

# rock island arts plan



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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### **Cover Art**

Benjamin Fawkes, Rozz-Tox



Photo credit: The District

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Photo credit: Circa '21 Dinner Playhouse

## INTRODUCTION

Cities around the world receive immeasurable cultural, social, and economic benefits from public art. It is therefore no coincidence that the most dynamic and creative cities also have vibrant public art programs. Art aficionados, tourists, and those seeking a creative place to call home look to cities like Chicago, Atlanta, and Seattle to be immersed in art. Rock Island is solidly claiming a space among these creative cities as an emerging contender, albeit on a smaller-scale. Within a quarter square mile, we have theater, comedy, professional ballet, sculptures, graphic street art, live music, murals, potters, woodturners, studios, and craftsmen, as well as an award-winning multimedia video production company. Rock Island is also home to Horseshack Studio, which hosts recording sessions with popular and up-and-coming indie musicians for the Daytrotter website. Our talent pool and wealth of artistic enterprises demonstrate that the arts are not only thriving in Rock Island, but the movement is gaining a foothold as well. Rock Island leadership is committed to strengthening and solidifying our reputation as a leader in the arts. This 2015 Arts Plan serves as a guide in helping us achieve that goal.



Photo credit: Quad City Arts



## Economic Prosperity and the Arts

In a post-2008 world there is an ever growing emphasis in cities and regions that job creation is critical to ensure a strong economy. The connection is also now being made that the arts help promote economic prosperity by contributing to the quality of life in a community, which positively impacts the local tourism industry while attracting new residents and businesses.

This link between arts and economic prosperity has been locally demonstrated. Americans for the Arts studied the nonprofit arts and culture industry in the Quad Cities region in 2013 and found that art generated \$71.34 million in economic activity, created \$47.92 million in household income for local residents, supported 1,906 full-time equivalent jobs, and delivered \$7.79 million in local and state governmental revenues.<sup>1</sup> These figures do not reflect additional economic benefits provided to our region by local for profit arts-oriented businesses, such as Circa '21, Ballet Quad Cities School of Dance, The District Theatre, and The Establishment Theatre, just to name a few.

Americans for the Arts also found that arts and culture pumps revenue into the local economy through event-related spending. When patrons attend an arts event, they may also pay for parking, eat dinner at a restaurant, shop in local retail stores, and have a cocktail or dessert on the way home. Based on the 151,802 audience surveys conducted nationally, the typical arts attendee spends \$24.60 per person, per event, beyond the cost of admission.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, the arts and culture industry tends to retain dollars in the local economy, as the associated expenses are largely manifested as wages for local residents.

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<sup>1</sup>Arts and Economic Prosperity IV, National Statistical Report, Americans for the Arts (2013)  
[http://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/pdf/information\\_services/research/services/economic\\_impact/aepiv/NationalStatisticalReport.pdf](http://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/pdf/information_services/research/services/economic_impact/aepiv/NationalStatisticalReport.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and Their Audiences in the Quad Cities Region, Arts and Economic Prosperity IV, Americans for the Arts (2013)  
[http://aftadc.brinkster.net/AEPIV/IL\\_QuadCitiesRegion\\_AEP4\\_SummaryOfFindings.pdf](http://aftadc.brinkster.net/AEPIV/IL_QuadCitiesRegion_AEP4_SummaryOfFindings.pdf)

## ARTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### Mission

The Mission of the Rock Island Arts Advisory Committee is to advocate for and to promote the creation, understanding, appreciation, and awareness of the arts in the City of Rock Island.

### Organizational Purpose

The Rock Island Arts Advisory Committee was established in 2007 to serve in an advisory capacity to the Mayor and City Council on matters related to the development of arts and culture in the City. The Committee is charged with: 1) promoting the creation, understanding, appreciation, and awareness of the arts, and 2) working together to determine ways that the arts can enhance Rock Island's quality of life and contribute to economic and social growth. The Committee also serves as a liaison to local, regional, state and national arts organizations to foster support of the arts.

### Membership

The Arts Advisory Committee is comprised of citizens, artists, arts organizations and design professionals. The Committee is appointed by the Mayor and consists of 9 members serving staggered 3-year terms. A nonvoting city staff member provides administrative assistance to the Committee.



## CITY OF ROCK ISLAND ART PROGRAM

The City of Rock Island Art Program was established by the Arts Advisory Committee through the development of the 2007 ArtsPlan. The initial ArtsPlan included numerous recommendations to support a broad range of artistic endeavors and to improve the City's quality of life. Many projects have come to fruition, including the creation of a walking guidebook for Rock Island arts, reuse of the former Rocket Theatre (now The Establishment Theatre), and the installation of a permanent sculpture and performance venue at Schwiebert Riverfront Park. The Committee also continues to offer its support to Quad City Arts for its sculpture and Metro Arts programs and contributes to Rock Island Arts & Entertainment District-sponsored events.

In 2014, the Arts Advisory Committee decided to revisit the ArtsPlan to celebrate successes, evaluate shortcomings, and ultimately expand the City's arts program to address city-wide arts initiatives and not simply focus on the downtown area. Two public meetings were held in 2013; everyone who had an interest in the Rock Island arts was invited to attend and give input. Local artists shared their ideas on how to grow and enhance all forms of art in Rock Island. The following ideas emerged from these input sessions:

- Create a community-wide art scene that is fluid and welcoming of all types of art and all levels of artistic endeavors.
- Develop Third Avenue as an Arts Corridor.
- Establish a weekly artist's market using the farmer's market model.
- Create opportunities for the public to engage artists outside of formal gallery/sales settings.
- Partner with local arts, tourism, and economic development organizations to better promote art and cultural events in Rock Island, while reaching an audience beyond the Quad Cities region.
- Create a website where original art by local artists can be sold online.
- Explore options to expand arts education (e.g., more arts education in schools, develop an art mentorship program).

Ideas from these input sessions were taken and prioritized by the Committee and used to develop the vision, goals, and recommendations for this 2015 Arts Plan.

*Metro Arts is the perfect program to get involved in the art community at a young age. This year I developed new leadership skills, learned the importance of team input, and problem solving when things go wrong, and of course made some great friends. Metro Arts has aided and supported me to get more involved with public art and community projects.*

*- Anonymous Metro Arts Apprentice Evaluation*

## OUR VISION \* GOALS \* INITIATIVES

The Arts Advisory Committee is dedicated to community-wide creation of arts and culture as a means to support economic wellbeing and enhance the quality of life in our community. Our vision is to expand our vibrant arts culture to reach a critical mass of arts and artists thereby setting Rock Island apart as a destination to live, work, and create.

### Our Goals and Strategic Initiatives

Our role as an advisory body to the City Council allows us to explore options that support the arts and meet the Council's strategic goals for the community. The following goals have been identified to support these needs.

#### **GOAL Establish dedicated funding to financially support a Rock Island Arts Program.**

Securing an adequate funding source is essential to the success of any public art program. While the City has generously supported the arts through annual support to Quad City Arts for its programs, the Arts Advisory Committee itself does not have a funding source devoted solely to the advancement of art in the community. The following are some strategies to create such a funding source to support the Committee's goals.

#### *Create an "Art Set Aside" for New Development Projects*

As recommended in the recently adopted Downtown Revitalization Plan, the Arts Advisory Committee recommends that the City Council consider establishing a "set aside" for public art or a "percent for art" requirement for new development in the City. San Francisco, for instance, mandates 2% of all construction costs be allocated for public art; Oakland has a 1% allocation for both public and private construction projects; and Vancouver, British Columbia also requires that new private developments allocate money to public art (\$0.95/square foot).

*As one who came upon the Arts Scene late in life, I can testify to the welcoming, all-inclusive and cooperative spirit among artists in the Quad Cities.*

*Artists enrich the community with their varied and significant talents, and benefit from each other's creativity in their individual development. I have had several exhibitions in the MidCoast Galleries and at the Botanical Center where rotating artists display their work providing beauty for the viewer as well as an opportunity for purchase. The Calls for Entry in turn stimulate artists in all media to produce more art.*

*- Margery Helen Franklin,  
local artist*

***Parking Meters for Charitable Giving***

Many communities are installing decommissioned parking meters where residents can chip in loose change to improve the public art scene. San Mateo, CA (photos right), Lexington, KY and Dallas, TX each have programs where meters, artfully designed and thoughtfully placed, are collecting small donations from passersby. Rock Island faces a timely opportunity to implement a similar program. The Downtown Revitalization Plan recommends removal of the downtown parking meters; some of these could easily be transformed by local artists into art collection meters.



Photo credit: Downtown San Mateo Association

**GOAL Support a critical mass of art activities, programs, spaces, pieces, and events that promote Rock Island as a cool place to live, work, and play.**

***Establish Third Avenue as the Arts Corridor in Downtown Rock Island***

More than a decade ago, The District (geographically centered within the core of downtown) was successfully branded as the arts and entertainment destination of the Quad Cities. An underground arts scene is now slowly emerging on the periphery of downtown. Craftsmen and art producers have been quietly producing works of art for diverse but specific audiences. Navarro Canoe Company (handcrafted canoes), Quad Cities Woodturners Club, Dphilms (film and imaging services), Daytrotter Studios, DeSoto Potters, and Rozz-Tox can all be found within a two-block area of Third Avenue. The Committee recommends promoting this area and developing it into an arts corridor.

***Establish a Regular Artist's Market using the Farmer's Market Model***

The Committee suggestions creating an open air market in the downtown area that is open to local artists of all media—visual artists, potters, fiber artists, illustrators, photographers, print makers, glass blowers, jewelers, and craftsmen, just to name a few. The regular availability of such a marketplace can help activate the downtown on a weekly or monthly basis to support not only the artists, but also other downtown merchants. The Artists Market could potentially expand efforts currently underway at Skeleton Key Art and Antiques, a local business that initiated a farmer's market in 2014.

***Support Artists, Nonprofits, and for Profit Arts Organizations***

The Arts Advisory Committee has long partnered with Quad City Arts and The District to support the creation of arts, events, and arts programming in our community. The Council will continue to offer its support to Rock Island artists and nonprofit and for profit arts organizations that offer programs such as Gallery Hop, Dirty Art, and the sculpture program, among others. The Council will also support new events and activities as opportunities arise, with particular attention to events that are inclusive and/or celebrate cultural diversity.



Photo credit: The District

**GOAL Leverage the arts to help the City Council address its economic agenda.**

*Assist with Business Connections and Marketing Efforts*

The Arts Advisory Committee will work with partner organizations such as the City, Renaissance Rock Island, The District, and others to connect artists to businesses thereby promoting shared success. In addition, the Committee will assist with routine marketing of the arts, both inside and beyond the region, to create a larger patron base. For example, the Committee can assist with promoting art, artists, activities and events through web-based resources and social media.

*Create an Arts Incubator for the Visual and Performing Arts*

An arts incubator is a physical space set aside for the purpose of assisting art entrepreneurs in developing their skills, tools and business knowledge. Typically, arts incubators provide inexpensive work space, technical support and business development services to emerging artists, arts groups and arts-related businesses. Arts incubators can play a valuable role in graduating successful artists into the community by helping to build critical mass for creative culture throughout a region. A Rock Island arts incubator can also be a mechanism for placing vacant or underutilized space into productive use.

**GOAL Promote the creation and inclusion of art in public spaces throughout Rock Island.**

*Encourage public art as a vital component of municipal and private development projects*

As stated in our Downtown Revitalization Plan, the benefits of public art are well documented. Public art can develop a sense of community pride, stimulate social interaction, encourage healthier life styles, reduce vandalism and associated costs, promote ecology, nurture and strengthen grass roots cultures, expand learning and awareness, heal the social fabric, explore risk and make lateral connections between the various people and agencies responsible for the public art. The Arts Advisory Committee will act in an advisory capacity to promote the use of public and private lands and facilities throughout Rock Island for the placement of arts and cultural events.

**RESOLUTION NO. 18-2015**

**WHEREAS**, it is the mission of the City of Rock Island Arts Advisory Committee to advocate for and to promote the creation, understanding, appreciation, and awareness of the arts in the City of Rock Island; and

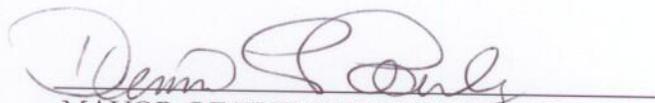
**WHEREAS**, in 2007, the Arts Advisory Committee established an ArtsPlan to increase the level of arts activity and awareness in the community with a focus on the Rock Island Arts and Entertainment District; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2014, the Arts Advisory Committee decided to revisit the 2007 ArtsPlan to celebrate successes, evaluate shortcomings, and ultimately expand the City's arts program to address city-wide arts initiatives and not simply focus on the downtown area; and

**WHEREAS**, in attempt to gain community input in the development of an updated Arts Plan, the Arts Advisory Committee hosted two community meetings to gather input, develop a vision, and prioritize and develop a vision, goals, and recommendations for an updated Arts Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council, having heard a presentation on the 2015 Arts Plan during a public study session on June 8, 2015 hereby finds that the 2015 Arts Plan supports City objectives to provide a vibrant arts and entertainment culture and should be adopted.

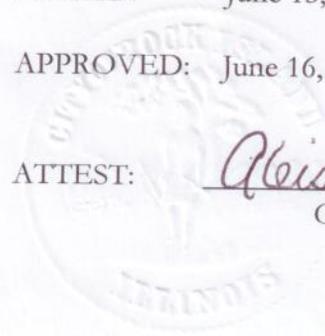
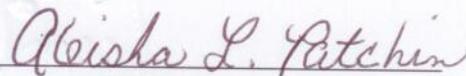
**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the City Council of the City of Rock Island hereby adopts the City of Rock Island 2015 Arts Plan.

  
MAYOR OF THE CITY OF ROCK ISLAND

PASSED: June 15, 2015

APPROVED: June 16, 2015

ATTEST:

  
  
CITY CLERK

AYES: Aldermen Schipp  
Austin  
Clark  
Mayberry  
Foley  
Tollenaer

NAYS: None  
ABSENT: Hotle