

2003 ArtGrowth Summit Results

On September 23, 2003, more than 300 Madison residents convened at the ArtGrowth Summit to offer their opinions and ideas about the arts in Madison. The participants in the Summit, coming from all walks of life, explored the community's arts, cultural and creative development in terms of strengths and needs. The lists that follow are all of the suggestions that emerged during round-table discussions. The ArtGrowth sponsoring partners were:

Madison CitiARTS Commission
Greater Madison Convention and Visitors Bureau
Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce
Downtown Madison, Inc.
City of Madison Economic Development Commission
Office of UW-Madison Chancellor John Wiley
UW-Madison Arts Institute
Accelerate Madison
Madison Artists Alliance,
Madison Gas and Electric
Wisconsin Assembly for Local Arts

Strengths

The Community Backdrop

- √ Madison's diversity, creativity, flexibility and passion
- √ Madison's progressive tradition, academic excellence, tolerance, and energy
- √ A positive community image and the draw of being the state capital
- √ A growing community with friendly, helpful people
- √ Increasing public will in support of the arts
- √ Renaissance of downtown and neighborhoods
- √ Ease of living, easy access, and freedom to take chances
- √ Strong, stable economic base with many knowledge sector businesses
- √ High standard of living
- √ Decent government services
- √ A beautiful natural environment
- √ High levels of community participation in the arts
- √ Vibrant sidewalk arts scene
- √ Supportive press and media with several arts calendars
- √ Growing numbers of list serves, chat rooms, and websites for local arts and artists including <portalwisconsin.org>, <missionhiphop.com>, <madpoetry.org>, <communitypages.com>, <madstage.com>, Madison Artists Alliance listserve

Human Capital

- √ Gifted, skilled, diverse artists working in complementary disciplines
- √ A strong work ethic and a tradition of volunteerism
- √ Artists rooted in many cultures and from many nations
- √ Artists of great skill working in a variety of disciplines
- √ A pool of potential board members with technical and political savvy

- √ College and university faculty, students, and alumni
- √ College and university internships and service learners in the arts
- √ Large, stable donor base

- √ Elected officials and corporate leaders who value the arts
- √ Strong, engaged leadership in many arts organizations
- √ Vocal believers
- √ Retired Senior Volunteers Program, United Way's Volunteer Center, UW Morbridge Center, and the collaborative <volunteeryourtime.org> project

Spaces and Places

- √ New arts district and other fine cultural and community facilities
- √ Library mall and State Street as active venues
- √ Available warehouse spaces
- √ New public art plan and growing public collection
- √ Many unique neighborhoods and neighborhood festivals
- √ Maturing jazz scene
- √ Arts events all over the city in parks and neighborhood facilities
- √ Fine commercial, school-based, campus and community galleries
- √ Informal exhibition space in coffee houses and hospitals
- √ Some shared studio and rehearsal spaces
- √ Potentially strong market for purchase of artwork

Organizations and Events

- √ Wide variety of exceptional arts organizations from grassroots to professional in the performing, visual, media, and literary arts
- √ Many arts classes and continuing arts education opportunities
- √ Experimental art works, programs, and events
- √ A range of free and reasonably priced arts events
- √ Rush tickets, senior discounts, and outreach programs of all sorts
- √ A history of collaboration among both artists and arts organizations
- √ Established events with a local following
- √ Commercial arts instruction and schools
- √ Great special events and community festivals and fairs in all seasons
- √ Wisconsin Assembly of Local Arts
- √ Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters
- √ Madison Artists Alliance
- √ A wealth of public and university libraries
- √ Many independent book and music shops
- √ WORT and Wisconsin Public Radio
- √ Many fine church and synagogue choirs

Financial Resources

- √ Stable events and organizations with ongoing financial support
- √ Corporate, foundation, and individual donor participation
- √ Public agencies: Wisconsin Arts Board, the Wisconsin Humanities Commission, Dane County Cultural Affairs Commission, and Madison CitiArts
- √ Municipal commitment to public art
- √ The Great Performance Fund

Educational Infrastructure

- √ University of Wisconsin, Edgewood College, and MATC with their astonishingly rich arts resources, both human and programmatic
- √ Madison Public Schools participation in the Arts Education Roundtable, strings program, inclusion of the arts in their core curriculum, and the Madison School-Community Recreation Department
- √ Outreach and educational programs of many arts organizations
- √ Residencies conducted by many local artists
- √ Great art teachers in neighborhood settings

Needs

Spaces for the Arts

Artists and arts organizations working in virtually all disciplines face serious problems finding appropriate space in which to work. A beginning agenda for resolving this problem includes

- √ Redesigning zoning controls to make artists live/work spaces more broadly available
- √ Creating a useful listing of available spaces in which rehearsal, performance, fabrication and studio uses are possible
- √ Creating a comprehensive listing of public and private arts facilities now in use
- √ Enlisting local developers and businesses in making surplus or shared spaces available at low cost
- √ Creating incentives for developers to include live/work spaces in commercial and residential developments
- √ Creating barter systems so that local artists can trade workshops, residencies, exhibitions, and other public service for use of costly facilities
- √ Creating residency programs that place artists and arts organizations in surplus church, school, business, and neighborhood facilities
- √ Planning a coherent relationship between neighborhood arts and the downtown core with a method for sharing skills and resources among the sites
- √ Training artists and arts organizations in the development and management of shared spaces
- √ Developing information materials explaining the availability of public and quasi public financing instruments and services available to support the development of arts spaces
- √ Creating arts incubators that provide shared administrative and development tools for emerging arts organizations and projects
- √ Helping make artists studios and galleries viable by enhancing maps, walking tours, gallery and studio nights and related special events
- √ Clarifying the public and private roles in the provision of affordable spaces for the arts
- √ Considering the location of arts spaces in the design of public transportation routes
- √ Creating a major outdoor performance venue and providing infrastructure for modest programming in all major parks
- √ Making streets and related regulations friendly to street artists
- √ Inviting artists to do temporary work at non-traditional sites such as construction fences and empty storefronts
- √ Beginning to build a tradition of provocative, high quality public art
- √ Including public performances within the concept and delivery of the public art program
- √ Including portable and perishable works within the public art program
- √ Expanding the cultural district

Artist Development

If Madison wishes to attract and maintain a diverse, dynamic cohort of artists, it must provide a base of operations that nourishes their development, honors their worth, and provides for gainful employment. A beginning agenda for resolving this problem includes

- √ Creating a single, welcoming point of access for all professional artists to form or find networks, to learn about opportunities for work (commissions, auditions, exhibitions, publications, gigs, residencies, etc.), to collaborate, and engage in discussion about their work
- √ Creating a parallel systems which links arts consumers and audiences to artists with skills appropriate to their needs
- √ Defining the arts and artists broadly, avoiding cultural biases in the leadership, design, and operation of artists services
- √ Provide training to emerging artists in managing the business aspects of their work and in grant-writing
- √ Helping artists and their families acquire affordable health insurance and health care
- √ Providing for affordable liability insurance for arts events and works
- √ Engaging artists as fundamental problem-solvers in civic decision-making through appointments, consultations, and related forms of participation

- √ Reducing the divide between university and community-based artists and artists coming from different cultural traditions through intentional collaborations
- √ Increase the number of opportunities for artists to come together as a group and forge a common community agenda
- √ Increase the number of opportunities for diverse groups of artists to come together with others interested in the arts, to advance broad understanding of their needs and contributions.

Arts Organizations' Needs

While Madison is home to an impressive array of arts organizations, they suffer from undercapitalization and lack of vehicles for collective enhancement. A beginning agenda for resolving this problem includes

- √ Increase the number of funding sources making grants of operating support
- √ Provide a mechanism for cooperative, informed scheduling of arts events
- √ Increase the links between higher education and local arts organizations through collaboration, field placements, and group sales
- √ Create on-going opportunities for arts organizations and artists' organizations to communicate their needs to funders
- √ Educate local businesses regarding the breadth of opportunities to partner with arts organizations including shared space, sponsorships, volunteer recruitment, workplace giving programs, group outings, etc.

Arts Education

While Madison prides itself a strong commitment to education, the arts are not fully harnessed as instructional tools and the community's system for linking critical resources together is weak. A beginning agenda for resolving this problem includes

- √ Infuse the arts into all areas of curriculum in early childhood, elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education
- √ Increase the level of involvement of participants (including children) in planning arts education programs
- √ Continue to work toward articulating and coordinating the arts education and outreach offerings of Madison's artists and arts organizations and the public schools in conjunction with the Arts Education Roundtable
- √ Make it easier for artists to market their residencies by creating a single, coherent information exchange system with potential consumers
- √ Engage local higher education institutions as partners in the arts education process
- √ Work with higher educational institutions to insure arts education training in teacher preparation programs across levels and disciplines
- √ Develop coherent, community-wide programs of arts education for a life-long learning audience; engage the business community as participants
- √ Train artists and arts organizations to be effective in their work with children and schools

Stewardship and Participation

If Madison's arts are to grow stronger, its leaders must create mechanism through which stewardship is strengthened and diversified, inclusiveness is ensured, and the arts themselves are given voice. A beginning agenda for resolving this problem includes

- √ Create an arts council to serve as a catalyst in local arts development
- √ Expand the identification of leaders and potential leaders to include people from diverse races and roles in the community
- √ Redefine the local culture of expectation training boards to perform at a higher level of stewardship
- √ Create a database or clearinghouse of past board members and interested citizens for all arts organizations to draw upon
- √ Open board committees to non-board members as a way of increasing the number of citizens with board skills
- √ Diversify those invited to become familiar with organizations as a first step in finding potential board members
- √ Conduct an arts volunteers recruitment campaign targeting young people
- √ Create a central place where all interested arts volunteers can sign up to work in the arts, get matched to the right role, get trained, and be recognized, perhaps in conjunction with volunteeryourtime.org.
- √ Get employers involved in the identification of volunteers and in providing release time for arts volunteerism
- √ Provide transportation to volunteers

Tourism and the Arts

In order to capture the full economic potential of the community's investment in the arts, Madison artists and arts organizations must serve a balance of area residents and tourists. A beginning agenda for resolving this problem includes

- √ Develop cooperative regional marketing campaigns for the arts
- √ Develop regionally marketed festivals to build audiences
- √ Target UW/Edgewood/MATC students, parents and alumni in marketing campaigns
- √ Provide printed guides to the arts in hotel rooms, restaurants, and public facilities
- √ Improve use of available arts-related websites (Portal Wisconsin etc.) and direct tourists to them
- √ Train the hospitality industry to know more about the arts in Madison
- √ Utilize the airports and buses as public art and art information sites
- √ Schedule multiple events throughout the weekend to entice tourists
- √ Conduct a campaign to secure national and regional press highlighting Madison's arts and entertainment scene
- √ Promote the essence of the arts, not just the facilities
- √ Create special discount ticket packages for tourists
- √ Target higher education professors and encourage them to bring their students as a group to local events

Media and the Arts

While some local media outlets are very supportive of the arts, both the level of discourse and the frequency of coverage must grow. A beginning agenda for resolving this problem includes

- √ More local newspaper and media coverage of the arts
- √ More profiles of local artists
- √ Utilize city cable as an opportunity for arts coverage
- √ Regular, regional media coverage on a parallel with sports coverage
- √ More substantive discourse about the arts in the media

Funding

Though Madison has many arts patrons both public and private, the overall community investment in the arts remains inadequate in comparison to the field's ongoing needs. A beginning agenda for resolving this problem includes

- √ Expending more public dollars for the arts through tax check offs, dedicated taxes
- √ Reducing the tax burdens for artists and arts organizations
- √ Creating a workplace giving campaign for the arts
- √ Creating opportunities for private financial participation in the public art program
- √ Persuading more corporations to establish corporate collections
- √ Advancing organized systems of barter between artists and providers of space and other resources
- √ Providing increased opportunities for artists to market their work in retail outlets, at festivals, and through direct sales
- √ Making grant-writing more worthwhile by increasing the size of awards and by developing common application forms among public arts agencies, area foundations, and local patrons

Festivals

Madison's many festivals remain isolated events without adequate coordination, capacity, or shared marketing. A beginning agenda for resolving this problem includes

- √ Creating festivals for fringe artists and arts organizations
- √ Establish a central entity for the coordination, scheduling, promoting, and development of community festivals
- √ Develop regional markets for more Madison festivals
- √ Use festivals as one means of diversifying local arts practice and celebration
- √ Link smaller neighborhood festivals to major, community wide events
- √ Tap into Wisconsin Department of Tourism's coop marketing resources to promote Madison festivals