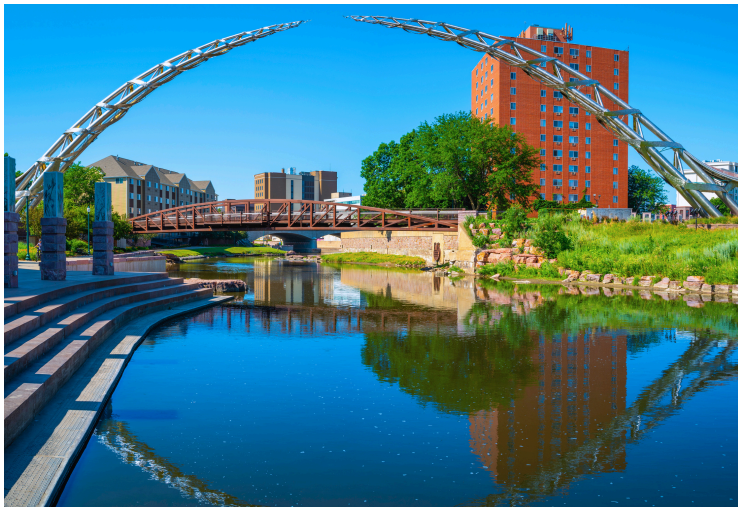




Arts and Cultural Plan: Executive Summary



Executive Summary

The Sioux Falls Arts and Cultural Plan, prepared by Keen Independent, establishes a long-term framework to guide the City's role in advancing arts and culture over the next decade. Developed through community engagement, stakeholder input and market analysis, the plan reflects a community that values arts and culture as an important part of civic life, economic vitality and Sioux Falls' identity. As the city continues to grow, the plan identifies opportunities to build on existing cultural momentum while expanding participation and visibility throughout Sioux Falls.

The following findings summarize the primary themes that emerged through the planning process and inform the plan's recommendations and long-term direction.

Existing Strengths and Community Support

Sioux Falls has built a strong foundation of arts and cultural assets, local creative talent and public support that contributes to the city's identity and quality of life. Cultural anchors such as the Washington Pavilion, Levitt at the Falls and SculptureWalk have helped establish Downtown Sioux Falls as an active center for arts and cultural activity. Participants described a cultural ecosystem that "punches above its weight" for a city of Sioux Falls' size. Museums, performing arts venues and public art provide a strong base for continued cultural growth and community activity.

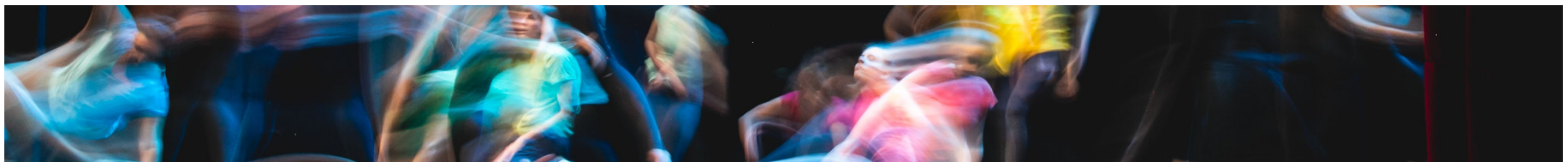
Strong Downtown arts identity. Downtown Sioux Falls has emerged as the center of the city's arts and cultural activity, creating an active environment for performances, festivals, public art and community events throughout the year.

Together, these cultural assets contribute to a vibrant Downtown environment that supports tourism, entertainment activity and regional visibility.

Community support for arts and culture. Public support for arts and culture is strong and consistent across the community. Plan survey findings show that 83 percent of Sioux Falls respondents believe arts and culture add to the city's appeal, while 90 percent support public funding for cultural programs and amenities. Residents also expressed strong interest in additional arts programming, public events and opportunities to engage with arts and culture throughout the city.

Civic pride and creative energy. Community input reflects a strong sense of local identity and civic pride connected to arts and culture. Residents frequently describe Sioux Falls as "diverse," "growing," "friendly" and community-oriented. Community input also emphasized the importance of local artists, Downtown activity and public spaces as defining characteristics of the city. Throughout the planning process, participants have described Sioux Falls as a community that combines a "small-town feel" with "big city amenities," supported by collaboration, creativity and growing cultural momentum.

Established institutions and community investment. Long-standing institutions, community organizations and ongoing public investment have helped establish a visible and active cultural presence across Sioux Falls. Existing facilities, festivals, public programming and community-led initiatives provide a strong foundation for future growth and continued cultural development.



Executive Summary

Existing Challenges and Areas for Growth

As Sioux Falls continues to grow, the planning process identified several areas where additional investment, coordination and access could help strengthen the city's arts and cultural sector. Key themes included limited affordable creative space, barriers to participation, coordination challenges and limited funding opportunities for smaller organizations and individual artists.

Limited affordable creation space. Individual artists and organizations described ongoing demand for additional rehearsal, studio and performance space, particularly spaces that are affordable and accessible for emerging and mid-sized organizations.

Stakeholders emphasized the value of flexible creative spaces that can support artistic development, collaboration and community programming. Expanding access to these spaces could create more opportunities for local artists and organizations to produce and present work within Sioux Falls.

Information sharing and audience development. Residents and stakeholders consistently expressed interest in making Sioux Falls' arts and cultural opportunities easier to find, experience and participate in. While cultural activity takes place throughout the year, many participants noted that events, performances, festivals and programs can feel disconnected or difficult to track across organizations and venues. Participants identified opportunities for stronger shared promotion, coordinated marketing and community storytelling that could help build larger audiences, increase participation and create a more visible and connected cultural environment across Sioux Falls.

Geographic and cost barriers. Cost barriers, transportation and the concentration of cultural activity Downtown were also identified as limiting broader participation, particularly for residents living outside the city center.

Coordination and governance opportunities. The planning process identified opportunities to strengthen coordination and communication among City departments, cultural facility operators and arts leadership as the arts and cultural sector continues to grow. More consistent collaboration and shared planning between City staff, the Arts Commission and operators of City-supported cultural facilities could help better align long-term planning, public investment and broader community cultural goals.

The analysis also identified opportunities to strengthen coordination between the Parks and Recreation Department, City arts staff and the Arts Commission related to arts and cultural programming in parks, public spaces and community facilities. Participants emphasized the importance of integrating arts leadership into planning and decision-making related to cultural programming in public spaces across Sioux Falls.

Limited funding pathways for small and mid-sized organizations. Stakeholder feedback and funding analysis identified a lack of smaller and mid-sized grant and funding opportunities to support artists, emerging organizations and community-based cultural programming. Participants noted that limited access to flexible operational and project-based funding can create barriers to organizational growth, creative development and long-term sustainability.

Executive Summary

Strategic Direction

Overall, the findings suggest that Sioux Falls is well positioned to build on a strong and growing arts and cultural economy. Established institutions, active community participation, creative talent and sustained public investment have helped shape a sector that already contributes to quality of life, tourism and community identity.

At the same time, the planning process identified clear strategic priorities to elevate Sioux Falls' cultural identity, expand cultural spaces and assets, steward public cultural investment for community benefit, increase access to arts and culture and support the creative workforce and economy. Sioux Falls is a unique community with thriving arts and culture. It is critical for the community to continue to invest itself to maintain its strengths and momentum into the future.



“Maestro!” by Sherri Treeby and Lee Leuning
Image source: Keen Independent

Sioux Falls Arts and Cultural Plan 2026-2036

FIVE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



1

Elevate Sioux Falls' cultural identity



2

Expand cultural spaces and assets



3

Steward public cultural investment for community benefit



4

Increase access to arts and culture



5

Support the creative workforce and economy

