

MASTER PLAN FOR ARTS AND CULTURE by Jake McIntire

On February 28, 2017 Ogden City Council voted unanimously to adopt a Master Plan for Arts and Culture. If you are like most people, you likely have no idea what this means. For this week's Arts Spotlight I'm going to tell you about the Master Plan for Arts and Culture including what it is, how it was created, and what it will do for the future of the arts in Ogden.

Essentially, Ogden's newly adopted Master Plan for Arts and Culture is a roadmap that Ogden City and the community can use to shape arts and culture activities for the next 10-15 years. It is not a list of projects, but rather a guide to aid the arts and culture community in moving forward together.

You can read the Master Plan for Arts and Culture here:

<http://www.ogdencity.com/DocumentCenter/Home/View/2708>

Within the document, you will find a section called Goals, Objectives, and Strategies. This is the central focus, and provides direction for establishing a stronger and more vibrant arts and culture community in Ogden. There are too many goals, objectives, and strategies to write all of them here, so I will tell you about a few of my favorites.

Objective 1.1 – Creative Job Creation: I believe that one of the biggest opportunities we, as a community, should build on is the development of more creative sector jobs in Ogden. As we have more people employed in creative sector jobs, more creative sector businesses starting, and more creative companies relocating here, I believe we will see a drastic increase in the quantity and quality of art in Ogden. These increases will also help to attract more funding for the arts within and outside of our community. This is about realizing that art is not just about beauty and aesthetics, it can also play a vital role in economic development.

Objective 3.2 – Education: As an educator, I believe strongly that providing arts education throughout people's lives is crucial to building a vibrant arts and culture community. For me, arts education includes infusing art into traditional education (K-12 and college-level), but it is not limited to that. There are many community members who want to learn or hone their artistic skills or have interest in learning how to gain more from the art experiences they participate in. Additionally, I think there is a great opportunity to provide education and professional development to established working artists to make them more successful. Arts education is truly needed at all levels.

Objective 4.2 – Support Physical Infrastructure and Gathering Places: As the Master Plan for Arts and Culture was developed, one of the most consistent points of feedback was that artists and community members desired more creative spaces to work, visit, and hangout. If you don't already know, Ogden City and several community partners are working to establish a Creative District. Within and around this Creative District are several new creative workspaces, galleries, venues, and events with many more in the works.

From the day this process was started (nearly two years ago) the team leading it had public values at the forefront of their mind. It was often said, “we are not creating a project-based plan, we are creating a value-based plan.” To me this distinction is crucial. Coming up with a list of projects is rather easy, but understanding our community’s values is far more complex and, in my mind, meaningful. To understand community value, the community must have opportunity for input. Throughout the process, Ogden Arts held 17 different public input opportunities. These ranged from public surveys, large public meetings, focus groups, and intimate conversations.

It is important to note that even though this document has been completed and adopted, the ear of Ogden Arts is still open! You can connect with Ogden Arts via email at arts@ogdencity.com and you can find out new things happening at ogdencity.com/arts.

The creation and adoption of the Master Plan for Arts and culture is a massive step forward for our city. It is concrete evidence and demonstration that Ogden City cares deeply about the arts, and understands the broad value of creativity. Beyond that, it gives direction to us as artists, arts organizations, and arts advocates so we know our collective efforts and resources are working together. Perhaps most importantly, this plan gives us the structure and framework to become significantly more competitive for arts funding. While it may take time for all of the benefits of this plan to be realized, its creation and adoption just catapulted us forward in a major way!

When you go to the ogdencity.com/arts website to check out the Master Plan for Arts and Culture, you should also look at their newly developed Local Artist Database, where artists can add themselves to a growing list of local creative talent. This makes finding and connecting with artists far easier (a major need identified during public input).

Lastly, be sure to mark your calendars for the MOMENTS art event on May 5th. This event will be a one-night art exhibition in downtown Ogden that showcases art which has light, sound, or time as its central theme. The event will be happening in conjunction with First Friday Art Stroll where you can visit all our amazing galleries and get the full picture of how great our local creative scene is.