

Arts & Creative Community Committee

Purpose Statement



Background

Rochester boasts a seemingly outsized arts and culture scene, as well as a blossoming network of creative professionals in the local economy. However, the organizational capacity of this sector needs improvements in order to provide services to local creatives, advocate on their behalf, and inform policies and investments within City government. Establishing a formal framework and advisory body to provide guidance will help advance the community's desire to be a more dynamic City of the Arts.

Currently, no centralized organization speaks for both large arts institutions, small organizations, and individuals in the creative sector. The Arts & Cultural Council for Greater Rochester was recently dissolved, while emerging groups like Arts in the Loop and ROC Arts United look to fill voids in the ecosystem and serve previously underrepresented voices.

The *Rochester 2034 Comprehensive Plan*, adopted in November 2019, acknowledges those organizational challenges and recommends a more collaborative approach between the City of Rochester and the arts, culture, and creative ecosystem. More specifically, the Plan proposes the development of a master plan for this sector (Strategy AC-1b), which would include recommendations for "an organizational structure within City government to support the arts community", such as an arts commission or other advisory body, among other ideas for supporting this part of our community.

Following the completion of *Rochester 2034*, Mayor Lovely Warren requested a steering committee be established to explore these opportunities. Unfortunately, the pandemic delayed those efforts for the rest of 2020. Then in her State of the City address in January 2021, the mayor helped restart the effort by calling for the creation of an "Arts Equity Fund". The City will commit 1% of the funding from all capital projects above \$1 million to this fund, which can be used to invest in creating art of all kinds throughout the city. This initiative is part of the Administration's broader *Equity & Recovery Agenda* (ERA). With that boost, a steering committee formation became an even greater priority. The committee will help improve connections between local government and the arts community and will spearhead master planning efforts.

Committee Purpose

The *Arts & Creative Community Committee* (AC₃) is a collection of stakeholders that represent various artists, genres, venues, and institutions within this critical sector of the Rochester community. The Committee will initially be charged with the following tasks, understanding that the group and its purpose may evolve as progress is achieved:

1. Partner with the City of Rochester to **develop the *Creative Community Empowerment Plan: A Blueprint for Rochester's Arts, Culture, and Creative Ecosystem***. This will include an RFP process, management of a consultant, a robust community engagement effort, and potentially fundraising.
2. Through the *Creative Community Empowerment Plan*, **develop the structure and mission of a City Arts Commission** that will implement the City Arts Policy (also known as the Percent for Arts Ordinance) by administering the Arts Equity Fund. The AC₃, and eventually the City Arts Commission, will also be responsible for coordination and collaboration with other arts-based organizations and individual artists.
3. The City Arts Commission, once established, will **guide City investments through the Arts Equity Fund**. In the interim, the AC₃ will serve that role.

The AC₃ will serve as a smaller, more focused steering committee that can perform the above tasks while meeting regularly with the broader arts community in a number of ways throughout the process. The AC₃'s ongoing connections and engagement with the highly diverse arts and creative community will be critical to an inclusive and well-informed process. Note that the committee's relationship with Monroe County and New York State, as well as the geographic purview beyond the city of Rochester, is to be determined.