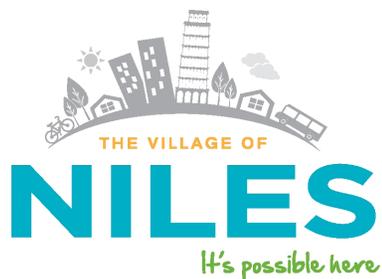


NILES ARTS & CULTURE MASTER PLAN

Second Draft Report | June 12, 2017

Prepared for: Niles Public Arts and Culture Advisory Council
Prepared by: The Lakota Group and Jon Pounds



SPECIAL THANKS TO THE VILLAGE OF NILES BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND THE PUBLIC ARTS AND CULTURE ADVISORY COUNCIL, INCLUDING:

ANDREW PRZYBYLO, MAYOR

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

GEORGE D. ALPOGIANIS

JOHN C. JEKOT

JOE LOVERDE

DANETTE O'DONOVAN MATYAS

DENISE MCCREERY

DEAM STRZELECKI

PUBLIC ARTS AND CULTURE ADVISORY COUNCIL

LINDSAY BRUBAKER - NILES PARK DISTRICT

ERICKA STOOR-BURNING - ARTIST

MICHAEL CRISCI - NILES HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MARY DOWD DEMAS - ARTIST

DEBI GAJEWSKI - ARTIST

CORY HANCE - ARTIST

DR. JOHN KOSIROG - SCHOOL DISTRICT 71

SUSAN LEMPKE - NILES PUBLIC LIBRARY

CAROL LUC - ARTIST

ROSSANA MACEJAK - NILES SISTER CITIES

KATIE SCHNEIDER - NILES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

JANET SPECTOR BISHOP - EAST MAINE SCHOOL DISTRICT 63

STEVEN C. VINEZEANO - VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS (VFW)

STAFF LIAISON

CATHY SPADONI

CONTENTS

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION 1

SECTION 2: STATE OF ARTS AND CULTURE IN NILES 9

SECTION 3: ARTS AND CULTURE VISION AND PRIORITIES 15

SECTION 4: KEY STRATEGIES AND INITIATIVES 21

SECTION 5: IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE 35

SECTION 6: THE COMMUNITY SPEAKS 47

SECTION 7: ARTS AND CULTURE INVENTORY 67

SECTION 8: APPENDICES 84



Village of
NILES
Inc. 1899
"Where People Count"



SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

This *Arts and Culture Master Plan* represents a set of policies and strategies in guiding the expansion and enhancement of Niles' arts and culture sector in the years ahead, acknowledging that arts and culture contributes to the community's economic competitiveness and quality of life. In 2016, the Village of Niles initiated an eight-month process to prepare this Arts and Culture Plan, which included an assessment of existing cultural arts assets and opportunities, and the engagement of local stakeholders and residents in determining short and long-term planning priorities and cultural arts initiatives.

This Plan also advances the arts and culture planning goals made within the Village's *2030 Comprehensive Plan* in that promoting *"arts and culture through the support of facilities and programs that reflect the diversity of the community, enhance the Village's reputation and creates a unique experience for residents, businesses and visitors."* The Comprehensive Plan also recognized that the community's greatest assets are its *"people," "events,"* and *"history."*

Beyond the policies and strategies, this Arts and Culture Master Plan also provides a compelling vision and direction for the cultural arts in Niles — one that capitalizes on existing assets, including the Village's diverse population, as well as its local amenities and facilities — while considering new initiatives that facilitate increased community and private sector involvement in the arts, and diversifies cultural offerings and opportunities to Niles residents and visitors. This vision was created through extensive community participation in the planning process with specific questions asked of Niles' stakeholders:

- *What should be the Village's arts and culture planning priorities going forward?*
- *What financial and organizational resources should be employed to build a vibrant arts and culture community in Niles?*
- *What roles should public art play in enhancing the community's public spaces and visual environment?*
- *How can accessibility to arts and culture activities be improved?*
- *What types of cultural activities should be nurtured and promoted — ones that can have attract people as well as generate economic benefit to the community?*
- *How can the arts promote a positive, unified identity and brand image to residents, visitors and investors?*
- *How can the Villages Public Arts and Culture Advisory Council best facilitate the expansion of the arts and culture sector in Niles?*

Today, Niles is known for its stable neighborhoods, varied retail and shopping opportunities, significant industrial and employment base, high-quality parks and recreation assets, and its diverse ethnic mix and vibrant religious institutions. The community is in proximity to regional transportation services linking Niles to employment centers in Chicago's Loop and other nearby suburbs. Niles stakeholders recognize that these assets serve as a starting point for building a more expansive, wide-ranging arts and culture program that can making Niles a more attractive and interesting place to place to live, work and play.

WHY AN ARTS AND CULTURE MASTER PLAN?

In recent years, the Village of Niles has made significant strides since the adoption of its *2030 Comprehensive Plan* in advancing arts and culture planning initiatives. In 2015, the Village Council established a thirteen-member Arts and Culture Advisory Council to guide and manage local cultural arts-related activities; members of the Council represent different organizations and entities within the community, including the Niles Park District, the Maine Niles Public Library, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Niles Sister Cities Program, and the Niles Historical Society. In addition, the Village also enacted a commercial building permit fee to be used expressly for future arts and culture initiatives.

Apart from these efforts, community events, such as the Italian Festival, the Holly Jolly Market, Bike Niles, neighborhood block parties, and the Niles Sister Cities initiative, have been embraced to celebrate Niles' ethnic diversity, attract visitors, and foster community spirit. Planned future investments in cultural arts facilities are also being considered, including new indoor and outdoor event and performance spaces at Golf Mill Park, near the Leaning Tower of Niles within the Touhy Triangle, and the Family Services/Senior Center Building adjacent to Village Hall.

However, before new investment decisions are made by the Village in arts and culture programming and facilities, the Village and the Public Arts and Culture Advisory Council recognized the benefit of creating a strategic arts and culture plan for future decision-making. It is anticipated that the permit fee program will play an important role in funding arts and culture programs and activities, although, in many cases, the program may also be used to leverage other financial resources, grants and contributions from the public and private sectors for more significant, long-term cultural arts initiatives.

Therefore, this Arts and Culture Plan will guide the Village, the *Public Arts and Culture Advisory Council*, local businesses,

institutions and residents in facilitating cultural arts opportunities that will promote Niles as a culture destination in the Chicago metropolitan region.

WHAT IS ARTS AND CULTURE?

Arts and culture is defined by different disciplines and mediums, including the performing arts of music, dance and theater; the visual arts of painting and sculpture; the audio-visual arts of film, media production and sound recording; creative writing; and the celebratory aspects of local culture such as special events and festivals. Culture is defined as the shared identity, heritage, values, stories, and beliefs and expressions of a population, group or community — expressions that are manifested through various art forms. It is these art forms that provide opportunities for learning and new experiences, engagement and in creating vibrant, sustaining communities.



Photo courtesy of the Village of Niles

ARTS AND CULTURE BENEFITS

Supporting arts and culture initiatives at the local level have several significant benefits, including:

Quality of Life

Arts and culture enhances several aspects of community quality of life — business climate, public safety and social capital — the networks of relationships among people that bring vibrancy to community life. Public art, live theater, entertainment destinations, and community events and festivals can have galvanizing, uplifting effects on people and neighborhoods. They can also provide inspiration and pathways to social and economic mobility.

Placemaking and Community Identity

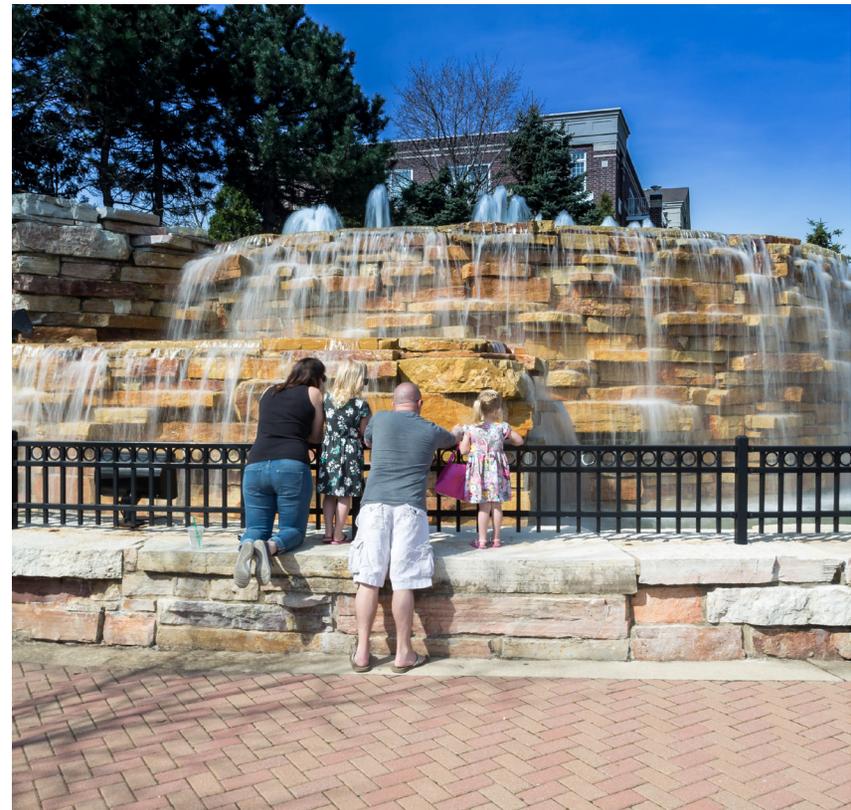
Public art, festivals and other cultural arts activities contribute to building local and regional identity and pride of place. They can also animate spaces and community life, as well as create attachments to places that might not have been in the consciousness of residents and visitors. Arts and culture activities can and should be a primary reason for community gathering.

Economic Impact

Arts and culture contribute to local and regional economies, generating jobs and spending, attracting tourists, and making places attractive to businesses and their employees. According to most recent figures (2012), arts and culture activities generated more than \$2.75 billion in annual spending, translating to more than 78,000 full-time equivalent jobs in Illinois (*The Creative Economy in Illinois, A Report of the Illinois Creative Economy Roundtable*, Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Center, 2014).

Educational Development

Arts activities provide avenues and opportunities for personal exploration and growth leading to the deeper understanding of cultures and the world beyond the everyday. The arts can also provide the framework for spurring creativity and imagination, encouraging discipline, and fostering teamwork — the foundations for building a more engaged community.



Niles Waterfall: photo courtesy of the Village of Niles

PURPOSE OF THE NILES ARTS AND CULTURE MASTER PLAN

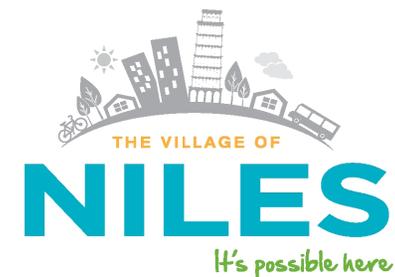
This Arts and Culture Master Plan is a strategic planning document that identifies implementable short-term and long-term initiatives for enhancing Nile's arts and culture environment. The Plan will also serve as a means in which to refine and promote Niles' physical character and image, and improve the Village's overall economic vibrancy and livability. This document is the culmination of community consultation and engagement, policy research, an inventory and analysis of existing cultural assets, and the brainstorming of specific programs and initiatives that have the potential to advance arts and culture programming in the community.

In addition, this Arts and Culture Plan is a supplemental policy document to the *2030 Niles Comprehensive Plan*, and seeks to advance the Comprehensive Plan's primary arts and culture goal where **"arts and culture"** are promoted **"through the support of facilities and the programs that reflect the diversity of the community, enhance the Village's reputation, and create a unique experience for residents, businesses and visitors."** Priority statements, initiatives and implementation actions made within this document are meant to align, reaffirm or update the Comprehensive Plan's arts and culture objectives, including:

1. *Support organizations and groups, such as the Niles Public Library District, local schools, the Niles Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Niles Sister Cities, the Korean-American Chamber of Commerce, Romanian Heritage Center, the Niles Historical Museum, and the Niles Senior and Teen Centers, that provide arts and cultural opportunities to ensure a robust array of events, programs and facilities.*
2. *Identify opportunities to promote the diversity of the Village through the support of events, programs, partnerships and publications.*
3. *As redevelopment occurs, encourage developers to include public art and plazas in projects whenever feasible.*
4. *Explore the use of incentives for artists and arts-related businesses as a business attraction strategy.*
5. *Create a Village-wide "Cultural Calendar" to track and promote arts and cultural events within the Village.*
6. *Prioritize arts and culture as a type of destination that can be included in proposals for development or redevelopment.*
7. *Maintain existing and promote new arts and cultural events in the Village, whether sponsored by the Village or partner organizations.*
8. *Explore the demand for seasonal events, in particular a farmer's market, and identify potential locations.*
9. *Consider the creation of, and potential locations, for a sculpture park within the Village.*

In other cases, the arts and culture initiatives presented in this document are meant to address issues not specifically addressed in the *2030 Niles Comprehensive Plan*.

It should also be noted that in addition to the 2030 Comprehensive Plan, the Village in 2015 adopted a new community brand logo and tag-line — ***It's Possible Here*** — to promote an updated, more compelling image of the community.



WHAT ARE THE CULTURAL ARTS?

Performing Arts — live music, dance, and theater.

Visual Arts — painting, sculpture, ceramics and mosaics, printmaking, crafts, photography, video and filmmaking, architecture.

Applied Arts — graphic design, industrial design, fashion and interior design, decorative arts.

Literary Arts — poetry, novels, non-fiction.

Culinary Arts — high dining, baking, wine and beer making.

KEY DEFINITIONS

The following are key words and concepts used in this Arts and Culture Master Plan:

Culture — defined as the shared identity, heritage, values, stories, and beliefs and expressions of a population, group or community — expressions that are manifested through various art forms.

Arts Incubator — are organizations or programs that provide some form of assistance to artists, arts organizations or creative businesses in early stages of development.

Makerspace — a place in which people with shared interests can gather to work on projects while sharing ideas, equipment, and knowledge.

Arts District — a neighborhood or area within a community intended to concentrate creative arts industries and cultural institutions.

PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process for creating this Arts and culture Plan involved three distinct phases:

- Phase 1: Community Engagement
- Phase 2: Cultural Arts Assets Inventory
- Phase 3: Arts and Culture Plan and Implementation Strategy

Phase 1: Community Engagement

Phase 1 of the planning process focused on engaging the Niles community on arts and culture issues — ensuring that stakeholders and residents had an opportunity to express concerns, thoughts, and ideas. Engagement efforts included:

- Discussion sessions with the Niles *Public Arts and Culture Advisory Council*.
- Interviews with current arts and culture providers and key stakeholder groups.
- A Community “Speak-Out” Session for the general public.
- An on-line questionnaire sent to community residents regarding arts and culture priorities.

Nearly one hundred fifty key community leaders, artists and residents participated in Phase 1 of the planning process. The findings of this process were summarized in Section 4: The Community Speaks.

Phase 2: Cultural Assets Inventory

Phase 2 of the planning process included documentation and inventory of existing arts and culture assets in Niles such as related municipal and governmental facilities — Teen and Senior Centers, Public Library; private arts instruction studios; nightclubs; galleries; schools and religious institutions; and, the arts and culture assets of nearby communities, including

Skokie, Evanston, Des Plaines, and Park Ridge, among others. The inventory also included on-site field work to local arts and culture assets. The inventory is incorporated beginning on page 39 of this Plan document.

Phase 3: Arts and Culture Plan and Implementation Strategy

Phase 3 included the refinement of preliminary arts and culture planning concepts presented during the Community Speak-Out and the integration of community engagement findings into a Draft Arts and Culture Plan. The Draft Arts and Culture Plan outlines preliminary strategies based on critical priorities identified by the community and the *Public Arts and Culture Advisory Council*. The draft was presented at second community open house in May 2017.



Children activities: photo courtesy of the Village of Niles



Golf Mill Park; photo: The Lakota Group



Niles Community Garden: photo courtesy of the Village of Niles



Our Library Card Opens Up Your World!
NILES PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT
Serving Niles, Unincorporated Des Plaines, & Unincorporated Glenview | nileslibrary.org



SECTION 2:

STATE OF ARTS AND CULTURE IN NILES

Niles has many strengths — good neighborhoods, extensive community services and highly developed retail and commercial sectors among them. *Although community interest in arts and culture has been heightened in recent years, especially with the establishment the Public Arts and Culture Advisory Council, the arts sector needs more visibility, more support and more collaboration to elevate and promote it as a significant element in Niles' economic environment and quality of life.* Arts and culture is increasingly viewed and used as an economic development tool by many communities in the Chicago region and beyond.

To be sure, there are many assets and building blocks already in Niles: a supportive municipal government, active religious institutions, Teen and Senior Centers, Public Library, school programs, and a fledgling number of passionate local artists and arts enthusiasts. This section summarizes and describes existing arts and culture assets in Niles; it also provides an overview local demographics and other constraints and opportunities to promoting the cultural arts in Niles.

ARTS AND CULTURE FACILITIES AND PHYSICAL SPACES

Buildings, facilities and outdoor spaces are needed to hold different types of arts and culture activities — all are key to engaging residents and visitors in local cultural experiences. The following are observations and analyses regarding local facilities and spaces in Niles:

- **Municipal Facilities.** The Niles Civic Center at Waukegan Road and Oakton Street has become a primary community service center with its well-used Village Hall, Senior, Family Services and Fitness Centers. The Village Hall and the

Senior Center are in functional buildings, though their entrances are not easily accessible from nearby parking lots. The Village is currently studying the potential for enhancing the Senior Center facility to accommodate additional creative and performing arts activities.

- **Public Library.** The Niles Maine Public Library District has a strong central presence that attracts both residents and non-residents. It serves the standard purposes of a public library well, and provides space not only for its core library functions, but also for exhibitions, presentations, and performances. It also has a start-of-the-art technology for public use, including a 3-D printer and video and sound recording equipment. Nonetheless, capacity of its meeting and performance space can be improved with better acoustics and sound systems.



Niles Public Library: photo by the Lakota Group

- **School Buildings.** There are several elementary and junior high school buildings in Niles, several of recent construction. There is no public high school inside Village limits. Notre Dame Catholic High School along Dempster Street has a strong presence in Niles. School buildings are relatively anonymous in design by contemporary standards and are only identified by their signage. Art installations, with careful design and fabrication by artists collaborating with the school communities, can create a strong sense of pride and stewardship while also making the function of the buildings more evident.
- **Niles Park District.** Niles Park District buildings are largely functional, but not inviting from a visual and physical design perspective. For instance, there are few places for people to sit in outdoor parks. Artists can work with park planners to make parks more unique and attractive to residents and encourage more informal social interactions.
- **Neighborhoods.** Some neighborhoods have been identified or branded to promote an identity and there has been discussion of new programming and events, other activities, and civic motivation to increase connection between residents. Niles also has an array of single-family homes, multi-unit apartments, and condominiums. This allows many new arrivals to begin in lower-cost housing and, when they become more established, to move to higher quality housing. It also allows older residents to downsize and remain in the community. This blend of multi- and single-family dwellings allows Niles to attract and retain diverse population groups that can support an active and vibrant arts and culture scene.
- **Milwaukee Avenue.** Milwaukee Avenue is a strong link between the southern and northern ends of Niles; however, it divides the community into two distinct sides that are difficult to transverse except by car.
- **Artist and Exhibition Spaces.** Studio and practice spaces are virtually non-existent in Niles. As retail needs continue to shift toward digital outlets, there will be places that can

become available for studio or makerspaces for use by individuals, small groups, or the public. Exhibition spaces are also needed to create places where Niles residents can gather to share interest in the arts. Programming in makerspaces, galleries, and studios make excellent opportunities to share skills and solve creative tasks.

- **Performing Spaces.** Performing spaces are largely limited to public and private schools, churches and community facilities. Some spaces can be activated by sharing creative performances, but, ultimately, a designated cultural or performing arts center would meet contemporary standards for a wide range of activities.
- **Niles Historical and Cultural Center.** Located at 8790 North Milwaukee Avenue, and formerly a Cook County Sheriff's facility, the Historical and Cultural Center currently houses the archives and collections of the Niles Historical Society. The Center also hosts regular programs and tours.



Niles Historical and Cultural Center: photo by the Lakota Group

- **Outdoor Spaces.** Several civic, cultural and religious festivals take place in Niles in public spaces and are well-established celebratory activities. These spaces are used sparingly during the year, and in some cases, serve as park and open space. An outdoor festival park is also planned near the Leaning Tower of Niles in the Touhy Triangle as well as Golf Mill Park, both are long-term projects.

Demographics

In terms of community demographic trends, the Niles population count has remained stable for at least two decades. There are new residents, primarily recent arrivals from other countries. There is limited civic focus on the needs of new immigrants and new residents in the community. Although, the median age of Niles' population is trending slightly younger and households are generally having fewer children, median household income is expected to increase — potentially providing more spending dollars on arts and culture activities. However, there will also be more seniors and empty-nesters in the years ahead, a population group that will also benefit from new cultural activities. Niles population diversity is also an opportunity to engage ethnic and immigrant groups in the community's cultural life.

Governance

The Village of Niles has a stable and attentive governing structure. The infrastructure for Village services is spacious and accessible to residents and visitors. Village staffing is professional and attentive to community concerns. The Village provides appropriate resources for youth, families, professionals, business leaders, and elders. While many missions have been accomplished, there has been only limited focus on cultural development.

The Village of Niles is served by multiple legislative and civic agencies. The only governing entity responsible for all of Niles is its elected Village Board. The Niles Park District serves

only the Village of Niles. Many recreational and educational needs are provided by agencies that also serve surrounding communities as well. For example, the Cook County Forest Preserve district intersects with Nile's footprint

These conditions create separate and sometime competing perspectives. Shared common goals can create energy and focus attention from diverse agencies. A central goal of the Arts and Culture Plan will be to create opportunities that engage more organizations and agencies in creating a more dynamic and interactive cultural environment.

Careful decision-making by high-functioning agencies can extend their own missions in support of the common cultural goals and activities. This will require both action by and cooperation between many entities.



Photo courtesy of the Village of Niles

ARTS AND CULTURE NEEDS

Engagement with Niles stakeholders, on-site field work and an inventory of local arts and culture assets pointed to several arts and culture planning needs. This Plan's priorities and initiatives (Section 3) respond to those needs and are based on what can be done with existing assets and how the Village, its Public Arts and Culture Advisory Council, and the Niles community at large can facilitate, coordinate, collaborate, and implement various new arts and culture initiatives.

Placemaking Through the Arts

Placemaking is the new buzzword in the creative arts — it's about bringing artists and community stakeholders and residents together to collaborate on public art projects that enhance, beautify and animate public spaces. Such projects are small-scale, less expensive and easily implementable and can dramatically transform existing buildings and public spaces into visual icons and focal points for community gathering. Most Niles stakeholders regard their community positively, in terms of its overall visual appearance and character. However, there is a desire to add distinction, color, animation and variety to streetscapes and public spaces, and to elevate Niles above other Chicago suburban communities as a destination place for arts and culture. Specific policies, practices, and collaborations are needed to facilitate the incorporation of art in key spaces throughout the community.

Diverse Cultural Programs and Activities

Niles currently has a range of significant cultural arts activities that take place during the year, including several destination festivals and events such as the Feast of Maria Santissima Lauretana (Italian Festival) and the Big Greek Food Fest, organized by Holy Taxiarchai and Saint Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church, among others. Other cultural arts activities are also offered by the Niles Park District, area schools, the Public Library, and several privately-run dance and music companies. However, local stakeholders, artists and residents



“Placemaking” can take many forms - from wall murals to temporary art in public spaces: photos by the Lakota Group



desire more diverse cultural arts offerings ranging from new art galleries and art exhibition spaces to live music and theater. While Niles has many cultural arts offerings, the marketing, communication and promotion of such offerings is limited or non-existent. There are also limited facilities and significant competition from nearby suburbs, adjacent Chicago neighborhoods, and the major arts and culture destinations in Chicago's Loop.

Facilities

As with programming, cultural spaces are also limited — limited to spaces provided in several Village-owned buildings, other government facilities, religious institutions, and private-owned galleries and artist studios. As mentioned previously, the Senior Center is currently being evaluated for potential expansion of its spaces for creative and performing arts uses. The Historical and Cultural Center could also be re-imagined to accommodate creative arts uses. Apart from the Village's *Public Arts and Culture Advisory Council*, existing organizations, such as the Niles Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Niles Historical Society, among others, have limited missions, resources and capacity to support new cultural arts facilities.

Clearly, local residents, as evident in the community engagement process, expressed a strong interest in a dedicated performing arts or cultural center, even with nearby facilities in Rosemont, Skokie, Arlington Heights and Chicago. The Village has made preliminary plans to add new outdoor event spaces at Golf Mill Park and the Touhy Triangle, although the space at the Touhy Triangle is a long-term initiative. A more complete theater complex could potentially be incorporated as part of a comprehensive redevelopment of the Touhy Triangle near the Leaning Tower of Niles, but that is not a specified initiative for the Triangle's redevelopment plans.

Regardless, in the short-term, more spaces are needed — possibly by improving and better equipping current facilities or adapting other spaces not previously considered—to increase

opportunities for the display of art, entertainment, and for other cultural arts experiences.

Coordination, Communication and Partnerships

A primary entity or organization is needed to lead and coordinate the development of Niles' cultural sector. The Village's Arts and Culture Advisory Council, with its diverse representation and access to a dedicated funding source, is certainly positioned to be a lead agency that can leverage relationships and resources, and build consensus to advance local arts and culture initiatives. This position is critically important as Niles' private sector — business, corporations, foundations and individual stakeholders and contributors — have yet to be actively engaged in sponsoring and supporting cultural arts activities. Therefore, there are vast opportunities for broader community collaboration that can assist artists, organizations and other entities in the production, performance, and delivery of arts initiatives in Niles

Implementation and the Roles of the City

As noted earlier, the Village has taken significant leadership steps in promoting the arts in Niles and is ready to be a prime partner in implementing the strategies and recommendations presented in this Arts and Culture Master Plan. Their key word is "partner," recognizing that the Village has only so many resources to devote to arts and culture initiatives given other community development and service delivery priorities. Given this, the Village must leverage its resources and relationships strategically, help build local capacity, and lead by example to strengthen the cultural life in Niles. It must also spearhead initiatives when warranted to provide vision, direction and inspiration on cultural arts initiatives that matter to Niles residents and stakeholders.



SECTION 3:

ARTS AND CULTURE VISION & PRIORITIES

The Niles Arts and Culture Master Plan represents the results of a collaborative process between the Village, its Public Arts and Culture Advisory Council, and Niles stakeholders and residents to create a vision and key planning priorities for the cultural arts in Niles. The vision and priorities are summarized in this section.

VISION STATEMENT

This vision statement captures and summarizes the aspirations of Niles' stakeholders regarding the roles arts and culture will take in enhancing economic competitiveness and quality of life. It also defines what the community desires in terms how arts and culture is produced, delivered and valued in Niles.

The Village of Niles is committed to fostering arts and culture in the community by supporting the people and organizations that create artistic and cultural experiences that add to the cultural life of each Niles' resident. To that end, the Village of Niles values:

Collaboration: *We believe in working with the artist and creative community—and other key stakeholder groups—as partners in bringing arts and culture opportunities to Niles' residents.*

Discovery and Innovation: *We value arts and culture as opportunities for enriching the community's quality of life and for providing the path for innovation and creativity for all the arts in Niles.*

Diversity: *We embrace the unique diversity of the community—its people, institutions and assets — in the partnerships needed to better serve the community's arts and culture needs.*

Service: *We exist to support the arts and culture needs of Niles' residents and strive to lead by listening and acting in partnership with residents, institutions, and corporate partners.*

Accessibility: *We support arts and culture activities that are accessible to all age, racial, and ethnic groups in the community.*

Trust: *We operate transparently and openly, with positive intent to facilitate arts and culture activities in the Village of Niles.*

KEY PRIORITIES

The Arts and Culture Master Plan focuses on the following five priorities based on identified needs determined through the planning process:

- A. Use Arts and Culture to Enhance Community Identity
- B. Celebrate Niles Diversity and Leverage Local Assets
- C. Enhance Conditions for Cultural Arts Activities
- D. Employ Innovative Methods in Increasing Local Arts and Culture Participation
- E. Forge Public-Partnerships to Advance Development of Niles Cultural Arts Sector

Each planning priority informs a set of policies, strategies and initiatives presented and described in detail in Section 4. An implementation guide for all arts and culture initiatives is also provided in that section.

Planning Priority A: Use Arts and Culture to Enhance Community Identity

As identified earlier, enhancing Niles’ physical spaces are central priorities and concerns among local stakeholders and residents — *understanding that public art, streetscapes, and placemaking efforts can help promote and reinforce a distinct and compelling community identity apart from other nearby suburban communities.* The Village of Niles should also leverage its resources and adopt policies that facilitate the integration and permeation of art in public facilities and spaces, as well as key private developments that contribute to building unique places and destinations within the community. It should also be noted that beyond public art, other arts and culture activities — whether live performances, art exhibitions or festivals — also contribute to a sense of community vitality, and should be marketed consistently and effectively to build their visibility within the community and in the Chicago region.

Impact

Enhancing community identity through arts and culture can help create needed spaces for community interaction and gathering that build social capital and citizen bonds to their neighborhood, schools and churches, and other destination places within community. Art also adds economic value to neighborhoods and investments in new development, promoting a unique Niles’ brand that attracts both new residents and businesses.

Planning Priority B: Celebrate Niles Diversity and Leverage Local Assets

Niles’ diversity in its population groups and institutions is one of the community’s singular strengths; it also has many physical assets — *facilities owned by government agencies, religious institutions and the private sector — that can be employed to build an ever-present cultural arts scene.* Going forward, these existing strengths and assets should serve as the foundation for creating a more diverse and extensive program of cultural arts offerings that are accessible to all Niles’ residents. As a short-term priority, this meets the current capacity of local entities to produce and deliver arts and culture programming. Long-term planning, resource development, and public-private partnerships will be needed to construct and develop more significant facilities that can house a variety of visual and performing arts activities as Niles’ cultural arts sector grows over the long-term.

Impact

By embracing and celebrating its diversity, the Niles community will experience increased participation by its different ethnic and racial groups in Nile’s cultural life. It will also promote Niles within the Chicago region as a vibrant place for appreciating diverse heritage and culture. This in turn will lead to increased tourism and recognition of the community’s arts and culture assets.

Niles Village Hall: photo courtesy of the Village of Niles



Priority C: Enhance Conditions for Cultural Arts Activities

To promote the creative arts, there must be policies, incentives and programs in place, whether instituted at the Village-level, or leveraged and offered through partnerships with other entities and organizations. For instance, community stakeholders voiced the desire for more galleries and artist work spaces, although no private-sector initiative has been pursued to encourage the attraction of creative professionals in Niles. Public-sector action might be needed in this case — possibly through an arts incubator or an incentive program for underwriting leasing costs, among other means — to help spur the growth of a creative arts industry in the community. Other policies and initiatives such as zoning changes and building permit fee waivers could also be explored.

Impact

The impacts of such efforts will be an increased presence of artists and creatives locating in Niles, whether within an arts incubator, individual galleries, or publicly or privately-owned and managed exhibition spaces. It will also help in attracting associated businesses and enhancing local economic activity. It may also result in more public art and increased interest and participation from Niles’ residents, visitors, and investors.

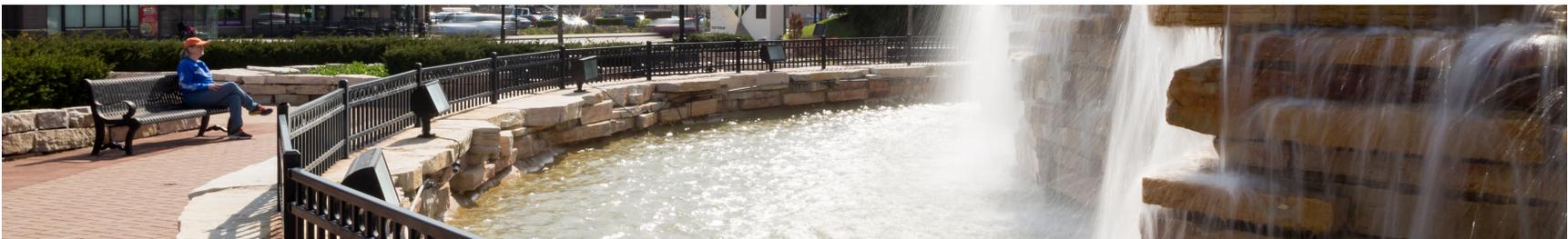
Priority D: Employ Innovative Methods in Increasing Local Arts and Culture Participation

While many Niles stakeholders desire new facilities for the performing and visual arts, there are other straightforward, relatively inexpensive means and methods in which residents and visitors can access the arts. For instance, public art can be placed in unexpected places, cultural events can be delivered in clusters and in partnership with many different groups, promoted through print and social media outlets, and even delivered in small, innovative formats to neighborhoods in parks, traditional commercial buildings, schools, and churches. Art today is not necessarily defined as going to the theater or a symphony concert — it can be delivered by artists in more active, diverse ways to the individual level where it can have the most meaningful impact. Going forward, the Niles community must explore all ways to provide arts and culture that reflect the specific community needs and desires.

Impact

By being thorough and effective in promoting local participation in arts activities, the Niles’ community can nurture a new generation of artists, a rising respect and appreciation for different cultures and traditions, an enriched quality of life, and a more engaged citizenry in the arts.

Niles Waterfall: photo courtesy of the Village of Niles



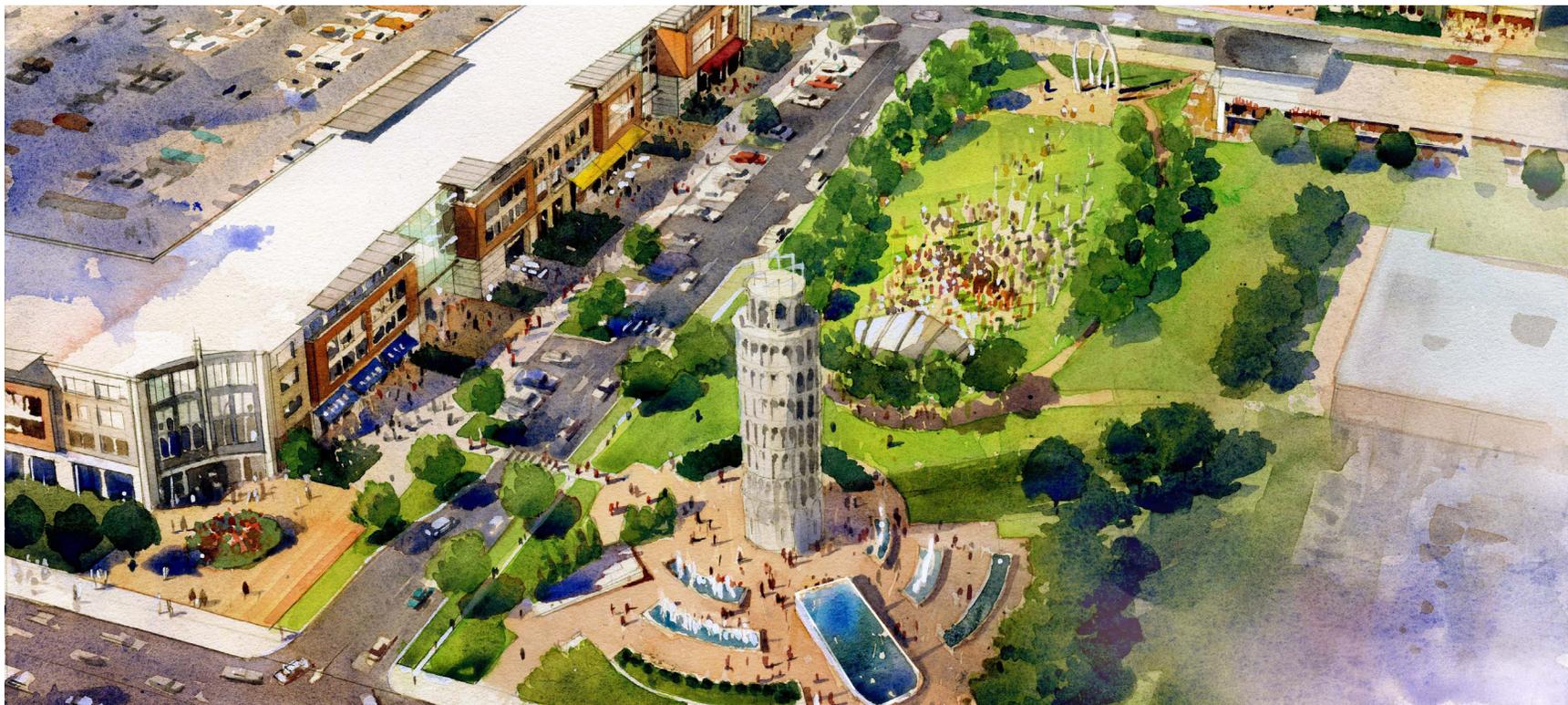
Priority E: Seek New Partnerships with the City as Lead Entity to Guide Development of Niles Cultural Sector

As discussed previously, leadership is needed to activate the arts as critical element to enhancing economic vitality and community quality-of-life – the Village of Niles is uniquely positioned to set the direction for developing and fostering the creative arts sector. However, there are limited resources and the Village and its *Public Arts and Culture Advisory Council* must seek partnerships and collaborations from the non-profit and for-profit sectors to achieve a varied, successful cultural arts program.

Impact

Strong leadership from the Village, especially from a well-managed, staffed and energetic *Public Arts and Culture Advisory Council*, should lead to measured, sustained growth in the cultural arts sector. Arts initiatives and programming are also well-funded, coordinated and promoted so that all available resources, financial and human, are utilized for creating compelling arts and culture activities.

Illustrative rendering of the Touhy Triangle-Leaning Tower outdoor festival space; image: The Lakota Group







SECTION 4: KEY STRATEGIES AND INITIATIVES

The following strategies and initiatives are ways in which the arts planning priorities can be implemented and achieved. Strategies are based on the analysis of key issues, engagement with community stakeholders, and typically represent best practices in community arts planning and implementation.

PRIORITY A: USE ARTS AND CULTURE TO ENHANCE COMMUNITY IDENTITY

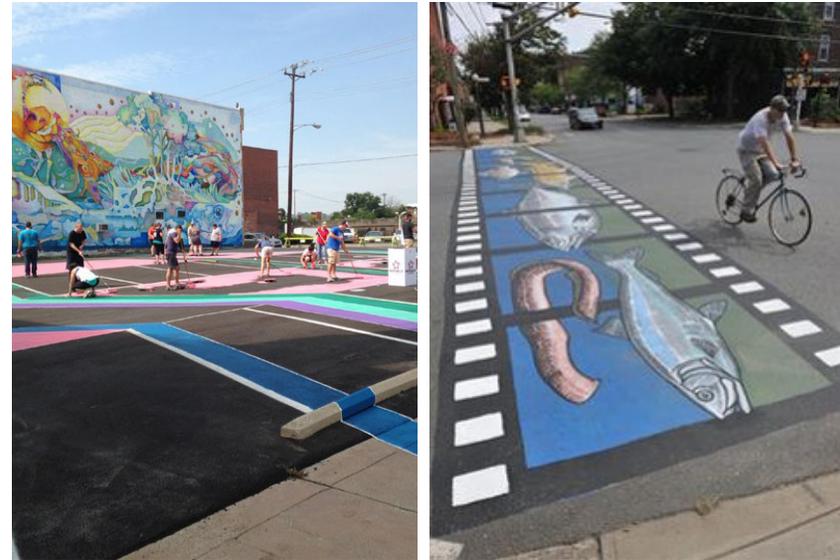
Strategy #1: Enhance public spaces through public art and other placemaking initiatives.

Initiatives:

- Create a public art plan that identifies sites — public spaces, streetscapes, buildings, and parks — that can integrate and accommodate public art enhancements. The plan should have clear guidelines on the types of public art that would be considered — mosaics, sculpture, interactive pieces, murals — while ensuring how public art might express important values of the Niles community. Local entities such as the Niles Park District, schools, businesses, and churches and religious institutions should be included in preparation of the public art plan to determine potential locations for public art installations. The public art plan should be managed and administered by the *Village's Public Arts and Culture Advisory Council*.
- Require that all new Village or government-constructed buildings and facilities in Niles include art or aesthetic treatments. This could be required through zoning.

Facilitate various public art and placemaking initiatives that enhance spaces throughout Niles:

- Temporary art installation in public parks
- Painted crosswalks
- Murals or small-scaled public art placed in select “iconic” locations
- Small-scaled public art framing parking lots
- Embellished tree grate covers.
- Special art installations or seating area designs at transit/bus stops



Placemaking examples: Temporary pop-up play spot (left), art in crosswalk (right); photos: The Lakota Group.

Other initiatives may include:

- Encourage Niles residents to notice empty places and blank surfaces and create online or face-to-face forums where citizens can propose empty sites that should be considered for public art installations and community placemaking efforts.
- Encourage the use of temporary media to transform places during neighborhood parties or civic gatherings. Options include temporary paint (temptra), Indian Holi powders (natural), snow sculptures (after a storm), installations and displays of beautiful leaves in public buildings, shaped plants (topiary) in front yards, kite festivals, or themed costumes parties.
- Use simple digital projections to help visualize how the places and surfaces might be transformed to encourage conversations with imaginative outcomes. Allow high school students with digital drawing skills to work with adults lacking those skills to model intergenerational collaboration.
- Promote collaboration between the Village of Niles and Niles' residents to create, review and approve temporary placemaking projects as long as design and safety concerns are addressed. Temporary placemaking projects can go beyond the usual art installation and incorporate performances by amateur musicians, dramatic readings of text/poems, exhibitions by artists, or even juggling or roller skating in costumes.



Placemaking examples: Kite Festival, Berkeley, California (above left); Holi Festival of Colors, Spanish Fork, Utah (above right); digital projection example, photo source: SignMedia (below left); temporary park/playground space, photo source: Highlandtown Main Street, Baltimore, Maryland (below right).



Strategy #2: Create and implement other arts and culture marketing and branding efforts.

Initiatives:

- Create and maintain an up-to-date Village cultural arts calendar that promotes all arts activities and events from Village-sponsored festivals to theatrical performances in the local schools. The calendar would be produced in multiple formats for print, online display and inclusion in social media outlets, Facebook, Twitter and other platforms. The calendar should be cross-marketed and integrated in the websites of other organizations, such as the Niles Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Public Library, and the Niles Historical Society.
- Consider the creation of an arts and culture “brand image” that can be used in marketing at least Village-sponsored events, other activities that might be Village-funded or supported, to heighten the awareness of Niles cultural arts activities locally and regionally.
- In partnership with other organizations, the Village may consider a promotional campaign that publicizes local cultural activities — festivals and special events at first, other cultural assets and activities over the long-term as such assets are developed.
- Maintain data and information on the economic impact of all cultural arts activities in Niles, including attendance at festivals and local school activities, registration at instructional classes in Park District venues, and the number of new galleries and artist work spaces established, among other data points that could be collected. Such data should be compiled by the Village and the Public Arts and Culture Advisory Council using information from business license applications, tracking attendance at City-sponsored festivals and requesting other attendance information directly from the Park

District, local schools and other institutions. An Internet-based data collection software system could also be employed to allow partner entities to input or upload economic or attendance-related information after events or cultural arts activities have taken place. The data could also be incorporated as part of an annual report to the Village Council summarizing progress toward implementing the Arts and Culture Master Plan.

- Develop an online digital tagging system to remind residents where cultural activities occur around Niles. The tagging system should be employed in the Village’s website and those of other agencies and entities, including the Park District, the Niles Historical Society, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Public Library.



Holly Jolly Christmas event (left), Idol Choirfest (right); Photos courtesy of the Village of Niles.

PRIORITY B: CELEBRATE NILES DIVERSITY AND LEVERAGE LOCAL ASSETS

Strategy #1: Create new events and activities that highlight Niles' unique cultural and ethnic

Initiatives:

- Diversify Niles' cultural offerings to appeal to a broad range of ethnic and racial groups — such offerings can include festivals, art exhibitions, and performance events that showcase a domestic or international artist from various cultural or ethnic backgrounds.
- Encourage local religious institutions or other local entities to organize new events that highlight Niles' different ethnic and racial groups — Irish, Italian, Korean, Polish, Jewish, Greeks, Hispanics, among others.
- Make available festival grounds, buildings and other spaces available to different ethnic groups to produce events and activities to ensure that such activities are accessible to residents throughout Niles.

Strategy #2: Build and enhance capacity of local artists and existing arts entities to offer a diverse range of cultural arts programming.

Initiatives:

- Explore opportunities to provide training and technical assistance services to local artists and new start-up arts entities. Such assistance could focus on business planning and start-up financing, locating and leasing suitable spaces, leadership and board development, marketing and publicity, accessing Village resources and donor cultivation.

- Forge partnerships with the Niles Chamber of Commerce and Industry to provide training and resources to artists and arts entities.
- Engage trainers knowledgeable in local arts development to provide on-going trainings.
- Require trainings for artists and arts-related organizations seeking Village-funding for arts projects and initiatives.
- Establish a mentorship or orientation program for new artists, start-up and existing arts entities centered on providing information on Village and area resources.
- Assist existing organizations, such as the Niles Historical Society, in grant writing and procurement for specific initiatives that advance organizational and Village-wide cultural arts programming goals. Additional technical assistance could be provided to the Society in board development, fundraising, archival management, online services, and facilities management.
- Encourage crossover cultural events such as temporary exhibitions at live concerts, brief musical performances at readings, historic objects from the Niles Historical Society displayed in context such as schools and churches. Create an atmosphere in which creative contrast is valued along with creative cohesiveness.



Photo courtesy of the Village of Niles

Case Study Example: Web-Based Tools for Artist Technical Assistance – Chicago Artists Resource Website

Founded in 1974, the non-profit Chicago Artists Coalition provides education and advocacy resources and tools to Chicago-based artists as a means to empower them to achieve their full artistic potential. These resources include regular training and education workshops and programs, as well as a Maker Grant Program that provides financial support to visual artists demonstrating potential to a sustainable artistic practice. In addition to these programs, the Coalition also sponsors and manages the Chicago Artists Resource Website (www.chicagoartistsresource.org), – a website portal to a variety of information resources to artists such as available work/studio spaces in Chicago, job postings, listings of artists/gallery events and training opportunities, and calls for artists announcements. Post listing fees support the continued management of the website by Coalition staff.



An art exhibition opening at the Chicago Artists Coalition Blue Sky Vault Gallery space. Photo: Chicago Artists Coalition.

Case Study Example: Teacher Trunks School Outreach Program – Boone County Museum of History

Located in Belvidere, Illinois, the Boone County Museum of History maintain a facility with several exhibition spaces related to the County’s history and development. The Museum is currently staffed by a full-time executive director and collections manager. As part of its community outreach activities, the Museum offers “Teacher Trunks”—boxes that contain real and reproductive historic artifacts and documents – which are available to local school teachers as an educational tool about local history. Trunks are available for specific topics in local history, including Native-American, Pioneer women, World War II, Illinois history, and local fossils and paleontology. More trunk topics and related artifact collections are under development by the Museum. The Museum has found the trunks to be effective tools for engaging local students on the County’s history.



The Pioneer Teacher Trunk. Photo: Boone County History Museum.

Strategy #3: Deliver cultural arts activities in local neighborhoods.

Initiatives:

- Coordinate creative actions with other civic agencies — Park District, Public Library, and local schools — for the delivery of arts programming at the local level.
- Consider how various civic entities have responsibility based on geographic or neighborhood boundaries.
- Encourage those agencies to include creative cultural action as a part of raising visibility and awareness of what they do for the community/neighborhood.
- Encourage school communities to do simultaneous mini-festivals celebrating local creative activities around specific themes. Scheduling these activities simultaneously results in both collective action and individual choice - more activities than one can attend.

Art exhibition, Niles Public Library, photo courtesy of the Niles Public Library



Case Study Example: Collaborative Cultural Arts Initiatives — Kettering, Ohio

Kettering, Ohio, a suburb of Dayton, and a community with many similar socioeconomic, demographic and cultural characteristics to Niles, maintains a lively public art/cultural arts program managed mainly by the City Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department, but also in partnership with other municipal agencies and local artists. For example, a Senior Show Choir is produced by the Kettering Senior Center. While activities take place at local parks, the Rosewood Arts Centre, a former school building, houses many cultural activities, including workshops, lectures, classes, performances, and an annual arts festival. The range of activities is intellectual, playful, and creative as Kettering residents join each other in creating a shared creative culture. Kettering's municipal website (www.ketteringoh.org/departments/prca/) includes locations and listings of public art installations, art classes, family activities, and children's programming.



Mosaic art instruction class, Rosewood Arts Center. Photo: BasedonTrueBlog.

PRIORITY C: ENHANCE CONDITIONS FOR CULTURAL ARTS ACTIVITIES

Strategy #1: Optimize use of existing cultural arts facilities and programs.

Initiatives:

- Identify and enhance performance and educational spaces in existing Village-owned facilities — Senior and Teen Centers, the Public Library, schools, and Park District facilities could be opportunities for enhancing existing spaces to meet local cultural arts needs.
- Digitize and place online significant parts of Niles Historical Society’s archival information — photos, directories, obituaries, real estate records, etc., for access by the public. Digitization would permit for some storage of records, freeing up space in the Historical and Cultural Center for other uses. The Village/ Historical Society’s website capabilities would have to be expanded and enhanced to allow for digitization of various record collections.
- Consider space collaborations between the Public Library and the Niles Historical Society, perhaps with a dedicated “local history room” within the Library and an expanded makerspace — managed by the Library, but housed in the Historical and Cultural Center. In turn, for instance makerspace activities could focus on topics that would interest history enthusiasts such as restoration and repair of family antiques or the conservation of historic photos and other heirlooms
- Create rotating Historical Society exhibits for other civic spaces and facilities, including local schools, Village Hall, the Teen and Senior Centers, and other facilities.

Case Study Example: DeKalb County (IL) — Joiner History Room

The Joiner History Room, managed cooperatively between the DeKalb County Board of Supervisors, the DeKalb County Finance Office, the Sycamore Public Library and local history enthusiasts, provides a diverse collection of archival research materials and resources made available to the public both on-site in a dedicated room in the Sycamore Public Library and in databases accessible through the Internet. Both on-site and Internet archival collections are extensive — ranging from digitized newspapers and obituary records to city directories, high school yearbooks, wills, and historic photographs. The intent of the online resources is to make such information more accessible to the general public. The Joiner History Room is currently staffed by both volunteers and the Public Library; volunteers also provide assistance and expertise in genealogical research.



Joiner History Room, Sycamore Public Library. Photo: DeKalb County

Strategy #2: Consider development of a cultural arts district along Milwaukee Avenue.

Initiatives:

- Cultivate and promote a cultural arts district in Niles – most possibly an area along Milwaukee Avenue between Seward and Monroe Streets where there is a concentration of small-scaled storefronts within larger buildings. These storefronts could potentially provide suitable spaces for galleries, artist-work spaces and nightclub and entertainment venues. Several actions need to be pursued:
 - Creation of a business development plan with property owners and leasing agents on how to attract creative arts businesses.
 - Creation of creative arts attraction incentives.
 - Branding and placemaking of Milwaukee Avenue as an arts district.

Strategy #3: Review Village policies and practices to encourage arts and culture efforts in Niles.

Initiatives:

- Consider a thorough review of all Village policies and that may impact the development of Niles’ cultural sector. For instance, a streamlined permitting process or the availability of permit fee waivers for new arts-related businesses could be instituted. Zoning and noise ordinances could also be reviewed to ensure they do not pose obstacles to the establishment of creative arts industries.

- Identify cultural arts opportunities throughout the initiatives of all Village departments.
- Consider requiring the installation of public art in any private or public development projects assisted through Tax Increment Financing.

Strategy #4: Establish an arts incubator and recruit entertainment-related businesses.

Initiatives:

- Pursue the establishment of an arts incubator, perhaps located along the Milwaukee Avenue corridor or within the Niles Historical and Cultural Center, to nurture local artists, facilitate the creation of arts-related businesses, and provide instruction, exhibition, and small-scaled performance spaces.
- Recruit entertainment-related businesses — restaurants or bars with attached music venues — that can offer regular live music performances. Community stakeholders expressed a strong desire for such facilities as nearby live music venues in adjacent Chicago neighborhoods are compelling alternatives to more expensive cultural offerings in Chicago’s Loop and other nearby suburbs. Such businesses could also be positioned to host national or international music groups.



Commercial buildings along Milwaukee Avenue; photo: The Lakota Group

Strategy #5: Conduct needs and financing assessment for a performing arts complex.

Initiatives:

- Consider undertaking and commissioning a needs and financing assessment for a more comprehensive performing arts and cultural arts center or complex. While many Niles stakeholders desire a complex where larger-scaled music, dance and theater activities could take place, it is unknown what the market would be for the center, how it would be financed and where it would be located.

Given that the cultural sector is relatively small at this time, the construction of a new performing arts or cultural center should be a long-term priority; however, commissioning such a feasibility study would provide some answers and direction for how the cultural sector needs to develop to gain market and market and programmatic support. It is suggested that such a future facility be considered as part of the Touhy Triangle redevelopment initiative



Exhibition spaces at the Brickton Arts Center, Park Ridge (left), photo, Des Plaines Patch; gateway signage, Oak Arts District-Harrison Street, Oak Park, Illinois, photo, Wednesday Journal.

Photo courtesy of the Village of Niles



PRIORITY D: EMPLOY INNOVATIVE METHODS IN INCREASING LOCAL ARTS AND CULTURE PARTICIPATION

Strategy #1: Increase the number of free or sponsored cultural activities for all age groups.

Initiatives:

- Explore cross-promotional opportunities between existing cultural arts providers, such as the Public Library, Park District, and the Nilés Chamber of Commerce and Industry to promote and make arts offerings more widespread.
- Organize and promote free art instruction or “art day events” at Park District facilities, and local schools and churches.
- Create a regular schedule of outdoor concerts, plays and theatrical performances, perhaps on a rotating basis, in Nilés’ parks and church grounds.
- Organize and schedule small and large- scaled cultural offerings and festivals that attract Nilés other ethnic groups — delivered in facilities that are easily accessible: churches, schools, and expanded Golf Mill Park, and perhaps a new outdoor event space within the Touhy Triangle. All ethnic and racial groups should be encouraged to use all public event spaces, existing and planned.

Strategy #2: Explore opportunities to integrate arts in everyday activities and experiences.

Initiatives:

- Continue allowing use of the Public Library and Village and Teen and Senior Centers for art exhibitions, perhaps expanding the use of such facilities for limited musical and theater performances. Ensure that student art productions are also displayed in such facilities.
- Encourage art or performances by local artists and organizations be displayed, for sale, or performed in Nilés’ restaurants and cafes, and permit different age and ethnic groups to participate in placemaking activities.
- Use crowdsourcing and social media as methods for raising money for local arts initiatives and conducting outreach for increasing participation in arts activities.
- Find creative approaches for diversifying cultural arts offerings in the local schools, perhaps by supplementing school art curriculums, encouraging participation in Nilés’ local festivals, producing art fairs, and accessing studio facilities in a future arts incubator or cultural center.
- Explore means in which to educate Nilés residents and parents on the value of an arts education.



Holy Texiarhai and St. Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church photo: The Lakota Group

PRIORITY E: SEEK NEW FINANCING MECHANISMS AND PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE CITY AS LEAD ENTITY TO GUIDE DEVELOPMENT OF NILES' CULTURAL SECTOR

Strategy #1: Coordinate community arts and culture efforts through the Niles Public Arts and Culture Advisory Council.

Initiatives:

- Prepare an annual strategic plan that outlines initiatives and projects to be pursued in the coming year, including those initiatives recommended in this Arts and Culture Plan.
- Hire and retain at least a part-time staff person or consultant experienced in cultural arts management to provide support for the Advisory Council and lead and coordinate certain aspects of the Niles' cultural arts program.
- Spearhead cross-collaborative cultural initiatives that require the Advisory Council's lead and active involvement — such initiatives may include providing technical assistance to individuals and groups planning new cultural arts initiatives, and working with other governmental agencies on facility and program enhancements. Such efforts should be managed by future Arts Council staff.
- Conduct on-going Advisory Council development activities, including preparing grants for specific initiatives, and identifying and training future members of the Council.
- Manage the on-going preparation, distribution and promotion of the Niles' arts calendar.

Case Study Example: Oak Park, Illinois - Oak Park Area Arts Council

Established initially as the Civic Arts Council of Oak Park in 1974, the Oak Park Area Arts Council supports artists and arts organization in the communities of Oak Park, River Forest and Forest Park through a variety of education, outreach and grant programs. Although the Council is an independent non-profit organization, it is housed in Oak Park Village Hall. A period of 12 years elapsed when the Council hired its first part-time staff in 1987 to when its first full-time executive director was brought on board in 1987. The Council manages several initiatives, including Arts Funds, a grant program for locals artists and arts organization; a Mini-Mural programs that supports small mural installations along the CTA's Green Line viaduct; and, the Off the Wall summer art program, which employs local youth in the creation of public art. The Council also maintains art exhibition spaces inside Village Hall.



Outdoor wall art commissioned the Oak Park Area Arts Council Off-Wall-Summer Art Program; photo courtesy of the Wednesday Journal.

Strategy #2: Develop and provide access to diverse public and private funding sources to varied support cultural arts initiatives.

Initiatives:

- Prepare a funding/fundraising plan along with the Advisory Council strategic plan to determine how the construction permit fee fund pool will be spent and what other sources of revenues — grants, corporate contributions, for example — will be sought to underwrite cultural arts initiatives. Such a plan should be prepared by future Arts Council staff.
- Continue allocating a portion of the construction permit fee fund for a granting program that awards funds to artists, arts organizations and other entities engaged in the arts to advance Niles’ arts and culture goals. Grants and other outside resources could also be used to augment the grant program’s resources. In addition, adopt policies and procedures for program operations that support fair grant award review processes.
- Consider additional requirements within municipal capital improvement programs to require the installation of public art on or near municipal facilities. Similar requirements should be promoted with other affiliated government agencies, such as the Park District.
- Create a formal sponsorship program for Village events and festivals where all Village-sponsored events could potentially be marketed together to outside contributors as part of an overall sponsorship package.
- Create guidelines for the acceptance or donation of public art in tandem with the creation of the public arts plan described in Priority A.

Strategy #3: Collaborate with existing agencies, organizations and entities in the production and promotion of arts and culture activities.

Initiatives:

- Conduct regular visits with area businesses and corporations to discuss possibilities for private-sector involvement and funding of cultural arts initiatives.
- Establish a cultural space brokerage in partnership with local property owners or other entities to market affordable or low-cost spaces and storefront that are currently available for rent to cultural arts practitioners.
- Explore the interest of area foundations and philanthropic organizations in the funding of Niles arts initiatives, including arts education activities, placemaking efforts, and facility enhancements



Niles community garden; photo courtesy of the Niles Park District.





SECTION 5: IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

OVERVIEW

The following pages includes a guide for implementing the various initiatives presented in the Arts and Culture Master Plan. Each initiative is assigned a relative timeline for implementation — from one year to ten years on, or a regular, on-going activity — prospective project cost, lead and partner agencies and organizations involved in implementation, and the relative priority for implementation given other initiatives starting within a given timeline. The guide is that — a guide for implementation. Timelines for specific initiatives can be changed and adjusted depending on resources available and the readiness of agencies and partner entities to participate in implementation.

When reading the Implementation Guide, please take note of the following:

- **Relative Cost:** Cost estimates listed in this column provide an approximate budget that would be primarily derived from the Public Art and Advisory Council’s budget, not taking into account other revenue sources from the Village or other public and private sectors sources. In some cases, a cost figure cannot be determined.
- **Lead Party:** A lead party is an organization or entity that may take a primary responsibility for initiative implementation, although that responsibility may be shared with other entities, such as other Village departments or outside organizations.
- **Potential Parties:** Potential parties are those entities and organizations that can participate in certain cultural arts activities by providing funding, project coordination, and manpower and volunteer support. Depending on the initiative and circumstances, a potential party could also serve as the lead implementation party.

ROLES OF THE PUBLIC ARTS AND CULTURE ADVISORY COUNCIL

To grow the cultural arts sector in Niles will require active leadership and participation by the Village of Niles, its Village Council and the Public Arts and Culture Advisory Council. The Council’s primary role is to set the direction and offer central coordination and support for partner entities for important cultural arts activities in Niles. The Village Council and the other Village departments will also provide budgeting, financing, technical and logistical support for various arts initiatives. Other Arts Council roles and responsibilities may include:

- Ensuring Arts Council policies, initiatives, budget and expenditures are aligned with Master Plan priorities.
- Convene partners and interested parties in implementation initiatives
- Review Master Plan implementation progress and an annual basis
- Commission other studies and plans as needed to advance Master Plan priorities.
- Communicate the ongoing impacts of arts and culture in Niles to the community.

Priority A: Use Arts and Culture to Enhance Community Identity

Strategy #1: Create and implement other arts and culture marketing and branding efforts.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a public art plan that identifies sites — public spaces, streetscapes, buildings, and parks — that can integrate and accommodate public art enhancements. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require that all new Village or government-constructed buildings and facilities in Niles include art or aesthetic treatments. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate various public art and placemaking initiatives that enhance spaces throughout Niles 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage Niles residents to notice empty places and blank surfaces and create online or face-to-face forums where citizens can propose empty sites that should be considered for public art installations and community placemaking efforts. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the use of temporary media to transform places during neighborhood parties or civic gatherings. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use simple digital overlays to help visualize how the places and surfaces might be transformed to encourage conversations with imaginative outcomes. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote collaboration between the Village of Niles and Niles' residents to create, review and approve temporary placemaking projects as long as design and safety concerns are addressed. 					

Strategy #2: Create and implement other arts and culture marketing and branding efforts.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and maintain an up-to-date Village cultural arts calendar that promotes all arts activities and events from Village-sponsored festivals to theatrical performances in the local schools. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the creation of an arts and culture “brand image” that can be used in marketing at least Village-sponsored events, other activities that might be Village-funded or supported, to heighten the awareness of Niles cultural arts activities locally and regionally. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In partnership with other organizations, the Village may consider a promotional campaign that publicizes local cultural activities — festivals and special events at first, other cultural assets and activities over the long-term as such assets are developed. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain data and information on the economic impact of all cultural arts activities in Niles, including attendance at festivals and local school activities, registration at instructional classes in Park District venues, and the number of new galleries and artist work spaces established, among other data points to be collected. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an online digital tagging system to remind residents where cultural activities occur around Niles. 					

Relative Cost	Lead Party	Potential Partners	Priority
Under \$25K	Village, Arts Council	Arts Organizations, Artists, Park District, Chamber, Businesses	High
No Expenditure Required	Village, Arts Council		High
\$5k - 50K; TBD by Project	Village, Arts Council, Arts Organizations, Businesses	Arts Organizations, Artists, Park District, Chamber, Businesses	Medium
Under \$5K	Village, Arts Council	Arts Organizations, Artists, Park District	Low
\$5k - 20K; TBD by Project	Village, Arts Council, Arts Organizations, Businesses	Arts Organizations, Artists, Park District, Chamber, Businesses	Low
\$20k - 50K; TBD by Project	Village, Arts Council, Arts Organizations, Businesses	Arts Organizations, Artists, Chamber, Businesses	Low
No Expenditure Required	Village, Arts Council	Arts Organizations, Artists, Local Agencies, Chamber, Businesses	High
Under 5K	Village, Arts Council	Arts Organizations, Artists, Local Agencies, Chamber, Businesses	High
Under 10K	Village, Arts Council	Arts Organizations, Artists, Local Agencies, Chamber, Businesses	Medium
\$5k - 25K; TBD by Project	Village, Arts Council, Chamber	Arts Organizations, Chamber, Businesses	Low
Under 5K	Village, Arts Council, Chamber	Arts Organizations, Local Agencies, Chamber, Businesses	Medium
Under 5K	Village, Arts Council, Chamber	Arts Organizations, Local Agencies, Chamber	Low

Priority B: Celebrate Niles Diversity and Leverage Local Assets

Strategy #1: Create new events and activities that highlight Niles’ unique cultural and ethnic make-up.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversify Niles’ cultural offerings to appeal to a broad range of ethnic and racial groups — such offerings can include festivals, art exhibitions, and performance events that showcase a domestic or international artist from various cultural or ethnic backgrounds. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage local religious institutions or other local entities to organize new events that highlight Niles’ different ethnic and racial groups. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make available festival grounds, buildings and other spaces available to different ethnic groups to produce events and activities to ensure that such activities are accessible to residents throughout Niles. 					

Strategy #2: Empower local artists and build capacity of existing arts entities to offer a diverse range of cultural arts programming

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities to provide training and technical assistance services to local artists and new start-up arts entities. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forge partnerships with the Niles Chamber of Commerce and Industry to provide training and resources to artists and arts entities. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage trainers knowledgeable in local arts development to provide on-going trainings. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist existing organizations, such as the Niles Historical Society, in grant writing and procurement for specific initiatives that advance organizational and Village-wide cultural arts programming goals. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage crossover cultural events such as temporary exhibitions at live performances, brief musical performances at readings, historic objects displayed in context such as schools and churches. 					

Strategy #3: Deliver cultural arts activities in neighborhoods

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate creative actions with other civic agencies — Park District, Public Library, and local schools — for the delivery of arts programming at the local level. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how various civic agencies have responsibility based on geographic or neighborhood boundaries. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage school communities to do simultaneous mini-festivals celebrating local creative activities around specific themes. 					

Relative Cost	Responsible Party	Potential Partners	Priority
\$20k - 50K; TBD by Project	Village, Arts Council, Arts Organizations	Arts Organizations, Local Agencies, Chamber, Businesses, Churches	Medium
\$20k - 50K; TBD by Project	Village, Arts Council, Churches, Arts and Civic Organizations	Churches, Arts Organizations, Local Agencies, Chamber, Businesses, Civic Organizations	Medium
Under 5K	Village, Arts Council, Local Agencies, Arts Organizations	Local Agencies, Arts and Civic Organizations	High
\$20k - 50K; TBD by Project	Village, Arts Council, Arts Organizations	Local Agencies, Businesses	Medium
\$20k - 50K; TBD by Project	Village, Arts Council, Chamber	Local Agencies, Businesses	Medium
\$5K - 10K	Village, Arts Council	Local Agencies, Chamber Businesses	Medium
Under 5K	Village, Arts Council	Arts Organizations	Medium
\$5k - 20K; TBD by Project	Village, Arts Council, Local Agencies	Arts Organizations, Businesses	Low
Under 5K	Village, Arts Council	Local Agencies, Arts Organizations	High
No Expenditure Required	Village, Arts Council	Local Agencies	High
\$5k - 20K; TBD by Project	Local Schools	Village, Arts Council	Medium

Priority C: Enhance Conditions for Cultural Arts Activities

Strategy #1: Optimize use of existing cultural arts facilities and programs.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and enhance performance and educational spaces in existing Village-owned facilities – Senior and Teen Centers, the Public Library, schools, and Park District facilities could be opportunities for enhancing existing spaces to meet local cultural arts needs. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digitize and place online significant parts of Niles Historical Society's archival information – photos, directories, obituaries, real estate records, etc., for access by the public. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider space collaborations between the Public Library and the Historical and Cultural Center, perhaps with a dedicated “local history room” within the Library and an expanded makerspace – managed by the Library, but housed in the Cultural Center. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create rotating Historical Society exhibits for other civic spaces and facilities, including local schools, Village Hall, the Teen and Senior Centers, and other facilities. 					

Strategy #2: Consider development of a cultural arts district along Milwaukee Avenue.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultivate and promote a cultural arts district in Niles – most possibly an area along Milwaukee Avenue between Seward and Monroe Streets where there is a concentration of small-scaled storefronts within larger buildings. 					
--	--	--	--	--	--

Strategy #3: Review City policies and practices to encourage arts and culture efforts in Niles.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider a thorough review of all Village policies and practices that may impact and influence the development of Niles’ cultural sector. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify cultural arts opportunities throughout the initiatives of all Village departments. 					

Strategy #4: Establish an arts incubator and recruit entertainment-related businesses.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue the establishment of an arts incubator, perhaps located along the Milwaukee Avenue corridor or within the Niles Historical and Cultural Center. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit entertainment-related businesses – restaurants or bars with attached music venues – that can offer regular live music performances. 					

Strategy #5: Conduct needs and financing assessment for a performing arts complex.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider undertaking and commissioning a needs and financing assessment for a more comprehensive performing arts and cultural arts center or complex. 					
---	--	--	--	--	--

Relative Cost	Responsible Party	Potential Partners	Priority
TBD by Project	Village, Arts Council	Local Agencies, Arts Organizations	High
\$5k - 10K, TBD by Project	Village, Arts Council, Historical Society	Arts Organizations, Outside Funders	High
TBD	Village, Historical Society, Public Library	Arts Council, Outside Funders	Medium
Under \$5K	Village, Arts Council, Historical Society	Local Agencies, Arts Organizations	Low
TBD	Village, Arts Council	Arts Organizations, Artists, Chamber, Businesses	Low
No Expenditure Required	Village, Arts Council	Arts Organizations	Medium
No Expenditure Required	Village, Arts Council	Arts Organizations	Medium
\$20 - 40K, TBD as Seed Money	Village, Arts Council	Chamber, Arts Organizations, Businesses, Outside Funders	Medium
\$20 - 40K, TBD as Incentive Money	Village, Chamber	Businesses	Medium
\$25 - 50K	Village, Arts Council	Arts Organization, Chamber	Low

Priority D: Employ Innovative Methods in Increasing Local Arts and Culture Participation

Strategy #1: Increase the number of free or sponsored cultural activities for all age groups

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore cross-promotional opportunities between existing cultural arts providers, such as the Public Library, Park District, and the Niles Chamber of Commerce and Industry to promote and make arts offerings more widespread. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize and promote free art instruction or “art day events” at Park District facilities, and local schools and churches. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a regular schedule of outdoor concerts, plays and theatrical performances, perhaps on a rotating basis, in Niles’ parks and church grounds. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize and schedule small and large- scaled cultural offerings and festivals that attract Niles’ other ethnic groups — delivered in facilities that are easily accessible: churches, schools, and expanded Golf Mill Park, and perhaps a new outdoor event space within the Touhy Triangle. 					

Strategy #2: Explore opportunities to integrate arts in everyday activities and experiences in Niles

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue allowing use of the Public Library and Teen and Senior Centers for art exhibitions, perhaps expanding such facilities use for limited musical and theater performances. Ensure that student art productions are also displayed in such facilities. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage art or performances by local artists and organizations be displayed, for sale, or performed in Niles’ restaurants and cafes and permit different age and ethnic groups to participate in placemaking activities. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use crowdsourcing and social media as methods for raising money for local arts initiatives and conducting outreach for increasing participation in arts activities. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find creative approaches for diversifying arts and culture offering in the local schools, perhaps by evaluating and supplementing school art curriculums, encouraging participation in Niles’ events and festivals, producing school art fairs, and accessing studio facilities in a future arts incubator or cultural center. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore venues and means in which to educate Niles residents and parents on the value of an arts education. 					

Relative Cost	Responsible Party	Potential Partners	Priority
\$5K - \$10K, TBD by Project	Arts Organization, Public Agencies	Village, Arts Council, Businesses	Low
\$5 - \$10K, TBD	Park District	Village, Arts Council	Low
\$5k - \$25K, TBD	Village, Arts Council	Park District, Local Agencies, Churches, Arts Organizations	Medium
\$5k - \$25K, TBD	Village, Arts Council	Park District, Local Agencies, Churches, Arts Organizations	Medium
\$5K - \$10K, TBD by Project	Village, Arts Council, Public Library	Arts Organizations, Artists	Medium
TBD	Village, Arts Council, Businesses	Arts Organizations, Artists	Low
TBD	Village, Arts Council	Arts Organizations, Artists, Chamber	Low
TBD	Village, Arts Council	Schools, Arts Organizations, Businesses, Outside Funders	Medium
Under 5K	Village, Arts Council	Arts Organizations, Artists, Local Agencies, Chamber	High

Priority E: Seek New Financing Mechanisms and Partnerships with the City as Lead Entity to Guide Development of Niles' Cultural Sector

Strategy #1: Coordinate community arts and culture efforts through the Niles Arts and Culture Advisory Council.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare an annual strategic plan that outlines initiatives and projects to be pursued in the coming year, including those initiatives recommended in this Arts and Culture Plan. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hire and retain at least a part-time staff person or consultant experienced in cultural arts management to provide support for the Advisory Council and lead and coordinate certain aspects of the Niles' cultural arts program. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spearhead cross-collaborative cultural initiatives that require the Advisory Council's lead and active involvement 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct on-going Advisory Council development activities, including preparing grants for specific initiatives, and identifying and training future members of the Council. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage the on-going preparation, distribution and promotion of the Niles' arts calendar. 					

Strategy #2: Develop diverse Advisory Council and public and private funding sources to support arts and culture initiatives and provide access to such sources to artists and cultural organizations.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a funding/fundraising plan along with the Advisory Council strategic plan. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider allocating a portion of the construction permit fee fund for a granting program that awards funds to artists, arts organizations and other entities engaged in the arts to advance Niles' arts and culture goals. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider additional requirements within municipal capital improvement programs to require the installation of public art on or near municipal facilities. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include public art installations in projects that are partially-financed through Tax-Increment Financing. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a sponsorship program for Village events and festivals. 					

Strategy #3: Collaborate with existing agencies, organizations and entities in the production and promotion of arts and culture activities.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct regular visits with area businesses and corporations to discuss possibilities for private-sector involvement and funding of cultural arts initiatives. 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a cultural space brokerage in partnership with local property owners or other entities . 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the interest of local foundations to participate in various arts initiatives. 					

Relative Cost	Responsible Party	Potential Partners	Priority
No Expenditure Required	Village, Arts Council	Local Agencies, Arts Organizations	High
\$25k - \$35K	Village, Arts Council		High
TBD	Village, Arts Council	Local Agencies, Arts Organizations, Artists, Chamber, Businesses, Outside Funders	Medium
TBD	Village, Arts Council		High
Under \$5K	Village, Arts Council	Local Agencies, Arts Organizations, Chamber, Businesses	High
No Expenditure Required	Village, Arts Council		High
No Expenditure Required	Village, Arts Council		High
No Expenditure Required	Village, Arts Council		High
No Expenditure Required	Village, Arts Council		High
Under \$5K	Village, Arts Council	Arts Organizations, Chamber, Businesses	High
No Expenditure Required	Village, Arts Council	Chamber, Businesses	Medium
Under \$5K	Village, Arts Council	Chamber, Businesses	Low
No Expenditure Required	Village, Arts Council	Outside Funders, Foundations	Medium



BIG MAP EXERCISE

Use the icon stickers provided to tell us where public art and placemaking initiatives or new arts and culture assets could be installed.

-  PUBLIC ART PROGRAM
-  PLACEMAKING INITIATIVES
-  PERFORMANCE
-  ARTS

MILES ARTS & CULTURE
BIG MAP EXERCISE

SECTION 6: THE COMMUNITY SPEAKS

A series of community engagement activities were undertaken to provide Niles stakeholders an opportunity to learn about the Arts and Culture Master Plan, discuss ideas and provide feedback on arts and culture master planning concepts. The following sections summarize engagement activities, including local stakeholder interviews, community workshops and an online survey.

STAKEHOLDER LISTENING SESSIONS

While preparing the Niles Arts and Culture Plan, the Lakota Team met with and interviewed the following stakeholders and stakeholder groups to determine key issues and opportunities. Stakeholder interviews were conducted on Monday, January 23, and Tuesday, January 24, 2017 at the Niles Civic Center

Stakeholders interviewed include:

- Local artists
- Niles Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Local schools and colleges
- Village of Niles elected officials and professional staff
- Niles Public Library
- Niles Teen and Senior Centers
- Members of the Niles Arts and Culture Advisory Council
- Niles Historical Society
- Local businesses and industries
- Niles churches and religious institutions
- Community organizations



The following is a summary of key insights gained from the listening sessions.

Village Officials and Staff

- The current commercial building permit fee assessed for arts and culture-related activities has currently generated \$93,000. There may be a possibility of “inching” the fee up over the next few years to generate additional revenues for the arts and culture fund.
- Community needs “identity” and “activity” to attract new residents and businesses to Niles — Niles needs to differentiate itself if it is to be competitive with neighboring communities. Arts should be viewed as form of economic development.
- Recent festivals and special events—namely Italian Fest, the July Fourth Parade, and the Christmas tree-lighting—have been successful in drawing Niles residents.
- Despite recent successes in organizing new events, there is still a key challenge in dealing with diminished participation by residents in civic activities. Local civic clubs and associations are also dealing with this issue. This may be due to changing demographics and a lack of ongoing engagement with Niles’ emerging ethnic and racial groups. For instance, there has not been much engagement with the Asian population, which has been growing over the last decade. Niles also has a significant senior population.
- Approximately 40 percent of Niles’ population is first or second generation residents.
- Niles needs a “multi-cultural” event to attract the wide diversity of ethnic and racial groups in the community.
- The Village has been considering an effort to “brand” individual neighborhoods to build identity and resident pride and associations with these areas.

- Corporate businesses have yet to be tapped as participants and revenues sources in local arts and culture activities.
- There are possibilities with developing new nodes of activities in Niles—such as Golf Mill Park, the site of the Italian Fest, which is slated to expand as a park facility — and the potential redevelopment of Leaning Tower-Touhy Triangle area with an outdoor concert and performance space.
- Niles Sister Cities program needs to be re-purposed in some fashion to make it more interesting for Niles’ residents to participate in.
- The Village has adopted a new Multi-Modal Transportation Plan and there are efforts to install new bike trails; however, there is no current plan to connect Niles’ parks and neighborhoods to the regional trail system. Such transportation improvements can help improve access to parks and the activities that are conducted in them.
- Arts and culture efforts in Niles should start small—what are the best activities that could jump-start a Niles arts and culture program?



Photo courtesy of the Village of Niles.

Niles Parks District

- The Niles Parks District currently operates and maintains 20 facilities, including parks and buildings.
- Currently, approximately 85 to 90 percent of Park District participants do not come from Niles—mainly from adjoining Chicago neighborhoods. The Park District is also competitive on pricing its activities with other neighborhood park districts.
- Several arts and cultural-related activities offered by the Park District include concerts in the park, piano, drawing, and clay-pottery-ceramics classes.
- Niles Park District orients much of its programs towards families. There is a heavy emphasis on youth and adult athletics and special events for all ages to enjoy. We would recommend that future arts and culture activities be oriented towards families.
- Both Skokie and Evanston have events that celebrate cultural diversity—perhaps such an event could be organized here in Niles.
- The District was recently successful in securing a sponsorship from local businesses for its 5K Harvest Hustle Run. More effort needs to be done in engaging the corporate community in local activities and events.
- A small community garden has been started in one of the Niles parks—perhaps additional ones could be located in other neighborhoods.
- There is not a sizable group of known artists here in Niles currently. Attracting artists to establish studios and a presence in the community will take time and support from the Village.
- The District fully supports the incorporation of arts and culture into the community and the use of public park space for these endeavors.

Teen and Senior Centers

- The Teen Center is located within Golf Mill Shopping Center and mainly serves people north of Dempster Street. Most users of the teen center are whites of Eastern European descent; very few Asians use the Center.
- The Niles Senior Center has been around for a long time and provides a variety of programs, including day-trips, tax preparation services, social outreach, and limited medical-nursing programs. It has many evening programs and attracts users as far away as Evanston.
- The Village of Niles is fragmented due to its unusual geography and boundaries—that may be why there is a lack of active community involvement.
- Touhy Triangle, if redeveloped accordingly, could have the potential to attract people from outside the community.
- Niles has a free bus service that seniors regularly use; however, service is not available at night time.
- There are several events that do take place in Niles but they are not advertised very well. There is a need for a community calendar that lists all local events.
- It would be ideal to offer arts and culture events somewhere near the geographic center of the community, which would be near Oakton and Milwaukee Avenues. That area, however, is already fully-developed.
- Several recent and on-going arts-related projects have been undertaken in recent years, such as the Snow Plow Arts Project managed by the Village's Public Works department. These could be starting points for other small-scaled efforts.
- Local church communities tend to be isolated from the rest of Niles even though they offer many festivals, music and other arts and culture-related activities.

Local Schools and Educational Institutions

- Many of the local and area schools within and near Niles offer a variety of arts-related activities, from pure art classes to musical performances. In general, there is a very active music and arts scene, including theater and concert bands very high standards. Niles West and North high schools have excellent choral programs.
- However, many of the schools are not centrally-located in Niles—therefore, these activities are dispersed and not well-communicated within Niles. Niles needs a central place for the performing arts especially; it also needs to be flexible for other arts and culture uses.
- There is a vacant Best Buy within the Golf Mill Shopping Center—could that be used for an arts space? Perhaps the Village Hall site?
- Niles is a very diverse community with residents representing a diverse spectrum of ethnic and racial groups—this needs to be capitalized on when planning arts and culture activities. Language is a barrier to reaching these groups, however.
- Although not located in Niles, Oakton Community College has its arts curriculum and a variety of arts and culture-related events and activities. Oakton may be underutilized as an arts and culture resource in Niles. Forty-four percent of the students that come to Oakton are from lower-income households, so providing easy access to the arts is a priority to the College.
- Niles needs greater promotion of its assets and quality of life.

Local Artists

- Niles needs to be known for “something.”
- Does Niles have potential for day tourism – perhaps that needs to be explored as part of this planning process.

- Both public art and the performing arts need to be key elements in a Niles arts and culture program—both can improve the image of the community.
- Niles has always been sports-centered and there is nothing for those aged 20 to 50 to do in the community in terms of arts and entertainment activities.
- Niles could benefit from additional festivals to bring people into the community on regular basis. Additional ethnic celebrations can help bring the community together as well as promote the unique cultural aspects of Niles to a broader public.
- A community theater should be considered since there is not an active theater between Niles Chicago, Skokie, and other nearby suburbs.
- A physical space for artists to create and even sell their works would be great to have in the community—perhaps a facility that is like the Brickton Arts Center that operates in Park Ridge or the Green Leaf Art Center in Ravenswood. Alternatively, perhaps small grants could be offered to artists to rent space in existing buildings in Niles as a way to establish studios and galleries.
- In terms of public art and public space improvements, the intersections along Milwaukee Avenue could be the focus of such enhancements.
- The Public Library is a cultural center in Niles and could be focus of additional arts and culture activities if they have the space to allocate for such efforts.
- Could the Niles YMCA be re-purposed as an art center?
- A community calendar is desperately needed to promote local activities.
- Local industries need to be involved in supporting arts and culture in Niles.
- The Niles Public Arts and Culture Advisory Council may need a part or full-time director to help various aspects of the Plan.

Niles Historical Society

- The Historical Society receives a range of visitors to its Historical and Cultural Center, although most residents will probably visit the facility only one time.
- Staffing at the Center is low and it has been difficult to maintain exhibits and artifacts; cataloging artifacts on a regular basis has also been difficult. The current inventory is mostly recorded on index cards; it is not digitized in any way.
- On two Saturdays a month, the Society exhibits a table to display information about Niles history and Society membership. This has been an effective way to communicate the Society's activities to the public.
- People are interested in their own histories—the Society could do more to be a compelling resource for use when it comes to local history.
- The Society currently has 250 plus members but has no strategic plan to grow its resources.
- The current building complex includes an annex that is mostly used for storage and a rear parking lot that needs rehabilitation.
- The Society maintains two Facebook pages, one for the Society itself and one for the announcement of Society events and activities; the Society's webpage is incorporated as part of the Village's website.
- For the first and second story exhibit spaces, the Society is contemplating using QR codes as a low-cost method for aiding exhibit curation and interpretation.
- There are many ethnic and racial groups in Niles — Italians, Asians, Greeks, Hispanics, among others — but they seem to be isolated and tend to not participate in community activities.
- There's not many historic buildings in Niles in which to communicate a story about the community. There is an older neighborhood called Bunker Hill that might be worth preserving and highlighting.

Public Library

- The Public Library was established as a separate taxing district in 1957 and serves an area of 58,000 people.
- The Library is heavily used and accommodates many modern-day services that many other libraries offer, including digital equipment services, a 3-D printer, and vinyl and laser cutters for those patrons wanting to create things. In essence, the Library has parts of a “makerspace” common to other libraries across the country. The Library also hosts a “Makersfest” that has attracted 500 people or more.
- In addition, the Library offers several instruction classes, many conducted during the summer months, as well as “programming” rooms geared toward children and teen instruction purposes.
- Village is lacking performance space. The Library has a large “evergreen” room with a small stage that could be used for small plays and performances; the room needs to be updated and enhanced, perhaps with rehearsal rooms to accommodate such uses.
- Niles' profile within the Chicago region has improved over the years—a vibrant public arts program can only improve that.
- From a geographic standpoint, the Library is mainly seen as a “north side” node of activity. Is there a need for a Library services point towards the southern end of the community? Could it be combined with a cultural arts facility?
- The Library wants to be a proactive partner in developing a Niles arts and culture program.

Niles Business and Corporate Group

- Niles has many assets—its schools, residential areas, parks, churches, and its location near Chicago and other inner-ring suburbs. These assets need to be promoted more along with the availability of arts and culture activities.
- New investments will be occurring in the Golf Mill Shopping Center and at the Touhy Triangle over the coming years. These investments will be opportunities to build new nodes of activity that will attract residents and people from nearby Chicago neighborhoods and suburbs. Despite this, there is a concern that arts and entertainment activities will not be “central” enough for most residents to access. Niles lacks a true center.
- Niles is not walkable, which makes it hard to build nodes around local neighborhoods.
- Events are mainly done for residents—not in attracting outside people.
- Apart from the Italian Festival, Niles also hosts an annual Greek Fest hosted by the local Greek Orthodox Church, the Holly Jolly Market at Christmastime, and a criterium during the Intelligentsia Cup cycling series.
- • Historical Society could be in a better location to attract visitors than where it is currently.
- Gateway buildings in Niles could be the focus of public art or other types of enhancements to improve the appearance of these key areas.
- It is difficult to find artists in Niles, even to participate in arts-related activities recently organized by the Chamber of Commerce.
- There is a corporate community that contributes locally to events—but has not been actively engaged in promoting arts and culture in Niles.

- A small, performing arts center is needed in Niles but “pop-up” performing or gathering spaces could be used as an intermediate step to developing a new performing arts building.
- The local schools district need to be involved in any planning of a cultural arts or performing center as they could be users of such a facility.

Community Groups and Religious Institutions

- There are approximately 15 to 20 churches and religious institutions in Niles with active congregations, some with schools.
- Many local churches offer bilingual religious services; for instance, St. John Brebeuf offers two masses in Polish.
- Niles is incredibly diverse. People often forget that there is a significant Filipino population amongst the growing Asian groups settling in Niles. There are also substantial numbers of Indians and Pakistanis in the community. Overall, ethnicity has changed over the decades from Niles’ original German and Swedish newcomers.
- Some congregations in Niles use music extensively in their masses and worship practices. This is an opportunity for collaboration and celebration, perhaps with a festival of music.
- Churches need to work together to help promote each other’s activities, a non-secular space would be ideal to hold collaborative efforts. An indoor-outdoor space would work well for performances and outdoor masses and church-related festivals. However, Niles may not be able to support such a facility.
- St. John Brebeuf organizes an annual Celebration of Cultures, held each February and organized and sponsored by the Catholic Women’s Club.

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #1

Format and Stations

During the evening of February 15, 2017, a community workshop was held at the Village of Niles Senior Center. Roughly 50 community stakeholders were in attendance, including residents, business owners, Village staff, and members of the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee. This workshop introduced the project and planning process to the community, while providing an open forum to gather first-hand thoughts and opinions about the future of the Niles arts and culture sector. The workshop comprised of several stations in which participants could learn about planning concepts and strategies and provide comments on certain topics, including:

Station 1: Project Introduction and Local Assets Map

Participants were given the opportunity to “sign-in” to the workshop and were given a project information handout. A local assets map was also on display presenting the locations of existing arts and culture-related assets both within and near the Village. These included:

- Libraries
- Schools
- Places of Worship
- Museums
- Performing Arts & Art Centers
- Art Galleries
- Local Music Venues
- Independent Theaters

Photo: the Lakota Group

Station 2: Concept Exhibits

Station 2 provided an opportunity for participants to learn about five different concepts that could be used to expand arts and culture throughout the Village. Each concept was presented on its own board and included a brief description of the program elements, existing and potential revenue sources, a relative cost to implement, and representative images. The planning concepts included:

- Public Art Program
- Placemaking Initiatives
- Performing Arts Center/Entertainment space
- Arts Center/Arts Incubator Space
- Special Events/Festivals/Marketing



Public Art Program

Program Elements:

- New public art installed in or near municipal buildings and facilities, parks, plazas, public spaces, and streetscapes
- Public art usually commissioned by a municipality or through a municipal-sponsored competition or call for artist entries
- Public art created by local, regional, or nationally-known artists or creatives
- Public art projects managed by The Village of Niles Public Arts and Culture Advisory Council, with final approval by the Village Council

Existing/Potential Funding Sources:

- Village building permit fee levied on new development
- Percentage of monies for municipal capital improvement budgets.
- Private sector contributions

Relative Cost to Implement:

\$\$ on a scale from \$ to \$\$\$\$\$



Photos: the Lakota Group

Placemaking Initiatives

Program Elements:

- Small-scale public art projects including wall murals, streetscape initiatives, public space improvements, signage and gateways, pop-up spaces, new gathering spaces, park improvements, etc.
- Small-scale art projects to enhance community identity and economic development, build emotional attachment to place, engage youth, and attract diverse people to the community
- Can be facilitated by The Village of Niles Public Arts and Culture Advisory Council or other public private-sector participants

Existing/Potential Funding Sources:

- Village building permit fee levied on new development
- Percentage of monies for municipal capital improvement budgets
- Private-sector contributions

Relative Cost to Implement:

\$ to \$\$ on a scale from \$ to \$\$\$\$\$



Performing Arts Center Entertainment Space

Program Elements:

- Space for community live theater/performance
- Space could be housed in existing facility or new construction
- Restaurant with nightclub/live performance space
- Space/facility could be managed by the village of Niles Public Arts and Culture Advisory Council, other government entity, private sector, or public-private partnership in the form of a non-profit organization

Existing/Potential Funding Sources:

- Public contributions
- Private sector contributions including grants + foundation support

Relative Cost to Implement:

\$\$\$ to \$\$\$\$\$ on a scale from \$ to \$\$\$\$\$

Arts Center/Arts Incubator

Program Elements:

- Studio space for artists and creative professionals to produce art and other products
- Space for art exhibitions, arts instruction and educational activities
- Space could be housed in existing facility or new construction
- Space/facility could be managed by The Village of Niles Public Arts and Culture Advisory Council, other government entity, private sector, or public-private partnership in the form of a non-profit organization

Existing/Potential Funding Sources:

- Public contributions
- Private sector contributions, including grants and foundation support

Relative Cost to Implement:

\$\$ to \$\$\$\$\$ on a scale from \$ to \$\$\$\$\$



Photos: the Lakota Group



Special Events/Festivals/Marketing

Program Elements:

- Festivals that celebrate unique aspects of Niles history and heritage, diversity, culinary assets, and local businesses
- Live performances/concerts in public spaces and plazas
- Ongoing promotion of Niles through public relation campaigns and marketing initiatives
- Online calendar of special events and festivals

Existing/Potential Funding Sources:

- Public contributions through the village of Niles public arts and culture advisory council
- Private sector contributions including sponsorships

Relative Cost to Implement:

\$\$ to \$\$\$\$\$ on a scale from \$ to \$\$\$\$\$

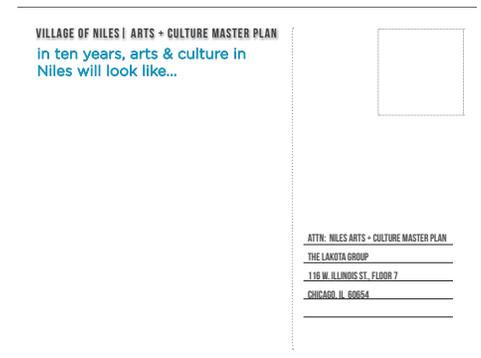
Station 3: Community Visioning and Postcard from the Future

This station, led by team member and public arts consultant, Jon Pounds, required workshop participants to look through a variety of images illustrating different types of public art and cultural amenities and then write down on a postcard a response to: “In ten years, arts and culture in Niles will look like...” The postcards and responses will be used to guide the development of a vision statement during the plan-making phase of this planning process.

Station 4: Questionnaire

A community questionnaire was distributed at Station 4 that requested attendees’ preferences, ideas, and opinions regarding expanding arts and culture within the Village. Respondents were asked to rank each of the five planning concepts based on priority for implementation. They were also asked to answer questions about the types and locations of arts and culture programs they had attended/participated in over the last twelve months, existing barriers to and resources for arts and culture throughout the community, and demographic information.

Drumming class - Niles Historical and Cultural Center, photo courtesy of the Village of Niles

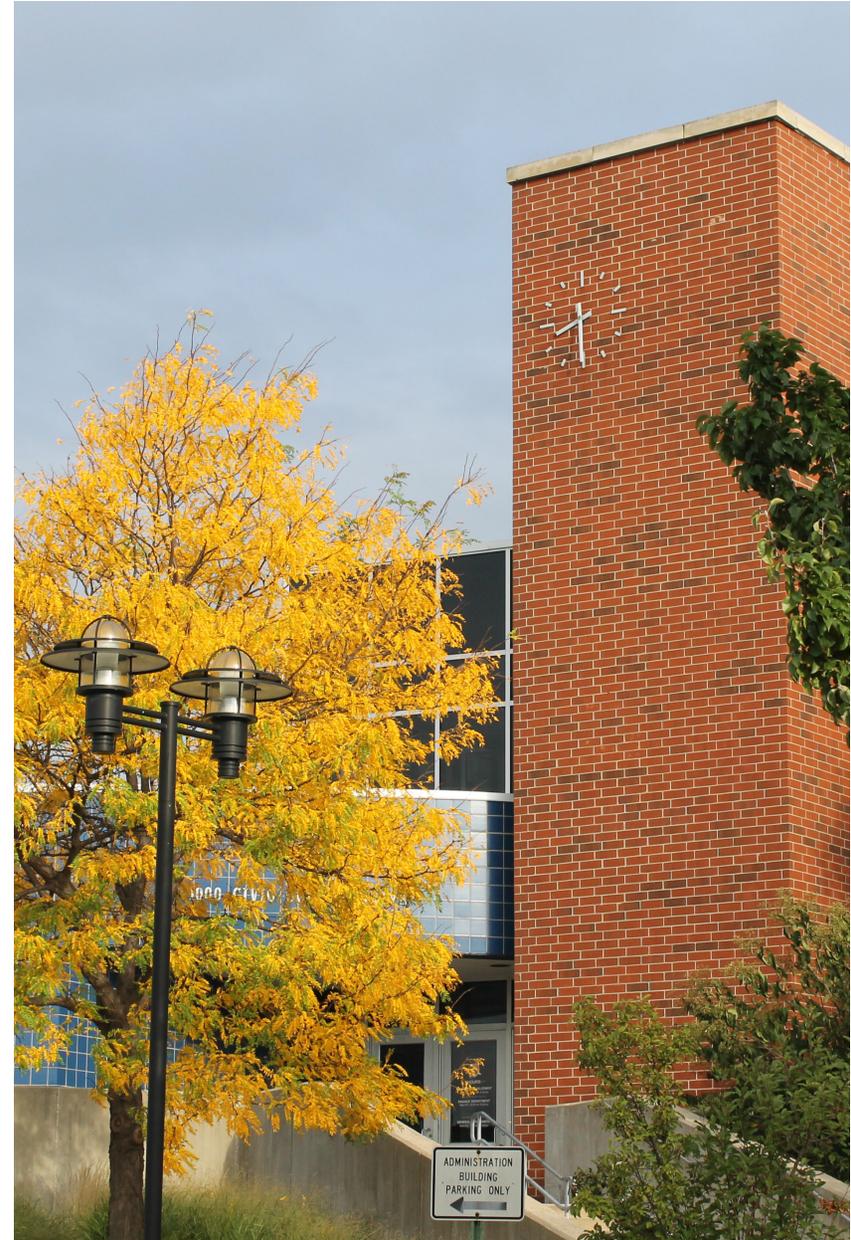


Key Takeaways

The following is a brief summary of the major themes that emerged from the Community Workshop:

- **Flexibility is key:** Many Speak-Out attendees expressed a preference for a performing arts/center and an arts incubator—preferably flexible spaces that could foster various forms of arts. Attendees liked the idea of a “hub” flourishing around a cultural/performing arts center or incubator space, since there is not a traditional downtown district within the Village.
- **A place for everyone:** Many attendees who expressed interest in a local arts incubator emphasized that it would have to be programmed for residents and visitors of all ages since there were both families and a significant number of senior citizens throughout the community. A “car-oriented” community makes public arts and culture difficult to establish and so any initiatives should focus on bringing the community together through arts, whether that be placemaking projects or a local arts center. All attendees affirmed the value in investing in arts and culture as a way to connect the community, and felt that it would spur economic development for the Village in the long-term.
- **Capitalize on an existing asset:** In conversations with the project planning team, many attendees felt that the Village’s greatest existing arts and culture asset was its diverse community and international food scene. While they acknowledged that the Village already programs a “Food Festival,” they felt that it wasn’t well-branded, and that it could be improved and marketed as an attraction to folks around the region, featuring the various local fare that is already currently found throughout the Village.

Niles Village Hall, photo courtesy of the Village of Niles



MAIL QUESTIONNAIRE

There were 109 total respondents who participated in the Questionnaire, including the February 15th Workshop Attendees, online submissions, and mail-in responses.

Key takeaways included:

- Respondents favored the development of a Performing Arts Center as a high priority (#1), followed by the Special Events/Marketing/Festivals (#2) and Arts Center/Arts Incubator (#3) concepts. The Public Art Program and Placemaking Initiatives were considered lower priorities for implementation.
- Of the types of arts and culture activities 107 respondents participated in over the past year, parks, live music and Public Library events, parades, and festivals received the highest number of responses (in that order). Community or professional theater, hands-on classes, literary events, children's activities at events, historical society programs, and dance performances received a lower number of responses.
- 58 percent of responses cited a lack of knowledge of existing arts and culture activities in Niles as a reason for not attending or participating in them. Another 51 percent considered a lack of interesting activities as an additional reason for not engaging in local arts and culture activities.

A complete summary of the Questionnaire responses are included in Appendix 1 on page 58.

109 
respondents
participated

40%
RANKED
**PERFORMING
ARTS CENTER**
AS #1 PRIORITY

Top 3 places
for arts + culture

**PARKS
LIVE MUSIC
LIBRARY**

**biggest
barrier=**
NOT KNOWING
ABOUT EVENTS

Sixty-two %
of respondents
listened to **LIVE
MUSIC** in Niles
sometime in the
past **12 months.**



**top priorities:
resources
and BETTER
MARKETING**

See full questionnaire and results Appendix 1.



COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #2

Format and Stations

During the evening of May 22, 2017, a second community workshop was held at the Village of Niles Senior Center. Roughly 20 community stakeholders were in attendance. Participants received an executive summary of the plan document and provided detailed feedback on initiatives and strategies essential to crafting the final plan. Three forms of engagement were incorporated to solicit feedback from the public. These included:

Station 1: Discussion Tables

Upon arriving, participants were assigned one of three discussion tables focused on three major topics:

1. Arts and Culture District
2. Festivals and Event Locations
3. Public Arts Plan

Participants at each discussion table were encouraged to ask questions regarding specific aspects of the Arts and Culture Plan including funding and implementation strategies. Additional ideas, insights and comments were also welcome and solicited through comment cards. Each table was facilitated by a member of the consultant team who aimed to find answers to the following questions.

- What is specifically feasible for Niles in the near and long term?
- When would you like to see something happen?
- What steps are necessary for implementation?
- Who needs to be involved?
- How can we make this profound and unique to Niles?
- What are the obstacles?

Arts and Culture District - Summary

The Arts and Culture District discussion was focused around three key interventions. These included a makerspace, arts incubator, and performing arts complex. Key takeaways included:

- Consider a consolidated arts & cultural center or 'district' in the Touhy Triangle area as part of redevelopment plans.
- In general, more events are needed.
- Make sure to keep budgeting – long term or on-going – in mind to ensure that proposed programs are sustainable and fiscally responsible.
- Outside funding opportunities do exist, e.g. Arcada Theater owner was willing to donate money to prop up the Des Plaines Theater.
- Traditionally the Village has been more sports-oriented, which will have to change a bit to support increased opportunities for arts and culture.
- Consider different programming in some of the parks such as the installation of public art.
- The Niles Public Library will be hosting a Comic Con and will have opportunities for vendors.



Photo : the Lakota Group

- The Historical Society has a docent program that goes into schools.
- “We do not have a unified “place for making events and opportunities known.” Each agency (parks, schools, etc., has its own “thing” going, but there could be better coordination and synergy.
- Consider Oak Park or Grennan Heights as main sites for community events.
- Consider implementing an arts-oriented “visitor center” — can be physical or conceptual (online), or both — that provides a clear destination for people interested in arts-related events, activities and opportunities in Niles.
- See Evanston’s Art Buzz as a reference arts promotion.
- Not enough people know about Niles’ history. Use sculpture to help illustrate the significance of Niles’ history and identity and convey “what Niles is” and why. Location is an important consideration.
- Public art and sculptures can be interactive — kinetic or dynamic art would be interesting.



Photo : the Lakota Group

- There really aren’t any distinct art ‘places’ in Niles, in other words galleries or ‘black-box’ theaters.
- The 6701 Oakton Street site near Culver School would be a good location for public art.
- There needs to be color and brightness in the community’s public spaces
- Potential district locations or opportunity sites include Dutchman’s Point at Milwaukee & Waukegan - there is hotel planned in that location.

Festivals and Event Locations - Summary

The Festivals and Event Locations discussion was focused around two key interventions. These included live entertainment, and special events and festivals. Key takeaways included:

- New food-related festivals could be a focus of new events in Niles given the community’s diversity. Perhaps new food events could be modeled after the regular food events produced by the Dank Haus — the German American Cultural Center in Chicago’s Lincoln Square neighborhood — where local German-American chefs are invited to teach, as well as make, special German fare for attendees. Such events are planned on a quarterly basis by the Dank Haus.
- Concerts in the park are organized by the Niles Park District and are well-attended. A better sound system would be helpful in making the concert more audible to those who cannot get close to stage. St. John Brebeuf also has regular concerts, including its Musica Lumina series; Our Lady of Ransom also organizes concerts from time to time and has an outdoor amphitheater.

- There needs to be an art fair — that would help bring in a variety of artists within Niles and outside to the community.
- Niles needs one large signature event — the expanded Golf Mill Park could perhaps accommodate a bigger event when its developed. For instance, Skokie has its “Backlot Bash,” held in the downtown, and drawing several big-name attractions, as its signature event.
- The Niles community should undertake a new international festival, or a festival of cultures, to again, capitalize on its diversity. Niles West High School has undertaken an “International Festival” event this past winter.
- A literary event or book festival might also be popular in Niles given the number of activities already programmed by the local library.
- A key objective going forward is to encourage more private sector participation in arts and culture activities, especially in festivals where they can contribute as sponsors and volunteers. How to get them involved should be an important goal for the Public Arts and Culture Advisory Council.
- The Leaning Tower Foundation is now established and needs to be involved in any future development of an outdoor special event space or indoor performing arts complex in the Touhy Triangle.
- The Bunker Hill neighborhood Block Party has been successful over the years; other block parties do occur — perhaps more need to be encouraged.
- Parades have always been staple events in Niles — are others needed?

Public Arts Plan - Summary

The Public Arts Plan discussion was focused around three key interventions. These included place making, public art, and neighborhood identifiers. Key takeaways included:

- Revitalizing the space around the Historical Society for more and more varied gatherings.
- Improve Niles branding through logo and an improved website to make activities more visible.
- Need to a paid staff person to guide/coordinate communication about activities and about upcoming opportunities. And to help shape good choices and to anticipate conflicts of schedule or intent.
- Caution about thinking the existing cultural/educational agents have time/capacity to promote cultural work done by other agencies.
- Interest in seeing identified neighborhoods become more visible through temporary placemaking activities that would encourage neighbors to experience creative cultural action together.
- Small “permanent” projects at schools and park district sites as a way to make them more visible as sites of local culture.



Photo : the Lakota Group

- Identify the full range of spaces and actions that currently encourage cultural action. Seek to expand this with a cultural district.
- Conversation about reclaiming the bank building anticipated to be torn down and as a cultural/performance/studio site.

Station 2: Arts and Culture Initiative Voting Exercise

A series of seven exhibits (initiatives) to promote arts and culture in Niles were displayed. Each exhibit described a key initiative that could be undertaken by the Village, or other organizations and partners with a relative cost to implement ranging from \$ to \$\$\$\$\$ — with one \$ signifying a low cost to implement and five \$\$\$\$\$ signifying a high cost to implement. Participants were given \$10.00 to spend in total on the initiatives that they believed should be high priorities for the Village and Arts Council to undertake. The seven initiatives were:

1. Create a Public Art Plan.
2. Install Temporary Placemaking Projects.
3. Develop New Festivals, Art Exhibitions, and Performance Space.
4. Establish a Training and Technical Assistance Program for Local Artists.
5. Promote a Cultural Arts District in Niles - in an area along Milwaukee Avenue between Seward and Monroe Streets.
6. Establish an Arts Incubator/Arts Center/Makerspace.
7. Build a New Performing Arts Facility.

The results of the exercise showed that constructing a new performing arts facility received the highest dollar vote next to developing new festivals, art exhibitions, and performance spaces. Full results can be see in the table above right.

	Relative Cost	Total Payment
INITIATIVE		
1. Create a Public Art Plan.	\$1	\$22
2. Install Temporary Placemaking Projects.	\$2	\$18
3. Develop New Festivals, Art Exhibitions, and Performance Space.	\$2	\$44
4. Establish a Training and Technical Assistance Program for Local Artists.	\$2	\$12
5. Promote a Cultural Arts District in Niles - in an area along Milwaukee Avenue between Seward and Monroe Streets.	\$3	\$17
6. Establish an Arts Incubator/Arts Center/Makerspace	\$4	\$28
7. Build a New Performing Arts Facility	\$5	\$60

Photos below: the Lakota Group



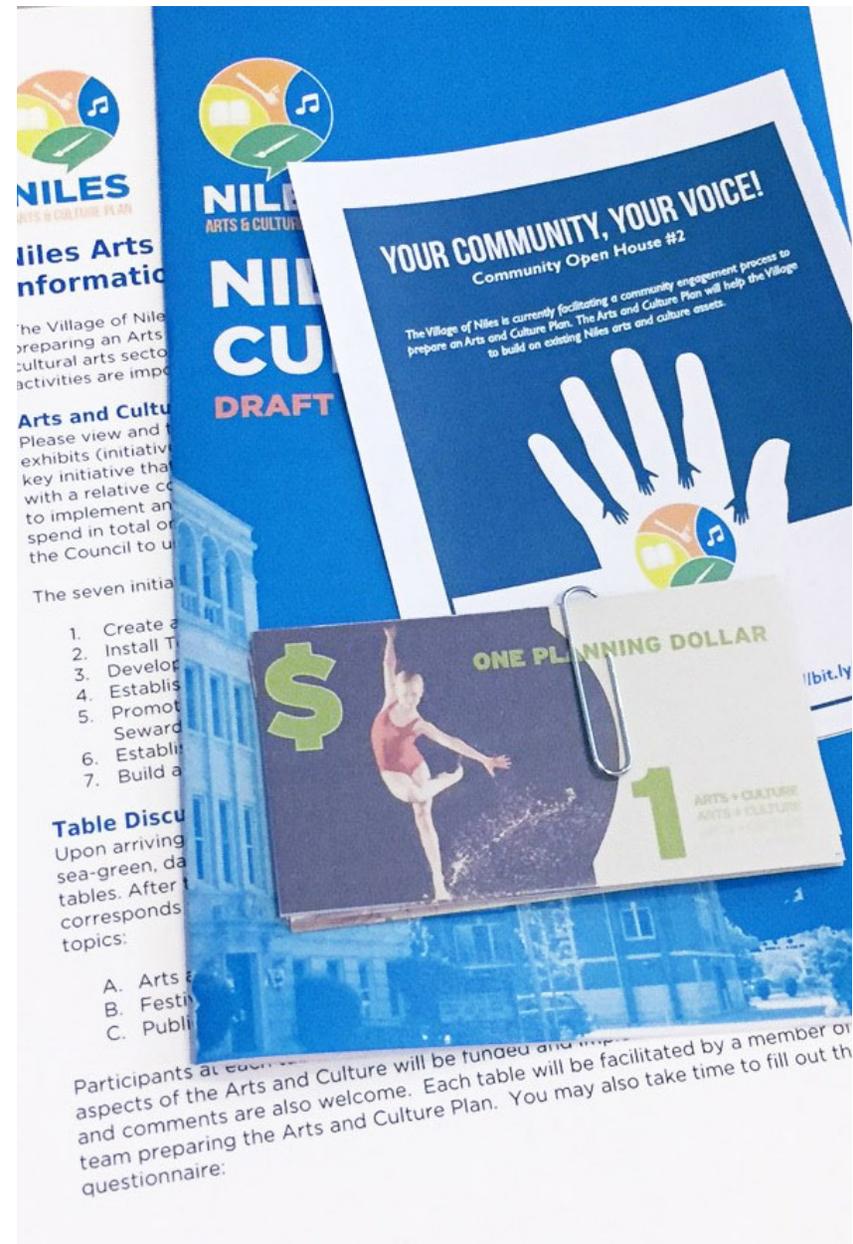
WORKSHOP QUESTIONNAIRE

There were 8 total respondents who participated in the Questionnaire.

Key takeaways included:

- Respondents identified live music events, heritage and ethnic festivals, art fairs and arts and crafts, and a farmers market as the most favored types of new festivals and events to be created in Niles.
- Parks and gateway entrances into Niles were identified as the preferred locations for new public art installations that could enhance Niles' visual appearance.
- Dutchmans Point, Golf Mill Park, and the Touhy Triangle were all identified consistently as locations for a potential arts and cultural district, new events, and public art installations.
- Parking, financing/funding sources, existing infrastructure, and existing business owners were identified as the biggest barriers to implementing an Arts and Culture District along Milwaukee Avenue.

A complete summary of the Questionnaire responses are included in Appendix 3 on page 72.







SECTION 7:

ARTS & CULTURE INVENTORY

WHY AN INVENTORY

A key part of this arts and culture planning process is assessing and understanding the Village of Niles' existing arts and cultural resources, which serve as the foundation for creating effective planning priorities and initiatives.

Throughout the community engagement process, a consensus emerged among residents and stakeholders that Niles has a significant number of cultural arts activities and arts attractions within the Village. The obstacle, however, is that many of these attractions are managed by different entities, and are not well-branded nor promoted. Therefore, this inventory identifies key assets, where they are located, and how they operate.

THE PROCESS

The team employed field work, GIS analysis, and stakeholder outreach to identify the arts and culture amenities of both Niles and its surrounding areas. The boundaries of the assessment are defined within a 3-mile radius from Niles' geographic center. This boundary was determined largely from Niles stakeholder comments regarding where they attend or participate in arts and culture activities. Other regional arts and cultural destinations/venues that lay outside of this boundary, such as the Wertz Center for Performing Arts at Northwestern University, were also included based on stakeholder feedback. Both public and private elementary, middle, and high schools that Niles residents primarily attend were included, because the majority offer arts and music classes, programming, and extracurricular activities. While this inventory is detailed, the Team acknowledges that the identification of additional existing assets will continue to occur throughout the planning process.

THE CATEGORIES

The following pages showcase the identified assets and organize them into five distinct categories:

- 1. Public Cultural Organizations:** not-for profit art organizations and venues, including municipally-owned performance venues, libraries, art centers, and museums
- 2. Private Cultural Organizations:** for-profit art organizations and venues, including private theaters; dance, art, and music studios that offer lessons; and for-profit galleries
- 3. Live Music Venues:** smaller for-profit music venues (e.g. bars that regularly features live music)
- 4. Schools:** University and Community College assets, including Oakton Community College and its Performing Arts Center; and elementary, middle, and high schools (including both public and private) that Niles residents primarily attend
- 5. Festival and Events Locations:** areas within Niles where major community festivals, including the Italian Festival and the Holly Jolly Market, are located

PRIVATE CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

1. McNulty Irish Dancers
2. Interclub Academy of Dance
3. Rhythm & Beyond
4. Studio 22
5. Virtuoso Performing Arts
6. Natraj Dance Academy
7. Nixie Gallery
8. Artisto Gallery

PUBLIC CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

9. Niles Historical & Cultural Center
10. Donald E Stephens Convention Center
11. Niles Park District
12. Skokie Heritage Museum
13. North Shore Center for the Performing Arts
14. Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center
15. Niles Maine District Public Library
16. Brickton Art Center
17. Skokie Public Library
18. Rosemont Theater
19. Glenview Art League
20. Glenview Public Library
21. DesPlaines Public Library
22. Niles Sister Cities
23. Niles Memorial Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3579

LIVE MUSIC VENUES

24. Space
25. Firewater Saloon Chicago
26. Montrose Room
27. Rhythm Room
28. A's Karaoke Bar
29. River's Casino
30. Rock House
31. Niles Senior Center

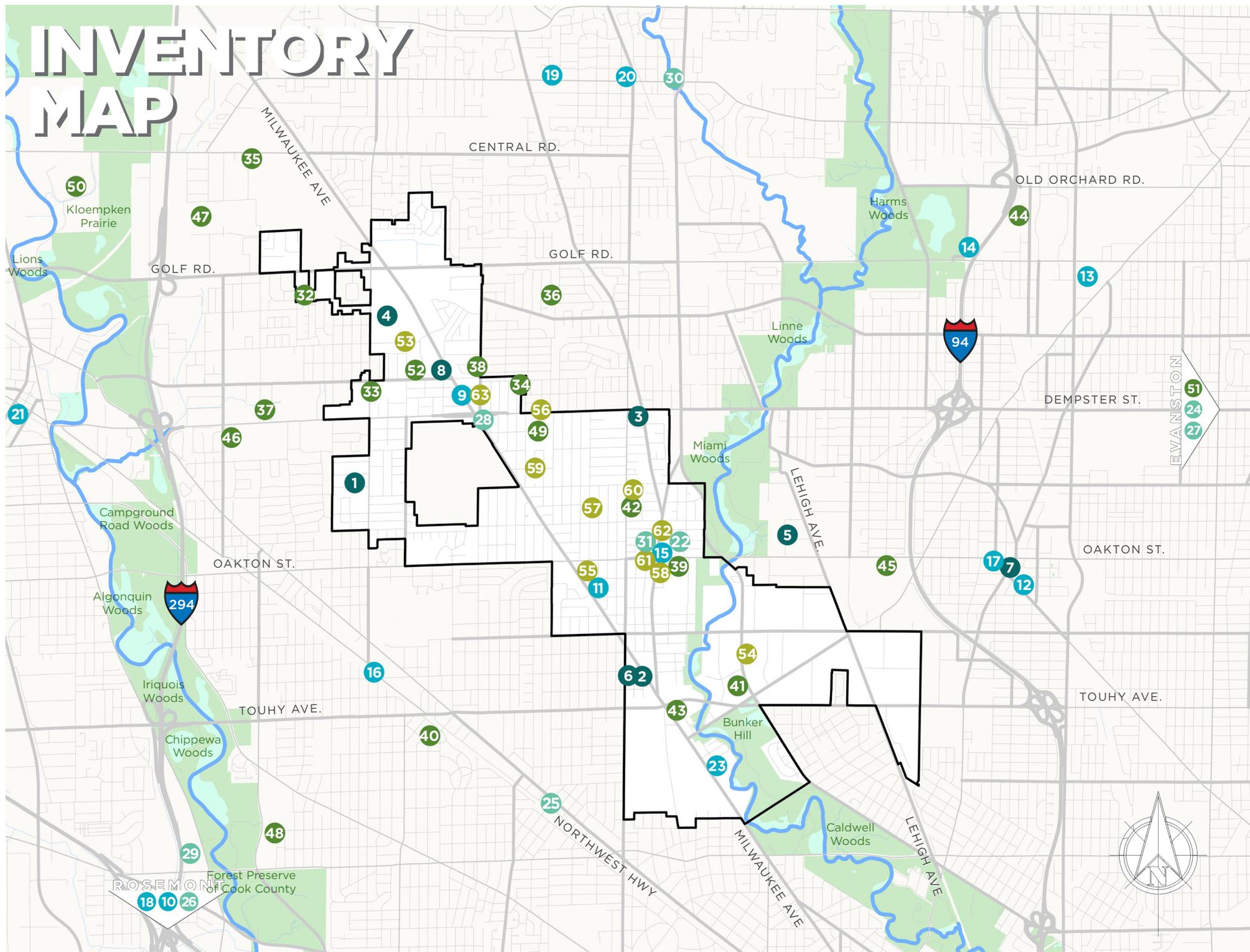
LOCAL SCHOOLS

32. Mark Twain Elementary School, *School District 63*
33. Gemini Junior High School, *School District 63*
34. V.H. Nelson Elementary School, *School District 63*
35. Apollo Elementary School District, *School District 63*
36. Melzer Elementary School, *School District 63*
37. Stevenson Elementary School, *School District 63*
38. Washington Elemenenatry School, *School District 63*
39. Clarence E. Culver School, *School District 71*
40. Emerson Middle School, *School District 64*
41. Logos Christian Academy
42. St. John Brebeuf School
43. Bridgeview and Challenger Day Schools
44. Niles North High School, *School District 219*
45. Niles West High School, *School District 219*
46. Maine East High School, *School District 207*
47. Maine North High School, *School District 207*
48. Maine South High School
49. Notre Dame College Preparatory School
50. Oakton Community College
51. Northwestern University
52. Northridge Preparatory School

FESTIVALS + EVENT LOCATIONS

53. Golf Mill Park on Church Street, Niles Park District
54. Holy Taxiarchai and St. Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church
55. Oasis Fun Center and Water Park, Niles Park District
56. Notre Dame College Preparatory School
57. Grennan Heights, Niles Park District
58. Niles Family Fitness Center
59. Oak Park, Niles Park District
60. St. John Brebeuf Church
61. Niles Maine District Public Library
62. Niles Senior Center
63. Niles Historical Society and Cultural Center

INVENTORY MAP





PRIVATE CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

1. McNulty Irish Dancers

8640 W Sunset Rd, Niles

Capable of hosting a wide variety of performing arts, corporate and special events, the North shore Center is a multi-purpose, modern, efficient theatre facility with 68,000 square feet of space. World famous performers, tradeshow, and local productions are equally at home.

2. Interclub Academy of Dance

7350 N Milwaukee Ave, Niles

5,200 square feet

5 staff members

Parents can watch their children's progress without interfering, through the screen monitors in the large reception area. The ballrooms are spacious enough to learn the Waltz, Cha Cha Cha, Jive, Samba, Rumba, Foxtrot, Bachata, Merenque, Salsa, Hip-Hop, and Ballet with ease.

3. Rhythm & Beyond

8746 N Shermer Rd, Niles

1,000 square feet

9 staff members

Rythm & Boom provides lessons for kids and adults including private piano and voice classes, dance classes include ballet and ballroom, and art classes such as drawing and painting. The studio also hosts birthday parties and summer camps, and is available to rent for private events.

Photos courtesy of The Lakota Group

4. Studio 22

*Golf Mill Center, 239 W Golf Rd, Niles
6,200 square feet
12 staff members*

Studio 22 provides classes in acro, ballet, boys hip-hop, conditioning, contemporary, floor barre, hip-hop, jazz funk, improv, kick, prepointe/pointe, and pom. Some classes have three sessions a week for beginner, intermediate, and advanced.

5. Virtuoso Performing Arts

*8120 Lehigh Ave, Morton Grove
8,500 square feet
17 staff members*

Virtuoso Performing Arts is home for all beginning, aspiring and experienced dancers, actors, musicians and tumblers. VPA has been offering performing arts classes and lessons to students of all ages in the northern suburb communities of Chicago for over a decade.

6. Natraj Dance Academy

*8746 N Shermer Rd, Niles
600 square feet
2-3 staff members*

The mission of Natraj Dance Academy is to provide dance training of the highest quality while keeping tuition costs low thereby enabling all interested children and adults to learn these ancient art forms from India, including Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi and Mohini Attam.

7. Nixie Gallery

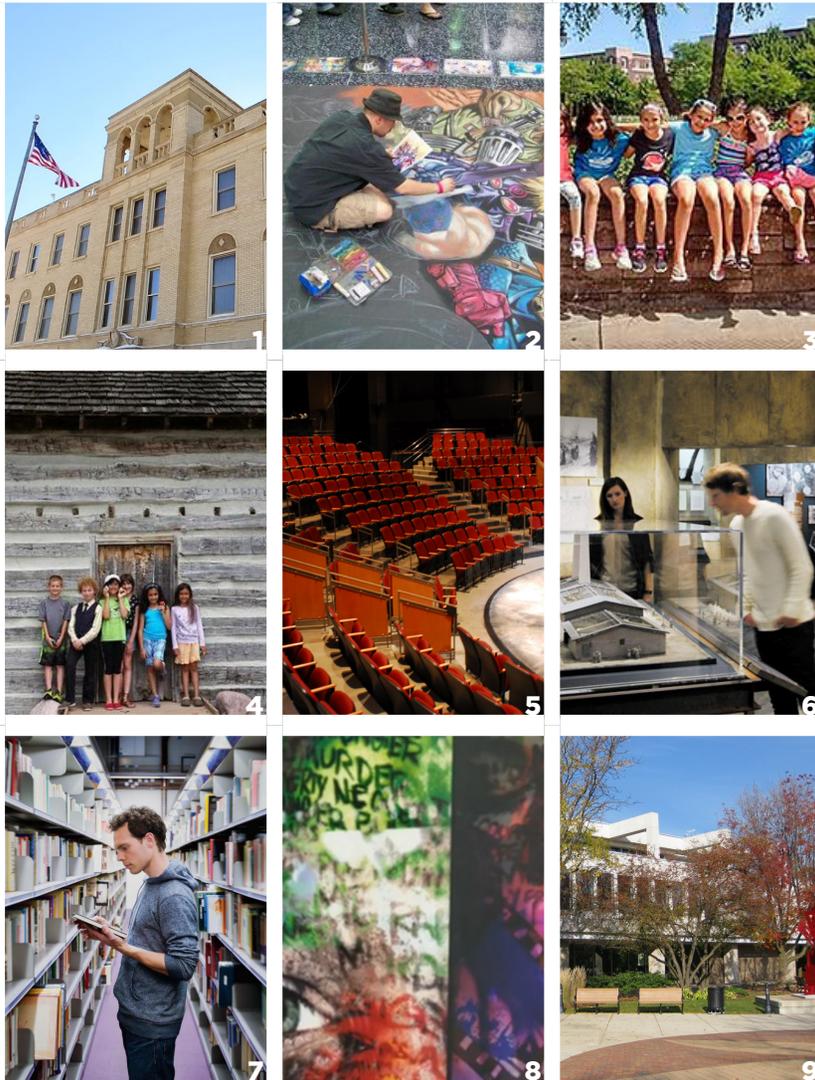
7925 Lincoln Ave, Skokie

New art gallery promoting local artists that sits across the street from the Skokie Theatre, with its iconic marquee in downtown Skokie.

8. Artisto Gallery

9018 N Milwaukee Ave, Niles

Artisto Gallery features handmade artisans that are highly influenced by middle-eastern culture. They design art work for low prices, including paintings, ceramics, carpets, and folklore elements. The team includes embroidery specialists, painters, and crafters.



PUBLIC CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

1. Niles Historical and Cultural Center

8970 N Milwaukee Ave, Niles

The Niles Historical and Cultural Center is one of the largest museums in the northeast area, and is part of the Northeast Illinois Association of Museums. The building was formerly the Cook County Sheriff's Building and is one of the oldest municipal structures in Niles and is a local landmark.

2. Donald E. Stephens Convention Center

*5555 n River Rd, Rosemont
840,000 square feet*

The convention center hosts a variety of events and expos, including anime festivals, fashion and jewelry shows, quilt festivals and more.

3. Niles Park District

*6676 Howard Street
Administrative Offices*

The Niles Park District offers drawing classes for children ages 7-12, using a variety of media to create masterpieces! Clay classes are also offered which focus on the pinch, coil and stab methods of pottery. Dance classes through the Park District include ballet, tap, jazz, advanced dance and more. A spring dance recital showcases all that students have learned throughout the season.

Photos courtesy of The Lakota Group

4. Skokie Heritage Museum

*8037 Floral Ave, Skokie
3,564 square feet
5 staff members*

The Skokie Historical Society is a resident of the Skokie Heritage Museum located at 8031 Floral Avenue. The Heritage Museum and Historic Log Cabin are maintained and staffed by the Skokie Park District.

5. North Shore Center for the Performing Arts

*9501 Skokie Blvd, Skokie
68,000 square feet
13 staff members
867 seats*

The North Shore Center for the Performing Arts is a modern performing arts center with 2 stages presenting a variety of concerts, dance events & plays. The space is capable of hosting a wide variety of performing arts, corporate and special events, the North shore Center is a multi- purpose, modern, and efficient theatre.

6. Illinois Holocauste Museum

*9603 Woods Dr, Skokie
65,000 square feet
36 staff members*

The museum consists of over 20,000 items that belonged to Holocaust victims and survivors. These precious artifacts, donated by individuals who directly experienced the Holocaust, relate the tragic and inspirational stories of the local survivor community.

7. Niles Maine District Public Library

*6960 W Oakton St, Niles
68,000 square feet
105 staff members*

The Niles Maine District Library offers many arts and cultural programs throughout the year, for all ages. The facility includes the Franklin Gallery for special exhibits and artists displays, as well as the Creative Studio with a digital media lab and a makerspace.

8. Brickton Art Center

*306 Busse Hwy, Park Ridge
15 staff members*

Brickton Art Center is a non-profit organization that provides creative outreach services in art therapy, art education and exhibitions using various artistic disciplines and media. Private lessons are offered in ceramics, drawing, painting and mixed media for artists of all ages.

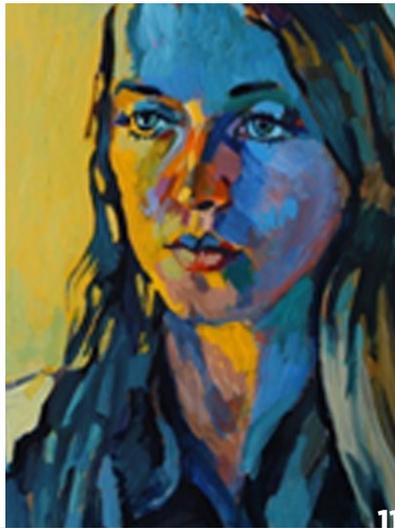
9. Skokie Public Library

*5215 Oakton St, Skokie
34,200 square feet
175 staff members*

The Skokie Public Library hosts reading challenges, family history resources, technology classes and how-to fests. Music performances include multi-cultural artists playing a wide variety of instruments.



10



11

10. Rosemont Theater

*5400 N River Rd, Rosemont
2,500 square feet
4,400 seats*

The plush Rosemont Theatre is your ticket to lavish Broadway musicals, full-scale productions and world-class entertainers. The venue also boasts extra-wide aisles, on-site parking, a superior sound system—making for unforgettable show-going experiences.

11. Glenview Art League

*2320 Glenview Rd, Glenview
No building
Volunteer Organization*

The Glenview Art League sponsors several activities including: the Summer Art Fair; monthly demonstrations by professional artists, the annual Youth Art Fair, featuring work by approximately 200 young artists; weekly painting sessions, held outdoors when weather permits; occasional workshops and opportunities for members to display their work.



12



13

12. Glenview Public Library

*1930 Glenview Rd, Glenview
85,000 square feet
368 general public seats | 278 public meeting room seats
Full-time staff: 43 | Part-time staff: 84*

The Glenview Public Library innovative programs and services strive to educate, enrich, inspire, and entertain, to meet the needs of a diverse community, fostered by a dedicated staff committed to excellence in customer service.

Photos courtesy of The Lakota Group

13. DesPlaines Public Library

*1501 Ellinwood Ave, Des Plaines
82,000 square feet
Full-time staff: 7*

When the 1501 Ellinwood Street building was constructed in 2000, the library board wanted to integrate public art throughout the building. Residents and local organizations donated money to fund sculptures, murals and other installations in the building. Each floor has at least one major piece for the public to enjoy.

14. Niles Sister Cities Association

1000 Civic Center Dr., Niles

Niles Sister Cities Association is a 501c3 organization committed to promoting Niles as a global Village, developing international partnerships, networking and sharing new information and ideas through municipal, business, professional, education and cultural exchanges.

15. Niles Memorial Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3579

6839 N. Milwaukee Ave., Niles

FWV Post 3579 seeks to help veterans in a number of ways including providing a place to meet and talk and by making donations to various veteran causes, including support for veterans at Hines Hospital, homeless veterans, veteran families temporarily residing as Fisher House on the Hines campus, the USO, DAV, VFW National Children's Home and other organizations that help veterans.



Photos courtesy of The Lakota Group

LIVE MUSIC VENUES

1. Space

1245 Chicago Ave, Evanston
 10,000 square feet
 65 dining seats & 20 bar seats

The venue hosts shows that are both seated and standing, loud and quiet. SPACE has brought thousands of world class performances to Evanston audiences. With a rustic and warm ambiance and state-of-the-art technology the venue has become a favorite amongst musicians and music fans of all ages.

2. Firewater Saloon Chicago

6689 N Oliphant Ave, Chicago

Firewater Saloon is Edison Park's only country bar and has been very well received by the neighborhood.

3. Montrose Room

5300 N River Rd, Rosemont

The Montrose Room is a small stage at the Loews Chicago O'Hare Hotel for live music & comedy performances. The venue is a great place for live entertainment, with an intimate feel and choice of seating (or standing) options, so you always have a great view of the stage.

4. Rhythm Room

1715 Maple Ave, Evanston
 Accommodates up to 150 people

The Rhythm Room is Evanston's premiere cocktail lounge, located off the lobby of Century Theatres. This venue features live musing on Friday and Saturday evenings from 7-11pm.

5. A's Karaoke Bar

8751 N Milwaukee Ave, Niles

A's Karaoke Bar will record your karaoke performance on DVD for your viewing pleasure. The bar will plan your party or special event from the music to the theme to the champagne toast.

6. River's Casino

*3000 S River Rd, Des Plaines
Accommodates up to 350 people*

The Casino's bar, Cube, features live entertainment Thursday through Sunday each week. Cube is a unique and versatile venue suitable for all types of events and groups from 50 to 350 people.

7. Rock House

1742 Glenview Rd, Glenview

The Rock House was started by 2 musicians who wanted to create a unique environment for people to gather, with music at its core. The venue offers music lessons and on weekends, it hosts live music from local and touring acts.

8. Niles Senior Center

999 Civic Center Dr., Niles

The Niles Senior Center offers programs to support the health, well being and social needs of seniors, age 55 and over. The Center offers a variety of programs, services, and events.



Photos courtesy of The Lakota Group

LOCAL SCHOOLS

Many of the local and area schools within and near Niles offer a variety of arts-related activities, from art and music classes to musical performances to extracurricular offerings, such as choir, band, orchestra, and theater offerings. In general, there is a very active music and arts scene throughout the schools.

However, many of the schools are not centrally-located in Niles and are housed under different districts. As a result, these school-based arts-related activities are dispersed and not well-communicated within Niles. During our education-based stakeholder group, the team heard a strong desire for a central events database and well as a centrally-located performing arts center that could have flexible uses to accommodate other arts and culture-related uses.

Elementary & Middle Schools

EMSD 63:

- Mark Twain Elementary School
- Gemini Junior High
- V.H. Nelson Elementary School
- Apollo Elementary School
- Meizer Elementary School
- Stevenson Elementary School
- Washington Elementary School

Niles ESD 71:

- Clarence E. Culver: PS-8th Grade

Park Ridge-Niles School District 64:

- Emerson Middle School

Private Elementary & Middle Schools

- Logos Christian Academy: PS-HS
- St. John Brebeuf School
- Bridgeview and Challenger Day Schools

High Schools

District 219:

- Niles North High School
- Niles West High School

District 207:

- Maine East High School
- Maine North High School
- Maine South High School

Private High Schools:

- Notre Dame College Preparatory School
- Northridge Preparatory School

University/Community and 2-Year Colleges:

- Oakton Community College
Performing Arts Center
- Northwestern University
Virginia Wadsworth Wirtz Center for the Performing Arts



Photos courtesy of The Lakota Group

FESTIVALS + EVENT LOCATIONS

1. **Golf Mill Park on Church Street**

Church St, & N. Cumberland Ave.

Maria SS Lauretana Society Festival (Italian Fest)

2. **Holy Taxiarchai and St Haralambos Greek Orthodox Church**

7373 N. Caldwell Ave., Niles

The Big Greek Food Festival

3. **Oasis Water Park**

7877 Milwaukee Ave., Niles

Holly Jolly Market and Tree Lighting

4. **Notre Dame Preparatory School**

7655 Dempster St., Niles

Niles Cycling Classic (formerly Bike Niles) (The location of this event changes annually.)

5K Harvest Hustle

5. **Niles Park District: Grennan Heights**

8255 N. Oketo Ave., Niles

4th of July Parade Post Parade Celebration

6. **Niles Family Senior Center**

999 Civic Center Dr., Niles

Niles Community Block Party

7. Niles Park District: Oak Park

7700 Lee St., Niles

Summer Concert Series

8. St. John Brebeuf Church

8307 N. Harlem Ave., Niles

St. John Brebeuf Carnival

9. Niles Maine District Public Library

6960 W. Oakton St., Niles

Maker Fest

10. Niles Senior Center

999 Civic Center Dr., Niles

11. Niles Historical Society and Cultural Center

8970 N. Milwaukee Ave., Niles

INVENTORY TAKEAWAYS

Niles has many strengths—a diverse population, a committed local government, and a passionate group of arts and culture enthusiasts that desire an expanded arts and culture presence in Niles. However, the mapping and asset inventory and public engagement process revealed gaps in facilities and venues for cultural arts activities in Niles. Gaps mainly concern the lack of live music venues and other spaces for the performing arts, dedicated places for art display and education, and collaborative partnerships that can enhance the capacity to produce new cultural arts programming. Key take-aways include:

- **Performing arts facility:** Niles currently lacks a central indoor performing arts center facility where live theater, dance, and music are programmed and presented on a regular basis. Other centers, including the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts in Skokie, the Metropolis Arts Centre in Arlington Heights, the Rosemont Theater in Rosemont, and other theaters in Chicago, are significant draws according to local stakeholders. Present spaces are limited in Niles, although an existing auditorium in the Public Library could be enhanced as a small-scale theater and music venue. Most performing arts activities occur through privately-operated instruction companies and school activities.
- **Live music/nightclubs:** Niles stakeholders expressed a strong interest in a live music or nightclub venue—several nightclub attractions are in nearby Chicago neighborhoods. A nightclub could also provide a spark for attracting other restaurants and entertainment-related businesses to a commercial area or district in Niles.
- **Visual arts space:** While there is a small number of artists with working-space galleries in Niles, they are not concentrated together. There is also lack of a true visual arts facility or “public” community studio for art instruction or for artists to access inexpensive working space. These types of facilities are currently operating in nearby communities, such as Park Ridge, Des Plaines, and Evanston. Such spaces are needed in Niles—by better equipping current spaces or adaptive reuse—to increase opportunities for the display of art.
- **Festival spaces:** Festivals and events take place in several locations throughout Niles, including parks and Park District facilities, as well as local school and church building grounds. A new festival space and outdoor venue is also planned for the Touhy Triangle area near the community’s southern boundary. Such spaces have the potential for ongoing special events and “temporary” activities that enliven them when they are not actively used.
- **Organizations:** There is a lack of a central arts coordinating and programming entity that can assist in marketing, producing, and supporting cultural arts activities. Small-scale cultural experiences are available in Niles—such as concerts and music performances during local church services, for example—but they lack consistent promotion and marketing to wider audiences.



SECTION 8: APPENDICES 1

STRATEGY CONCEPT QUESTIONNAIRE

Question #1: After reviewing the five (5) planning concepts above, please rank them from highest priority (1), to lowest priority (5).

of responses: 49

HIGHEST #1 RANKING: PERFORMING ARTS CENTER (40% RANKED THIS #1)

HIGHEST WEIGHTED AVERAGE: SPECIAL EVENTS/MARKETING/FESTIVALS

	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	SCORE
Special Events/Marketing/Festivals	21.74% 10 votes	34.78% 16 votes	30.43% 14 votes	6.52% 3 votes	6.52% 3 votes	46 votes	3.59
Performance Art Center	39.58% 19 votes	18.75% 9 votes	8.33% 4 votes	20.83% 10 votes	12.50% 6 votes	48 votes	3.52
Arts Center/Art Incubator Space	21.28%	25.53%	12.77%	12.77%	27.66%	47 votes	3.00
Public Art Program	6.52% 3 votes	15.22% 7 votes	32.61% 15 votes	30.43% 14 votes	15.22% 7 votes	46 votes	2.67
Placemaking Initiative	12.77% 6 votes	8.51% 4 votes	14.89% 7 votes	27.66% 13 votes	36.17% 17 votes	47 votes	2.34

Question #2: Where are you most interested in attending arts and culture activities in Niles? Please select your top three from the list below.

of responses: 106

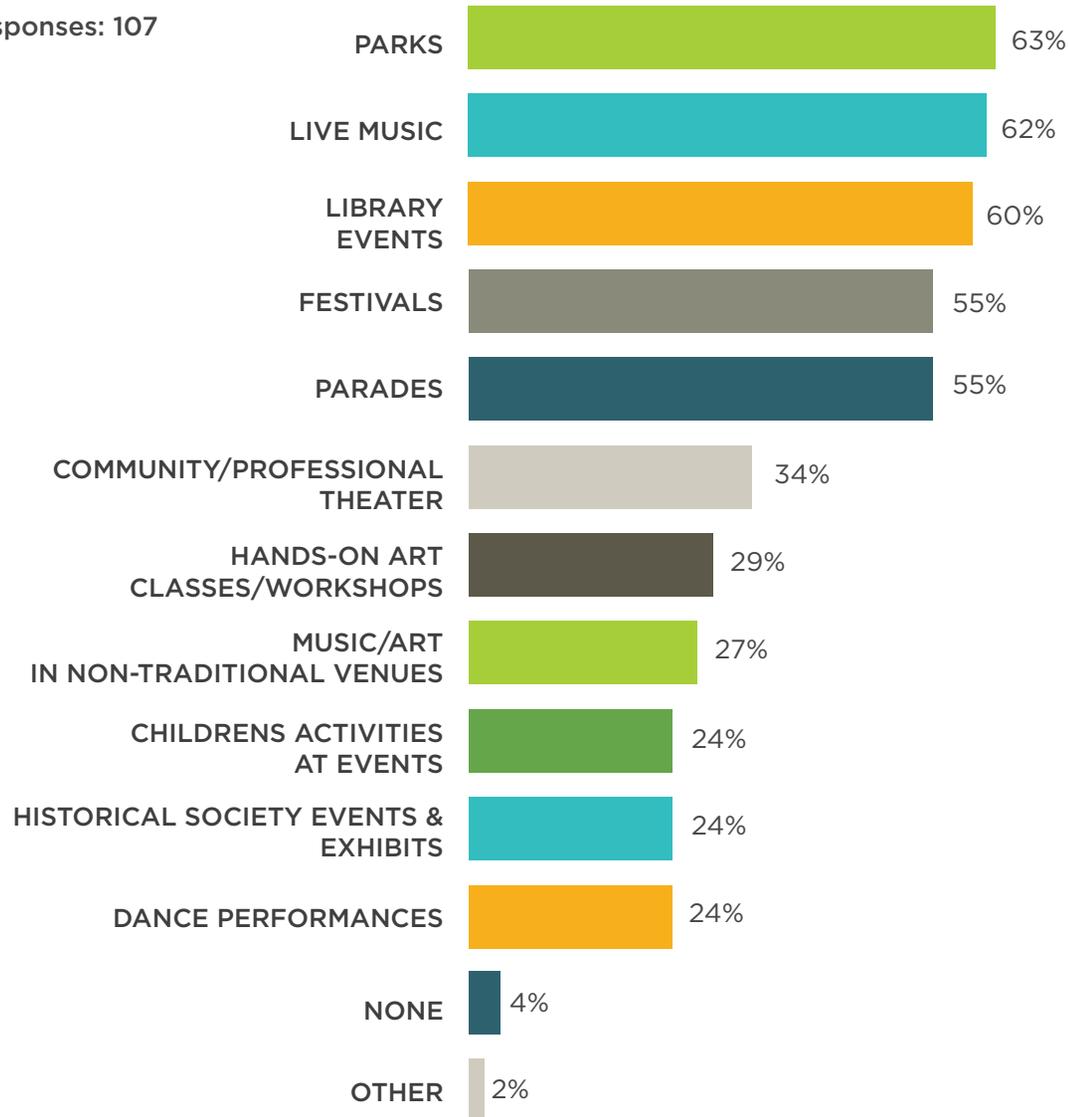
HIGHEST #1 RANKING: LIBRARY (53% RANKED THIS #1)

HIGHEST WEIGHTED AVERAGE: OTHER COMMERCIAL AREAS

	1ST	2ND	3RD	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVG
Other Commercial Areas	40.91% 9 votes	9.09% 2 votes	50.00% 11 votes	22 votes	2.09
In My Local Neighborhood	42.11% 8 votes	31.58% 6 votes	26.32% 5 votes	19 votes	1.84
Niles Teen Center	50.00% 2 votes	25.00% 1 vote	25.00% 1 vote	4 votes	1.75
Golf Mill Shopping Center	57.14% 12 votes	23.81% 5 votes	19.05% 4 votes	21 votes	1.62
Local Churches & Religious Institutions	57.14% 12 votes	12.50% 2 votes	18.75% 3 votes	16 votes	1.5
Parks	68.75% 11 votes	10.71% 6 votes	17.86% 10 votes	56 votes	1.46
Niles Senior Center	76.19% 32 votes	11.90% 5 votes	11.90% 5 votes	42 votes	1.36
Library	76.78% 56 votes	18.06% 13 votes	4.17% 3 votes	72 votes	1.26
Local Area Schools	80.77% 21 votes	15.38% 4 votes	3.85% 1 vote	26 votes	1.23
Niles Historical Society	100.00% 5 votes	0.00% 0 votes	0.00% 0 votes	5 votes	1.00

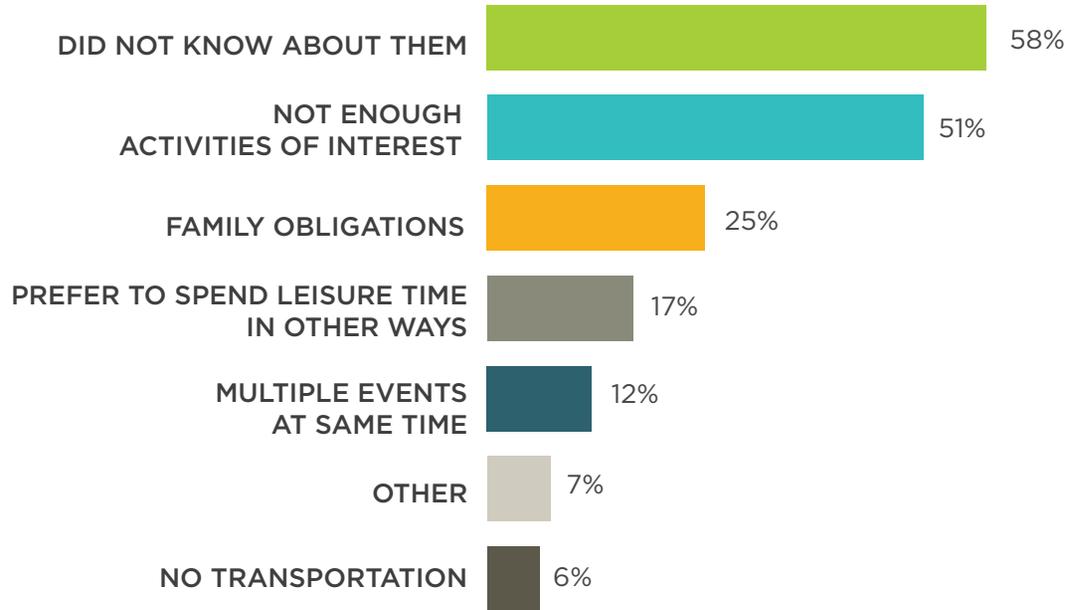
Question #3: Which of the following arts and culture programs have you attended/participated in the last 12 months? Please select all that apply.

of responses: 107



Question #4: If you are not able to engage in arts and culture activities in Niles, what are the barriers? Please select all that apply.

of responses: 83



Question #5: Identify three resources from the list below that you think would be the most beneficial to arts and culture development in Niles (Do not consider how or by whom these would be accomplished).

of responses: 101

	#1	#2	#3	TOTAL
Ensure that arts and culture activities and initiatives are included and integrated in the Village's overall community and economic development efforts	76.92% 40 votes	21.15% 11 votes	1.92% 1 vote	52
Coordinate the marketing and promotion of arts and culture activities in Niles	82.93% 34 votes	9.76% 4 votes	7.32% 3 votes	41
Provide an online calendar for local arts and culture activities	75.76% 25 votes	9.09% 3 votes	15.15% 5 votes	33
Ensure that Village funding for arts and culture activities are equally distributed to diverse projects throughout Niles	83.33% 20 votes	4.17% 1 vote	12.50% 5 votes	24
Attract and retain local artists and creative businesses	82.61% 19 votes	8.70% 2 votes	8.70% 2 votes	23
Advocate for arts education in local schools and other venues	64.29% 18 votes	28.57% 8 votes	7.14% 2 votes	28
Provide opportunities for direct participation in arts and culture offerings	48.57% 17 votes	5.71% 2 votes	45.71% 16 votes	35
Provide resources to local arts and culture entities so they can build their capacity to produce activities	72.73% 16 votes	13.64% 6 votes	13.64% 3 votes	22
Better connect with local schools and college arts and culture offerings	57.14% 16 votes	21.43% 6 votes	21.43% 6 votes	28
Provide resources and services to individual artists and creative professionals to build their businesses	85.71% 12 votes	7.14% 1 vote	7.14% 1 vote	14
Advocate for value of for-profit, non-profit, and independent arts and creative businesses to public officials	61.54% 8 votes	30.77% 4 votes	7.69% 1 vote	13
Document the impact of arts and culture activities in Niles	88.89% 8 votes	0.00% 0 votes	11.11% 1 vote	9

Question #6: What should be the top three priorities for Village of Niles government contributions to arts and culture activities?

of responses: 99

	#1	#2	#3	TOTAL	AVG.
Enhance historical society programming and activities	25.00% 1 vote	0.00% 0 votes	75.00% 3 votes	4 votes	2.50
Undertake creative placemaking activities and installation of public art	46.15% 6 votes	7.69% 1 vote	46.15% 6 votes	13 votes	2.00
Prioritize affordable artist studio space	64.29% 9 votes	7.14% 1 vote	28.57% 4 votes	14 votes	1.64
Develop an online database of resources and tool-kits for local artists and creative professionals	64.71% 11 votes	11.76% 2 votes	23.53% 4 votes	17 votes	1.59
Enhance youth arts programming	53.33% 16 votes	36.67% 11 votes	10.00% 3 votes	30 votes	1.57
Prepare policies that foster arts education in the local schools	67.74% 21 votes	9.68% 3 votes	22.58% 7 votes	31 votes	1.55
Provide greater access to arts and culture activities for people of limited means	68.42% 13 votes	15.79% 3 votes	15.79% 3 votes	19 votes	1.47
Partner with organizations in the development of arts and culture activities	71.43% 40 votes	16.07% 9 votes	12.50% 7 votes	56 votes	1.41
Publicize and market local cultural activities	78.95% 45 votes	10.53% 6 votes	10.53% 6 votes	57 votes	1.32
Subsidize arts and culture events with reduced permit fees	81.82% 27 votes	18.18% 6 votes	0.00% 0 votes	33 votes	1.18
Provide direct support and services as direct grants and technical support to artists and cultural institutions	90.63% 29 votes	6.25% 2 votes	3.13% 1 vote	32 votes	1.13

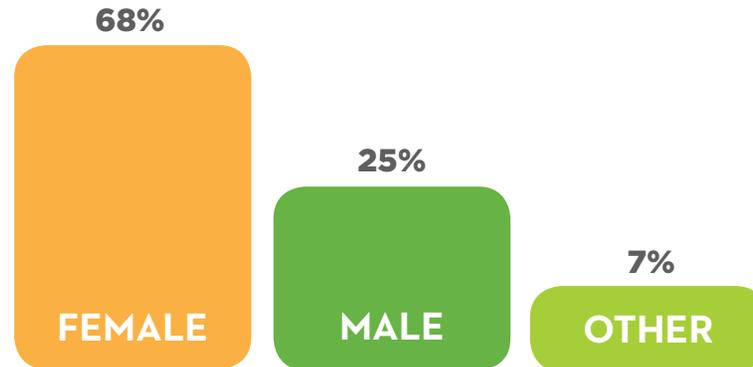
Question #7: Do you live in Niles?

of responses: 104



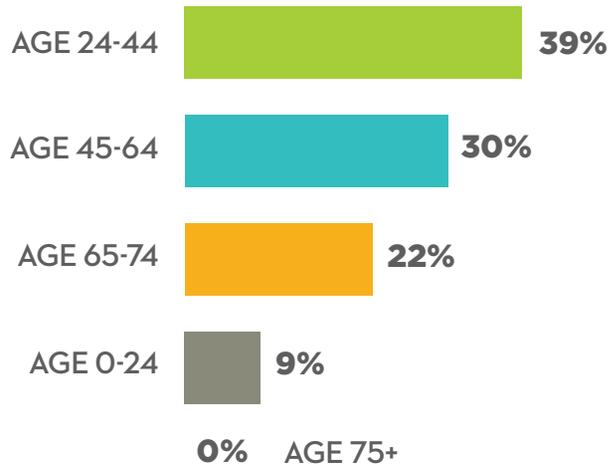
Question #8: What is your gender?

of responses: 100



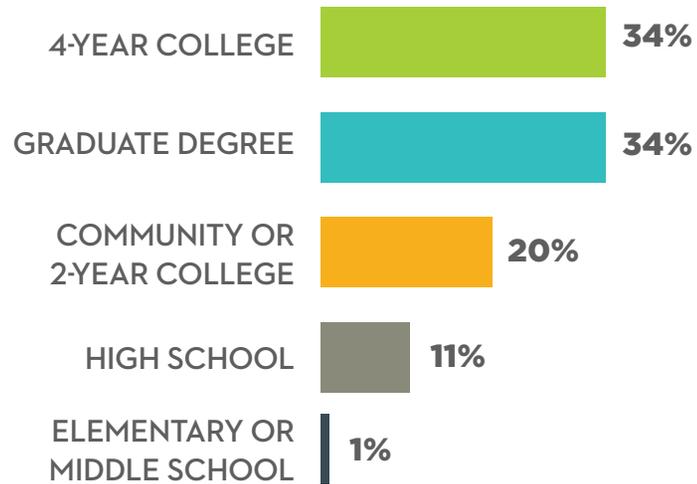
Question #9: What is your age?

of responses: 23



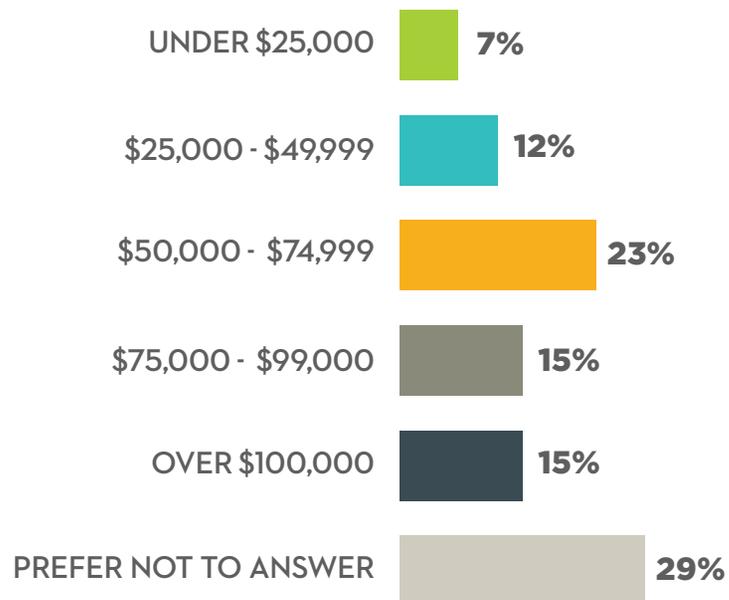
Question #10: Education - What is your last degree earned?

of responses: 103



Question #11: What is your annual household income?

of responses: 103



Question #12: Please provide any additional thoughts ideas about arts and culture in Niles.

of responses: 28



“PROVIDE ONLINE CALENDAR FOR CHURCHES, SCHOOLS, VILLAGE LIBRARY, BUSINESSES, PARK DISTRICT.”

“THIS IS THE KIND OF THINKING THAT MAKES NILES AN EXTRAODINARY COMMUNITY. ENRICHING THE ARTS & CULTURE WILL ENHANCE OUR COMMUNITY ON SO MANY LEVELS.”

“ ...A VILLAGE CENTER OR SQUARE. WOULD BE BENEFICIAL TO CREATING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND BUILDING NOT ONLY THE ARTS CENTER BUT ALSO A BUSINESS CENTER. ”

PERHAPS USING THE GOLF MILL MALL PARKING LOT SPACE TO CREATE A "ROSEMONT" PARK TYPE AREA WITH NEW, HIP RESTAURANTS, BARS AND BUSINESSES. THIS CAN BRING MORE PEOPLE INTO NILES AND USE UP UNUSED OPEN SPACE, WHILE STILL HAVING ENOUGH PARKING SPACES.

SPONSOR AN ART FAIR WITH FOLK SINGING OR JAZZ MUSIC....

“NILES COULD BENEFIT AESTHETICALLY BY PROMOTING ARTS IN SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY.. AND BY INCREASING INTEREST IN CULTURAL ACTIVITIES.”

“NEW AREAS FOR LIVE PERFORMANCES”

HAVING ONE RESOURCE TO GO TO LEARN ABOUT ARTS AND CULTURE OPPORTUNITIES IN THE VILLAGE WOULD BE HELPFUL.

#1 PRIORITY SHOULD BE TO DEVELOP AN OVERALL COORDINATED DETAILED ARTS AND CULTURE PLAN FOR NILES WITH PRIORITIES - WHAT CAN BE IMPLEMENTED SOON MOVING TOWARDS LONGER TERM OBJECTIVES.”

“WE NEED FAMILY FRIENDLY ART FAIRS AND FESTIVALS TO ENCOURAGE YOUNG TO MOVE INTO THE VILLAGE...”

“IT WOULD BE AMAZING TO HAVE A LOCAL THEATER AND ART STUDIOS AND THINGS TO BRING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER. ARTWORK AND PROJECTS BEING DONE AROUND THE TOWN WOULD ALSO JUST CREATE A MORE APPEALING LOOK AND MAKE OTHERS FEEL PROUD TO BE RESIDENTS OF NILES.”

“A RAVINIA AT A FOREST PRESERVES WITH ROOM FOR RESTAURANTS, GARDENS, LAWN CHAIRS, ART FAIRS, BALLET AND OTHER DANCE GROUPS. ANOTHER FOREST PRESERVES FOR DOWNHILL SKIING.”

“WE NEED MORE CULTURAL ARTS OPTIONS FOR CHILDREN IN THIS TOWN. I FIND I NEED TO LOOK TO SURROUNDING VILLAGES TO FIND OPPORTUNITIES FOR MY KIDS FOR BOTH CLASSES AND ATTENDING EVENTS.”



APPENDIX 2

WORKSHOP #2 QUESTIONNAIRE

Question #1: What would be the biggest barriers (financial, regulatory, etc. to implementing an Arts and Cultural District along Milwaukee Avenue?

of responses: 13

- Financial
- Traffic - Safety in crossing streets
- Infrastructure - Too much traffic, not good for walking
- Limited Parking
- Low income housing
- Existing Businesses
- Parking
- Public Access
- Financial
- Gathering all of the Businesses/Property Owners to get their buy in
- Space
- Collaboration and Communication with potential businesses and present venue owners
- Sponsorship

Question #2: If Milwaukee Avenue is not a suitable location for an arts and cultural district, where else in Niles would be?

of responses: 10

- Waukegan Road
- Other main streets bump up to other cities, but Touhy is our Main Street
- Golf Mill Park
- Milwaukee Avenue is well suited on both sides of the street up by Oakton.
- Touhy Triangle TIF District
- Near Gold Mill Park
- Greenwood & Maryland
- Dutchmans Point
- Bunker Hill
- Dutchmans Point

Question #3: What roles should the Village play in facilitating an arts and cultural district?

of responses: 10

- Funding & Administration
- Making Milwaukee Avenue travel friendly — especially for walking and biking
- Event promotion & organizing
- As little as possible
- Early involvement
- Get it established but have less of a role over time
- Zoning - staff to work with businesses
- Promotion
- Public works maintenance of walkways and lightning rods
- Advertising community events with social media, physical banners and multi-council support

Question #4: What kinds of festivals and events should be created in Niles?

of responses: 61

	Total Votes
QUESTION #4	
1. Live Music Events	7
1. Heritage/Ethnic Festivals	7
1. Art Fairs/Arts and Crafts	7
2. Farmers Market	6
3. Film Festivals	5
3. Car Shows/Cruise Nights	5
4. Parades	4
4. Food-Related Festivals	4
4. Holiday Events	4
5. Children's Events	3
6. Literary Events/Story Telling/Book Fairs	2
6. Carnivals	2
6. Street/Outdoor Dance	2
7. Sports-Related Events	1
7. Block Parties	1
7. Events for 21-30 Year Olds	1

Question #5: What locations should be used for new events (parks, new event spaces, etc.)?

of responses: 14

- Parks and open spaces
- Touhy Triangle - Milwaukee/Golf
- Oakton / Waukegan
- Golf Mill Park
- Oak Park
- Parks
- Dutchmans Point
- Golf Mill Park
- New Event Spaces
- Parks
- Other Niles entities e.g. Library, Park District Facilities, Senior Centers
- Grennan Heights
- New performance theater/film building
- Art Gallery

Question #6: Where should public art be installed in Niles?

of responses: 37

	Total Votes
QUESTION #6	
1. Parks	8
1. Gateway Entrances into Niles	8
2. Streetscapes and Sidewalks	5
2. Privately-Funded Development	5
3. Neighborhood Spots	4
4. Schools	3
5. Village-Owned Buildings	2
6. New Art Center Locations	1
6. Art Galleries	1

Question #7: Please describe any specific areas or locations where public art can be installed to enhance Niles' Visual Appearance.

of responses: 20

- Open area on Oakton east of Culver
- Golf Park
- By the Leaning Tower
- Historical Museum
- Village Buildings
- Parks
- Storefronts
- By Dunkin Donuts on Oakton & Milwaukee
- By Main Gateways
- Dutchmans Point
- Golf Mill Park
- Rain garden
- Areas along Milwaukee Streetscape (Touhy & Oakton)
- How to get first piece in the first spot
- Along main roads
- Park south of Golf Mill
- Rain garden (will need parking)
- Public ROW outside of Golf Mill
- Water Mill at new reservoir
- Best Buy
- Corner adjacent to Leaning Tower

Additional Comments:

“35MM CAPABILITY WOULD BE A GREAT STAPLE, UNIQUE; MANY PEOPLE TRAVEL FAR TO FIND 35MM THEATERS. A SINGLE THEATER WITH A PERFORMANCE VENUE SPACE AND 1920'S STYLE MARQUEE.”

“REPURPOSING OF GOLF MILL BANK LOCATION TO ARTS + CULTURE FACILITY.”

“CONSIDER DUTCHMANS POINT REDEVELOPMENT FOR ART CORRIDOR.”

“MORE COLOR! BRIGHT EYE CATCHING PUBLIC ART AND INTERACTIVE ART!”

“NEED AN ART GALLERY SPACE!”



NILES
ARTS & CULTURE PLAN