Input Intervention*

## Community Input

The planning process employed a wide range of methodologies to ensure diverse perspectives were included in the vision for the North River Arts and Culture Master Plan. Consultants from Group Creative Services conducted dozens of interviews, several focus groups, and an on-line community survey. Additionally, the consultants looked at existing plans, surveys and other community initiatives to understand the current landscape of the region, its key concerns and swell of opportunities. This plan is poised to be integrated into future capital projects and inform future private development projects.

## Regional Opportunities

This plan will help to convene the influential plans and organizations already guiding the North River region and its individual communities toward a future of civic and cultural growth and social engagement.

### ***Creative engagement to support main streets***

- + Create Regional Identity
- + Placemaking in Parks & Trails
- + North & Middle Rivers Greenway
- + Inn-to-Inn Walking Trail
- + Create more opportunities for local artists
- + Formalize role for North River Arts Council



Andrea von Bujdoss

### Community Specific Recommendations

In addition to strategies for regional arts and culture, each community in the North River region will benefit from highlighting local treasures and taking advantage of unique ways to highlight arts and culture.

#### CARLISLE

- + Make Peace with Hwy 5
- + Animate History
- + Birds and the Bees
- + Funding Arts and Culture
- + City of Carlisle establish the North River Arts Council as its local arts advisory commission

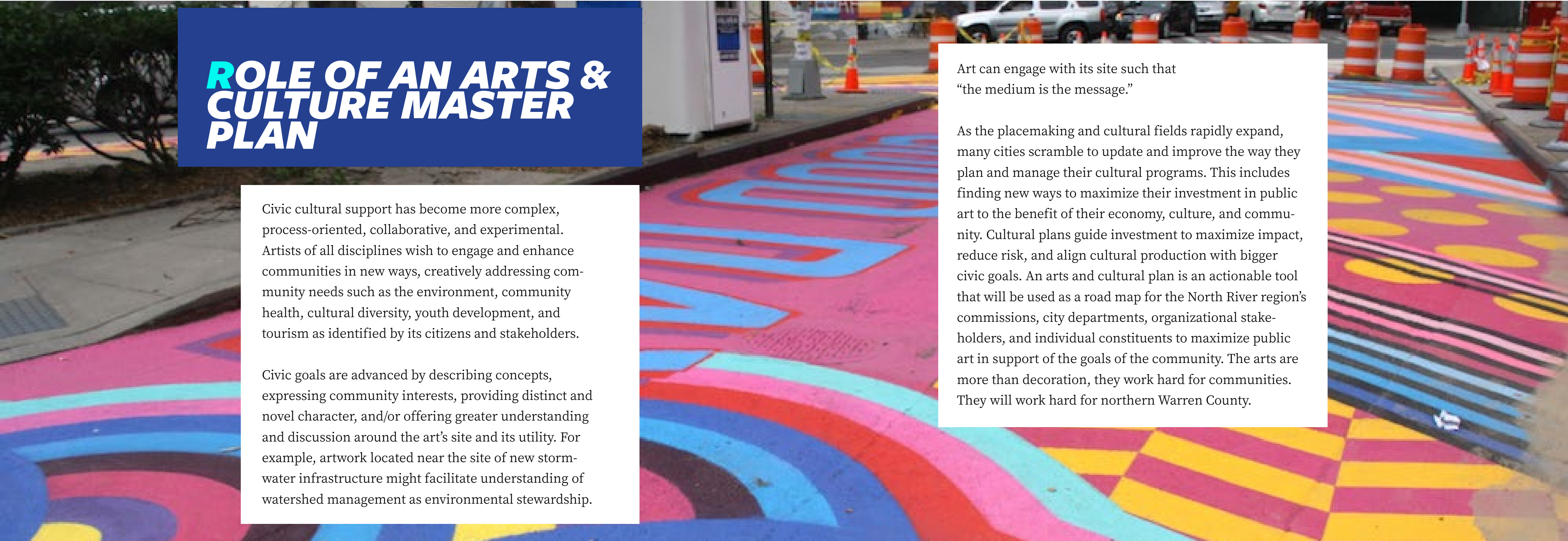


#### INDIANOLA

- + Wonder on Buxton
- + Reboot the Town Square
- + Refine Identity
- + Arts for Everyone
- + Capitalize on Upcoming Investments to Distinguish Indianola
- + Funding Arts and Culture
- + Strengthen the Role of the Indianola Public Arts Commission

#### NORWALK

- + Infuse the Arts into Existing Community Events
- + Art as a Cultural Ambassador with Sister City Vushtrri, Kosovo
- + Targeted Development: Old Downtown, North Avenue Corridor & Trails
- + Capitalize on Upcoming Investments to Distinguish Norwalk
- + Funding Arts and Culture
- + Role of the Norwalk Arts Commission



## ROLE OF AN ARTS & CULTURE MASTER PLAN

Civic cultural support has become more complex, process-oriented, collaborative, and experimental. Artists of all disciplines wish to engage and enhance communities in new ways, creatively addressing community needs such as the environment, community health, cultural diversity, youth development, and tourism as identified by its citizens and stakeholders.

Civic goals are advanced by describing concepts, expressing community interests, providing distinct and novel character, and/or offering greater understanding and discussion around the art's site and its utility. For example, artwork located near the site of new storm-water infrastructure might facilitate understanding of watershed management as environmental stewardship.

Art can engage with its site such that “the medium is the message.”

As the placemaking and cultural fields rapidly expand, many cities scramble to update and improve the way they plan and manage their cultural programs. This includes finding new ways to maximize their investment in public art to the benefit of their economy, culture, and community. Cultural plans guide investment to maximize impact, reduce risk, and align cultural production with bigger civic goals. An arts and cultural plan is an actionable tool that will be used as a road map for the North River region's commissions, city departments, organizational stakeholders, and individual constituents to maximize public art in support of the goals of the community. The arts are more than decoration, they work hard for communities. They will work hard for northern Warren County.

***Cities that integrate art, design, and culture while simultaneously investing in infrastructure and amenities gain the distinction and competitive advantage required for recruitment and retention in workforce and business development.***

Cities that integrate art, design, and culture while simultaneously investing in infrastructure and amenities gain the distinction and competitive advantage required for recruitment and retention in workforce and business development. Providing resources for the arts to work organically supports the creation of a unique sense of place. The culture of a community entices visitors to come for pleasure and spread the word to others.

This plan will align with and contribute to the influential plans and organizations already guiding the North River region toward a future of civic and cultural growth.

# THE PROCESS

The planning process employed a wide range of methodologies to ensure diverse perspectives were included in the vision for the North River Arts and Culture Master Plan. Consultants from Group Creative Services conducted dozens of interviews, several focus groups, and an on-line community survey.

Additionally, the consultants looked at existing plans, surveys and other community initiatives to understand the current landscape of the region, its key concerns and swell of opportunities. This plan is poised to be integrated into future capital projects and inform future private development projects.



## DEFINING ARTS & CULTURE

Culture is defined as the customs, social institutions, arts, achievements, customs, and traditions of a particular group. Within this concept of culture, the arts encompass a wide range of mediums, disciplines, and approaches. It includes visual arts such as painting, drawing, photography, and sculpture. It includes experiential and performance arts such as theater, music, sound art, installation, film, and video. It includes literary arts, poetry, creative writing, publishing, radio, internet streaming, and television.

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***Public art can be realized through a variety of installations like murals and sculptures but can also include work on different time scales from temporary to semi-permanent to permanent such as workshops or pop-up activations.***

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‘The Cultural Industry’ is a broad term that includes the breadth of ways arts, cultural production, and commerce can interact through mediums like graphic design, advertising, architecture, art festivals, antique markets, fashion design, publishing, and crafts traditions.

Cultural Assets include spaces such as libraries, parks, theaters, galleries, heritage sites, community centers, and educational facilities.



Refik Anadol



# ***NORTH RIVER ARTS AND CULTURE PLAN***

## North River Introduction

The North River region of Warren County isn't a recognized region (yet!), and the collection of communities on the southern edge of metro Des Moines are not interconnected. Still, they have much in common when it comes to their people, their vision for growth, and their mindset.

Residents have a regional loyalty to Des Moines perhaps equal to their own town. These communities generally lack cultural and racial diversity and are mostly comprised of moderate-income single-family home living; there is a relative affluence marked by communities full of automobiles.



There are many commuters from North River to the Des Moines metro. Each town enjoys a diverse local service economy, yet there are few large employers. It is also an area on the rural edge, with agricultural production visible in all directions.

***North River communities have much in common when it comes to their people, their vision for growth, and their mindset.***

Unlike much of rural Iowa, these communities are growing, in part due to their relationships to the metro region.

Strong schools and affordable living are the foundation for resident satisfaction. The advantages encourage careful planfulness – working to preserve a way of life while yearning for growth that brings distinction. The collective aspirations center on social cohesion, especially community events that bring people together.

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## ***The opportunity to create a shared, regional culture is wide open.***

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As there is no regional identity beyond county lines or rural-urban divides, the opportunity to create a shared, regional culture is wide open. And there is a case for regional work. Rivers and a growing network of trails connect these towns. Natural resources – public



Market Street Prototype Festival

and working lands – attract metro visitors and can be programmed to host more activity. Agritourism seems poised to grow, as there are many independent producers capable of welcoming guests. The rolling countryside seemingly has as much forest as field crops, which is an attractive environment for nearby city dwellers. Moreover, there are charming events and traditions that can evolve to match local and regional ambitions. Each community has cultural assets that can complement the others.

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## ***North River's collective aspirations center on social cohesion, especially community events and other ways of building community.***

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In this context, there are so many roles for artists – expressing common emotions, revealing hidden truths and sharing novel viewpoints. It is work that interprets the region, aiming for community attachment and growth. Residents are asking for social engagement and artists are well-suited to provide it.

**Artists' roles are broader than many imagine. A lap around Americans for the Arts (AFTA) [Social Impact Explorer](#) shows how the arts support public welfare, workforce attraction, economic and community development, and much more.**

What follows are ways the arts provide a pathway for communities to articulate needs and organize for change. In these small towns, neighborhood arts projects help to build trust and increase the likelihood that residents will participate in the community in other ways. It is proven that [people feel safer in communities](#) with art and communities [thrive when they put their best foot forward](#).



Iowa City Alley

## REGIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

*The following are opportunities that may take coordination across the region or are opportunities for the arts to support the region no matter the community.*

## Goal: Creative engagement to support main streets

While online shopping and other forces have eroded many central business districts, Main Street still conjures a specific image: essential goods and services with personal service from local ownership and a sense of community amid significant architecture.

In this context, artists can help make Main Streets stronger, inspiring community pride and mutual trust. For example, small businesses often commission **murals on their buildings**, creating public interest and appeal. Murals are just one of many authentic ways to generate positive attention and build shared identity directly.

Artists can make everyday activities more meaningful, adding dimensions to ‘shopping local’ by advancing goals beyond commerce. Yes, art drives foot traffic, and it can do more.

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***Murals are just one of many authentic ways to generate positive attention and build shared identity directly.***

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Market Street Prototype Festival

Main Street activations should be community-driven. That is, their forms should emerge from collaboration between artists and communities. While new public artwork is an expected outcome, community engagement, supporting local businesses, and building collaborative capacity are important opportunities here as well.

The multi-purpose nature of artist collaborations means there are nearly endless forms to explore; activations can be storefronts, parklets, murals, storytelling and many other forms. For example, artists can **teach the alphabet** to children while highlighting 26 local businesses. An **artist in residence** can bind neighbors to local businesses. Artists can temporarily enliven storefronts, **even empty ones**. Local artists can do **live art demonstrations** during a business opening or open house.

## OPPORTUNITY: Annual stipend for temporary art activations on main streets

Each North River town could engage at least three artists for Main Street activations, providing at least \$750 for each project. The work can be coordinated across the region, especially if the priority is regional attraction. Engaging multiple artists allows more activity, a broader array of expression, and more opportunity to attract attention. Ideally, the planning work is led by a point of contact focused on stakeholder collaboration, goal-setting and outcomes. Outcomes are stronger with a plan for promotion and evaluation.



Market Street Prototype Festival



Tanya Preminger



Ezra Masch

## Goal: Create Regional Identity

Grant Wood's paintings mainly depicted eastern Iowa, but his American Regionalism subjects could have been Warren County's rolling green hills and hot air balloons. Indeed, the geological context of Des Moines metro living changes dramatically south of Highway 5.

Nostalgia is only part of the region's appeal; there are tangible benefits to time spent in ample green space amid welcoming people. Traditions and heritage link us all, and artists can strengthen the bridge to our past while binding our communities for the future.

Moreover, it is rare that a single action creates an identity. Instead, behavior over time communicates values and builds a reputation. The stories of life in the North River region will travel to Des Moines and beyond.

Said another way: don't hire designers for marketing campaigns; hire artists to help cultivate remarkable community experiences. It is collaborative, community-building work that makes places like [Northwest Arkansas](#) and The Driftless region (especially [Lanesboro](#) on the Root River) so authentically attractive.

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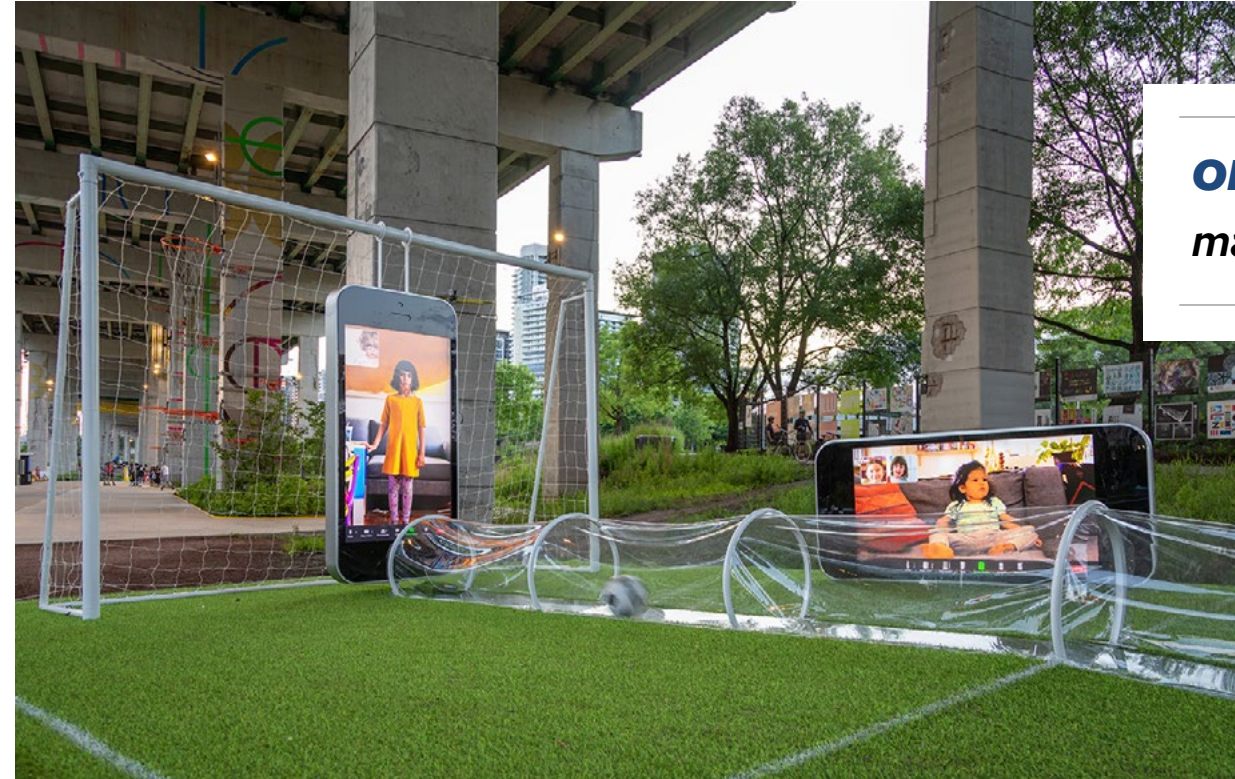
***It is collaborative, community-building work that makes places authentically attractive.***

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It could be that the North River region is a regional identity that grows over time. What's most important is that the work to create identity comes from lived experience shared in an authentic way.



Stuido F-minus

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***OPPORTUNITY: Regional marketing via art activations***

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Warren County Economic Development could work with local chambers, local Hometown Pride, and art commissions to annually fund temporary and/or permanent art activations to amplify the collective, unique assets of the region such as the rolling hills and North and Middle rivers.



Daily Tous Le Jour

### **OPPORTUNITY: Celebrate ballooning year-round**

There is a high concentration of balloon pilots living in the northern Warren County region. The National Balloon Classic could support the region with programs and events throughout the year including night glows in the fall and winter and regular, highly visible locations and times to get a ride from a commercial pilot.



### **OPPORTUNITY: Small steps toward authentic infrastructure projects**



Herman Kuijer



Andrea von Bujdoss

At any time, each community has large capital projects in the works such as new roads, library or park. Each community can capitalize on upcoming capital investments by securing concepts for art integration, ensuring the investments are built in a way that continues to distinguish the region, and promote beauty and community pride. Concept development ranges in cost from \$5,000 - \$10,000 depending on the scale of the project. Once concepts are in hand with quality visuals, a defined budget, and timeline, funding can be more easily secured through donations, grants, or other means. Each community could automatically allocate funding each year to support concept development while the capital projects are in the early design phase.

## Goal: Placemaking in Parks & Trails

Art is a known asset for public places. For example, it encourages adjacent development and reduces litter and vandalism. Thus, there is a history of commissioning artists to improve experiences – comforting, inspiring, and educating about public resources.

Throughout the region are dozens of parks, disc golf courses, and trail systems with potential areas for permanent or temporary (see [this regional disc golf course's](#) installation) public art installations. While there are [some murals and sculptures](#) throughout Warren County, there is space for more and broader expression.

Americans for the Arts, a nonprofit organization which focuses on advancing art in the US describes our vision well. “Public art activates the imagination and encourages people to pay attention and perceive more deeply the



Terolenn Mykitiuk



Beddagana Wetland Park

environment they occupy. Public art stimulates learning and thought about art and society, about our interconnected lives, and about the social sphere as a whole.”

Public art also creates a more meaningful sense of place; an area for people to pause and reflect or to gather. It can beautify an area that needs a lift (think of a mural on a brick wall in an alley, like in [Winterset](#)); it can tell part of a community’s story (like many of the [pieces and sculptures](#) throughout Iowa’s Scenic Byway); or it can make a space feel more safe and accessible. There are opportunities for interaction with public art, sound, and movement.

The pandemic brought people outside, and the region is uniquely positioned in the metro to sustain appreciation for natural resources and working lands with public art.

## **OPPORTUNITY:** *Pickard Park Disc Golf Course becomes Instagrammable*

As the area hosts many golfers and enjoys the spotlight of annual tournaments that bring in professional disc golfers, the region will benefit from creating iconic visuals to be shared on social media and beyond.

## **OPPORTUNITY:** *Temporary art activation to bring new people to existing park assets*

Temporary art activations such as Des Moines’ Water Works Park’s **Glass Egg Hunt** or downtown Des Moines’ **Hide and Seek** ornaments can be simple yet draw hundreds. Or create new experiences in the outdoors such as the immersive and ethereal **North Forest Lights** and **Lumina Night Walks** via Moment Factory.



Rafael Lozano-Hemmer



## **OPPORTUNITY:** *Distinct development of parks*

Many developers in communities such as Norwalk are increasingly asked to set aside parkland as part of their new development. Developers could also be asked to support those parks to be distinct and offer unique spaces especially with items already requested for a park including iconic **pavilions**, **wayfinding**, **picnic seating**, or **splash pads**. This forest **installation** is a nighttime listening experience. Cities could consider adopting **one-percent for the arts** policy for development projects to ensure sustainable funding for distinct development of the parks.

## OPPORTUNITY: Trails more than their destination

Ankeny's [High Trestle Trail Experience](#) public art plan is a great local example of making the trail ride more than finding the brewery at the end of the route. Bentonville, Arkansas with their [OZ Art NWA](#) leads in quality art experiences along the trail. [Small](#) and [large](#) surprises through lighting, sound, interpretation, or digital engagements on our devices could happen along the way to offer a scavenger hunt or the social media moment or even just the small enticements to keep kids riding a bit further down the trail. The [Rails-to-Trails site](#) has a useful page on integrating public art into activity paths for a variety of goals.



Salmon Bond Bridge



NYC Hlghline



Tongnan Dafosi Wetland Park

## Goal: North & Middle Rivers Greenway

Warren County Conservation Board has initiated efforts to establish a [greenway along the North River](#), which could be expanded to include the area around the Middle River. With ICON Water Trails taking off as a recreation initiative for central Iowa, Warren County has the opportunity to lean into their more shallow waterways as a recreational opportunity and embrace the river even when it can't be navigated via paddle.

## OPPORTUNITY: Bring the river to the town

The river and all of the critters it supports can be echoed through art within each community as well as regional parks such as this [mosaic river](#) embedded into a city sidewalk.

## OPPORTUNITY: Host an annual land and river art festival

Art can bring everyone closer to nature. Land art is made directly in the landscape by sculpting the land itself or by making structures in the landscape with natural materials. The region can take inspiration from the [Midwest Land Art Biennial](#) and capitalize on its unique landscapes from hidden prairies to diverse marshes by annually hosting a land and river art festival. Much like how the Des Moines’ Water Works Park’s [Glass Egg Hunt](#) brought thousands to explore off the beaten path, a festival can inspire ephemeral or permanent works of art where kids can be invited to [play with nature](#) as well as signature artists to stun visitors in feats of beauty such as these [waves of deadwood across a forest floor](#).



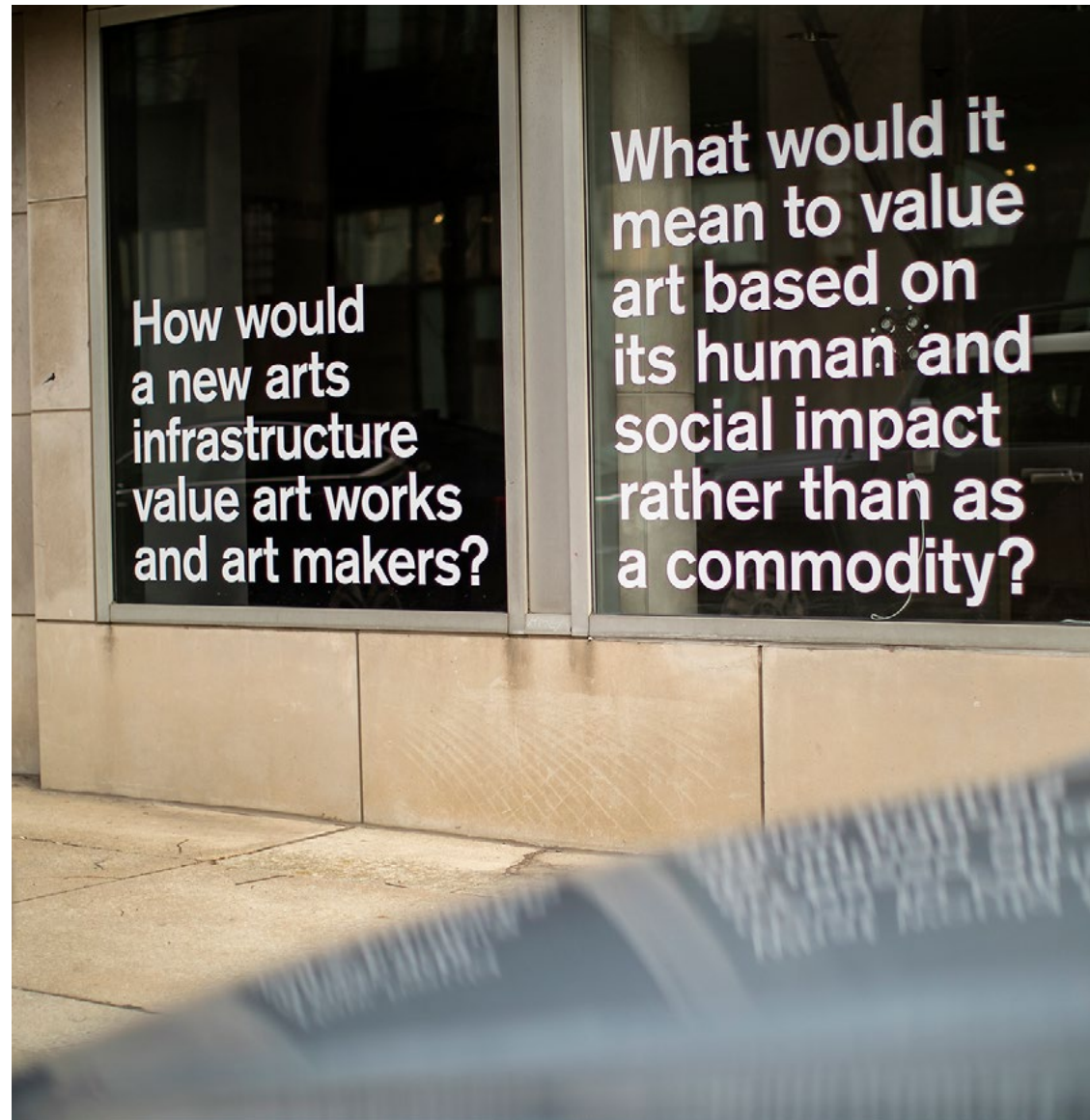
Jeppe Hein

## Goal: Inn-to-Inn Walking Trail

Multi-day, long-distance walking is common in Europe and is a [growing trend in the US](#) and [throughout smaller towns](#). Most of our paved trails are designed for bikers yet could be cultivated for walkers as well as adding lesser traveled country roads that pass by unique cultural offerings such as wineries, artist studios, horse stables, dairies, greenways, breweries, kooky art, or historic sites. A long-distance walking trail connecting the three communities and smaller towns along the way would draw a [new genre of tourists](#) for weekend trips to taste Midwest “more than corn and soybeans” agriculture through inn-to-inn excursions across beautiful rolling hills. Visitors would love to reconnect to agriculture by [shearing sheep, riding a horse, and being part of wine making](#). Luggage transport between inns and pre-made lunch makes it an easy trip for those wanting to slow down and really appreciate the sights, sounds, and textures of a place easily missed at a faster pace.

## **OPPORTUNITY: Plot the Path**

Best coordinated on a county level, Warren County Economic Development Corporation might be best to lead the effort. Initial planning would require plotting of assets and linking opportunities along quiet country roads and/or trails. An average day walk can range from 8 miles to 15 miles. The physical infrastructure required is minimal yet marketing infrastructure is key. Many state tourism, community betterment, and small business grants would be perfect as our state seeks new ways to build tourism.



## **Goal: Create more opportunities for local artists**

Local partners will look to develop a sustainable system of connecting local hospitality and commercial businesses that want rotating artwork with artists that have artwork to display and sell. The North River region has many working artists ready to display and/or sell their artwork. Art rotation in local businesses is a great way for local businesses to have a fresh, creative backdrop while showcasing local talent and contributing to the local creative economy. Over time, the host agency could pay a small stipend to support the administration of the program while benefiting from a more interesting, beautiful space where some individuals would come just to view the art. The program could focus on 3-4 months in a “down” time of the year such as January through April while hosting opening events on a monthly basis when the art rotates. All efforts will be made to showcase artwork from artists that reflect the cultural diversity of towns in the North River region.

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## OPPORTUNITY

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The Chamber of Commerce from each community will develop a list of businesses interested in displaying original artwork from local artists on a short-term rotating basis. The North River Arts Council will coordinate a list of artists seeking space to display their work. Together the organizations will work to match up artists with businesses and coordinate a regional “art night” open house at those businesses such as a First Friday event.

{ *Fairfield First Friday* }



## Goal: Formalize role for North River Arts Council

Each community in North River is advancing their own arts and culture initiatives yet there is a benefit in supporting each other as a region. The North River Arts Council could work with Warren County Economic Development to mutually advance community character goals as a region. The North River Arts Council could serve as a convener for the area arts committees as well as the Hometown Pride groups which often have arts and culture related activities.



The current and expanded role of the North River Arts Council includes:

- + Support the needs of artists in the region
- + Advise on a community's public art to share best practices
- + Advance regional community character goals
- + Ensure implementation of the North River Arts and Culture Plan
- + Advocacy for arts-friendly policies and funding
- + Model for cultural bridge building
- + Creative force to expand the role of the arts in the community
- + Communication and outreach about arts-related events and programming
- + Secures funding for the arts and artists
- + Provides services to artists and arts organizations including professional development, visibility, advocacy, networking, and educational opportunities
- + Forges partnerships with a wide net of stakeholders including elected officials, schools, developers, chamber of commerce

## OPPORTUNITY

Meet at least three times per year, one time in each city, with representatives from each community's art commissions/committees as well as other key stakeholders (Chamber, Hometown Pride, parks and recreation, city planners, Warren County Economic Development, etc.). The meetings are a time for sharing as well as strategizing how to support each other's efforts.

## Regional Assets

Rolling hills: at the edge of the **Des Moines Lobe glacier**

Natural resources, parks including two state parks, trails, river greenways

Diverse agriculture including winery, horse stables, apiary and berry patches

Edge of the metro, access to metro resources while maintaining small town life

Hot air balloons and an abundance of local pilots



# CITY STRATEGIES: CARLISLE

## Carlisle Introduction

Carlisle is metro-adjacent and maintains a strong sense of a small-town feel. It has geographic constraints, and the majority of its acres are in a floodplain. A primary challenge for this 4,000 person town is developing a stronger community while embracing its natural resources. While daytime activity spikes with school traffic, Carlisle seeks (and will soon have) the coffee shops and public squares enjoyed in other towns of its size. The community yearns for social gathering places beyond private homes, parks, or churches. These social ties are vital when making decisions about infrastructure as a metro gateway community bisected by a state highway.



## Goal: Make Peace with Hwy 5

There are a few ways to address the bisecting state highway. Slowing traffic and adding beauty should be a priority. Highway 5 is a gateway into Carlisle and a chance to invite commuters to wander off and explore, Just as Barry Highland's [spooky yard](#) draws seasonal visitors from all over, so too can art offer a reason to invite the curious to explore hidden and creative treasures beyond the highway.



[Chainlink Fences Ideas: 25+ Unique DIY Ideas](#)

## OPPORTUNITY: Greetings from Hwy 5

As a metro gateway community, Carlisle can offer a greeting scaled to the volume and speed of the corridor. Iconic [roadside art](#) abounds and could be inspired by Fiss' or other local "only in Carlisle" assets. Ample property exists for massive plantings with seasonal interest to soften the corridor and slow traffic. Art can be integrated into the myriad of chain link fences along the highway. The [Iowa Living Roadway Trust](#) Fund is a good source of grant funding along state highways.



[The Best Trees to Plant for Fall Color in Iowa](#)

## OPPORTUNITY: Art as Trailhead

Trailheads can be tied more conspicuously and safely into the community, as seen in roadside signs and other markers. Wayfinding should be large enough to be appreciated by highway traffic as well as clever enough to lure trail users downtown. **Horizontal** and **vertical** options could be explored.



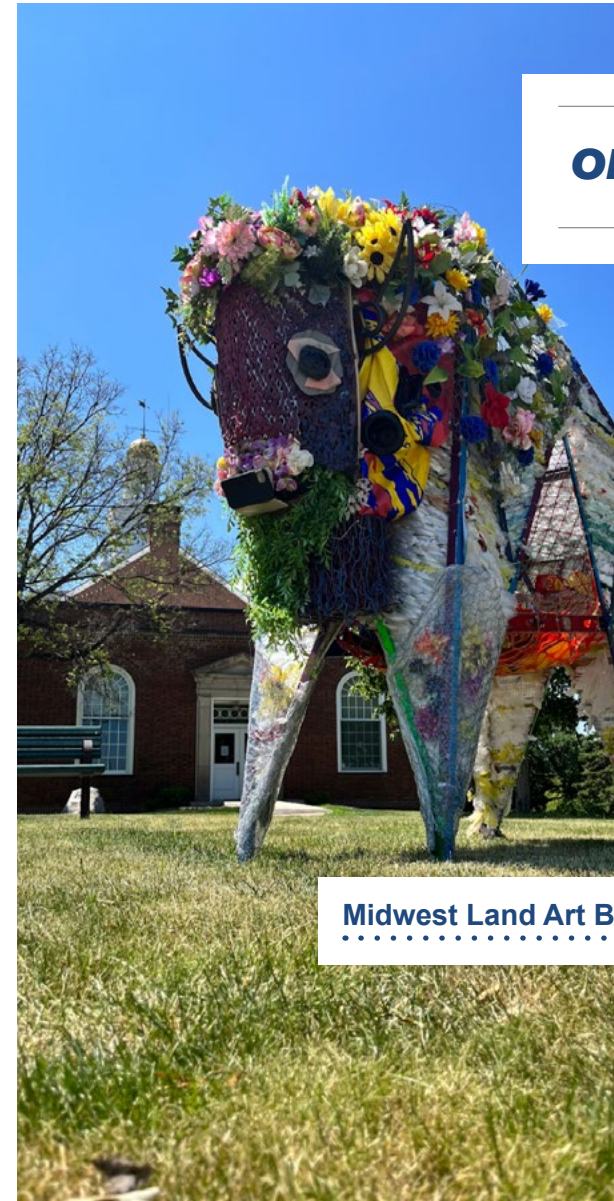
Craig and Karl



RSM Design

## OPPORTUNITY: Lure to Downtown

There are reasons to slow down, if not stop, in Carlisle that have nothing to do with engineering. The rural edge has its charms, and artists can help metro residents, commuters, and other travelers find irresistible reasons to stop downtown, just a hop-skip-and-a-jump from Highway 5. It may start with community dialogue, building off of Carlisle's unique assets and lore, that invites imagination of what can be to activate a downtown as a hub of unique experiences, beauty and family-friendly engagements. Such dialogue can foster unexpected collaboration among stakeholders.



Midwest Land Art Biennial JUNE - AUGUST 2022

## Goal: Animate History

Carlisle has a strong interest in its history and current citizens continue to enjoy sharing community lore. **Storytelling is a critical** part of culture in a community, as it brings people together to entertain, to learn from each other, and to reveal a bigger world. Sharing in communities where people share a common space provides the community a shared sense of identity and character that is represented in landmarks, artworks, and cultural celebrations. From **flour mills** to **railroads** to star midwife Mary Owens Sanders, Carlisle has an abundance of stories to share.



Wonders of Weston

### OPPORTUNITY: Lustron legacy

The community should work to finish the Lustron project. The Museum of Modern Art has highlighted the **Instant Houses, Then and Now** and Carlisle should seek ways to lean into the Lustron Legacy. The Lustron house could be a location for an **artist in residency** as a way to influence Carlisle both culturally and economically.

### OPPORTUNITY: Cemetery updates

The City of Carlisle expects to provide upgrades to the cemetery in the coming years. This is an excellent opportunity to use the space as a way to honor new stories and expand programming. Cemeteries are **places for the living** as well.

## OPPORTUNITY: Expand the story

There are parts of our history that have yet to be told. Carlisle could expand their story to reflect the geological and native origins of the land. The community could work with Carlisle Area Historical Society, the Great Plains Action Society, and regional resources to help fund, maintain, collect and share historical stories. Carlisle could host artists who excel in research and storytelling to work in the community such as [Grin City Grinnell, IA](#) has done.



Wonders of Weston



Daniel Ramirez-Perez

## DISTINCT COMMUNITY ASSETS OF CARLISLE

### CULTURAL FUEL:

Carlisle Historical Society  
North River Arts Council  
Home Town Pride  
Carlisle Chamber of Commerce

### FESTIVALS/ANNUAL TRADITIONS, PAST AND CURRENT:

Newly appointed Bee City  
Holiday Extravaganza  
4th of July  
Light Up Carlisle  
Pumpkinfest  
Lawn mower races  
Pickers + car show

**OPPORTUNITY: Diversify programming at The Randleman House**

The **Randleman House** is a point of deep pride for the community. This small and mighty town has raised a lot of funds to support its preservation. It is clear that there is a desire amongst the community for more places to showcase local music. The Randleman House could offer a summer front porch music or performance series as it recently held the talent show for the **3 Rivers Community Theater**. It could be programmed to be a weekly event for a month or more with food trucks and local arts and crafts for sale. Income could be generated by turning the upstairs into an **AirBnB as historic sites** are growing popular with travelers who want to stay somewhere with a story.



**Benzinger** wanted to make participation in the show's cast and crew accessible for anyone who wanted to join



Christine Sun Kim



RAW Design

**CITY ELEMENTS:**

- Fiss' Ice Cream and Sandwiches is local iconic place
- Hwy 5, highly visual
- Bike trails, East to west bike path - CRP (ask Rhonda with Parks & Rec)
- Wayfinding signage
- Quality schools
- Scotch Ridge Road, connects to Indianola, central to future development
- Summerset Trail
- Dog parks

**HISTORICAL LEGACY:**

- Mid-century modern Lustron House
- Goodhue family
- Train History

## **OPPORTUNITY: Buried cement truck and contemporary community lore**

History is constantly in the making. As the town continues to grow, it will be important to recognize how culture and heritage is evolving in tandem. There are small ways unique lore can be shared with the community. Playing off the story (real or not) of a cement truck that was buried in town, Carlisle could host an annual big dig event with fake cement trucks buried in a giant heap of sand like this [Folkestone Dig](#). [Rural myths and legends](#) offer a glimpse into the weird and often underappreciated community life.



Folkestone Digs



## **GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES:**

Close to Des Moines  
Prairie land on Fleming property  
south of town, access needed  
Wetlands east of the bike path

Sidney owned a furniture store in Carlisle and he wanted to prove that the Red Cross Kapoc mattress was the best mattress made. The mattress/raft traveled from Keokuk to St. Louis, over 202 miles. [\(source\)](#) [Sonny Helms](#)



Polyglot Theater

## Goal: Birds and the Bees

Playing off Carlisle's motto, "The Natural Choice," as a place to be and live creates an opportunity for the community to focus on the development and build out of land art and art that celebrates pollinators and birds. Carlisle is at the beginning of leading a long history in Iowa's restoration of prairie and healing the environment for pollinators to thrive. The community should establish a long term, legacy vision of what it means to be a Bee City and how the community can build pride and participation in creating a new tradition. Carlisle has the opportunity to develop bold visibility for the town's Bee City status and start traditions of education, up close experiences, shopping/dining opportunities, and connection to nature.

## **OPPORTUNITY: Annual Birds and the Bees Festival**

People would swarm to an annual **bee festival** with live music, pollinator-inspired arts and crafts, honey-infused drinks, and a bike ride with prizes for the best costume and decorated **pollinator bike**. Local dance and community theater could be inspired by Polyglot's **bees** and **ants' joyful** and interactive performances that invite children into entirely new worlds of wonder and imagination. The Blank Park Zoo could offer kids activities and Warren County Conservation could provide how-to's in planting a pollinator garden. The town's marching band could be part of the parade.

### **Polyglot Theater**



*Dale Lewis, No Iron Dragonfly*



*Beddagna Wetland Park*

## **OPPORTUNITY: Activate Prairies and Marshes with Art**

Carlisle has ample opportunities to work in artworks that use and showcase the natural environment, including a growing birding community, plenty of grass and farmland to build out, natural gems like the Scotch Ridge Nature Park, North Park, and the north trailhead of the Summerset National Scenic Recreational. Scotch Ridge is already a place people go to celebrate and learn about natural, local ecosystems. Carlisle's natural spaces could showcase these natural environments, like world-renowned sculptor **Andy Goldsworthy** or Grinnell based artist **Lee Emma Running**. Access to existing natural areas such as the Fleming property is a basic requirement to help citizens better appreciate this resource.

### **Dale Lewis, No Iron Dragonfly**

**OPPORTUNITY: New library buzzing with art**

A library can be a magical place for a child. Creating an inviting, colorful and kid-friendly space is crucial to making their experience truly wonderful. Carlisle’s library hosts many non-residents during after school hours and can therefore be a place to showcase the community’s unique character by focusing on bees and birds. This city library installed an **indoor/outdoor observation bee hive.**



Daniel Ramirez-Perez

Carina Library Children’s Area



**SUSTAINABLE  
SYSTEMS TO  
SUPPORT ART  
AND CULTURE IN  
CARLISLE**



Murals in the Market - Detroit, MI

## Goal: Funding Arts and Culture

Sustainable and diverse sources of funding, K-12 arts education, new programming for existing or adaptive venues, and a healthy entrance of new roles and perspectives in the shared work support future growth. Access to funding sources beyond the city, including governments, private foundations, and corporations, are also vital. It is widely understood that private and corporate support for arts and culture has room for growth.

*Sustainable and diverse sources of funding support future growth.*



Esther Stocker

## OPPORTUNITIES for Funding

### City of Carlisle Funding

The City of Carlisle could devote funds to arts and culture on an annual basis. The City will consider sustainable approaches to funding the arts including annual set-asides or Percent for the Arts. [Percent for the Arts](#) is a type of initiative, often passed through a city ordinance, where a certain percentage of the budget for large public or private developments are allocated to fund public art selection, creation, and maintenance in the community. There are many variations of the model and [sample ordinances](#), but it is an important tool used to ensure that a community develops with distinction and enhanced livability. Residents appreciate community-building activities and there needs to be systems in place to provide funding for such projects. The City of Carlisle could review other successful small Midwest communities including [River Falls](#), WI and [Hailey](#), ID as well as many other examples of communities that have enacted some version of this policy.

### **Grants**

There are many grants the City of Carlisle is well-positioned to access. Bravo Greater Des Moines is the only local arts-funding organization, but many projects could be supported by other granting agencies including Prairie Meadows, [Warren County Philanthropic Partnership](#) and the [Greater Carlisle Community Foundation](#). The [Iowa Arts Council](#) has several annual grants available.

### **Public/Private Partnerships**

The City of Grimes is already quite adept at partnering with developers for implementing quality of life amenities including a parks and a sports complex. Negotiating for public art integration into large capital investments is a natural extension of amenities a developer could be asked to support. Additionally, many businesses and individuals are likely willing to donate to an installation or program that has a strong concept at the ready.

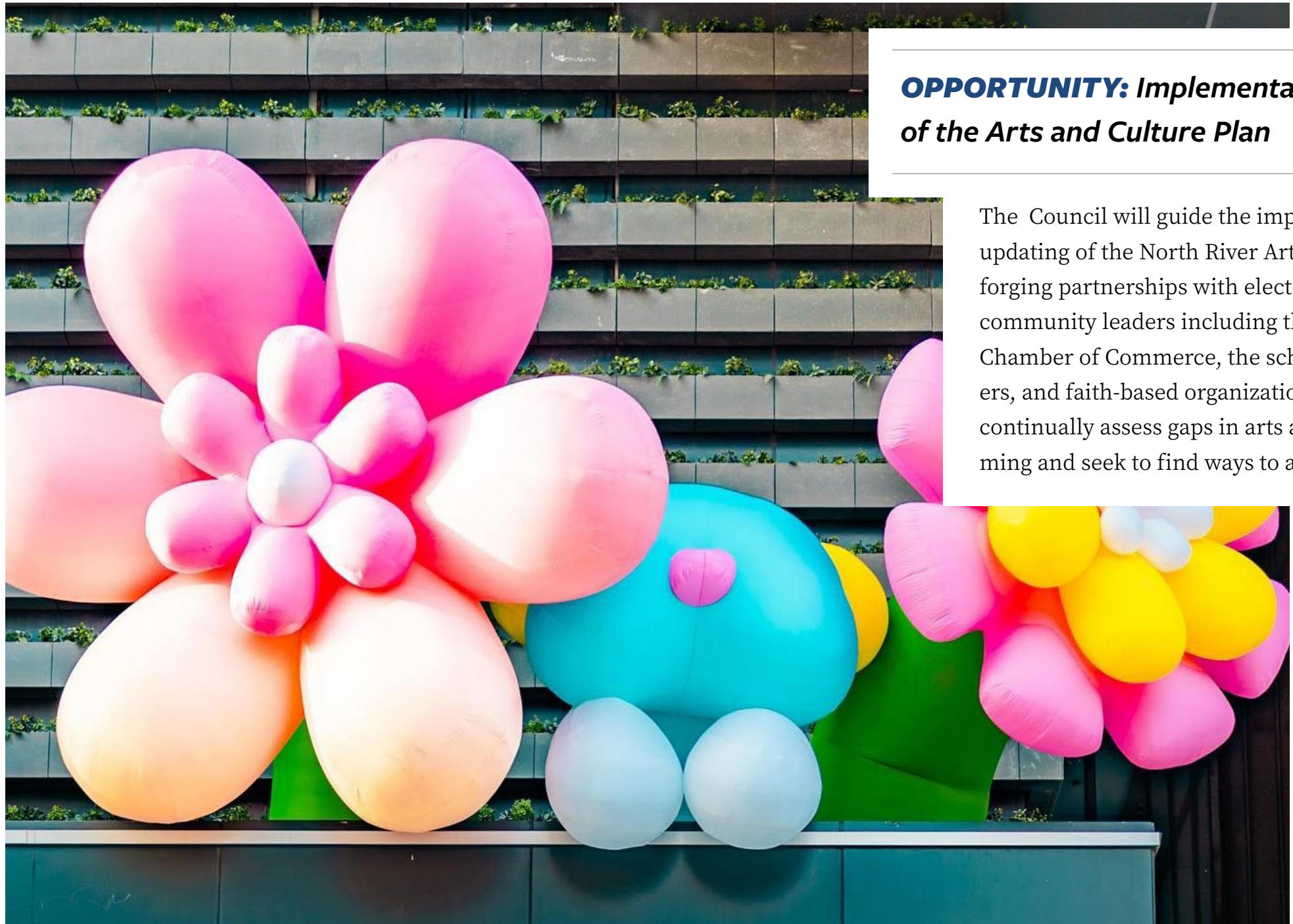
## **Goal: City of Carlisle establish the North River Arts Council as its local arts advisory commission**



The Council will support the City in enhancing the quality of life for the community. Arts and cultural activities are recognized as vital components of community life, understood for their economic benefits, and are vital in maintaining a vibrant, unique and distinct identity, as well as a socially-connected community. Membership could include an architect or landscape architect, visual and/or performing art teacher, business leader, two local artists, community members at large, Chamber of Commerce, developer, elected official and staff representation from the city, parks, and the library.

**OPPORTUNITY: Public Art  
Advocates and Advisors**

The Council will advise on the City’s public art program which activates artwork on public property including city parks, library, cemeteries, roadways and neighborhoods. The Advisory Group will periodically review the capital improvement program with staff for inclusion of works of art in various projects. They will also support the city with methods for selecting and commissioning artists with respect to the design, execution, and placement of art in public places. They will advise staff on the selection and commissioning of artists, and the suggested funding amounts to be expended on art in public places



Daniel Ramirez-Perez

**OPPORTUNITY: Implementation  
of the Arts and Culture Plan**

The Council will guide the implementation and updating of the North River Arts and Culture Plan by forging partnerships with elected, business, and other community leaders including those from the Carlisle Chamber of Commerce, the school district, developers, and faith-based organizations. The Council will continually assess gaps in arts and culture programming and seek to find ways to address those gaps.

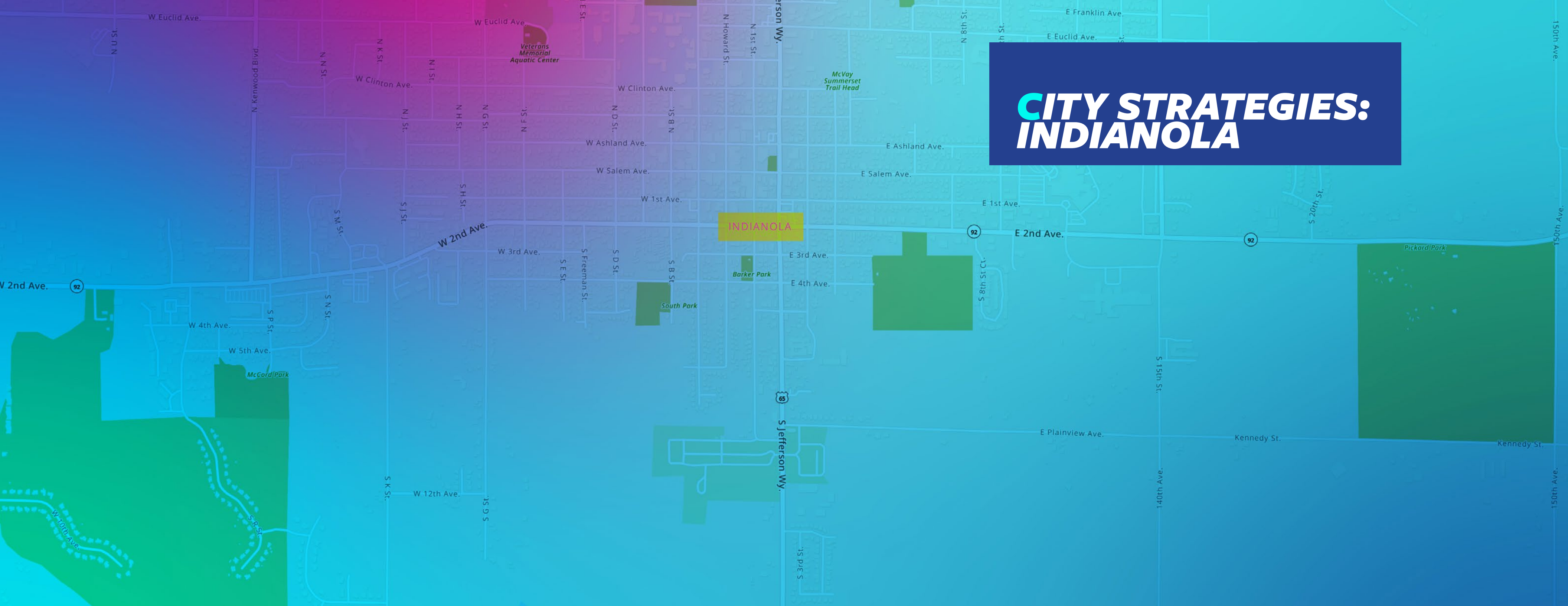
**OPPORTUNITY: Arts and Culture Ambassadors**

The Advisory Group will advise the City on arts and culture activities, serve as ambassadors to the community, champion local artists and art and culture organizations, and advocate for funding and policies to promote arts and culture activities in the community. The Advisory Group will work in concert with other boards and committees of the city to align with key civic goals and strategies.



Janet Echelman

# CITY STRATEGIES: INDIANOLA



## Indianola Introduction

Indianola is the Warren County seat – oriented as much toward serving southern Iowans as it is to serving Des Moines metro employers. Simpson College imports students and secures institutional prosperity. Visitors from across the country descend on the Memorial Balloon Field each summer and attend the Des Moines Metropolitan Opera series hosted at Simpson. Pickard Park hosts professional disc golf tournaments. Despite these assets and visitors, the community has struggled to attract significant industrial or commercial development, and there is a growing need for human services addressing food and housing insecurity. There is a community focus on building a stronger central business district, including the physical and social inclusion of Simpson College and reconstructing a sense of place in the wake of a newly constructed courthouse.




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***Indianola is the Warren County seat  
– oriented as much toward serving  
southern Iowans as it is to serving  
Des Moines metro employers.***

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## Goal: Wonder on Buxton

A project by Indianola Hometown Pride and partners, the vision is to transform a portion of North Buxton Street into a place that celebrates the community, connects the town to the college, invites people to gather together, tells the “story” of Indianola and Warren County, and inspires an overall sense of curiosity and wonder. Current plans include a series of public art pieces, gathering spaces, landscaping, signs, and other beautification improvements along the 2.5-block corridor from the Square to Simpson College, along North Buxton Street. These amenities will incorporate themes from local cultural icons, including hot air balloons, Simpson, music, and local history.

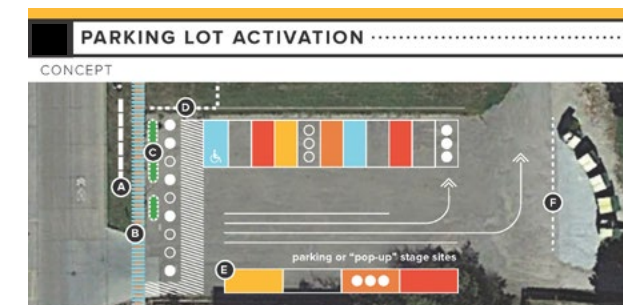
This project addresses many goals such as connecting the downtown Square and Simpson college in a visible and celebratory way, providing spaces for community events and impromptu gatherings, and serving as a “spill-over” area for events on the square.



It will attract visitors and residents to spend time in Indianola, visit businesses, and celebrate and strengthen community pride and identity. Additional enhancements along corridors to the Town Square should be considered for the future.

### OPPORTUNITY: Advance Wonder on Buxton

A solid plan of concepts is in place. Support for private and public fundraising has begun including an application to Iowa Great Places.



## Goal: Reboot the Town Square

Town squares are traditionally areas of pedestrian-oriented social connection. They highlight businesses, provide vital space for civic government, and are often a community's focal point, serving as a place of pride and beauty. Indianola's town square has been through a lot the past few years. Its sense of place is still unfolding. The new [Indianola Downtown Merchants](#) and the City's newly formed [Downtown Square Commission](#) are poised to lead revitalization efforts. In addition to the recommendation offered in the regional strategies, the arts can continue to support [on-going efforts to ensure a vibrant town square.](#)



Amanda Browder

### OPPORTUNITY: Cows in the square

Thousands of people come to Indianola in the summer to visit the [National Balloon Classic](#), the [Des Moines Metro Opera](#), and the [Warren County Fair](#). It is easy for an out of town visitor to come to one of those events and never wander into the town square. Each of these events could host activities in the town square like cow milking demonstrations or hot air balloon crafts in some businesses or [opera performances of poetry and music](#) submitted by Warren County's K-12 youth. Indianola could create a spectacle by tapping local quilters and Simpson student power to sew old hot air balloon fabric and make a giant quilt to cover the courthouse for a few weeks each summer. Artist [Amanda Browder](#) has added fabric to some massive buildings. With the help of cross-promotion, Indianola's commerce will benefit from a stronger tie to those events. The community could draw on the additional tourism magnet of the [All Iowa Shop Hop](#) and by adding an annual sew-a-thon and give a unique reason for visitors to collect their stamp. The [Carousel Theatre of Indianola](#) could provide some pop-up street theater.

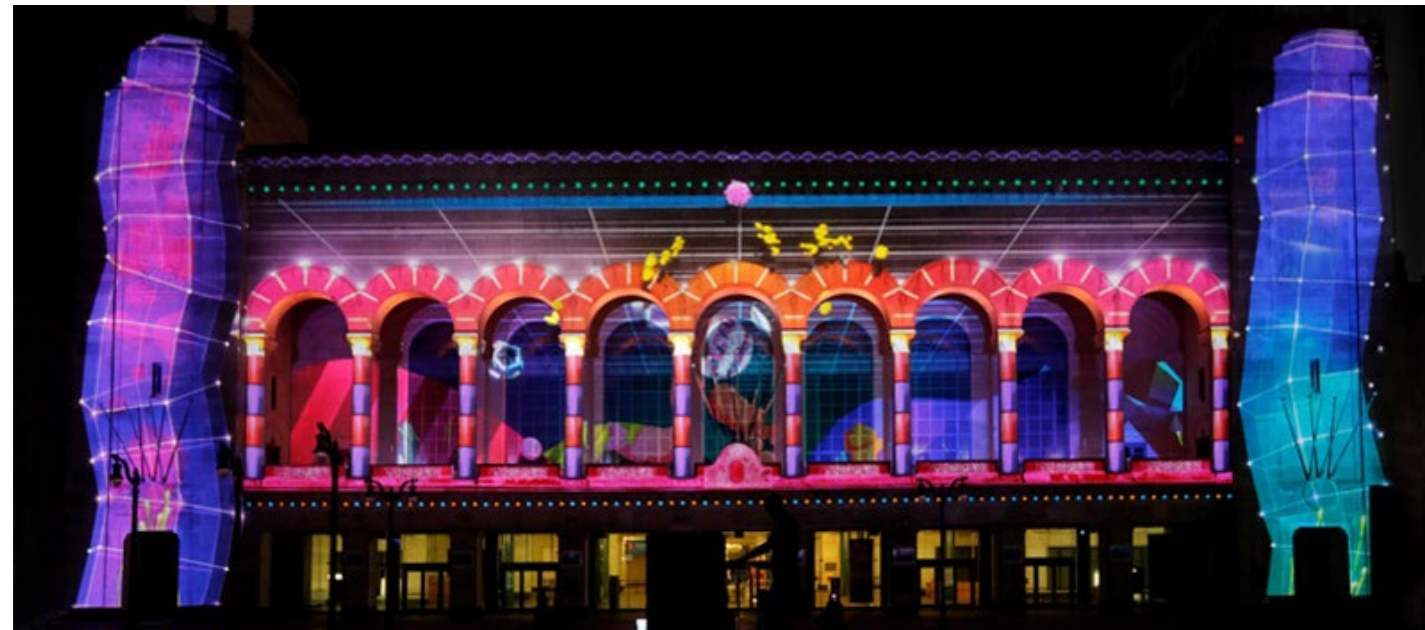
## Town Squares highlight businesses, provide vital space for civic government, and are often a community's focal point

### OPPORTUNITY: Projection of Esports

Bring [Simpson's Esports program](#) to the town square by projecting live-streams of tournaments with Simpson students in the competition. Esports, or electronic sports, is a form of professional, competitive gaming where players and teams compete to be the best in the world in their respective video games. It is similar to how live sports work but instead of playing on a field, players compete on a computer or TV screen. The live-stream could be projected on the courthouse or other surfaces downtown.



Esports Projection Event



Moment Factory. Projections Mapped Courthouse

### OPPORTUNITY: Continued work on the Courthouse

The Warren County Courthouse is newly constructed and in the midst of Indianola's growing business district. The previous courthouse, demolished for this one in May 2019, was on the National Register of Historic Places. According to news articles, some historically significant pieces were saved (to be used or displayed) with this courthouse. Highlighting these in a public way would enhance the connectivity Warren County residents feel to their community.

The new Warren County Courthouse, delivered in 2022, has the opportunity to be a more beautiful focal point of the downtown area utilizing public art to create some color and excitement. Art could illustrate the historic timeline of the courthouse's story: initially a log cabin, then a Victorian structure, then a Depression Modern design, until this 4th contemporary version, An architectural visualization of previous designs that pays homage to the historic significance of the courthouse styles could liven up the building and space that the courthouse occupies in downtown Indianola.

Much like the impact **Mainframe Studio's 360 degree mural** had in converting a drab downtown Des Moines building into a place of beauty, so too can adding an artistic facade to the exterior of the building that is congruent with the historic nature of the Indianola's square. Glass mosaics may offer the best medium for storytelling in a medium that has a historical feel as seen in the new mosaics at the **World Food Prize** building. The mosaics could be phased in via panels over time and could utilize local talent. Laser cut panels with a traditional look embellished with touches of color are another affordable and durable option. There are many examples of dynamic building facades such as this wind activated **Articulated Cloud**, or this celebration of **Aboriginal art**, these **vibrant colors and energetic patterns**, or **translucent facades**.

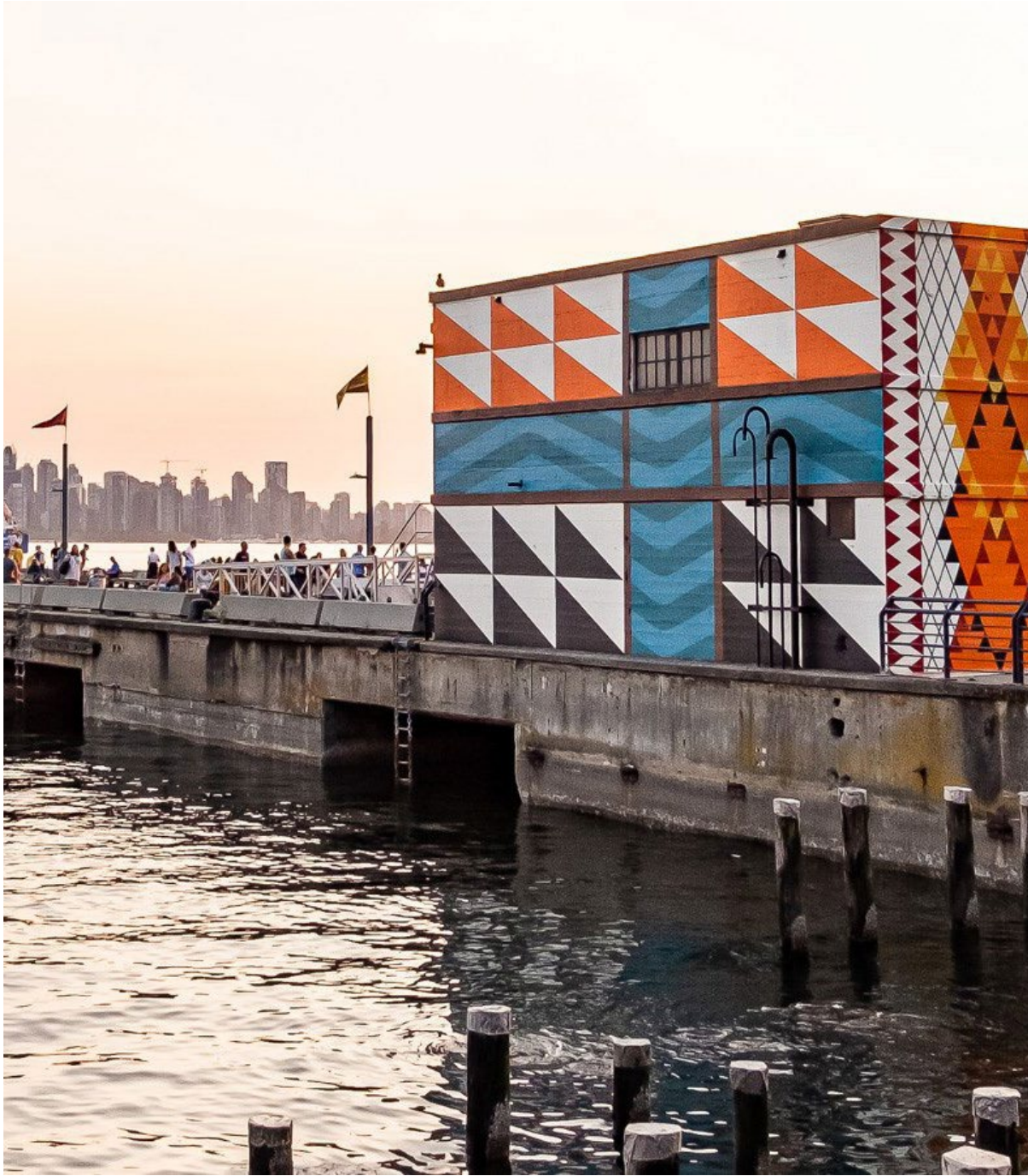
## INDIANOLA'S DISTINCT COMMUNITY ASSETS

### CULTURAL FUEL:

Simpson College  
Des Moines Metro Opera  
Carousel Theatre  
Church musical groups  
Warren County Historical Society

## INDIANOLA FESTIVALS/ANNUAL TRADITIONS, PAST AND CURRENT:

Arts Festival, after the balloon parade  
Log Cabin Days Festival  
Memorial Day parade  
Veterans Day ceremonies at high and middle schools  
Wine, Witches and Brews  
Ridiculous Days  
National Balloon Classic  
Balloon parade - spearheaded by Home Town Pride  
Bike night  
Classic car shows  
Warren County Fair  
Holiday Extravaganza  
Iowa Wine Festival  
Simpson Night  
Storm the Square  
High School students painting downtown windows for homecoming



Blanketing the City V by Debra Sparrow, Chief Janice George, and Angela George



Daniel Martin Diaz - Emergence



Source



Tanya Tagaq - Inuk sound artist, visual artist, and writer



Studio F-minus

### INDIANOLA COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

The Fieldhouse (non-profit sports complex)  
Hometown Pride  
Helping Hand  
Lions Club  
Churches  
4-H  
YMCA  
Indianola AAUW(Janet Hart-Heinicke, Jo Richey)

### INDIANOLA CITY ELEMENTS:

Indianola school district  
County Seat  
Town Square & Courthouse  
Buxton Street  
Monuments  
Indianola Public Arts Commission  
Warren County Economic Development  
Balloon field (can be used for other events)  
Pickard Park  
Current reputation that Indianola is easy to work with for home developers

### HISTORICAL LEGACY:

George Washington Carver attended Simpson.

### GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES:

Lake Ahquabi State Park  
Annett Nature Center Park  
Mounds - Native American site south of Ackworth

## OPPORTUNITY: Arts Programming

One group that does this well in Des Moines is the [After School Arts Program](#). ASAP has musicians, artists, makers, and teachers lead children in classes, thus creating more jobs, and mentoring the children of Des Moines. Like ASAP, Indianola area churches could spearhead this programming as an outreach ministry to the community. Simpson College and the many area civic organizations are a local resource for youth and adult art classes as well as tapping local talent, especially for fiber arts that are often practiced by older adults. A variety of studies have documented the value of arts related programming for youth; this one by [ART WORKS](#) shows the positive impact on arts education for school-aged children specifically. The [Art + Life Long Learning](#) and [Arts + Youth Development & Education](#) fact sheets offer excellent statistics, case studies, and links to literature on how the arts make every phase of life better and more fulfilling.



## OPPORTUNITY: Cross-generational Fiber Arts

The fiber arts culture of Indianola could hand down techniques from elders to teach the youth. Quilts, knitting, tailoring, and mending all have revived interest with young people who are using it for their own versions of creative expression. A community orientation to collective fiber arts can empower individuals to utilize textile art for personal transformation, build community understanding and cohesion, and be part of the journey towards positive community change. [Amanda Browder's Sewing Days](#), [GENERATIONS THROUGH CLOTH](#) and Iowa-artist [Catherine Reinhart Collective Mending Sessions](#) are all excellent examples of artist-led programs that promote care for cloth and community.

## OPPORTUNITY: Let the Youth Lead

Albert Einstein said, “If you can’t explain it simply, you don’t understand it well enough.”

Provide a stipend to youth and young professionals for leading art and culture programs to deepen their connection to the community as well as build leadership skills. Possible engagements include:

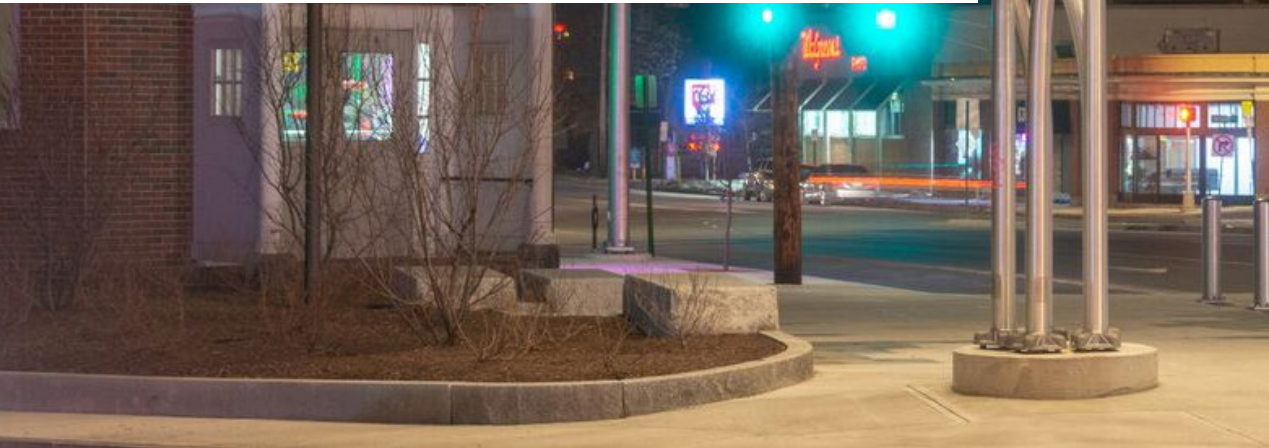
- + Teaching traditional crafts or dance styles
- + Leading walking tours around the square with themes of their creation
- + Issuing calls for youth art for community note-cards, murals, calendars, etc.
- + Designing fresh community engagements activities for the community such as ribbon-cutting events for the Chamber, history scavenger hunts for the historical society, storytime at the library



Market St Prototype Festival

## Goal: Capitalize on Upcoming Investments to Distinguish Indianola

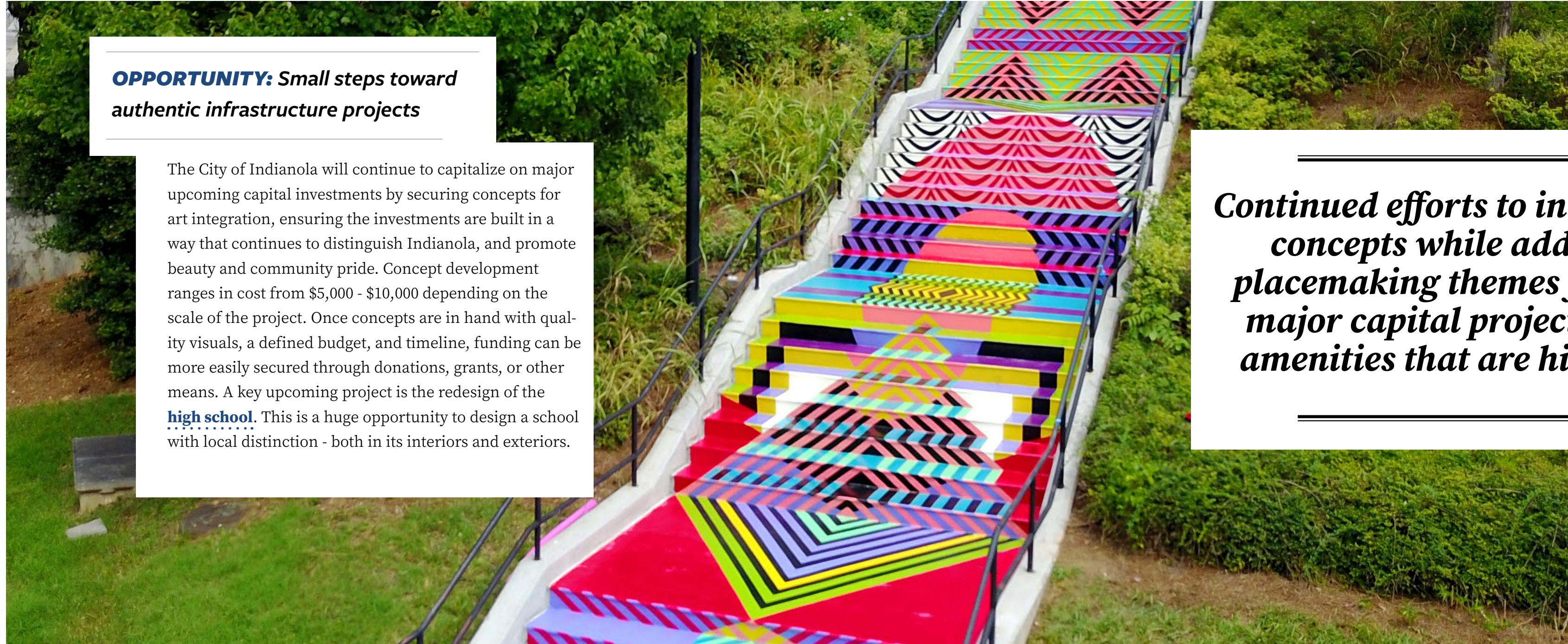
Continued efforts to integrate artists’ concepts while addressing the placemaking themes for upcoming major capital projects will create amenities that are highly desired. Developing creative, artistic approaches in the design phase of these projects is a financially responsible way to add personality. Early art integration saves money and adds value, creating a stronger sense of place and promoting Indianola as a unique place to live.



Indianola

## ***OPPORTUNITY: Small steps toward authentic infrastructure projects***

The City of Indianola will continue to capitalize on major upcoming capital investments by securing concepts for art integration, ensuring the investments are built in a way that continues to distinguish Indianola, and promote beauty and community pride. Concept development ranges in cost from \$5,000 - \$10,000 depending on the scale of the project. Once concepts are in hand with quality visuals, a defined budget, and timeline, funding can be more easily secured through donations, grants, or other means. A key upcoming project is the redesign of the **high school**. This is a huge opportunity to design a school with local distinction - both in its interiors and exteriors.



Jessie Unterhalter and Katey Truhn

***Continued efforts to integrate artists' concepts while addressing the placemaking themes for upcoming major capital projects will create amenities that are highly desired.***

# SUSTAINABLE SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT ART AND CULTURE IN INDIANOLA

*Sustainable and diverse sources of funding, K-12 arts education, & new programming for existing or adaptive venues support future growth.*



## Goal: Funding Arts and Culture

Sustainable and diverse sources of funding, K-12 arts education, new programming for existing or adaptive venues, and a healthy entrance of new roles and perspectives in the shared work support future growth. Access to funding sources beyond the city, including governments, private foundations, and corporations, are also vital. It is widely understood that private and corporate support for arts and culture has room for growth.

## OPPORTUNITIES for Funding

### City of Indianola

The City of Indianola could devote funds to arts and culture on an annual basis. The City could consider sustainable approaches to funding the arts including annual set-asides or Percent for the Arts. **Percent for the Arts** is a type of initiative, often passed through a city ordinance, where a certain percentage of the budget for large public or private developments are allocated to fund public art selection, creation, and maintenance in the community. There are many variations of the model and **sample ordinances**, but it is an important tool used to ensure that a community develops with distinction and enhanced livability. Residents appreciate community-building activities and there needs to be systems in place to provide funding for such projects. The City of Indianola could review other successful small Midwest communities including **River Falls**, WI and **Hailey**, ID as well as many other examples of communities that have enacted some version of this policy.

### Grants

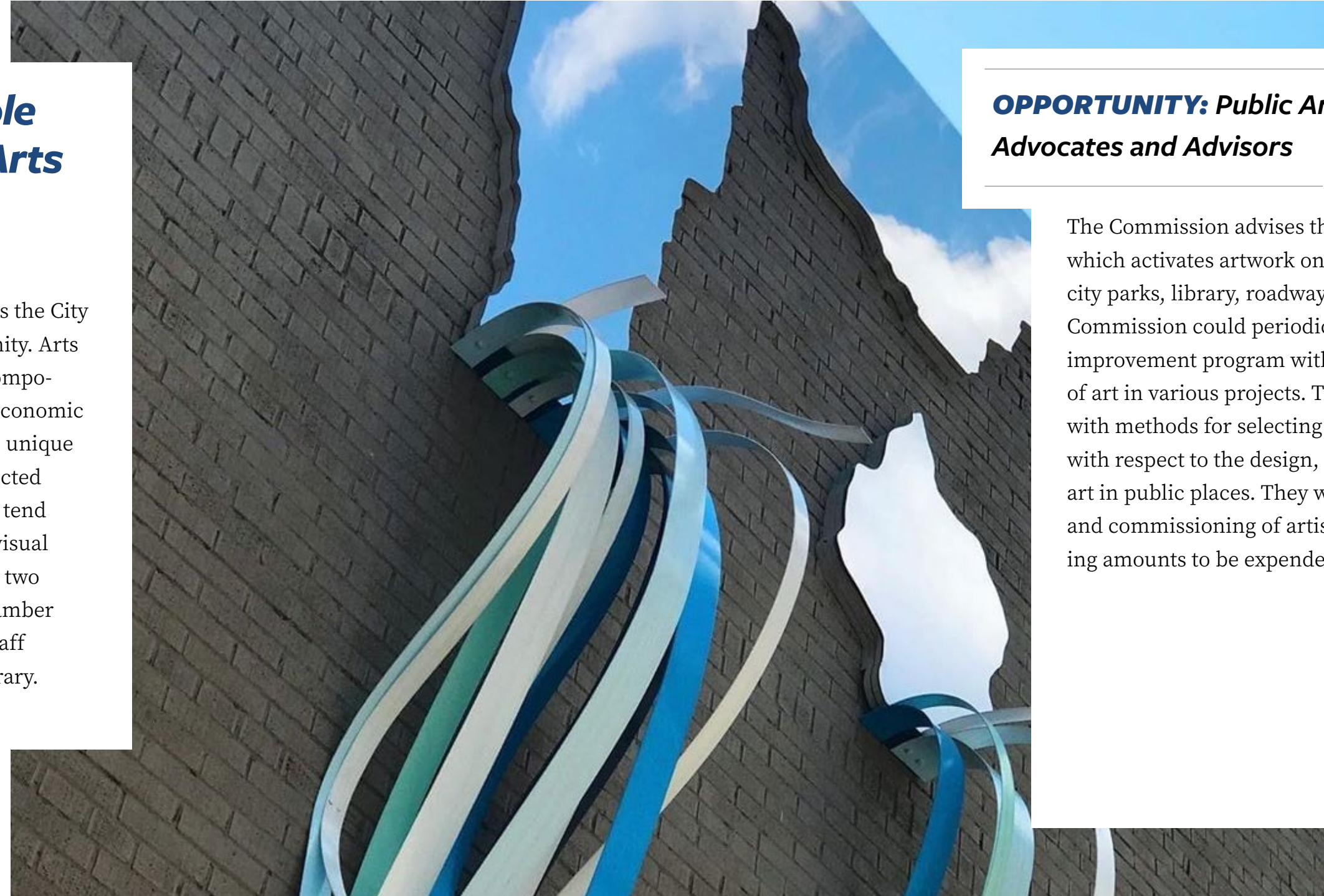
There are many grants the City of Indianola is well-positioned to access. Bravo Greater Des Moines is the only local arts-funding organization, but many projects could be supported by other granting agencies including Prairie Meadows and the **Warren County Philanthropic Partnership**. The **Iowa Arts Council** has several annual grants available.

### Public/Private Partnerships

The City of Indianola is already quite adept at partnering with developers for implementing quality of life amenities. Negotiating for public art integration into large capital investments is a natural extension of amenities a developer could be asked to support. Additionally, many businesses and individuals are likely willing to donate to an installation or program that has a strong concept at the ready.

## Goal: Strengthen the Role of the Indianola Public Arts Commission

The Indianola Public Arts Commission supports the City in enhancing the quality of life for the community. Arts and cultural activities are recognized as vital components of community life, understood for their economic benefits, and are vital in maintaining a vibrant, unique and distinct identity, as well as a socially-connected community. Membership of such commissions tend to include an architect or landscape architect, visual and/or performing art teacher, business leader, two local artists, community members at large, Chamber of Commerce, developer, elected official and staff representation from the city, parks, and the library.



Studio F-Minus

### OPPORTUNITY: Public Art Advocates and Advisors

The Commission advises the City's public art program which activates artwork on public property including city parks, library, roadways and neighborhoods. The Commission could periodically review the capital improvement program with staff for inclusion of works of art in various projects. They could also support the city with methods for selecting and commissioning artists with respect to the design, execution, and placement of art in public places. They will advise staff on the selection and commissioning of artists, and the suggested funding amounts to be expended on art in public places.

### ***OPPORTUNITY: Implementation of the Arts and Culture Plan***

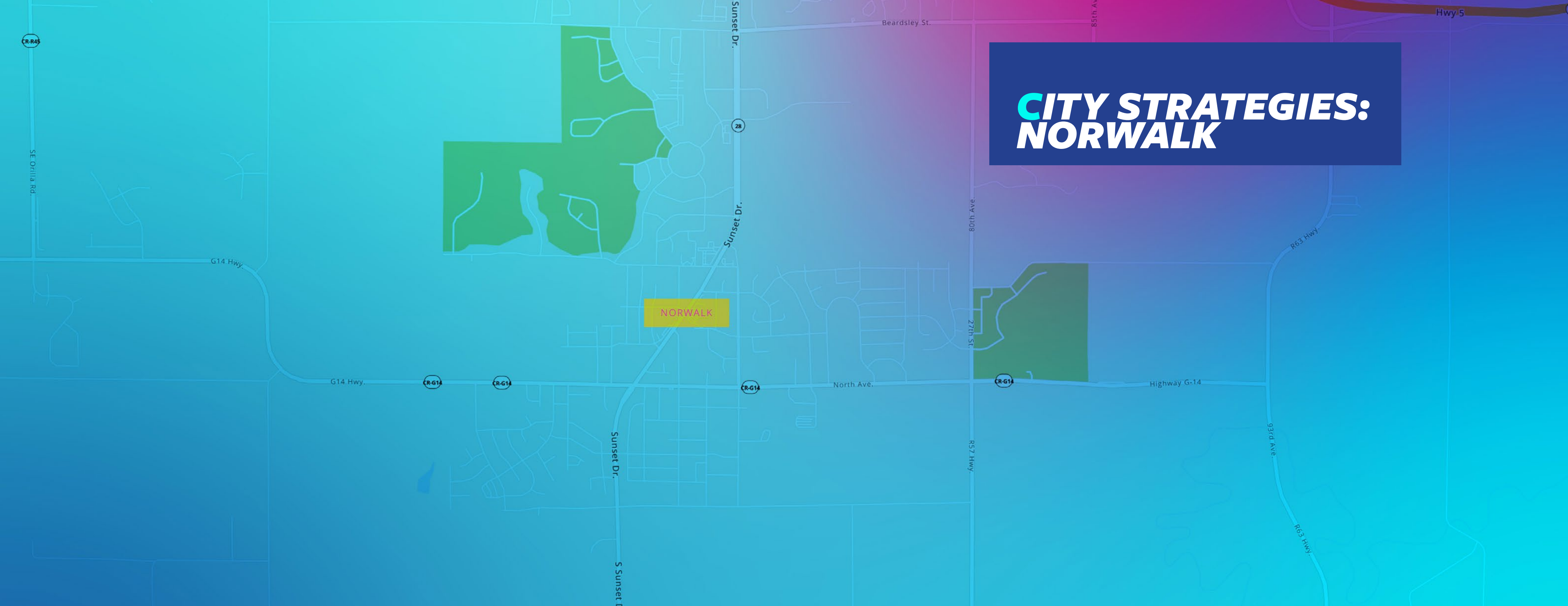
The Commission will guide the implementation and updating of the North River Arts and Culture Plan by forging partnerships with elected, business, and other community leaders including those from the Chamber of Commerce, the school district, developers, and faith-based organizations. The Commission will continually assess gaps in arts and culture programming and seek to find ways to address those gaps.

***...forging partnerships with elected, business, and other community leaders...***

### ***OPPORTUNITY: Arts and Culture Ambassadors***

The Commission will advise the City on arts and culture activities, serve as ambassadors to the community, champion local artists and art and culture organizations, and advocate for funding and policies to promote arts and culture activities in the community. The Commission works in concert with other boards and committees including Indianola Hometown Pride to ensure alignment with key civic goals and strategies.

# CITY STRATEGIES: NORWALK



## ***Norwalk Introduction***

Norwalk is one of the fastest growing cities in Iowa. Once a small, rural community, Norwalk has become a burgeoning economy filled with new residents and more commercial development. A State Certified Site brought significant industrial growth. The rapid growth has challenged housing affordability, with much of the city’s manufacturing workforce being priced out of town. Growth also challenges local government to add schools, roadways, water and sewer and other infrastructure. Norwalk is a bedroom community with strong parks and schools, and a place that invests in youth education and athletics. Yet rapid growth challenges social cohesion. Traditions, such as community festivals and Front Porch Norwalk are evolving to meet new opportunities, especially expanding recreation programming and facilities.




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***Norwalk has become a burgeoning economy filled with new residents and more commercial development.***

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## Goal: Infuse the Arts into Existing Community Events

Norwalk gathers around key community events, helping connect residents as the community rapidly grows. Community-wide events keep traditions alive (such as the well attended [Celebrate Norwalk 4th of July](#) festivities) and make new traditions (such as the [Norwalk Music Festival](#)). These events also help attract new visitors by showcasing what makes Norwalk unique and build a strong sense of pride in the community. There are many opportunities to integrate artists into these existing and popular community events.



ReadyGo



***Norwalk is a bedroom community with strong parks and schools that invests in youth education and athletics.***

Passages Insolites (Unusual Passages)

## OPPORTUNITY: Demonstrate the power of the arts at community events

Celebrate Norwalk 4th of July parade: make it bolder: add giant puppets as a community engagement opportunity leading up to the holiday; hire artists/ sculptors to vamp up the parade floats; create a bigger prize for the most creative and fun parade float. Norwalk Music Festival: create vibrant and fun entrance features; hire artists for **family engagement** and **fun artful experiences**.



Gong Bath



Uplifting Puppet Company

**RUNorwalk 5K:** encourage local musicians, including young musicians, to be stationed like buskers along the route; offer a pre-race/post-race **gong bath** as athletes are increasingly **turning to sound therapy to be race ready**.

**Front Porch Norwalk:** provide participating neighborhoods a roster of affordable musicians; sponsor the creation of artist-created mobile engagement tools like **ReadyGo**. These “tools” are loaned out and are designed to attract people, pique curiosity and prompt interaction.

## Goal: Art as a Cultural Ambassador with Sister City Vushtrri, Kosovo

Arts and cultural programs are some of the oldest and most robust in the [Sister Cities network](#). Art and culture connect people from different backgrounds on a fundamental level. By experiencing and exploring the culture of an international community, citizens may gain insight into the history, values, and aesthetic sensibilities of their partners. Efforts could include educational programs, artist residencies, and commissioned artwork aiming to foster dialogue and strengthen institutional partnerships. The citizens of Vushtrri and Norwalk can virtually learn each other's traditional music, instruments, dances, and crafts.



*Art and culture connect people from different backgrounds on a fundamental level.*

### OPPORTUNITY: Art and Artist Exchange

Participate in the Sister City's annual [Young Artist and Authors Showcase](#). Create a virtual [artist exchange program](#).

[Exchange art](#) with artists from each community or with [youth in each community](#). Commission a Vushtrri artist to create artwork to be integrated into an upcoming civic space

[Source](#)

## Goal: Targeted Development: Old Downtown, North Avenue Corridor & Trails

Although Norwalk doesn't have a showcased old downtown, there are enough remnants worthy of attention. North Avenue corridor is home to many civic spaces: city hall, the old downtown, city park, the library, the cemetery, the high school, and the veterans memorial. While there have already been programs to promote rejuvenation of buildings, additional strategic civic interventions could make the corridor and the old downtown intersection a real dynamic and vibrant location within the community. While there are great plans underway to create [Norwalk Central](#), the old bones of a community should not be left behind. This intersection will always have the competitive advantage of being historic, unique, and authentic, as the look and feel of original main streets can never be replicated.

### NORWALK COMMUNITY ASSETS OF DISTINCTION

#### CULTURAL FUEL:

Dan Trilk - Trilk Rock School  
Paul Michich - artist  
Somali community  
Norwalk Art Committee

#### FESTIVALS/ANNUAL TRADITIONS, PAST AND CURRENT:

Norwalk Santa  
Easter at public library  
4th of July parade  
Norwalk Music Fest  
RuNorwalk 5k  
Small business Saturday  
Front Porch Norwalk  
Annual Tree Lighting and Santa Visit

#### COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

American Legion  
Rotary  
Norwalk Chamber of Commerce  
Norwalk Hometown Pride  
Norwalk Lions Club  
100 Men of Norwalk  
City State Bank  
Fareway  
Gregg Young Chevrolet  
Capital City Fruit  
Michael Foods



**OPPORTUNITY:** Targeted incentives for food, drink and retail businesses

Incentives like a cost-sharing program for grease-traps could help to attract businesses such as restaurants and breweries. Additional [incentives for retail businesses](#) alongside support for relocation of existing businesses that don't currently drive pedestrian traffic could also be considered.

*Engage artists to develop concepts for how to use beauty, visual design and pedestrian engagements to foster a corridor feel along North Avenue.*

**OPPORTUNITY:** Visual engagement, continuity along North Avenue Corridor

Engage artists to develop concepts for how to use beauty, visual design and pedestrian engagements to foster a corridor feel along North Avenue. Much like Indianola's' concepts for Buxton Avenue, the visual connecting pieces go beyond the traditional banners on a pole to create visual continuity and pedestrian interest along the way.

**NORWALK CITY ELEMENTS:**

Norwalk Physical Education & Competition Center (NPECC)  
Schools  
Norwalk Central, rapid expansion  
Norwalk Easter Public Library  
Main Street murals  
Norwalk Amphitheater  
Park and Rec  
Warren County Freedom Rock  
Veterans' Memorial Park - for Medal of Honor recipient  
McAninch Sports Complex  
Skate park  
Mayor's monthly community chats  
Police department  
Main Street School  
Warrior Stadium  
Skate Park, Disc Golf Course & Pickle Ball Courts  
Caboose at City Park  
3 golf courses in city limits

**HISTORICAL LEGACY:**

Superhero celebrities - Brandon Routh and Jason Mamoa

**GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES:**

Great Western Trail - Holland connection  
Located 8 minutes from the Des Moines International Airport  
25 minutes from downtown Des Moines  
15 minutes from the Jordan Creek mall

## Goal: Capitalize on Upcoming Investments to Distinguish Norwalk

Continued efforts to integrate artists' concepts that play off the unique themes and assets of Norwalk with upcoming major capital projects will create amenities that are highly desired. Developing creative, artistic approaches in the design phase of these projects is a financially responsible way to add personality. Early art integration saves money and adds value, creating a stronger sense of place and promoting Norwalk as a unique place to live.

Craig and Karl

## OPPORTUNITY: Make it policy, generate funding

The City of Norwalk could devote funds to arts and culture on an annual basis through several mechanisms. In addition to the City setting aside funds on an annual basis, City Council could consider a Percent for the Arts policy. **Percent for the Arts** is a type of initiative, often passed through a city ordinance, where a certain percentage of the budget for large public and/or private developments is allocated to fund public art selection, creation, and maintenance in the community. There are many variations of the model and sample ordinances (see **River Falls, WI** and **Hailey, ID**); it is an important tool used to ensure that a community develops with distinction and enhanced livability. Much like city requirements of development to set aside parkland for the community, the City of Norwalk could consider funding for public art as it writes a Planned Urban Development plan for new developments.

**OPPORTUNITY: Small steps toward authentic infrastructure projects**

The City of Norwalk should continue to capitalize on major upcoming capital investments by securing concepts for art integration, ensuring the investments are built in a way that continues to distinguish Norwalk, and promote beauty and community pride. Concept development ranges in cost from \$5,000 - \$10,000 depending on the scale of the project. Once concepts are in hand with quality visuals, a defined budget, and timeline, funding can be more easily secured through donations, grants, or other means. Key upcoming projects are [Norwalk Central](#), [Kosovar Bridge in the Elizabeth Holland Park](#), and a replacement fence along the gateway corridor of Sunset Drive. Art can also continue to help shape the existing character of places like [Legacy Circle](#).

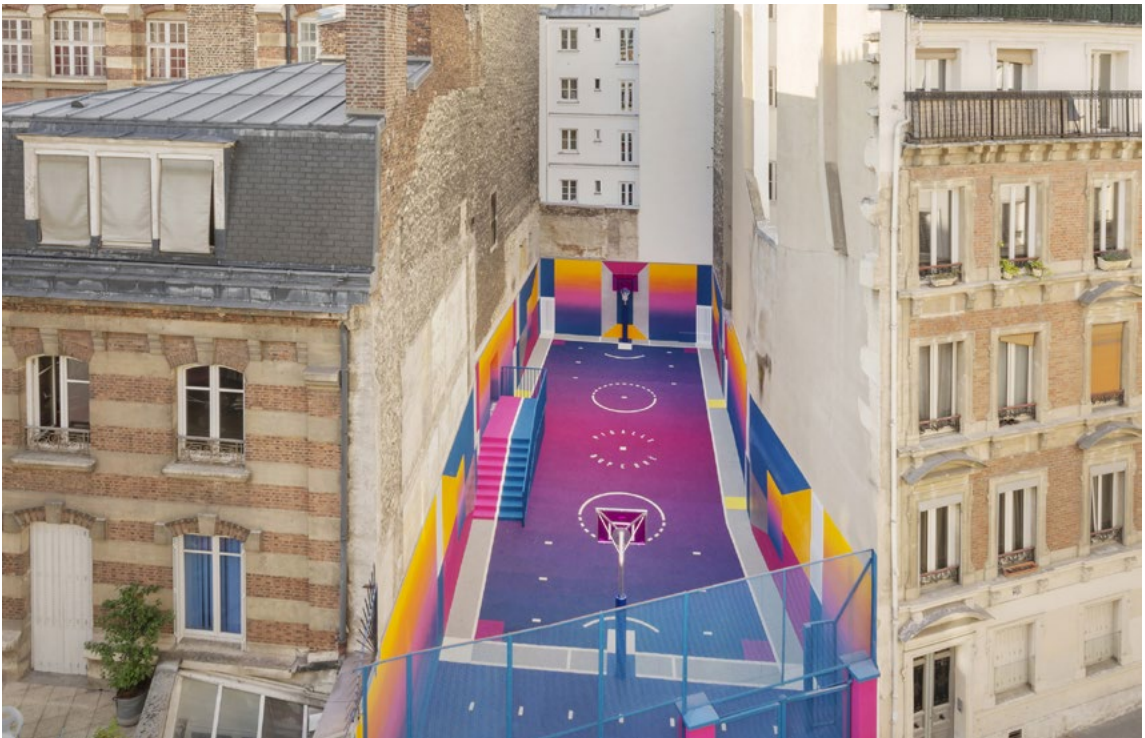


Terolenn Mykitiuk



Norwalk has purchased a 150-acre park spanning the north river and connected to a county park to include walking trails, wild life, and canoeing opportunities. As this 150-acre park develops, art opportunities should be identified at the beginning of any new project or update.

**[Wading Pool Fence by Beatrice Coron](#)**



Ill-Studio and Pigalle



## Goal: Funding Arts and Culture

Sustainable and diverse sources of funding, K-12 arts education, new programming for existing or adaptive venues, and a healthy entrance of new roles and perspectives in the shared work support future growth. Access to funding sources beyond the city, including governments, private foundations, and corporations, are also vital. It is widely understood that private and corporate support for arts and culture has room for growth.

## OPPORTUNITIES for Funding

### City of Norwalk

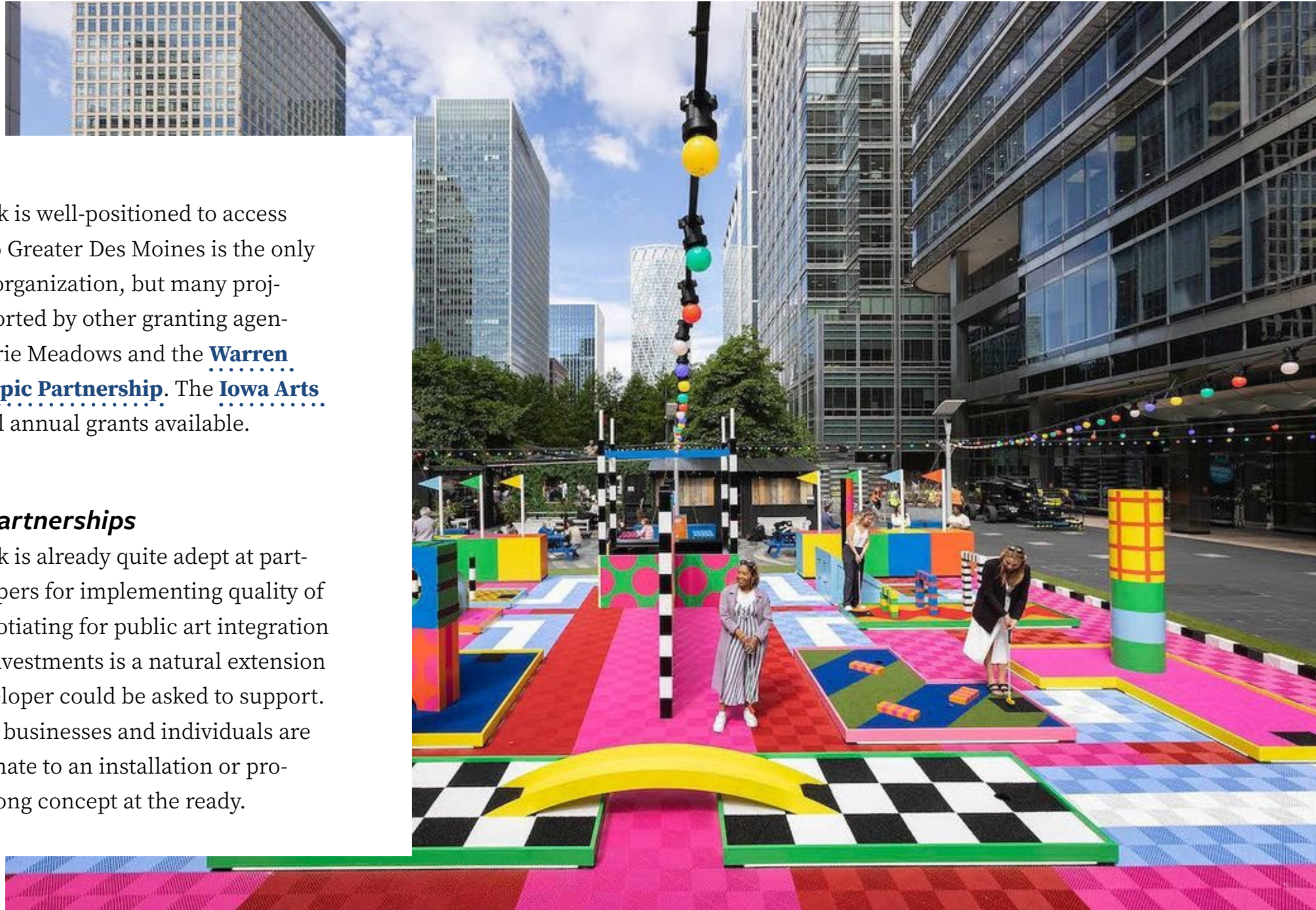
The City of Norwalk could devote funds to arts and culture on an annual basis. As stated above, the City could consider sustainable approaches to funding the arts including annual set-asides or Percent for the Arts. **Percent for the Arts** is a type of initiative, often passed through a city ordinance, where a certain percentage of the budget for large public or private developments are allocated to fund public art selection, creation, and maintenance in the community. There are many variations of the model and **sample ordinances, River Falls, WI and Hailey, ID.**

### Grants

The City of Norwalk is well-positioned to access many grants. Bravo Greater Des Moines is the only local arts-funding organization, but many projects could be supported by other granting agencies including Prairie Meadows and the [Warren County Philanthropic Partnership](#). The [Iowa Arts Council](#) has several annual grants available.

### Public/Private Partnerships

The City of Norwalk is already quite adept at partnering with developers for implementing quality of life amenities. Negotiating for public art integration into large capital investments is a natural extension of amenities a developer could be asked to support. Additionally, many businesses and individuals are likely willing to donate to an installation or program that has a strong concept at the ready.



Craig and Karl



## Goal: Role of the Norwalk Arts Commission

The Norwalk Arts Commission would support the City in enhancing the quality of life for the community. Arts and cultural activities are recognized as vital components of community life, understood for their economic benefits, and are vital in maintaining a vibrant, unique and distinct identity, as well as a socially-connected community. Membership of such commission tends to include an architect or landscape architect, visual and/or performing arts teacher, business leader, two local artists, community members at large, Chamber of Commerce, developer, elected official and staff representation from the city, parks, and the library.

## OPPORTUNITY: Public Art Advocates and Advisors

The Commission would advise the City's public art program which activates artwork on public property including city parks, library, cemeteries, roadways and neighborhoods. The Commission would periodically review the capital improvement program with staff for inclusion of works of art in various projects. They would also support the city with methods for selecting and commissioning artists with respect to the design, execution, and placement of art in public places. They would advise staff on the selection and commissioning of artists, and the suggested funding amounts to be expended on art in public places

## OPPORTUNITY: Implementation of the Arts and Culture Plan

The Commission would guide the implementation and updating of the North River Arts and Culture Plan by forging partnerships with elected, business, and other community leaders including those from the Chamber of Commerce, the school district, developers, and faith-based organizations. The Commission would continually assess gaps in arts and culture programming and seek to find ways to address those gaps.



Moment FAcTory

## OPPORTUNITY: Arts and Culture Ambassadors

The Commission would advise the City on arts and culture activities, serve as ambassadors to the community, champion local artists and art and culture organizations, and advocate for funding and policies to promote arts and culture activities in the community. The Commission would work in concert with other boards and committees including Norwalk Hometown Pride to ensure alignment with key civic goals and strategies.





*Sponsored by the North River Arts Council  
with funding from the cities of Carlisle,  
Indianola and Norwalk.*

*Developed by  
Group Creative Services  
Des Moines, IA*



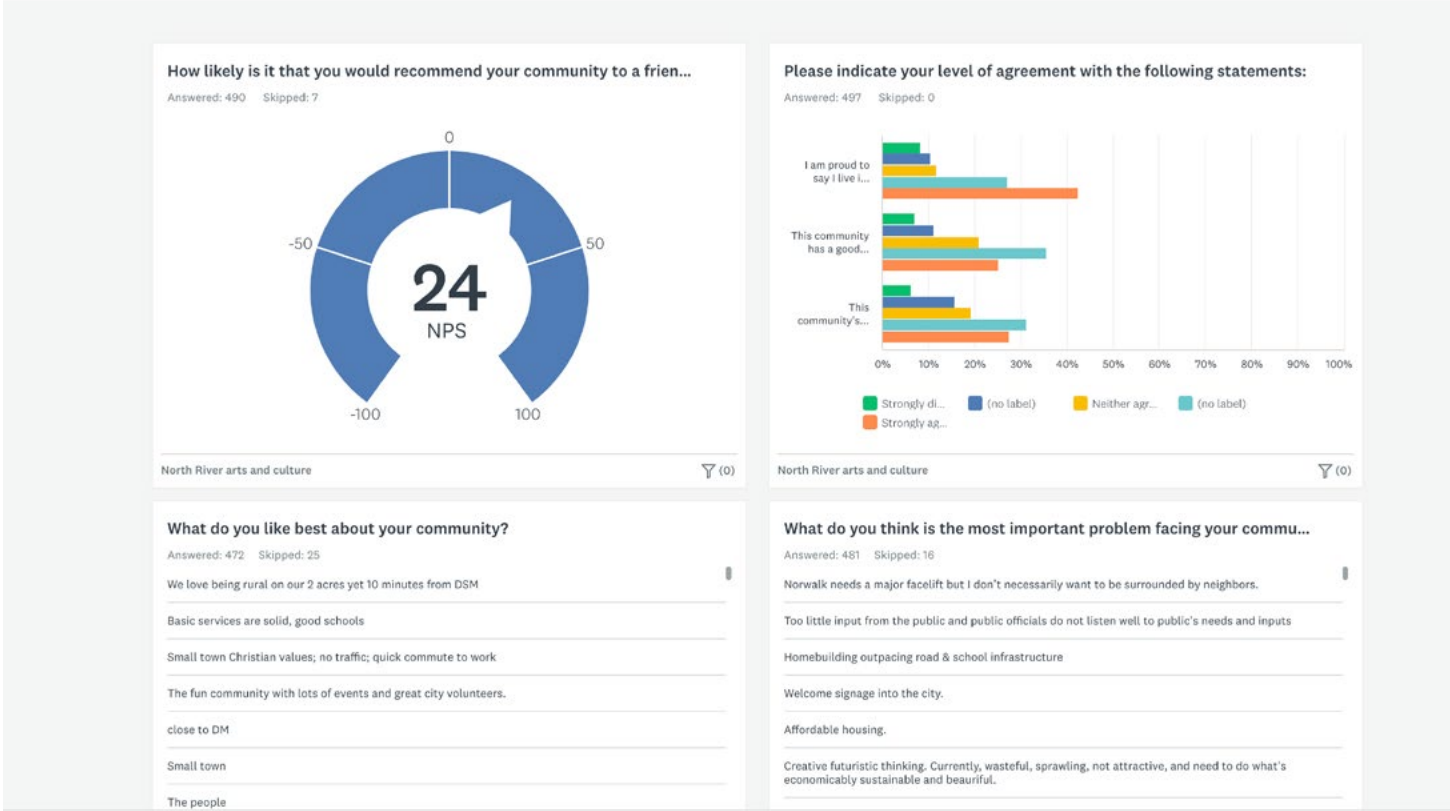
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# ADDENDUM

North River arts and culture



**View survey results at the following link:**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/stories/SM-Z7MDFPZQ/>