



# **Cultural Master Plan**

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# **Realize Bradenton Cultural Master Plan**

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## Introduction

Cultural planning asks the question, “*how and why do the arts, culture and heritage matter to a community?*” For Bradenton, planning begins with many assets and answers already. The city is blessed with cultural amenities that might be expected of a city twice its size, at least. These include the recently upgraded South Florida Museum, the nationally recognized Manatee Players community theatre, ArtCenter Manatee, which offers classes and exhibits, the Village of the Arts, and many historical sites and building. Cultural assets, such as these, contribute to Bradenton’s unique identity and sense of place, quality of life and economic prosperity.

The arts, culture and heritage have a significant economic impact by generating spending, jobs and tax revenues, and as an attraction for tourism, businesses and the talented workforce they need to thrive. Americans for the Arts conducted an economic study of Manatee County for Realize Bradenton, which found that the nonprofit arts, culture and heritage sector generates \$29.5 million in local economic activity, supports 441 full-time equivalent jobs, generates \$9.2 million in household income to local residents, and delivers \$1.9 million in local and state government revenue<sup>1</sup>. *We need to get people to grasp how to use arts as an economic engine. “ It will improve neighborhoods and attract quality businesses. From an economic development standpoint – people will go where they want to live, companies will start up where their employees want to live. Arts and culture play a big role in the quality of life that is sought<sup>2</sup>. ”*

The Realize Bradenton Cultural Master Plan process was inspired, initially, by the opportunity for particular impact on a crucial priority for the City -- downtown revitalization. After the 2007 Downtown by Design planning process, surfaced ideas for how the arts can impact downtown vitality, the Bradenton Culture and Business Alliance and the Knight Foundation recommended merging downtown revitalization and cultural development strategies. Realize Bradenton was launched in May, 2008 to engage citizens, leaders and cultural stakeholders in a comprehensive planning effort to develop strategies for future cultural development to benefit downtown, as well as other facets of the community.

For Realize Bradenton, our definition of culture is fairly broad, encompassing professional and informal arts and cultural activity of individual creators, nonprofit organizations and cultural businesses such as galleries, arts education

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<sup>1</sup> *Arts and Economic Prosperity III, The economic impact of nonprofit arts and cultural organizations and their audiences*; a study conducted for FY 2005, by Americans for the Arts in 156 communities and regions representing all 50 states. Findings Purposely include total expenditures of \$ 63.1 billion; 2.6 million jobs; \$ 2.8 billion in local government revenue and \$ 6.9 billion in federal income tax revenue; [www.AmericansForTheArts.org](http://www.AmericansForTheArts.org)

<sup>2</sup> Emblematic quote from a key interview participant

and youth arts, libraries and heritage – all examples of how creativity reflects and amplifies the unique history, character and authentic identity of Bradenton.

An example of the spirit of collaboration that energized Realize Bradenton was the integration of the history and heritage sector into the planning process – the “big five” cultural organizations – Manatee Players, the South Florida Museum, ArtCenter Manatee, the Village of the Arts, and the Arts Council of Manatee County -- became the “big six,” with the addition of Manatee Village Historic Park and related heritage venues. Participants acknowledged the important role of heritage and history sites, festivals and exhibits in reinforcing a sense of place and identity, serving as a repository of a community’s local memory, provoking new ways of thinking, providing ways for local residents to get involved in their communities, offering lifelong learning opportunities, and contributing to the local economy by attracting new businesses, residents and visitors. History and heritage are part and parcel of culture and its potential to vitalize communities.

Bradenton is in a region, needless to say – and its creators, cultural organizations, events, venues, audiences and funding are part of a regional cultural ecosystem with myriad interdependencies. And yet, the charge to this planning effort was, appropriately, to begin with Bradenton and the cultural development opportunities and strategies with the most potential for impact close at hand. One of the main goals of Realize Bradenton is to establish Bradenton’s ideal “niche” within the region and its cultural ecosystem – building upon its unique strengths and assets to reinforce an authentic community identity as friendly, affordable, informal – and vital. In the Plan, regional ramifications are posited where they are most immediately relevant, such as in marketing and resource development.

One of the most difficult challenges during this planning process was the task of assessing the roles and viability – past and future – of the Arts Council of Manatee County. There is a strong belief, in Bradenton and nationally, in the critical leadership role a local arts agency can play in cultural development in which collaboration is essential to maximize impact: providing information to the public, leaders and cultural stakeholders; joint marketing and PR; creating policy and advocating for it; brokering partnerships; developing and allocating resources; and building capacity--all of the support systems that help make it possible for artists and cultural organizations to provide their programs and benefits to the public. Needless to say, strong, collaborative leadership from an “umbrella” organization, such as the Arts Council, is also critical for Realize Bradenton implementation.

It is important to credit the good work done by the Arts Council of Manatee County with limited resources: arts education and youth programming; acting as an information and networking hub for smaller cultural organizations; placing art exhibits in businesses; supporting the Village of the Arts. But it is also

important to note that the overwhelming sentiment expressed during planning meetings and interviews is that the Arts Council needs new and broader based board and staff leadership in order to focus its efforts on the critical areas outlined above, in becoming a strong “umbrella” cultural organization that is needed for Realize Bradenton implementation, and robust cultural development in the years to come. Each chapter of this Cultural Master Plan addresses the ideal role of a reinvigorated Arts Council in addressing its topical area.

### **The Realize Bradenton Cultural Master Plan Process**

This was a comprehensive planning effort, involving detailed research and robust community engagement – over 1,500 citizens participated, directly. A consultant team, led by Bill Bulick of Creative Planning, Inc. and including cultural market research specialist, Surale Phillips of Decision Support Partners and public art expert, Gretchen Freeman, facilitated the following planning elements, in a time frame from April, 2008 through March, 2009:

- Extensive and ongoing review of background materials and data on Bradenton, the region and its cultural sector.
- 19 key interviews and 18 focus groups with key civic, cultural and community leaders reaching well over 100 participants (listed in Appendix).
- Three well advertised, open public forums with almost 100 attending.
- Community surveying: a total of 1,231 residents filled out the survey.
- Five research components supported this Plan. Each is referenced throughout the text and included as Appendices to the Plan:
  - Market Research: a geo-demographic analysis of the regional market and an analysis of the audiences of the five major cultural institutions.
  - Community Survey: a survey that collected and analyzed interest, priorities, and opinions of residents in Bradenton and Manatee County with regard to arts, culture and heritage opportunities.
  - An Organizational Capacity Study: board and staff members of the five major cultural institutions self assessed their organizations’ effectiveness in management domains such as marketing, fund-raising, planning and governance, as well as their individual and collective capacity to lead plan implementation efforts.
  - Comparable cities/programs study: cultural programs and strategies in nine cities offering interesting/compelling models

were examined period cities included Chattanooga, Pawtucket/Providence, Asheville, NC, Tallahassee, Santa Cruz.

- Arts and Economic Prosperity Study, by Americans for the Arts: an analysis of the economic impact of nonprofit arts and culture organizations and their audiences, referenced above and in the Support Chapter.
- Critical dialogue and consensus building with advisory groups:
  - The Realize Bradenton Steering Committee, a diverse group of 34 civic and cultural leaders, who met regularly to review research and community input, and put shape to, and ultimately, approve the Cultural Master Plan.
  - A small Working Group of Steering Committee members, and the Downtown Development Authority staff that supported the planning process, who met regularly to address planning process issues – who to interview, where to hold community meetings, how to maximize participation.
  - Task Forces: six groups, made up of Steering Committee members, cultural professionals, civic leaders, artists and community members met 4-6 times during November and early December, 2008 to review findings from research and public engagement and develop strategies to address the six priority opportunities of planning, which became the topical chapters of the Plan: Downtown Cultural Vitality; Support for Individual Artists and the Village of the Arts; Marketing, Access and Collaborations; Public Art; Arts Education and Youth Arts; Support and Capacity Building.
- Development of a Draft Cultural Master Plan, reviewed by the Steering Committee, Task Forces and in a public meeting.
- Presentation of the final Realize Bradenton Cultural Master Plan to the community.

Throughout this ten-month planning process, participation, collaboration, enthusiasm and commitment has been extraordinary. The result is a Plan that leaders are rallying around to produce some early implementation successes and maintain momentum.

### **The Realize Bradenton Cultural Master Plan Document**

The document is comprised of an executive summary, introduction, topical chapters, a section on implementation first steps, and appendices.

- The Introduction describes how and why planning occurred, provides some community context based on research and includes the Vision Statement developed by the Steering Committee.
- Six topical chapters address the top priority opportunities for cultural development, based on the excellent work of the Task Forces. An introduction and situation analysis is followed by recommended strategies, listed in priority order. The six chapters contain 66 recommended strategies, grouped under over-arching recommendations.
- Each strategy includes suggestions for lead and partner implementers, resources, first steps, outcomes and benefits. Three possible time frames for implementation are suggested: Immediate/Near-Term; 1-4 Years; Long-Term, 4 - 10 Years. Models are provided when appropriate. Not all implementers named in this document have been asked formerly for their help. It is hoped that they will join the “community of implementers,” and make suggestions for other implementers, as well.
- The Implementation First Steps Chapter suggests the initial work in coalescing and focusing leadership towards implementation, communicating the Plan to the community, gaining support and maintaining momentum with early successes.
- Direct quotes, from key interviews, focus groups and meetings, are cited *in italic*, when they are emblematic of the prevailing opinions expressed during planning.
- The Appendices provide lists of Plan participants, summaries of the Research Studies, and background information about the consultant team.

The Realize Bradenton Cultural Master Plan presents a big picture overview of cultural resources, challenges, opportunities and strategies – it is a master plan. In some cases, recommendations are concrete and specific, in others more planning and assessment is called for, because more time and broader input are needed. It is important to consider this a living document whose vision and directions will embolden leaders to respond to new challenges and opportunities, as they arise.

### **Realize Bradenton Cultural Master Plan Vision**

During its first two meetings, in June and July of 2008, the Realize Bradenton Steering Committee identified the following elements of a Vision for Cultural Development, over a 10-year time frame. The inspiring and optimistic spirit of this Vision reflects the tone of the planning process.

In 2018, as a result of the Realize Bradenton Cultural Master Plan:

- Downtown and the Riverfront is a vibrant, walkable setting with housing, retail, restaurants and a rich array of cultural amenities and activities - a vital, creative and economic hub – open 24/7.
- Arts, culture and creativity have a significant and demonstrable impact on Bradenton’s economy that is well understood in the community.
- Downtown transportation enhancements improve mobility among cultural sites and other amenities.
- Bradenton hosts an active and diverse range of arts and cultural activities appealing to all ages, ethnicities and income levels and adding to its high quality of life.
- Artists can live and work affordably in Bradenton and contribute to its vitality and prosperity.
- Bradenton has a robust public art program with sculptures, murals, and other art works integrated with streetscaping and public spaces that reflect and contribute to its unique identity and sense of place.
- Bradenton preserves and enhances historic buildings and sites that reflect its heritage.
- Bradenton has adequate indoor and outdoor facilities that complement the regional mix and enable residents and visitors to experience the full range of artistic expression.
- Bradenton’s arts and culture organizations are connected organizationally and physically - through multifaceted collaborations and transportation links.
- Bradenton arts and cultural organizations and activities are sustained through a balanced mix of earned income, public and private support.

### **Community and Regional Context**

One of the goals of the first round of research was to establish community context, through inquiries about the history of the region, the issues that are shaping Bradenton and leadership dynamics – “what is unique and special about Bradenton – and how do things get done here?” This is what we heard:

#### **Bradenton’s character and identity encompasses:**

- Location – Florida climate and geography, proximity to Gulf of Mexico, Manatee River, access to water and eco parks throughout community – commitment of to preserve the natural history of Florida.

- Proximity to Sarasota, Tampa, St. Petersburg, cultural and sports facilities. *“I can go to professional sports, Ringling, performing arts – all within an hour’s drive. All the benefits of an urban setting without the traffic, crime, etc.” “There is no need to replicate these amenities. It would be competing at a disadvantage.”*<sup>3</sup>
- Quality of life, lack of congestion, small town feel.
- Friendliness of residents, warm and comfortable community; people know each other. *“Personality is small town, gracious.”*<sup>4</sup> People who have moved away say they just miss Bradenton and want to come back.
- Midwestern roots of many residents. *“ A lot of folks from the Midwest. How do we retain those values?”*<sup>5</sup>
- Heritage as an agricultural, commercial and government center, with many historic sites, buildings and neighborhoods.
- Affordable in comparison to Sarasota, St. Petersburg.
- Bradenton has a “drive through” feel currently; it doesn’t feel like a destination.

Critical community issues:

- Economy: the current slump; housing/ mortgage crisis hits Florida particularly hard; the economy is over reliant on housing/ development. The economy lacks diversity therefore is prone to boom and bust cycles. *“The economy is not great, but will recover. Have a great location, a lot to offer. Baby Boomers will be retiring. This is our opportunity to get ready for the next boom. We needed the real estate market correction.”*<sup>6</sup>
- Growth has led to change, particularly in North County and Lakewood Ranch. People are more spread out. 230,000 of the 355,000 residents of Manatee County live in unincorporated areas; 40,000 in Lakewood Ranch, which is not incorporated yet. Many new and higher income people are going to those communities. Companies are going there, too – with good salaries, expansion of the tax base and growing interest in the arts and culture resulting.
- *“Manatee County is a bastion of sprawl.”*<sup>7</sup> County unincorporated areas have suburban development guidelines. There have been few incentives to redevelop properties that need to be or could be, and land has been relatively inexpensive; this favors new construction. The County now

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<sup>3</sup> Emblematic quote from a key interview or focus group participant.

<sup>4</sup> Emblematic quote from a key interview or focus group participant.

<sup>5</sup> Emblematic quote from a key interview or focus group participant.

<sup>6</sup> Emblematic quote from a key interview or focus group participant.

<sup>7</sup> Emblematic quote from a key interview or focus group participant.

appears to be more interested in denser, mixed-use development, oriented to transit options and existing infrastructure. There is high value land in Bradenton that should attract this denser development.

- Anti-growth sentiment exists: *"We've gotten away from what's best for community. Just want to carve it up to make money - putting high rises on the river, big developments, trying to manipulate the political process. Because the recession has slowed it, we have another shot to get it right."*<sup>8</sup>
- There is strong interest in revitalizing downtown Bradenton as a commercial, retail, governmental, residential and cultural hub - as envisioned by the *Downtown by Design* study. But there is a perception that the community is stuck and development is stalled. What will catalyze forward movement? More housing, restaurants, retail or cultural amenities? The city is currently working on its Comprehensive Plan to incorporate new regulations and tools to facilitate the implementation of *Downtown by Design*.
- Crime: there is a perception that areas of downtown, including the Village, are unsafe, though many asserted that this is not true. The perception may be keeping some people away, whether it is true or not.
- There is considerable chaos and conflict around state and local government taxing authority, stemming from Amendment One *"The State and local governments need to reconsider tax base reform. They are too dependent on real estate market for their tax bases."*<sup>9</sup>
- The region's population is aging - it is challenging to attract and retain younger people to the region and its work force - including doctors, for one of the region's most important economic sectors - health and wellness.
- There is growing interest in developing more "green" and sustainable economic options and lifestyles, as well as stewarding natural resources, landscapes and wildlife.
- The Economic Development Council of the Chamber targets bringing in wealth from outside, concentrating on companies that have high growth potential. These companies have a hard time attracting and keeping employees. More companies are looking for creative talent that thinks outside of the box. Some have begun to work with institutions like Ringling College of Art and Design. Cities around the world are finding that cultural amenities, sense of place and "creative buzz" are crucial to attracting highly skilled talent and enterprise.

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<sup>8</sup> Emblematic quote from a key interview or focus group participant.

<sup>9</sup> Emblematic quote from a key interview or focus group participant.

- Tourism: *“People come for the climate and beaches. If there are arts and cultural opportunities, it will extend their stays and leave more revenue in the county.”* By attracting out of town visitors who spend significant dollars whilst in the area this achieves two things. Firstly it helps to stabilize downtown businesses and more importantly identifies the establishment of Bradenton as a major center to be visited.”<sup>10</sup>

### Leadership dynamics: how things get done

- There is a strong spirit of volunteerism in the region and it is important in civic affairs and community development. Leadership Manatee has one of the largest memberships in the country for organizations of its type. *“Most people live and work here which gives you better buy in. In other communities the powerful players live somewhere else”*<sup>11</sup>.
- *The City power center has been West Bradenton – wealth, and professional (medical) classes. Bradenton County Club was the nexus. When they adopted a project, it was successful. Now a lot of wealth is moving into Lakewood Ranch*<sup>12</sup>.
- There was a core group of influential people, “the old guard” families - whose influence is waning. Now the three main groups are: The Chamber of Commerce, the City Council and County Commission; they drive change.
- Many said that the City of Bradenton has been leading on planning issues. *“Reorientation towards urban centers, mixed-use, green space is something that started in the City of Bradenton.”*<sup>13</sup> The City’s three Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRAs) were also applauded for their leadership and investment.
- Neighborhood organizations are encouraged by the city, but they do not have a formal role or support and they are not organized in a coalition. Their issues tend to focus on crime, traffic, parking and code enforcement. There have been some successes from neighborhoods that want to make things happen like Better Manatee Day, Keep Manatee Beautiful, Key Club and organizing volunteers.
- Kiwanis has been major sponsor of private initiatives; many of which have also had public support, such as the Civic Center.
- Some said there is not much innovative sentiment here; not much thinking out of the box. *“People are very content to have things stay the same, to go along*

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<sup>10</sup> Emblematic quote from a key interview or focus group participant.

<sup>11</sup> Emblematic quote from a key interview or focus group participant.

<sup>12</sup> Emblematic quote from a key interview or focus group participant.

<sup>13</sup> Emblematic quote from a key interview or focus group participant.

*with how it's been. They may not have a pre-disposition to value culture based on Midwestern roots.”<sup>14</sup>*

- Many efforts to tax for civic improvements have failed. Interviewees said they failed due to lack of consensus among elected officials and voter resistance. *“Voters don’t want change. We talk the talk, but we don’t walk the walk.”<sup>15</sup>*
- There has been a lack of cultural leadership – no organization, person or group of people has articulated and advocated for a role for culture within civic affairs.
- *“We are a conservative community that needs to be open to listening and to growing its receptivity.”<sup>16</sup>*
- Development of consensus and broad based leadership is essential. *“To succeed, city officials and county officials have got to get the other major institutions involved and supportive – downtown businesses, the hospital, Tropicana, the Chamber. We all have to be together. We all have to be supportive.”<sup>17</sup>*

During the cultural planning process, the Knight Foundation, the funder of Realize Bradenton, sponsored another community building effort. *Soul of the community* was designed to probe “the emotional connection a resident feels towards their community” and correlate findings with measures of economic growth in the community. The project is based on a Gallup poll of 26 US communities, including Bradenton. The findings are synergistic with what we learned and believe as a result of the cultural planning process – that “emotional connection to place” is driven by aesthetics, the availability of social offerings and the perception of openness (how welcoming the community is to different people). The Realize Bradenton recommendations for public art and more cultural events and gatherings, reflecting the full diversity of the community, address this opportunity to enhance “emotional connection to place” and economic prosperity.

Findings from the Realize Bradenton Community Survey of 1231 citizens<sup>18</sup>, also speak powerfully to the role of arts, culture and heritage in contributing to the aesthetic vitality, quality-of-life and prosperity of the community.

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<sup>14</sup> Emblematic quote from a key interview or focus group participant.

<sup>15</sup> Emblematic quote from a key interview or focus group participant.

<sup>16</sup> Emblematic quote from a key interview or focus group participant.

<sup>17</sup> Emblematic quote from a key interview or focus group participant.

<sup>18</sup> Realize Bradenton Community Survey Report, January 2009; Decision Support Partners, Inc.; Surale Phillips; in partnership with Creative Planning, Inc.: Bill Bulick. Full report attached as an Appendix.

- Over 80% were “interested” or “very interested” in the arts, culture and heritage.
- Over 72% “agreed” or “agreed strongly” that thriving arts, culture, and heritage places contribute to the economic vitality of our region by attracting visitors, business, and employees to our region.
- Over 76% “agreed” or “agreed strongly” that arts, culture and heritage contribute to our community’s identity and sense of place.
- Over 80% “agreed” or “agreed strongly” that more arts, culture, and heritage opportunities in downtown Bradenton would make the area a more attractive and desirable place to live, work and play.

The Realize Bradenton Cultural Master Plan offers 66 strategies for cultural development over the next 10 years that address these opportunities and aspirations.

# 1. Downtown Cultural Vitality

Bradenton has the opportunity – and many of the ingredients – to become a vibrant city. Downtown by Design, was undertaken by the Downtown Development Authority in 2007 to develop land-use, zoning, transportation, development infill (retail, restaurants, housing, offices), open space and infrastructure improvement strategies to spur revitalization. During the Downtown by Design planning process, ideas for how current and future cultural amenities might contribute significantly to a vital downtown emerged. As a result, the Bradenton Culture and Business Alliance and the Knight Foundation recommended merging downtown revitalization and cultural development strategies -- and the Realize Bradenton Cultural Master Plan process was launched, in the spring of 2008. The purpose of this cultural planning process is not to redo Downtown by Design, but to build upon it.

Exploring how arts, cultural and heritage activity and venues can reflect and contribute to the identity, vitality, prosperity and success of downtown became one of the primary focal points of the Realize Bradenton process. Every chapter – almost every page – of this Plan addresses downtown vitality, but this chapter provides a concentration of strategies and details.

## Goal Statement

**Downtown Bradenton charms all by the diversity and number of cultural, arts, and historic offerings. Each event feeds off of each other and showcases the community's distinctiveness and unique resources. The result produces a dynamic energetic downtown where more people will want to live, eat, shop, be entertained, recreate, learn, work, and/or visit.**

The Downtown Cultural Vitality Task Force focused on the “nuts and bolts” of adding more activity, raising visibility and coordinating efforts among key players, but its intent was expressed as follows: *In essence, we want each experience downtown to create the buzz of delight.*”

## Situation Analysis

- Bradenton retains the “bones” of its original downtown -- a tight grid of streets opening up to the riverfront faced by new and old civic and cultural venues, with many historic buildings and close in neighborhoods. Bradenton retains its small-town, friendly feel and there are a growing number of residencies downtown.
- Key arts, cultural and heritage venues include the South Florida Museum, Manatee Players and ArtCenter Manatee - all have national recognition

and a scale of programming and amenities that would be expected in much larger communities. All are located within blocks of each other, downtown, and near the waterfront. Close by are the Manatee County Central Library, McKechnie Field and the Village of the Arts, where over 40 of the houses in the close-in neighborhood feature artist studios and/or galleries, accessible during art walks and other special events.

- Historic sites, neighborhoods and buildings reflect Bradenton's rich heritage, including Old Manatee Village, Carnegie Library and the many historic buildings along or near Old Main Street.
- There is a lack of comprehensive, up-to-date and easily accessible information about arts, culture and heritage activities and venues downtown. Media coverage is incomplete and there is no one, dependable website. There is no comprehensive guide or map of downtown cultural venues.
- The Manatee River, Riverwalk, and Rossi Park are wonderful, but underutilized amenities. The area is well maintained by the City, but infrastructure – such as public bathrooms, water fountains, benches, picnic tables, shade trees, garbage cans, etc. – is lacking. The “No Trespassing” signs by the Green Bridge further discourage use. While there is a playground, there is no water park or fishing pier, or signage to indicate the presence of wildlife visible to the passerby. There is little coordination among stakeholders such as cultural venues, Mattison's and the Twin Dolphins Marina.
- In the past, there has been little coordination and cross-fertilization among venues and events sponsors – or with restaurants, businesses or major employers -- in scheduling, collaborative programming or marketing. There is a lack of events, especially on weeknights and weekends, and a lack of events that would engage youth or culturally diverse populations.
- Downtown, potentially, has an appropriately scaled and demarcated “cultural district” extending from the new Players facility, along the riverfront, down Old Main Street and into the Village of the Arts. But, this area does not encourage pedestrian traffic, and with little signage, it is hard to find one's way among different areas of downtown and their amenities. Good public transportation connections are lacking. Downtown is currently bisected by commercial throughways, that speed people through on the way to the beach and points north and south, creating pedestrian barriers.
- Unattractive surface parking, vacant lots and storefronts, areas without adequate shading, a lack of streetscaping and public art, and limited opportunities for additional activities make the downtown less appealing

as a destination to residents and visitors. *“The City currently lacks in the Downtown an effective pedestrian area where the arts and culture can work side by side with retail, residential and commercial businesses in revitalization effort<sup>19</sup>s<sup>20</sup>.”*

The full potential of cultural development as a revitalizing force can only be realized if it occurs alongside and in conjunction with broader downtown development efforts. Over 80% of respondents to the community survey strongly agreed with the need for efforts to enhance the riverfront area with arts programming and improve downtown Bradenton’s livability through cultural opportunities<sup>21</sup> In addition, almost half of respondents felt that Bradenton is not a vibrant cultural hub for Manatee County .

There are many cultural assets to build upon and ample opportunity for further development, linkages and impact. *“When downtown is more walkable, has transit and mixed-use, arts will be part of it, part of the ingredients of a full service downtown. Gateways, arts and culture and identity were all part of the package for other cities I’ve been in<sup>22</sup>.”*

**Recommendation 1.1:**

**Encourage coordinated events and linkages to multiple institutions and businesses.**

**Strategy 1.1.1: Reform and reinvigorate the Arts Council to become an umbrella arts, cultural and heritage organization.**

Bradenton needs one central arts, cultural and historical umbrella group to:

- Coordinate marketing programs for all groups.
- Create and maintain a central website with links to partners.
- Develop, oversee, and/or promote downtown cultural, arts, and historic experiences and events that support these groups and others and that highlight and build on our core competencies.
- Liaison with the Convention and Visitors Bureau to assure their awareness and support of downtown institutions and events.

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<sup>19</sup> Emblematic quote from a key interview participant.

<sup>20</sup> Emblematic quote from a key interview participant.

<sup>21</sup> Realize Bradenton Community Survey Report, January 2009; Decision Support Partners, Inc.; Surale Phillips; in partnership with Creative Planning, Inc.: Bill Bulick.

<sup>22</sup> Emblematic quote from a key interview participant.

- Interface with the arts, cultural, business, and educational communities to encourage shared communications, resources, and enabling opportunities that are mutually beneficial.

Input from interviews, focus groups, surveying and task forces suggested a lack of confidence in the leadership and capacity of the current board and staff of the Arts Council to take on these and other “umbrella” functions recommended by this Plan. An infusion of new leadership, planning and capacity building is needed to re-create the organization.

(SEE SUPPORT AND CAPITAL BUILDING CHAPTER FOR DETAILS)

**Strategy 1.1.2: Establish a singular Downtown Bradenton arts, culture and heritage website with a section, “What’s Happening In Downtown Bradenton,” and link it with the CVB, City and other websites.**

(SEE MARKETING, ACCESS, AND COLLABORATION CHAPTER FOR DETAILS)

**Strategy 1.1.3: Create a Bradenton Arts and Culture welcome packet.**

This packet will contain membership brochures and upbeat descriptions of ongoing events that occur downtown allowing people to readily get involved in downtown, including as Downtown Ambassadors.

- Packets will be distributed as widely as possible to local employers, to new homeowners, to the Visitor and Tourist Bureau, to realtors, to the Manatee Chamber of Commerce, participating arts, cultural and heritage groups, Island venues, City and County Hall to assure maximum exposure.
- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Realize Bradenton Marketing Subcommittee, reinvigorated Arts Council.
- **Partners in implementation:** Arts, cultural and heritage organizations, Downtown Development Authority, Manatee Chamber of Commerce, the City of Bradenton, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, and Manatee County.
- **Timeline:** Near-Term
- **Resources:**
- Material provided by each of the arts, cultural and heritage organizations along with overview by the reinvigorated Arts Council.

- **First steps:** Organize a subcommittee to coordinate.
- **Models:**
- **Concrete outcomes:** After one year, the reinvigorated Arts Council should evaluate the effectiveness and cost.
- **Benefits/rationale:** Introduce all new citizens to the Arts, Cultural and Heritage organizations to promote membership and participation. Grow a cultural marketing database.

**Strategy 1.1.4: Create a Downtown Ambassador Corps made up of devoted volunteers who share their expertise, time, and know-how.**

The Downtown Ambassador Corps will include young and older recruits who are students, local employees, residents, who:

- Help prepare and distribute literature.
  - Guide attendees at events.
  - Walk around town greeting folks and pointing out key spots, including the Discovery Stops, the various arts, cultural, heritage groups, etc.
  - Share technical expertise for the Nature and History Discovery Stops.
  - Outreach to other students, employees, and residents encouraging them to take advantage of downtown.
- 
- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Realize Bradenton Marketing Subcommittee, which will recruit, screen, and assign Ambassadors.
  - **Partners in implementation:** Arts, cultural, and heritage organizations, the Manatee Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Development Authority, the City of Bradenton, and Manatee County.
  - **Timeline:** Near-Term
  - **Resources:** Material provided by each of the arts, cultural and heritage organizations along with overview by the reinvigorated Arts Council; T-shirts. Experiences of other cities that have used such guides.
  - **First steps:**

- The program will be launched through the media, the website informing the public to look for the Ambassadors who wear some agreed upon official t-shirt.
- Official ambassadors will apply and be accepted through a formal program which would include documentation of their experiences to continually inform and improve the program.
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:** Number of guides recruited and volunteering; public reaction.
- **Benefits/rationale:** A human interface of enthusiastic, helpful people will help visitors and residents connect with the downtown and various cultural programs of interest. It will help personalize each experience and involve more people.

**Recommendation 1.2:**

**Capitalize on the Riverfront, the Riverwalk and Rossi Park as a prime area for entertainment, arts, culture, education, and downtown enjoyment.**

**Strategy 1.2.1: Invest in fundamental infrastructure that will enable ongoing, meaningful usage of the areas and encourage more cultural and arts usage of the Amphitheatre, including bathrooms, benches, picnic tables, shade trees, night lighting and further amenities.**

Improve signage in area:

- Provide proper signage and/or guides, a pedestrian friendly way to reach the ArtCenter, the Manatee Players new theatre, and the South Florida Museum.
- Remove the Green Bridge's "no trespassing" sign and replace with bold, enticing signage and artwork, possibly including murals and golden footsteps encouraging exploration under the bridge.

Investigate funding for other improvements like:

- Lighting along the riverfront and water park.
- A carousel-like amusement park for children.
- Launch a campaign to encourage gifts to buy a bench, a tree, a picnic table, and lights that will lower public expenditure and bear plaques commemorating a special person or event.

Amend the City noise ordinance to permit the additional volume of downtown events on evenings and weekends.

Partner with Manatee Memorial Hospital and other downtown employers to encourage greater use of the adjacent Riverwalk by their employees and clients, for cultural and recreational purposes to improve health and quality of life.

- **Lead implementation responsibility:** City of Bradenton, Downtown Development Authority. The DDA has identified 2009 as a year for planning further improvements and amenities along the Riverwalk. Detailed recommendations from the Downtown Cultural Vitality Task Force have been forwarded to the DDA.
- **Partners in implementation:** reinvigorated Arts Council, until then the Realize Bradenton Marketing Subcommittee, Public schools, bands, and other musical ensembles, Manatee Memorial Hospital and other nearby employers.
- **Timeline:** 1-4 Years, Long-Term
- **Resources:** Downtown Development Authority, City's Public Works, local artists and/or local art students for the mural, area resident groups.
- **First steps:** Downtown Development Authority initiates planning, working with Realize Bradenton Marketing Subcommittee.
- **Models:** Chattanooga, Providence/Pawtucket, York Gear Garden
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**
  - Increased audience participation at special events at these locations.
  - Increased revenue and attendance from visitors to existing arts, cultural, historic organizations and venues.
  - More use and improved quality of the Riverwalk experience. Improved health and appreciation of Riverwalk for citizens and visitors to Bradenton.
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - Increase use and appreciation of connections to arts, cultural and heritage resources by citizens and visitors.

- Improved synergy between special events and ongoing arts, cultural and heritage resources.
- Improved facilities will allow more use and enjoyment of existing outdoor spaces and events.

**Strategy 1.2.2: Launch a Guide-By-Cell program to complement the Nature Discovery Stops as a test for broader use throughout downtown, enticing people to discover the history of downtown, to learn more about museum exhibits, encourage event participation, and purchases at stores.**

- The system allows anyone with a cell phone to dial up and hear a prerecorded message, answering provocative questions, like, “Why do fish jump?” or “What birds am I seeing?” It can add content and context to visitor experiences like an audio tour, be used in a game format to create downtown treasure hunts, grow the contacts data base, as well as collect user feedback through surveys.
- The program can be launched without significant cost; there is no fee for the first month and there is no contractual obligation.
- The recordings can be in separate languages, allowing us to cater to German visitors and Spanish speakers. There is no fee for each taped message.
  - **Lead implementation responsibility:** South Florida Museum, Realize Bradenton Downtown Cultural Vitality Subcommittee
  - **Partners in implementation:** Downtown Development Authority, private businesses
  - **Timeline:** Immediate/Near-Term
  - **Resources:**
    - The Guide-By-Cell Company has sample jpeg signs layout ready to use and will also work to set up recordings.
    - The Manatee Central Library is available to laminate, at no cost, the Guide-By-Cell signs.
  - **First steps:** the Museum is ready to go; launch the program by March, with full publicity, and evaluate the program after three-four months before expanding.
  - **Models:** The guide-by cell program has been successfully tested by the South Florida Museum, and was researched by the Manatee County Clerk’s Office for history tours.

- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:** Demographic data is available to analyze how many people are using the system and where they come from, thereby enabling strategic analysis of who is coming downtown and suggesting audiences to be further recruited and encouraged to visit.
- **Benefits/rationale:** The system has been used throughout the United States and delighted clients for walking stops at the U. of Ca. at Berkeley, in the City of Cheyenne for the seven museums, and Visitor and Tourist Bureau, the Niagara Falls State Park, and the White House walking tour.

**Strategy 1.2.3 : Establish a Star Gazer’s path along the Riverwalk**

- Encourage evening usage of the Riverwalk with South Florida Museum’s signs identifying what stars and constellations are visible with the naked eye.
- **Lead implementation responsibility:** South Florida Museum, Realize Bradenton Downtown Cultural Vitality Subcommittee
- **Partners in implementation:** City of Bradenton and New College, Partners with the South Florida Museum and Planetarium, using their expertise.
- **Timeline :** Immediate
- **Resources:** South Florida Museum signage and Downtown Development Authority funding.
- **First steps:**
- **Models:** The Chattanooga Riverwalk is an excellent example of a well signed and maintained gateway to nature  
<http://www.americantrails.org/resources/greenways/GrnwyCHattanoogaTwo.html>
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - Provides students and families and visitors with another reason to be downtown.
  - Improved community, health, alternative transportation, appreciation of the river, art, and use of parks along the river.

**Strategy 1.2.4: Launch a History Discovery Stop program with Guide by Cell system along river, bridges, and throughout downtown.**

- Rich local history can be learned by all through a one to two-minute call.
  - **Lead implementation responsibility:** Manatee County Clerk's Office, Realize Bradenton Downtown Cultural Vitality Subcommittee
  - **Partners in implementation:** Downtown Development Authority, Manatee County Library to laminate signs
  - **Timeline:** Immediate/Near-Term
  - **Resources:** , County Clerk office tech staff
  - **First Steps:** The County Historian has research and scripts prepared; it simply needs to be converted into one – two minute pre-recorded messages.
  - **Models:** Charlotte Trolley, Chattanooga Public Art, Grand Teton National Park, and others.
  - **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:** Usage is measurable through cell phone access records.
  - **Benefits/rationale:** Visitors as well as locals will delight in learning more about local history through provocative questions such as “Why isn't Green Bridge Green?” or “What was here before the Manatee Players?”

**Strategy 1.2.5: Launch a signature Singing River Festival in 2010 that takes full advantage of the Manatee River, its history, and its cultural richness, tying in all of the Arts, Cultural, and Heritage members with opportunities for relevant exhibits, lectures, performances, books, and purchases.**

- Assuming downtown signage and gateways are installed, toilet facilities established, Discovery Stops in place, downtown public art present, the reinvigorated Arts Council is operating, downtown Bradenton can kick off a signature festival that will put the community on the map, and build audience and visitors each year.
- The Singing River Festival will spotlight how Downtown Bradenton uniquely has the **Manatee River, which long ago was called the “The Singing River” based on a love story involving the Timucuan, the**

**earlier Native American residents of Manatee County.** Possible elements could include:

- Downtown arts, culture and heritage groups can reinforce the river, its history and culture, by preparing timely events that complement the weekend festival.
  - A wide range of folk singing and dancing can take place along the river, by the Amphitheatre, with demonstration, perhaps by Native Americans and representative collections of the South Florida Museum.
  - A large “Singing River” mural, depicting the legends, could be painted on the side of the Amphitheater.
  - McKechnie Field can sponsor a major music event, or smaller more intimate events, using a portion of the facility.
  - The Amphitheatre can have the legend of the Singing River painted on its wall alerting all who pass it about the River’s enchantment.
  - Day and evening cruises along the river can encourage future ongoing services.
  - A barge with music and possibly fireworks can excite visitors with the evening benefits of the waterfront.
- 
- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Downtown Development Authority, Realize Bradenton Downtown Cultural Vitality Subcommittee, Realize Bradenton Implementation Coalition.
  - **Partners in implementation:** Native American groups, Arts, cultural and heritage organizations, City of Bradenton, Downtown Development Authority, Convention and Visitors Bureau, Manatee Chamber of Commerce, reinvigorated Arts Council, downtown employers, churches, schools, colleges, hotels, boating clubs, Twin Dolphin’s Marina,
  - **Timeline:** 1-4 Years
  - **Resources:** First United Methodist Church for music consultation, Manatee County Clerk Office, Downtown Development Authority, grant funding, Native American cultural groups
  - **First steps:** Infrastructure improvements; form planning committee.
  - **Models:**

- Four Bridges Arts Festival in Chattanooga:  
<http://www.4bridgesartsfestival.org/>
- Waterfire in Providence, RI: <http://www.waterfire.org/>  
and concurrent Pawtucket, RI Arts Festival:  
<http://www.pawtucketartsfestival.org/>
- LEAF Festival near Charlotte, NC:  
<http://www.romanticasheville.com/leaf.htm>
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:** Attendance numbers
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - Each successive year the attendance at this festival should grow with benefit to all.
  - The tie in of history, arts, music and dance in a festival atmosphere will draw citizens and visitors.
  - Revenue and participation for arts, cultural and heritage organizations.
  - Community building and educational opportunities around the appreciation of arts, culture and heritage.

**Strategy 1.2.6: Place public art throughout the Riverwalk**

(SEE PUBLIC ART CHAPTER FOR MORE DETAILS)

**Recommendation 1.3:**

**Increase and enrich downtown events that spotlight Bradenton’s uniqueness**

**Strategy 1.3.1: Sponsor noon-time concerts in the Judicial Square one day each month.**

- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Downtown Development Authority
- **Partners in implementation:** City of Bradenton for stage, sound system, and chairs
- **Timeline:** Immediate/Near-Term
- **Resources:** Downtown Development Authority, available musical consultants.

- **First steps:** Evaluate attendance over a year's time and make needed changes.
- **Models:** Many comparative cities have ongoing concert series either at lunch or evenings, weekends, etc.
  - Paducah Downtown after Dinner series: <http://www.kyfestivals.com/details.php?id=5126>
  - Chattanooga's Bach lunch series, Rhythm and Noon series, and others: [http://www.igougo.com/attractions-reviews-b19487-Chattanooga-CoffeeHouse\\_Concert\\_Series.html](http://www.igougo.com/attractions-reviews-b19487-Chattanooga-CoffeeHouse_Concert_Series.html)
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:** Growing Attendance and positive feedback.
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - Expose those serving on juries to the cultural possibilities of downtown.
  - Delight workers and residents with a free cultural event during the workday.
  - Local musicians will share their talent with the community.
  - Bring vitality and energy to the downtown
  - Tie-in restaurants with picnic lunch opportunities

**Strategy 1.3.2: Have a progressive music concert hosted by multiple downtown churches.**

- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Downtown churches, promoters
- **Partners in implementation:** Downtown churches, reinvigorated Arts Council, Downtown Development Authority
- **Timeline:** Immediate/Near-Term
- **Resources:** Churches, media, Downtown Development Authority funding
- **First steps:** Planning meetings
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:** Measure success by attendance; interest by attendees' questionnaires for other such events.
- **Benefits/rationale:**

- Expose parishioners to other venues and downtown excitement
- Bring others into the various churches (some historic) to enjoy the music and facilities.
- Encourage people's discovery of the walkability of the downtown and reasons to return.
- Tie in arts, cultural, historic programming with restaurant deals.

**Strategy 1.3.3: Sponsor monthly music and theatre in the park on Sundays at the Amphitheatre**

- Amphitheatre is ready to be used.
- Local Manatee and Sarasota Bands are volunteers; therefore costs can be low. Manatee Band includes 55 players who can attract friends and relatives.
- Tie in brief vignettes of Manatee Player's upcoming shows to encourage attendees.
- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Manatee Players, other cultural organizations, downtown promoters, RB Downtown Cultural Vitality Subcommittee
- **Partners in implementation:** Public schools, bands, and other musical ensembles, Downtown Development Authority, reinvigorated Arts Council.
- **Timeline:** 1-4 Years
- **Resources:** Available musical consultants.
- **First steps:** Schedule and rehearse performances
- **Models:**
  - Article about new Amphitheater series near Chattanooga: <http://www.farragutpress.com/articles/2005/05/2756.html>
  - Outdoor programs in Providence RI: <http://www.providenceri.com/artculturetourism/newsletter2.php?id=127>
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:** Evaluate attendance and publicity after a season to modify for the future.

- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - Extends the entertainment potential of the area.
  - Use of student jazz groups, etc. can attract families.

**Strategy 1.3.4: Continue to use the Old Manatee Players Theatre to host arts and cultural activities including such distinctive options as a Ringling School film festival, independent film viewings, jazz club, music concerts, dances, dance recitals, etc.**

- **Lead implementation responsibility:** City of Bradenton and Downtown Development Authority
- **Partners in implementation:** Ringling School of Design, Sarasota Folk and Jazz Clubs, reinvigorated Arts Council, Manatee Players, Arts, cultural and Heritage Organizations
- **Timeline** 1-4 Years
- **Resources** local promoters – Spotlight Entertainment, Howling Dog Studios.
- **First steps:** Meetings with partners to plan events and funding
- **Models:**
  - Emerging Picture is an independent film screening company that uses digital technology – and have expressed interest in a series in Bradenton [www.emergingpictures.com](http://www.emergingpictures.com)
  - The historic Tivoli theater in Chattanooga is used for many events of wide ranging interest:  
[http://www.chattanooga.gov/PRAC/30\\_1022.htm](http://www.chattanooga.gov/PRAC/30_1022.htm)
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:** size of audiences and revenue adequate to sustain.
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - An intimate and historic space will continue to anchor artistic ventures
  - Local and emerging talent will be exposed and encouraged.
  - Creative development will be encouraged for economic and cultural payoff

**Strategy 1.3.5: Accompany large public gatherings with cultural presentations.**

There are two annual gatherings of hundreds, if not thousands, of people, the December Boat Parade and the Fourth of July Fireworks, along the Manatee River. These events should provide opportunities to showcase performing arts talent, for the enjoyment of the public.

- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Cultural organizations, RB Implementation Coalition
- **Partners in implementation:** Schools, county bands, local groups, churches, Downtown Development Authority
- **Timeline:** Immediate/Near-Term
- **Resources:** Available musical consultants; some public and private funding.
- **First steps:** Meet with partners, schedule performances
- **Models:** Most of the comparison cities have expanded the music and dance aspects of festivals to improve attendance and enhance their reputation of an arts loving community, to both locals and visitors.
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:** Measure attendance
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - Introduce more people to the Riverfront and the Riverwalk by having performances in that area.
  - Entertain the public while they wait for the “main” event.
  - Improve the visibility of the music and dance organizations.
  - Add to the ‘festival atmosphere’ and celebration of the arts community to existing gatherings.

**Strategy 1.3.6: Show movies in the park**

This broadens the range of evening outdoor activities with a family-friendly event. A mobile kiosk could promote other events.

- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Downtown Development Authority

- **Partners in implementation:** Sarasota Film Festival, RB Downtown Cultural Vitality Subcommittee
- **Timeline:** Immediate
- **Resources:** Rossi Park, South Florida Museum, Manatee County Library, City of Bradenton for chairs, lights, sound system, etc.
- **First steps:** Happening already
- **Models:** many all over the world, especially in places with pleasant weather (Winter Park, Florida).
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:** Evaluate attendance over a season.
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - Encourages gathering and community
  - Brings energy and vitality to downtown
  - Is opportunity to show classic, universally appealing movies that contribute to the safe, friendly, charming feel of Bradenton
  - Vendors, restaurants may benefit from food and drink sales
  - Tie in evening experiences at downtown arts, cultural and historic locations.
  - The river will be utilized more.

**Strategy 1.3.7: Offer downtown art and dance classes and dances**

- Provide opportunities to learn and practice various dance styles (e.g. Tango in the Park or elsewhere, Swing Dancing at Mattison’s, Country Dancing in the Park, etc.), while discovering downtown.
  - **Lead implementation responsibility:** Dance Schools and Instructors, Village studios for art classes, RB Downtown Cultural Vitality Subcommittee
  - **Partners in implementation:** reinvigorated Arts Council
  - **Timeline:** 1-4 years
  - **Resources:** Amphitheatre, Mattison’s upstairs room, Bradenton Auditorium, The Renaissance, First United Methodist Church to coordinate live music for some of the dances. Some public and private funding is needed

- **First steps:** Planning meetings with partners
- **Models:** Lake Eden, near Asheville, NC, teaches and supports many kinds of dance experiences involving the whole family, and attracts people from all over:  
<http://www.theleaf.com/dancing.php>
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:** Attendance measurements; ability to attract resources, instructors and performing artists
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - Encourage longer stays supporting restaurants and arts, cultural and heritage activities.
  - Venues will be utilized more.
  - Encourages gathering, fun, health, and community

**Recommendation 1.4:**

**Improve navigability into and within downtown.**

**Strategy 1.4.1: Install several permanent, modern kiosks for event promotion and visitor guidance, plus two moveable kiosks that can be placed temporarily for events or seasons.**

- Place kiosks at key locations, including between Chamber and South Florida Museum, entrance to Mattison's, Old Main Street/Judicial Square, VOA, and temporarily at McKechnie Field during spring training.
- Have Downtown Ambassadors monitor clarity and accuracy of these kiosks weekly.
- Provide location and event information, as well as schedule and accessibility of special events.
- Give a comprehensive list of events and activities that emphasizes the breadth of opportunity available.
- At Twin Dolphin Marina existing kiosk, offer a walking tour map with Arts, Cultural, Historic attractions as well as estimated time to walk between places. Also, offer a separate brochure that fits in established slots; the brochure will list key events for the current month.

- Provide physical map people can use to navigate downtown and discover the Arts, Cultural, Historic institutions.
  - **Lead implementation responsibility:** Realize Bradenton Implementation Committee Marketing Subcommittee, Downtown Development Authority
  - **Partners in implementation:** City of Bradenton, Manatee County Health Department, Manatee Memorial Hospital, walking groups
  - **Timeline:** Short-Medium-term
  - **Resources:** Arts, cultural and heritage organizations, Manatee County Health Department, walking groups
  - **First steps:** Planning meeting with partners
  - **Models:**
  - **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:** Evaluate after one year to determine if updates are maintained and program is successful.
  - **Benefits/rationale:** Better wayfinding will promote more active and regular use of downtown; awareness of multiple events will hopefully encourage longer stays and more economic investment in downtown.

**Strategy 1.4.2: Create gateways to mark entrances and to welcome people to the downtown.**

(SEE PUBLIC ART CHAPTER)

**Strategy 1.4.3: Promote access to downtown arts, culture and heritage venues and activities through alternative, “green” transit options.**

Two options came up repeatedly during cultural planning discussions.

- Create a shuttle/trolley for easy transit around downtown, to its various amenities, such as the trolley on Anna Maria Island.
- Promote greater use of bicycles through identification of dedicated bike lanes, improved signage, more bike racks and, possibly, the establishment of a “taken leave” free bike program, similar to other cities

The City of Bradenton and the Downtown Development Authority will explore these within the Downtown Mobility study and implementation process.

- **Lead implementation responsibility:** City of Bradenton Public Works, Manatee County Transit Authority
- **Partners in implementation:** Realize Bradenton Marketing Subcommittee, Downtown Development Authority, reinvigorated Arts Council
- **Timeline:** 1-4 Years
- **Resources:** Visitor and Tourist Bureau, arts, culture and heritage organizations, Manatee Chamber of Commerce; local bike clubs and shops
- **First steps:**
  - Fund and design feasibility study
- **Models:** bike programs:
  - Austin, <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/parks/trails.htm>
  - Washington DC, <http://bikewashington.org/trails/>
  - Chapel Hill NC, <http://www.bikely.com/listpaths/country/254/region/155/city/9593>
  - Fort Collins, CO [http://www.trails.com/tcatalog\\_trail.aspx?trailid=BGR084-029](http://www.trails.com/tcatalog_trail.aspx?trailid=BGR084-029)
  - Chattanooga: <http://www.bikechattanooga.org/BikeFriendlyWeek.html>
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**
  - Expand the accessibility and stays downtown
  - Cleaner air and 'green' appeal
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - Encourage environmentally-friendly and healthy ways to move through downtown efficiently
  - Extend downtown visits and explorations

- Reinforce downtown as a friendly, charming community where free transportation is “provided”.
- Opportunity to learn from driver about more events, sites, restaurants, shops, uniqueness of Bradenton
- Bike racks will send message that downtown is bike-friendly. Provide easy locations for bikes to be locked downtown.
- Use of non-polluting, less expensive bikes will be encouraged.
- Increase safety of everyone

**Strategy 1.4.4: Clearly mark the Riverwalk path.**

- Demarcate where the path begins and ends and how to follow it as well as its mileage.
  
- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Downtown Development Authority, City of Bradenton
- **Partners in implementation:** Manatee Memorial Hospital,
- **Timeline:** Immediate/Near-Term
- **Resources:** Manatee County Health Department
- **First steps:**
  - Fund design of signage
- **Models:** articles on Chattanooga Riverwalk story:
  - [http://www.cityscopemag.com/August\\_08/Riverwalk.aspx](http://www.cityscopemag.com/August_08/Riverwalk.aspx)
  - [http://www.pps.org/info/design/success\\_chatanooga](http://www.pps.org/info/design/success_chatanooga)
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**
  - Rossi Park will be used more
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - Encourage more use of the Riverwalk

**Strategy 1.4.5: Create a Culture Trail that connects all of the arts and cultural venues and historic sites.**

- Make the Culture Trail an adventure. Strategically place public art, so there are things to see in between stops.
- Keep Culture Trail maps at all arts, cultural and heritage organizations and at public kiosks.
- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Realize Bradenton Implementation Coalition, Reinvigorated Arts Council
- **Partners in implementation:** Arts, cultural and heritage organizations, Downtown Development Authority
- **Timeline:** 1-4 Years
- **Resources:** Public Art committee, arts organizations: ArtCenter Manatee, VOTA, ComCenter
- **First steps:**
- **Models:** Chattanooga has an Art Trail and Music Trail program that is both printed and on-line:  
<http://alliedartschattanooga.org/site/pages/local-arts/art-trails.php>
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:** Usage will be measured by the arts, culture and heritage organizations
- **Benefits/rational:**
  - Extend downtown experiences for more than a singular experience.
  - Encourage more “green friendly activities” (walking or biking) throughout the downtown.

**Recommendation 1.5:**

**Distinctively beautiful downtown experience.**

**Strategy 1.5.1: Provide incentives to businesses and organizations to make exterior improvements, including displays of public art. (SEE ALSO, PUBLIC ART CHAPTER)**

Eventually, buildings, signage, lighting, landscape and art will all contribute to charming and inviting ambience of downtown where people want to stay and enjoy the experience.

- **Lead implementation responsibility:** City of Bradenton, downtown businesses and other building owners
- **Partners in implementation:** Downtown Development Authority
- **Timeline:** Long-Term
- **Resources:** Architectural Review Board, Historic preservation expertise, architects, landscape architects, interior designers, design students from local schools
- **First steps:**
  - Explorer policy changes needed
  - Plan and procure funding
- **Models:** Chattanooga, etc.
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**
  - Enhanced appeal of downtown to visitors and residents.
  - Artists are supported by purchase of their art by businesses.
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - Businesses and organizations will feel supported by the city and will have resources to hopefully guide them to success and stability.
  - Businesses and organizations will have well-maintained and fresh spaces.
  - Business and organizations will potentially enjoy more traffic and revenue that they in turn put back into the local economy.
  - Lower turnover of businesses and eventual filling of leased space in the downtown as merchants are successful and others want to enjoy the same success, bringing their business into the downtown.

**Strategy 1.5.2: Reinforce a “unified look” downtown encompassing streetscaping, shading options, street furniture, signage and artistic elements.**

Goals and strategies for achieving this “unified look” were established in Downtown by Design, and the Downtown Development Authority and City of Bradenton are pursuing implementation.

- A cultural strategy proposed by the Downtown Cultural Vitality Task Force is to place artistically decorated large clay pots, filled with plants and /or flowers throughout downtown. This would, ideally, be a public art project.
  - **Lead implementation responsibility:** Downtown Development Authority, Public Art Board
  - **Partners in implementation:** City Public Works, City of Bradenton
  - **Timeline:** 1-4 Years
  - **Resources:** Manatee River Garden Club, Manatee County Extension Office, Palma Sola Botanical Gardens, City of Bradenton, arts, culture and heritage organizations, artists; public and private funding.
  - **First steps:**
    - Plan and procure funding
  - **Models:**
    - Photos of streetscaping in Paducah, KY  
<http://artistrelocation.blogspot.com/2008/10/streetscape-paducah-kentucky.html>
    - Photos of streetscaping in Charlottesville, Va.  
<http://www.cnu.org/cnu17/node/246>
  - **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**
    - Enhanced appeal of downtown to visitors and residents.
    - Planters are functional public art.
  - **Benefits/rationale:**
    - The plants and flowers will add color and vitality to the downtown.
    - If placed throughout the downtown, they can be an element of continuity and signal that a person is in the downtown.

- The distinctiveness of each pot will encourage more pedestrian activity, with people enjoying a stroll and admiring the pots and their plantings.
- Provides opportunity for potted garden tour and linkages to Arts and Cultural organizations, while engaging community gardeners for maintenance.

**Strategy 1.5.3: Commission Public Art for key locations downtown.**

(SEE PUBLIC ART CHAPTER FOR DETAILS)

**Strategy 1.5.4: Create a mural under the Green Bridge**

- A bright, colorful mural will make the low underpass more inviting.
- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Public Art Board
- **Partners in implementation:** Downtown Development Authority, City of Bradenton, artists
- **Timeline:** 1-4 Years
- **Resources:** Arts, culture and heritage organizations, local artists and /or art students
- **First steps:**
  - Funding and grant planning
- **Models:**
  - Douglas Cooper has focused on large panoramic murals of cities in the U.S. and abroad. In three of these projects he has worked together with elderly residents of each city and incorporated their stories and drawings  
<http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/dcooper/>
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**
  - Provides another opportunity for public art.
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - The Riverwalk will be enhanced and used more.

- Many mural projects have become centers for civic engagement and pride.
- Contributes to the ‘branding’ of Bradenton as an Art Town.

**Recommendation 1.6:**

**Encourage creative business relationships downtown that support the arts and the community.**

**Strategy 1.6.1: Develop a program to have select artists use leftover construction scraps for successful art, based on San Francisco model cited below.**

- Turning scraps into art is intriguing, in vogue with the green theme of our times, and may offer good publicity and economic payoff for the community, the construction company and the artists.
- It may be an expandable model to apply to leftover goods at thrift and consignment shops, our garbage company and dump, and provide income stream.
- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Public Art Board (See Public Art Chapter for a description of their role), NDC Construction Company (has expressed interest).
- **Partners in implementation:** Downtown Development Authority, City of Bradenton, Manatee Chamber of Commerce, Volunteers of America, other construction companies.
- **Timeline:** 1-4 Years
- **Resources:** (SEE MODELS)
- **First steps:**
  - Plan and procure funding
  - Safety concerns, selectivity of artists and their supervision can be pre-established using San Francisco’s materials as a model and local constraints.
- **Models:** Artist in residence program at SF Recycling and Disposal, Inc. (a subsidiary of Norcal Waste Systems in San Francisco), <http://www.sunsetscavenger.com/AIR/index.php?t=d>

- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**
  - Enhanced creative and green appeal of downtown to visitors and residents.
  - Artists are supported by purchase of their art.
  - Evaluate after a year's experience, measuring costs and community impact.
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - More public art, increased utilization of resources.
  - Turning scraps into art is intriguing, in vogue with the green theme of our times, and will offer good publicity and economic payoff for the community, the construction company and the artist.
  - Potential source for future art material for local art programs that lack funding.
  - Good publicity and potential economic payoff for community and artists.

**Strategy 1.6.2: Establish creative incubators in downtown vacant buildings, and warehouses.**

- Use vacant buildings to encourage low-cost rents for artists, salvage companies, cooperative printing, knitting, quilting, and other art groups to launch start-up businesses.
- Use public incentives to support starts-ups in exchange for fix-up.
- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Realize Bradenton Implementation Coalition, Downtown Development Authority, City of Bradenton
- **Partners in implementation:** Reinvigorated Arts Council
- **Timeline:** Long-Term
- **Resources:** Policy incentives; public and private funding
- **First steps:**
  - Plan and procure funding source for incentives
  - Market program to artists nationwide

- **Models:**
  - **Sammons Center for the Arts**, Dallas, a performing arts incubator serving small, emerging, and mid-sized arts organizations, as well as the patrons of the Sammons Center's ongoing programming. The **Sammons Center for the Arts** is a Dallas landmark, serving as the home for 12 arts organizations representing every performing arts discipline. Over 40 other arts organizations also regularly use the Center's services and facilities for rehearsals, meetings, performances, auditions, and special events.  
<http://www.sammonsartcenter.org/>
  - Battlecreek, Michigan has three:  
<http://www.unitedartscouncil.org/incubator/incubator.aspx>
  - Pawtucket, Chattanooga, Paducah all call them “small business incubators.” See Comparable Cities Report.
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**
  - Attracts artists and arts related businesses to improve critical mass of arts related businesses to downtown.
  - Easy to measure the incentives used and how it improved business over a specific period of time.
  - Can also measure influx of arts and art related businesses to area that make use of incentives.
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - Taps inventory maintained by the Downtown Development Authority of such properties.
  - Enhance economic appeal of Bradenton during a difficult economic reality.
  - Enhanced appeal of downtown to visitors and residents.

**Strategy 1.6.3: Spruce up retail windows with decorating contests and use of college design students and retirees.**

This provides students with hands-on experiences at low-cost window decorating that will benefit store owners and provide tangible real-life experiences for their portfolios

- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Realize Bradenton Implementation Coalition, Realize Bradenton Downtown Cultural Vitality Subcommittee
- **Partners in implementation:** Downtown Development Authority, Manatee Chamber of Commerce, Ringling School of Design, Manatee Community College, reinvigorated Arts Council
- **Timeline:** 1-4 Years
- **Resources:** Commercial Realtors, Tax records, U.S. SPA Score and Ace volunteers
- **First steps:**
  - Form committee to identify potential windows and work with schools to design program and calendar.
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**
  - Inspires creative changes to downtown windows.
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - Provides students with hands-on experiences at low-cost; window decorating will benefit store owners and provide tangible real-life experiences for the students' portfolios.
  - Encourages people to watch the seasonal transformation of downtown windows.

**Strategy 1.6.4: Target the creation of music clubs for downtown.**

- Many participants in this planning process noted the absence of live entertainment venues downtown, catering to a variety of tastes.
- Live entertainment venues would provide more reasons to come downtown in the evening to enjoy the arts in the company of others, stimulating increased spending.
- If critical mass is attained, festivals can be created around popular music genres, further enlivening and attracting commerce and activity downtown.
- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Developers, Producers

- **Partners in implementation:** Downtown Development Authority, City of Bradenton
- **Timeline:** Long-Term
- **Resources:** Music promoters such as Spotlight Events, Howling Dog Studio
- **First steps:**
  - Brainstorm ideas and resources
  - Identify venues
- **Models:** Providence/Pawtucket, Charleston, Charlotte
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**
  - Income from revenue of venues and related businesses
  - Vitality of downtown after dark
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - Fill a gap in downtown entertainment
  - Enliven nightlife and activity

## 2. Support for Individual Artists / Village of the Arts

It was stated many times during our planning interviews and meetings that the entire southwest coast of Florida has a large concentration of artists of all types, especially visual artists. Though we could find no statistical comparisons to other regions, this assertion is not surprising, given the attractive climate, quality-of-life and presence of culturally interested patrons and audiences in the region<sup>23</sup>.

It is certainly apparent in the Village of the Arts, established in a downtown neighborhood of Bradenton in the mid-90s as an enclave for artists. The availability of affordable housing stock, and neighborhood revitalization incentives provided by the City since 2000, such as an overlay zoning district permitting studios and galleries in their residencies, façade improvement grants, streetscaping and signage, have attracted over 40 artists to the neighborhood. An umbrella organization, the Artist Guild of Manatee, sponsors monthly art walks, outdoor film screenings and other special events to draw regional residents and tourists -- and their spending -- into the neighborhood. The Village is beginning to attract other amenities such as a gourmet restaurant, bookstore and café.

Creativity is a resource for communities, as expressed in breathtaking performances and works of art that bring joy and meaning to our lives – for the economic activity and jobs generated by the cultural sector – as a magnet for other talented people who choose to bring their ideas and enterprise to vital, interesting places – and in the generation of creative innovations and energy towards civic improvement (one current Bradenton City Council member was formerly a practicing artist).

Ann Markusen, in her landmark study, *The Artistic Dividend: The Arts' Hidden Contributions to Regional Development*, asserts that productivity and earnings in a regional economy rise as the incidence of artists within its boundaries increases. This is due to artists' creativity and specialized skills, which enhance the design, production and marketing of products and services in other sectors, generate income through direct exports of artistic work and help recruit highly educated and talented employees to the region.

Creativity begins with the individual creator and the factors that make it possible to live, work, express and contribute to one's community, such as affordable live and work space, healthcare and insurance, ability to sell work – and a general civic culture that welcomes creativity.

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<sup>23</sup> Market Study Report, August 2008; Decision Support Partners, Inc.; Surale Phillips; Research conducted for the Realize Bradenton Cultural Master Plan; Full report attached as an Appendix.

## Goal Statement

**Enhance the overall climate of support for creativity, with a special focus on strengthening the Village of the Arts as a creative enclave and vital, prosperous neighborhood.**

## Situation Analysis

- The Village of the Arts is a unique neighborhood, already established as an artists enclave with incentives to attract and retain artists. It has attractive housing stock and is within easy walking distance to the downtown core's restaurants, retail, government buildings and other cultural amenities. It has been nationally recognized and promoted in Arts Calendar Magazine. Its proximity to beaches, the river and other quality-of-life amenities, adds to its attractiveness.
- The Artists Guild of Manatee is already established as a 501 c3 that organizes artists walks and other events, and promotes the Village and the artists who live and sell their work from their residencies. It has a board of directors, many volunteers and a functioning website, and is also a focus for community involvement.
- There is room for expansion of the Village, with a large amount of housing stock still available and affordable, particularly South of the current concentration of artists live/work and gallery spaces.
- There is particular synergy between the Village and ArtCenter Manatee, which offers classes, has studio space and sponsors exhibits, including those of national and international artists.
- The region is home to high-quality artistic training programs at Ringling College of Art and Design, New College, Manatee Community College and the area's K-12 schools. These programs incubate artistic and creative talent for the region.
- There is also a concentration of artists, galleries and performance venues on Anna Maria Island where artists and cultural leaders are becoming more organized to promote these amenities. Ware's Creek also has a concentration of artists. There is an opportunity for more collaborations among these other enclaves, the Village and with downtown based cultural entities.
- The principal challenge for the Village of the Arts is that it is an all volunteer organization which lacks sufficient capacity to organize, promote and market Village events and artists' work. Aside from art walks and other special events, hours for individual galleries are limited and irregular. It would be hard for a visitor to know what was open, when. There is no

central venue for visibility, information and exhibit of artwork. There is virtually no data collection on visitors – who they are, where they come from, how they got there, and what they buy.

- Most, if not all of the resident artists in the Village rely on other jobs and sources of income to support them. The Village will not be sustainable until more artists are able to derive sole or substantial income from producing art.
- Though it is a short walk from the downtown core, the Village of the Arts is separated from the downtown by commercial through ways which create pedestrian barriers, unattractive parking and vacant lots, lack of shade and limited opportunities for other activities or sightseeing along the way, and a lack of wayfinding signage. There is a perception that the area is unsafe. It can also be a longish walk from gallery to gallery within the Village, compared to the extremely compact nature of the Towles Court arts district in Sarasota.
- The Village of the Arts also needs a greater diversity of eating, retail and entertainment establishments and amenities to attract more visitors and potential patrons into the neighborhood, and keep them there for longer periods. The lack of a liquor license for special events has also been seen as a limitation.
- Housing prices have escalated rapidly during boom cycles, and property taxes are relatively high, raising the fear that the Village is, or could easily become, unaffordable to working artists. Village artist residents are concerned about the presence of “flippers,” who buy up cheap properties, provide minimal management and maintenance and then turn them over at a profit – contributing to further escalation of housing prices.
- Other area wide challenges for artists of all disciplines include, generally, a lack of spaces for exhibition, rehearsal, performance, offices and storage. The need for a recording studio, a dance studio and “cool” places to hang out such as wine bars, coffee shops art film theaters, etc. was also voiced.
- There is also a general sense that there has been little focus on the arts, culture and heritage in Bradenton as compared to its close by neighbors, Sarasota and St. Petersburg. But there is also a sense that this is changing, and that the Cultural Master Plan can provide a needed focus on cultural and community development.
- The Bradenton region’s artists and creators and enclaves such as the Village of the Arts and Anna Maria Island are already key resources for its quality of life, vitality and economy – and they can be further enhanced, as described below.

**Recommendation 2.1:**

**Strengthen the Village of the Arts as a live/work/sell neighborhood.**

**Strategy 2.1.1: Increase organizational capacity of the Artists Guild of Manatee, so that it can coordinate events, promotions, marketing and support services for Village operations and become an effective partner with the City, the Downtown Development Authority, other cultural entities, and community organizations.**

Some Guild organizational planning occurred before and during the cultural planning process, including some sessions with the lead consultant and community leaders. Several needs were identified:

- Develop an organizational, board and membership structure to attract broader community involvement and investment in the Village. It is likely that the 501 c3 membership structure should change to a general category.
- Staff to coordinate activities of the Village and to provide support to make best and most efficient use of board members, community volunteers and interns.
- A permanent office with meeting space and adequate equipment.
- Adopt regular “open for business” hours and expand the schedule of regular and special events that can be marketed to bring people into the Village.
- Expand marketing of Village artists and their products, through web based, media and other strategies.
- Enhance signage marking gateways into the Village and helping visitors to find their way to galleries and other amenities.
- Upgrade and enhance the website for more effective communications, marketing, and networking (also fundraising – see below). Achieve consistent and professional promotional and marketing efforts, including better use of social networking media and strategies. Make the collection and maintenance of a “friends” database a priority for ongoing communications.
- Better coordination with the Convention and Visitors Bureau, Downtown Development Authority, Chamber, etc.
- Management of Village artists’ sales documentation. It is our belief that the Village of the Arts needs to track sales data in order to establish

benchmarks, set goals, measure performance and establish and collect a sales commission that can help to support the ongoing operations of the Village.

- Develop expertise and capacity for ongoing, concerted fund-raising for Guild operations.
- Partner with K-12 schools and youth organizations.
- Developing mentorship program pairing younger and more established artists in the Village.
- Explore branding opportunities for “made in the Village.”

Further strategic planning is needed to establish an optimal organizational and membership structure, consistent governance practices, develop a business plan, and set goals and strategies for a 2-5 year horizon that can provide a basis for yearly operational planning.

- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Artists Guild Of Manatee County
- **Partners in implementation:** Downtown Development Authority, umbrella cultural organization, Non-Profit Resource Center of Sarasota Community Foundation, funders and members
- **Timeline:** Immediate and 1-4 Years.
- **Resources:** Support from diverse funding sources, including foundation, individual, corporate, sponsorships, memberships, and public sources; staff, physical location.
- **First Steps:**
  - Apply for capacity building grants from foundations.
  - Explore assistance from the Nonprofit Resource Center.
- **Models:**
  - Chattanooga has developed a number of programs, some run by artists, others run by non-profits to improve professionalism, and business acumen in the arts and arts related businesses. <http://createhere.org/projects.html>
  - The Pawtucket Artist Collaborative is another excellent example. It provides space for regular local and national juried shows and an ongoing lecture series to give immersing artists business tips from professional artists: <http://www.pawtucketartscollaborative.org/>

- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**
  - Revised bylaws and operating policies
  - Completion of strategic plan
  - Staff hired
- **Benefits/rationale:** a strong Village organization can take full advantage of this valuable resource for the benefit of both the community and its resident artists.

**Strategy 2.1.2: Establish a Village of the Arts “Welcome Center” in a highly visible location in the Village, optimally at or near a key gateway into the neighborhood.**

Such a center would include, at a minimum, office and meeting space, a reception area with complete information about Village events and hours, and a gallery space for showing and selling Village artists’ work. A near-term “reachable” version of this might be a modest, low-cost rental.

The more long-term vision for this “Welcome Center” is that it also include studios, performance space, classrooms, a resource center a cultural incubator space and an artist in residency program. The Center could also be a home for the umbrella cultural organization. A satellite, nonprofit gallery space downtown, operated by the Village is also a dream. Why not one in Lakewood Ranch, also?

- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Artist Guild of Manatee, Realize Bradenton Implementation Coalition
- **Partners in implementation:** Downtown Development Authority, Reinvigorated Arts Council
- **Timeline:** 1-4 Years
- **Resources:** adequate, initially, to pay for rehab, furnishing and rental of and appropriate space. Possible funding sources are the Downtown Development Authority, foundations, individual donors, and earned income from offense and sales.
- **First steps:** locate an affordable rental space; utilized volunteer labor to rehab and furnish.
- **Models:**
  - The Pawtucket Artist Collaborative has a regular series of juried shows and a lecture series at the Blackstone Valley

Visitor center:

<http://www.pawtucketartscollaborative.org/special%20events/Exhibits09.html>

- The Santa Cruz Mountains Art Center has a mission to encourage the arts through education, exhibition and cultural activities:  
<http://www.mountainartcenter.org/aboutus.htm>
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:** open a modest Welcome Center within one year of the completion of the Cultural Master Plan.
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - Central welcome and information Center for the Village
  - Increased traffic, sales and visibility
  - Education to further the advancement of local artists
  - Arts education and exposure for the general public can lead to more citizens participation in the arts as collectors and immersing artists. This has been very effective in Santa Cruz where nearly every citizen is proud of their art collection and has participated in some form of art classes.

**Strategy 2.1.3: Recruit targeted niche local businesses, such as restaurants, retail, creative businesses, etc. to locate or re-locate to the Village of the Arts, and surrounding commercial corridors.**

- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Downtown Development Authority, City of Bradenton, Artists Guild
- **Partners in implementation:** Business community, Chamber of Commerce
- **Timeline:** 1-4 years
- **Resources:** incentives, TBD
- **First steps:** generate lists of targets to attract; coordinate recruitment and negotiations
- **Models:**
  - Chattanooga <http://createhere.org/springboard.html> and Pawtucket both do a good job of arts related businesses with

incentives (including food). They also provide a variety of assistance for arts related entrepreneurial businesses.

- Pawtucket example: When Stone Soup Coffee House, one of the New England's oldest nonprofit coffee houses, relocated to Pawtucket, Public Works provided a truck and driver and helper to pick up more than 200 folding chairs and sound equipment. Without this assistance, the nonprofit group would have had to make dozens of trips in a small pickup truck to transport their belongings. Stone Soup's relocation to downtown Pawtucket has proven that one way to revitalize a particular area of the city is through music and the arts.
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:** 3-5 new, desirable businesses recruited to the Village within the first two years.
- **Benefits/rationale:** better mix of available amenities to draw patrons; increased spending and other economic activity

**Strategy 2.1.4: Implement further strategies to attract and retain artists to the Village of the Arts.**

The following should be explored in order to keep the Village affordable to working artists and to attract the highest quality artists, especially up and coming artists.

- Tweak the façade improvement grants to permit structural rehabilitation.
- Adopt a policy in the overlay district that permits inspection of rental properties for code enforcement purposes (a disincentive for “flippers”).
- Create a forgivable loan program modeled after ArtsMove in Chattanooga.
- Create a funding pool to subsidized moving expenses for relocating artists ( The latter two strategies would require development of a jurying system to qualify artists and might be used in particular to attract younger, up-and-coming artists).
- Create a partnership with area banks to offer low-interest mortgages.
- Secure a 5-year property tax freeze on improvements.

- Advocate for State incentives (property and/or sales tax abatements, access to capital funding and/or low interest loans) for arts districts.
  - Explore development of a Community Land Trust or a Community Development Corp. to purchase, develop, and retain properties for cultural uses.
  - Invite and encourage a national, nonprofit developer of cultural space, such as Artspace to develop a project in Bradenton.
  - Explorer mechanisms to provide affordable health care and insurance for artists and creators.
  - Implement artist studio tours and market heavily to surrounding region, targeting art patrons.
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- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Artists Guild of Manatee County, Downtown Development Authority
  - **Partners in implementation:** Realize Bradenton Implementation Committee, City of Bradenton, Umbrella Cultural Organization, incentives award jury
  - **Timeline:** 1-4 years
  - **Models:** (for relocation incentives)
    - Chattanooga: <http://artsmove.org/>
    - Pawtucket: <http://www.arts.ri.gov/special/districts/>
    - Paducah: <http://www.paducahmainstreet.com/incentives.htm>
  - **Models:** (for Artspace examples) [http://www.artspace.org/properties/live\\_work.html](http://www.artspace.org/properties/live_work.html)
  - **Models:** (for studio tours)
    - Santa Cruz has an excellent fall Open Studio Tour that is heavily promoted regionally across the Bay Area by billboards, radio, newspaper and magazine ads. It is also promoted by the production of a glossy calendar that is sold for \$20. This calendar has photos of the studios and art as well as the contact information for all the artists on the tour. The tour is juried to assure professionalism. It has helped many artists (over 300 in a town of 75,000) become self-supporting artists; some don't even need a regular gallery. <http://www.ccscc.org/index.php/open-studios.html>

- Chattanooga has an Open Studio Tour that attracts over 400 people per day that artists can derive most of their income from. Another more regional crafts version from Chattanooga: [http://www.chattanooga.com/articles/article\\_139268.asp](http://www.chattanooga.com/articles/article_139268.asp)
- Here are links to two others, one in Ventura, California: <http://buenaaventuragallery.org/firstfridaysventura.html> and one in the region surrounding Palm Springs: <http://www.arttours2007.com/>
- Kansas City Artists' Coalition is another excellent example of a regional Open Studios program within a 1.5 person nonprofit organization serving and supporting regional artists: [http://www.kansascityartistscoalition.org/open\\_studios/open\\_studios.html](http://www.kansascityartistscoalition.org/open_studios/open_studios.html)
- **Resources:** private and public funders
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**
  - National arts media coverage of the Village of the Arts incentive programs continues and increases.
  - Increase in the number of professional creators moving into the Village of the Arts.
  - Establish and meet standards of quality for incoming artists eligible for incentives.
  - Support artists to market their work to become self-sustaining small businesses.
- **Benefits/rationale**
  - The village continues to be a desirable place to live and work
  - Improved quality of life
  - Sales and commerce increase; spin off spending in downtown, if Village becomes more of a regional and tourist attraction.

**Strategy 2.1.5: Connect the Village to 14<sup>th</sup> Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Street and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue.**

Currently, these corridors, which act as boundaries for the Village, show little sign that the Village is right beyond them. They would be ideal locations for a Welcome Center, gateways, signage, public art, and the types of businesses mentioned above, which relate to the Village's identity.

- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Downtown Development Authority, City of Bradenton, Artists Guild; businesses on these corridors
- **Partners in implementation:**
- **Timeline:** 1-4 years and Long-Term
- **Resources:** Village Guild Board, DDA
- **First steps:** generate lists of targets to attract; coordinate recruitment and negotiations
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - Improved navigability into the Village
  - Increased traffic and commerce
  - Improved perceptions of the safety of the neighborhood

**Recommendation 2.2:**

**Reinvigorate the Arts Council to be an effective umbrella cultural organization for networking, info sharing and professional development for local creators ( SEE SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING)**

**Recommendation 2.3:**

**Explore and undertake other strategies to enhance opportunities for artists and creative individuals to live, work, express and contribute to their communities in the region.**

**Strategies:**

- 2.3.1 Develop the market for artistic products via better publicity and partnerships (SEE MARKETING AND COLLABORATIONS), improved web presence ( both the Village and Arts Council websites should promote artists from throughout Manatee County) and the development of more sales outlets and performance opportunities (SEE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION).

- 2.3.2 Develop and offer business management and marketing assistance for individual artists and creators ( SEE SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING).
- 2.3.3 Develop public and private funding sources for individual artists, such as grants, fellowships and support for cultural events that provide opportunities for individual artists ( SEE SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING).
- 2.3.4 Generally elevate arts awareness through media and public relations (SEE MARKETING AND COLLABORATIONS).
- 2.3.5 Incorporate more artists and creators into public events (SEE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION).

### 3. Marketing, Access And Collaborations

There is significant opportunity to increase access to and participation in the arts culture and heritage in Bradenton and Manatee County. Geo-demographic market research and analysis of the audiences of five major cultural institutions, conducted for this Plan, indicate that consumer demand for arts and culture in the region is strong, with more than 40% of regional households indexing above the national average *for attending live music, theater, and dance and visiting museums in zoos*. Yet, the five majors collectively have only 6% penetration of this household market<sup>24</sup>. In addition, results of the Realize Bradenton Community Survey<sup>25</sup>, pointed to high interest in cultural activities, but low awareness of opportunities. More than 70% of survey respondents indicated that better awareness would have high impact on increasing their participation. Of the 10 participation drivers tested on the survey, “better awareness” scored the highest for encouraging residents to participate more often than they do now. Budgets and cooperative activities for marketing have been limited to date.

Many planning participants stated that there has been little communication, much less collaboration, among the five major cultural institutions – prior to this planning effort. Now, the Bradenton Culture and Business Alliance, formed to undertake cultural planning, has brought the five major cultural institutions, representatives from the heritage sector and the business community together to collaborate on cultural and community development. The BCBA had already launched a joint marketing initiative, funded along with this planning effort by the Knight foundation. This initiative, with heritage now integrated, can move forward, informed by the Cultural Master Plan market research. Enhanced marketing will not only increase participation and the quality of life of the community, but will strengthen earnings of cultural organizations, gain them access to potential new donors – and increase the spin off spending and economic impact of the arts, culture and heritage.

Five of the six task forces, including Marketing, Access and Collaborations, voiced a need for a strong “umbrella cultural agency,” a reinvigorated Arts Council, to coordinate and lead cultural development, including joint marketing efforts and cooperative marketing activities. The community survey results also supported this need from the perspective of customers; 73% of survey respondents agreed that Bradenton needs one central source of information about arts, culture, and heritage opportunities, while only 35% agreed that they are very aware of arts, culture, and heritage offerings in Bradenton. While Realize Bradenton advocates are building the capacity of the Arts Council, the

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<sup>24</sup> Market Study Report, August 2008; Decision Support Partners, Inc.; Surale Phillips; Research conducted for the Realize Bradenton Cultural Master Plan; see Appendix.

<sup>25</sup> Realize Bradenton Community Survey Report, January 2009; Decision Support Partners, Inc.; Surale Phillips; in partnership with Creative Planning, Inc.: Bill Bulick.

Realize Bradenton Marketing Subcommittee will lead already begun joint marketing efforts.

This chapter, and the Plan in general, focuses on downtown Bradenton first and foremost, to build upon the Downtown Development Authority's "Downtown by Design" study, and because there is a huge and fortuitous concentration of cultural activity in close proximity to other amenities downtown. As the effort gathers momentum it will be important to take a regional perspective in regard to venues and activities, collaborations and, especially, audiences. An apt metaphor is that Bradenton is the "hub" and other venues and marketing efforts represent the "spokes and wheels."

### **Goal Statement**

**Bradenton is a unique destination located in a historic site along the Manatee River with close proximity to both major markets and smaller communities. By creating a strong advocacy group, collaborating partnerships and increased visibility to leverage Bradenton's already strong assets, we will work with the Downtown Development Authority's "Downtown by Design" to recreate a thriving downtown for all ages from which further investments and interest in arts, culture and historic preservation will evolve.**

### **Situation Analysis**

- Bradenton's five major cultural amenities – the South Florida Museum, Manatee Players, ArtCenter Manatee, Village of the Arts and Manatee Village Historical Park are of a size and quality of many, much larger communities. They are in close proximity to each other and the waterfront.
- Historic sites, neighborhoods and buildings reflect Bradenton's rich heritage including Old Manatee Village, Carnegie Library and the many historic buildings along or near Old Main Street. This planning effort aims for full integration of heritage assets into overall cultural marketing and development.
- As the County seat, Bradenton is already both a regional gateway and a County wide gateway. There is adequate parking downtown to accommodate more visitors.
- Anna Maria Island is home to many cultural organizations, including theater, music, historic preservation, literary and visual arts groups. Some have recently organized Cultural Connections, a coalition for joint marketing and networking.

- Some organizations, such as ArtCenter Manatee, have established satellite facilities and programs in other communities, including Lakewood Ranch, that broaden audiences, increase revenues and open avenues to new, wealthy donors.
- Bradenton is also near to outstanding cultural institutions in Sarasota and St. Petersburg, such as the Ringling Museum, Van Wezel Auditorium, Asolo Theatre, Manatee Community College Performing Arts Center (the closest venue used by the Sarasota Orchestra), and the Holocaust Museum.
- Market research and audience analysis have occurred during the Cultural Master Plan process, and a joint marketing initiative has begun, with initial funding from the Knight Foundation to tap into the potential indicated above.
- Marketing by individual cultural organizations has, historically, been underfunded, resulting in low awareness of their offerings, both locally and regionally. There has been no joint marketing prior to the current effort and very little audience data collection. Because there has been little communication among cultural organizations there are frequent scheduling overlaps and conflicts.
- The need for a strong “umbrella cultural agency” to coordinate joint marketing is critical. There is also a need to make the general case to citizens and leaders as to why the arts, culture and heritage are important to the identity, quality of life, vitality and prosperity of Bradenton and the region.
- Some sites need improvement, including the completion of the Manatee Players new building, and signage and further enhancements in the Village of the Arts. ArtCenter Manatee is also studying expansion and site improvements.
- There is one major hotel downtown, and a few restaurants, but more lodging and meeting space, restaurants, retail and entertainment venues are needed to attract more visitors and lengthen their stay. There is a lack of physical connection, transportation options, and wayfinding to move patrons between cultural venues and events and other downtown restaurant, entertainment and retail amenities. Planning participants expressed concern over a history of no or slow movement on prior downtown redevelopment efforts. Cultural development can only succeed within a larger context of successful downtown revitalization.
- Cultural tourism marketing by the Convention and Visitors Bureau has, so far, been limited. The marketing focus has been on the beaches and golf.

- City and County investment in the arts and culture, aside from support for the Village of the Arts and the one dollar per year land leases for the Manatee Players and ArtCenter Manatee, has been limited.
- The current economic climate means that household disposable income is reduced and there is more competition among community amenities and causes, however, the community survey suggested that the cost of events was not a barrier to participation.

These recommendations and strategies aim to build upon new opportunities for collaboration and research based, coordinated marketing.

**Recommendation 3.1:**

Continue the coordination and joint marketing begun during this planning process to increase visibility and access to the arts and culture.

**Strategy 3.1.1: Reconstitute the marketing committee created for the current joint marketing effort, add representation from the heritage sector and continue the work under the auspices of the Realize Bradenton Implementation Coalition.**

- This Subcommittee should oversee the critical effort to communicate the findings and recommendations of the Realize Bradenton Cultural Master Plan and, generally, the role and value of the arts, culture, and heritage to the broader community.
- Develop a joint marketing plan for arts, culture, and heritage, building upon the research conducted during this planning effort. Elements may include:
  - A mission statement based upon the Cultural Master Plan, and developed in order to unite cultural leaders in this collaborative effort.
  - Create a collective tag line that unites the downtown cultural entities under the Realize Bradenton identity (e.g. “Real. Live. Experiences. Downtown,” etc.)
  - Identify critical characteristics of place, including identity as a historic, river town, agricultural heritage, proximity and contrast to larger towns such as Sarasota, St. Petersburg and Tampa, the presence of significant cultural amenities, and other unique attributes.
  - Strategies to broaden the diversity of participation in arts, culture and heritage activities, including youth and ethnic groups, must be

reflected in event planning, marketing activities, and communication messages.

- Using existing arts patrons and supporters first, tap into social media marketing mechanisms such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, blogs, etc.
- Focus on downtown and the riverfront as a principal amenity. Work with Downtown Development Authority and other entities to integrate cultural activities and marketing with boating, walking and other recreational and entertainment activities. (SEE ALSO, DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION CHAPTER.)
- Integrate smaller cultural and heritage organizations – such as the regional festivals (De Soto, Cortez, and Manatee County Fair), and Anna Maria Island creative and historical assets– into county-wide marketing and audience development efforts.
- Consider an update of the “Friendly City” slogan to emphasize other differentiating characteristics of Bradenton.
- Tie into State’s “Visit Florida” and Convention and Visitor Bureau’s “Island” campaigns.
- Partner with regional economic development entities such as the Tampa Bay Partnership, Florida High Tech Corridor, etc. on efforts to communicate the unique identity and cultural vitality of the region as an attraction for talented workers and entrepreneurs.
- Explore regional partnership opportunities to promote activities (such as GoTriadScene.com, the Artsopolis model that promotes all arts, culture, heritage and similar events across 12 North Carolina Counties including Greensboro, High Point, Asheboro, and Winston-Salem.)
- Identify critical programming that may be missing (e.g. music, culinary arts, environmental focus, ethnic diversity, etc.) and plan events, activities, collaborations, and messaging accordingly.
- Work to remove physical and social barriers to cultural participation, especially among diverse, rural, youth/family, and disabled populations.
- Utilize professional help in developing and implementing the marketing plan.
- Build off the Realize Bradenton brand and website to expand data collection efforts and build a marketing contact list of interested individuals.

- Initiate training for cultural organization staff to effectively implement joined and individual marketing strategies.
  - Coordinate with the Downtown Development Authority, Chamber, City and County, Convention and Visitors Bureau, State of Florida, and any other entities involved in marketing Bradenton to ensure that arts, culture and heritage and entities are included.
  - Create collateral that may include a cultural amenities brochure, rack cards, in a downtown cultural guide, etc.
  - Tap into all media: television, print media, web-based and electronic media.
- 
- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Realize Bradenton Marketing Subcommittee
  - **Partners in implementation:** Arts, culture and heritage organizations; Downtown Development Authority; Chamber; business sponsors and partners
  - **Timeline:** Already Happening and Ongoing
  - **Resources:** Marketing budgets of cultural and heritage organizations; business sponsorships; foundation and other private funding. Paid, professional marketing staff is needed to coordinate this effort. A rough estimate for yearly joint marketing efforts is \$100,000, including staff and office expenses.
  - **First steps:**
    - Reconstitute Marketing Subcommittee, as above
    - Finalize cultural map and distributions plan using the geodemographic maps in the market study and securing a list of prospect contacts from MOSAIC lifestyle clusters identified as good prospects. Ensure any prospecting efforts through mail or website include a call to action to track and maintain database information for on-going marketing.
    - Establish communication around cultural organizations' events scheduling to minimize overlap and stimulate synergistic programming.
  - **Models:**

- Research the “conflict” buster created by the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance  
<http://www.philaculture.org/conflict/conflict.cfm>
  - Artsopolis: cultural calendar sites:  
<http://www.artsopolis.com/>
  - Santa Fe Arts and Cultural Calendar:  
<http://www.santafeartsandculture.org/>
  - KC Performing Arts <http://www.kclivearts.org>
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**
    - Development of a rational, coordinated marketing plan for arts culture and heritage that each organization’s marketing can link to.
    - Pooling of resources and efforts.
  - **Benefits/rationale:**
    - Build upon Bradenton’s strengths: the riverfront, an attractive, walkable downtown and already strong cultural and heritage amenities.
    - Will increase participation in the arts, culture, and heritage
    - Will increase earned revenues for cultural organizations
    - Increased spin-off economic activity and jobs generated by cultural activity

**Strategy 3.1.2: Develop cultural and heritage tourism marketing.**

This work should occur on several fronts:

- Better integrate cultural and heritage events and amenities into the marketing efforts of the Convention and Visitors Bureau, including especially Bradenton and Island based activity.
- Strengthen collaborations between downtown Bradenton cultural and heritage organizations and the Anna Maria Island Cultural Connections consortium to increase awareness and participation in cultural activity in both locations.
- Create partnerships with hotels, beach rental agencies, restaurants, the transit agency, and other tourism businesses to better market and package the cultural product.

- Create and strengthen partnerships with the sports sector, such as IMG and the Pirates, who, routinely, bring large numbers of travelers into Bradenton and Manatee County for training,, conferences and events, who have demonstrated interest in cultural events and activities.
  - Strengthen and create communications and exposure opportunities with frontline tourism industry staff such as concierges, reception desk, waiters, etc. so that they have first-hand and updated knowledge of cultural events and activities.
  - Secure funding for cultural and heritage organizations and consortia to develop and market cultural tourism packages, including development of calendars, coasters and other collateral to promote cultural events.
  - Create new, “signature” cultural events of a scale and quality appropriate for the tourism market.
  - Develop and maintain a web portal for all arts, cultural and heritage sites and events with links to local (cultural and heritage organizations, CVB, City, County, etc.), State (Tourism Division), and national websites. The site should have the capability to generate maps to desired events and venues. It will require dedicated staff to manage constant updating (see below, Arts Council).
- 
- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Realize Bradenton Marketing Subcommittee; reinvigorated Arts Council.
  - **Partners in implementation:** Countywide arts, culture and heritage organizations; Convention and Visitors Bureau; Tourism Development Commission; Manatee County; Downtown Development Authority; Florida State Tourism Division; hotels, restaurants and other tourism industry businesses are
  - **Timeline:** Immediate and 1-4 years
  - **Resources:** CVB marketing expertise, resources and partnerships; a portion of bed tax dedicated to cultural tourism development; ongoing funding for marketing coordination, website development and maintenance.
  - **First steps:**
    - Develop structured partnership with CVB to integrate culture and heritage amenities and the collection of leads into their marketing and particularly into [www.floridagulfislands.com](http://www.floridagulfislands.com) . Form a cultural tourism committee to develop and follow through with strategies.

- Take inventory of venues and events appropriate for the tourism market (regular, consistent, planned 1-3 years ahead; sufficient facilities and scale to accommodate tourists)
- Begin design and planning for web-based portal and cultural events calendar. Explore feasible tie-in sites versus stand-alone site.
- **Models:**
  - Investigate Artsopolis models such as [www.artsmemphis.org](http://www.artsmemphis.org), [www.gotriadscene.com](http://www.gotriadscene.com) (if regional), [www.kclivearts.org](http://www.kclivearts.org) (portal example v. stand-alone site).
  - Radio ad linked to a directory of hotels and resorts at [www.gotampabay.com](http://www.gotampabay.com)
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**
  - Development of a rational, coordinated marketing plan for arts culture and heritage tourism.
  - Develop Web portal and cultural events calendar within one year.
  - Increased mention of cultural and heritage venues and activities in CVB marketing and PR materials.
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - CVB marketing of Island amenities has been very successful. Bradenton based cultural and heritage amenities – only 10-15 minutes away -- provide a powerful enhancement of tourism product that can yield longer stays, more spending and more economic impact from tourism. State and national studies reinforce both the interest in cultural and heritage amenities as well as the heightened economic impact of cultural tourism.
  - Greater revenues from tourists will also strengthen the balance sheets of cultural and heritage organizations and venues.

**Strategy 3.1.3: Seek National Trust for Historic Preservation Distinctive Destination award for Bradenton.**

Applying for this award provides a powerful and appropriate focus for fully integrating heritage into cultural and community development and

synergistically addressing other aspirations and goals that have emerged during cultural planning, that relate to the criteria for the award:

- Protect the historic character of downtown by enacting local preservation laws to protect historic buildings against demolition; rewrite zoning codes to prevent commercial sprawl; remove regulatory barriers to downtown housing; make downtown areas more walkable; enact design standards.
- Demonstrate a heritage tourism infrastructure, including heritage sites, unique shopping, cultural and lodging opportunities.
- Provide an authentic visitor experience in a dynamic downtown reflecting cultural diversity, attractive architecture, cultural landscapes and a strong commitment to historic preservation and revitalization.

- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Realize Bradenton Marketing Subcommittee, City of Bradenton Planning Department, Manatee County Clerk of Circuit Court's Historical Resources Department

- **Partners in implementation:** Manatee County Historical Commission, Manatee County Historical Society, State of Florida Bureau of Historic Preservation, Downtown Development Authority

- **Timeline:** 1-4 years

- **Resources:** commitments of above partners to pursue, including interest in considering selling and code changes; staff support to pursue strategies and develop application materials.

- **First steps:** Convene subcommittee to pursue; game commitments of above partners to pursue; begin collecting materials required

- **Models:** Santa Fe is listed as one of the 2009 distinctive designations: <http://www.preservationnation.org/travel-and-sites/sites/southwest-region/santa-fe-nm.html>

- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**

- Placement of Old Main Street on the National Register of Historic Places
- Listing in Distinctive Destinations by National Trust for Historic Preservation

- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - Fully integrates heritage preservation into cultural development and downtown revitalization strategies; addresses many other goals and aspirations that emerge during cultural planning;
  - Nation and world wide marketing assistance by National Trust for Historic Preservation.
  - Would increase tourism and consequent economic activity.

**Recommendation 3.2:**

**Reinvigorate the Arts Council of Manatee County with new and augmented board and staff leadership, empowered to provide leadership and coordination for the cultural sector, including staff support and coordination for joint marketing effort and cultural events.**

The Support and Capacity Building Chapter addresses, in greater detail, the need for and future roles of the reconstituted Arts Council critically needed for Realize Bradenton Cultural Master Plan implementation and future cultural and community development. This Chapter’s recommendation addresses the particular elements to support joint marketing and an increase in cultural events.

A quote from the Marketing, Access And Collaborations Task Force Report is emblematic of the desire for stronger cultural leadership, coordination and follow through: *“If there is not a body to implement the results of these meetings and to oversee them, all of our work will have little or no effect, like previous downtown development plans.”*

**Strategy 3.2.1: The reinvigorated Arts Council could, eventually, provide the staff support and some resources for the joint marketing and cultural tourism marketing initiatives described above. ( SEE SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION DETAILS)**

**Strategy 3.2.2: The reinvigorated Arts Council should provide coordination and resources for the new “signature” cultural events downtown, working closely with the Realize Bradenton Implementation Coalition and the Downtown Development Authority.**

Many participants in interviews and meetings during the cultural planning process voiced a desire for more cultural events, particularly outside and

downtown, along the riverfront. More than 60% of respondents to the public survey voiced the need and desire for more outdoor events and festivals, but only 22% agreed with the statement that Downtown Bradenton is a vibrant arts and cultural hub for Manatee County. There is also an opportunity to more fully integrated the arts, culture and heritage into existing events, such as Get Down Downtown, Seafood Fest, Pirates Family Fund Day, the Farmers Market, etc. (SEE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION CHAPTER FOR RECOMMENDATIONS ABOUT SOME SPECIFIC NEW EVENTS AND MORE IMPLEMENTATION DETAIL.)

- **Lead implementation responsibility:** reinvigorated Arts Council working closely with the Realize Bradenton Implementation Coalition, Downtown Development Authority, cultural and heritage organizations.
- **Partners in implementation:** Downtown businesses, hotels, restaurants; Chamber; service organizations; City of Bradenton, Convention and Visitors Bureau
- **Timeline:** 1-4 Years
- **Resources:** Corporate and business sponsorships; other private funding (individual, foundations); public funding
- **First steps:** Convene a Downtown Cultural Events Committee of Realize Bradenton participants to continue work on design and development of these events.
- **Models:** Explore various local and regional models including, ArtsFest Orlando (United Arts of Central Florida), Spoleto (Charleston, SC) , Aspen Music Festival (CO), Smoky Hill River Festival (Salina, KS), Memphis Music and Heritage Festival (Center for Southern Folklore), Sweet Pea Arts Festival (Bozeman, MT), National Cowboy Poetry Gathering (Elko, NV) as a broad range of examples.
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**
  - Decision and work towards adding one major cultural event during 2010.
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - New, well planned “signature” events will enliven downtown, showcase cultural venues and increase the

number of residents and visitors spending time and money downtown.

- More people and commerce downtown will help to attract more restaurants, retail, residences, etc., which will, in turn, attract yet more residents and visitors and their spending.
- A lively downtown increases the quality of life for all regional residents.

**Recommendation 3.2.3:**

**Build stronger collaborations and partnerships among arts, culture, and heritage organizations, business, government and community organizations.**

As previously stated, there has not been a strong history of collaboration and partnerships among cultural organizations in Bradenton. The creation of the Bradenton Cultural and Business Alliance, to launch this cultural planning effort – and a planning process designed to seek common ground and foster collaborations -- signals a new era. Many ideas are now on the table and bear further exploration.

- The joint marketing effort described above was initiated to partner the five major cultural organizations. It has already grown to include heritage organizations and should encompass smaller cultural organizations, as well. There may also be opportunities to partner with the library system. The development of one, central web portal and calendar for all cultural venues and activities will stimulate further joint marketing collaborations.
- Ideas spinning off from the joint marketing discussion include commonly themed programming, development of a cultural passport program, more Chamber “after hours” and then said cultural organizations, and joint development of major cultural events, such as the “signature” events mentioned above. The upcoming Manatee Jazz Fest, in April, is a terrific example (see below under First Steps).
- Cultural organizations have expressed interest in joint fundraising for targeted collaborative activities. Success in securing Knight Foundation funding for cultural planning and to initiate joint marketing has established a precedent. Interest has been expressed in joint fundraising to continue the marketing effort, and to support collaborative programming and development of new, major cultural events. Another area of interest

for collaboration and joint fundraising is arts education and arts based youth programming (SEE ARTS EDUCATION AND YOUTH CHAPTER).

- In some communities, cultural organizations, especially those housed together in a shared facility, have begun to pool resources and efforts for shared support services such as data management, volunteer coordination, board and leadership development and other functions. There is now interest among cultural and heritage organizations in Bradenton in exploring such opportunities. **Montana Arts** is an example of an organization created to provide back office and administrative support to cultural groups, especially small, largely volunteer ones . <http://www.mtarts.com/>
- There is a history of partnerships with business, including sponsorships and the displays of artworks, many coordinated by the Arts Council of Manatee County. Some businesses, such as ComCenter, have displayed large sculptures in public spaces within and outside their buildings. Cultural organizations should build on these precedents to create more opportunities for showcasing artworks in businesses and publicizing the showcases.
- A strong belief voiced during the planning process is that a more broad-based and unified advocacy effort is needed – and on several levels – first and foremost to communicate the findings and recommendations of the Realize Bradenton Cultural Master Plan and advocate for implementation – but also to present an engaged and coherent voice in statewide and national cultural advocacy. Local cultural leaders can tap into tremendous resources of information, research and models of cultural programs by connecting with statewide and national advocacy organizations.
- Given the median age of the Bradenton population (40.3 for the City; 42.7 for the County) and the importance of effective healthcare, it is not surprising to learn of some partnering between the arts and health sectors, reflecting a growing trend, worldwide. There is an Art Therapy program at the Moffit Cancer Center<sup>26</sup> and The Wellness Community, in Lakewood Ranch is integrating the arts into its design and programming ([www.wellness-swfl.org](http://www.wellness-swfl.org)). National and international research has shown the power of hearts and creativity for patients, doctors and caregivers. The Society for the Arts In Healthcare is a national service organization engaged in advocacy, research and services: [www.theSAH.org](http://www.theSAH.org) Americans for the Arts has published a monograph, *Cultures of Care: A Study of Arts Programs in US Hospitals*, [www.AmericansForTheArts.org](http://www.AmericansForTheArts.org)

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<sup>26</sup> Carol Short runs the program.

- National research also shows that arts participation is proven to increase the health and well-being of older adults and cut overall costs of health care. See the Americans for the Arts monograph, *Creativity Matters: Arts and Aging in America*, [www.AmericansForTheArts.org](http://www.AmericansForTheArts.org). At [www.artsandaging.org](http://www.artsandaging.org) you can find a free toolkit that provides in-depth information and support for arts program development that targets older adults.
- There is also interest in projects and initiatives that combine the arts and environmental stewardship, including public art made with recycled materials (SEE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION). Manatee County is home to several eco-tourism sites, such as the Robinson Preserve, Emerson Point, Felts Preserve and Desoto National Memorial which might partner with arts, culture and heritage organizations.

One of the main purposes - and, often, an immediate outcome - of cultural planning is the development of greater communication, connections and new partnerships. The Marketing, Access and Collaborations Task Force developed a useful collaborations matrix chart to help guide future work on such partnerships.

- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Realize Bradenton Implementation Coalition, reinvigorated Arts Council; arts, culture and heritage organizations
- **Partners in implementation:** Downtown Development Authority, City of Bradenton, Manatee County, other municipalities, Chamber, Convention and Visitors Bureau, Library system, businesses, civic and community organizations, statewide and national advocacy organizations.
- **Timeline:** Immediate and 1-4 Years
- **Resources:** As needed for specific initiatives.
- **First steps:**
  - Follow up on the most promising connections made during cultural planning.
  - A stellar example is the upcoming Manatee Jazz Fest, a month long celebration of jazz music, culture and history taking place throughout Manatee County. Nine of the predominant cultural entities in Manatee County are collaborating on this effort to bring concerts, film screenings, parties, lectures, outdoor events, farmer's markets, cocktail

receptions, art shows and more. Additional information at [www.manateejazzfest.com](http://www.manateejazzfest.com)

- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**
  - 3-4 significant new partnerships during the first year following cultural planning
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - Effective use of shared resources;
  - Tap into the latest research and models.

## **4. Public Art**

Public art – sculptures, murals, portable paintings, videos, artist-designed functional elements, and many other kinds of art -- animates and humanizes public spaces and draws people into them. Public art may be beautiful, fun or thought provoking as it reflects and informs the heritage and character of the community. Public art can assist in revealing that which is special about a community, enhance city and regional identity, and contributes to sense of place. It improves the quality of the built environment, increases property values, and is an attraction for visitors, tourists and businesses.

There is considerable interest in establishing a public art program in Bradenton, based upon our interviews, focus groups, meetings, and surveys conducted during this cultural planning process. Public Art Task Force members, and other participants, are aware of the growing number of successful public art programs in communities throughout Florida, the U.S. (over 350) and the world. The Public Art TF examined strengths and challenges in Bradenton, as well as model programs and policies from other cities. They believe it would be wise to introduce public art to the community in carefully planned stages.

<b>Goal statement:</b>
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<b>Institute a Public Art Program in Bradenton.</b>
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**The Public Art Program will include the following elements:**

- **Clear definition and standards for public art.**
- **Policies for the public sector and for public art in private development.**
- **Professional administrative support for the program.**
- **Funding strategies for year one and long term.**
- **Successful permanent and temporary public art projects in year one.**
- **A long-term plan for continuing public art projects.**
- **Encouragement, education, assistance and resources to the community to fulfill its desire for public art, beginning in year one.**

**Situation analysis:**

- **Examples of art and sculpture commissioned by the private sector, many of which are publicly accessible, include those in the Village of the Arts, the Gecko Fest Sculptures, Murals on Ninth Street West, and the ComCenter Sculpture Garden.**

- The citizens of Bradenton are beginning to recognize the importance and value of public art and its ability to revitalize the community, strengthen civic pride, and enhance the quality of life for themselves and future generations.
- The Downtown Development Authority has made a policy and funding commitment to launch a public art program.
- Manatee County initially committed to a public art program for the Judicial Center, but withdrew support during the last phase.
- No communitywide standards for quality, site selection, durability, maintenance, etc. have been established.
- The current inventory of public art is small, with little impact.
- There has been minimal government or private sector investment in public art.
- The economic climate exacerbates the prevailing attitude that the arts are a lower investment priority. This was evidenced by the postponement of the public art program for the Judicial Center.

**Recommendation 4.1:**

**Establish a permanent Public Art Board to continue the work in developing, defining, and launching a public art program.**

- This group will grow out of the Realize Bradenton Public Art Task Force, whose members are willing to stay on for the initial year of the program. The Public Art Board (PAB) will be comprised of citizens willing to work hard to educate Bradenton leaders and residents about the economic, aesthetic, and community unifying benefits of public art.
- Diverse membership should reflect the skills and experience required to establish a public art program including an artist, curator, public relations/communications specialist, arts educator, business leader, and youth representation. The group will be advised by various public sector staff from planning, economic development, zoning, risk management, legal, and others, as necessary.
- A principal role of the Public Art Board will be to manage communications, PR, and advocacy on behalf of public art, tapping into traditional and electronic media.
- PAB will develop bylaws to define membership, purpose, governance, and succession. The PAB's development of committee bylaws and policies should include clear ethics guidelines for the Board and program

operation. After the first year, the Board will reconstitute itself in accordance with adopted policies and procedures related to board composition and terms of service.

- The PAB will develop public art policy, including a definition of public art, standards of quality, and policies governing calls for artists, selection, placement and installation, insurance, maintenance, gifts and loans, and de-accessioning.
- The PAB will serve as the artist selection jury for initial projects in the first year of the program. In subsequent years, and in accordance with national standards, the PAB will review recommendations made by distinct and separate juries appointed on a per-project basis.
- The Public Art Board will initially be an advisory committee to the Downtown Development Authority, because its first projects will be funded and approved by DDA, which will also provide staffing support. As it, potentially, assumes oversight of projects with private developers and/or the City or County, the PAB could become an independent body, or a standing committee of the reinvigorated Arts Council envisioned in this Plan (SEE SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING CHAPTER).
- The PAB should seek designation by the City to advise on gifts and loans proposed for placement on City property or in the public right-of-way – to bring a review process as to whether they are appropriate, of sufficient quality, safe for the public, and structurally sound. It will seek City support to insure and maintain these works. It may also play this role with respect to the County, eventually.
- The initial Public Art Board has received an orientation from the public art consultant on the cultural planning team and will continue to review sample policies, ordinances, and projects provided.
- The Public Art Board will seek paid, professional staff to provide support and guide the new program(s). At this critical phase of cultivating public art, it is important that the process be guided by an experienced and knowledgeable professional who can respond to the unique circumstances of Bradenton and Manatee County. Other programs in the region and the state of Florida's public art staff can advise on public art specialists who may be available on a contract basis.
- The PAB offers this preliminary definition of public art: *it includes, but is not limited to sculpture, murals, portable paintings, earth works and water works, neon, mosaics, photographs, prints, film, sound, video, and combinations or forms of media and new genres, and standardized fixtures such as grates, street lights, seating, and other design enhancements as rendered by a professional artist for unique or limited use. Public art also encompasses the utilization of artists on*

*design teams for buildings or infrastructure projects. Public art can be permanent or temporary, sited in public places or in private development settings that are accessible to the public.*

- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Public Art Task Force of Realize Bradenton.
- **Partners in implementation:** Realize Bradenton Implementation Committee, City of Bradenton staff, Downtown Development Authority, community advocates for public art.
- **Timeline:** Immediate and 1–4 Years
- **Resources:** Volunteer time of task force members; funding commitment and support from Downtown Development Authority.
- **First steps:** Form the new Public Art Board during the first six months; review model policies and ordinances.
- **Models:**
  - Standards of the public art field as defined by Public Art Network and various publications on the subject of program formation, i.e. *Public Art 101* by Barbara Goldstein<sup>27</sup>.
  - Information about Florida Public Art programs.  
<http://www.floriaarts.org/resources/cityandcountypublicartprograms.htm>
  - Florida Public Art Administrators organization: State-wide organization for program administrators and others interested in public art in the state.  
<http://www.floridapublicart.org/>
  - Public Art Network: a national networking and information resource on public art, with listserv and research materials,  
[www.americansforthearts.org/networks/public\\_art\\_network/default.asp](http://www.americansforthearts.org/networks/public_art_network/default.asp)
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**
  - Formation of the PAB and introduction of public art to the community.

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<sup>27</sup> University of Washington Press  
<http://www.washington.edu/uwpress/search/books/GOLPUB.html>

- Development of bylaws and policies.
- Launch of at least one demonstration project during the first year.
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - Public art can help to define the character and personality of Bradenton, add to the richness of its cultural life, and contribute to its vitality, livability, and economic success.

**Recommendation 4.2:**

**Seek policy adoptions and code changes that will encourage and enable public art in both public and private development.**

**Strategy 4.2.1: Develop a City of Bradenton policy encouraging the integration of public art into private development.**

Public Art Task Force members have been meeting with City staff to review options for incorporating language into City code and the Comprehensive Plan.

- The PATF prefers that the policy be driven by incentives, rather than requirements.
- PATF will convene a group of developers to advise on a policy that is workable and will provide sufficient encouragement towards integrating public art into the built environment. Private developers must be consulted in the development of a program that will affect their business within the City and, potentially, the County. Policy options to consider include density bonus trade-offs, fee and/or tax abatements or assessments based upon valuation of the project and/or square footage.
- Typically, funds may be spent by the developer for an on-site public art project, or can be pooled for use in other locations as overseen by a public art review board.
- Such a policy could also, eventually, be adopted by Manatee County.

**Strategy 4.2.2: Formally request a policy and funding commitment to public art from the Downtown Development Authority. Negotiate the status of the Public Art Board to oversee the program. Explore the**

possibility of a Central Community Redevelopment Agency commitment, as well.

**Strategy 4.2.3: Amend the Downtown Development Authority's Façade Grant Program to permit property owners to commission public art to enhance their properties. The Public Art Board would review projects.**

**Strategy 4.2.4: Consider amending the City sign ordinance to permit and encourage murals, created by professional artists, larger than current signage square footage limits.**

The PAB would provide review of this exceptions process to insure that public art is not reviewed by those enforcing a sign ordinance, but by the PAB. Art-related issues must not be limited by ordinances that are based on regulations for graphic design and advertising concerns. More research as to legal ramifications and aesthetic considerations is needed.

**Strategy 4.2.5: Begin work towards development of a City of Bradenton Percent for Public Art policy and ordinance; integrate into the City's Comprehensive Plan.**

It is hoped that as the first projects unfold, encouraged by strategies 1-3, enthusiasm for public art will grow, along with City interest in a public policy. Manatee County has evidenced interest in public art, and may eventually commit to a policy, as well. An organized effort to approach and convince those within County government to adopt public art policies in conjunction with the City's efforts should be undertaken.

Community engagement, education, and advocacy are fundamental to legislating an ordinance for public art. City and County funded programs are likely to be supported through dedication of an annual percentage of the capital improvement budget towards public art. Flexible use of such funding is most desirable. Operating costs would be required for program administration and maintenance of the growing public art collection.

- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Public Art Board, Realize Bradenton Implementation Coalition.
- **Partners in implementation:** City of Bradenton, Downtown Development Authority, community advocates for public art.
- **Timeline:** 1-4 Years.

- **Resources:** Volunteer time of PAB, City staff time, funding commitment and support from Downtown Development Authority.
- **First steps:** Convene a group of developers and City Planning Staff to flesh out the elements of a public art in private development policy.
- **Models:**
  - The Public Art Task Force has been provided copies of a study by the King County, Washington Public Art Program reviewing public art and private development policies of over two dozen programs.
  - Model policies from Clearwater, Santa Fe, Chattanooga, Santa Monica, Ventura, and other cities have been provided.
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**
  - Policies and code changes for strategies 1-3 completed.
  - Launch of at least one demonstration project during the first year.
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - The first three strategies offer easy steps to encourage public art quickly and inexpensively. Many small projects could be launched soon, and could excite the public about the potential for public art, long-term.

**Recommendation 4.3:**

**Initiate kick off public art projects to demonstrate their value to the community.**

Completion of the Realize Bradenton Cultural Master Plan will generate a great deal of initial interest in the community. It is important to reward this interest immediately, with concrete action.

**Strategy 4.3.1: Launch a major, highly visible project, “Muracle on Ninth,” Lining the street with murals and other public art.**

- Ninth Street is a major thoroughfare with quick impact potential that passes by the South Florida Museum, the ArtCenter, the Village of the

Arts, McKechnie Field, and other landmarks. It could easily be structured as an art/bus route and there is a great opportunity to line this major corridor with great murals and public art.

- It is important that the first permanent project(s) be funded through both public and private sources, as a cooperative venture. The future of program funding will be closely tied to the success of this initial project. Funding must include the cost of artist selection, administration, artist fees, installation, a plaque, dedication, and promotional materials. Ongoing maintenance for the project must be considered in advance. Community engagement and notification are crucial from the project planning stages through installation.

**Strategy 4.3.2: Launch a series of low cost, temporary public art projects that are free to the public.**

- Engage and delight the public with a series of temporary, inventive, and interactive projects produced in conjunction with annual festivals and other events, to maximize audiences. Projects such as these may provide a particular opportunity to bring in artists from outside the community to inject new ideas and standards:
  - A chalk art festival
  - Night lights along the river walk
  - A temporary water feature
  - A knit-in
  - A sand sculpture competition
  - A projected light performance
  - An outdoor film series
  - A “community stories” project led by an artist

**Strategy 4.3.3: Place public art throughout the Riverwalk.**

- The Riverwalk is one of Bradenton’s major and most used amenities, and is a prime location for public art and for public enjoyment of it.
  - **Lead implementation responsibility:** Public Art Board, Realize Bradenton Implementation Coalition, Downtown Development Authority.
  - **Partners in implementation:** ArtCenter Manatee, South Florida Museum, Village of the Arts, other heritage and cultural

organizations, City of Bradenton, Chamber of Commerce, private businesses and property owners, Manatee transportation officials.

- **Timeline:** Immediate/Near-Term, Long-Term
- **Resources:** Financial support from Downtown Development Authority; private sector funding and donations, incentives and grants to businesses and nonprofits to participate.
- **First steps:**
  - Inform the community of the success that other cities have had with murals.
  - Gain buy in from key organizations and property owners along Ninth Street.
  - Accomplish sign ordinance and Downtown Development Authority façade grant amendments.
  - Identify prospective locations for murals along Ninth Street.
  - Identify possible sites and media for Riverwalk public art.
  - Develop a list of artists who are skilled at murals.
  - Develop a *Call for Artists* to solicit muralists in a fair, competitive process.
  - Compile cost and technical information to determine resources needed.
  - Request funding from private and public sources.
- **Models:**
  - Two articles about incorporating public art into the Chattanooga Riverwalk:  
[www.collins3d.com/TimesMarkerArticle.doc](http://www.collins3d.com/TimesMarkerArticle.doc)  
[http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m1145/is\\_/ai\\_59319076](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1145/is_/ai_59319076)
  - Ventura, California placed very large, nationally known public artworks seen from the freeway to draw visitors into town. This has improved their reputation to well-heeled region's art patrons to come to the open studio tours to purchase local artworks regularly.
  - Mural projects: Philadelphia Mural Arts Program;  
<http://www.muralarts.org/whatwedo/community/>
  - Temporary projects:

- Creative Time [www.creativetime.org](http://www.creativetime.org)
- Public Art Fund, New York, NY [www.publicartfund.org/](http://www.publicartfund.org/)
- WaterFire, Providence, RI (<http://www.waterfire.org>)
- Santa Monica
- Scottsdale, AZ's ([www.nightlightsonthecanal.com](http://www.nightlightsonthecanal.com))
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**
  - Buy in and permissions obtained from partners.
  - Approval of policy amendments.
  - Successful fundraising.
  - Murals!
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - Both the murals in the temporary public art projects can begin and come to fruition quickly.
  - Huge impact through presence on a major thoroughfare and at major events (temporary public art projects).
  - Improved visibility for major cultural institutions such as the ArtCenter, Village of the Arts, and South Florida Museum.
  - A quality first impression as a key gateway to Bradenton.
  - A major splash of art and landscaping between the bridge and Third Avenue will “calm the traffic.” The block will be friendlier to the pedestrian and the connection with Third Avenue, Manatee Players, and parking for Rossi Park will be apparent.
  - Another way to enjoy the Riverwalk – and a tourist draw.
  - Opportunity for Bradenton to be seen as a center for Art by showcasing local and nationally known artists in prominent locations.

**Recommendation 4.4:**

**Develop ongoing private funding to support public art.**

There is sufficient interest in public art to warrant the belief that significant private funding could be developed, at least to launch the initial year of a public

art program. The Manatee Community Foundation has expressed interest in advising and acting as a fiscal agent.

Grants and corporate sponsorships could be sought and creative fundraising strategies, such as the Gecko Fest, could be employed to develop both funding and heightened interest.

- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Public Art Board, Realize Bradenton Implementation Coalition.
- **Partners in implementation:** Manatee Community Foundation, Corporations and businesses, individual donors, foundations, and arts, culture, and heritage organizations who may partner in fundraising.
- **Timeline:** Immediate, 1-4 Years and Long Term.
- **Resources:** Fundraising expertise.
- **First steps:** Establish fundraising goal for initial projects.
- **Models:** King County, WA's publication on art in private development.
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**
  - Establishment of fiscal agent relationship with the Manatee Community Foundation.
  - First public art projects include private sector support.
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - Support for public art projects and features a balanced and diverse range of funding sources, including private sector support.

**Recommendation 4.5:**

**Identify both temporary and permanent sites for public art.**

- Develop an inventory of potential, publicly accessible sites within the City. Both publicly and privately owned sites could be identified, but proper authorization will be required for use of non-public land. Possible sites already identified by the public art consultant and task force members include:

- Downtown along Old Main Street and along a walking trail to the Village of the Arts.
- Streetscapes/landscapes in public rights-of-way.
- Rossi Park and other City parks.
- The entire Riverwalk right-of-way.
- In the river itself.
- Entries and gateways to the City.
- Entries and gateways to the Village of the Arts.
- The Promenade development
- Transit stops and shelters.
- Prominent building exteriors.
- Tropicana freight cars.
- Conduct a formal inventory of existing public art, identifying name of piece, artist, location, media, dimensions, and potential maintenance needs. This inventory could eventually provide the basis for a Public Art Guide to Bradenton – web and printed versions.

- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Public Art Board.
- **Partners in implementation:** Realize Bradenton Implementation Coalition, Downtown Development Authority, public art contractor or consultant, citizen/stakeholder charrette process.
- **Timeline:** Immediate/Near-Term, 1-4 Years
- **Resources:** Volunteer time Public Art Board.
- **First steps:** Has begun.
- **Models:** Public Art ordinances and operational procedures in the following cities, and others, have been provided: Clearwater, FL; Ventura, CA; Chattanooga, TN; and Santa Monica, CA.
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**
  - Conduct and publish inventory.
- **Benefits/rationale:** Build the public art program based upon awareness of current works and a vision for future sites and types of work.

## 5. Arts Education and Youth Arts

Investing in arts education and arts-based youth programming is an investment in Bradenton's and the nation's future. Arts education opens doors for those with different learning styles, excites the imagination, and provides the disciplined training in creative problem-solving that is needed to develop the talent, enterprise, wealth and jobs of the future. Numerous studies now show the links between a strong arts education and academic achievement, success in school and positive social development<sup>28</sup>. Children who are exposed to the arts as they grow up are also the artists, audiences and patrons of the future.

The Arts Education and Youth Arts Task Force conveyed the importance of learning in and through the arts powerfully: *It is in the future of imagination that we see the arts at the heart of a great society, the record of civilization, the common experience that links the past to the present and the present to the future. Youth learn to appreciate and honor the arts as society's gift to itself – a gift that links hope to memory, inspires courage, enriches celebrations, and makes tragedy bearable. The National Standards for Arts Education remind us that, in a complex world, inundated with a bewildering array of messages and meetings, an arts education – based in the classroom and in the community – helps youth explore, understand, accept, and use ambiguity and subjectivity in the process of learning to make decisions in situations where no standard answers exist, and creative solutions are needed.*

### **Goal statement**

**Increase youth participation in the arts and cultural education in Bradenton by enhancing school and afterschool opportunities that support and encourage youth involvement and engagement, while offering venues to showcase talent.**

### **Situation analysis**

- Florida was the first state to adopt the National Standards for Arts Education in 1994; the Sunshine State Standards were adopted in 1996, and include the arts as a core subject. Florida has a strong arts education advocacy coalition – Arts for a Complete Education (ACE)/ Florida Alliance for Arts Education, [www.faae.org/](http://www.faae.org/) – that is a resource for

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<sup>28</sup> *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*  
[http://www.americansforthearts.org/public\\_awareness/resources/artsed\\_publications/003.asp](http://www.americansforthearts.org/public_awareness/resources/artsed_publications/003.asp)  
*Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning*, 2002.  
[http://www.americansforthearts.org/public\\_awareness/artsed\\_facts/highlights/001.asp](http://www.americansforthearts.org/public_awareness/artsed_facts/highlights/001.asp)  
*YouthARTS Development Project*. Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Prevention, Americans for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts,  
<http://www.americansforthearts.org/youtharts/about/>

advocacy, networking, information, research, curriculum models and professional development.

- The Manatee County School District has maintained a significant commitment to arts education with 52 art teachers, 54 music teachers, and 15 dance/theater teachers serving students in elementary, middle, and high schools. Noted programs include those at Electa Arcotte Lee Magnet Middle School, Manatee School of the Arts, and Rowlett Magnet Elementary School.
- With decreasing amounts of district funding available for special programs, fundraising for field trips, artists in residencies and other partnerships with community-based arts and cultural organizations occurs on a school by school basis, mostly done by parent and student groups. Teachers also write grants to support such programming.
- The School District's "HeArt and Soul" art gala and live auction event raises approximately \$45,000 a year for arts education programming.
- The Gecko-Fest fundraiser has provided over \$10,000 per year, during the last two years, for arts education programming.
- The Arts Council of Manatee County has utilized arts license plate revenues to support arts education and arts-based youth programming via grants and direct management.
- Key partnerships between the School District and community-based cultural organizations include those with the Manatee Players, South Florida Museum, Arts Council of Manatee County, ArtCenter Manatee, and, also, organizations in Sarasota County such as Asolo Theater and the Sarasota Orchestra.
- There is outstanding youth talent in Bradenton, many of whom participate and volunteer with cultural institutions and programs.
- The Prodigy Cultural Arts Program has been praised as a community-based program designed to help children improve learning skills, attitudes and discipline through creative self-expression. Some YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, Oasis, the Police Athletic League and Gulf Coast Marine also offer arts programming.
- It was assumed during our planning process that access to high-quality arts based youth programming has declined and is limited and uneven, but no inventory of such programs exists and there is little communication among them about issues, challenges and best practices.
- The Manatee County School District is a recipient of a federal 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Grant, which supports after school programming in four elementary schools and one middle school.

- There are few places for youths to “hang out” in Bradenton to partake of or participate in cultural activities that are of interest to them. Most current programs and venues seem geared to older adults. There are few opportunities for young peoples’ artistic talents to be showcased.
- Our market research indicated there is a gap in participation among families – particularly those with younger children – in current programming, as reflected by the median age in consumer markets showing demand for arts and culture, but low market penetration.
- There is fear that in-school arts education programs are threatened by looming budget cuts in a struggling economy.
- Planning participants and the Arts Education and Youth Arts Task Force cited the most pressing challenges as lack of funding for programs, lack of transportation to and from community-based programs, lack of venues outside schools, and a lack of cultural activities and opportunities for youth that truly represent the diversity of the community.

Frequently cited ingredients for high-quality, accessible arts education include:

- School district adopted standards and curriculum;
- In-school opportunities for cultural learning through both discipline-based, sequential arts education and integration of the arts into the whole curriculum;
- Rigorous professional development to prepare both arts and general classroom instructors to teach and integrate the arts;
- Strong partnerships between schools and community based cultural organizations to augment and enhance learning opportunities;
- Access to afterschool and summer arts-based youth development programs for any child that needs or wants them.

In many communities a strong umbrella organization, such as an arts council or an entity formed for the purpose, takes a leadership role in the policy development, advocacy, fundraising and partnership brokering that are needed for “systemic” arts education enhancement, both in-school and out-of-school. Many planning participants expressed the hope that a reinvigorated, strengthened Arts Council could shift its attention from arts education programming to these leadership roles.

What pieces of this arts education puzzle should this Cultural Master Plan address? The most promising avenues would seem to be strong advocacy for the role and value of creative learning, enhancing communication among in-school and out-of-school based programs, developing funding for programs and

transportation, and increasing opportunities for youth to participate in cultural activity and have their talents showcased.

**Recommendation 5.1.1:**

**Reinvigorate and strengthen the Arts Council of Manatee County and refocus its role with respect to arts education to be one of leadership and coordination of advocacy, policy development, fundraising and information resources. (SEE ALSO, SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING CHAPTER)**

A strong and coordinated advocacy effort is needed to make the case for the critical importance of arts education to school district leaders, elected officials, civic leaders and the community, as the threat of cutbacks loom. This effort should be fueled by access to information on arts education research, policy, model programs and best practices, that can be readily obtained from state and national sources and made available to cultural education providers, advocates and the community. As discussed in many other sections of the Plan, the prevailing sentiment Bradenton cultural leaders is that the Arts Council needs a dramatic infusion of board and staff leadership and organizational capacity in order to play the many “umbrella leadership” roles called for during cultural planning, including coordination for arts education efforts. (SEE SUPPORT AND CAPACITY BUILDING CHAPTER FOR A MORE COMPLETE DISCUSSION.)

A reinvigorated Arts Council should rally Bradenton-based cultural organizations to play a strong role in advocacy efforts at the local state and national levels. As an information resource with a robust arts education portal on its website, the Arts Council would also be the logical organization to coordinate communication between the School District, cultural organizations and individual artists to foster collaborations that support District arts education policy and practice. It should convene these stakeholders regularly to work towards “systemic” improvements in cultural education. The website should also include an inventory of suitable venues for youth program rehearsals and performances. The Arts Council should move away from its involvement in direct programming, in order to focus on its coordinating, “umbrella” role.

The Arts Council already has tapped into funding for arts education programming, as a conduit for State license plate revenue through Manatee County. The reinvigorated Arts Council should build its fundraising and grant writing capacity in order to develop larger pools of private and public funding that would be distributed to cultural organizations, schools and teaching artists

to develop and strengthen arts education initiatives and programs, and address issues such as transportation.

The solution to the transportation problem is not yet clear. Some say that parents have to provide transportation, but if both parents are working during school or afterschool hours, this is problematic. Manatee County has a bus system, but the perception is that it is unsafe and/or undesirable. Some afterschool programs have vans, but insurance is an issue. More creative thinking is needed to devise a transportation solution.

- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Realize Bradenton Implementation Coalition, reinvigorated Arts Council
- **Partners in implementation:** Manatee County School District; arts, culture and heritage organizations; Florida Alliance for Arts Education; civic leaders
- **Timeline:** 1-4 years – to strengthen the Arts Council so that it can play a leadership role for cultural education
- **Resources:** Foundation and corporate grants; individual donors; fundraising events; memberships; public funding.
- **First steps:**
  - Reformulate Arts Council board.
  - Develop funding, strategic and business plan for reinvigorated Arts Council.
  - Chart a new role, according to the above recommendations.
- **Models:** Systemic efforts:
  - Broward County, Florida  
<http://www.broward.org/arts/aie/welcome.htm>
  - Franklin County (Columbus, OH)  
<http://www.gcac.org/arts-education/>
  - Chicago Arts Partnership for Education (CAPE),  
<http://www.capeweb.org/> Founded in 1992, Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE) has become recognized as a leader in the field of school improvement through the arts.
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**
  - Arts Council reinvigorated and ready to begin playing a stronger role in arts education within one year.

- **Benefits/rationale:** An informed and coordinated partnership between the School District and community-based cultural organizations will yield more and better arts education and address issues such as funding and transportation.

**Recommendation 5.1.2:**

**Increase opportunities for youth to participate in and have their talents showcased in community events and festivals. (SEE ALSO, DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION CHAPTER)**

The need for more opportunities to showcase youth talent came up throughout the planning process. Several options were discussed:

- Incorporate youth talent into existing events such as Get Down Downtown.
- Create a new event -- a community-wide Martin Luther King Day celebration, in Bradenton, to showcase youth talent and celebrate diversity and unity across all ethnic groups and ages.
- Plan for youth participation and talent showcase in other proposed new events, such as the “Singing River Festival,” suggested by the Downtown Revitalization Task Force.

Another critical need and opportunity is for youth empowerment, leadership and responsibility in planning and managing such events. Realize Bradenton leadership should build upon the youth focus group and involvement on the steering committee and task forces by inviting youth leaders to hold a Youth Arts Summit to initiate more detailed planning for a youth role in the above events.

- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Realize Bradenton Implementation Coalition, Central Community Redevelopment Agency, Downtown Development Authority, Arts Council
- **Partners in implementation:** Youth arts programs, community and youth centers, public and private schools, Manatee County Children’s Services, City of Bradenton, Village of the Arts, Palmetto Art Center, church youth groups, fraternities/sororities, businesses.
- **Timeline:** 1-4 years
- **Resources:** Public and private funding
- **First steps:**

- Hold Youth Arts Summit within the first year. Incorporate youth leadership into the design and execution of the event(s).
- Decide and commit to 1-2 events to focus efforts.
- Recruit steering committee, including youth, to plan, fund raise for and execute event.
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**
  - Commitment to 1-2 new and/or reformulated events showcasing youth talent within the first two years.
- **Benefits/rationale:** Showcasing of youth talent stimulates pride in community and youth; provides opportunities for youth to exercise leadership and responsibility, building skills and self-efficacy.

**Recommendation 5.1.3:**

**Create a forum/network of arts based youth programs in the community to promote sharing of best practices and information, community awareness and joint programming.**

Prodigy Cultural Arts Program has expressed interest in leading the effort to identify, inventory and network together community-based youth development programs which incorporate the arts and culture. The purpose would be to assess the relative level of access to such programs in Manatee County, identify critical issues and potential solutions, share best practices and connect the network to regional and national resources and information of the Youth Arts Field.

Prodigy has been meeting already with five churches that offer programs and has begun to explore avenues for funding, under the umbrella of one of the church's community development corporation. This group could provided basis for a larger, regular convening of youth arts providers. The Manatee Juvenile Justice Council is also a forum for exchange about prevention, intervention and referrals for youth offenders.

Issues for arts-based youth programs include youth recruitment and retention, training and professional development, evaluation, parental involvement funding and organizational capacity. It can be very helpful for programs to network to share successes, challenges and, potentially, collaborative solutions. Until a scan occurs to inventory programs, questions in regard to whether there are enough services, whether they are serving diverse populations, and how to increase access and impact, cannot be addressed.

The Arts Education and Youth Arts Task Force Report spoke to the purpose of such a convening: *it will allow multiple organizations and individuals with differing views to feel welcome in the collaboration and to participate in finding creative ways to serve youth in the community and expand collaboration in an effort to lead multi-organizational efforts.*

Collaborative activities could begin with the following:

- A youth arts web portal could be created as a resource for programs to share information, for parents wishing to locate appropriate programs and for youth to access programs and for information about venues and other resources.
- Collaborations among cultural organizations to develop and promote summer programs for youth.
- A partnership with the Manatee County School District to develop a newsletter for District parents about afterschool and summer opportunities.

- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Prodigy Cultural Arts Program, Realize Bradenton Implementation Coalition
- **Partners in implementation:** Arts based youth programs in Manatee County; Arts Council, public and private youth development organizations; Manatee County School District; Manatee County; arts, culture and heritage organizations
- **Timeline:** 1-4 years and long term:
- **Resources:** Staff time of youth arts programs; foundation funding; public support.
- **First steps:** Begin identifying youth arts service providers; assess interest in networking
- **Models:**
  - Seattle Arts Education Consortium, a coalition of community based youth arts organizations. A report from a two-year study, *Assessing Learning Through the Arts* is available at <http://www.artscorps.org/downloads/publications/Consortium%20Report.pdf>
  - **The Massachusetts Cultural Council's YouthReach Initiative** promotes out-of-school arts, humanities and science opportunities that nurture the spirit of creative inquiry in young people. YouthReach encourages

collaboration between cultural organizations, human service agencies and other organizations. MCC provides grant funding, information, technical assistance and opportunities to network

<http://www.massculturalcouncil.org/programs/youthreach.html>

- **YouthArts Toolkit:** The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, National Endowment for the Arts and Americans for the Arts produced a multimedia toolkit with a handbook and videos outlining best practices in art based youth programming, evaluation and funding. It is now available online from Americans for the Arts, [www.AmericansForTheArts.org/youtharts/howtouse.asp](http://www.AmericansForTheArts.org/youtharts/howtouse.asp)
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**
  - Meeting of Manatee County arts-based youth program staff within the first year.
  - Inclusion of mechanisms for an evaluation, feedback and improvement, to ensure advancement of coordinated efforts towards established goals.
  - Documented increase in opportunities and venues in which Bradenton youth gain access to cultural learning.
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - Networking will enable sharing of best practices, increased access, increased program effectiveness and impact.
  - Arts programs offer youth opportunities to create, develop, analyze, reflect and dream. Whether in the classroom or community, the arts provide an atmosphere for self-expression offering youth safe places to express themselves, while accepting the diversity of others.

## 6. Support and Capacity Building

Bradenton has cultural assets that would be the envy of a city two or three times as large – a natural history museum that has been expanded and upgraded over the last eight years, a nationally recognized community theater that is about to move into a stunning and state-of-the-art facility, an arts center that is beginning to host national touring exhibits in addition to those of local artists, a unique artists enclave with almost 40 studios and galleries, and historic sites, neighborhoods and buildings that reflect its rich heritage as an agricultural, commercial and government center.

All of these institutions have been community mainstays for many years, and none are running deficits. Yet, these – and the many other arts, cultural and heritage organizations in Bradenton and the County -- would benefit from a broadened base of financial support and improved organizational capacity. Most importantly, the community would benefit from the additional cultural activity, amenities and collaborations that contribute to Bradenton’s unique identity, vitality, livability and prosperity. This chapter outlines strategies to strengthen arts, cultural and heritage organizations and their impact.

What do we mean by capacity building? This term encompasses the myriad ways in which organizations conduct their business – planning, board development, governance, staff and program management, marketing, customer service and resource development – and efforts to improve management efficiency and effectiveness.

### Goal Statement

**Enhance the overall funding and capacity of arts, cultural and heritage organizations in Bradenton.**

### Situation analysis

- Bradenton has strong cultural organizations, but many view them as “mom-and-pop” level rather than professional. Some planning participants lamented the low self-image of Bradenton as a cultural center, compared to Sarasota. Comparisons of the communities were cited frequently during interviews with some saying, “*We are not going to be the black tie openings, film festivals type of town like Sarasota,*” and others, “*It’s not bad to have an older sibling that is successful. We’ve been comparing and aspiring*<sup>29</sup>.”

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<sup>29</sup> Emblematic quote from a key interview participant.

- A problem endemic to the nonprofit arts everywhere, including Bradenton, is that audiences, and even some funders, do not understand that the price of a ticket only covers about half the costs of putting on the show, or exhibit. The rest must be raised from private and public sources.
- Funding is a challenge for Bradenton's cultural organizations:
  - Organizations are reporting that corporate support has diminished in the slowing economy.
  - There are relatively fewer foundations in Manatee County than in neighboring areas. Information provided by the Sarasota Community Foundation on foundation giving in FY 2006 indicated that 45 Bradenton foundations (including family foundations) gave a total of \$11,028,258. Over 180 Sarasota-based foundations gave \$54,311,890 in FY 2006 - nearly five times more -- confirming the impression of greater wealth and giving in Sarasota.
  - Individual cultural philanthropy is under-developed. There has been strong individual support for recent capital campaigns, particularly of the South Florida Museum, but these have not translated into crucially needed ongoing support for operations. Some cite the modest Midwestern roots of many Bradenton retirees in comparison to the imported wealth of Sarasota retirees, from the Northeast. In either case retirees may retain philanthropic ties to their original communities that limit giving in their new homes. Changing those habits requires forming relationships to reach them as donors and philanthropists to the arts.
- The South Florida Museum, Manatee Players and ArtCenter Manatee all sit on City owned land at a dollar per year lease, but receive no ongoing government support.
  - An Americans for the Arts study of Local Arts Agency (LAA) budgets and programming for FY 2003 (will be updated this year) indicated that 88.4% of Local Arts Agencies in cities between 30,000 and 99,000 in population, receive local governments support averaging \$71,356. The average budget for LAAs in this population range is \$242,204; revenue sources for LAAs include: 31.8% local government; 16.1% private contributions; 40.1% earned income; 6.9% other government.
  - The Arts Council of Manatee County receives the County share of the cultural license plate revenues generated through the state - less than \$20,000 per year, to support cultural projects, throughout the County.

- Manatee County is investing approximately \$.5 million per year to maintain historic sites and programs.
- Dozens of counties in Florida allocate a portion of their bed tax to arts, cultural, and heritage organizations. Close by examples include Hillsborough – over \$1 million per year; Sarasota -- \$1.7 million per year; Orange -- \$3.2 million per year.
- Many planning participants said that there had been little history of cultural organizations working together before the formation of the Bradenton Cultural and Business Alliance and this planning effort.
- Smaller cultural organization voiced their challenges at one focus group. In addition to those in common with larger organizations such as funding and marketing, they cited the following:
  - It is hard to get young people to come and participate.
  - School funding for arts education residencies and field trips is diminishing – around the state.
  - There is a need for more facilities; demand for programs is growing; they need space and funding.
  - They would like better connections with area colleges.
  - There is a concern that the community is becoming unaffordable for artists to live and work.
- There is a need for more, and to make better use of, professional development and management assistance services for nonprofit cultural organizations and artists.
- There is widespread belief that the Arts Council of Manatee County has been limited by its lack of organizational capacity, relatively small cadre of leadership and focus on programs. There is strong sentiment that it needs new and expanded board and staff leadership in order to play stronger roles in facilitating collaborations, advocacy, visibility and support for the cultural community.
- Bradenton-based organizations are attracting audiences from Sarasota, Lakewood Ranch and the wider region. Perhaps they will be successful in attracting increased donations, as well.
- There is also a potential to tap more resources in the Bradenton community, as people look closer to home, rather than Sarasota, for their cultural participation and to provide their support.
- A precedent for joint fundraising was established with the Gecko-Fest, and there is interest in continuing this effort. The cultural planning

process has brought new leadership to the table and reinforced new habits of partnership and collaboration.

**Recommendation 6.1.1:**

**Build community awareness of the role and value of the arts, culture and heritage.**

The Support and Capacity Building Task Force focused on four strategies to address this priority, so important to all other goals:

- Create high-impact community-wide events showcasing the arts, culture and heritage (The Task Force emphasized, as did other task forces, focus groups and research, the importance of cultural events reflecting the full diversity of the community, including youth);
- Develop better connections among cultural events through the creation of a Cultural Art Transport system with Manatee County Transit Authority.
- Work to increase media coverage of arts, culture and heritage events and venues.
- Increase direct advocacy to local elected officials and other civic leaders to make the case for the important role arts, culture and heritage to sense of place, identity, livability and economic prosperity.

These first three strategies are discussed in more detail and fleshed out in other chapters. (SEE DOWNTOWN CULTURAL VITALITY, AND MARKETING CHAPTERS). This Plan, itself, must be a prime tool for making the advocacy case. Communicating the findings and recommendations of the Plan will be discussed in the IMPLEMENTATION CHAPTER.

**Recommendation 6.1.2:**

**Strengthen the Arts Council of Manatee County to play a key leadership and coordinating role on behalf of Realize Bradenton implementation and future cultural development, countywide.**

This is one of the key recommendations of this Plan. It is referenced in every other chapter, but discussed in most detail here.

The need for a strong “umbrella” cultural agency to lead and coordinate countywide cultural development was expressed strongly in key interviews, focus groups, the organizational capacity assessment and in all task force deliberations. Roles and duties of such an organization, based upon planning input and reference to national standards of the Local Arts Agency Field, include:

- Gather, filter and disseminate information to the public, civic leaders and cultural stakeholders via its website and other electronic and print media, etc.; including marketing the arts, culture and heritage to increase participation and cultural tourism marketing;
- Coordinate and support advocacy efforts of the cultural sector;
- Develop and disseminate funding for cultural organizations, venues, activities and individual artists/creators;
- Provide technical and capacity building assistance to cultural organizations and individual creators;
- Develop and broker partnerships among the arts, businesses, education, social services and other sectors;
- Plan and assess cultural development opportunities and create cultural policy on behalf of government and the public, including playing a role as the official designated Local Arts Agency for Manatee County and the City of Bradenton;
- Convene the cultural community and civic leadership to identify and address opportunities for joint initiatives, such as fundraising, cultural space development or others;
- Develop and manage programs, such as events, festivals and arts education services to address needs and gaps that individual cultural organizations cannot address; includes coordination of joint programming initiatives.

The prevailing sentiment expressed in key interviews, focus groups and advisory committee meetings is that the Arts Council needs new and expanded board and staff leadership, and additional capacity, in order to fulfill these “umbrella” roles. This was reinforced by the Organizational Capacity Assessment in which the Arts Council was not chosen by its peer, “Big 5” entities as the preferred organization to lead and coordinate any of the “umbrella” functions listed -- such as joint marketing, advocacy, fund-raising or information services<sup>30</sup>.

Once new board leadership is identified and recruited, an intensive organizational strategic and business planning effort must unfold in order to structure and secure resources for a reinvigorated Arts Council to evolve. The current 501 © 3 status should be retained. The Council has already renamed itself the Manatee County Cultural Alliance to reflect the broader purview and new collaborations engendered during this planning process.

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<sup>30</sup> Realize Bradenton Organizational Capacity Assessment Report, December, 2008; Decision Support Partners, Inc.; Surale Phillips; in partnership with Creative Planning, Inc.: Bill Bulick.

There is another organization recommended by this Plan, the Realize Bradenton Implementation Coalition, that will need to play a role in convening, advocacy, joint marketing, partnership brokering and special initiatives -- especially during the critical, early phases of plan implementation, while the effort to strengthen the Arts Council is under way. Long-term, a strong business and cultural alliance is needed, as a permanent partner with the reinvigorated Arts Council, and the entire cultural community, in cultural advocacy and development efforts. The formation of the Bradenton Culture and Business Alliance, to initiate this planning process, was the first step. Additional community leadership was engaged through the Realize Bradenton process, and provides the basis for the near term Implementation Coalition to evolve into a permanent and strong, 501 c 3 cultural and business alliance. That organization and its evolution is discussed in more detail in the Implementation Section.

Meanwhile, reforming and strengthening the Arts Council is one of the most important strategies of this Plan.

- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Realize Bradenton Implementation Coalition, Arts Council Board
- **Partners in implementation:** Arts, culture and heritage organizations; civic leadership; Nonprofit Resource Center of Sarasota Community Foundation, Downtown Development Authority
- **Timeline:** 1-4 years
- **Resources:** Foundation capacity building grants; individual donors; public funding.
- **First steps:** Recruit new leadership; seek funding for planning, capacity building and four future operations; undertake strategic organizational planning.
- **Models:**
  - The Delray Beach Downtown Marketing Cooperative is a good example of a downtown cultural and business alliance developed to create, organize and manage events, to enhance the economic prosperity of downtown, and to assist with marketing and promoting downtown.  
<http://www.downtowndelraybeach.com/site.php?PageID=56>
  - Arts Council models:
    - Arts Council of Sarasota County

<http://www.sarasota-arts.org/>

- Abilene Cultural Affairs Council  
<http://www.abilenecac.org/index.html>
- Champaign County Arts, Culture and Entertainment Council  
<http://www.40north.org/>
- Acadiana Arts Council, Lafayette, LA  
<http://www.acadianaartscouncil.org/>
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**
  - Arts Council reformed with stable funding within one year
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - Strong leadership and coordination for cultural development.

**Recommendation 6.1.3:**

**Build the capacity of arts, culture and heritage organizations.**

If cultural organizations can improve their management effectiveness, they will be better able to reach the public with quality services, maximize access and participation in cultural activity, and develop the resources needed to sustain their operations. The Realize Bradenton Cultural Master Plan process included a key research component that addresses this opportunity. The Organizational Capacity Survey<sup>31</sup> asked the “Big Five” Bradenton based organizations to rate their own effectiveness in several key domains: planning, fund development, marketing, programming, governance, operational management, and partnerships/collaborations. The results provide each organization with a tool to identify areas where they need to develop more expertise and capacity. The planning process has already included some consultation with organizations about these results.

There are three areas of challenge identified by all organizations that are being addressed by the Realize Bradenton planning process, itself:

- Marketing and communications: the Plan recommends continuation of a joint marketing initiative begun early in the planning process (SEE MARKETING CHAPTER);

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<sup>31</sup> Realize Bradenton Organizational Capacity Assessment Report, December, 2008; Decision Support Partners, Inc.; Surale Phillips; in partnership with Creative Planning, Inc.: Bill Bulick.

- Partnerships and collaborations: as has been said previously, the planning process itself has engendered a new spirit of collaboration that can lead to joint initiatives in programming, fund-raising and even administrative support services (SEE MARKETING AND COLLABORATIONS CHAPTER);
- Board development: this planning process was designed to inspire and engage existing and new leadership throughout. As a result, cultural organizations will be able to draw upon a larger pool of leadership for their boards, committees and special projects. It is particularly important that boards seek and engage with a broader diversity of leaders, including younger leaders that have been identified and/or emerged.

During this planning process, communication occurred with the Sarasota Community Foundation, sponsor of the regional Nonprofit Resource Center, which provides training, classes and workshops in nonprofit management, covering the domains surveyed through the Capacity Assessment. Top line results have been shared with Sarasota Community Foundation staff, and they have expressed specific interest in sponsoring workshops and training to address the challenges identified, and tailor those offerings to cultural organizations in Manatee County, including smaller organizations on Anna Maria Island and throughout the county.

- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Arts, culture and heritage organizations; Nonprofit Resource Center of Sarasota Community Foundation
- **Partners in implementation:** Realize Bradenton Implementation Committee; Manatee Community Foundation; Manatee Young Professionals; Manateens; Chamber; Latino Chamber of Commerce; Kiwanis and other service clubs; reinvigorated Arts Council
- **Timeline:** Immediate/Near-Term
- **Resources:** Nonprofit Resource Center; Foundation capacity building grants; resources and board/staff time of arts, cultural and heritage organizations
- **First steps:**
  - Engage with Nonprofit Resource Center and Manatee Community Foundation to plan training.
  - Continue with joint marketing and other initiatives begun during Plan.
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**

- Series of capacity building workshops held during first year
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - Stronger, more sustainable cultural organizations.

**Recommendation 6.2.1:**

**Increase private support for arts, culture and heritage.**

As noted above, the data on foundation giving in Bradenton versus Sarasota reinforce a strong belief that private support is lower in Bradenton. Growing a “culture of philanthropy” is long term work, but can be accelerated by the spirit of collaboration and strategies developed during this planning process, such as:

- Increased visibility for cultural activity and venues, via joint marketing, will demonstrate their value to the community in increased participation, livability and economic impact – the kinds of outcomes that donors like to see.
- There is already a precedent for joint fundraising via the Gecko-Fest, which was not only highly visible, but fun – and it tapped into giving in new ways. Another type of joint fundraising that is of interest is workplace giving, a large, long-term project, with great potential – that could not be taken on by a single organization, but requires the collaboration and trust being established by this planning process.
- Fundraising results will also be enhanced by building fundraising expertise and capacity, as described above, via training and an increased organizational focus on this critical function.

A reinvigorated Arts Council could play a leading role in all three areas.

The most important opportunity is to grow individual giving. Nationally, it represents the vast proportion of private-sector giving to cultural organizations – 35% of total revenues, compared to 2.5% from corporations and 5% from foundations – meaning over 80% of private giving to cultural organizations is from individual donors. Hence, there is more to gain from targeting this source. A particularly promising subset, given the relatively high median age of residence, is “planned giving.”

During this planning process, participating Manatee Community Foundation board and staff representatives indicated interest in exploring strategies to grow cultural philanthropy, and are willing to host a “philanthropy round table” to jumpstart discussions. The Foundation – already the fiscal agent for the Knight Foundation pool of funding that supported Realize Bradenton planning – is also

able to steward and manage pools of private donations, including donor advised funds, that may be raised for various of the Realize Bradenton initiatives.

- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Realize Bradenton Implementation Coalition, Manatee Community Foundation
- **Partners in implementation:** Arts, culture and heritage organizations; civic leadership; Nonprofit Resource Center of Sarasota Community Foundation; reinvigorated Arts Council; individual donors, foundations and corporations
- **Timeline:** 1-4 Years and Long-Term
- **Resources:** Foundation capacity building grants; individual donors
- **First steps:**
  - Manatee Community Foundation convenes a “funders forum” to explore strategies for increasing philanthropy and to “vet” Plan initiatives.
  - First implementation steps, such as continued joint marketing and public art raise visibility and model collaborative approach to fundraising.
  - Revenue streams of cultural organizations should be benchmarked and analyzed as a basis to quantify private giving goals and progress.
  - Sponsor seminars and other special programs for high net worth individuals
- **Models:** Austin Campaign For Philanthropy “*I live here, I give here*” initiative: <http://www.ilivehereigivehere.org/>
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**
  - Demonstrable increase in private giving, within two years.
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - Stronger, more financially stable cultural organizations with diversified revenues.

**Recommendation 6.2:**

**Increase public support for arts, culture and heritage.**

As indicated in the introduction to this chapter, almost 90% of communities between 30,000 and 99,000 in population, with local arts agencies, provide ongoing public support for their cultural sectors. Total local government funding for the arts in the U.S. has been the fastest growing government source for over two decades, and now surpasses \$850 million; in 2008; state legislative appropriations were almost \$360 million, and federal appropriations were \$144 million. This is major, and critically needed support.

For cultural organizations nationally, on average, 8% of their revenue comes from government sources<sup>32</sup>. This is to acknowledge the public value and impact of their programs and to diversify their sources of support, balancing earned income from ticket sales (usually well over 50%) and private giving (usually, over 40%). Public support is also a critical lever for private donations, because public grants virtually always require private match, thus cementing the public-private partnership that fosters a vibrant cultural scene.

The Realize Bradenton Community Survey of over 1200 individuals revealed strong interest and support for a greater local government role:

- Over 72% “agreed” or “agreed strongly” that thriving arts, culture, and heritage places contribute to the economic vitality of our region by attracting visitors, business, and employees to our region.
- When asked to rate, on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 meaning "not at all" and 10 meaning "very much," “how important is public support for arts, culture, and heritage?” over 90% rated the importance as 6 or better; almost 80% rated the importance 8 or better and over 50% rated it as 10.

An Americans for the Arts economic impact study, commissioned for Realize Bradenton, indicates that spending by Manatee County organizations and their audiences in 2007 generated \$29.5 million in economic activity, 441 full-time equivalent jobs, \$9.2 million in household income to local residents, \$607,000 in tax revenue to local government and \$1,312,000 in tax revenue to state government<sup>33</sup>.

The economic impact study underscores the significant impact of cultural tourism. Of the \$17 million in event related spending by audiences in 2007 (restaurants, shopping, parking, hotels, etc.), almost \$9 million was by nonresident attendees, who spend, on average, \$54.18 apiece, compared to \$21.36 by resident attendees.

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<sup>32</sup> Statistics from Americans for the Arts;

[http://www.artsusa.org/information\\_services/toolkit/007.asp#](http://www.artsusa.org/information_services/toolkit/007.asp#)

<sup>33</sup> *Arts & Economic Prosperity III: the Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Cultural Organizations and their Audiences in Manatee County*; Americans for the Arts Study, commissioned for Realize Bradenton, 2009.

There is a unique opportunity unfolding right now. The Manatee County Commission and Tourism Development Commission are considering a 1% increase in the bed tax, to be used for tourism infrastructure and marketing. Use of a portion of this increase for cultural tourism marketing, packaging and product development would be appropriate based upon ample precedents in other Florida counties and across the nation<sup>34</sup>.

- The bed tax is one of the most frequently earmarked funding sources for the arts in the U.S., because cultural amenities help to attract tourists, lengthen their stay, increase their spending, build tourism and grow the broader economy.
- In 2001, an estimated 7.0 million out-of-state cultural tourists visiting Florida spent \$4.5 billion, adding \$9.3 billion to the Florida's gross regional product and creating 103,713 full-time equivalent jobs with a payroll of \$2.6 billion.
- A 2000 study indicates that Heritage Tourism generates \$3.721 billion in expenditures in Florida.
- Arts, cultural and heritage tourists spend more. According to a national study, local attendees spent an average of \$21.75 per arts event, while non-local attendees spent \$38.05 per event – 74.9 percent more. For Manatee County, the numbers are even more compelling: resident attendees spend an average of \$21.36, excluding the cost of admission; nonresident attendees spend \$54.18, more than double that of residents<sup>35</sup> When a community has arts, cultural and heritage activities to offer tourists, they stay longer in the area; and thus, spend more.
- According to Florida Tax Watch Tourism Research Report, 74.9% of visitors to Florida participate in cultural activities. The report goes on to say we need to understand the factors that make Florida an attractive destination and retain and enhance those factors.
- Dedicating a portion of the bed tax would be a timely strategy to help stabilize the cultural sector and enable it to have a much greater impact as part of the tourism amenities and attractions package for Manatee County.

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<sup>34</sup> Sources include: *Economic Impact of Florida's Arts and Cultural Industry* (2001), written by Dr. William Stronger. *Economic Impacts of Historic Preservation in Florida*, produced by the U. of Florida, 2001. Florida Cultural Alliance and other Florida communities' data. [www.flca.net](http://www.flca.net)

<sup>35</sup> *Arts & Economic Prosperity III: the Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Cultural Organizations and their Audiences in Manatee County*; Americans for the Arts Study, commissioned for Realize Bradenton, 2009.

**Strategy 6.2.2: Request that Manatee County and the Tourism Development Commission dedicate one third of the additional 1% of bed tax to arts, culture and heritage tourism development.**

Funding would be used to support joint cultural tourism marketing and packaging initiatives and for cultural tourism product development and strengthening.

- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Manatee County, Tourism Development Commission, Realize Bradenton Implementation Coalition, Convention and Visitors Bureau, reinvigorated Arts Council
- **Partners in implementation:** City of Bradenton, Downtown Development Authority, Chamber of Commerce
- **Timeline:** Immediate
- **Resources:** Volunteer time for advocacy efforts.
- **First steps:**
  - Identify civic leaders and groups to participate in advocacy;
  - Compile and prepare research and materials to support the case;
  - Seek endorsements from entities such as the Bradenton Herald, Pirates organization and others;
  - Meet with County Commissioners and Tourism Development Commissioners.
- **Models:** Sarasota, Hillsborough, Pinellas, Orange, Palm Beach, Miami-Dade and many other counties in Florida.
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:**
  - Decision by Manatee County to dedicate a portion of the 1% increase to arts, culture and heritage development – by mid-2009.
- **Benefits/rationale:**
  - There is a strong and proven access between cultural development and the ability to attract tourists who stay longer and spend more.
  - Ample precedent exists in Florida counties and across the nation.

- Manatee County arts, culture and heritage organizations and venues need and deserve public support for the role they play in building tourism, economic impact and quality of life.

**Strategy 6.2.3: Work with the City of Bradenton and Manatee County to explore bonding for capital projects of cultural organizations.**

Countless communities across Florida and the nation have provided public support and used their bonding capacity to build or contribute to performing arts facilities, arts centers, artist studios, nonprofit galleries and other cultural spaces for their communities. The City of Bradenton has provided favorable land leases (one dollar per year) for the Manatee Players and ArtCenter Manatee facilities, and façade improvement grants for Village of the Arts galleries, but no direct capital support, so far.

Cultural facilities mentioned during this planning process as long-term dreams – a Welcome Center and gallery space for the Village and/or a downtown nonprofit gallery, a rehab of the current Manatee Players building for other cultural uses, or additional performing arts facilities – would need and potentially deserve the kind of public support that other communities have provided.

- **Lead implementation responsibility:** Realize Bradenton Implementation Coalition, City of Bradenton, Downtown Development Authority, Manatee County
- **Partners in implementation:** Arts, culture and heritage organizations and venues.
- **Timeline:** Long-Term
- **Resources:** Public and private funding
- **First steps:** Identify future capital projects of cultural groups that may warrant City support.
- **Models:**
- **Concrete outcomes and indicators of success:** City bonding for a cultural facilities project.
- **Benefits/rationale:** Cultural facilities help to revitalize downtowns and neighborhoods, attract residents, visitors and their spending, provide venues for entertainment and enable community gatherings that contribute to quality-of-life.



## 7. Implementation: First Steps

Realize Bradenton signals a new era of collaborative cultural development for the community. Previously there was little communication among arts, cultural and heritage organizations and leaders – or with other community partners. The Bradenton Culture and Business Alliance came together last year to coalesce leadership behind cooperative initiatives and to undertake future focused cultural planning. The result is a remarkable spirit of unity and optimism.

The Realize Bradenton cultural planning process was designed specifically to engage, inspire and motivate existing and new leadership behind cultural development as well as integration of cultural strategies into broader community building efforts, such as downtown revitalization, economic development, cross cultural understanding and youth development. Over 1500 citizens became involved in Realize Bradenton through an open, porous process that included public meetings, focus groups, key interviews, community surveying and several advisory committees and task forces. Extensive research was conducted examining the regional market for cultural activity, the organizational capacity of Bradenton’s major cultural entities, the economic impact of cultural activity and model programs from other communities. We also used an interactive website and benefited from extensive media coverage to leverage community awareness and involvement.

It is critical to build upon this foundation of engagement, research and commitment, maintain the involvement of key leaders and celebrate early successes in order to continue momentum seamlessly into longer-term implementation. The following initial steps are recommended:

### 7.1 Maintain and reformulate three key leadership groups, per the following chart:

<b>Downtown Development Authority</b>	<b>Realize Bradenton Implementation Coalition</b>	<b>Arts Council of Manatee County</b>
The Downtown Development Authority (DDA), which houses two of the City’s three Community Redevelopment Agencies, and is the steward of Downtown by Design implementation, will have a natural focus on the Realize	The Realize Bradenton Implementation Coalition (RBIC) will be made up of 25-35 high-level leaders: a diverse group including Steering Committee members who are willing to continue, augmented by new leaders that have emerged through	Realize Bradenton recommends that the Arts Council of Manatee County be reinvigorated, reformulated and refocused to become a key partner in implementation as an “umbrella” cultural agency that meets national “best practices” strategies of the

<p>Bradenton strategies which contribute to downtown revitalization. The DDA played a crucial role in forming the Bradenton Culture and Business Alliance, initiating the planning process, recruiting leadership, and providing support. Its role in implementation is equally crucial, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong advocacy for Plan implementation and communication to its stakeholders about progress.</li> <li>• Continued staff and logistic support for the Implementation Coalition, while that group evolves into a permanent, 501 c 3 nonprofit culture and business alliance, focused on downtown revitalization.</li> <li>• Staff support and funding to increase and enhance downtown cultural events, including launching the new "Singing River Festival."</li> <li>• Sponsorship and funding of initial public art projects. The Public Art Board will begin as an advisory committee to DDA, for these projects.</li> <li>• Continued work on downtown infrastructure and wayfinding improvements that link to and enable Realize Bradenton implementation.</li> <li>• Liaison with City to seek additional support, and to integrate Realize Bradenton strategies into</li> </ul>	<p>the research and task force processes. This group is the principal advocate for and steward of Plan implementation. Continued staff and logistic support will be provided by DDA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The RBIC will be spokespersons for the Plan, presenting it to key governments and civic groups, the media, editorial boards etc.,</li> <li>• They will seek adoptions and/or endorsements, and secure commitments from other key groups and leaders to join the "community of implementers," provide resources for implementation and take on significant initiatives of the Plan.</li> <li>• They should meet once per month and should convene periodic community forums to review progress.</li> <li>• Subcommittees will form to take direct responsibility for specific sets of strategies, including joint marketing with downtown and countywide partners, downtown cultural events and promotions, building the capacity of the Village, etc.</li> <li>• These subcommittees will undertake a tactical planning and resource development needed to advance strategies.</li> </ul> <p>The Realize Bradenton Implementation Coalition will evolve into a permanent cultural advocacy alliance, as a 501 c 3 nonprofit with staff, that will continue to work</p>	<p>local arts agency movement. It has already adopted a recommended new name, the Cultural Alliance of Manatee County to reflect the broader purview of Realize Bradenton, and to underscore its countywide coordinating role.</p> <p>Rebuilding the board and staff, and securing resources and assistance to build organizational capacity will take 6-12 months. When rebuilt, its roles should encompass:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information hub: website, calendar of events;</li> <li>• Coordinate and support advocacy;</li> <li>• Develop and disseminate funding and other resources;</li> <li>• Technical assistance and capacity building to cultural organizations and creators throughout the County;</li> <li>• Joint initiatives in marketing, fund-raising, shared services, etc.</li> <li>• Develop/broker partnerships with other sectors;</li> <li>• Convene the cultural community and civic leadership to address challenges and opportunities;</li> <li>• Plan and develop cultural policy on behalf of government and the public as the designated local arts agency for the County;</li> <li>• Develop and manage programs, such as events,</li> </ul>
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City planning and policy.	actively on behalf of downtown cultural development activities and collaborations.	festivals and arts education services to address gaps that individual cultural organizations cannot address.  During the rebuilding phase for the Arts Council, the Realize Bradenton Implementation Coalition will take more direct responsibility for coordinating joint initiatives such as marketing.
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**7.2 Advocate for a portion of the County bed tax to be dedicated to cultural tourism marketing and product development.** This is an immediate priority because decisions about increasing the bed tax and allocations will be made within the next few months. This is an appropriate source of public funding that would provide crucial, ongoing support for long-term cultural development. Rationales and strategies are presented in the Support and Capacity Building Chapter.

**7.3 Maintain the Realize Bradenton “brand” and website.** Substantial effort was put into creating a visual identity and visibility for the Realize Bradenton Cultural Master Plan process, including development of a website and communications vehicles, press announcements and conferences, viral marketing and development of a contacts list numbering over 2000. Strategic communications efforts to maintain visibility during implementation, celebrate successes and stay in touch with stakeholders are just as important. Key partners should continue to be asked to help with communications efforts by featuring news about Realize Bradenton in their newsletters, websites, programs and other vehicles. This effort is synergistic with the joint marketing initiative, already underway.

**7.4 Publish the Plan,** executive summary and strategies charts as quickly as possible and “translate” it as appropriate, into alternative communication formats, such as PowerPoint, video and web versions, in order to present it to key stakeholder groups and highlight the most pressing messages and recommendations for each. Post the plan on the Realize Bradenton website and invite dialogue about its implications.

**7.5 Present the Plan and seek adoption/endorsement** from the City of Bradenton, Downtown Development Authority, Chamber and other civic and cultural leadership groups.

- 7.6 **Meet with major media editorial boards and reporters** to discuss the implications of the Plan and to garner endorsements.
- 7.7 **Apply for a major Knight Foundation grant for Realize Bradenton Implementation**, citing the comprehensive effort, community engagement, new collaborations and broad community impact. There is also a new funding category – Culture Builds Florida – of the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs, that should be explored for Plan implementation.
- 7.8 **Ask arts, cultural and heritage organizations to review and adopt the Plan** as a set of guiding principles, asking “what does this mean for us and our future evolution and priorities?” and “how can we be involved in leadership and advocacy for implementation?”
- 7.9 **Advocate for “signature” cultural projects.** Two major, interrelated projects were under way before the Realize Bradenton Cultural Master Plan process was initiated – the Manatee Players new theater campaign, and the effort to resolve the land lease and location issues that would permit ArtCenter Manatee to plan for future expansion. It is hugely important – including symbolically – that these two projects of major Bradenton cultural institutions be resolved positively. Realize Bradenton leadership should advocate and assist in every way possible.
- 7.10 **Launch immediate priority Plan initiatives to maintain momentum with early successes. These include:**
  - 7.1.1 **“Muracle on 9<sup>th</sup>” public art projects;**
  - 7.1.2 **Continuation of joint marketing efforts and other capacity building initiatives for the “big 6” cultural organizations;**
  - 7.1.3 **Downtown cultural events, including a “Singing River Festival;”**
  - 7.1.4 **Strengthen Village of the Arts capacity and marketing;**
  - 7.1.5 **Strengthen the Arts Council, now renamed the Manatee County Cultural Alliance.**
- 7.11 **Work to integrate the Realize Bradenton Cultural Master Plan into the City of Bradenton’s Comprehensive Plan, Downtown Mobility Study and other plans.**
- 7.12 **The Realize Bradenton Implementation Coalition should sponsor a yearly Community Forum** to invite the public to help assess progress, chart desirable “course corrections,” and draw new leadership into implementation efforts.

# Realize Bradenton Participants Lists

## Realize Bradenton Steering Committee

Mayor Wayne Poston and Herbie Rose, Honorary Co-Chairs	Drexler James
Councilman Patrick Roff, Co-Chair	Tom Jung
Susie Walters, Co-Chair	Sherry Lawrence
Carly Ayres	Carson Longo
Mark Barnebey	Mike Moschella
Bill Blalock	Cristina Najmy
Amara Cocilovo	Jane Plitt
Bernie Croghan	Tim Polk
Greg Curling	Will Robinson
Vernon DeSear	Cathy Slusser
Jacki Dezelski	Sarah Taylor
Linda Van Tassell	Larry Thompson
Rick Fawley	Tony Tiberini
Pat Glass	Joan Voyles
Mike Hamad	Tyrell Waiters
Sam Hershfield	Kevin Webb
Marilyn Howard	Carol Whitmore
Irene Ingram	Leymis Bolanos Wilmott

## Realize Bradenton Key Interview and Focus Group Participants

Carly Ayres	Jay Brunell	Roberta Goss	Doug Knowlton
Nick Baden	Larry Bustle	Dantia Gould	Jayne Kocher
Dyrren Barber	Harold Byrd	Jessica Grace	Leslie Lacktman
Mark Barnebey	Carl Callahan	Greg Green	Gretchen Leclezio
Marianne Barnebey	Ted Camp	Preston Griffith	Joe Loccisano
Peter Barrie	Andrea Celis	Carol Heckman	Laura Lockwood
Bob Bartz	Rhea Chiles	Sam Hershfield	Tanya Lukowiak
Randal Beckwith	Nancy Colcord	Marilyn Howard	Joe McClash
Ed Bennett	Bernie Croghan	Ed Hunzeker	Bill Mears
Brynne Anne Besio	Dwight Currie	Irene Ingram	John Moody
Bill Blalock	Jim Delgado	Johnette Isham	Tim Polk
Bob Blalock	Vernon DeSear	DJ James	Wayne Poston
Scott Blum	Jacki Dezelski	Alice Jeghelian	Sissy Quinn
Dorothy Blum	Dean Dixon	Dudley Johnson	John Rice
Gary Bogart	Troy Dugan	Edrick Johnson	Nina Richardson
Leymis Bolanos Wilmott	Aron Edidin	Tom Jung	Will Robinson
Ashley Bower	Ben Ellinor	Robin Kaercher	Jeff Rodgers
Jim Boyd	Nancy Engel	Carl Keeler	Patrick Roff
	Gerry Fisher	Mike Kennedy	Bob Schmitt
	Gene Gallo	Rick Kerby	Caitlin Shedlock
	Jennifer Gemmke	David Klement	Diane Shelly

Cathy Slusser  
JoAnn Spencer  
Neil Spirtas  
Jason Taylor  
Glori Thompson

Larry Thompson  
Jim Toomey  
Bob Turner  
John Van Berkel  
Ed Vogler

Joan Voyles  
Tyrell Waiters  
Linda Walker  
Susie Walters  
Cliff Walters

Kerry Ward  
Kevin Webb  
Larry White  
Janene Witham  
Diane Wood

## **Realize Bradenton Task Force Rosters**

### **Downtown Cultural Vitality**

Jane Plitt, Chair  
Jason Bartz  
Bonni Brown  
Jim Johnstone  
Laura McKeithen  
Cristina Najmy  
Valerie Nelson  
Will Robinson  
Diana Shoemaker  
Ed Vogler  
Preston Whaley

### **Public Art Task Force**

Bernie Croghan, Chair  
Marianne Barnebey  
Amara Cocilovo  
Jacki Dezelski  
Rick Fawley  
Preston Griffith  
Jayne Kocher  
Tim Polk  
Diane Shelly  
Charlie Ugarte

### **Support for Individual Artists/Village of the Arts**

Mike Kennedy, Chair  
Rochelle Dudley  
Kelly Fores  
Tom O'Brien  
Carrie Price  
Patrick Roff  
John Teitjen  
Chris Turner  
Rose Von Perbandt  
Kevin Webb

### **Arts Education and Youth Arts**

Irene Ingram, Chair  
Carly Ayres  
Dyrren Barber  
Drexler James  
Mike Hamad  
Robin Kaercher  
Sherry Lawrence  
Gretchen Leclezio  
Susie Walters

### **Marketing, Access and Collaborations**

Sam Hershfield, Chair  
Geza Darrah  
Jessica Grace  
Pam Lukas  
George Mendez  
Anna Pohl  
Cathy Slusser  
Joan Voyles  
Kerry Ward  
Susie Walters

### **Support and Capacity Building**

Vernon DeSear, Chair  
Mark Barnebey  
Peter Barrie  
Ed Bennett  
Brynne Anne Besio  
Bill Blalock  
Marilyn Howard  
Chris Pennewill  
Anna Smart  
Janene Witham



## **Realize Bradenton Consultant Team Bios**

### **Bill Bulick, Creative Planning, Inc., Lead Planner and Author**

Bill's 37 year career in cultural and community development includes roles as a musician, founder and producer of multi-cultural arts festivals and concerts, founding Program Director of Pioneer Courthouse Square - a nationally recognized urban public plaza - Director of one of the nation's leading Local Arts Agencies in Portland, board member of Americans for the Arts, chair of several NEA panels, and president of the U.S. Urban Arts Federation. As a full time consultant for the last 10 years, he has designed and led cultural planning and assessment in over twenty communities, including Austin, Tucson, Minneapolis, Kelowna, BC, Charlotte, Santa Cruz, Newark, NJ, Portland, Cincinnati and Washington State.. Bill also has extensive experience with broader based community planning through involvement in all of Portland's major planning efforts over the last 30 years and in integrating cultural planning into broader based plans in other communities. He is pioneering efforts to bridge cultural planning with creative economy strategies sparked by the work of Richard Florida, Ann Markusen, Joe Cortright and others and has been a frequent guest speaker on the topic at conferences and meetings throughout the U.S. and Canada. Bill wrote the forward to the Americans for the Arts 1998 publication, Community Cultural Planning, A Guidebook for Community Leaders. Bill and was lead writer and editor of the recent AFTA monograph, Cultural Development in Creative Communities.

### **Surale Phillips, Decision Support Partners, Inc., Research Specialist**

Surale Phillips has provided audience and market research services to the nonprofit cultural sector for 20 years. Her research and consulting supports marketing plans, community audience development initiatives, community cultural plans, operations plans, and grants programs. Her services have been the foundation for projects supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, Wallace Foundation, James Irvine Foundation, Hewlett Foundation and scores of individual nonprofit arts and cultural organizations. Recent clients include the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation, Cultural Alliance of York County, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts, Gallo Center for the Arts, Taller Puertorriqueno, and the Oregon Bach Festival.

### **Gretchen Freeman, Freeman Whitehurst Group, Public Art Specialist**

Gretchen Freeman is a consultant specializing in planning, policy, and program and project management services in public art for various entities, including cities, local arts agencies, universities and colleges, design firms, public/private partnerships, and others. Since 1994, Freeman has provided master planning services for cities, public systems, and building projects; developed and integrated community involvement processes; organized public art competitions nationwide; and managed a wide variety of public art projects, including those related to the development of streets and roadways, multimodal pedestrian systems, public transportation, libraries, airports, convention centers, private developments, and linear parks. She has worked on small and large-scale projects in both rural and urban communities.

Freeman was the founding director of the Phoenix Arts Commission's Public Art Program - the first of its kind in the country as it was based upon city infrastructure investments and

emphasized the use of artists on design teams in the initial phase of infrastructure and facility design. Freeman was a founder of the Public Art Network, Washington, D.C. and the Children's Museum of Phoenix. She is a member of the National Advisory Board of Public Art Review, St. Paul, Minnesota; and a member of the International Association of Professional Art Advisors.