

Creative Sector Connects 2020 – Emerging Themes
Prepared for Arts United of Greater Fort Wayne

July 15, 2015

We want to be a recognized as an arts destination. Given the wide variety and high quality of its cultural offerings, the relevant stakeholders want Fort Wayne to be a reputable and recognized arts destination – a Midwest ‘creative hub’ that is nationally known for the quality of its cultural scene. The public responds that these amenities are very important for the community to offer whether or not they participate; and the principal partners are developing their plans to rise individually to new heights.

Access to the arts is critical. This access includes making sure every student pre-K -16 has continuing education in the arts; and ensuring that there is equal and affordable access to arts and culture offerings throughout the entire community.

Measuring and communicating the value of the nonprofit and for profit creative businesses and workers is an essential component of a regional development plan. A first read of the creative economy in Northeast Indiana is that there are over 18,500 jobs representing 4.6% of the region’s workers and over \$400 million in total wage value.

Attracting and retaining professional talent with family supporting wages represents a key goal for the community. Research demonstrates that the young professional talent in greater Fort Wayne seek a vibrant and professional creative community in which to live, work, and play. Bringing creative professionals and creative businesses into the area enhances the value of the region as well as its economic base.

Key community development initiatives in the region need to be linked with arts and culture advancement in order to have an attractive, dynamic quality of place. This leadership considers it important that arts, culture, and creativity be embedded or connected to all of the regional priorities as they form the bedrock of a vibrant and sustainable quality of life.

Framing a regional platform for arts, culture, and creative planning requires a change in focus and resources. Determining the role for arts and culture within a regional scope is an important component of regional planning. Understanding the collective regional creative assets will form a baseline for development.

Neighborhood and corridor development connects community with quality placemaking. Ensuring that arts and culture amenities are embedded in the social fabric of all neighborhoods will improve access, multi-cultural understanding and youth engagement.

Enhancing the organizational capacity of the arts and cultural organizations as well as encouraging more programmatic risk-taking is considered an important aspect of growing the cultural community. Respondents and the principal partners want the community to support organizational development and innovation across the cultural community.

A strong, interconnected and integrated downtown is considered the core underpinning of the entire community and most certainly the cultural and creative centerpiece of Greater Fort Wayne. Arts United’s downtown arts campus, downtown redevelopment, and the emerging riverfront development support this core community objective.