

Review of Background Research

Prepared by AMS Planning & Research

The consultants have reviewed a number of documents related to the Background Research task for the Plan for Arts & Culture. The following memo summarizes the four primary documents that we have reviewed and summarized as part of this task.

Document #1 - Minneapolis CultureTalks – July 1993

The report summarizes the results of a planning process undertaken in 1993 which involved a Steering Committee, independent consultants, and research that included 24 focus groups, 13 community meetings, and more than one hundred leadership interviews. The stated purpose of the effort was “to define a role for Minneapolis city government with respect to the arts and culture of our community.” Recommendations were presented by then Mayor Donald Fraser to the members of the city council and residents of the city.

The study commences with a statement of the value of the arts in Minneapolis, which estimated non-profit arts activity contributing more than \$181 million to the city’s economy. The “for-profit arts industry” was estimated to consist of more than 200 businesses, with the film industry alone generating \$155 million in annual revenues and 5,000 full-time jobs.

Called “a thoughtful beginning” as a subtitle, the “CultureTalks” report is premised on a situation that the report authors called “surprising”: that “the absence of prior city-wide public policy discussion” had not taken place, and yet Minneapolis is regarded as “an unusually strong arts and cultural center.” Fittingly, recommendations are “not just about money and how much the city should spend...the majority have no financial impact...they focus on attitude and policies, leadership and stewardship, coordination and cooperation...and improved service to the community through finding better ways of conducting city affairs.”

Recommendations in the report can be summarized as follows:

- The Mayor, City Council, Park & Recreation Board, Library Board, and Board of Education should jointly adopt a vision statement and arts policies which articulate benefits and define the City’s roles, responsibilities, and funding priorities.
- The City should create an Office of Cultural Affairs, reporting to the Mayor and City Council, advised by a Cultural Affairs Commission, which consolidates the functions of the Arts Commission, Committee on Urban Environment, Heritage Preservation Commission, Office of Film Video and Recording, and the arts activities of the MCDA.
- To use the arts to strengthen neighborhoods and communities, premised on the efforts of city boards and programs such as offered by MCDA, NRP, Parks & Recreation Board, and the Arts Commission.
- Develop arts programs for youth, beginning with a city-wide conference to further define the scope of tasks to undertaken.
- Promote Minneapolis as a cultural center, primarily by pursuing a concerted cultural tourism effort. (It is cited that tourism contributed some \$2.5 billion annually to Hennepin County, and that “a strong positive image as a cultural center” is a significant asset” in this scenario.

- Capitalize on the arts as an economic development tool for neighborhood revitalization, to provide jobs and other economic stimulus. The text of this recommendation goes on to say that while CultureTalks participants endorse the city’s use of the arts as an economic development tool, they “urged several important changes,” those being that MCDA should adopt overall policies, create an “overall plan,” and broaden its scope to support more neighborhood development and programs such as artist housing and studio space. The report requests that city officials “acknowledge that “the acquisition of the State and Orpheum Theaters is not ‘art spending.’”
- Enhance the city’s physical environment through the arts, historical preservation and urban design, focusing on adopting design guidelines, and a public art program that goes beyond Gateways.
- Foster a more positive climate for the arts and artists, including zoning and permit processes, and advocating for additional metro and state arts funding.
- A call for leadership in “recommended financial priorities” including “public operating support” for organizations, better coordination of existing resources, continued support of cultural tourism and film/recording efforts, programs that serve children and youth, and a public art plan guaranteeing city-wide access and involvement.

Implications

The most illuminating aspect of this report, as it relates to the 2004 Minneapolis Plan for Arts & Culture effort, is that its recommendations are almost unanimously and identically reverberated by the leadership interview participants in the current planning process. In other words, it would appear that many people would characterize the situation with a frustrated “nothing has changed” attitude.

Document #2 - “Cultural Affairs” Section of State of the City 2002

This 16-page summary document clearly articulates the latest research with respect to economic impact of the arts in Minneapolis and the city’s financial (and other) support for the arts. It also contains a brief description of six fundamental “city arts goals” as priorities, based on some 50 individual objectives culled from over the last 30 years, and makes a short statement about “city arts leadership.”

The six “fundamental priorities” can be summarized as:

- Stimulate excellence in arts, culture, and urban design
- Increase participation and provide access to all citizens and communities
- Capitalize on arts as economic development tool and promote Minneapolis as an international cultural center
- Encourage the development arts districts, affordable spaces and a thriving artistic work force
- Advocate and leverage investment in the arts from businesses, governments, foundations and neighborhoods
- Encourage partnerships and coordination between artists, organizations, and public agencies.

Economic Impact

The city participated in a national study which locally featured 300 organizational surveys and 750 audience surveys. Based on these data the Minneapolis nonprofit arts industry is estimated to generate \$269.4 million in economic activity annually, including:

- 8,504 full-time or equivalent jobs
- \$214 million in resident household income
- \$8.3 million in local government revenues
- \$19.6 million in state government revenues

Event-related spending (\$98.2 million) is based on the finding of \$19.09 average per person (in addition to admission costs), which is further broken down as \$33.97 per non-local attender, and \$14.85 by resident attenders.

City Support

The document details a wide range of city and MCDA expenditures on arts and culture beginning with major capital projects including the State, Orpheum, and Pantages theaters, land acquisition and a parking facility for the new Guthrie Theater complex, a parking ramp for the new Walker Art Center, and assorted other smaller projects. City dollars spent by the Parks & Recreation Board are also tracked, including annual operating support for the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, arts in the parks programs, and a neighborhood park arts program, among other grant-funded projects. Art in public places funding is documented, and special projects in the Mayor's office (exhibitions), for film projects, and the Northeast Arts Action Plan are also described. All together, these expenditures amounted to some \$94 million in 2002, \$78 million of which is devoted to four large capital projects (Walker and Guthrie parking, historic theaters, and MacPhail Center for the Arts).

Upcoming City Arts Projects

The report nears its conclusion with a summary of upcoming projects as of the date of release, including Mayor R.T. Rybak's Mosaic initiative, plans to undertake the Plan for Arts & Culture, art in public places projects with an emphasis on public art in the new central library and in neighborhood libraries.

City Arts Leadership

Concluding the document is a section describing the city's staff and volunteer positions related to the areas of arts and culture, including staff in the Mayor's office, a reconstituted Arts Commission (featuring 10 new members), and a brief description of the "redesign" of the Office of Cultural Affairs and its reduction in staff. In May 2002 the City Council passed a resolution directing:

- The Arts Commission should develop an annual work plan based on priorities established by city council, the community, and the Mayor
- The Arts Commission should work with city staff and elected officials to develop a long-range cultural plan for the city

Arts staff to be relocated to the planning Department under the Division of Cultural Affairs

Document #3 - Northeast Minneapolis Arts Action Plan, 2002

The Action Plan was completed in 2002 and “developed to strengthen artists’ presence in NE Minneapolis.” It was created as a long term plan with 3 phases in a 15 years time frame. There are 8 basic recommendations, each with several strategies attached.

A key recommendation is formation/confirmation of the Northeast Arts District, bounded by the Central, Lowery, Broadway and the river, as concentration of artists spaces, studios, galleries, entertainment venues. NE Minneapolis is home to many working artists who have located or relocated there due to its many warehouse and factory spaces that are ideal for studios and galleries. A goal is to maintain artists presence and their contribution to quality of life and economic development as the neighborhood inevitable changes and real estate prices escalate. Establishment of the district will include developing signage, exploring the expansion of the Business Improvement District on Central Avenue, creating temporary exhibition programs, installing public art (including incentives for inclusion in private sector developments),

Other highlighted recommendations:

- Secure sustainable, affordable spaces for artists studios, live/work spaces and arts related businesses.
- Pursue the purchase of development rights for selected properties. Expand the level of arts programming in the Arts District.
- Coordinate with the City to make changes in planning, zoning and regulations, including temporary use permits for performance/exhibitions, flexibility in upgrading buildings.
- Establish extensive marketing programs to publicize activities and programming in the NE Arts District.
- Use the NE Arts Action Plan as a template for creation of a cultural plan for the entire city.
- Enhance the capacity of the Northeast Minneapolis Arts Association (NEMAA) to expand programming, artists’ support and leadership. NEMAA, founded in 1995 to manage the Art-a-Whirl studio tours, oversaw development of the Plan and will play the lead role in implementation.

Document #4 – City of Minneapolis Public Art Funding Study

The study was initiated in 2002 and conducted by Jerry Allen and Associates in order to identify public art funding mechanisms in the City and to make recommendations to streamline the public art program.

Values and Goals of the Public Art Program are:

- Stimulate excellence in urban design and public art;
- Enhance community identity and place
- Contribute to community vitality;
- Involve a broad range of people and communities
- Value artists and artistic process;
- Use resources wisely.

Currently the City makes a yearly, voluntary allocation of 1% of a portion of its capital budget, determined annually by the Capital Long Range Improvement Committee. Funding is pooled, all public art staffing is paid by the fund and maintenance is not funded in the allocation. The public art program is overseen by the City's Arts Commission and staff are housed in the Community Planning and Economic Development agency.

In addition, the Public Library has a public art program, Neighborhood Revitalization funding has been used for public art, the Metropolitan Community Development Agency has undertaken some projects and public art is one of the menu of density bonuses available to private developers.

Highlighted recommendations

- Establish a City percent for art policy detailing annual allocations, how percentages are determined and allowable uses.
- Consider integrating all public art programs of independent boards (Library, Parks, Schools) into a City-wide program.
- Empower the Minneapolis Arts Commission as the central process body, and the City Council as the final approval body, for all public art in the City of Minneapolis.
- Create a Public Art Master Plan outlining goals, processes and policies for the program and establishing priorities with regard to the location and types of future project.
- Create an inventory of existing public artworks owned by the City and independent boards.
- Continue to develop public art projects in all wards of the City, ensuring equity.
- Create marketing vehicles to expand public art awareness of visitors and residents.

There is a tremendous opportunity for the current Cultural Plan to provide an advocacy and leadership boost to implementation of the Public Art Funding study.