



LENEXA ARTS COUNCIL

Strategic Plan - 2019

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Introduction

In 2019, the Lenexa Arts Council (LAC) voted to undergo a strategic plan evaluation of its mission statement and the programming needs of community stakeholders. The Arts Council discussed the possibility of working with a professional in the field of strategic planning but decided to develop the strategic plan in an extended, special meeting of the Arts Council and then evaluate its effectiveness.

A questionnaire was developed and patrons attending Arts Council events were asked to fill out the questionnaire in person or to go on-line and respond. In addition, the Arts Council members used the questionnaire during several weeks at the Lenexa Farmers Market.

The responses were collected and presented to the Arts Council before its strategic planning meeting. The charge for the Council was as follows:

- Evaluate the current mission statement to see if it is relevant to the current programming of the Arts Council
- Evaluate existing programs to see if they are meeting the needs of resident stakeholders
- Evaluate the unmet needs of the resident stakeholder to see if any programs should be added to the programming
- Evaluate programs that were not well-attended and the reasons given for non-attendance to see if they need to be revised or removed from programming

The result is the Strategic Plan of the Lenexa Arts Council presented to the Governing Body. The Arts Council wishes to thank Susanne Neely for coordinating the survey results and all Lenexa and area residents who responded to the survey. The Lenexa Arts Council feels that this plan provides a vision for the future to meet the needs of patrons in the coming years.

Lenexa Arts Council

Emily Behrmann (chair), Dale Trott (vice-chair), Jess Collins, Wayne Dothage, Cheryl Kimmi, Rob Robinson, Judy Tuckness, Jennifer Wampler, Claire Ward

Public Art



VISION: Provide quality public art to celebrate Lenexa’s history and future, to be enjoyed by current and future residents.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: Lenexa has been amassing its public art collection since the early 1980s, and the city currently has more than 20 two-dimensional and three-dimensional pieces.

On February 19, 2013, the public art master plan was presented to the City Council and accepted.

https://www.lenexa.com/Assets/departments/parks/pdfs/public_art_master_plan.pdf

Since then, public art pieces, “Frenzied Flight” by Robin Richerson was installed in Central Green in 2015 and “Amusing Breeze” by Chris Duh was installed in Sar-Ko-Par Trails Park in 2016.

Also in 2016, with construction of the new Lenexa Civic Campus at City Center, the City engaged Steven Boody, of Public Art & Practice, to develop a public art master plan for the rapidly growing City Center, with particular focus on the new civic campus, which includes City Hall, Rec Center, Public Market, Johnson County Library and parking garage. The city appointed a

Public Art Committee (PAC) comprised of the project architect, members of the Lenexa Arts Council, the Lenexa Planning Commission, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and City staff, who worked with public art consultants to create a public art master plan for City Center.

The PAC selected two public art pieces that were installed on the Civic Campus: “Body Politic” by Joe O’Connell, installed between the Recreation Center and parking garage in the summer of 2018 and “Splash,” by Shan Shan Sheng, installed inside the Recreation Center in December 2018.

WHAT DOES YOUR COMMITTEE SEE AS THE MASTER PLAN FOR THE NEXT 1-3 YEARS?

- The LAC is focusing on a long-range plan to guide public art acquisitions and installations throughout the city, including a signature piece, or pieces, for gateway areas within the community.
- The LAC plans to obtain community input by adding questions to the survey that will be conducted as part of the Parks master planning process. Input may provide guidance on priority art placement and other arts programming. Following the survey, the LAC intends to follow up to obtain more in-depth input through community engagement efforts, similar to the PAC process that was developed by the consultant for the civic campus. This will also allow us to create community buy-in.
- When possible, the LAC plans to incorporate art into public projects such as parks and roads. The LAC will consider the Old Town Study, Community Center Study, Complete Streets, and the proposed Public Safety complex plans. The LAC will also coordinate with city engineering staff for road/bridge project opportunities and parks & recreation for art opportunities in public parks.
- The LAC plans to explore a public art sculpture for Old Town (in particular, a piece depicting historical figure, Jim Brown, champion bricklayer). The LAC plans to coordinate with Old Town construction, including the Senior Center renovation project. Additional discussion with staff and the Governing Body will occur
- The LAC also plans to continue looking for viable locations for existing public art pieces that are currently in storage.

Lenexa City Center Gallery



VISION: The goal for the Lenexa Arts Council is to organize art exhibits in the Lenexa City Hall Art Gallery. This will provide the opportunity for artists to advance their creative ideals and inspirations by displaying their work in a public venue.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: The Lenexa Arts Council hosts monthly invitational exhibitions and receptions with selected local artists/group collectives and educational institutions. The Lenexa City Center Gallery has three architecturally designed exhibit spaces for 2D and 3D art. These spaces are the Lobby on the main floor, the second main floor space on the east side of the central staircase and the second floor gallery wall, located outside the City offices. The Gallery hosts annual juried shows with local art experts acting as judges of the submitted artworks. The judges select which pieces are to be shown and select the prize winners: The prizes that are awarded are funded from the LAC annual budget. The prizes are then awarded at a special ceremony, hosted by the LAC.

WHAT DOES YOUR COMMITTEE SEE AS THE MASTER PLAN FOR THE NEXT 1-3 YEARS?

- Engage and improve the quality of life, and educate the community through the promotion of public art exhibitions.
- Showcase invitational exhibitions with selected artists invited to exhibit.

- Enable resident and local artists to gain stature and attract a following through our gallery shows by promoting their work in solo and group shows.
- Host monthly art exhibitions and receptions in the new Civic Center.

Music



VISION: All Lenexa residents will have multiple opportunities to listen to and/or participate in a variety of genres of live music.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: Music has always been a part of the arts in Lenexa and supported by the Lenexa Arts Council. Historically, the Arts Council has funded live music performances at city festivals such as the Spinach Festival, Lenexa Art Fair, Chili Challenge and others. In 2015 the Arts Council reintroduced an outdoor performance series continuing a series that the Lenexa Arts Council supported nearly 15 years ago.

WHAT DOES YOUR COMMITTEE SEE AS THE MASTER PLAN FOR THE NEXT 1-3 YEARS?

Over the next three years (2020-2023) the Music Committee plans to maintain and grow, where necessary, the quality of existing programs. The ultimate goal is to provide the highest quality music experiences in a variety of genres.

Current programs

- Summer concert series – Maintain series in its current form.
- Music sponsorship for festivals. Maintain the level of funding and quality of existing music sponsorships.
- Lenexa Community Orchestra – Founded in 2017, the LCO performs three concerts each summer in June, July and August. The orchestra is conducted by a professional conductor, all players are volunteers and have the option to participate in as few as one or as many as all three concerts. Though initially the plan was to have all concerts

outdoors at the festival plaza on the Lenexa civic campus, the nature of symphonic music and its instruments as well as the harsh and unpredictable weather, all concerts now take place at Community Covenant Church.

- Additional Music performances are either under other strategic initiatives, such as City Center Live (a cooperative program with the Johnson County Library), or are engaged by other departments of the City of Lenexa (live music in the Public Market and Farmers Market.)

Performing Arts



VISION: Our vision is to promote live theatre experiences in Lenexa

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: Theatre Hike of Chicago has been well received by the Lenexa community for five years. In 2019 this experience was offered to a local high school theatre group, Shawnee Mission Northwest Repertory Theatre Class. Considered to be very successful, this will be a good format to continue.

WHAT DOES YOUR COMMITTEE SEE AS THE MASTER PLAN FOR THE NEXT 1-3 YEARS?

The objective is to continue to offer opportunities for community experiences with theater

- Explore how we can offer theatrical opportunities to other schools in our community
- Support other theater experiences in our community.
- Promote field trips to live theatrical events.
- LAC should continue to co-host with the Johnson County Library and host City Center Live with theater opportunities
- Support children's theater experiences with the Lenexa Parks and Recreation Department. Currently, the city works with Missoula Children's Theatre.

City Center Live



VISION: The vision of the City Center Live program is to leverage the combined resources of the City of Lenexa and the Johnson County Library to produce a series of varied performing arts experiences for our residents and patrons. These performances will range from music, to dance, to theater, to poetry and will be performed at venues within the City Center Campus such as the Community Forum and the outdoor stage in the Community Plaza.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: The program was conceived in 2018 when it was recognized that the Community Forum would be an excellent venue for several performances during the colder, winter months. The Johnson County Library (JCL) had a similar program at the Johnson County Arts & Heritage Center. However, that venue became problematic due to staffing issues in late 2018, and the Arts Council was asked if we would provide a venue for that performing arts series. It turned out that the JCL series provided a test of what the combined program would look like. After the City developed a logo and branded the new series “City Center Live” the joint program kicked off in January 2019. In 2019 there were eight performances (one was cancelled due to inclement weather) ranging from folk, jazz, big band and country music, to a

one-man play on Shakespeare, and a performance by Actor's Choice. Attendance at the performances ranged widely from 30 to over 200.

The joint program is conditioned on participation by the Johnson County Library but is expected to continue with or without the library, albeit with a somewhat reduced performance schedule. Currently the Arts Council alternates with the Library to cover the fees for the performers.

WHAT DOES YOUR COMMITTEE SEE AS THE MASTER PLAN FOR THE NEXT 1-3 YEARS?

The City Center Live Committee will seek to grow our audiences for our performances over the next 3 years through marketing and word-of-mouth. We will continue to seek unique experiences in all of the performing arts to reach the varied Lenexa and Johnson County Library residents and patrons, respectively.

Literary Arts



VISION: Our vision is to promote, education and proliferate the Literary Arts in Lenexa

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: During the past few years, our flagship literary program offering has been the “Sunflower Poetry Slam and Open Mic.” It has evolved over time, but we have settled into a routine of holding the events in the City Center Community Forum on Thursday’s once a month. The events, hosted by Poet Jen Harris, regularly draws about 20 people with about 6 people typically competing for the \$50 prize. Beginning in 2020, the event is changing to an open mic format only in an effort to attract more people to participate.

WHAT DOES YOUR COMMITTEE SEE AS THE MASTER PLAN FOR THE NEXT 1-3 YEARS?

This continues to be a new area for the LAC and it is the intent to focus on solidifying and growing the slams before taking on new efforts. The objective over the next few years is to explore the subject by implementing a variety of low-cost highly visible programs consistent with the vision and measure the community’s reception to it. Those that are popular will be invested in and expanded upon. Those that aren’t will be curtailed prior to any larger investment. Initial activities will include but not be exclusive to:

- Initiate relationships with the Writer’s Place, public libraries and other organizations to see how we can complement their ongoing activities in this area.
- Study how we can better support Lenexa residents who are emerging authors and professional writers.