



Vicksburg Cultural Arts Center

Strategic Plan 2018-2019

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Introduction

Leaders' Statement

As leaders of the Vicksburg Cultural Arts Center (VCAC), we are excited to offer this initial strategic plan for the transition of the VCAC from a project of the Vicksburg Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to an independent nonprofit organization.

We thank the community members who participated with us in three strategic planning input sessions totaling five face-to-face hours: Kristina Powers Aubrey, Community Activist; Lisa Beams, Artist and VCAC Gallery Manager; Kari L. de Boer, Community Member; Denny Hayward, VCAC Artist; Norm Hinga, Durametallic (retired); Laynie Leach, High School Artist; Gail Reisterer, Vicksburg Village Council; Jim Shaw, Vicksburg Foundation; Vic Simmons, High School Artist; Amanda Wilson, Actor and VCAC Gallery Coordinator.

Thanks to Lisa Beams, Bobbe Luce and Amanda Wilson for serving with us on the Strategic Planning Steering Committee. We appreciate the expertise and insights each of you brought to our ten hours of discussion and decision-making.

We are also grateful to the organizations whose grants have made this strategic planning process possible: Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, Irving S. Gilmore Foundation and Paper City, LLC.

Informed by community member input, the strategic plan identifies steps that VCAC leaders and supporters must take to effect a smooth and successful transition from DDA project to independent nonprofit organization. We look forward to forming an organization that will build on the first two years of success achieved by the VCAC!

Jackie Koney, Chair
Arts & Creative Placemaking Sub-Committee
Vicksburg Downtown Development Authority

Syd Bastos, Director
Vicksburg Cultural Arts Center

Executive Summary

As the Vicksburg Cultural Arts Center makes the transition during 2018 from a project of the Vicksburg Downtown Development Authority to sustainable independent nonprofit organization, VCAC supporters will focus their energy and attention on 1) taking the steps necessary by law to constitute the VCAC as a nonprofit organization, 2) creating and implementing a plan for financial stability for Fiscal Year 2018-19, and 3) enhancing the reputation of the VCAC by continuing to offer and promote the high quality programming and services already established during the first two years of the VCAC's existence.

These strategic priorities and the goals that underpin them were identified through a strategic planning process. The process involved a total of thirteen community members and key VCAC staff and volunteers. Participants began with clarification of the VCAC's vision, values and mission. Participants then conducted a situational analysis of the VCAC, considering internal strengths and weaknesses, as well external opportunities and threats. Given the VCAC's vision, values, mission and its current situation, participants generated strategic priorities and pertinent goals.

Once the VCAC has incorporated, formed a Board of Directors, and submitted its application to the Internal Revenue Service for 501c3 nonprofit status, a new strategic planning process will be in order to guide the organization after its transitional period.

Description of Vicksburg Cultural Arts Center

Background

The Vicksburg Cultural Arts Center (VCAC) was created in September 2015 by the Vicksburg Downtown Development Authority to support the Arts & Creative Placemaking Initiative of the Village of Vicksburg, Michigan. The VCAC provides a gallery for exhibition and sale of work created by local and regional visual artists; offers performances by local and regional theater, vocal and musical artists; conducts arts education; and organizes arts events.

Creative placemaking intentionally leverages the power of the arts, culture and creativity to serve a community's interest while driving a broader agenda for change, growth and transformation in a way that also builds character and quality of place.

In its first two years the VCAC held 68 events, engaging 7,000+ visitors with the gallery and VCAC events. Forty-two artists earned over \$27,000 in sales of their artwork at the VCAC gallery. Thirty-nine musical performing groups earned \$5,150. Three part-time contractors earned \$72,000 providing services to the VCAC. A local business owner received \$20,400 in rent for a storefront. Local businesses gained an unknown amount of revenue from patrons of VCAC before and after events, including Coffee House Concerts, Destination Series offerings, and 600+ participants in the 2016 Art Stroll.

Sources of revenue for the VCAC include foundation grants, donations, fundraisers, memberships, event admissions and commissions on sales of art. No financial support is provided by the Village of Vicksburg or the Vicksburg Downtown Development Authority.

Americans for the Arts surveyed nonprofit arts organizations in 2014 and 2016 to determine the typical proportion of revenue from different sources. The survey showed that the following mix is typical:

- Earned 60% – events, commissions, fundraisers, membership
- Private 30% -- foundations, private donors, corporate sponsors
- Government 10% -- federal, state and municipal

The VCAC increased the proportion of earned income between its first and second years.



The VCAC reports monthly on its performance to the Downtown Development Authority Board of the Village of Vicksburg, which has fiduciary responsibility.

Vision, Values, Mission

VISION

A strong creative arts culture contributes to a distinct community identity and economically vital Vicksburg.

VALUES

- ❖ Creativity
- ❖ Collaboration
- ❖ Diversity and Inclusion
- ❖ Learning
- ❖ Enrichment
- ❖ Sustainability

MISSION

The Vicksburg Cultural Arts Center inspires, educates and enriches by providing artistic and cultural opportunities.

Programs & Services

Ongoing

- **Art Gallery**—sale of work by 23 regional artists and 5 artisans
- **Event Space**—gallery rental for private events

Monthly

- **Coffee House Concerts**—featuring local musical groups including Megan Dooley, Duffield/Caron Project, Dani Jamerson Band, Kim Richey, Henpecked Dawgs, Pnuckleheads, Brass Rail, Hackneyed Quips, Double-Strung, Sound Builders and The Trucky Twins

Annually

- **Arts Stroll**—visual and performing arts at 18 venues around the Village of Vicksburg in a festival atmosphere; discounts on drinks, food and goods at participating establishments

Biannually

- **Arts Camp** — week-long summer day camp for children 8-12 years old, led by artist-educators

Periodic

- **Destination Series** — Ukrainian and Irish-themed events have been held
- **Special Exhibits** — West Michigan Woodturners; Vicksburg Elementary, Middle and High School Student Artists, Kalamazoo Paper Guild have been featured
- **Arts/Crafts Classes** — including glass art, knitting, floral arrangement

Artists & Artisans

Artists

Lisa Beams - Pottery
Aerick Burton - Multimedia Art and Origami
Jake Biernacki – Plaster
Daisy Chisholm – Paper and Mixed Media
Bruce Dannenhauer - Turned Wood
Pam Davidson - Painting
Dina Hadley - Pottery
Denny Hayward - Inlaid & Turned Wood
Tory Hollister – Glass
John Kern - Photography
Helen Kleczynski - Pastel & Watercolor Painting
Pete LaRouech - Abstract Painting

Bobbe Luce - Fused Glass
Kim Marston - Graphic Arts & Photography
Terry Nugent - Handmade Glass Bead Jewelry
Nancy Smith - Multimedia Art & Author
Susan Snyder - Pastels
Kathy Standard - Stained Glass
Barbara Stewart - Jewelry
Coco Sweezy - Painting
John Sweezy - Woodworking - Lamps & Boxes
Patrick Thomas - Pastels
Raven Wynd - Sculpture, Drawing

Artisans & Authors

Jim Bird – Turned Wood Pens
Larry Forsyth – Metalwork
Georganne Oldenburg – Knitwear
Norm Hinga – Author
Lynn Pruitt-Timko - Weaver

Management

Syd Bastos, Director, .5 FTE

Responsibilities: reporting, fundraising, finances, marketing, facilities, program development & management
Experience/qualifications: project management, profit & loss responsibilities, inventory control

Lisa Beams, Gallery Manager, .5 FTE

Responsibilities: artist recruitment, special exhibit programming, event planning & management
Experience/qualifications: project management, commercial food preparation, fiber and ceramics artist

Amanda Wilson, Gallery Coordinator, .5 FTE

Responsibilities: gallery sales, inventory control, event publicity & management
Experience/qualifications: retail sales, theater and voice artist

Situational Analysis

Eight community members and four VCAC Steering Committee members identified the following Internal Strengths, Internal Weaknesses, External Opportunities and External Threats of the Vicksburg Cultural Arts Center.

Strengths

Passionate Staff

Passion, enthusiasm of staff
Stubbornness, perseverance
Dedicated staff, work more hours than paid
Passion for the arts as individuals
Optimism, “can do”

Community Support

Great success given limited resources and support; community wants it
Support from community
Discovery of people who really want to help
New help

Leadership

Leadership
Capable, skilled management
Organizational [capacity]

Foundation Funding

Vicksburg and Gilmore Foundation support

Programming

Arts camp
Concerts

Flexibility

Ability to make changes quickly
Try-it attitude; we're new, so we're willing to try new stuff

Space

New location
Designing space to suit gallery

Partnerships

Established connections with entities in the community

Weaknesses

Visibility

Still trying to be "visible"
Not marketing to the right demographics
Create an ID that shouts, "Look at me!"
Lack of advertising/outreach beyond the artistic community
Advertising, marketing—get the word out of what's happening

Focus

Get distracted
Lack of focus
Time management
Agree to more than can do well
Organization

Financial Stability

Financial stability
Grant writing
Lack of funding
Funding

Human Capacity

Staff with no nonprofit experience or arts organization experience (I don't think)
Getting the right people for the job
Lack of staff
Organized volunteer corps
No succession plan

Governance

Not being able to call the shots—still under DDA
Municipal governance—DDA—Village
Not sure there is enough support to be own 501c3?

Fluid Location

Mobile location [location has changed and will change again]

Financial Accountability

Financial controls, including procedures

Generational Orientation

Caters to art buyers [who are] older; focus not on building future generations

Opportunities

Potential Individual Participants

- Seems like lots of artists around
- Community participation (not yet tapped)
- Involve more youth art[ists]
- Encourage amateur artists to display

Potential Partner Organizations

- Ability to work with Village and community
- Can engage school age artists due to location of schools
- Local schools with artistic opportunities for students

Arts Niche Open

- First mover advantage
- (Re) create the understanding of the arts
- Sharing arts

Younger Generation's Preferences [Cool Cities]

- Trend for younger folks wanting “cool” places in towns non-big box
- Encouraging young people to stay in our community

Regional Arts Emphasis

- Kalamazoo has reputation for arts and culture

Funding

- Grants available but not applied for

Threats

Community Attitudes

- Negative attitude from some people
- Vocal opponents
- Narrow mindedness
- Lack of diversity in community
- Perception of “the Arts” as highbrow
- [Assumption that red tape prevents projects that would] cross over to other areas that benefit community [such as students painting trash cans creatively for downtown]

Community Disinterest

- People don't understand value of arts—for all community decision-making
- Attitude of unimportance surrounding arts in Vicksburg
- Lack of interest of community (3x)
- [Lack of] support by community

Competition

- Too close to Kalamazoo? (competition)
- Competing communities (primarily Kalamazoo)
- Competition
- Kalamazoo's availability of space and opportunity for artists

Funding

- Money always dwindling, especially for arts
- Grant funding cuts

Priorities & Goals

Given the Internal Strengths and Weaknesses, and External Opportunities and Threats, the VCAC Strategic Planning Steering Committee with input from eight community members devised strategic priorities and SMART goals for the VCAC for the next 12 to 18 months (November 2017-October 2018 or April 2019). SMART goals are specific, measurable, achievable, result-focused, and time-bound.

Strategic Priority I: Constitute the Vicksburg Cultural Arts Center as a nonprofit organization.

Goals:

1. File Articles of Incorporation with the State of Michigan by December 1, 2017 with three incorporators to gain corporate status.
2. As soon as VCAC is incorporated, file for charitable license to solicit from the State of Michigan so VCAC can solicit donations.
3. Create bylaws for the organization by January 15, 2018 for governance of VCAC.
4. Form initial Board of Directors of 5-7 members, including President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, by March 1, 2018 to guide and govern the organization.
5. Secure Directors & Officers Liability Insurance by March 15, 2018 to protect board members' assets.
6. Submit application for 501c3 nonprofit tax status with the Internal Revenue Service by March 15, 2018 so donations to VCAC will be tax deductible, VCAC owes no federal taxes, and VCAC may apply for grants.

Strategic Priority II: Create and implement a plan for financial stability for Fiscal Year 2018-19.

Goals:

1. To ensure smooth transfer to VCAC (as a nonprofit organization) of funds and assets designated for VCAC held by the Village of Vicksburg, put in writing by December 31, 2017 the terms of that transfer.
2. By November 30, 2017 to aid in board recruitment, create revenue and expense scenarios for VCAC, including: staff, volunteers and gallery; volunteers, gallery and no staff; staff, volunteers and no gallery.
3. As soon as VCAC is incorporated, file for an EIN from the IRS to establish corporate standing for tax purposes.
4. To ascertain the viability of the VCAC, write a nonprofit business plan for 7/1/18-6/30/19 by February 1, 2018, including:
 - Executive Summary
 - Organization Description (including vision, values, mission; programming and services; target audiences and clientele)
 - Market Analysis (including competitors and partners)
 - Organization Management (including staffing)
 - Revenue Strategies (may include donations, sponsorships, grants, ticket sales, commissions)
 - Funding Requirements
 - Financial Projections
5. By April 1, 2018 create a board committee for Fund Development to complete tasks for revenue strategies for FY 2018-19 to ensure adequate financial resources for the VCAC.
6. By December 31, 2018, establish criteria for selecting programming and services to guide decisions for 2018-19. Criteria may include: financial cost/benefit, political cost/benefit, quality.

Strategic Priority III: Enhance the reputation of the Vicksburg Cultural Arts Center.

Goals:

1. Promote the VCAC via the mass and personal channels that will most effectively reach VCAC's current and desired partners and audiences starting February 1, 2018 to build support for the VCAC.
2. Reinforce the VCAC reputation and build audiences/clientele by continuing to offer programming and services already established, insofar as each meets the criteria for programming and services: annual Arts Stroll and arts camp; monthly Coffeehouse Concerts; periodic Destination Series, exhibits, and art/crafts classes; ongoing art gallery sales.

Implementation

Resources—Infrastructure & Finances

Fixed Assets

The Vicksburg Cultural Arts Center rents space for the gallery. Fixed assets include: two computers, seven chairs, shelving, light walls with lighting, and one desk.

Financial Assets—Funds held by Vicksburg Downtown Development Authority as of 6/30/17: \$17,661.

Profit and Loss, Budget vs. Actual: 7/1/16—6/30/17

	7/1/16--6/30/17	Budget	% of Budget
Income:			
Grants-- Foundations, MCACA	20,000	20,900	95.7
Artist Commissions & Rental	7,910	8,620	91.8
Event Contributions	17,117	21,800	78.5
Memberships	3,747	4,000	93.7
Donations	4,300	4,400	97.7
Other Income-- Visitor Center, private gallery rental	2,545	3,572	71.3
Total Income	55,619	63,292	87.9
Expenses:			
Staffing	37,500	43,000	87.2
Rent	10,200	10,200	100.0
Operating Expenses	1,823	2,300	79.6
Advertising/Printing	1,763	2,700	65.3
Fundraising Expenses	8,556	9,000	95.1
Professional Services-- Website, Attorney	1,083	1,100	98.4
Bank Charges	969	1,200	80.8
Postage	352	550	64.0
Total Expenses	62,246	70,050	88.9
NET PROFIT/LOSS	(6,627)	(6,758)	

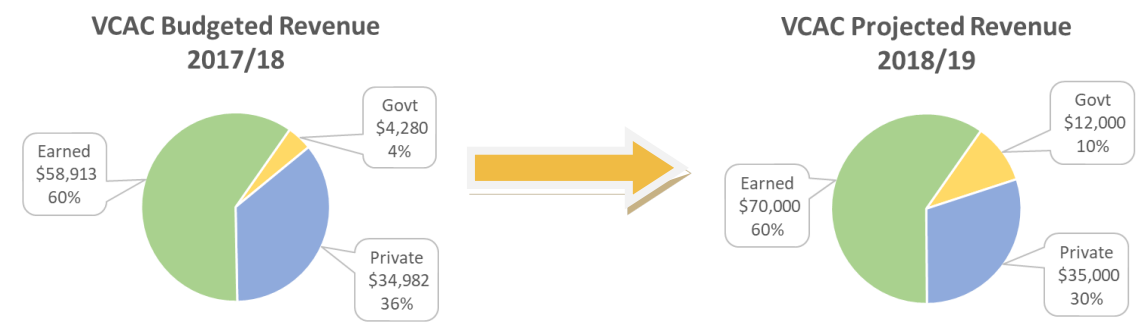
NOTE: Timing of grant funding creates the apparent loss in FY 2016-17. If not for the issue of timing, revenues would meet expenses for the year.

Profit and Loss, Budget vs. Actual: 1st Half of 7/1/17-6/30/18

	7/1/17 – 12/30/17	Fiscal Year Budget	% of Budget
Income:			
Grants-- Foundations, MCACA	32,762	30,762	106.5
Artist Commissions & Rental	4,451	6,720	66.2
Event Contributions	14,534	49,343	29.4
Memberships	85	1,200	7.0
Donations/Sponsorships	3,918	8,500	46.1
Other Income-- Visitor Center, private gallery rental	750	1,650	45.4
Total Income	56,500	98,175	57.5
Expenses:			
Staffing	18,000	38,400	46.9
Rent/utilities	4,186	10,400	40.2
Operating Expenses	245	455	53.8
Advertising/Printing	281	2,500	11.2
Event Expenses	7,365	25,375	29.0
Professional Services-- Website, Attorney, Insurance	1,450	8,746	16.6
Bank Charges	551	2,030	27.1
Postage	0	441	0
Total Expenses	32,078	88,347	36.3
NET PROFIT/LOSS	24,422	10,349	

Anticipated Revenue Mix, 2017-19

Earned income is key for sustainability. Year 3 earned income is expected to increase 40% over Year 2 with new programming. By Year 4, earned income growth will slow to 20% over prior year as VCAC attains equilibrium. Then the revenue mix will more closely align with the mix typical of ongoing nonprofit arts organizations: 60% earned, 30% private and 10% government.



Implementation Plan

Date	Action	Lead	Team	Resources Needed	Measure of Success	Status 1/12/18
Ongoing	Offer programming & services already established	Syd Bastos & Lisa Beams	Amanda Wilson	Funding Event and gallery partners	Increases in event attendance and gallery visits	Ongoing
11/1/17 12/1/17	File Articles of Incorporation	Syd Bastos	Lisa Beams, Jackie Koney	3 incorporators \$20 fee	Corporate status	Complete
11/1/17 2/28/18	Create budget scenarios for 2018	Syd Bastos	Lisa Beams Amanda Wilson Jackie Koney, Fawn Callen	Seber Tans, VCAC supporters	Budget for 2018 and 2019	Draft complete
12/1/17 12/15/17	File for EIN from IRS	Syd Bastos		Leo Goddeyne	EIN for VCAC	Complete
12/1/17 1/15/18	Create By-laws	Syd Bastos	Jackie Koney Bobbe Luce, Lisa Beams	Leo Goddeyne	By-laws	Draft
12/1/17 3/1/18	Form Board of Directors, select officers, approve By-laws	Bobbe Luce	Syd Bastos Jackie Koney Lisa Beams	Selection Matrix, Application	Select 5-9 Board members, orientation	Info mtg scheduled, selection matrix complete
12/1/17 2/28/18	Write nonprofit business plan	Syd Bastos	Bobbe Luce Norm Hinga Bill Adams Amanda Wilson	Input from experienced stakeholders	Nonprofit Business Plan	
12/1/17 3/1/18	Apply for 501c3 status with IRS	Syd Bastos	Bobbe Luce, Lisa Beams, Jackie Koney	Leo Goddeyne, \$850 app fee	501c3 status	
2/1/18 Ongoing	Promote VCAC via effective channels	Amanda Wilson	Syd Bastos	Contacts Funding	Increase event attendance, fundraiser proceeds	
3/1/18 3/15/18	Secure Directors & Officers Insurance	Board Executive Committee	Staff	Funds for insurance fee	D&O Policy for VCAC	
3/1/18 4/1/18	Create board committee for Fund Development	Board President	Board members	Board members and other volunteers with expertise	Fund Development Committee	
6/1/18	Secure written agreement with Village for transfer of VCAC funds	Syd Bastos	Leo Goeddyne, Seber Tans, Michelle Morgan, Jim Mallery	Bylaws, EIN, 501(c)(3) letter	Written agreement with Village	
6/1/18	Apply for charitable license to solicit	Syd Bastos	Board	By-laws,	Charitable License to Solicit	
9/1/18 12/31/18	Establish criteria for programming & services	Board of Directors	Staff	Costs & benefits of past & current programming & services	Criteria for programming & services	

Calendar of Due Dates

	2017		2018											
	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Budget scenario	11/30													
Art. of Incorpor.		12/1												
EIN appl.		12/15												
By-laws				2/28										
Business Plan				2/28										
Promote VCAC				2/1	→									
Board & Off.				2/28										
501c3 appl.				2/28										
D&O insur.					3/15									
Fund Dev. Com.					3/15									
Village Agreement								6/1						
Char License								6/1						
Prog. criteria											9/1	→		

Dissemination of Strategic Plan

The Vicksburg Cultural Arts Center Director will make as many visits as possible to share the main points of the strategic plan and to solicit input from partners and potential partners. A copy of the plan will be provided upon request. Organizations to visit include:

- Vicksburg Downtown Development Authority
- Vicksburg Village Council
- Vicksburg Foundation
- Vicksburg Chamber of Commerce
- Gilmore Foundation
- Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs (MCACA)
- Arts Council of Greater Kalamazoo
- Carnegie Center for the Arts (Three Rivers)
- Schoolcraft Village Council

VCAC leaders will also use the strategic plan as they recruit potential applicants for the VCAC Board of Directors.

Assessment of Strategic Plan Implementation

The Vicksburg Cultural Arts Center Director and other contractual staff members will monitor implementation of the strategic plan until the VCAC Board of Directors is in place.

Once in place, the Board of Directors will monitor implementation of the plan and assess the appropriateness of adding goals, especially for the 6-12 months of May 2018-October 2018 or April 2019, which follow the planned transition from the Vicksburg Downtown Development Authority to independent nonprofit status.

Given that this strategic plan covers a brief transitional period, a new strategic planning process for 2019 forward will be in order for the Board of Directors soon after the Board is established.