

# *Creative Community Empowerment Plan for the City of Rochester*

## **Plan Overview**

The Creative Community Empowerment Plan (CCEP) will provide a blueprint for investing in and improving the local creative ecosystem. It will be created by the community, for the community, with facilitation assistance provided by City staff, the AC<sup>3</sup>, and a team of planning and design consultants. It will have a particular focus on historically marginalized and underserved artists in the community. The Plan will concentrate on recommendations for the City of Rochester, but will address the broader Rochester region as well.

## **Plan Framework**

The CCEP will be a graphically-rich, user-friendly, and implementation-oriented document. It will establish a strategic framework with a set of goals, objectives, and actions, all under the umbrella of a vision and key values that guide decision making. **The following are examples of questions that should be explored during the CCEP process.**

1. How can we **establish a formal City Arts Commission** for Rochester? We need to set up a framework for its mission, membership, and operations, as well as the City's process for allocating money to the Arts Equity Fund (AEF). This organization would be responsible for:
  - o Identifying and prioritizing potential arts projects/installations, capital and otherwise
  - o Administering the use of AEF funds
  - o Serving as a liaison between the City, Monroe County, the arts community, and the arts organization(s) in #2 (if formed)

And potentially:

- o Promoting arts-based activities and events
- o Leading or partnering on efforts to implement recommendations of the CCEP

What steps are needed to form this Commission, including City charter, legal, and budget implications?

2. How can we **establish a non-profit arts alliance organization** for the city and region? This could help fill the void left by the Arts & Cultural Council and/or enhance the efforts of other emerging organizations. The community needs a centralized non-profit organization responsible (in part) for:
  - o Providing services and support systems for artists and arts organizations (training, workshops, networking, developing a business, pooling resources for insurance, etc.)
  - o Advocating for members and the broader arts and creative community

- Serving as a liaison to local, county, and state government
- Promoting arts-based activities and events
- Leading or partnering on efforts to implement recommendations of the CCEP

What steps are needed to form this organization and who will be involved in that formation?

3. How can we further **advance or expound upon issues brought up in the [Arts + Culture Section](#) of the Rochester 2034 Comprehensive Plan**? The following Goals are listed in the Plan, with each containing several more specific Strategies (one of which calls for the creation of the CCEP):
  - Support, grow, and sustain the creative economy
  - Support Rochester’s local arts and cultural organizations through community collaboration and joint fundraising
  - Increase access to public art and cultural resources in an equitable and culturally sensitive way
  
4. How can we **increase the economic impact of the arts and creative community** in Rochester? For starters, the existing economic impact should be studied and promoted. Beyond that, growing the arts ecosystem will help raise the quality of life of all Rochesterians, in particular providing a more equitable and accessible path for marginalized and/or economically distressed residents to grow their artistic endeavors. This effort should also include improving collaboration between colleges/universities, innovation zones, co-work spaces, maker spaces, business incubators, and the gaming community. All of these and more contribute to a robust and economically impactful creative community.
  
5. How can we **establish a sustainable and coordinated approach to programming parks and public spaces**, especially in Downtown and within ROC the Riverway projects? This approach must reflect the size of the city and region and recognize the critical mass needed to support a variety of programming.
  
6. How can we **improve access to the arts**? This should address equity, geography, infrastructure, promotions, and coordination.
  
7. How can we **amplify the artistic expression of marginalized populations**, including people of color, the LGBTQ+ community, deaf artists, etc? And how can these efforts help further goals related to social justice, community building, and healing divisions?
  
8. How can the CCEP efforts **complement the development of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan** for Rochester? The City is currently pursuing funding for the development of a plan that will include issues relevant to the CCEP, such as safe and equitable access to parks, public art in public spaces (temporary, permanent, rotating, etc.), and arts and creative programming in parks and R-Centers.

9. How can we **provide a more robust pipeline for the development of artists?** We need to nurture their skills, business acumen, and even ability to respond to public art commissions/RFPs. This effort, among other benefits, will invest in young and emerging artists who could eventually contribute to installations paid for by the AEF.
  
10. How can we **nurture a culture of arts-filled spaces and experiences** throughout the community? While Rochester boasts an outsized arts and culture scene, much more can be done to fill our urban spaces with creative expression – both large and small scale. Rochesterians and visitors to the Flower City should come to expect regular encounters with creativity and whimsy throughout the city – art that surprises, pops up, infiltrates, confronts, inspires, unites, and draws people in.

### Consultant Selection

Because of the highly unique nature of the CCEP, a consultant would likely consist of a team of companies with a combination of local and out-of-town experience. The team would ideally and collectively have experience with:

- Developing arts master plans, as well as other community plans
- Robust and creative community engagement, especially with artists
- Establishing non-profit organizations, especially arts alliance groups and area management entities that promote and activate public spaces
- Encouraging collaboration between municipalities and non-profit arts organizations
- High quality graphic design for documents, websites, and other project materials
- Best practices in other communities

Consultants will be encouraged to review example plans from other cities such as Minneapolis, Brooklyn, Alexandria, Dayton, and Greensboro.