



# EAST LANSING AGENDA

## Arts Commission Meeting

5:30 p.m. - April 16, 2026

Hannah Community Center - 819 Abbot Rd.

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# MINUTES

## Arts Commission Meeting

5:30 p.m. - March 19, 2026

Hannah Community Center - 819 Abbot Rd.

The Arts Commission of the City of East Lansing was called to order on Thursday, March 19, 2026, at 5:30 PM, in the Hannah Community Center, with the following members present:

**PRESENT:** Barbara Worgess, Elinor Holbrook, Commissioner Allie Siarto, Commissioner Leslie Wilbur, Commissioner Nina Silbergleit, Cara Ronk, and Gail Burke

**EXCUSED:** Commissioner Gabriel Biber and Courtney Miniffee

### 1. OPENING

1.1 Roll Call

1.2 Approval of the agenda

No concerns

1.3 Approval of the minutes

No Concerns

### 2. COMMUNICATIONS FROM AUDIENCE

None present

### 3. DISCUSSION ITEMS

3.1 Discussion of Arts Commission operating procedures and work plan

The Parks, Recreation and Arts Director, Justin Drwencke was present to review the Boards & Commission's Handbook. He also encouraged the Commission to review the 5-year plan and develop specific goals for 2026.

Chairperson Siarto developed a 3-goal outline draft. Document is attached.

Commissioners will now email the Chair, Vice-Chair and staff when they'd like items to be added to the agenda. Agenda's are set by this team.

[2026 Goals and Timeline - DRAFT](#)

3.2 Discussion of proposed FY2027 Public Art Fund budget

Parks, Recreation and Arts Director Justin Drwencke was present to review the FY27 budget and process. He encouraged the Commission to not make

financial decisions based on past budgets. For the past few years many infrastructure improvements have been with AARPA grant funds. These are no longer available.

#### **4. BUSINESS ITEMS**

##### 4.1 Consideration of FY2027 Cultural Arts Grant Guidelines

Commissioners reviewed the Cultural Arts Grant Guidelines and made updates.

Moved by Leslie Wilbur, seconded by Barbara Worgess, Move to direct staff to prepare an updated Cultural Arts Grant guideline document to be reviewed at the April 16, 2026 Arts Commission meeting.

#### **5. REPORTS**

##### 5.1 Council Liaison

Not present

##### 5.2 Commissioners

Request to review the CAG increased budget request letter to Council.

##### 5.3 Staff Report

Reviewed

##### 5.4 Chairperson

Allie went to a meeting with arts people at MSU - IAH instructors are doing more art.

Studio 10 - interviewed about song competition and CAG

Meeting with neighborhood presidents on Monday

talking with Wendy and Janey Lilly to learn about feasibility of permanent pianos

Went through 5-year plan and worked out a draft goal plan for this year. To be placed on future agenda.

#### **6. ADJOURNMENT**

8:36 p.m.

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Mayor

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Administrative Secretary



## 2026 Goals & Timeline

**Goal 1:** Revise and relaunch the Cultural Arts Grants program to increase clarity, fairness, and alignment with city arts priorities.

### 5 Year Plan Alignment:

- **Goal 2:** Improve commission operations
- **Goal 4:** Develop fair and equitable art selection criteria

### Actions & Outcomes:

- Draft a fully updated grant application, evaluation rubric, and review process by April, 2026.
- Launch the updated grant cycle in July 2026.

**Goal 2:** Develop a strategic one-year plan that identifies the commission’s top arts priorities and supports the City of East Lansing’s identity as a “City of the Arts.”

### 5 Year Plan Alignment:

- **Goal 3:** Create Recognition of the City of the Arts

### Actions & Outcomes:

- One Commissioner will take the lead on research and present to the Commission on what elements have led to other cities becoming known as art destinations; e.g.:
  - Arts branding approaches
  - Grant program structures
  - Any public-private partnerships
  - Signature art pieces, events, or programs
- The Commission will conduct a planning workshop by June 2026 to gather Commissioner input.
- The Commission will create a document defining how they want to move toward making East Lansing a creative and cultural destination. The document will include a one year plan that outlines top art funding priorities/locations in relation to how the Commission defines East Lansing as a creative and cultural destination.
- Review this plan quarterly and adjust priorities or messaging as needed.

**Goal 3:** Commissioners will collaborate to attend at least eight community meetings/events to connect with local stakeholders outside of Arts Commission meetings.

**5 Year Plan Alignment:**

- **Goal 6:** Develop and strengthen collaborative relationships among regional stakeholders

**Actions & Outcomes:**

- The Arts Commission will brainstorm local organizations and meeting opportunities by August, 2026 and assign volunteers to attend at least eight external meetings to build upon collaborative relationships and opportunities.
- Assigned volunteers will attend their meetings to better connect with local stakeholders related to the mission of the Arts Commission.
- As of March, 2026, the chair will have met with:
  1. Greater Lansing Humanities, Arts, and Cultural Leaders luncheon (quarterly)
  2. The East Lansing neighborhood presidents
  3. Representatives from MSU, including:
    - Janet Lillie, Assistant Vice President for Community Relations
    - Judith Stoddart, Vice Provost of University Arts and Collections
    - Morgan Butts, Senior Director of Communications and Marketing, Michigan State University Arts and Collections
    - Kristin S. McCool, Assistant Director of Off Campus Life, Office of Community & Student Relations | Student Affairs



Arts Commission  
**AGENDA ITEM REPORT**

**To:** Arts Commission  
**Subject:** Cultural Arts Grant Guidelines  
**Meeting:** Arts Commission - 16 Apr 2026  
**Department:** Parks, Recreation and Arts  
**Staff Contact:** Heather Majano, Art Festival & Arts Initiative Coordinator

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Updates have been made to the Cultural Arts Grant Guidelines based on feedback during the March 19 Arts Commission meeting.

Tonight, the Commission will review the changes, offer feedback and if only minor changes are needed, vote on approving the guidelines for the 2027 Grant cycle.

Please note that if words are in red in the document, it means we do not have this information yet. Specifically, we do not know what the allocated amount of FY27 grants will be and we do not have it posted on line yet so the links will be updated at that time.

Attached is one document that includes the Cultural Arts Grant Guidelines, scoring rubric, budget template and application form all in draft form.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Move to approve the 2027 Cultural Arts Grant Guidelines.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

[2027 CAG DRAFT](#)

# City of East Lansing Arts Commission

## FY27 Cultural Arts Grant Application

### Mission of the East Lansing Arts Commission:

The mission of the Arts Commission is to provide leadership by and for the City of East Lansing, to support and promote the arts and artists, recommend policies and programs that develop and promote creativity and artistic excellence in our community, and serve as liaison between the government, artists, arts organizations and the public.

### Purpose of the Cultural Arts Grants

The East Lansing Arts Commission Cultural Arts Grant program works to support and grow the arts in our community. We encourage projects that do one or more of the following in East Lansing:

- Enrich public spaces through creative placemaking
- Build community through art (e.g. visual arts, performing arts, creative writing)
- Expand on arts education

Our goal is to encourage artistic work or education that contributes to the identity, vibrancy, and sense of community within East Lansing.

Available funding changes from year to year, and grant awards are based on established criteria and program guidelines.

We welcome applications from all levels of artistic background, age and ability. We encourage black, indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersexual and asexual (LGBTQIA+) identities and people with disabilities to apply.

### Funding:

**\$X** for the Cultural Arts Grants in Calendar Year 2027 (January 1, 2027 – December 31, 2027).

There is no minimum or maximum grant amount; however, applicants are advised that the Commission is interested in supporting as many programs as possible over a wide range of genres. The Arts Commission encourages applicants with ongoing or repeating projects to pursue a variety of funding sources. The Cultural Arts Grant does not fund ongoing expenses. Ongoing or repeat events should demonstrate an ability to continue into the future, independent of these funds.

### Eligibility:

- Projects must take place within the City of East Lansing.
- The applicant is not required to be a resident of the City of East Lansing.

- The project must primarily benefit City of East Lansing residents.
- The project must take place between January 1 and December 31, 2027.
- The project must encourage artistic awareness, public participation and/or cultural arts appreciation.
- The project must provide evidence of artistic merit, shown through one or more of the following:
  - A well-defined creative vision or concept.
  - A meaningful artistic process (this may also include community collaboration, youth art, cultural storytelling, or heritage-based art).
  - Evidence that the project will deliver a valued artistic or cultural experience.
  - Artists, facilitators, or culture-bearers with relevant experience, credibility, or connection to the work.
  - A project design that strengthens community identity, cultural expression, arts education, or shared creative experience.

## Application Information:

- All submissions must be received by the application deadline October 6, 2026.
- Incomplete applications or those that do not meet the eligibility requirements will be placed on a hold status until technical support can be offered to the applicant.
- Funds will be released by January 22, 2027.
- Late applications will not be accepted. Contact Heather Majano at hmajano@cityofeastlansing.com to be notified of the next grant cycle.

## Program Schedule:

- **Release Grant:** July 14, 2026
- **Grant Applications Due:** October 6, 2026
- **Administrative Review:** October 7 – 29, 2026
- **Arts Commission Discussion:** November 19, 2026
- **Recipients Notified:** December 3, 2026
- **Contracts, Insurance Due:** December 17, 2026
- **Funds Distributed:** January 22, 2027

Projects must be between January 1 – December 31, 2027.

## How to Apply:

1. Submit one set of the grant application, narrative, budget, and support material as a single .pdf. If you are unsure how to submit all materials as one .pdf please email Heather at hmajano@cityofeastlansing.com for assistance.
2. Grant applications can be mailed, hand-delivered or e-mailed to the City of East Lansing Arts Commission, Attn: Heather Majano, 819 Abbot Road, East Lansing, MI 48823 or hmajano@cityofeastlansing.com. Faxed submissions will not be accepted.
3. All application materials must be submitted on 8 ½ X 11 paper or .pdf, one-sided, unbound or as a single .pdf via email.

## Application Guidelines:

1. This is a competitive process, and projects or events are recommended based on the applicant's ability to meet the eligibility requirements and review criteria.
2. Applications will be reviewed by the East Lansing Arts Commission on November 19, 2026.
3. The Arts Commission reserves the right to allocate funds to a specified portion of a project and/or event.
4. If the project/event is canceled or cannot be completed by its intended due date, funds must be returned.
5. An applicant can only have one open grant at a time.
6. The grant cannot be used to pay salaries or benefits; however, a stipend is acceptable. A stipend is defined as a one-time payment for a short-term event/project/class.
7. Funds will be released upon acceptance of the grant by the applicant, as demonstrated by the execution of a Grant Agreement.
8. If the intent is for the funds to create and/or install something not on the applicant's own property (ex. little art gallery, art exhibit, etc.) permission from the land or gallery owner must be included with the application.
9. Program reports will be due within 30 days of activity and can be found here: <https://www.cityofeastlansing.com/FormCenter/Arts-Commission-7/Arts-Commission-FY14-Cultural-Arts-Grant-48>
10. The Arts Commission requires that the Commission be acknowledged in all publications related to the funded activity. High-resolution logos are available by emailing Heather Majano, hmajano@cityofeastlansing.com.

Approved as to form:

By:

Date:

City Attorney

## Application:

Please provide the following:

- A. **Application:** Please complete the application included in back of this packet. Use this as your cover page.
- B. **Narrative:** The narrative can be no longer than two single-sided pages and must include:
  1. **Background:** Provide a brief overview of your organization and/or self.
  2. **Descriptive Narrative:** Provide a clear, detailed description of the proposed project or event. Describe what the proposed project or event is, when and where it will take place, and how the requested funds will be used.
  3. **Target Audience:** Describe the target audience(s), how the proposed project or event will benefit that audience, and how it will benefit the residents of East Lansing.
  4. **Communication Plan:** Outline how your team plans to promote the grant project to the target audience.
  5. **Artistic/Cultural Merit:** Describe evidence that the project or event will provide high artistic quality, merit or community value. Artistic Merit is defined above under, "eligibility."
  6. **Project Management:** Describe your organization's project management history and fiscal competence or describe your plan for ensuring appropriate financial accountability.
- C. **Budget:** Please attach the project budget, including anticipated expenses, income and funding sources. The budget must also clearly state how the Arts Commission funds will be used. Please be very specific. The budget form is included in this document and can be found separately here: <https://www.cityofeastlansing.com/394/FY22-Cultural-Arts-Grant>
- D. **Letters of Support and Support Materials:** Please attach any current letters of support and/or other support materials (no more than five pages total). Support material may include, but are not limited to: photos of past events, images of proposed artwork, social media counts, letters from individuals who support your work or support you, etc.

## Scoring Rubric (Total = 100 Points)

Each category is scored independently, and total points are used to guide funding recommendations. Commissioners should base scores solely on the information provided in the application and apply the scoring guidelines consistently across all proposals.

While each category includes three defined scoring levels (Strong, Moderate, Weak), commissioners may assign any point value within the full point range if they believe a proposal falls between the described levels.

## Funding Recommendation Guidance

- **90–100:** Strongly recommend for funding
- **80–89:** Fund or partially fund
- **70–79:** Consider partial funding

- **Below 70:** Not recommended this cycle

## **A. Artistic / Cultural Merit – Weight 30%**

**30 points – Strong:** The project demonstrates clear artistic purpose and thoughtful intention, shown through one or more of the following:

- A well-defined creative vision or cultural concept.
- A meaningful artistic process (this may also include community co-creation, youth art, collaborative work, cultural storytelling, or heritage-based art).
- Evidence that the project will deliver a valued artistic or cultural experience, even if the final product is not “professional.”
- Artists, facilitators, or culture-bearers with relevant experience, credibility, or connection to the work.
- A project design that strengthens community identity, cultural expression, arts education, or shared creative experience.

## **B. Community Benefit, Participation & Accessibility – Weight 30%**

**30 points – Strong:** Clear & meaningful benefit to residents; well-defined engagement; clear ways for public participation; good attention to accessibility; includes a clear communication plan and/or past evidence for widespread community participation.

## **C. Feasibility & Project Management – Weight 20%**

**20 points – Strong:** Feasible plan; clear timeline; solid management capacity

## **D. Budget Clarity – Weight 20%**

**10 points – Strong:** Specific, clear, realistic budget; transparent use of funds; all designated grant funds are related to art. Multiple funding sources are shown to provide sustainability for ongoing or annual projects, or the grant is for a one-time project with a clear end.

# **Scoring Summary**

Maximum score: **100 points**

## Bonus (0–4 points)

Used only to differentiate similar proposals.

- **Established Partnerships & Collaborations:** +0–2
- **Innovative or First-time Applicant:** +0–2

Max with bonus: **104 points**

# Scoring Sheet

Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

## Eligibility (all must be Yes)

- In East Lansing?  Yes  No
- Dates within range?  Yes  No
- Benefits EL residents?  Yes  No
- Public art participation/appreciation?  Yes  No
- Artistic merit evidence?  Yes  No
- Complete budget?  Yes  No

If any "No": Ineligible

## Scores

- A. Artistic Merit (max 30 points) \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Community Benefit, Participation & Accessibility (max 30 points) \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Feasibility & Management (max 20 points) \_\_\_\_\_
- E. Budget Clarity (max 10 points) \_\_\_\_\_
- F. Leverage & Sustainability (max 10 points) \_\_\_\_\_

Subtotal (100 max): \_\_\_\_\_

## Bonus (0-4)

- Partnerships (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_
- Innovation/First-time (0-2): \_\_\_\_\_

Bonus Total: \_\_\_\_\_

Grand Total: \_\_\_\_\_ / 104

Funding Recommendation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or Partial \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Cultural Arts Grant Budget</b>	
<b>Revenue</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Arts Commission Request	
Other Grant:	
Other Grant:	
Sponsor:	
Sponsor:	
Sponsor:	
Sponsor:	
Ticket Sales	
<b>Total Revenue</b>	
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b><i>Allowed Cultural Arts Grant Expenses</i></b>	<b>Amount</b>
Artist Stipend	
Artist Stipend	
Art Supplies	
Venue	
Advertising	
Graphics	
<i>Total Cultural Arts Grant Expenses (this should equal your grant request amount)</i>	
<b><i>Other Expenses</i></b>	
Salaries/Wages	
Food/beverage	
Overhead costs	
<i>Other Expenses Total</i>	
<b><i>Total Expenses</i></b>	



**City of East Lansing Arts Commission  
Fiscal Year 2027 Cultural Arts Grant Application**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Project or Event Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Website: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Cost of Event/Project: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Grant Amount Requested: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Admission Fee/Ticket Price of Event: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

If there is an admission fee/ticket price, is there a discount to East Lansing residents? \_\_\_\_\_

How did you find out about the Cultural Arts Grants? \_\_\_\_\_

Date/s of proposed Event or start of project: \_\_\_\_\_

*I understand that the availability of Arts Commission grants is based upon a variety of factors, including availability of funds, number of applicants and compliance with grant guidelines.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



Arts Commission  
**AGENDA ITEM REPORT**

**To:** Arts Commission  
**Subject:** Letter for Cultural Arts Grant Increase  
**Meeting:** Arts Commission - 16 Apr 2026  
**Department:** Parks, Recreation and Arts  
**Staff Contact:** Heather Majano, Art Festival & Arts Initiative Coordinator

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

At the February 19 Arts Commission, Commissioners voted to increase the allocation request for the Cultural Arts Grants program. The increase is from \$45,000 to \$55,000. Commissioner Biber was asked to write a letter to explain the increase to City Council.

The letter is attached.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Move to authorize the Chairperson to sign and authorize staff to share with City Council.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

[Letter for increase in CAG funds DRAFT](#)



# ARTS COMMISSION

Quality Services for a Quality Community

March 9, 2026

**MEMBERS**  
Allie Siarto, Chair  
Cara Ronk, Vice Chair  
Courtney Minifie  
Elinor Holbrook  
Gail Burke  
Nina Silbergleit  
Gabriel Biber  
Leslie Wilbur  
Barbara Worgess

City Council  
410 Abbot Rd.  
East Lansing, MI 48823

**City Council Liaison**  
Councilmember Kerry Singh

To the Members of the East Lansing City Council,

**Staff Liaison**  
Heather Majano  
(517) 319-6804

City of East Lansing  
**PARKS AND RECREATION**  
**DEPARTMENT**  
819 Abbot Road  
East Lansing, MI 48823

(517) 337-1731  
[www.cityofeastlansing.com](http://www.cityofeastlansing.com)

This letter is to provide you with context for the budget request made by the Arts Commission as part of your consideration of the City's general fund budget for the coming year. Over the past three years, the City has seen a sustained increase in proposals for public art projects and programs to be funded by the Arts Commission. In each of the past two years, more than fifty thousand dollars was requested from local artists, community groups, and City departments per grants cycle (a record \$57,000 in requests two years ago and more than \$51,000 in requests last year) through the Cultural Arts Grant process.

Due to recent successful ordinance changes, the scope of art projects has broadened to include additional types of art. A reformed grant process will ensure our robust vetting process adapts to continue providing a responsive community interface ensuring high quality, compliant projects which draw investment to the City. With inflation driving up costs and more artists and organizations applying for funding, the gap between need and available resources continues to grow. The Arts Commission requests a budget of \$55,000 for the Cultural Arts Grant to continue serving the City's thriving and expanding arts programs, cultural events, and creative community.

Thank you for your support of the arts in East Lansing, it is one of the strongest investments we can make in our long-term economic sustainability as a visiting destination and appealing place to call home.

On behalf of the Commission,  
Yours Sincerely,

Allie Siarto, Chairperson  
East Lansing Arts Commission



## Arts Commission **AGENDA ITEM REPORT**

**To:** Arts Commission  
**Subject:** 2027 Goals for Arts Commission  
**Meeting:** Arts Commission - 16 Apr 2026  
**Department:** Parks, Recreation and Arts  
**Staff Contact:** Heather Majano, Art Festival & Arts Initiative Coordinator

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The Arts Commission's 5-year Cultural Arts Plan lays out seven goals for the Arts Commission to accomplish within the next five years. The Plan also states that the Commission will review the goals and status every six months.

At tonight's meeting the Commission will be reviewing the goals and deciding on up to three goals to accomplish in 2027.

Attached is a draft of potential goals laid out by Chairperson Siarto. These goals are a suggestion and are open to discussion.

Also attached is the full 5-year plan for reference.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Move to approve these three goals \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ for the Arts Commission to accomplish in 2027.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

[2026 Goals and Timeline](#)

[EL Arts Commission Cultural Arts Plan FINAL](#)

## 2026 Goals & Timeline

**Goal 1:** Revise and relaunch the Cultural Arts Grants program to increase clarity, fairness, and alignment with city arts priorities.

### 5 Year Plan Alignment:

- **Goal 2:** Improve commission operations
- **Goal 4:** Develop fair and equitable art selection criteria

### Actions & Outcomes:

- Draft a fully updated grant application, evaluation rubric, and review process by April, 2026.
- Launch the updated grant cycle in July 2026.

**Goal 2:** Develop a strategic one-year plan that identifies the commission’s top arts priorities and supports the City of East Lansing’s identity as a “City of the Arts.”

### 5 Year Plan Alignment:

- **Goal 3:** Create Recognition of the City of the Arts

### Actions & Outcomes:

- One Commissioner will take the lead on research and present to the Commission on what elements have led to other cities becoming known as art destinations; e.g.:
  - Arts branding approaches
  - Grant program structures
  - Any public-private partnerships
  - Signature art pieces, events, or programs
- The Commission will conduct a planning workshop by June 2026 to gather Commissioner input.
- The Commission will create a document defining how they want to move toward making East Lansing a creative and cultural destination. The document will include a one year plan that outlines top art funding priorities/locations in relation to how the Commission defines East Lansing as a creative and cultural destination.
- Review this plan quarterly and adjust priorities or messaging as needed.

**Goal 3:** Commissioners will collaborate to attend at least eight community meetings/events to connect with local stakeholders outside of Arts Commission meetings.

**5 Year Plan Alignment:**

- **Goal 6:** Develop and strengthen collaborative relationships among regional stakeholders

**Actions & Outcomes:**

- The Arts Commission will brainstorm local organizations and meeting opportunities by August, 2026 and assign volunteers to attend at least eight external meetings to build upon collaborative relationships and opportunities.
- Assigned volunteers will attend their meetings to better connect with local stakeholders related to the mission of the Arts Commission.
- As of March, 2026, the chair will have met with:
  1. Greater Lansing Humanities, Arts, and Cultural Leaders luncheon (quarterly)
  2. The East Lansing neighborhood presidents
  3. Representatives from MSU, including:
    - Janet Lillie, Assistant Vice President for Community Relations
    - Judith Stoddart, Vice Provost of University Arts and Collections
    - Morgan Butts, Senior Director of Communications and Marketing, Michigan State University Arts and Collections
    - Kristin S. McCool, Assistant Director of Off Campus Life, Office of Community & Student Relations | Student Affairs

**2025-2029**  
**East Lansing Arts Commission Cultural Arts**  
**Five Year Plan**  
*Adopted July 15, 2025*





Image 1: L-5 and Beyond by Thomas E. Young, is the first piece of public art purchased through the Public Art Fund in 1976. It was restored and moved to Albert A. White Park in 2024.

## Acknowledgements

Mayor & City Council      George Brookover, Mayor  
Kerry Ebersole Singh, Mayor Pro Tem  
Erik Altmann  
Mark Meadows  
Dana Watson

City Manager                Robert Belleman

Arts Commission            Barbara L. Worgess, Chairperson  
Allie Siarto, Vice-Chairperson  
Cara Ronk  
Courtney Miniffee  
Elinor Holbrook  
Gail Burke  
Leslie Wilbur  
Nina Silbergleit  
Gabriel Biber

Art Selection Panel        Silvia Tita, Chairperson  
Ranae Selmeyer, Vice-Chairperson  
Joshua Brady  
Rafael Villares Orellana  
Jarran Fountain

Also thanks to former Arts Commissioners:  
Karen Jennings  
Abbie Tykocki  
Oluwatobi Williams  
Christopher Wardell  
Alan Conceicao  
Austin Pabian

Special thanks to Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and Blake Newman for technical assistance.

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## Executive Summary

The East Lansing Arts Commission has developed a 5-year Cultural Arts Plan to comply with Ordinance 1547 (formerly Ordinance 1339), better coordinate their efforts and expenditures, engage residents, make the arts more accessible and representative of the community and to ensure there is art throughout the City.

The Commission conducted a survey in 2023 asking residents what they know about art in the community and what they would like to see. Survey results guided the development of seven goals for the Commission. These goals are to 1.) Review the scope of Ordinance 1339; 2.) Improve Commission operations; 3.) Create recognition of the City of the Arts; 4.) Develop fair and equitable art selection criteria; 5.) Create access and awareness to public art for residents and visitors; 6.) Develop and strengthen collaborative relationships among regional stakeholders; and 7.) Support artists, musicians, performers, creatives and community.

This Cultural Arts Plan is a living document. The Commission will work to achieve each goal and regularly check in to evaluate their progress.



Image 2: Collaborative Weaving Project under the Division St. Garage.

# Planning Process

## Plan Development Process

The 2025-2029 Cultural Arts Plan was developed over the course of 2023, 2024 and 2025. The plan development process began with an initial orientation meeting with the Arts Commission and Staff Liaison, Heather Majano. Chairperson Barbara Worgess agreed to take the lead on research and development while staff and other Commissioners supported her.

A public input process was developed and implemented as described in the following section. The goals and objectives were refined through a facilitated charrette process with Michigan State University Extension's - National Charrette Institute: Setting Group Goals for Growth. Commissioners who were present at this Charrette included Chairperson Worgess, Allie Siarto and then Vice-Chairperson Abbie Tykocki as well as two staff members. The Arts and Economic Prosperity 6 Report (The Report) (Appendix A) that was commissioned by Americans for Art and published on October 12, 2023, was also reviewed for national statistics and goal alignment. This was a study of arts and culture organizations across the country. Michigan communities that participated included Creative Washtenaw, the Upper Peninsula Arts and Culture Alliance, and the Greater Flint Arts Council. The resulting report included a survey of 224,677 respondents and the analysis of the data they uncovered. Results in this report helped to show the value of arts in a community. In 2023 an online survey was also developed and shared with community members. Subsequent refinement of the Arts Commission's 5-year Cultural Arts Plan was performed through various discussions with City representatives and public comment.

## Public Participation Strategy

An effective means of obtaining public input is critical for the development of any five-year plan. For East Lansing's plan, several means of gaining input were used, including:

- Online opinion survey – April 18 - November, 2023
- Open comment period – May 2 - June 9, 2025
  - Posted on the City website, hard copy available at Hannah Community Center and East Lansing Public Library
- Arts Commission review and recommendation - June 18, 2025
- Council Approval - July 15, 2025

Summaries of the public input activities are provided in the following sections. A full compilation of all survey results, input, and public comments is contained in Appendix B.

## Survey and Summary of Information

As part of the public engagement and participation strategy for the development of this plan, ELAC and the City conducted a survey from April 18th-November 30th 2023. There were 51 responses to the survey that were analyzed and helped inform the goals, objectives and priorities outlined in this plan.

The survey showed that there is a strong desire by community members and local creatives for more performances (35/51) and murals (25/51) that represent the vast diversity of the community as well as opportunities for more arts related workshops (17/51). For this question, respondents could select as many answers as applied.

Overwhelmingly, the comments from the survey requested more diverse art that represented more of the community. Including, LGBTQIA+, disabled and LatinX individuals. 23 out of 51 survey respondents also said that finances were their main barrier to creating art in East Lansing. 18/51 responding creatives said that business development support would be helpful.

East Lansing has been collecting and installing art since 1976. The Arts Commission's role is to not only continue curating the collection, but also to maintain the current collection. Many survey responses mention the sculptures and murals downtown, but not many refer to others in the community.

The majority of survey participants were not aware of the regular events programming hosted by both the Parks, Recreation and Arts Department and Downtown Development Authority. By strengthening partnerships, there is more opportunity for collaboration often resulting in more organic reach as well as new and different activities.

Artists and creatives (self-identified) who took the survey requested financial support, business development support as well as more opportunities to exhibit art and mingle with other creatives.

# Introduction

Public Art is a form of collective community expression through any form of media created for the public. To be considered public art it must be visually, audibly and/or physically accessible, regardless of whether the location and funding are publicly or privately controlled. Public art is an interactive process involving artists, architects, design professionals, performance venue owners, community residents, civic leaders, politicians, approval agencies, funding agencies and construction teams. A process guided by professional expertise and public involvement can enable an imaginative and productive affinity between artists and the community. Definitions of public art evolve as our society and its modes of expression grow.

People pursue artistic and creative expression through a variety of outlets, from theatrical performances and paintings, to food festivals and local craft groups. Some participants are professionals, many are dedicated amateurs, and even more are consumers. Many forms of arts and culture naturally manifest in aspects of daily human activity.

Similarly, the locations and spaces where such activities are held include professional venues such as theaters, arenas, museums, and galleries, as well as less formal settings such as local community and recreation centers, businesses, libraries, clubs, parks, schools, and other local gathering places. Individual arts activities can occur anywhere and at any time.

## Arts Commission

### Mission, Values, and Vision

Mission:

The mission of the Arts Commission is to provide leadership by and for the City of East Lansing, to support and promote the arts and artists, recommend policies and programs that develop and promote creativity and artistic excellence in our community, and serve as liaison between the government, artists, arts organizations and the public.

Values:

We believe in the intrinsic value of the arts.

- The integration of art and beauty into everyday life.
- The principles of inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility to our programs.
- The value of community collaborations, alliances and partnerships.

- The active enrichment of community engagement and outreach

Vision:

The ELAC's vision is for a thriving, collaborative, and interdisciplinary cultural community that supports a variety of resources, spaces, and pathways to foster the creative activities of East Lansing, artists and the enrichment of those who seek out the arts. We imagine the arts as a means toward social and self-awareness, a catalyst to foster local culture, a facilitator to give voice to a diversity of ideas, a medium to establish a unique sense of place, a catalyst to foster creativity from the community, and a mechanism to contribute to East Lansing as a destination for artists and patrons of the arts.

## History of the Arts Commission

The East Lansing Arts Commission (ELAC) is a citizen advisory board that serves as a liaison between the city, the arts community, and the public. As part of this role, the Commission supervises the qualification, selection, and location of public art in our city. Working with city staff, the ELAC's goals are implemented.

Beginning in January 1983, the City Council liaison requested the Commission pursue the development of a public art ordinance to place major works of art within public spaces in East Lansing. After the City Manager researched Michigan programs and practices, they sent a request to the East Lansing Fine Arts Commission (ELFAC) to further investigate ordinances and identify a percentage for funding of the Public Art Program (PAP). In August of 1984, the City Council adopted work objectives for the PAP, including a funding level of one-tenth of one percent of the City's General Fund. In September of 1985, a selection panel was discussed by ELFAC. Further development of PAP continued through 1986. The State of Michigan created, "The State of Michigan's Art in Public Places Program and Art Bank." ELFAC made the decision to adopt this program for use by the Commission. In May of 1986, the ELFAC Chairperson, William Trevarthen, sent a letter to The National Endowment for the Arts that summarized the City's PAP and welcomed advice and counsel from the Endowment panel on the City's project.

As a part of this planning process, sites for public art were identified and mapped and an ordinance was developed. In April of 1988, ELFAC developed changes to Ordinance 598, the public art ordinance. New provisions included the opportunity to collaborate with private development in the placement of art; authorization to pay fees to an artist for the proposal phase if needed; honorarium paid to the Art Selection Panel; appointment of the Art Selection Panel; an architect may be a member of the Art Selection Panel; the Art Selection Panel to consist of no less than three members and no more than seven; members of the Art Selection Panel will serve on an ad hoc basis; the Art Selection Panel is given sole responsibility to identify and recommend to the ELFAC artists and/or works of art; the Fine Arts Commission makes final recommendations to the City Council; and if the ELFAC fails to accept the panel's recommendations it may require the formation of a new selection panel.

Beginning in 2009, East Lansing City Council allocated funds from the City's General Fund to support an annual grants program, Cultural Arts Grants. These grants are available to local artists, organizations, theater groups, concert planners, dance groups and other cultural arts efforts as long as it takes place within the City of East Lansing and primarily benefits East Lansing residents. The initial allocation was \$14,000, going down to \$10,000 some years. In the current year (FY2025), \$25,000 was allocated. Each year, the ELAC reviews the applications and works to fund as many of the qualifying applications as possible. The ELAC intentionally works with applicants to make this process open to anyone from the most novice to the most experienced. The goal is to foster a thriving art community.

On October 7, 2014, the East Lansing City Council adopted Ordinance 1339 as the new Public Art Ordinance. Stating that the City Council, "...has determined that the creation of additional public art will improve the aesthetic quality of public spaces and structures, provide cultural and recreational opportunities, contribute to the local heritage, stimulate economic activity and promote the general welfare of the community."

### **Ordinance 1339**

Ordinance 1339 - Percent for Art Ordinance, was adopted in 2014 (Appendix C). This ordinance requires any new development in the City to commit 1% of their overall budget, up to \$25,000, to public art. Developers may fulfill the requirement of the ordinance by donating this 1% commitment to the Public Art Fund, by installing art on the site of their development, by donating art to the City of East Lansing or by designing their building in a way that allows the architecture to bring them into compliance with the ordinance. The Arts Commission's purview for art installations used to fulfill the ordinance requirement is to review the developer's proposed fulfillment and approve that the art is indeed art, created by an artist and in a publicly accessible location of the development. The Commission's recommendation is included in the full developer proposal that Council reviews and approves.

The City of East Lansing is also subject to the Percent for Art Ordinance requirement. As stated in Ordinance 1339 Section 2-312 (a), "There is further hereby established a "Public Art Fund" to which shall be appropriated each year by the city council an amount equal to one percent of the cost to the City's general fund of all public facilities or city capital improvement projects unless public art is not legally permissible due to the constraints imposed by the funding mechanism." The Public Art Fund is used for the purchase, installation and maintenance of public art within East Lansing.

## Organizational Structure

The following chart depicts the organizational structure of decision making within the City of East Lansing. While staff reports directly to Directors, staff are also the liaisons to the Commissions and Panels. In some cases, the department Director is the staff liaison to a Commission or Panel. The Arts Commission and Art Selection Panel's staff liaison is the Art's Coordinator who reports to the Director of Parks, Recreation and Arts.

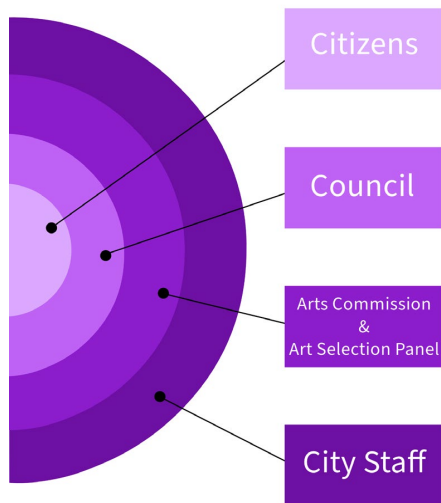


Table 1: The structure of the City of East Lansing municipal government.

## Budget

<b>Public Art Fund Annual Report FY26</b>			
Account	2025 Adopted Budget	2025 Estimated Amount	2026 Final Budget
<b>REVENUE</b>			
<b>Public Art Fund</b>			
Private Developer Contributions	25,000.00	15,000.00	25,000.00
Interest Income	1,500.00	2,200.00	2,200.00
Transfer from General Fund	11,860.00	11,860.00	27,270.00
Reappropriated Equity	19,230.00	.00	9,225.00
Division <b>7601 - Public Art Totals</b>	\$57,590.00	\$29,060.00	\$63,695.00
<b>Arts Planning and Administration</b>			
Transfer from General Fund	25,000.00	25,000.00	45,000.00
<b>REVENUE TOTALS</b>	<b>\$82,590.00</b>	<b>\$54,060.00</b>	<b>\$108,695.00</b>
<b>EXPENSE</b>			
Operating Supplies	200.00	2,000.00	600.00
Contract Services	3,000.00	5,000.00	3,000.00
Sponsorships	1,000.00	1,000.00	1,000.00
Repairs and Maintenance	10,000.00	20,385.00	10,000.00
Capital Outlay	40,000.00	16,000.00	30,000.00
Wages - Part Time	.00	.00	13,700.00
Social Security	.00	.00	1,050.00
Retirement - Hybrid DB	.00	.00	1,200.00
Retirement - Hybrid DC	.00	.00	170.00
Workers Compensation	.00	.00	10.00
Communications - Telephone	.00	.00	120.00
Arts Commission - Grants	27,025.00	27,025.00	45,000.00
City Facility Rental	1,365.00	1,365.00	1,365.00
City Computer Rental	.00	.00	1,480.00
<b>EXPENSE TOTALS</b>	<b>\$82,590.00</b>	<b>\$72,775.00</b>	<b>\$108,695.00</b>

Table 2: The approved Budget for Fiscal years 2025 and 2026.

Annual Comprehensive Financial Report	
Statement of Fund Balance	
	\$\$
Fund balance as of June 30, 2023 (per audited financial documents)	\$ 114,860.00
Anticipated Operating Surplus (Deficit) for year ended June 30, 2024	\$ 1,100.00
Estimated Available Fund Balance as of June 30, 2024	\$ 115,960.00
Anticipated Operating Surplus (Deficit) for year ended June 30, 2025	\$ (16,535.00)
Estimated Available Fund Balance as of June 30, 2023	\$ 99,425.00

Table 3: The Public Art Fund maintains a balance until the Arts Commission would like to acquire more art in the City or repair existing art.

# City of East Lansing & the Arts

## Demographic Information

The City of East Lansing is a youthful, culturally diverse community with a strong core of year-round residents. Its population of 47,741 has been stable. As home to Michigan State University, East Lansing has an annual influx of over 40,000 students pursuing undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. Compared to the state as a whole, a dramatically higher percentage of East Lansing residents are between the ages of 20 and 24 (35.7% versus 7.3%).

The influence of the university is also reflected in the educational attainment levels of those who have made longer-term investments in the city. When compared to Michigan as a whole, East Lansing residents are considerably higher educated with nearly 73% having an Associate degree or higher education, compared to 42% statewide.

Of the 51 individuals who took the Arts Commission's online survey the majority identified as between the ages of 35-44 and 65+. 17/51 participants have a family size of at least 3 individuals, and more than half did not include children in the household. Most participants identified as Female and Caucasian/White. While many participants did not identify as being a part of the LGBTQIA+ community or having a disability, it is worth noting that there were 7 individuals who did identify in the LGBTQIA+ community and 6 with a disability. One participant shared they were a student at Michigan State University. This could be due to the survey being available mostly during summer when the students were gone for the season.

## Local Plan Coordination

Through the creation of the East Lansing Arts Commission, the adoption and implementation of Ordinance 1339, and the centering of arts in all phases of development, the City of East Lansing has shown its commitment to the arts. This is further shown through the local planning process and the identification of public art, arts programming and entertainment, and placemaking as key components in the city reaching its many and varied goals.

### The Bigger Picture: East Lansing Master Plan

In 2018, the City of East Lansing went through a Master Plan update. The result of these efforts was the adoption of *The Bigger Picture: East Lansing Master Plan* (Master Plan). With City Ordinance No. 1339 being adopted in 2014, it was made clear that the arts were a central priority to the city and the Master Plan solidified this priority by frequently calling out the arts as a core part of the city's identity, and an instrumental strategy to reaching many of their goals.

"The City of East Lansing actively pursues opportunities to promote arts and culture through a variety of public events and exhibits as well as the incorporation of art into public places throughout the city." - The Bigger Picture: East Lansing Master Plan, p. 10

The Master Plan goes into great detail on the multitude of ways the arts are central to the community's identity. Outlining the numerous art-based events the city hosts, as well as a robust arts ecosystem including galleries, museums, performing arts venues and more. The city has a diverse inventory of public art, beautifying the community and adding to the public spaces around the city, and even promotes and supports local artists through a variety of strategies including displaying local artist's art and keeping a registry of local artists for when local projects come up. The Master Plan also outlines how the adoption of Ordinance 1339 is another clear and important action taken that indicates the city's commitment to the arts and making art more available to the public.

The Master Plan identifies this vast ecosystem of art and art entertainment as a significant advantage in talent attraction and retention for the city. It is also called out as a strategy to support street activation in the downtown. Overall the city believes art and art entertainment are essential to the community's identity and that art can and should be available in public spaces across the city. The desire to leverage art as a selling point for its impact on resident quality of life and creating places people want to be, and understanding the impact art can have in this way, is a core driver for the city to continue to be a leader in art incorporation in community and economic development.

#### 2025-2029 Parks, Recreation, Open Spaces and Greenways Plan

At the start of 2025, the City of East Lansing adopted its 2025-2029 Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Greenways Plan (Parks Plan). Much like the Master Plan, the Parks Plan highlights the importance and use of art throughout the city. Not only this, but Parks Recreation and the Arts are interlinked at the city into one department (See Table 1), highlighting that the arts and parks and recreation are interconnected and integral to each other at the city.

The Parks Plan includes an inventory of publicly owned parks and recreation spaces including public art and other amenities and features in each space. Public art is also mentioned in the Parks Plan as a method of placemaking for projects like the Valley Court Park and downtown East Lansing connection.

#### City of East Lansing Strategic Priorities

In order to guide the allocation of city resources, the City of East Lansing annually updates its strategic priorities. The city brings together city staff and the City Council to review the previous year's activities, progress toward goals, and the upcoming year's events and activities in order to create the strategic priorities that will guide the focus of staff, boards, commissions and the City Council.

The strategic priorities can be sorted into four broad categories which are good governance, vibrant economy and development, environmental sustainability, and enhanced transportation and infrastructure. With art and arts entertainment being such a huge part of the City of East Lansing's identity and strategy to meeting many of their goals, it is only fitting that the Strategic Priorities would include mention of the arts:

*Strategic Priority: Vibrant Economy and Development.*

In partnership with PR&A, DPW, Planning Department and other partners, the goal is to support the redevelopment and transformation of underutilized public spaces into interesting and unique public places that offer a wide range of seating options, are conducive to hosting community activities, incorporate all forms of the arts, and provide attractive amenities for an enhanced visitor experience.

In Cultural Arts & Diversity, the focus of this goal is to foster a thriving culture that celebrates diversity in City sponsored events and activities. The Arts Commission works to put an emphasis on diversity in all new art acquisitions.

In Recreation and Cultural Opportunities the focus of this goal is to encourage and support the visual, performing, graphic and literary arts, advance cultural enrichment and celebrate diversity through collaborative community partnerships.

Through this direct strategy prioritizing the use of art and arts entertainment to advance the city's goals, there is also frequent mention in the goals section of this plan of how the Arts Commission can leverage their position in the community and their role in fostering the arts and arts entertainment ecosystem in the city to advance the strategic priorities of the city.

Conclusion

Understanding the importance of public art and art entertainment to the City of East Lansing and seeing its clear demonstration in other planning documents, it is important to consider this context when planning for the future of the arts and the Arts Commission. The City of East Lansing relies on its cultivation of art and art entertainment to attract and retain residents and talent, beautify the community through placemaking in public spaces, create opportunities for experiencing art, enhance cultural diversity and cultural opportunities, and provide creative outlets for its residents and visitors alike. It looks to use funding pooled through Ordinance 1339 to add art pieces throughout the community for all to enjoy, and signals to investors and developers that art is a core identity and priority to the community. All of these actions, implementation strategies, and priorities should provide a great base for this plan to build from.

## **Benefits of Public Art to the Community**

Public art is often evaluated and understood through the perspective of the following values: Economic Growth and Sustainability, Attachment and Cultural Identity, Artists as

Contributors, Social Cohesion and Cultural Understanding, Public Health and Belonging, and Placemaking. These values will be used in conjunction with the City Council's adopted strategic priorities to organize the priorities of the Arts Commission, Art Selection Panel and, by doing so, the expenditure of Public Art Fund dollars.

### Economic Growth and Sustainability

*By engaging in public art as a tool for growth and sustainability, communities can thrive economically.*

Enhancing the identity and character of communities through public art directly supports cultural tourism and economic development strategies, which can both retain and attract residents. In addition, incorporating public art into private development can be a way for buildings to stand out as developers and managers look for renters – whether businesses or residents. The attention public art can bring to a development project can be calculated. A healthy public art ecosystem also drives the growth of new businesses. This goal is in alignment with the Strategic Priority: Vibrant Economy and Development.

The Arts Commission oversees Ordinance 1339: Percent for Art Ordinance (arts application and ordinance 1339 included in Appendix C). This ordinance was approved in 2014 and requires developers to include art in their plans at 1% of their overall budget, up to \$25,000. The developer has the option to donate the money to the Public Art Fund or install art onsite. If a donation is the chosen option, the Arts Commission has the purview to expend Public Art Fund dollars on new public art or maintenance of public art. If an art installation is the chosen option, the developer must bring their proposal to the Arts Commission for approval. The Arts Commission must approve that it is in fact art that is being proposed, created by an artist and in a public location.

The Arts and Economic Prosperity 6 Report Identifies the economic benefit of public art as follows:

- Arts and Culture generated \$151.7 billion in economic activity in 2022 across the entire country. \$73.3 billion was in spending by arts and culture organizations. \$78.4 billion in event related expenditures were by arts and culture audiences.
- 2.6 million jobs are supported by arts and culture. \$101 billion was paid in personal income to residents. \$29.1 billion in tax revenue was generated by local, state and federal governments.
- When people attend an arts and cultural event, they often make an outing of it (dining in a restaurant, paying for parking or public transportation, enjoying dessert after the show, and paying for child or pet care). The typical attendee spends \$38.46 per person per event in addition to the cost of event admission. 30.1% of the attendees traveled from outside the county in which the event took place. These individuals spent more than twice that of their local counterparts (\$60.57 for out of county individuals and \$29.77 per local resident.)
- 79% believe arts and culture is "important to their community's businesses, economy, and local jobs."

### Attachment and Cultural Identity:

Public art directly influences how people see and connect with a place, providing access to aesthetics that support its identity and making residents feel appreciated and valued. Public art encourages attachment to a location and a sense of place for residents through cultural and historical understanding, and by highlighting what is unique about the places where people live, work, and play.

When people see themselves reflected in their civic spaces they have a sense of attachment that allows them to feel ownership and respect. Attachment to a location, whether it be a neighborhood, town or city is key to retention of residents and commuters alike. Public art makes places unique through the reflection of local history and culture which gives communities a sense of place and identity.

This goal is in alignment with the Strategic Priority: Vibrant Economy and Development in Cultural Arts & Diversity. In each new request for qualifications, the process by which the Commission requests proposals and applications from interested artists, the following sentence is included in the introduction of the project, "East Lansing has a long-standing commitment to public art, and we are further committed to broadening the representation of artists within our city-owned art collection." In the introduction of the Cultural Arts Grant Guidelines the Commission also states, "The City of East Lansing through the Arts Commission, promotes art in the community; encourages cooperation with local arts agencies; develops and recommends proposals for activities related to exhibition, performance and instruction in the arts; we are committed to promoting and uplifting all artists, artistic expressions and organizations. We encourage black, indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersexual and asexual (LGBTQIA) identities and people with disabilities to apply. Further we will collaborate with other boards and commissions to strengthen the aesthetics and appeal of projects that affect public places to reflect a diversity of artistic expressions and artists."

These statements are not only for the applicants. They are used by the Arts Selection Panel and Arts Commission when reviewing applications. The Panel and Commission review applications to look for diverse artists as well as diverse art. The Panel and Commission both understand that not everyone will like or appreciate the art that they select, but if it's being talked about the art is a success.

The Arts and Economic Prosperity 6 Report identifies how residents acknowledge pride in their community.

- 89% of attendees to arts and culture events agreed the activity or venue they were attending was "a source of neighborhood pride for their community." And
- 86% said they would feel a sense of loss if that activity or venue was no longer available, and
- 86% felt it important that future generations also be able to have that cultural experience.

- 86% believe arts and culture is “important to their community’s quality of life and livability.”

Artists as Contributors:

*Providing a support system for artists and other creatives to help validate them as important to the community both as individuals and contributors.*

In alignment with the City’s Strategic Priority for recreation and cultural priorities, including artists and creatives in collaborative community partnerships is a priority. A public art ecosystem resonates with artists and other creatives as a visual reminder that they are embraced by a community. Artists bring innovation and problem solving wherever they go, which strengthens America’s competitiveness in the global marketplace and plays an important role in building and sustaining a vibrant economy. Artists provide valuable contributions when they are included in the planning of public spaces and amenities with planners, engineers, designers, elected officials, and community stakeholders. Artists bring their creative skills and interpretations to each idea, site, social construct, and aesthetic potential. These conversations generate creativity in others inspiring an inventive result. Artists become civic leaders advocating through art for alternative perspectives that can challenge assumptions, beliefs, and community values. Both the Arts Commission and Art Selection Panel are individuals who live and/or work in the East Lansing community and are involved creatively in the community.

Social Cohesion and Cultural Understanding

*Public art provides a visual mechanism for understanding other cultures and perspectives, reinforcing social connectivity with others.*

Public art supports communities by providing social cohesions and encouraging civic engagement. Public art activates the imagination through visual art and storytelling to emphasize the shared humanity of civic spaces – allowing the individual to better understand strangers and neighbors alike. Public art aids communities in visualizing different perspectives through civic icons and infrastructure projects such as train stations, traffic circles, hospitals, water treatment facilities, and airports. By reinforcing the cultures of a community, public art acts as a catalyst for unity and social engagement.

In alignment with the Strategic Priority: Strong Neighborhoods/Strong, Safe, Diverse Community, the Arts Commission works to support City of East Lansing cultural celebrations and events. This is most evident in the allocation of funds through the Cultural Arts Grants. This is a once-per-year grant the Commission accepts applications to.

Arts and culture build more livable communities. According to the Arts and Economic Prosperity 6 Report;

- 72% of the surveyed individuals see empathy and understanding arising from the arts and culture. “The arts provide shared experiences with people of different



- Connecting communities, people, places, and economic opportunity via physical spaces or new relationships.
- Honoring traditions shaped by the lived experience of a community's residents, such as music, dance, design, crafts, fashion, cuisine, and oral expression.



Image 3: "First Class" by Ndubisi Okoye, a mural depicting Dr. Robert L. Green at the entrance to Albert Avenue Parking Garage.

## Art Inventory

Title	Artist Name	Type of Art	Year of Acquisition	Location
L-5 and Beyond	Thomas E Young	Sculpture	1976	Albert A White Park
Childhood Scenes	Margot Evans	Tapestry	1982	Library
Untitled	Carolyn Dublin	Sculpture (porcelain)	1986	City Hall, 2nd Floor
Democracy	Charles McGee	Sculpture	1989	54B District Court
Untitled	Mark Chatterley	Sculpture (ceramic)	1989	City Hall, 2nd Floor
Untitled	Deb Boyer	Watercolor	1992	City Hall, 2nd Floor
Untitled	Deb Boyer	pencil drawing	1992	City Hall, 2nd Floor
Untitled	W. Scott Wilson	Abstract gouache	1993	City Hall, 2nd Floor
Han Dynasty	John Chen	mixed media on handmade	1997	City Hall, 2nd Floor
Jack Brings the Bird	Marvin Hill	Hand-colored block print	1998	City Hall, 2nd Floor
Discover the Other Half	Patrick Turner	original collage on paper	2000	City Hall, 2nd Floor
Don't Be Afraid of NO	Patrick Turner	original collage on paper	2000	City Hall, 2nd Floor
Montana Puddle	Donovan Reeve	Digital Photo	2002	City Hall, 2nd Floor
Grandpa & Paris	Nels Johnson	Sepia Photo	2003	City Hall, 2nd Floor
	Xavier Nuez	Photograph	2006	City Hall, 2nd Floor
City of East Lansing Centennial Kick-Off	COEL	Photo	2007	City Hall, main hallway
	Christopher Farah	Series of photographs	2007	City Hall, 2nd Floor
Nature Book	Marina Terauds	Intaglio Print	2010	City Hall, 2nd Floor
Raising Harmony	Richard Taylor	Sculpture	2013	City Hall, Outside
One World, Many Stories	Barbara Bailey Hutchinson and Red		2013	Library
The Spirit of East Lansing: Sounds from the Streets	Julian Van Dyke	mural	2016	
?	Ben Duke	mural	2016	
	Mel Fleck	Print	2017	City Hall, 2nd Floor
Genes to Scents	Bethany Moore, Siobhan Cusack,	Mixed media on canvas	2019	Library
Ute Boxing Team	Keith Secola Jr.	Collage	2020	City Hall, 2nd Floor
Being Here	Vinnie Southerland	Pewter, aluminium,	2020	City Hall, 2nd Floor
Untitled	Aidas Mikelanas	Painting	2021	City Hall, 2nd Floor

Title	Artist Name	Type of Art	Year of Acquisition	Location
Vilnius in Chicago	Aidas Mikėlanas	Painting	2021	City Hall, 2nd Floor
"Birch Trees" - placeholder	Anastasia Mak	Acrylic	2022	Hannah Community Center
Community Fingerprint Project	East Lansing Farmers Market	Painting	2023	ELHCC, 2nd Floor
Day Dream	Melvin McGee	Acrylic	2023	Hannah Community Center
Tile Art Project	EL Residents	Mosaic	2023	
Just Passing Through	Christina Jacobs	Print	2024	Hannah Community Center
Night Climb	Christina Jacobs	Print	2024	Hannah Community Center
The Old Library	Christina Jacobs	Print	2024	Hannah Community Center
Meet Me at the Treehouse	Christina Jacobs	Print	2024	Hannah Community Center
Collaborative Weaving Project	Planning Dept. Collab.	Mixed media	2024	Division St. Parking Ramp
Summer Solstice Jazz Festival, 2024	Ari Franklin	Acrylic on canvas	2024	Hannah Community Center
Chinese Calligraphy Brushes		Artifacts		ELHCC, 2nd Floor
A Day in December		Painting		ELHCC, 2nd Floor
	Craig Cossey	Painting		ELHCC, 2nd Floor
(set of 10 white flower paintings on turquoise)		Painting		54B District Court
(snail clock)				City Hall, 2nd Floor
(multiple faces in silver)				City Hall, 2nd Floor
(colorful inside with print outside frame)				City Hall, 2nd Floor
(plant watercolor)				City Hall, 2nd Floor
(colorful acrylic, native)	Anna Caluya			City Hall, 2nd Floor
(three abstract paintings)	Joyce Mac...	Abstract painting		Library
Sunday Story	Marlene Boonstra	Painting		Library
	Margot Evans	watercolor		Library
Bookman	Mary Leiserowitz	Sculpture		Library
Familiar Faces	Louise McCagg	Sculpture		Sharp Park
Laura	Mary Buckman	Sculpture		
Slow Social Climbers & Friends	Frank Fleming	Sculpture		
Andromeda	Anthony Fridakis			
Cassiopeia	Nancy Leiserowitz	Sculpture		
Anima Librata	Evan Lewis			
Cymbidium	John Parker			
Who's Watching Whom	Jane DeDecker			
And She Thought She Could Fly	Claire Crandell			
Raising Harmony	Richard Taylor			
Budget Friendly Gas Pump	Todd Kime	Bike rack		
EIL Logo/Peace Tree	Randolph Dunn	Bike rack		
Circle Back	Paul Such			
Life is a Groovy Opportunity	Ben Duke & collaborators	mural		Division St. Parking Ramp
Release the Stigma	ASMSU's Mental Health Awareness	Painting		

Table 4: The Public Art Inventory for the City of East Lansing.

## Goals and Objectives

The overarching goal of the Arts Commission (ELAC) in the next five years is to grow and support a strong presence of cultural arts in the community.

A small group of the ELAC participated in the Michigan State University Extension's - National Charrette Institute: Setting Group Goals for Growth. The purpose of the Charrette was to identify the issues of interest brought to the attention of the Commission from artists, residents, and consumers along with the challenges observed by the Commissioners during meetings and efforts to support cultural arts in the community. Seven goals were identified.

The Commissioners were able to define the strategies to create the environment with the necessary ingredients for making the East Lansing community an attractive and vibrant place to live and work.

### Goal 1.

Review the Scope of Ordinance 1339 to ensure that the interest of the community is taken into account.

- ◆ Objective (1): The Commission members will review the Ordinance 1339 on Public Art and will consider options to expand the variety of opportunities for the residents and creatives in the Community.
- ◆ Objective (2): Commission members will work with the City Attorney to update the ordinance. This will be presented and recommended to the City Council for final approval.

### Goal 2.

Improve Commission operations.

- ◆ Objective (1): Commission members and support staff will work together to evaluate ways that the Commission can be most effective by improving existing processes. This evaluation includes a critical look at timelines, expectations, and capacity.
- ◆ Objective (2): The Commission will develop governing bylaws to ensure themselves and posterity are able to smoothly continue the work of the Commission as membership is ever evolving.
- ◆ Objective (3): Commission members and support staff will create an environment for the Commission that is responsive to the community and fulfilling, engaging and fun for the community and the Commission. This environment will be demonstrated in the agendas, events, and grant awards.

### Goal 3.

Create recognition of the City of Arts.

- ◆ Objective (1): The Commission Members will define what it means to make East Lansing a creative and cultural destination.

Goal 4.

Develop fair and equitable art selection criteria.

- ◆ Objective (1): The Commission Members will establish a process that ensures the diversity of the community is reflected in future art and artists. As well as building upon existing language in Requests for Qualifications that draws responses from all sectors of the community.

Goal 5.

Create access and awareness to public art for residents and visitors.

- ◆ Objective (1): The Commission members and support staff will update the existing art database and map. The update will include new art installations and maintenance records as well as identify City owned art assets, their location, artist name, piece name and date of installation.
- ◆ Objective (2): Make the map and art database available to residents and visitors in multiple ways, including print and web.
- ◆ Objective (3): Commission members will identify opportunities to support unique cultural events in neighborhoods and in unexpected places.

Goal 6.

Develop and strengthen collaborative relationships among regional stakeholders.

- ◆ Objective (1): Collaborate with and support the City Council, Art Selection Panel, art organizations throughout the region, other City departments, and other Commissions, the arts media, and local educational institutions to identify ways in which we can support each other and coordinate events.

Goal 7.

Support artists, musicians, performers, creatives and community.

- ◆ Objective (1): Develop methods to better support performers (theaters, storytelling, music).
- ◆ Objective (2): Continue to provide support through the Cultural Arts Grants, Ordinance 1339 and explore other opportunities to support connections between creatives and the community.
- ◆ Objective (3): The Commission will amplify the artists in the community by developing financial support opportunities.

## Implementation and Monitoring

The implementation of the goals and objectives outlined in the previous section will take place over the next five years. The ELAC will monitor the implementation of the plan and progress towards goals and objectives twice per year to ensure the goals, objectives and action steps are moving forward and demonstrating that progress is occurring throughout the time period. This will also ensure that the ELAC will review the planned actions and make changes or adaptations as situations and events occur or priorities change. If revisions to the objectives and the addition and/or deletions of identified activities are necessary, changes will be noted for future planning processes.

The Commission should view this document as a living, breathing guide to their work over the next five years. It is completely natural for things to evolve, priorities to change or shift, or for uncontrollable events to occur that impact the work. By having a strong and consistent implementation and monitoring plan, the commission will be able to maintain the relevancy of the plan, goals and objectives, so it can continue to guide their work accurately and effectively.

Upon the adoption of this plan, ELAC and City Staff will build out a project tracker for the goals and objectives in this plan. The tracker will include the goals and objectives from the previous section, as well as associated action items, responsible parties, timeline of work, funding sources (if applicable) and partners (if applicable). The Commission will receive updates from City Staff on the project tracker every 6 months. Noting timeline adjustments, staff or board turnover that may affect project leads, priority shifts or changes, and any other updates needed in order to keep the board and staff working on the highest priorities and ensuring well rounded, consistent communication.



Image 4: “Lemongrass” by Dane Porter in Valley Court Park.

## Appendix

Appendix A: Arts and Economic Prosperity 6. Americans for the Arts

Appendix B: Survey Information

Appendix C: Ordinance 1547 (formerly 1339) and Percent for Art Application

Appendix D: Art Space Preliminary Feasibility Report, December 2021

Appendix E: Key terms meanings

## Other Sources of Information:

East Lansing Plan Update, June 2018

East Lansing Census Information

Multiple Municipal and Regional Cultural Arts Plans from Cities, Counties and Regions across the United States

East Lansing's Parks, Recreation and Arts 5-year Plan 2025-2029



Arts Commission  
**AGENDA ITEM REPORT**

**To:** Arts Commission  
**Subject:** City of the Arts Discussion  
**Meeting:** Arts Commission - 16 Apr 2026  
**Department:** Parks, Recreation and Arts  
**Staff Contact:** Heather Majano, Art Festival & Arts Initiative Coordinator

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

What does "City of the Arts" mean to the Commission?

Develop a strategic one-year plan that identifies the commission's top arts priorities and supports the City of East Lansing's identity as a "City of the Arts."



Arts Commission  
**AGENDA ITEM REPORT**

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Update on Song Competition - Deadline for songs April 15

Developments I'm following:

- 111 Saginaw - Sheetz - donate
- 530 Albert - Bailey Parking Lot - install
- 401 Grand River - The Howard - install
- 1000 Cedar Village Upgrades - donation

Reminder: no meeting in May. Come to the East Lansing Art Festival instead!