

# Supporting York County's Arts, Culture, and Outdoor Recreation Ecosystem

 York County Economic Alliance

 Cultural Alliance  
BRINGING ARTS AND CULTURE TO LIFE IN YORK COUNTY

August 2022



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## **ABOUT THIS REPORT**

York County, Pennsylvania, has an abundance of quality of place assets that contribute to its vibrancy and unique character. From independently owned and charming bed and breakfasts, to diverse and ingenious artist collectives, intentionality and passion consistently shine through across York County’s cultural and outdoor programming.

This report builds from the directives of the [York County Economic Action Plan](#), which was published in 2020 and cites a clear desire by the community to enhance and elevate the amenities that make York County a great place to live, work, and play. Via a combination of data mapping and analysis as well as one-on-one interviews and surveys, this holistic report has been developed to guide York County stakeholders in supporting these essential assets.

This report contains an ecosystem map that displays York County’s many cultural and outdoor recreation assets and how they interact; a look into the impact those amenities are making throughout the region; and profiles of mechanisms utilized in communities throughout the country to fund a robust cultural and outdoor landscape. This report culminates in targeted recommendations that synthesize local insights and best practices from around the country, to help advise on how York County might create a public funding strategy to support a vibrant quality of place.

# METHODOLOGY

This engagement included three overarching components:

## ***I – MAPPING YORK COUNTY’S CULTURAL/ARTS AND OUTDOOR/RECREATION ASSETS AND THEIR IMPACT***

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Through a combination of desktop research, surveying, and targeted interviews, York County’s cultural and outdoor assets were accounted for and classified, along with their impact and level of service, their financial model and levels of support, and their interconnectivity. Through Kumu Mapping, an ecosystem map documenting the relationships between interviewed organizations was developed and is displayed at [tinyurl.com/2uu4shjc](https://tinyurl.com/2uu4shjc).

## ***II – DOCUMENTING HOW COMMUNITIES SIMILAR TO YORK COUNTY SUPPORT THEIR QUALITY OF PLACE AMENITIES WITH DEDICATED PUBLIC FUNDING***

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Six communities with dedicated funding streams for cultural and outdoor programming were identified, researched, and interviewed. The selected communities share similar characteristics to York County, such as geography, population, and area median income. Researching these communities included conducting a demographic and economic analysis to explore how the cultural and outdoor assets shape their communities. This consisted of interviews and desktop research to understand the history and public approval of funding mechanisms, as well as their impact on quality of life indicators, talent attraction and retention, overall community wellness, and economic growth in the arts, cultural, and outdoor recreation sectors.

## ***III – UNDERSTANDING HOW THE COMMUNITY COULD BENEFIT FROM A DEDICATED FUNDING SOURCE FOR CULTURAL AND OUTDOOR ASSETS WITHIN YORK COUNTY***

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Following profiles of York County’s cultural and outdoor assets, a scenario was developed to visualize the impact – present and future – of a cultural asset strategy and accompanying financial support. This scenario has been compiled into an easily digestible presentation with recommendations for the creation of a robust cultural and outdoor asset funding strategy.



# YORK COUNTY'S CULTURAL AND OUTDOOR ASSETS

## MAPPING CULTURAL AND OUTDOOR ORGANIZATIONS

The Cultural Alliance of York County and York County Economic Alliance distributed a survey to cultural and outdoor recreation entities throughout the county, to have them self report their organization name, contact information, website, location, geography served, service category, beneficiaries, audience reach, staff levels, budget levels, funding sources, and more. 80 organizations in total responded to the survey.

Though most fit neatly into either arts/culture or outdoor/recreation categories—many organizations serve a dual purpose, with service offerings blending beyond set boundaries. In some instances, arts organizations make use of outdoor recreation spaces like parks, public squares, or markets to display and perform, while some outdoor recreation assets highlight the region's deep history and rich culture for their guests to experience. For example, the Susquehanna National Heritage Area features trails, water access, and historic sites to preserve, interpret, and promote the abundant cultural and natural resources of the lower Susquehanna River region. These instances show the interconnectedness of the outdoor recreation and arts and culture sectors in creating a robust place-based experience for those in York County.

While 80 assets completed the survey, nearly 200 more were identified through stakeholder groups and included on the map; desktop research enabled categorization and supplied basic information like website and organizational structure. Many of these identified organizations are outdoor recreation entities, which unlike arts and culture amenities, do not have a singular "owner" but are managed by an overarching entity like County Parks.

The survey results and additional organizations were transposed onto an ecosystem map, which displays each organization, as well as its relationship to other entities in the county. This map highlights the connectivity of the many quality of place assets and amenities of York County. It also provides the public a view of the many quality of place assets available in the county, as well as contact information and websites for people to plan their visit or learn more.

Total Survey Responses

80

58 Cultural  
22 Outdoor

Total Organizations Mapped

270

105 Cultural  
59 Outdoor

The map features more cultural than outdoor organizations, partially because many outdoor recreation entities, unlike arts and culture amenities, do not have a singular "owner" but are managed by an overarching entity like County Parks. The difference in the total and number classified is due to connections that were added manually and not classified.

Location



38% are located in the City of York  
9% in Hanover  
6% in Hellam Township  
5% in Springettsbury Township  
5% in Spring Garden Township  
the rest are **scattered across the county**

Service Area



68%  
serve a **local borough, municipality, or neighborhood, York County, or the South Central PA region**



33%  
have a **statewide** reach



28%  
have a **national** reach



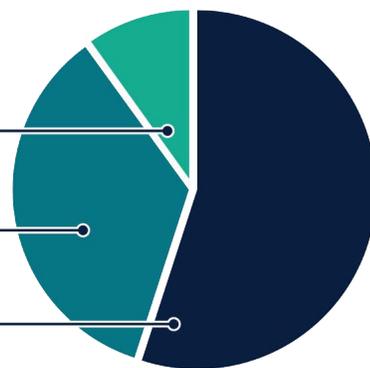
15%  
have an **international** audience

Organization Type

10%  
are **governmental** entities

35%  
are **non-profit** entities

55%  
are **for-profit** entities



## Beneficiaries/ Audience

While nearly all York County organizations surveyed serve a "general population", organizations indicated they serve the following populations:



children/youth

**50%**  
40 organizations



senior citizens

**41%**  
32 organizations



non-white /  
mixed-race

**27%**  
21 organizations



LGBTQ+

**26%**  
20 organizations



people with  
disabilities

**24%**  
19 organizations



veterans/ active  
duty military

**20%**  
16 organizations



immigrants

**19%**  
15 organizations



indigenous  
people

**19%**  
15 organizations



refugees

**14%**  
11 organizations

**25%** of organizations surveyed are  
minority-owned or managed

## PANDEMIC IMPACTS:



**46%**

of organizations saw a decrease  
in the number of users served  
during the pandemic



**48%**

shifted to serving more online  
customers since the onset of  
the pandemic

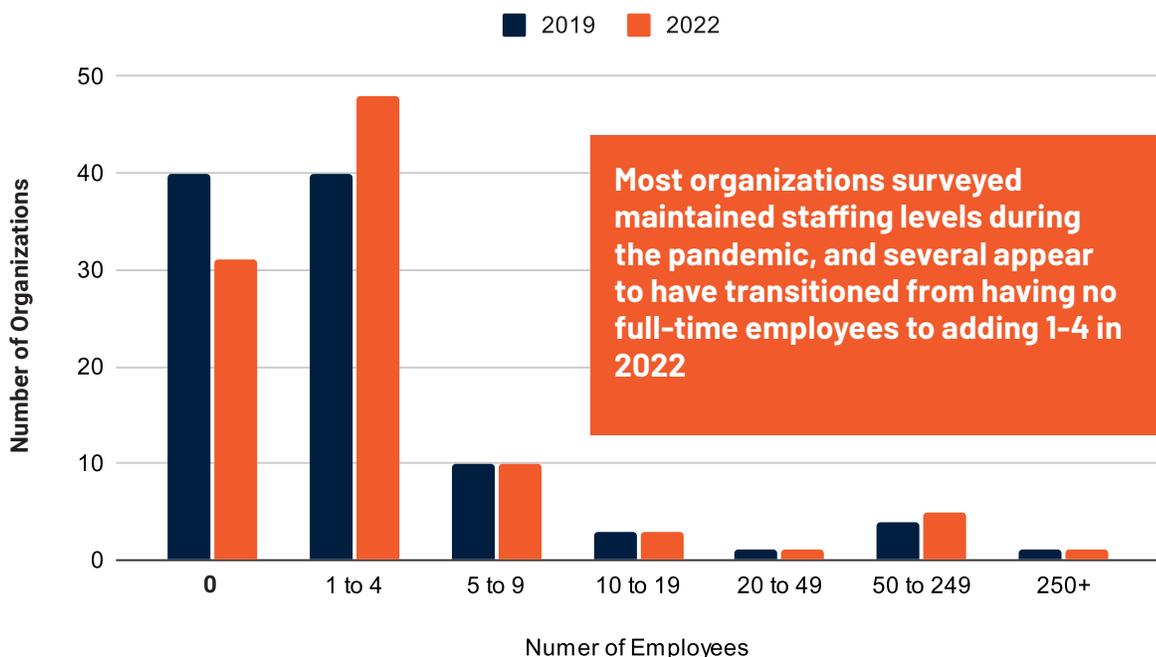
# EMPLOYMENT BY THE NUMBERS

## FULL TIME EMPLOYEES (2022):

The pandemic does not appear to have had drastic long-term negative impacts on employment within the arts, entertainment, and recreation sector in York County. Nationally and locally, the creative sector was hit hard by the public-health-related closure orders early on in the pandemic, and [saw high rates of unemployment and decreased revenue to arts organizations](#). However, since reopening and experiencing rebounds in demand related to widespread vaccination availability, these industries have recovered significantly, and unemployment and other indicators have started to return to pre-pandemic levels. **Compared to national trends, the recovery of the creative sector in York County post-pandemic is quite good**, thanks in part due to relief funding issued, such as through the Shuttered Venue Operators Grants (SVOG) distributed by the Department of Small Business Services. York County received nearly \$4m in SVOG funds as of July 2022.

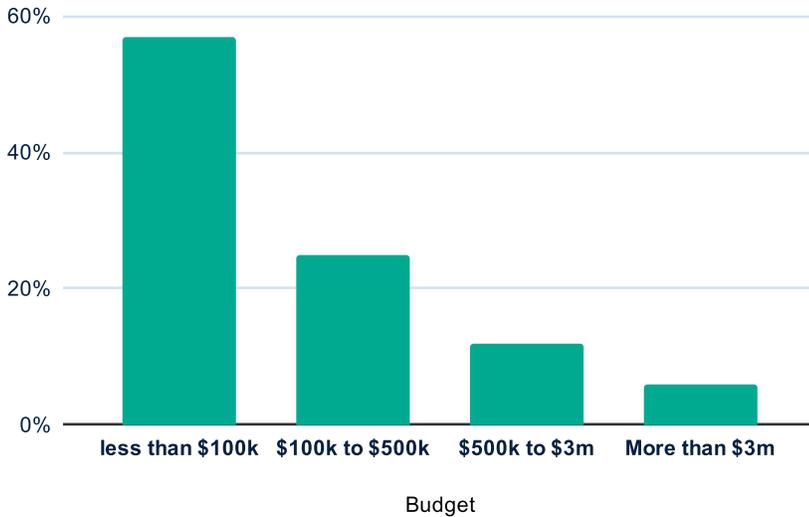
Outdoor recreation has seen quite a different trend during the pandemic period. The height of the pandemic in 2020 saw a 20% increase in outdoor recreation across the United States, according to [a recent study by Penn State’s Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Management](#). Given the landscape of York County and abundance of outdoor assets, it is safe to assume that outdoor recreation increased locally during the pandemic period, which would also indicate employment levels that remained the same or increased slightly.

### CHANGE IN NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES PRE-PANDEMIC VS CURRENT BY ORGANIZATION SIZE



## Operating Budgets

Most organizations surveyed (57%) operate on a budget of **under \$100,000**.



## Part-time/Seasonal/Temporary Employees:

Part time/seasonal/temporary employees have become a popular option following the pandemic. **42% of organizations surveyed used part time, temporary, or seasonal employees prior to and during the pandemic. 57% currently use or anticipate utilizing part time, temporary, or seasonal employees in 2022.**



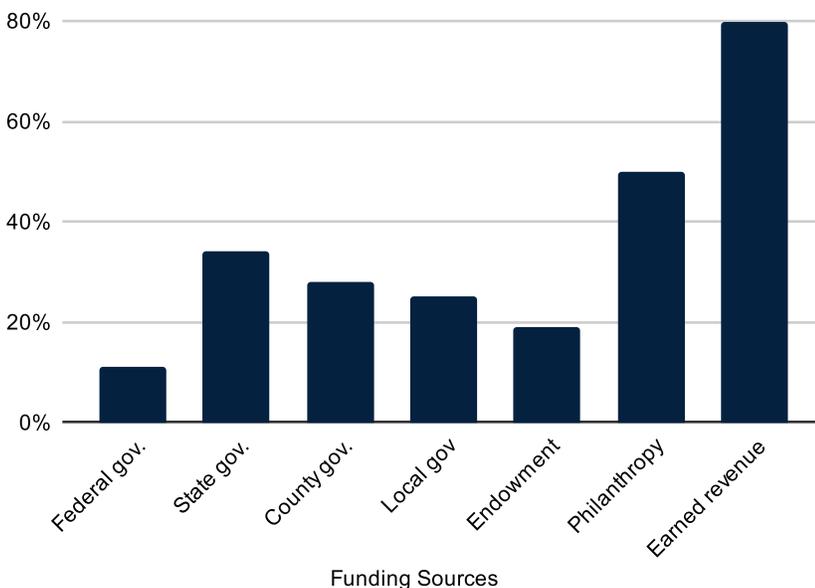
## Volunteers

Volunteering decreased during the pandemic, likely in part to protect public health and safety. However, volunteerism rebounded in 2022, **with nearly 64% of organizations surveyed relying on at least one volunteer.**

- ▶ **60%** used volunteers prior to the pandemic (2019)
- ▶ That decreased to **46%** during the pandemic (2020-2021)
- ▶ **64%** use or anticipate utilizing volunteers in 2022

## Funding Sources

The organizations surveyed rely on a variety of funding sources, with **the majority bringing in some form of earned revenue**, indicating a level of self-sustainability and ability to augment grant and governmental funding.



# IMPACT / CASE STUDIES

The impact of York County's many arts, culture, and outdoor recreation assets on the quality of life of the people who call the region home cannot be overstated. In addition to providing entertainment and enrichment to residents of all ages, they help spread stories of the county's unique history and culture, educate the public about social and environmental issues and spur community involvement, and are an attraction for new and seasoned tourists to the area.

The owners, proprietors, and managers of several quality of place amenities throughout the county were interviewed, to share more about their history and founding, mission and work, and impact on the community.



# SHANK'S MARE OUTFITTERS

Family owned and operated since 1978, Shank's Mare Outfitters has embedded educational programming into every aspect of their business. From selling paddleboarding, kayaking, and other outdoor supplies to offering intimate, historically-themed tours along the shores of the Susquehanna River, Shank's Mare is dedicated to offering people a safe and comfortable way to explore outdoor sports.

As stated by co-owner and operator Liz Winland, "Shank's Mare serves all ages, all people. The only requirement to engage with us is the desire to "Go Play Outside." Liz and her family have assured that the Shank's Mare experience is one everyone can enjoy, which is facilitated by the variety of differently priced services offered by Shank's Mare. Services include paddleboard and kayak rentals, done-in-a-day tours along the Susquehanna River, and multiple day-long hiking tours. Prior to the pandemic, Shank's Mare served nearly 7,000 people each year. During the pandemic, that number slightly decreased to 6,500. As of June 2022, Liz estimates that Shank's Mare's annual reach for 2022 will be 8,000. Furthermore, Shank's Mare is committed to working with educational institutions—both local and outside of York County. Recently, the National Aquarium in Baltimore contacted the business in hopes of bringing a group of scholars to Shank's Mare for a paddle tour along the river—a promising partnership.

The owners of Shank's Mare constantly advocate for the safety, preservation, and cleanliness of the rivers via serving on the board of the Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper association. Liz notes that the shared mission with the Riverkeeper organization has been integral to the preservation of the Lower Susquehanna as a whole. Finally, despite the incredible value that Shank's Mare brings to the community, there are many people within and around York County who are not aware of what Shank's Mare offers. Organizations like the York County Economic Alliance and Explore York play an important role in marketing to inform local residents and tourists of the outdoor resources available to York County—especially resources like Shank's Mare.



**Shank's Mare serves all ages, all people. The only requirement to engage with us is the desire to "Go Play Outside"**

**- Liz Winland, Co-owner, Shank's Mare Outfitters**



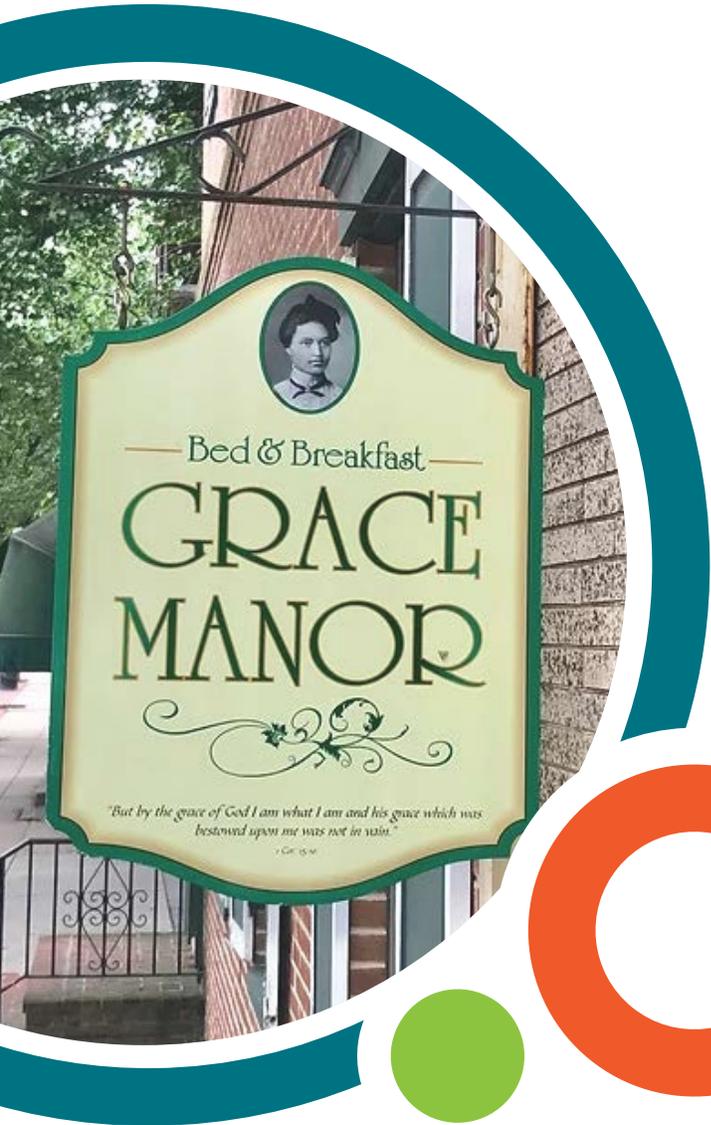
Kayakers enjoying a group trip along the Susquehanna River



## GRACE MANOR BED AND BREAKFAST

One of the few woman-owned and black-owned bed and breakfasts in the country, Grace Manor is fully owned and operated by Joanne Wilmore. Named after her maternal grandmother – who is featured in the business’ logo – Grace Manor pays homage to African American women who were not afforded the luxury of rest or respite. Opened in 2010, Grace Manor’s mission is “to provide overnight accommodations that exceed guest expectations”. Situated off the Rail Trail, Grace Manor is located in the historic district of York City and provides lodging to guests traveling mainly from the mid-atlantic region, and many as visitors to the bike trail and creek. Guests can choose to stay in any of the five suites themed to represent French, Asian, Mexican, African Diaspora, and Swiss cultures. Furthermore, each room’s design choices, building materials, and artwork honor the history, artists, and architecture of their respective cultures. Before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Joanne hosted local politicians, community leaders, civic activists, and community members to Grace Manor with the intent of facilitating conversations between Grace Manor’s guests and York County’s residents – a strategy to better connect York County’s culture and history to its visitors.

Like most hospitality businesses around the country, Grace Manor closed from March to July of 2020 due to the onset of COVID-19. Joanne notes that organizations like the York County Economic Alliance helped support Grace Manor and others during the pandemic by acting as a liaison for funding and constantly communicating other opportunities for financial support. Joanne also notes that the YCEA “understands the climate of diverse business ownership in York County” and promotes visibility surrounding the lack of diverse business ownership in the form of workshops and DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) conversations. Still, Joanne feels that more is needed in the county to move the needle when it comes to access to capital and the networks needed to help achieve self-sufficiency and sustainability of diverse entrepreneurs. Though some funding streams have been established in recent years to help fill economic gaps in businesses owned by women and people of color, Joanne feels that more can be done to support, elevate, and expand diverse businesses and the businesses of women of color in York County.



The sign outside Grace Manor Bed and Breakfast includes a photo of Joanne’s great-grandmother, Grace, who the bed and breakfast is named after.

## ORANGEMITE STUDIOS



Founded in 2008, OrangeMite Studios is a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to producing grassroots Shakespearean theater in south-central Pennsylvania. The OrangeMite Shakespeare Company has produced 32 of Shakespeare's 39 plays and, under the direction of Executive Director Ángel Nuñez, plans to produce an eco-drama of *All's Well That Ends Well* in August of 2022. Prior to the pandemic, OrangeMite Studios hosted "Shakespeare in the Barn," community theater classes, and kids theater classes. Recently, OrangeMite has pivoted their programming to focus on "flexible, fun, shorter, and more engaging work" that is welcoming to those with little to no experience in the theater.



As part of their equity work, OrangeMite Studios had eased into developing original productions which blend different cultures. Their fusion production of Miguel de Cervantes' *Juez de los Divorcios* (The Divorce Judge) and Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*, for example, features Henry VIII attempting to divorce one of his many wives while Cervantes' Judge also oversees bickering couples' divorce proceedings. Another aspect of OrangeMite Studios' equity work

is assuring that as many people have access to their work as possible, which includes hosting their classes and productions in venues across the county, offering online reading classes for those new to theater, and offering various programs, which Nuñez states brings in participants of diverse backgrounds and fosters the studio's inclusion efforts.

With an annual budget of six to eight thousand dollars, OrangeMite Studios relies on ticket sales, donors and sponsorships, and Give Local York's 24-hour online giving extravaganza to maintain operating costs. Nuñez also states that grant funding has and continues to be a major source of support for OrangeMite Studios. They received a 2022 Welcoming Communities Grant from Downtown Inc. and the Cultural Alliance of York County, funded by Better York, the York County Community Foundation, and the Powder Mill Foundation, which allowed for the upcoming 2023 summer production of three one-act plays. Productions typically feature a cast of ten to twelve participants and reach audiences of upwards of two hundred people during their two-week run, an engagement level which Nuñez hopes to continue to grow via the studio's three one-act plays over the summer. OrangeMite Studios also values collaboration with local organizations and notes that interconnectedness and collaboration between local arts organizations can fast-track how quickly organizations can re-engage with pre-pandemic beneficiaries.



Cast members of Antony and Cleopatra

## NAKED CHICK ART

An active muralist for the past twenty years, Suzanne Rende owns Naked Chick Art, an artist collective which helps local artists start their careers by selling their artwork. Suzanne has grown Naked Chick Art into a two-stand shop inside York Central Market that features 30+ artists. With a monthly reach between three hundred and four hundred customers, Suzanne notes that the collective's artists gain confidence in seeing that their art is valued and purchased by other people, especially by people of entirely different backgrounds – which is facilitated by the collective's strategic location inside the heavily-trafficked York Central Market. Suzanne notes that York County is “definitely not short on artistic talent,” and she has no trouble finding or being approached by talented, unique, and capable artists hoping to represent their pieces within the collective – two of whom she employs as part-time employees of Naked Chick Art.

Like many small businesses, Naked Chick Art closed its stand in York Central Market for three months, during which time Suzanne leveraged her social media following and sold artwork online as well as via Etsy and directly off her front porch. Suzanne notes that Cultural Alliance of York County was incredibly helpful during the height of the pandemic; not only in providing financial relief for cultural assets within the county, but providing constant communication about resources available.

Suzanne is most proud of her mural on Beaver Street. The seventy-foot by thirty-foot mural depicts a natural landscape, which Suzanne was selected to complete given the presence of her business within the market district and her experience in depicting animals. This mural – which Suzanne notes has been photographed by countless tourists and residents alike and is represented across many of York County's website – has created professional opportunities for Suzanne and encourages foot-traffic through downtown York.



Suzanne Rende stands in front of her 70'x30' mural on Beaver St. in Downtown York



## YORK COUNTY RAIL TRAIL AUTHORITY



Project partners cutting the ribbon for a new trail section in Spring Grove

The YCRTA is a small organization whose main purpose is to embrace and promote trails throughout the county. This includes acquiring the legal rights to the land which will become a trail, hiring consultants to conduct feasibility studies and develop a model of what the trail would look like, finding partner and lead agencies to maintain and sponsor trails, and general trail development through celebrating that trail's groundbreaking and grand opening to the public. The York County Rail Trail Authority (YCRTA) is composed of one salaried staff, occasional volunteers/interns, and ten Authority Members appointed by the York County Board of Commissioners who volunteer their professional expertise to developing and sustaining the new miles of rail trail all across the county.

Gwen Loose, the authority's Executive Director and only staff member, oversees the YCRTA's annual budget of about \$100,000. The YCRTA was founded in 1990 with a dedicated funding stream from York County, which was in place for the first ten years of its existence but has since been discontinued. Currently, the YCRTA is entirely dependent on private funding, donations, period allocations of Marcellus Shale funds, and other one-time funding sources, but has nonetheless been successful in winning grants, having brought in upwards of \$11m to York County since its founding. The Authority still works closely with the Board of County Commissioners, who are supportive of the YCRTA.

The YCRTA would benefit from the reintroduction of a dedicated funding stream for both operations and project development, both of which would help increase its capacity to realize the trail vision throughout the county. Furthermore, a well-funded maintenance partner would fundamentally change the experience of those on the rails and trails; because of different capacities across municipalities, there is a different level of care for each trail, which makes it difficult for visitors to have a continuous experience when visiting different trails. Gwen is especially proud of the Heritage Rail Trail, which she considers the "golden standard" for partnerships, as it is maintained by the county Parks Department.

## CENTRAL PENN SPORTING CLAYS

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Founded in 1961, Central Penn Sporting Clays offers upland bird hunting and sporting clays for shooters of all experience levels. As such, Central Penn's programming is entirely tailored to the experience of the hunter. Those who have never shot sporting clays or experienced upland bird hunting can schedule a guide or instructor who provides basic training and guidance, while experienced shooters are welcome to explore the course on their own and hunt by themselves. While the majority of Central Penn's clientele consists of seasoned hunters or sporting clay shooters, Central Penn attracts people from all walks of life, including those new to sporting clays. Central Penn also hosts outings for corporations seeking to engage their teams and clients in a slightly untraditional but exciting way.

While Central Penn does see quite a few visitors from Maryland and New Jersey, it relies on word of mouth for a flow of local clients, which include the York Builders Association as well as membership from local companies.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Central Penn experienced a sharp increase in visitors seeking a new, outdoor, and socially distanced experience. Only recently have younger, inexperienced shooters stopped visiting as frequently, indicating a potential need for targeted outreach to maintain this audience's interest, but seasoned hunters continue to frequent Central Penn. Furthermore, as part of their community engagement efforts, Central Penn hosts the annual York County Conservation District fundraiser, which they have been hosting for twelve years. Central Penn also works with the Farm and Natural Land Trust of York County and other local organizations that sponsor academic scholarships. Finally, Central Penn hosted the 2021 Youth Sporting Clay State Championship, which brought five hundred people and two hundred and fifty youth participants to York County to observe or participate in the championship.



Hunters during the Conewago  
Scholarship Fundraiser



Christmas Magic – A Festival of Lights, which is coordinated by the York County Parks Department

## YORK COUNTY PARKS DEPARTMENT

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As York County Parks Director, Mike Forbes oversees the 4,500 acres and 11 parks within the York County Parks system, which are largely located in the southern and eastern part of the county (this is not inclusive of all of the ~250 public recreational areas in York County, including: county, state, and municipal parks; state game lands; trails, fish and boating property; and conservation land). In 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic, visitation increased by 30% to 2.4 million annual visitors. This population was largely composed of people visiting the park for the first time. In 2022 the Parks Department has seen continued engagement with visitors from across the county.

During the pandemic, it became clear that parking was a significant constraint for park goers, especially in major parks and trails like the York Heritage Rail Trail, York's most visited trail. As such, increased parking availability is a goal of the Parks Department as it continues to develop land for public use. Despite the increase in visitation during the pandemic, the parks system was concerned with the rising rates of COVID-19 within York County. Nevertheless, Mike notes that the county commissioners provided and continue to provide support for the parks system, stating that "...you cannot sustain such a large parks system without political support, and the political support that the Parks Department has received has been very consistent and important." Like many employers, it has been difficult for the Parks Department to maintain its staff of 29 full-time employees. Until the pandemic, the Parks Department received a constant stream of job applicants; today interest seems to be much lower.

The department continues to receive dedicated funding from the county, and benefits from private donations. The department is also connected to a trust, which supports major purchases and expenses. The Parks Department works hand-in-hand with other Parks Departments, township departments, state parks, and the York County Rail Trail Authority. These collaborative efforts allow the York County Parks Department's focus on "passive recreation" activities, while "active recreation" activities (sports leagues, family-friendly activities, etc.) are coordinated by the various townships across York County.

# GUSA BY VICTORIA, GUSA WORLD MUSIC FESTIVAL

Originally from Kenya, Victoria Kageni immigrated to the United States to “master the art of creating fabric”. In 2016, Victoria opened her retail fashion store Gusa by Victoria, which proved a gateway for showcasing Kenyan culture in York County. Victoria found that York residents were equally as interested in her products as they were with her accent, food, and culture. As a result, Victoria began to offer the Gusa Dining Excursion, which was held at the York Central Market and allowed guests to experience homemade Kenyan cuisine while learning about the history and cultural significance of the specific dish they were enjoying. Victoria also began to offer sewing and Swahili language classes for children, and both of these classes had a weekly attendance of between five and seven children. Around the same time, Victoria started jazz nights at Gusa. Originally a monthly backyard session and outlet for the Kageni family’s musical interests, jazz nights eventually grew into a full-fledged festival now known as the Gusa World Music Festival. While the focus of the Gusa World Music Festival is to spotlight Kenyan musicians, Victoria also features artists and musicians from all of the African continent. The festival attracts more than two thousand visitors over the course of two days, and Victoria anticipates the same energy and excitement now that COVID-related restrictions are lifting. Victoria’s programming is a direct result of her being tired of traveling out of town for child-friendly and culturally diverse events, so she has made it a point to assure that her programming is as inclusive, welcoming, and child-friendly as possible.

With an annual budget of approximately twenty five thousand dollars for the World Music Festival, Victoria relies on grant funding from the Cultural Alliance of York County, the York County Economic Alliance, Explore York, and other sources to host the festival. Eventually, Victoria would like to have “a boatload of food trucks from every corner of the world” and welcome “ambassadors from different parts of the world, from wherever, to show how we all love food, fashion, and music independent of where we are from”. Victoria believes she could accomplish this by having access to grants and funding opportunities exclusively for people of color – an opportunity currently unavailable within York County’s local funding ecosystem. Nevertheless, Victoria continues to work towards representing Kenyan culture within York County via Gusa by Victoria and its programming as well as the Gusa World Music Festival.



*Victoria would like to welcome ambassadors from different parts of the world, from wherever, to show how we all love food, fashion, and music independent of where we are from*



Yoga Break with Kent Nazereth at Gusa World Music Festival



# NORTHERN YORK COUNTY HISTORICAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY

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The Northern York County Historical Preservation Society has provided a wide variety of historical programs and cultural events for those in the Northern York County region since its inception in 1984. Halfway between Harrisburg and Gettysburg, and with programming and events throughout the year, the Preservation Society reaches an estimated sixty to seventy thousand people annually. Events like the *Christkindlmarkt* reach upwards of five thousand people in one weekend, while events like the Farmer's Fair reach upwards of twenty thousand visitors. Smaller events like First Friday at Dill's Tavern – a historical treasure built in 1794 and now managed by the Preservation Society – cater to families and see upwards of one hundred daily visitors.

Currently, the Preservation Society is undertaking the construction of an eighteenth/early nineteenth century style distillery. This distillery – which will feature historically accurate distilling equipment and techniques – will serve as a classroom where the history of distilling and traditional distilling will be taught. The Preservation Society also offers classes for blacksmithing, baking in wood fired ovens, candlemaking, and clothing dying, which are offered at different points throughout the year. Furthermore, as part of their community engagement initiatives, the Preservation Society works closely with local school districts, homeschooled students, and various senior citizen's groups across Northern York County.

In the words of the Preservation Society, “we serve everyone, anyone who enjoys learning, curiosity, and doesn't mind being outside.” With a part-time staff of one employee, the Preservation Society is almost entirely run by and dependent on their strong support base of donors and members as well as grant funding. The Preservation Society is, in the words of Executive Assistant Dara Kana, “entrepreneurial” in that it has created many unique streams of earned revenue. For example, it makes and sells bread directly from the Society's various locations.

The Preservation Society also considers themselves “one of those ‘best kept secret’ kind of places”. Dara states that some of Northern York's residents simply do not know about the Preservation society but when they do stumble upon it they “think [the Society] is really cool”. Finally, the Preservation Society is most proud of being a landmark and site for the community to gather; the society has taken originally derelict buildings and transformed them into a pillar of community pride. They have created a sense of community and place via shared experiences that make people feel at home.



Guest cuts a traditionally made loaf of bread

## YORK COUNTY'S DATA PROFILE

The following chart explores economic and demographic data for York County and six comparable communities, chosen for their relative similarities to York in characteristics like population size, growth, median household income, and/or median home value. Each of the profiled communities has a dedicated public funding source for supporting quality of life amenities throughout their counties. In the sections that follow, the linkages between the presence of these funding mechanisms and economic growth is explored, in particular as it relates to employment within the creative and outdoor sectors.

These sectors are composed of diverse industries, including performing arts, museums and heritage sites, arts education, design and architecture, film and television, sounds and radio, publishers and software design, golf and skiing facilities, marinas, campgrounds, recreational goods retail, and more (full list included in the appendix).

	York County, PA	Allegheny County, PA	Davidson County, TN	Washington County, MD	St. Bernard Parish, LA	Santa Barbara County, CA	Genesee County, MI
<b>Associated Metro Area</b>	York City	Pittsburgh	Nashville	Hagerstown	New Orleans	Santa Barbara	Flint
<b>Population (2019)</b>	449,058	1,216,045	694,144	151,049	47,244	446,499	405,813
<b>Pop Change (2010-19)</b>	3.10%	-0.60%	10.60%	2.30%	28.30%	5.20%	-4.50%
<b>Median HH Income</b>	\$68,940	\$62,320	\$62,515	\$63,510	\$47,873	\$78,925	\$50,269
<b>Median Home Value</b>	\$183,300	\$161,600	\$267,400	\$221,700	\$152,600	\$610,300	\$119,500
<b>Life Expectancy</b>	78	77	77	76	75	81	75
<b>Farmers Markets</b>	9	23	14	4	1	13	6
<b>Libraries/ Museums</b>	15	101	39	14	3	44	30
<b>Creative/ Outdoor Sector Share of Total Employment (2010)</b>	4%	6%	5%	4%	13%	6%	4%
<b>Creative/ Outdoor Sector Share of Total Employment (2020)</b>	5%	8%	7%	4%	5%	8%	4%
<b>Creative/ Outdoor Sector Employment (2020)</b>	8,358	50,221	32,039	2,376	511	16,000	4,617
<b>Sector Employment Change (2010-2020)</b>	33.80%	15.90%	46.60%	13.10%	-16.50%	36.00%	-4.50%



# LEARNING FROM OTHERS: PUBLIC FUNDING MECHANISMS

The following section outlines several ways communities around the country use public dollars to support their quality of life amenities, from parks and trails, to public spaces like town squares and farmers markets, to cultural institutions like museums and libraries, as well as public art installations, theaters, and festivals. These include Percent for Art programs, Special Tax Districts, and Cultural Districts, described in greater detail below.

This summary chart details each funding mechanism and the estimated levels of funding that could be generated in York County if a similar mechanism were deployed there (based off 2020 tax and property assessment levels).

	York County, PA	Allegheny County, PA	Davidson County, TN	Washington County, MD	St. Bernard Parish, LA	Santa Barbara County, CA	Genesee County, MI
<b>Metro Area</b>	York City	Pittsburgh	Nashville	Hagerstown	New Orleans	Santa Barbara	Flint
<b>Funding Mechanism</b>	n/a	Tax District	Percent for Art	Arts & Culture District	Arts & Culture District	Percent for Art	Tax District
<b>Details</b>	n/a	1% countywide sales tax	1% of any general bond issued for construction	State incentives on property (50% property tax credit for 10-years), amusement, and artist incomes within the area	Tax incentives on development and art sales within the district	1% of capital projects funds	.96 mills property tax countywide
<b>Estimated Funding</b>	1 mill property tax ~\$27m; 1% sales tax ~\$51m annually	\$62m annually	tbd	tbd	tbd	tbd	\$3.5m annually

With a few exceptions, most of these funding mechanisms support primarily arts and cultural assets rather than outdoor recreation assets. However, the basic principles could be applied to supporting a wide variety of quality of place amenities.

Given the overlap and connectivity between organizations in these spaces (public art installations along rail trails; theater performances in parks; culinary experiences at farms and heritage sites), these programs could inform similar mechanisms in York County. Each mechanism is explored below, with additional testimonial from communities that have deployed them.

## PERCENT FOR ART

Percent for art programs collect a percentage — typically 1% — of government revenue from sources like bond sales for capital projects or investment funding to fund the arts in the community. Percent for art programs often directly fund public art on-site at new capital developments, such as a statue outside a new office building or a gallery inside a new school or library. However, these funds can be and often are captured for a variety of uses, including the distribution of grant dollars to local nonprofits and administrative needs.

These programs are used throughout the country from the neighborhood to state level, and are usually passed as legislation through a council or other governing body. Two examples of counties utilizing percent for art programs are examined below.

### DAVIDSON COUNTY, TN - METRO ARTS (NASHVILLE)

**Funding Mechanism:** The Nashville Office of Arts and Culture, doing business as [Metro Arts](#), is partially funded by a percent for art program of 1% of the total dollar amount of general bonds issued for public construction and capital projects. Funding is allocated to the office through the city-county government and then distributed to specific organizations and projects through the guidance of the county's arts commission.

As a whole, Metro Arts distributes grant funding to cultural groups, commissions public art projects, and also grants permission for filming and photography permits at public cultural assets and events. Additionally, its dedicated percent for art dollars work to place public art around the city. Metro Arts is given the freedom to decide where art is placed geographically, as opposed to some municipalities which require percent for art dollars to create public art at the site of capital development. Funds for the maintenance of public art come from the city's general budget, rather than capital project bond revenues.

**Purpose:** Metro Arts works to ensure that all Nashvillians have access to creativity through community investments, artist and organizational training, public art and creative placemaking coordination, and direct programs that involve residents in all forms of arts and culture.



Exploration and Discovery: The Scholar, by Ken Rowe, a Metro Arts public art piece



 From the Four Corners by Paul Vexler, in the Southeast Davidson County Public Library entable art in Nashville’s public libraries

**History:** Nashville–Davidson’s percent for art program was crafted in 2000 by then-mayor Bill Purcell, who championed the creation of the fund. The ordinance was passed by council, and requires council approval for policy changes to this day.

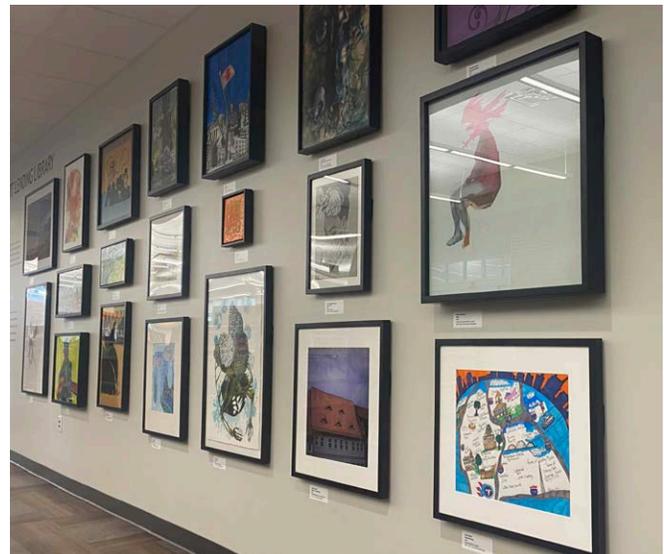
**Governance:** Metro Arts is a city-county government office with a [15-person voting commission](#). Commission members serve 4-year terms and are selected through a public nomination process. The mayor has the largest say over these nominations given their office’s political sway and connections, often directly choosing eventual appointments while Metro Arts has little control. Subcommittees of Metro Arts, composed of existing commission members and designated community/non-commission members, also provide guidance specifically on grants and public art.

**What Works Well:** Metro Arts boasts a clear strength in the clarity of their operational policies. What is [defined as public art](#), where it can go, how it should be maintained, and who should create these works is all clearly laid out [in their guidelines](#). These standards in part help shield the office from potential criticism since they are transparent and visible.

The team has also worked hard in the past years to ensure public art meets standards of social equity and access, by ensuring most of their pieces are made by local artists, that local artists have apprenticeships under their wing, and that art is being increasingly placed in growing minority communities.

Metro Arts is also utilizing data and best practices to grow not only the level of interest in local arts and culture, but also the economy of the arts and culture sector as a whole. This data is further utilized in understanding what sorts of art should be added to the groups’ portfolio, where it should come from, and where it should be placed.

**Project Highlight:** In 2020, Metro Arts led the creation of the Art WORKS Lending Library Collection, purchasing 60 total works of art from local artists that are now available for short to long-term rental in libraries in the same vein as books. The program aims to further engrain arts and creativity into public spaces. As the program continues, it holds the goal of ensuring upwards of 85% of available art is from local creators.



 Rentable art in Nashville’s public libraries

**Data Profile:** Like York County, Davidson County is a growing community, with a 10%+ increase in population between 2010–2019. A full 7% of its workforce of nearly 480,000 people is employed in the creative and outdoor recreation sector, and that has increased by almost 50% since 2010 to a total of 32,039 in 2020. This program works well in part due to this large pool of talent working in the sector to help drive success forward – which would likely be the case in York County as well, given that 5% of its workforce is employed in the creative and outdoor recreation sector. Davidson County boasts an impressive 39 libraries and museums and 14+ farmers markets, indicating a robust civic environment.

**SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, CA - SANTA BARBARA ARTS COMMISSION (SANTA BARBARA)**

**Funding Mechanism:** The Santa Barbara County Office of Arts and Culture (SBAC) produces and manages public art for Santa Barbara County, CA, funded through the allotment of 1% of capital projects funds for public art installations. The agency also works to give grants to local arts and culture nonprofits and provides programming that engages the community according to collective priorities. Grants are funded through county, municipal, state and private allocations.

Percent for art funding is used for the creation and maintenance of public art installations. Funding is allocated to the office through the county government and then distributed to specific organizations and projects through the guidance of SBAC’s public commission. The 1% fee is paid directly by the government, as opposed to the developer, keeping accountability internal to local leaders.

**Purpose:** SBAC serves as an umbrella for county arts projects, assists communities in raising funds for art programs, and provides technical assistance and coordination to arts organizations, artists, and local government.

**History:** SBAC was established in 1977 by the County of Santa Barbara. In 1985, as part of a Regional Arts Master Plan that worked to drive arts and culture access in the area, the Office became the staff of the City of Santa Barbara.



An art market in Santa Barbara County



MOXI, the Wolf Museum of Exploration & Innovation in Santa Barbara, CA

**Governance:** SBAC functions as a government office that is part of the Community Services division of the county. SBAC also houses a 15-member county commission, composed of three people per each of the county’s five supervisorial districts, that helps guide the office’s work. However, SBAC does not report directly to this group, as they operate with relative freedom and utilize advice from the commission. The commission is appointed by the County Board of Supervisors, and typically prioritizes community engagement and maintaining relationships with political leaders as its top action items. Commissioner appointments must go through a public county hearing that is open to public comment.

**What Works Well:** SBAC’s efforts to [track community indicators](#) such as the economic impact of arts and culture in the county, revenue generated from audiences attending cultural events, and volume of artists per capita have allowed the office to make investments in this space a priority. By utilizing analyses from [Americans for the Arts](#) and [OTIS College](#), which produces an annual report on the creative economy in Southern California, as well as working alongside local business improvement districts, SBAC have made developers and government officials alike see the value that arts and culture bring to the county’s community.

New investments are directly supported by the idea that art is an economic multiplier in terms of not only creating industry activity, sales, and new tax revenues, but also being instrumental in attracting both residential and tourist populations to key target areas.

**Project Highlight:** SBAC leads the county’s public-private process of [strategic master planning](#) for arts and culture assets, programming, and policy related to the office’s scope. The multi-year planning process, which began in 2014 as Phase I and concluded in 2020 as Phase III, highlighted the community’s desire for increased collaboration amongst cultural organizations, reliable and sustainable funding measures for artists, enhanced K-12 arts education, and affordable live-work and performance spaces.

**Data Profile:** Santa Barbara County’s population is very similar to York County’s at 446,499 as of 2019. It has seen a 5% population growth rate over the last ten years, and that growth is reflected in an 36% increase in creative and outdoor recreation sector employment since 2010, similar to YorkCounty’s 34% increase over the same time period. In 2020 there were 16,000 people working in the sector in Santa Barbara County, representing 8% of the county’s 201,236 working population, reflecting a truly vibrant cultural economy that is fueled, in part, by SBAC’s efforts.

# PERCENT FOR ART SUMMARY

## IMPLICATIONS FOR YORK COUNTY

Percent for art programs **succeed** in engaging the political, planning, and artistic communities in the codified growth of arts and culture by serving as supplemental and complementary funding to other public and private sources. These funding mechanisms fuel a general governmental interest in the arts and employment in the sector, as the government is required to prioritize these sectors when funding, and the impact of these sectors fall under their purview.

However, percent for art can sometimes **fail** to generate any real innovation due to the frequent political turnover seen in many municipalities and counties, often creating long-term planning issues such as a lack of funds for maintenance, conservation, and administration more generally. This is amplified by the fact that percent for art funds are often meant solely for public art, not grants or other innovative methods of placemaking.

**In an ideal world**, a percent for art ordinance would be coupled with specific commitments to data collection and impact measurement that can help catalyze and justify future investments that drive DEI initiatives, placemaking, private sector involvement in funding the arts, enhanced marketing and operational capacity for support organizations, and continued funding support from capital projects administrations.



## TAX DISTRICTS

Tax districts tie government revenue from a new tax, often codified into the tax code or part of a ballot measure, to a specific, predetermined use. Tax districts are known for their strict geographic scopes, only collecting funds within the area they are passed for.

Types of taxes deployed can vary from property and sales taxes, to new taxes on hotel/motel occupancy, to sin taxes on things like alcohol or cigarette sales. For example, a municipality can use a 1.5% sales tax to directly fund cultural institutions. Or, a county can impose a 3% tax on hotel/motel occupancy to fund public parks and trails.

### ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PA - REGIONAL ASSET DISTRICT (PITTSBURGH)

**Funding Mechanism:** The Regional Asset District (RAD) is a countywide tax district funded by a 1% sales tax on a variety of purchases, excluding only sales of food (ready-to-eat food is not exempt), most footwear and clothing, textbooks, prescription and non-prescription drugs, sales for resale, and residential heating fuels. All government and non-profit purchases are also exempt.

Half of the tax directly supports RAD grants to nonprofit and civic organizations that manage quality of place amenities, with the other half distributed amongst the county's 128 municipalities as direct financial support according to a calculated formula from the State Treasury. Taxes are collected by the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue and then transferred to the RAD, which distributes funds consistently to grantees and municipalities throughout the year.

RAD grants are awarded through a robust vetting process, including a standard application and a public hearing in front of the RAD board and other involved stakeholders. The RAD typically funds organizations year after year, supplying needed operating revenue in a predictable and reliable way. RAD grants are split up amongst three categories:

- 1. Contractual Assets:** Organizations selected at RAD's founding in 1994 for 10-year funding commitments that were reauthorized for five additional years in 2005, 2010, 2015, and 2020;
- 2. Annual Assets:** Organizations that apply for support on an annual basis;
- 3. Multi-Year Assets:** Grants with commitments for more than one year of commitments beyond the contractual asset period.

**Purpose:** The RAD exists to invest in local quality of life initiatives through grants, public projects ranging from installations to placemaking initiatives, and direct financial support for local municipalities. The RAD has also helped eliminate personal property taxes in the county, shift the burden away from other forms of property tax, and support a plethora of government activities.

Notable assets funded by the RAD include theaters, libraries, Allegheny County's Land Trust, galleries, historical and heritage sites, and a multitude of museums. These institutions host '[RADical Days](#)', specific days with free admission, in exchange for the RAD's public support.





To date, RAD revenue has supported:

195

Regional Assets

128

Municipalities

The Allegheny Regional Asset District – RAD – invests in Allegheny County’s quality of life through financial support of libraries, parks and trails, arts and cultural organizations, regional attractions, sports and civic facilities, and public transit.

With half of the proceeds from Allegheny County’s additional one percent sales and use tax, RAD has invested more than \$2 billion in regional assets since its inception with an additional \$2 billion going directly to the County and its 128 municipalities for property tax relief and local government services.



Sports and Civic Facilities



Arts & Culture



Libraries



Parks, Trails & Green Spaces



Transit



Tax Relief and Government Services

**History:** RAD was established as a special purpose area-wide unit of local government, authorized by an act of the Pennsylvania Legislature (Act 77 of 1993). The authorization is part of the State’s second class county code, rather than existing as a piece of renewable legislation, meaning it exists in perpetuity. The ordinance came into effect with little fanfare, but grew in notoriety and was the subject of some controversy when it was used to fund new sports facilities throughout Pittsburgh beginning in 1999. Now, it is seen as an essential piece of the county’s identity and quality of place development.

**Governance:** The RAD is a special-purpose unit of the county government. Oversight of funds is handled by a seven member board of directors, four of which are appointed by the County Executive, two by the Mayor of Pittsburgh, and one by public, at-large nominations. This board requires a supermajority (six of seven members) to pass grants and other forms of internal policy. Other key policies include the mandatory 15% reserve fund that RAD must keep and the limiting of administrative expenses to 1% of annual funding.

**What Works Well:** Perhaps the RAD’s biggest success is simply its size. The 1% sales tax has raised over \$4b for the county’s assets and municipalities since 1995, currently generating over \$250m a year in revenue. This volume is further supported by internal policy which requires the RAD to keep a reserve fund at 15% of total annual funds. The RAD’s current \$33m of reserves allow it to continually invest in communities with a low amount of stress on financial sustainability and future impact, even through recession. As Executive Director Richard Hudic said, “everything that makes the Pittsburgh region fun is funded by the RAD.” This mentality speaks to the size and impact the entity embodies.

## TAX DISTRICTS

The RAD also excels in ensuring grantees meet DEI standards. Public funding hearings and collecting annual data on the impact of grantees allow the RAD to make transparent and prioritize the impact they want to see from the groups they fund. This rigidity allows the RAD to ensure DEI impacts are being met throughout the region.

**Project Highlight:** The RAD's impact and strength stems from its part in attracting people, families, and businesses to the area. Well-funded cultural assets and municipalities create spaces for creativity, innovation, and quality of life. In turn, the region experiences a robust sense of place that people are excited to enjoy.

**Data Profile:** Allegheny County has a relatively stagnant population, experiencing a slight (-.6%) decline between 2010-2019. Despite being primarily urban, the county boasts similar median household income and median home value data to York. York County experienced a faster rate of creative/outdoor sector employment growth between 2010-2020 (33.8% growth, compared to 15.9%), though Allegheny County's employment in this sector makes up a larger piece of the total employment pie, at 8% total. The county is home to over 100 libraries and dozens of farmers markets, reflecting a rich culture and vibrancy.



Pittsburgh's cultural district

## GENESEE COUNTY, MI – FLINT CULTURAL CENTER CORPORATION (FLINT)

**Funding Mechanism:** The [Flint Cultural Center Corporation \(FCCC\)](#) is funded by a property tax millage of .96 mills throughout Genesee County, MI. Funding is collected by the county and then redistributed to the FCCC team as non-restricted revenue for the organization. 5% of funds are held in escrow to account for organizational administration, with the rest going directly to individuals and institutions.

[FCCC collected over \\$3.5m from the millage in 2019](#), reinvesting over 90% of that directly to cultural individuals and institutions, according to their 2019 Millage Audit. Facilities supported include: “Flint Institute of Arts (FIA)(an art museum and art education facility); Flint Institute of Music (FIM)(Flint Symphony Orchestra and a 3,000- student Flint School of Performing Arts); Flint Public Library; Flint Youth Theater (an organization that produces and presents plays for youth and inter-generational performances); Robert T. Longway Planetarium (a 286-seat planetarium); Alfred P. Sloan Museum (a history and science museum); and James H. Whiting Auditorium (a 2,000 seat auditorium).”

**Purpose:** FCCC works to foster cultural activity and community vitality through history, science and the arts. The group provides grants and services for cultural bearers along with a campus-esque physical space for cultural institutions and facilities.



Flint Cultural Center Academy

## TAX DISTRICTS



 Flint Institute of the Arts and Capitol Theater



**History:** The Flint Cultural Center Corporation (FCCC) was founded in 1992. The millage directly supporting FCCC was passed in 2018 and implemented in 2019.

**Governance:** FCCC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Governance is provided by nine board members who represent a mix of public and private officials.

Governance related to specific cultural assets is laid out in the group's most recent audit: "The Center is governed in a very complex manner. Flint Cultural Center Corporation (the "Corporation") serves as the governing body for Longway Planetarium, Sloan Museum, and Whiting Auditorium. The Corporation also has responsibility for the land and buildings in which the above three organizations are housed, the buildings in which Flint Institute of Arts and Flint Institute of Music are located, the Flint School District Central Kitchen building, and the Walker Place building. The latter two buildings were purchased by the Corporation during the years ended June 30, 2014 and 2015. The operations of Flint Institute of Arts, Flint Institute of Music, and Flint Public Library remain independent and governed by their own boards of directors. Although these organizations have their own missions and goals, their governing boards have pledged to work closely with the Corporation in meeting the goals of the Center as a whole."

**What Works Well:** Much of FCCC's success comes from the long-term creation of their arts and culture campus, which houses the 8 major institutions it works to fund.

By creating this dense concentration of cultural experiences in one part of the city, FCCC is able to attract residents and tourists alike to not only one experience, but a diverse array of activities and exhibitions that define the area's local arts and culture scene.

**Project Highlight:** According to the group's 2019 Millage Audit, FCCC recently undertook a large effort to restore and revitalize one of the city's historic entertainment venues: "During 2015-16, FCCC entered into a collaborative arrangement with a third party to renovate and manage The Capitol Theater, a historic theater opened in 1928 and listed among the National Register of Historic Places in Michigan. As part of the arrangement, the Corporation received and then re-granted funds to the third party to fund the projects. During the 2015-16 fiscal year, the Center re-granted \$15.975 million under this arrangement."

**Data Profile:** Genesee County hosts a similarly sized population to York at 405,813, though it has experienced a population decrease in recent years. Of its total population, 4% of Genesee County residents work in creative/outdoor sectors, less than but similar to York's rate of 5%, and the rate of local residents working in these sectors has decreased from 2010-2020, in line with the county's overall population decline. However, Genesee does boast double the amount of libraries as York, with 30 total, perhaps indicating differences in the priorities of social service and tourism sectors.

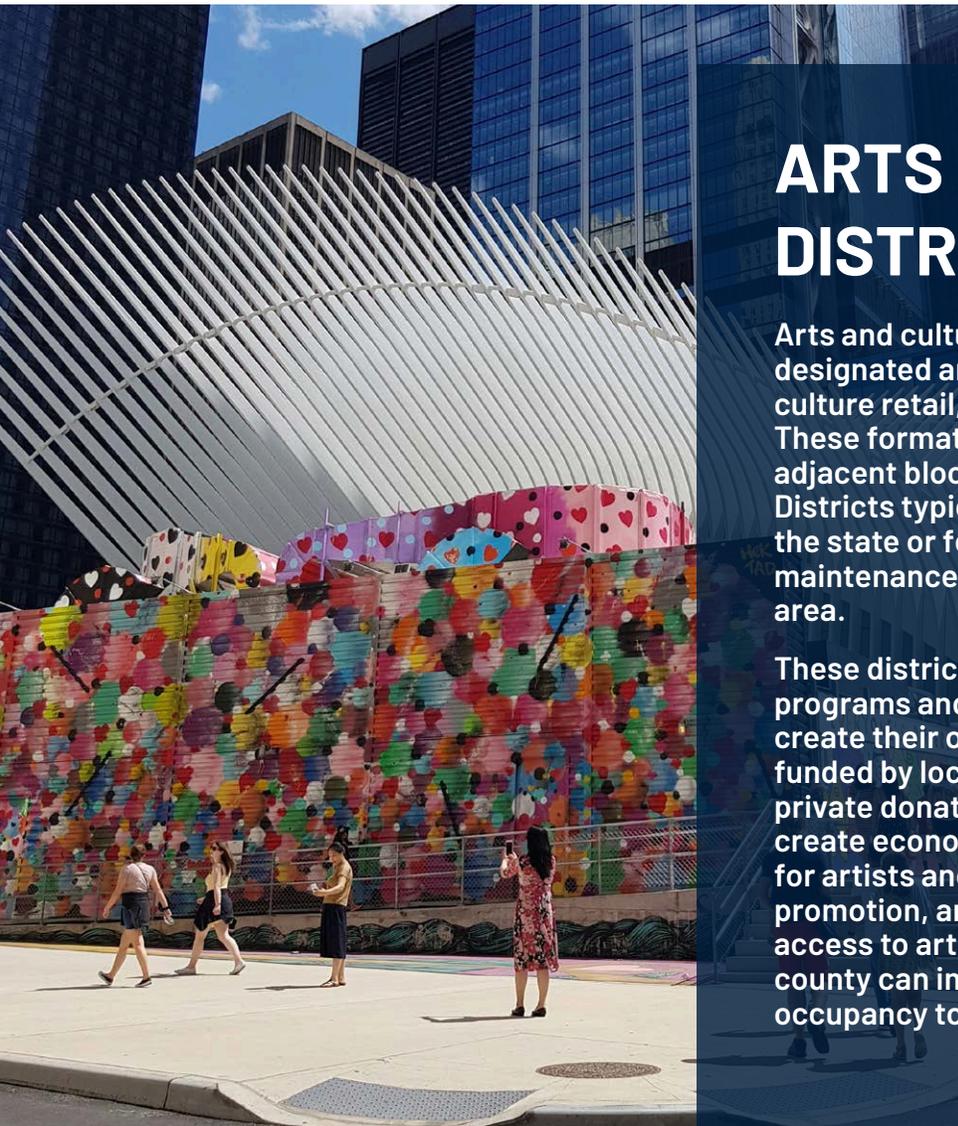
# TAX DISTRICTS SUMMARY

## IMPLICATIONS FOR YORK COUNTY

Tax districts can **succeed** in codifying funding for the arts into the tax code and therefore getting consistent, standardized help to arts & culture organizations and assets without much worry of financial fallout. Tax districts are consistent, and with the utilization of policies that ensure cash reserves, funding can remain flush from year to year to the benefit of a plethora of artists, cultural institutions, and nonprofits.

However, tax districts can **fail** in creating both collaboration and public understanding due to their grandiose size and power. Tax districts can garner large sums of money, creating complexity as stakeholders from the board to grantee level politic on behalf of their own position. This jostling for position can make tax districts inefficient and ineffective in their governance and impact.

**In an ideal world**, tax districts would benefit from a higher allotment of unrestricted administrative funds that allow the staff and operational capacity of the funding entity to grow. A codified, planned vision over how funding creates impact should also be prioritized to maximize community benefit, as opposed to a less transparent method of operations. The creation of more public governance and processes can hold day-to-day operations and long-term impact to a higher standard.



## ARTS & CULTURE DISTRICTS

Arts and culture districts are geographically designated areas that prioritize arts and culture retail, activities, and experiences. These formations can exist in the form of three adjacent blocks or an entire district of a city. Districts typically apply for designation from the state or federal government to receive maintenance and operational funds for the area.

These districts differ from percent for art programs and tax districts in that they do not create their own revenue. Districts are often funded by local and state dollars, grants, and private donations. However, the areas still create economic impact through tax incentives for artists and cultural bearers, marketing and promotion, and housing a concentration of access to arts and culture institutions. Or, a county can impose a 3% tax on hotel/motel occupancy to fund public parks and trails.

### WASHINGTON COUNTY, MD - HAGERSTOWN ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT & WASHINGTON COUNTY ARTS COUNCIL (HAGERSTOWN)

**Funding Mechanism:** The [Hagerstown Arts & Entertainment District \(HAED\)](#) is a state-designated arts & entertainment district in Washington County, MD. The district creates funding for artists and cultural assets through leveraging [state incentives](#), applicable at the local level. To be eligible, artists must live and work in the area.

To incentivize development, there is a 50% property tax credit for 10-years on the increase in property assessment which results from a renovation project to create housing, working, or performing space for arts and entertainment enterprises. The state also provides an exemption on its Admissions and Amusement Tax to enterprises dedicated to visual or performing arts located within the district. And, qualified residing artists who live in Maryland and sell artistic work in any of the State's A&E Districts are eligible for an income tax subtraction modification on income derived from their in-district sales (for performing artists, this includes income derived from performances in a district; for all qualified residing artists, this includes internet sales originating in a district.)

The district is supported by the Washington County Arts Council, which is primarily funded through state funds and private dollars. The district itself funds its incentives through state dollars.

**Purpose:** HAED hosts festivals throughout the year, a large portion of the city's cultural trail, and is the physical hub to a variety of cultural assets such as theaters, libraries, and museums. Primarily, the district works as a tool for stimulating the economy and improving quality of life. The Arts Council then supports these activities through working to expand public art, programming, and grants to local community arts and culture institutions.



 HAED cultural trail

## ARTS & CULTURE DISTRICTS

**History:** HAED was founded in 1977 as part of a larger, statewide effort to drive arts and culture participation and innovation in local communities. Most recently, [Hagerstown's city government](#) has worked to expand the district to encompass a desire for new development, including the potential for a new baseball stadium, monument row, and food and beverage market.

**Governance:** The district's status is a state designation applied for and received by the City of Hagerstown government. This designation creates direct support for artists and institutions within the district. HAED requires reapproval every 10 years at the city's request from the state, and is advised by a three-person board. The Arts Council is a 501(c)(3) providing county oversight over all arts and culture happenings, including HAED. The Council has a 13-person governing board.

**What Works Well:** By requiring artists and culture bearers to both live and work in and around the district to qualify for incentives, HAED succeeds in creating a concentration of activities and experiences within a particular geographic area. This reality has also helped expand the district over time, as more residences and businesses hope to be a part of what the district offers in terms of financial and promotional opportunity.

**Project Highlight:** The district is home to the [Historic City Farmers Market](#), which opened in 1791 and is the oldest continuously operating farmers market in Maryland, if not the country. Housed in a brick warehouse since 1928, the market just recently moved to a new outdoor location as new tenants move into the HAED, opening a brewpub, distillery, and cidery in the market's previous location.

**Data Profile:** Washington County has similar median household income and median home values to York County. However, Washington County is rather low in creative/outdoor employment, with this sector making up only 4% of total employment despite a 13.1% increase in sector employment between 2010-2020. Despite its relatively small population of just over 150,000, Washington County is home to 14 libraries compared to York's 15, though the Maryland county hosts only one farmers market compared to York's nine.



Historic City Farmer's Market

## ST. BERNARD PARISH, LA - OLD ARABI CULTURAL DISTRICT & ST. CLAUDE ARTS (NEW ORLEANS)

**Funding Mechanism:** The [Old Arabi Cultural District](#), anchored by the [St. Claude Arts strip](#), is a historic community adjacent to Southeast New Orleans. The cultural district creates funding for arts and culture by providing [tax incentives](#) that help catalyze the growth and development of these sectors. In the cultural district, sales of original works of art are exempt from local sales tax, and renovations to existing buildings are more likely to be eligible for residential and commercial state historic income tax credits. From 2014-18, sales were exempt from the 4.45% state sales tax as well, but 2018 legislation eliminated this exemption until 2025 in an effort to bring more taxes into the state budget during a period of fiscal crisis. These incentives allow Old Arabi's arts and culture community to benefit directly from state funds in both selling works and creating personalized workspace.

**Purpose:** The district works to leverage arts and culture as a driver for economic development and enhanced livability in St. Bernard Parish. The geographic designation, part of the state's [Cultural District program](#), serves as a hub for arts and culture development, historic renewal, and local museums.

**History:** The district's designation was approved in 2014. However, concepts for the area came to be after Hurricane Katrina, when the local Meraux Foundation purchased land throughout the parish after its 2005 decimation to help revitalize the area both physically and culturally. The foundation works to leverage its landholdings to benefit St. Bernard Parish through land use strategy, community building, and special projects.

St. Claude Arts specifically was a \$2m initial private investment into undeveloped and blighted buildings and sites, complemented by a near \$1m public investment into community beautification by local government. More information is provided courtesy of the Meraux Foundation's website:

“Thus far, it has created a unique space that is spurring economic development by attracting people to live, work, visit, and spend money in the Parish. Re-envisioning and putting vacant and underused properties back into commerce has generated local property and sales tax revenues that can be devoted to infrastructure improvements. The \$2 million acquisition, construction, and renovation project alone supported more than 100 jobs, and the finished project has directly created some 15 new jobs for St. Bernard. The redevelopment is also contributing to a ripple effect, attracting complementary businesses to the area.”

**Governance:** The cultural district is an official designation applied for and received by St. Bernard Parish Government's Tourism Office. The office's director leads governance over the district alongside a small committee appointed by the office.

The committee completes annual impact reports to maintain its cultural district status, under accordance with the guidelines of the state's program.

The St. Claude Arts strip, which sits on the main thoroughfare of the district, is managed by The Meraux Foundation. The foundation has a five-person voting board.

**What Works Well:** St. Bernard Parish was considered the community hardest hit by Hurricane Katrina, with the area population diminishing from close to 70,000 to under 17,000 between 2005-06. The cultural district and St. Claude Arts have both helped to revamp not only the area's population and charm (St. Bernard boasts the fastest growing population in LA & the 2nd fastest growing GDP), but also its physical infrastructure. As these areas have become full of new artists and tenants, the local government has made it a priority to invest in the surrounding streetscapes, flood infrastructure, and parks. Ultimately, the cultural district and arts strip have partially spearheaded a larger package of revitalization in the parish.



This domino effect is in many ways thanks to the Meraux Foundation's strict standards over land use within St. Claude Arts. Considering they own



Detail of a mural painted by Lana Guerra

most of the land on the strip, the foundation is able to control who tenants are, what they do, and how they affect people's perceptions of the parish. By controlling the parcels, the Meraux Foundation has been

able to control quality of place in a hyper-concentrated area and bring in new populations and developments. This strategy has brought in academics from throughout the country to study how land ownership can correspond to community redevelopment and improvement.

**Project Highlight:** The Ranch Film Studios, a local film production company, plans to convert the [historic 225,000 sq. ft Ford Plant](#), built in 1921 by Albert Kahn and Henry Ford, into a state-of-the-art film studio that will help anchor the cultural district as a job and wealth creator. This development will complement the moves of Studio Inferno and Zeitgeist Multi-Disciplinary Arts Center from New Orleans to Arabi and a planned outdoor arts market in fulfilling the area's mission of growing the parish's arts and culture communities.

**Data Profile:** St. Bernard is one of Louisiana's fastest growing counties in the post-Hurricane Katrina era, gaining 28% in population between 2010-2019. However, the parish of only 47,244 residents has experienced an immense loss in cultural/outdoor employees between 2010-2020, losing 16.5% of its jobs in this sector. The parish boasts a small amount of cultural facilities to match the small population, but proximity to the Mississippi River and its surrounding deltas and bayous makes for a strong outdoor economy.



Future film studio

# ARTS & CULTURE DISTRICTS SUMMARY

## IMPLICATIONS FOR YORK COUNTY

Cultural districts **succeed** in prioritizing a specific, predetermined area for development that can house the growth of arts and culture industry and employment at the benefit of political agendas, the artist community, and the general public alike. Placemaking at the hands of arts districts can be a win across the board: for government administration, economic developers, residents, and local artists.

However, cultural districts can **fail** in creating both community programming and usable financial incentives for artists due to high barriers to entry and the independent nature of participating entrepreneurs. While arts districts may still create impact, a lack of community involvement can cause questions over what districts do other than create an avenue for outside investment, often generating gentrification and potential displacement.

**In an ideal world**, cultural districts need real funding from public and private means to catalyze community involvement and programming with artists, impact reporting, and a general public utility outside of development. Data that justifies not only the positive impact of available incentives and their utilization, but also community satisfaction with happenings in an arts district, could go a long way in keeping a variety of stakeholders happy.





# OUTDOOR RECREATION

Funding at a county level for outdoor recreation such as parks, trails, and natural water assets typically stems from a county's general fund. **At the county level, most forms of designated funding streams for the outdoor economy were enabled at the state level.**

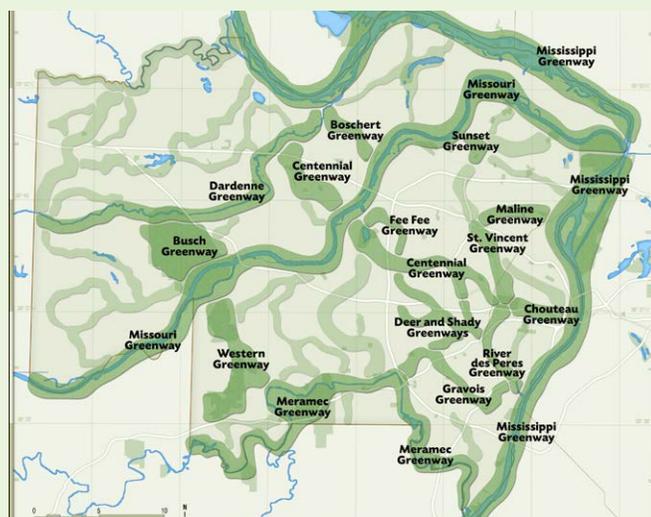
At the state level, there are a [variety of creative financing programs](#) that help preserve and grow access to local green spaces, wetlands, streams, lakes, and the woods.

- Colorado hosts the [Great Outdoors Colorado](#) Program, a program backed by a statewide constitutional amendment, which uses a portion of the state's lottery revenue to protect and enhance the state's natural areas.
- Minnesota's [Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment](#), passed in 2008 to the state's constitution with a 25 year sunset, protects drinking water sources, wetlands, woodlands, and other natural assets. The program was funded through 3/8ths of a percent increase to state sales tax, and splits revenue between four major funds: 33% to a clean water fund; 33% percent to an outdoor heritage fund; 19.75% to an arts and cultural heritage fund; and 14.25% to a parks and trails fund.
- In Arkansas, the [Natural and Cultural Resources Grant and Trust Fund](#) collects a \$2.20 of tax per \$1,000 of sale on the transfer of most real estate. Established in 1987, the program had raised over \$165m as of 2018, with funds split between land acquisition, management, the stewardship of land for recreation, and conservation purposes.
- Meanwhile, Pennsylvania's most notable stream for the funding of the outdoor recreation economy is the [Keystone Recreation, Park, and Conservation fund](#), which receives revenue from 15% of real estate transfers throughout the state. Passed by state legislation in 1993, voters doubled down on the program in that same year, voting to supplement the fund with \$50m of bond revenues.

## OUTDOOR RECREATION

**In Missouri, collaboration between St. Louis County and its neighboring St. Charles County is one example of county action taken to support outdoor recreation.** In 1999, the State of Missouri passed legislation enabling the creation of new recreational park districts. This legislation led to a more local ballot vote in the two counties, known as the Clean Water, Safe Parks, and Community Trails Initiative or Proposition C, which created a 1/10th of 1c sales tax in the area to create the Great Rivers Greenway District. The tax created an annual \$10m budget for the District, which has since led the construction of over 128 miles of greenways, connecting over 100 local municipalities. A 12-person board of directors, appointed by county executives, help lead the District. St. Louis County is given six appointments, while the City of St. Louis and St. Charles County each receives three apiece. In 2013, St. Louis County approved an additional 3/16 of 1c sales tax to increase the District's budget by another \$9.4m a year, though St. Charles County officials decided not to put the measure on the ballot. These funds help drive a variety of activities, including the purchasing of land, construction and maintenance of trails, and the procurement and implementation of public art installations.

Designated funding streams for outdoor recreation at the local or municipal level are also rare. However, in Western Pennsylvania, **the City of Pittsburgh has shifted this paradigm with a new plan to fund parks.** In December 2020, the city's council voted 6-3 in favor of a new tax of \$50 for every \$100,000 of assessed property value for owners, or an increase of 0.5 mills. This tax is estimated to create an additional \$10m annually for general improvements, maintenance, operation of parks, improvements to park safety and provisions for equitable funding of parks. In 2021, the council pushed through plans to utilize the revenue through the new Pittsburgh Parks Trust Fund. The council will have to approve both allocations internally to the fund, and allotments out to parks. As of 2022, the council rejected a plan to split funds evenly amongst the city's 9 districts, deciding that underserved areas should receive a greater share of these tax dollars.



There are 45 greenways identified in the overall Great Rivers Greenway concept. 128 miles have been built so far, with another 200 miles in the planning stages and up to 600 miles within the designated area.



The Three Rivers Heritage Trail in Pittsburgh has been recognized nationally for transforming the city's waterfront from a post-industrial "dead zone" to a vibrant community asset which has spurred investment along its 33-mile route.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

There are many lessons learned from looking at the public funding programs deployed in comparable communities across the county. Though many of them support primarily cultural assets rather than outdoor recreation amenities, the format and structure may be applicable to funding a wider variety of quality of life organizations in a given region, especially given public support for quality of place enhancement as an economic development strategy. What follows are recommended best practices to consider when exploring establishing a potential public funding mechanism for arts and outdoor recreation assets in York County.

## FUNDING MECHANISMS AND IMPACTS

### *FUNDING VOLUME*

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**It's important to consider the purpose, goals, and scope that new funding for quality of life amenities in the community will serve.**

For example, tax districts typically create the highest volume of funding to support a wide variety of cultural, environmental, and recreation assets. The amount is dependent on what is being taxed and at what percent, but ultimately, this relatively steady and reliable cash-flow is attached to a greater sum of revenue for the desired purpose. Taxes on property, sales, hotel/motel occupancy, and even sin activities (alcohol sales or gambling) are typically not very volatile on an annual basis.

Meanwhile, percent for art programs are reliant on long-term capital projects for their funding. This can create a disparity in the amount of funding available year-over-year, particularly when political administrations turnover and newer leaders are more or less inclined to support infrastructure investments and other forms of capital projects.

Arts and culture districts do not generate funding alone solely from becoming established; they instead rely on tax incentives like credits and exemptions to incentivize artists and institutions to locate within the district, utilizing local and state policies to drive and encourage density.

## BARRIERS TO CREATION

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Tax districts can be difficult to create considering the public backlash that often comes from proposed tax increases. While these taxes can be implemented without public input through the tax code, or more publicly through ballot measures, both avenues can be unpopular, as seen not only in the RAD's initial implementation but also in the fact that over 50% of Americans [support lower taxes in general](#). However, **the public can become more open to raised taxes if the benefit is clear and supported.**

Percent for art *and* cultural districts have much simpler routes to implementation. Both can be created through a council vote, especially when mayoral or even state support is in place. The feasibility of implementing an arts and culture district can also rely heavily on the existence of statewide programs and designations. Though Pennsylvania does not boast a statewide arts and culture district designation, these areas still exist: [Pittsburgh's Cultural District](#) is operated by the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust as a private governing body, and [Bethlehem's SouthSide Arts District](#) is managed by the Bethlehem Economic Development Corporation.

## MAINTENANCE & ADMINISTRATION

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All three funding types examined through this planning effort generally lack the ability to create an amount of funding that is adequate to cover operational overhead or all of the maintenance it takes to keep assets fresh, attractive, and well-functioning. While some entities earmark a percentage of revenue for administration or maintenance, all organizations interviewed in this particular study found this funding to often be insufficient.

One potential solution to consider is **leveraging public funding to solicit matching funds from philanthropic and other sources**, in order to help cover potential gaps in coverage of maintenance, administration, and operational costs.

# GEOGRAPHIC IMPLICATIONS

## SCOPE

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All three funding archetypes use a specific geographic area as a mechanism for defining where funding goes: a county, a municipality, or even a few square blocks in a business district are potential options for implementing new forms of revenue and incentives meant to encourage cultural activity, support placemaking, and increase quality of life in a community.

The amount of funding generated is directly correlated to the size of a district or program in terms of geography, though. A larger scope will often yield more money from tax revenue, capital project allocations, or a government funder of incentives. Meanwhile, smaller areas will receive less revenue and up-front funding.

In York County, which contains 72 municipalities, including dense urban and suburban areas as well as vast rural communities, there are so many diverse offerings to celebrate and support, that casting a wide net would be impactful. Referencing a strategy like the one used by Metro Arts in Tennessee that values **geographic diversity as a core funding principle can help focus funding widely throughout a region or county and reach well beyond just the downtown or city centers.**



## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

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Geographic size and scope can also tie directly back to the level of ownership a population of people feel over the way arts, culture, and outdoor recreation activities are supported in their community. While tax districts can generate larger sums of funding from a greater mass of land and population, they can feel rather top-down and non-visible compared to the visceral and tangible nature of an arts and culture district. Cultural districts are typically more likely to spawn community-run programming, workshops, and a neighborly feel that many communities strive for. However, if done right, a tax district or percent for art program can fund entities and projects that drive a true sense of place, identity, and pride in an area. Thus, **it comes down to intentionally and planning to spur community buy-in, participation, and support.**

# ORGANIZATIONAL GOVERNANCE

## COMMISSIONS & LEADERSHIP

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**Successful forms of support for arts and culture, whether governmental or non-profit in structure, benefit from a voting commission that helps to dictate priorities, select projects, and drive impact.** These commissions can help bring stability and longevity to the organization, as well as institutional know-how, and can mitigate against the volatility of changing political administrations. Commissions help sustain an agenda over a longer period of time.

Many commissions are selected and appointed by mayors or council members. In York County, a leadership commission or committee that has representation from political leaders and the community

served is advised. A commission should be structured with an odd number of voting members, with final vote given to the entities' executive director or equivalent management as a good way to maintain order and strategy past a few years' time.

## VISION

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Of the groups surveyed, the most successful ones had in common a strong vision that defined the type of impact they would create. Whether those visions were based in utilizing public art to enhance quality of place, getting funding in the hands of museums and heritage centers, or creating more accessible spaces for artists to work and sell their items, a collaborative, ambitious vision should drive the work. Visions should be backed by a mission and goals that help clarify how the vision would be achieved within the community.

## CODIFIED DECISION-MAKING

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Almost all groups engaged for this study noted the critical nature of robust guidelines, standards, and codified methods of decision-making. As a public agency or nonprofit with a commitment to the public good, **funding entities must ensure a clear and transparent purpose, methodology, and methods of recourse for problem solving.** For example, SBAC has a formal process for complaints when residents view art as unfit for a community or in need of maintenance: online and in-person options exist for filing a complaint, connecting with a member of the SBAC team, and having your complaint dealt with, much like submitting a customer support ticket on any given website.

These standards should shape and inform everything from what defines a cultural enterprise to how to get community members engaged in placemaking efforts.

While guidelines and codified policy can sometimes be restrictive, they often yield the most consistent, positive work when the right balance is struck between creativity and standards.

## INTERACTION WITH THE PUBLIC

### EQUITY

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As advancing social equity has become the focus of many organizations' work in recent years, governments and nonprofits play an increasingly important role in ensuring constituents and beneficiaries receive equitable access to programs and experiences. Cultural and community amenities are no exception, and should center inclusion a guiding principle

In every group we spoke with, an immense focus was placed on practicing DEI in both organizational operations and public impact. **This entails prioritizing diverse staff perspectives and backgrounds, as well as an enhanced focus on granting funding to diverse points of view, demographics, and communities.**

Using data-driven insights, organizations can begin to ask the right questions surrounding DEI and better tailor their impact to the public: is my staff representative of who we serve? Do all communities in the area have equitable access to facilities and experiences? Is there diverse representation in the leadership of institutions and cultural centers? Are the organizations we financially support diverse in their viewpoint, backgrounds, and offerings?

### PUBLIC-PRIVATE INVOLVEMENT

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To maximize impact and representation within the community, funding mechanisms should utilize both public and private sector involvement to ensure a diverse array of opinions.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

This may mean corporations and private foundations, local government and non-profit leaders, and community members are guiding and supporting work.

### TRANSPARENCY

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Arts and culture support groups should be clear with the public on what their operations are, who supports them, and who they are attempting to benefit with projects, programs, and other efforts.

**Without transparency, these support groups can become ineffective and distrusted.**

## UTILIZING DATA

### ASSESSING IMPACT

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To create impact toward a stated mission and vision, entities must pair actions with methods of assessment and evaluation, tracking data that shows success and progress toward goals.

In the space of culture and community funding, investments should be made in order to track data trends around the impact of annual grants, tourism expenditures, job creation, and other economic measures. These metrics can be tracked both independently and with support from larger entities, such as state government and organizations like Americans for the Arts. Regardless of where it comes from, it is important these conglomerations of data exist to justify impact, catalyze investments, and grow the arts and culture sectors.

**Understanding impact and measuring success are the key steps to not only requesting additional funding for programs and initiatives, but attracting investment in general.** Even if data is lackluster due to poor performance, gaps can still be identified to help grow into the future.



## CONCLUSION

Arts, culture, and outdoor recreation amenities add massive value to the quality of life for the communities in which they are located, from increased tourism, to economic development and job creation, to enhanced community pride, civic engagement, and talent attraction. The recommendations in this report provide guidelines and a roadmap to follow for further exploration of how York County may choose to support these assets in a systematic and sustainable way, for generations to enjoy.



# APPENDIX

## “CORE CREATIVE”

Industry Category	Industry Sub-Cluster	Industry Code	Description
Core Creative	Arts and Culture	711110	Theater Companies and Dinner Theaters
		711120	Dance Companies
		711130	Musical Groups and Artists
		711190	Other Performing Arts Companies
		711410	Agents and Managers for Artists, Athletes, Entertainers, and Other Public Figures
		711510	Independent Artists, Writers, and Performers
		712110	Museums
	Arts Education	611610	Fine Arts Schools
		611630	Language Schools
		611691	Exam Preparation and Tutoring
		611699	All Other Miscellaneous Schools and Instruction
		611710	Educational Support Services
	Design & Creative Services	541310	Architectural Services
		541320	Landscape Architectural Services
		541410	Interior Design Services
		541420	Industrial Design Services
		541430	Graphic Design Services
		541490	Other Specialized Design Services
		541810	Advertising Agencies
	Photography and photofinishing services	541921	Photography Studios, Portrait
541922		Commercial Photography	
812921		Photofinishing Laboratories (except One-Hour)	
812922		One-Hour Photofinishing	

## "CREATIVE PRODUCTION"

Industry Category	Industry Sub-Cluster	Industry Code	Description
Creative Production	Motion Picture and Television	512110	Motion Picture and Video Production
		512120	Motion Picture and Video Distribution
		512191	Teleproduction and Other Postproduction Services
		515120	Television Broadcasting
	Music and Sound, Radio	512230	Music Publishers
		512240	Sound Recording Studios
		512290	Other Sound Recording Industries
		515111	Radio Networks
		515112	Radio Stations
	Printing and Publishing	323111	Commercial Printing (except Screen and Books)
		511110	Newspaper Publishers
		511120	Periodical Publishers
		511130	Book Publishers
Other Creative	Computer Systems Design Services	541512	Computer Systems Design Services
	Custom Computer Programming Services	541511	Custom Computer Programming Services
	Software Publishers	511210	Software Publishers

## “OUTDOOR ECONOMY”

Industry Category	Industry Sub-Cluster	Industry Code	Description
Outdoor Economy	Primary Outdoor	487	Scenic and Sightseeing Transportation
		7131	Amusement Parks and Arcades
		481219	Other Nonscheduled Air Transportation
		611620	Sports and Recreation Instruction
		624110	Child and Youth Services
		624120	Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities
		711219	Other Spectator Sports
		711310	Promoters of Performing Arts, Sports, and Similar Events with Facilities
		713910	Golf Courses and Country Clubs
		713920	Skiing Facilities
		713930	Marinas
		713940	Fitness and Recreational Sports Centers
		713990	All Other Amusement and Recreation Industries
		721211	RV (Recreational Vehicle) Parks and Campgrounds
		721214	Recreational and Vacation Camps (except Campgrounds)
	813990	Other Similar Organizations (except Business, Professional, Labor, and Political Organizations)	
	Secondary Outdoor	236220	Commercial and Institutional Building Construction
		237990	Other Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction
		336214	Travel Trailer and Camper Manufacturing
		423110	Automobile and Other Motor Vehicle Merchant Wholesalers
		423910	Sporting and Recreational Goods and Supplies Merchant Wholesalers
		441210	Recreational Vehicle Dealers
		512132	Drive-In Motion Picture Theaters
		531190	Lessors of Other Real Estate Property
		532120	Truck, Utility Trailer, and RV (Recreational Vehicle) Rental and Leasing
		532284	Recreational Goods Rental
621340		Offices of Physical, Occupational and Speech Therapists, and Audiologists	

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