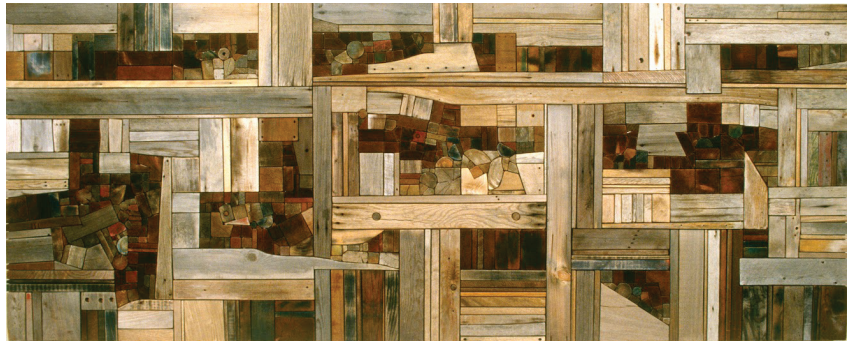


Leveraging Creativity

Cook County Cultural Plan

Accelerating the development of Arts and Culture as a key prosperity driver contributing to the social and economic vitality of Cook County



We can count ourselves among the most fortunate to live in a place that on a daily basis offers us the riches of a bountiful and beautiful landscape, a home in which to raise our families that offers healthy lifestyle choices and the lessons of self-reliance, a deeply ingrained culture of respect for the land and one another, and the creativity of the artist and the maker.

This plan recognizes the critical role that arts and culture play in the development of Cook County—as drivers of the local culture, the economic life, as well as the tourism that brings visitors into the region.

George Morrison (1919–2000) *Cumulated Landscape*, 1976
Wood collage, 48 x 120 x 3 inches
Collection, Minnesota Museum of American Art, Gift of Honeywell, Inc., 2000.01

Creating Lives from the Land

The Lake Superior horizon is never far from view on Minnesota's North Shore. "It straightens out the crooked thoughts," observed artist Birney Quick, founder of the Grand Marais Art Colony.

The lake wears a different mercurial and mysterious mood every day. It inspires visual art, music, and poetry, and has fed, transported, threatened, quenched, and enlivened residents and visitors in Cook County since the glaciers receded. The rugged landscape and the hardy people have been sculpted by chisels of wind, water, and winter. The intensity of the climate breeds its own kind of abundance, fueling ingenuity and cooperation.

Those who live in Cook County are here because they want to be, have stayed because they can. The place attracts unique people: self-reliant, creative, opinionated, outspoken, observant. They pull together for community initiatives, artistic endeavors, bartering goods and services, and to pull each other out of the ditch in snowstorms.

Creativity has long connected humanity to this place, from prehistoric artists to the writers, performers, and makers of today. Few small and isolated towns have such plentiful culture. People here craft useful and beautiful products that echo the beauty of the landscape, utility, and a sense of purpose and connection. Artists also bring visitors, tax dollars, creative problem-solving, and much more.

Preserving the county's rich resources is a priority for Cook Countians. It means eating as much food as possible that was grown locally. It means sustainable forestry, biomass heat, solar arrays, and smart architecture. Eating fresh-caught fish is an eternal connection between life and the lake.

People here can make almost everything they need, from bread to birchbark canoes. And now they must make two essential elements: space to live and places to work. They must make an economy that lasts all year. Families, seniors, locals and visitors occupy the county rich with arts and culture. The combination of ideas, education and experience is stimulating an exciting time at the edge of Lake Superior.

Vision

We envision a quality of life for future generations that embraces our strong ties to the land, to the water, and to the rich heritage of the peoples of diverse cultural origins that call this place home.

We will respond to the constant press of change by encouraging viable locally-based economic development, caring deeply for our natural resources, and honoring our artisans, artists, culture-keepers and historians, recognized as essential elements of a balanced, sustainable community.

\$10 MILLION ESTIMATED ANNUAL **ECONOMIC IMPACT** FROM ARTS & CULTURE¹

\$2.58 MILLION ANNUAL **DIRECT EXPENDITURES** FROM ARTS & CULTURE SECTOR²

\$2 MILLION ANNUAL **AUDIENCE SPENDING** ON ARTS & CULTURE²

127 FTE JOBS SUPPORTED BY ARTS & CULTURE²

ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT AND RECREATION ARE AMONG THE **TOP 3 EMPLOYERS** IN COOK COUNTY AS OF 2014³

 **100,000+** PARTICIPANTS FOR ARTS AND CULTURE OFFERINGS ANNUALLY (approx. 50% from outside of Cook County).¹

Values and Guiding Principles

- We value the role that arts, crafts and culture play in our lives, contributing to our physical, spiritual and emotional well-being.
- We value arts and culture as critical to Cook County's quality of life and community vitality.
- We value the importance of our quality of life to a healthy economy, recognizing our businesses, our homes and our public spaces as important to community sustainability.
- We value our beautiful natural setting, ensuring that it is preserved, protected and restored for future generations.
- We value communities with distinct identities, retaining their authenticity and rural character while responding to growth and change.
- We value the role that diverse recreational opportunities play in our community well-being, balanced with our need to preserve and protect our natural setting.

Why Arts and Culture

Arts, craft and culture are essential to a sustainable future for Cook County. They make our values visible, building on the region's natural beauty and cultural heritage. They offer opportunities to diversify the economy, bringing new dollars into the region.

Traditionally logging, fishing, farming and manufacturing were the foundation of the county. Today the primary driver is tourism, driven by the four key ingredients of a place of destination: a stunning natural beauty, a rich history and culture, local foods and an authentic life, and a vibrant arts and culture scene. Go Cook County Economic Analysis, 2013, reports that "The County's tourism economy is built on high quality public lands and Lake Superior, arts and North Shore culture."

Artists bring the ability to create goods that can be sold over internet-connected distances, and to do it all year long, while the tourist economy ebbs and flows. Art and craft education is also proving it can bring students in all seasons, who come to learn from masters, seeking experiences of the authentic North, and to eat, sleep, and explore the community.

This plan builds on the strength of documented impacts from investment in arts and culture, striving to ensure a sustainable future for the sector as a key prosperity driver into the future. Cook County has the heritage, talent, institutional capacity and commitment to successfully grow this sector of the economy.

The plan explores three key priorities necessary to ensure a balanced and sustainable future for the county as a place of destination, securing vitality for the future while honoring the values that have made this place the one we love. These three priority areas include

- 1. TELL THE STORY:** Capture the essence of this place and the imagination of both residents and visitors. Promote arts and culture, bringing buyers for local arts, crafts, cultural goods and products to markets locally and beyond the County.
- 2. WORK TOGETHER:** Develop the capacity, synergy and teamwork across public, commercial, and arts and culture sectors to work collaboratively building support for the growth of arts and culture as a key economic driver for the County.
- 3. PLACEMAKING:** Assess the physical spaces around us. Rally around key opportunities necessary to support and expand the arts and culture sector as an essential economic driver, from affordable housing to a stronger public presence as a destination.

Average arts tourists stay 5 nights rather than 3 and spend \$614/ stay vs. \$425 of a non-arts tourist.

—The Travel Industry Association of America

COOK COUNTY ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

If we invest dollars and effort here...	...and accomplish goals such as....	...we will ultimately achieve measurable, long-term objectives
<p>TELLING OUR STORY</p> <p>Develop and market the identity and brand of Cook County as a regional, national and global arts and culture destination.</p>	<p>Goal 1: Create an authentic, unified story and brand that invites community ownership.</p> <p>Goal 2: Develop and fund an arts and culture marketing and public relations plan based on the authentic story and brand.</p> <p>Goal 3: Use technology, including online sales, to enhance markets for artists and arts & culture sector organizations, including a database of artists and their work.</p>	<p>Narrative and Language: Review of communications and marketing materials in place throughout the County reflect a unified narrative articulating our identity.</p> <p>Growth as an Arts Destination: Data reflects increased visitorship to Cook County with documented engagement in Arts and Culture.</p> <p>Enhanced Technology: There is an online promotion and sales platform in place, broadly used by artists. Tracking demonstrates economic impact.</p>
<p>WORKING TOGETHER</p> <p>Build and support public and private capacity and commitment to common goals to grow the arts and culture sector.</p>	<p>Goal 1: Develop and formalize a community vision and commitment to support arts and culture initiatives in Cook County. (<i>community defined as local township, city, tribal, county, state and federal government; business and nonprofits.</i>)</p> <p>Goal 2: Support collaboration and organizational development of a vibrant and sustainable arts and culture sector.</p> <p>Goal 3: Support the business, economic and professional development of Cook County artists.</p>	<p>Government Policy: Emphasis on arts and culture is incorporated into key planning tools such as comprehensive plans and economic development documents, and planning bodies such as an arts commission.</p> <p>Cross Sector Partnership: There is evidence of strengthened connection or alignment across organizations and sectors in support of the cultural economy.</p> <p>Professional Practice: Resources are in place to support arts and culture workers in developing sustainable business models.</p> <p>Organizational Income: There is documented growth in earned income for arts and culture sector organizations to sustain the arts and culture economy.</p> <p>Individual Artist Income: There is documented growth of the arts and culture sector, including artists and arts businesses in Cook County.</p>
<p>PLACEMAKING</p> <p>Inventory, identify, prioritize, fund and develop key physical building projects that expand the arts and culture sector.</p>	<p>Goal 1: Develop affordable workforce housing options for low- to mid-income permanent residents, including artists and new, younger residents.</p> <p>Goal 2: Develop affordable short-term housing for shorter stay guests such as temporary workforce, artists in residence, interns, instructors, students.</p> <p>Goal 3: Envision, plan, design and build the next generation of focal point facilities, generating a shared sense of excitement and purpose while also supporting arts and culture in Cook County.</p> <p>Goal 4: Assess the visual appearance of public places and streetscapes; fund opportunities for improved signage and public arts to reflect an arts and culture destination.</p>	<p>Permanent Housing: There are new affordable permanent workforce housing options available for county residents with low- to mid-income.</p> <p>Short-Term Housing: There is affordable short-term workforce housing in place in adequate supply to respond to the growing demand from potential participants in arts and culture opportunities.</p> <p>Focal Point Arts and Culture Facilities: There is in place one or more focal point next generation facility(ies) supporting arts and culture.</p> <p>Public Spaces and Streetscape: Cook County visually represents itself as a major arts and culture destination, filled with public art.</p>
<p>GUIDING IMPLEMENTATION</p>	<p>Develop a Steering Committee for Arts and Culture Plan Implementation, housed within the EDA. This group, representative of leadership key to the implementation of plan goals, is to be charged with oversight and strategy implementation.</p>	<p>New Dollars: There is increased as well as shift in funding from both within the County and outside sources in support of the cultural economy.</p> <p>Culture: There is a visible shift in cultural norms toward support for arts and culture, as demonstrated in new partnerships and local support to artists & cultural work. There is overall evidence of accelerated economic vitality for Cook County.</p>

There are a range of personal economies here, and some people are really struggling to get food on the table. I would really hope we could help somehow raise the quality of life for everybody through this plan, including our artists.

—Betsy Bowen, printmaker and gallery owner

Cook County Arts and Culture Economy Planning Team

Representing the public sector, the commercial sector, the nonprofit sector, and the arts and culture sector, the Arts and Culture Economy Planning Team has met throughout 2016 developing this roadmap for accelerating the development of arts and culture as a key prosperity driver in securing the social and economic vitality of Cook County into the future. The planning has grown out of previous and ongoing efforts, such as the excellent work of the Go Cook County process, enhancing that work with a particular emphasis on the key role of crafts and artistic creativity in preserving our way of life.

Jay Arrowsmith DeCoux, Mayor, City of Grand Marais

Debbie Benedict, Executive Director, WTIP Community Radio

Betsy Bowen, Printmaker, Betsy Bowen Gallery & Studios

Kristofer Bowman, Owner, Upstate MN

Jim Boyd, Executive Director, Cook County Chamber of Commerce

Jeff Cadwell, Administrator, Cook County

Pat Campanaro, Business Consultant, Small Business Devel. Ctr.

Tom Christiansen, Sculptor, Last Chance Fabricating LLC

Amy Demmer, Executive Director, Grand Marais Art Colony

Jessa Frost, Program Director, North House Folk School

Gerry Grant, The Grand Marais Playhouse, Board of Directors

Bill Hansen, Owner, Sawbill Canoe Outfitters

Marcia Hyatt, Leadership Consultant, Co-owner Last Chance Gallery

Linda Jurek, Executive Director, Visit Cook County MN

Peggy Lucas, ArtSpace Board of Dir., UMN Board of Regents

April McCormick, Manager, Grand Portage Roads and Realty

Carrie McHugh, Executive Director, Cook County Historical Society

Richard Olson, Designer, Owner of EnvironDesign

Lori Rothstein, Associate Extension Professor, Univ. of Minnesota

Jan Sivertson, Cook County Commissioner, Sivertson Gallery, Board of Directors Minnesota State Arts Board

Mary Somnis, Director, Cook County/Grand Marais Economic Development Authority

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