

**Johnson County, KS Suburban Arts Business
Plan
2005-2015**

**Prepared by Arts Council of Johnson County
September 2004**

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PREFACE

Why an arts plan?

Johnson County is a national leader in population growth, per capita income and many quality of life measures. Its public schools, its library system, its parks and its community college all have national standings and support making the County a place of choice for businesses and residents.

The arts also have a notable presence in Johnson County with approximately 40 arts and humanities entities plus numerous festivals and art exhibitions. One of the higher profile cultural resources is the Carlsen Center at Johnson County Community College. The Carlsen Center's performing arts programs along with the Gallery of Art and the Oppenheimer-Stein sculpture collection have emerged as major region-serving attractions. This burgeoning College arts district will be further enhanced in 2007 with the opening of the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, the second largest museum in the metropolitan area.

Other parts of the county also enjoy a healthy arts presence. Theater in the Park attracts thousands of people annually, the Johnson County Museum has been farsighted in establishing a focus on suburbia, exhibitions at the Epstein Gallery at Village Shalom draw high critical acclaim, Overland Park's Convention Center boasts a hearty art collection, Leawood has a percent for art public art program, a dinner theater is highly successful, and several cities and the county boast active arts councils and arts programs. In addition to supporting their own cultural institutions, Johnson County residents provide nearly half the audiences for the major cultural institutions in other parts of the metropolitan area.

However, concerns are emerging that these quality of life amenities as they stand today may not be enough to sustain the County's economic leadership in the future. Urban core developments in Kansas City and other major cities are becoming increasingly attractive lifestyle options, offering enhanced opportunities for residents to socialize and enjoy amenities more accessible than in suburban areas. In response, some suburban developments are trying to achieve similar opportunities through increased density developments.

Concurrently, the arts are emerging as a vital force in addressing both economic development and quality of life issues. Cities around the globe are using arts initiatives to attract creative workforces, develop tourism and revitalize neighborhoods. Prime

examples extend from Sedan, Kansas and Dallas, Texas to London, England and Bilbao, Spain.

This arts plan is designed to mine the full potential of the arts for Johnson County as both amenities and an economic development resource. It builds upon a history of vision and leadership within the county and sets out a new vision more inclusive of the arts. Nearer term, this plan identifies specific projects, some of which are currently in development. Longer term, it sets a framework for new programming and new facilities yet unspecified. Throughout, it lays the groundwork for creating synergies from the arts both locally and regionally.

Specifically, this arts plan is designed to:

- Build upon existing County arts resources, including resident artists and arts councils;
- Develop new arts resources, including resources complementary to existing metropolitan arts resources;
- Leverage arts resources for the economic and social betterment of the County's citizens and the metropolitan area;
- Develop sustainable funding for the arts, including working toward passage of the 2004 Metropolitan Culture District Tax initiative; and
- Create arts partnerships, including partnerships with the business community to implement this plan.

The time is at hand for giving the arts a place at the table along with schools, parks, libraries, roads and other public services if the County is to remain a national leader in providing amenities that will attract the best and the brightest people and the most progressive companies in the 21st century.

Who was involved?

Beginning in January 2003, the Arts Council of Johnson County (ACJC) undertook a Suburban Arts Initiative. Highlights of this initiative included an early 2004 public symposium and forum centered on arts and economic development. These two public events attracted more than 500 participants from the business, political, cultural and educational communities across the metropolitan area. Along with the information collected from these two events, key one on one visits with community leaders, the assistance of a 17 member Planning Committee and a final broad call to community cultural, business, political and educational leaders for comments on various drafts of this plan, the ACJC has taken the information collected through these open community processes and developed this Arts Business Plan.

Members of the Planning Committee: Shannon Barks, Mona Carmack, Dr. Chuck Carlsen, Mark Gilman, Bruce Hartman, Ann Kenney, Susan Lindahl, Edeen Martin, Ray Makalous, Nelson Mann, Laura McKnight, Larry Meeker (Chairman), Jerry Nerman, Marti Oppenheimer, Ken Rashid, Ron Wimmer and Hannes Zacharias.

Plan Ownership

While this arts plan was developed with broad public input and guidance from a diverse planning committee, the plan is the sole responsibility of the ACJC. The ACJC is the only arts planning organization in Johnson County with a countywide audience and responsibility.

The ACJC recognizes that the actual implementation of this plan is beyond the capabilities of any single organization. However, it is the intent of the ACJC to oversee the implementation and ongoing updating of this plan, working through new and existing partnerships, changing the structure of the ACJC as necessary and building increased public support for the arts. This is consistent with ACJC's role as outlined in the 1999-2004 Strategic Cultural Plan: *Artistic leader; long range planner; convener; arts advocate at the national, state, regional, county and metro levels; program and information broker and funder and catalyst for community development.*

Plan Evaluation and Amendments

Every year after adoption of this plan, the ACJC Board of Directors will appoint a 15 member committee comprised of no more than three board members and at least 12 representatives of the Johnson County cultural, business, political and educational communities to evaluate the plan and make recommendations for changes. The findings will be presented to the Arts Council of Johnson County Board of Directors who will then seek broad public comment on the proposed changes. The Board of Directors will then make appropriate changes to the plan.

THE PLAN

Vision:

Johnson County becomes a nationally recognized suburban region for using the arts to attract tourists, define its culture and sustain the County's national economic leadership in attracting people, families and businesses.

Arts Council of Johnson County Role:

To promote, support, coordinate and monitor arts initiatives that will continue to make Johnson County a place of choice for doing business and living in metropolitan Kansas City.

Outcomes by 2015:

- Johnson County will be recognized as the first truly suburban community to make arts and culture an axis for economic development.
- Johnson County will be recognized as a major provider of arts experiences and arts programming for Metropolitan Kansas City.
- Johnson County residents will have convenient access to all levels of cultural programs and services and opportunities to participate as both consumers and producers.
- Johnson County and City governments will embrace cultural activities as a basic service.
- Johnson County arts leaders will be recognized regional arts leaders.
- Johnson County's premiere arts activities will enjoy diversified and sustained funding from both the public and private sectors.
- Johnson County businesses will embrace the arts as a tool for economic development and as a tool for attracting quality employees.
- Johnson County Government and city governments will allocate a percentage of construction contracts to public art.
- Johnson County local governments will allocate, or continue to allocate, dedicated and recurring public funds to the arts.

Strategies:

1. Develop an arts environment in Johnson County that makes the County a place of choice to work and live, and to create and consume art products and services.
 - Identify partnerships to explore creating a regional/national arts event in the County. (2005)
 - Complete a public art project. (2006)
 - Create partnerships that will nourish one or more “arts districts” in the County beyond the JCCC campus. (2007)
 - Create an arts incubator that includes a visiting artist program. (2010)
 - Create arts-business relationships to promote the arts as an economic development tool. (Ongoing)
2. Develop arts educational programming that reaches all residents, helps bridge cultures and enhances arts skills.
 - Continue to support and expand the current Shooting Stars recognition and scholarship program for high school students to include an in-depth arts education component. (2006)
 - In partnership with other providers, develop a life-long community-based arts education program for Johnson County citizens of all ages. (2009)
 - Advocate for arts education in the schools and help develop expanded arts partnerships between the cultural community and the schools. (Ongoing)
3. Create a County-wide capital plan for arts facilities plan that will improve arts access for the citizens of Johnson County, enhance metropolitan arts options and enrich the metropolitan area’s arts profile through creative architectural design.
 - Develop plans and purposes for up to three new community arts facilities that make performing and visual arts experiences more accessible for all County residents. (2006)
 - Identify and develop support for one or more additional region-serving major arts/cultural facilities in Johnson County. Special interest has been shown in suburban history, American art, Native American art and a performing arts facility. (2007)
4. Develop a County-wide public arts program to accentuate the County’s gathering places, mark its major corridors, advertise its understanding of and commitment to international arts quality standards, and raise the metropolitan area’s public arts profile.

- Develop a symposium for public officials and other partners in public arts projects that helps all parties better understand their respective roles and responsibilities in pursuing excellence in public art. (2005)
 - Identify arts corridors and major gathering places as potential sites for public art. (2006)
 - Establish a formal County public arts program that can assist cities and the County in acquiring high quality public art. (2006)
5. Develop diversified funding sources that build and sustain the County’s arts programming and facilities.
- Support the 2004 Metropolitan Culture District Tax initiative since it was identified as a key resource for funding the arts in Johnson County (2004).
 - Identify options for funding the arts initiatives outlined in this plan and, where appropriate, document the need for sustained funding. (2005)
 - Develop a proposal for a percent-for-arts program for County buildings in Johnson County and submit the plan to the County Commissioners for consideration. (2005)
 - Conduct a feasibility study for a percent-for-arts program for private commercial building projects in Johnson County and submit results to appropriate government bodies. (2007)
 - Advocate for establishment of public art programs with appropriate funding from the cities in Johnson County. (Ongoing)
6. Develop arts leadership necessary to achieve this plan’s vision.
- Identify leadership needs, resources and options for the future development of the arts in Johnson County, including the implementation of this plan, and make recommendations to the appropriate entities. Include in this evaluation potential changes in the structure and operations of the ACJC and the advisability of establishing a County Arts Commission or Department. (2004-2005).
 - At least annually sponsor a community forum/symposium/conference on a topic that will strengthen the arts and arts leadership in the County: (2005 – Public Art and the Public Sector; 2006 – Strategies for Attracting People and Businesses Through the Arts)
 - Strengthen existing partnerships, such as the ACJC’s Marketing Co-op and the Cultural Advisory Committee, and build new partnerships within the community to broaden the base of support for the arts in the County’s economic development initiatives. (Ongoing)

OVERALL MEASUREMENTS:

- ❑ By 2010 Johnson County Government is the Americans for the Arts recipient of the National Award for County Arts Leadership. Americans for the Arts annually recognizes elected officials who have exhibited outstanding leadership in the advancement of the arts at the national, state and local levels.
- ❑ By 2015 all Johnson County residents will live within a 15-minute drive of an architecturally significant arts facility where they can engage in arts activities as producers and/or consumers.
- ❑ By 2015 four additional Johnson County cities and Johnson County government will have adopted a percent for public art program.
- ❑ By 2010 the arts will be considered a basic government service, sharing equally with other government services in discussions and initiatives addressing quality of life in the County. County budgets, advisory groups and department activities will be indicators of government support.
- ❑ By 2010 Johnson County Chambers of Commerce will consider the arts an important economic development tool as demonstrated in their economic development publications and Chamber goals.
- ❑ By 2010 Johnson County will have created at least one public arts corridor or gathering place.
- ❑ By 2010 sustainable public funding will be available to supplement existing funding of arts activities in Johnson County.
- ❑ By 2015 Johnson County's premiere arts organizations will have access to sustainable funding.

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