

# ***Art Works: Creative Invention/Reinvention*** **A Collaborative Cultural Economic Development Plan for Greater Lansing's Urban Center**

The many unique qualities and assets of Lansing and East Lansing, when creatively combined, will significantly contribute to its economy and quality of life during the next decade. Creative thinking, smart young talent, hard-working 'get-it-made' workforce, visionary leadership, and a network of artists and cultural organizations are among existing ingredients.

This Cultural Economic Development (CED) Plan recommends the two cities, Michigan State University, and the Arts Council of Greater Lansing expand their promising collaboration and join with additional partners such as the Capital Area Transportation Authority, Lansing Community College, Leap, Inc., Capital Area Michigan Works!, and other community leaders towards this vision.

**Planning Purpose:** Lansing, East Lansing and MSU are committed to complete a cultural economic development (CED) plan for both short-term and long-term that:

- Identifies cultural assets, opportunities and needs
- Defines a manageable set of economic development goals
- Builds collaborations among multiple assets and sectors to achieve CED goals
- Physically and virtually connects Lansing, East Lansing and MSU
- Recommends action steps to develop partnerships and the cultural sector's capacity to contribute to the economy
- Build and coordinate with other existing plans

## **A Bold Vision**

The Cities of Lansing and East Lansing and region become the Midwest's most welcoming and supportive destination for creative innovators and entrepreneurs.

## **Statistical Facts**

The combined creative sector workforce in the Lansing metropolitan area constitutes a significant economic sector, over 9% of the workforce in 2006. While the overall number of workers, payroll and business establishments declined during the middle of this decade, the creative sector grew. The number of people in these creative fields declaring themselves as self-employed also grew from 13.9% to 16.6%, nearly twice the number of self-employed as in other industry sectors.

Primary return will be a change in attitude from creative entrepreneurs being seen as "people who can't keep a job" to "heroes" and the future for Greater Lansing. Developing a renewed spirit of entrepreneurialism with visibility and recognition will help retain existing small businesses, attract new investment, and encourage more additional start-up businesses, thereby increasing employment and tax revenues

## **Core Strategy**

The Plan recognizes that multiple and significant activities are already underway in Lansing and East Lansing initiated by many different players, and these efforts all contribute to cultural economic development. There is minimal need to create new programs, but rather to understand how these efforts fit together within a larger plan, and to connect existing initiatives with each other and with the creative/cultural sector.

The core strategy is to connect with existing economic, entrepreneurial, and workforce initiatives and coordinate these with the growing ranks of creative entrepreneurs, artists, creative workers, and cultural organizations.

### **Key Elements of the Cultural Economic Develop Plan**

The Cultural Economic Development Plan outlines assessment findings and details of four goals and signature initiatives. Each initiative highlights priority strategies, key outcomes, anticipated return on investment (ROI) and priority actions steps. Photographs and real-life stories within Lansing, East Lansing and MSU are placed throughout the plan.

The plan is Phase I of subsequent regional cultural economic development planning. While many assessment findings and planned strategies apply to the region, the current initiative studied and focused its recommendations on the urban center. Further planning will include the larger Greater Lansing region more explicitly. A synopsis of the key goals and signature initiatives and priority action steps follow this Executive Summary for preview.

**Partners:** This plan was created by the combined efforts of local and state agencies: the Lansing Economic Development Corporation, City of East Lansing, Michigan State University, Arts Council of Greater Lansing, Michigan State Housing Development Authority, and the Michigan Office of Cultural Economic Development.

**Builds on other plans:** This plan was developed in close partnership with the Leap, Inc. regional economic development planning (Regional Cluster Analysis Report of the Lansing Metropolitan Region; Shared Visions, Gap & Barriers Analysis, & Alternative Economic Development Strategies for the Lansing Metropolitan Region). This CED plan also builds other plans and studies including: Downtown Lansing Market Study and Strategies, MSU Cultural Engagement Council Strategic Plan, The Dollars and Sense of Cultural Economic Development: Summary Report of Michigan's Cultural Capacity, The Michigan Center for Innovation and Reinvention, City of Lansing Comprehensive Plan, City of East Lansing Big Picture, Comprehensive Plan for our Community, City of Lansing Community Cultural Plan 1998 Status Report, and Arts Council of Greater Lansing Strategic Plan.

### **Planning Consultants:**

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To obtain a copy of the full CED Plan for Greater Lansing's Urban Center, go to: [www.lansingedc.com](http://www.lansingedc.com).



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## GOALS AND SIGNATURE INITIATIVES

### **Goal 1. Lead and Coordinate Cultural Economic Development**

Due to its arts connections, the Arts Council of Greater Lansing has been identified by the consultants and the Steering Committee as the best organization to lead the cultural plan.

#### **Goal 1 Signature Initiative**

1. **Build cultural and creative sector leadership capacity** to guide implementation of the plan. This initiative will strengthen the Arts Council of Greater Lansing (ACGL) to engage strategic partnerships and to lead and represent the creative sector. Other partners include the cities of Lansing and East Lansing, Michigan State University (MSU), Lansing Community College (LCC), Greater Lansing Convention & Visitors Bureau (GLCVB), Leap, Inc., Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce (LRCC) and others.

##### *Priority Action Steps:*

- Leaders of Leap, Inc., MSU, the cities of Lansing and East Lansing, GLCVB, to determine how best to increase the ACGL's capacity to lead implementation of the CED plan with its partners.
  - The ACGL continues its strategic planning and reorganizing to respond to its CED responsibilities.
  - ACGL recruits new governing board members with economic development experience to complement its existing leadership.
  - The City of East Lansing, Lansing, MSU and others make leadership investments that increase the ACGL's capacity and inspire additional investments.
  - The ACGL continues to develop its board, fundraising, and earned revenue capacity, as outlined in its new strategic plan.
2. Invest in top priority initiatives. Short-term strategies in this plan acknowledge funders' constraints in the lingering recession and do not require much new investment.

##### *Priority Action Steps:*

- ACGL and core CED partners develop cost estimates and identify likely investors to achieve priority outcomes in the first two years of plan implementation.
  - Lead agencies identified in the plan build CED action steps into their work plans and related costs into their budgets.
  - ACGL board invites the cities of Lansing, East Lansing, MSU, Leap, Inc. and other member organizations to invest in Arts Council capacity and CED implementation.
3. Strengthen existing economic development efforts by embedding initiatives to support culture and creativity.

##### *Priority Action Steps:*

- CED Steering committee members actively look for opportunities to embed CED strategies into existing economic development initiatives and new plans

including the two cities master plans, the Capital Area Transportation Authority (CATA) study and others.

- Leap, Inc. incorporates this CED plan into the regional economic plan's goals and strategies.

4. Coordinate and expand investment in building strong cultural sector.

*Priority Action Steps:*

- ACGL provides information on its website to direct low and moderate income creative workers to existing housing assistance programs.
- The cities integrate opportunities for artists and other creative enterprises into their affordable housing development plans.
- ACGL invited to participate and provide input into CATA Transportation study.

**Goal 2. Encourage, support and invest in creative enterprises**

Lansing and East Lansing become the region's acknowledged center of knowledge, services, capital, space and recognition for creative innovators and entrepreneurs.

**Goal 2 Signature Initiative**

1. Focus existing entrepreneurial and business development strategies to meet unique needs of creative/cultural entrepreneurs.

*Priority Action Steps:*

- ACGL, Lansing and East Lansing planning and economic development agencies, MSU, LCC and Leap, Inc. convene providers of entrepreneurial assistance for a summit to present this plan. Encourage and help them understand how to best coordinate service to respond to the needs and opportunities of the growing creative sector.
- Identify entrepreneurial training and/or business development programs to partner with ACGL to develop a "pilot" program that tailors existing services to meet needs of creative entrepreneurs (a good model is Springboard for the Arts in St. Paul).
- ACGL, Leap, Inc., and Ingham County MSU Extension & Economic Development Corporation create a central web portal that directs creative entrepreneurs and artists to entrepreneurial training and other economic development resources.
- Leap, Inc. develops a network of entrepreneurial assistance providers and periodically convenes their representatives to coordinate efforts, facilitate constituent referrals and avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts.

2. Cultivate the Spirit of Creative Entrepreneurism

*Priority Action Steps:*

- ACGL works with partners such as Leap, Inc., Lansing Regional Chamber and others to establish a creative entrepreneur award, determine a process and criteria for selection.
- ACGL invites area professional associations to share in implementing these strategies and challenges at least one of the associations to initiate an arts festival.
- The Lansing Regional Chamber explores the feasibility of LansingMade branding.

3. Expand opportunities for creative businesses within existing business incubators.

*Priority Action Steps:*

- ACGL and business development providers working with creative industries in existing and new business incubators as they grow.
- ACGL provides information on its website about the availability of office space in existing and new incubators.
- ACGL and its partners work with creative sector businesses to address concerns or deficiencies in existing incubator spaces to accommodate needs of emerging creative businesses.
- The cities identify promising properties, giving priority to central Michigan Avenue sites to develop a creative entrepreneur incubator modeled after the successful Technology Innovation Center.

4. Identify source of flexible financing.

*Priority Action Steps:*

- Ingham County MSU Extension & Economic Development Corporation and Leap, Inc. survey the Ingham County list of entrepreneurial and small business assistance providers and identify existing sources of financing.
- ACGL works with existing small business lenders to provide training and assistance to artists and other creative industries to help them access existing pools of loan capital (e.g. help them navigate the loan qualification process, link to other financial coaching services to help repair credit, etc.).
- Work with existing new business loan funds and leaders of locally-based banking, finance and insurance companies to assemble a \$5M flexible financing fund for creative and innovative businesses.
- Achieve a portfolio of 20 new business loans within first two years

5. Identify and grow clusters of creative industries.

*Priority Action Steps:*

- LEDC, East Lansing, Leap, Inc. and ACGL identify which existing creative clusters should be priorities for recruiting complimentary businesses to create a critical mass i.e., printing, publishing and graphic design, motion picture/sound production and photography, libraries, archives and museums, performing arts, arts instruction, architecture and design, and fabric arts.
- The two cities economic development agencies work with ACGL and other partners to actively recruit complimentary businesses within each cluster, promoting training, facilities, business development services and knowledge resources outlined in this plan.
- The cities and higher education institutions actively recruit new graduates and creative workers who complement growing clusters of creative enterprises.

6. Grow creative workforce and help link workers with employment in creative sector.

*Priority Action Steps:*

- Work with creative sector employers to identify future workforce needs.
- Work with existing workforce development providers to tailor training and workforce development programs to build pipeline” of qualified workers.
- Expand programs like Graduate to Lansing and Linking Lansing & U, and (SCENE) Metrospace that connect students with activities, services, and job opportunities.

- Establish partnership with Lansing schools and creative sector to identify future job opportunities for current students and build curricular and/or extra-curricular activities designed to prepare students for the future.
- Work with existing youth employment service providers to create partnership with creative industries to provide summer internship/employment opportunities for youth in creative sector.
- Develop mentoring program between creative industries and schools or other youth service organizations (Boys & Girls Clubs, Junior Achievement, Scouting organizations).

### **Goal 3. Attract & Assist Workers and Businesses**

A vital, culturally-rich and creative environment attracts and retains creative workers and business owners.

#### **Goal 3 Signature Initiative**

1. Coordinate efforts to recruit and retain creative workforce.

##### *Priority Action Steps:*

- ACGL helps to coordinate a resource guide and conducts an informational tour/orientation for human resources managers responsible for recruitment and retention of high-skilled workers and executives so they can better promote existing cultural assets of the Greater Lansing area.
- Economic Development agencies, Leap, Inc., MSU, Lansing Regional Chamber, GLCVB and others develop coordinated strategy to recruit and retain creative workforce that include highlighting existing cultural opportunities.
- Partners integrate consistent recruitment messages into literature, web sites, tours and other promotional materials.

2. Focus efforts on retaining graduates

##### *Priority Action Steps:*

- The City of Lansing expands “Graduate to Lansing and Linking Lansing & U initiatives to retain students in the Lansing area.
- MSU, Cooley Law School, and LCC partner with Lansing Regional Chamber, Leap, Inc., and local businesses to provide increased opportunities to link creative students to local businesses through internships, mentoring, on-campus presentations by local businesses and other opportunities to expose graduates to potential employers in the Greater Lansing region.
- Educational institutions partner with ACGL and other cultural organizations to provide opportunities for students to become aware of the cultural opportunities in Greater Lansing after graduation. May include providing space on campus for local arts organizations to present their work as a recruitment tool for future audience and performers/participants.

3. Improve marketing and coordination of cultural organizations and events

##### *Priority Action Steps:*

- ACGL works with its nonprofit members to consolidate mailing lists into a single marketing resource (as done by ArtsBoston’s “Big List”).
- The Greater Lansing Festival Alliance organizes to develop a planning calendar to coordinate scheduling, branding and marketing.

4. Create a central events calendar and ticketing system.

*Priority Action Steps:*

- ACGL convenes organizations that host existing calendars to determine how to consolidate and link calendars to create an easily accessible arts and entertainment guide (good example is Philadelphia Cultural Alliance's PhillyFunGuide).
- ACGL and GLCVB create an online ticketing system.

5. Develop cultural facilities.

*Priority Action Steps:*

- MSU and East Lansing implement their plans to develop the Broad Museum and City Center II and encourages development of complementary nonprofit and commercial cultural and entertainment near the Broad Museum.

**Goal 4. Enhance the Value of Place**

Residents are proud and others attracted as Greater Lansing's urban center becomes a geographically integrated arts, entertainment, and knowledge economy, and a business destination.

**Goal 4 Signature Initiative: Develop the Michigan Avenue Corridor for Creative Business and Arts** at a central location between the two cities as part of a vital business node. A new center might incorporate one or more existing incubators and will include and incubator/studio facility with business services, training, and consulting that cross arts, technology and business innovation. It will strengthen the connections between Lansing, East Lansing, MSU, LCC and other creative nodes. This center could house some existing MSU and LCC faculty and research projects. Partners could include the Michigan Avenue Corridor Improvement Authority, CATA, Capital Area Michigan Works and others.

1. Build and connect clusters of cultural attractions and creative activity

*Priority Action Steps:*

- MSU and ACGL map arts and entertainment attractions.
- Encourage interactive websites and social media like "My Michigan Avenue" to identify and attract people to centers of activity.
- CATA and events producers promote events and activity nodes and encourage public transportation.

2. Further improve the cultural opportunities and amenities along the river trail landscape, walking/biking paths

*Priority Action Steps:*

- Festival Alliance examines scheduling, locations and branding of events to maximize and encourage use of river trail and other pathways.
- Comprehensive transit and public space maps are posted publicly and online, linked to municipal and civic organizations.

3. Better connect the two downtowns and expand business activity along the Michigan/Grand River Avenue corridor.

*Priority Action Steps:*

- Michigan Avenue Corridor Improvement Authority actively supports and develops infrastructure, zoning and other development policies friendly to retail, small business service, residential, and live/work space.
- The two cities continue to develop the Michigan Avenue corridor, infilling gaps in the corridor.
- Encourage the use of the “My Michigan Avenue” initiative.

4. Simplify way-finding

*Priority Action Steps:*

- CATA and ACGL work to create an aesthetically integrated system of maps, web sites, signs and promotions that direct riders to cultural attractions and patrons to public transportation. See the Syracuse connective corridor for a good example at [www.connectivecorridor.syr.edu](http://www.connectivecorridor.syr.edu).
- The two cities and MSU identify and promote walk able nodes where people can walk among cultural attractions, shopping, dining, trails, etc. The two cities continue to enhance physical infrastructure through streetscape, biking/walking. Create an integrated sign and way-finding systems to direct people to cultural attractions. For example: Way-finding Worcester: Finding Your Way is a public-private partnership between the City of Worcester and its business, higher education and cultural communities. The Worcester Way-finding Project is intended to develop a way-finding system including signage, destination identifiers and information kiosks capable of guiding Worcester visitors to their designations while give them the sense of Worcester's rich cultural history and future.
- The City of Lansing enhances signage and street patterns to connect to Old Town with downtown and East Lansing.

5. Implement strategic public art program

*Priority Action Steps:*

- The City of Lansing seeks to enact and secure funding to install art in public places including the Capital City International Airport and Lansing Center.
- The cities seek opportunities to mitigate eyesores like the highway overpasses with Overpasses public art.
- CATA integrates public art into the design of future transit stations.

6. Further connect rapid transit to regional arts and cultural amenities and increase the aesthetic experience to encourage ridership.

*Priority Action Steps:*

- ACGL communicates this plan's endorsement of rapid transit to planners of the MI/Grand River Transportation Study.
- CED Steering Committee members testify at Transportation Study focus groups and hearings.