

**WABASH RIVER**

Regional Development Authority

# ARTS AND CULTURE PLAN



DESIGNING



# WABASH RIVER REGIONAL ARTS AND CULTURE PLAN

## A LETTER FROM THE RDA

Dear Partners and Friends of the West Central Indiana Region,

Across Indiana's west central communities, a new energy of innovation, collaboration, and regional pride is shaping our future. The Wabash River Regional Development Authority (WVRDA) has been proud to help lead that momentum through the Regional Economic Acceleration and Development Initiative (READI)—Indiana's statewide effort to invest strategically in what makes places attractive for people to live, work, and invest.

From the start, our region has focused on three foundational priorities: education and workforce training, housing and infrastructure, and early childhood education. These are essential for long-term growth. But as we advanced these priorities under READI, it became increasingly clear that the vitality of our region depends on more than just jobs and infrastructure. To truly attract and retain residents, we must also invest in what makes our communities vibrant, connected, and uniquely ours: arts and culture.

The Wabash River Regional Arts & Culture Plan was created to meet that need. While our counties already have passionate arts organizations, events, and local champions, their efforts often operate independently. This plan brings those individual strengths together under a shared regional vision—one that recognizes that creativity and culture are not luxuries but essential drivers of community pride, economic vitality, and quality of life.

This effort was made possible through planning support from Lilly Endowment Inc., which in early 2024 provided a historic \$250 million grant to the Indiana Economic Development Corporation to bolster "quality of place" initiatives across the state—including arts and culture planning efforts that align with regional development strategies.

On behalf of the WRRDA Board, I want to thank the many community members, partners, and organizations—especially our regional arts council, Arts Illiana—who helped make this plan possible. Their leadership and vision ensure that this plan is not just a document, but a living strategy to foster a stronger, more vibrant West Central Indiana.

Sincerely,



Jon Ford

*Chair, Wabash River Regional Development Authority*

## CONTENTS

<b>WEST CENTRAL IDENTITY</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>Arts and Culture Innovators</i>	<i>14</i>
<b>A VISION FOR THE ARTS</b>	<b>25</b>
<i>Engagement and Analysis</i>	<i>26</i>
<b>WEST CENTRAL STRATEGIES</b>	<b>33</b>
<i>Objective 1</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Objective 2</i>	<i>46</i>
<i>Objective 3</i>	<i>60</i>
<b>FUNDING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE</b>	<b>67</b>

## VISION

The Wabash River Region is home to an exciting and deeply collaborative arts community. Together, they will cultivate compelling destinations for public art and diverse cultural experiences, making the region a vibrant and engaging hub for arts and culture.

## GOALS

***Beautification and Placemaking***

***Community Pride***

***Health and Wellness***

***Local Investment***





**1**

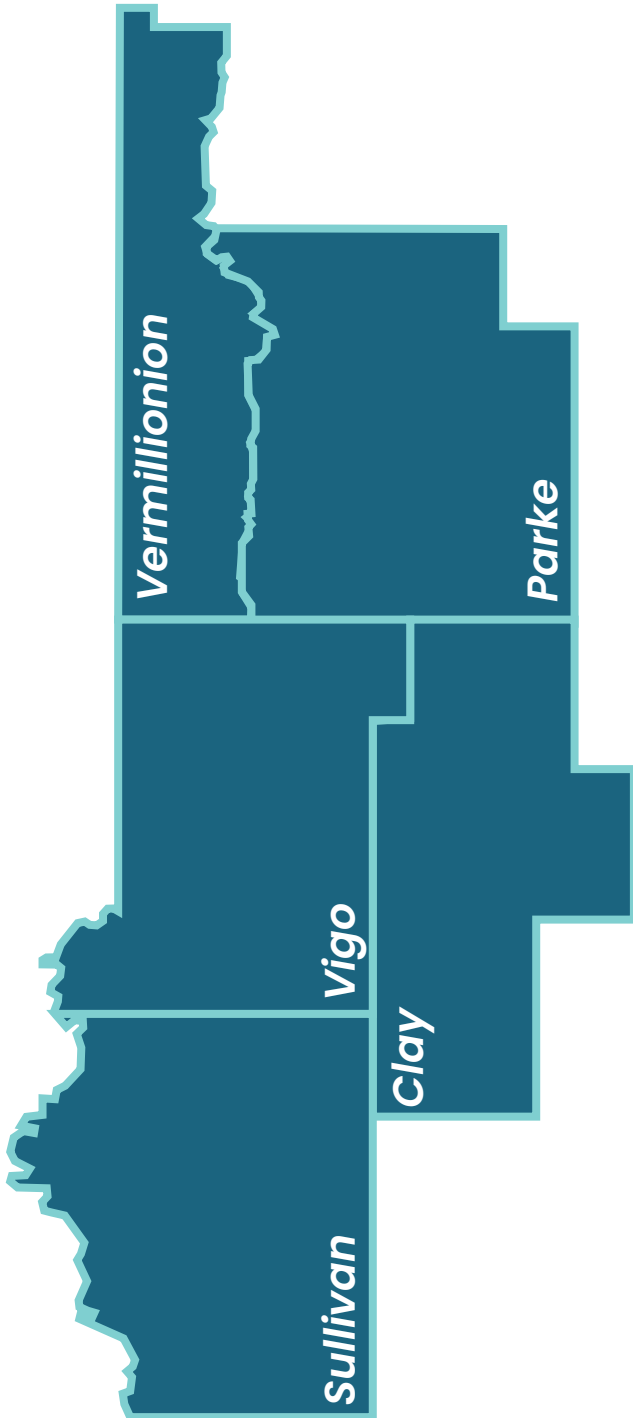
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**WEST  
CENTRAL  
IDENTITY**

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# WABASH RIVER REGIONAL ARTS AND CULTURE PLAN

## THE WABASH RIVER REGION



## Who is West Central Indiana?

Region Population

**185,271**

Land Area (m<sup>2</sup>)

**1,910**

The Wabash River region is made up of five counties in western Indiana on its Illinois border: Clay, Parke, Sullivan, Vermillion, and Vigo. The Wabash River cuts through the region from the north to the south, providing dynamic and thriving waterfronts across both rural and more urban areas, with many opportunities for investment and expansion. While much of the rural landscape is agricultural and forested, many downtown areas provide hubs of arts and culture for residents in and around those areas.



## > Clay County

> Clay County is the easternmost county in the region, bordered by Parke, Vigo, and Sullivan counties. It is the second most populous county in the region, and its county seat of Brazil (pop. 8,214) is home to many exciting parks, murals, and museums that make up the county's cultural fabric.

### Cultural Assets

#### **Cultural Amenities**

- » Brazil Farmers Market
- » Brazil Public Library
- » Clay County Courthouse
- » Clayshire Castle
- » Tilted Compass Winery
- » White Pine Manor

#### **Museum & History Centers**

- » Clay County Genealogical Society
- » Clay County Historical Society
- » Historical Clay County Cabins

#### **Performing Arts**

- » Amplify the Arts
- » Brazil Concert Band
- » Community Theater of Clay County
- » Forest Park Band Shell

#### **Visual Arts**

- » Bank On Art Gallery
- » Clay City Pottery

### Festivals and Events

- » Brazil Main Street's Route 40 Fest
- » Brazil Strawberry Festival
- » Christmas in the Park
- » Clay City Pottery Summer Festival
- » Clayshire Castle Medieval Faire
- » Cory Apple Festival
- » Loyalty Day Parade
- » Old Settlers Picnic
- » Rotary 4th of July Celebration
- » Saline City Picnic
- » Volunteer Fire Department Fish Fries

### BY THE NUMBERS

Land Area: **357.54 m<sup>2</sup>**

County Population: **26,460**

County Median Age: **41.2**

County Median HHI: **\$67,676**

Number of Employers: **479**

Employment Rate: **56.4%**



Brazil Mural, Becky Hochhalter



## Parke County

Parke County is located at the northeastern corner of the region, bordered by Vermillion, Vigo, and Clay counties. Its county seat, Rockville (pop. 2,607), is home to its historic Ritz Theater and the center of its popular covered bridge tour, showcasing the 31 historic bridges in the county. Parke County's Covered Bridge Festival is the largest festival in the state, with over 2 million visitors over 10 days. The festival invites visitors to explore the arts and culture offerings across nine communities in Parke County.

## Cultural Assets

### *Cultural Amenities*

- » Billie Creek Village
- » Historic Mansfield Roller Mill
- » Historical Bridgerton Mill
- » Main Street Rockville
- » Parke County Convention & Visitors Bureau
- » Parke County Public Library
- » Historic Indiana State Sanatorium

### *Museum & History Centers*

- » Parke County Historical Society Museum

### *Performing Arts*

- » Parke Players
- » Ritz Theater

### *Visual Arts*

- » Covered Bridge Art Association and Gallery
- » Off the Square Artisans

## BY THE NUMBERS

Land Area: **444.66 m<sup>2</sup>**

County Population: **16,484**

County Median Age: **42.5**

County Median HHI: **\$66,776**

Number of Employers: **270**

Employment Rate: **49.2%**



Parke County Visitor's Center

## Festivals and Events

- » Andrew Ray Vet Ride
- » Antique Tractor Power Tour
- » Art Affair on the Square
- » Brick Street Market
- » Bridgeton Civil War Days
- » Bridgeton Country Christmas
- » Bridgeton Milling Days
- » Bridgeton Rendezvous
- » Community Yard Sale
- » Covered Bridge Art Association Open Art Show
- » Covered Bridge Christmas Market
- » Dine On A Covered Bridge
- » Eagles in Flight Weekend
- » Fourth of July Fireworks
- » Halloween In Parke County
- » Junk in the Trunk
- » Main Street Cruise-In & Street Dance
- » Main Street Rockville Block Party
- » Main Street Rockville Hometown Holidays and Parade of Lights
- » Mansfield Village Beans & Cornbread Festival
- » Mansfield Village Mushroom Festival & Car Show
- » Miami Nation Of Indians Of Indiana All Nations Gathering
- » Model T Covered Bridge Tour
- » Montezuma Chili Cook-Off
- » Montezuma Pranks in the Park
- » Montezuma Zoomtown 5K
- » Over the River and Through the Woods 5k and Morningfest
- » Parke Countians' Favorite Fireworks
- » Parke County 4-H Fair
- » Parke County Fair
- » Parke County Maple Syrup Fair
- » Raccoon Lake Independence Day Fireworks
- » Raccoon SRA's Un-BOO-lievable Halloween Happenings
- » Rockville Lake Park Halloween
- » Rockville Lake Park Independence Day Celebration
- » Rockville Lake Park Kids Fishing Derby
- » Rosedale Christmas Parade and Craft Bazaar
- » Rosedale American Legion Fireworks
- » Rosedale Strawberry Festival
- » Shop Small Saturday
- » Parke County Covered Bridge Festival
- » Trick or Treat Around the Square
- » Turkey Run Women's Wellness Retreat
- » Zoomtown Covered Bridge 5k



Covered Bridge, Parke County



## Sullivan County

Sullivan County is the southernmost county in the region, bordered by Vigo and Clay counties. Sullivan (pop. 4,264) is its county seat and offers a historic downtown with innovative placemaking techniques and recent investment that has made it a great place for families. With a new community pool and park facilities, as well as the development of a community/convention center, Sullivan County has been making investments in community pride and liveability.

### BY THE NUMBERS

Land Area: **447.14 m<sup>2</sup>**

County Population: **20,757**

County Median Age: **41.3**

County Median HHI: **\$54,985**

Number of Employers: **315**

Employment Rate: **51.3%**



Sullivan County Carnegie Library

### Cultural Assets

#### **Cultural Amenities**

- » Merom Conference Center
- » Robin's Place
- » Sullivan Civic Center
- » Sullivan County Public Library
- » Tourism Commission of Sullivan County

#### **Museum & History Centers**

- » Dugger Coal Museum
- » Sullivan County History Museum

#### **Performing Arts**

- » Farmersburg Theater
- » Sherman House Theater
- » Sullivan County Players

#### **Visual Arts**

- » Sullivan Area Art Guild & Gallery

### Festivals and Events

- » Bass Unlimited Family Fishing Rodeo
- » Be There or Be Square Car Show
- » Brew Que & Wine Too
- » Downtown Sullivan Christmas
- » Dugger Coal Festival
- » Freedom Festival & Fireworks Over the Lake
- » Holiday Market & Expo
- » Hymera Ruritan Seafood Festival
- » Merom Bluff Chautauqua Festival & Parade
- » Rat Rod Rust Rash Car Show
- » Shelburn Boo Bash
- » Sullivan County Corn Festival
- » Thunder Valley Bike Rally



> **Vermillion County**

> Vermillion is the northernmost county in the region, bordered by Clay and Vigo counties. This narrow county is the smallest in both land area and population. Its county seat is Newport (pop. 515), but its largest city is Clinton (pop. 4,831). Clinton is home to the county’s signature Little Italy Festival. New investments in arts and culture in Vermillion are increasing access for its residents, including a new non-profit Vermillion County Mural Project, riverfront developments such as boat access, county trail expansion through the Vermillion Trails Alliance, and restoration to the Perrysville Opera House.

**Cultural Assets**

**Cultural Amenities**

- » Clinton Public Library
- » Ernie Pyle Rest Park and Covered Bridge
- » Historic Newport Jail

**Museum & History Centers**

- » LIFT Coal Town and Railroad Museum
- » Ernie Pyle World War II Museum
- » Henry Dana Washburn Educational Exhibit

**Festivals and Events**

- » Clinton 4th of July Celebration
- » Dana Festival of Lights
- » Ernie Pyle Firemen’s Festival
- » Little Italy Festival
- » Newport Antique Auto Hill Climb
- » Perrysville Fun Days
- » Tarquini’s Mother’s Day Event
- » Vermillion County Fair
- » Victory Marathon, Half Marathon, and 5K
- » Wabash River Run

**BY THE NUMBERS**

Land Area: **256.88 m<sup>2</sup>**

County Population: **15,417**

County Median Age: **42.5**

County Median HHI: **\$59,363**

Number of Employers: **250**

Employment Rate: **54.4%**



Clinton, Vermillion County



## Vigo County

Vigo County is in the center of the region, bordered by Vermillion and Parke counties to the north, Clay County to the east, Sullivan County to the south, and Illinois to the west. Vigo is home to Terre Haute (pop. 58,502), the largest city in the region, and home to 50% of Vigo’s residents. Terre Haute’s 41/40 Arts and Cultural District is managed by an Advisory Group of Arts & Cultural stakeholders within the district, and is a central hub for the county’s museums, festivals, education, and creative professionals.

## Cultural Assets

### Cultural Amenities

- » 12 Points Historic District
- » 12 Points Public Market
- » 14th & Chestnut Community Center
- » 41/40 Arts & Cultural District
- » Arts Illiana, Regional Arts Council
- » Charles E. Brown Cultural Center
- » Deming Park
- » Fairbanks Park
- » Fowler Park
- » ISU Community School of the Arts
- » Pride Center of Terre Haute
- » Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College
- » Saint Mary-of-the-Woods Historic District
- » Terre Haute Casino Resort
- » Terre Haute Chamber of Commerce
- » Terre Haute Convention & Visitors Bureau
- » The Station
- » Vigo County Public Library
- » YMCA of the Wabash Valley

### Museum & History Centers

- » Candles Holocaust Museum and Education Center
- » Dobbs Memorial Park Native American Museum
- » Educational Heritage Vigo County Museum
- » Eugene V. Debs Museum
- » Indiana Track & Field and Cross Country Hall of Fame Museum
- » Larry Bird Museum
- » Swope Art Museum
- » Terre Haute Children’s Museum
- » Veterans Memorial Museum of Terre Haute
- » Vigo County History Center
- » Wabash Valley Railroad Museum

## BY THE NUMBERS

Land Area: **403.31 m<sup>2</sup>**

County Population: **106,153**

County Median Age: **35.9**

County Median HHI: **\$52,525**

Number of Employers: **2,377**

Employment Rate: **52.9%**



Terre Haute Court House

## **Performing Arts**

- » 7th Street Theater (ISU)
- » Community Theatre of Terre Haute
- » Dreiser Theater (ISU)
- » Fairbanks Park Amphitheater
- » Hippodrome Theatre
- » Hulman Center
- » Indiana Theatre
- » Landini Center for Performing and Fine Arts
- » Rose-Hulman Performing Arts Hatfield Hall
- » Terre Haute Symphony Orchestra
- » Terre Haute Community Band
- » The Mill Terre Haute
- » Tilson Auditorium (ISU)

## **Visual Arts**

- » Art Spaces - Wabash Valley, Inc. Public Sculpture Collection
- » Upstairs at the Gosnell
- » Bare-Montgomery Gallery
- » Hager White Gallery
- » ISU Yang Family University Art Gallery
- » Java "HAUTE" Gallery
- » MuseArt Terre Haute
- » River City Art Association
- » Rose-Hulman Permanent Art Collection
- » SEEK Gallery
- » The Gallery at Arts Illiana
- » Turman Gallery
- » Wabash Valley Art Guild

## **Festivals and Events**

- » 6th Street Arts Fest
- » Banks of The Wabash Festival
- » Dog Days of Summer
- » Earth Day Festival
- » Explore Wabashiki
- » Family Learning Day - Vigo County Public Library
- » First Congregational Church Strawberry Festival
- » Christmas Walk at Fowler Park
- » Haunted Haute
- » Haute Hops & Vines Festival
- » Indiana State University Homecoming
- » ISU Performing Arts Series
- » Linda Luebke Strings Festival
- » Miracle on 7th Street
- » Old Fashion Day
- » Pioneer Days
- » Terre Haute Balloon Festival
- » Terre Haute Night Markets
- » Terre Haute Pride Festival



Downtown Terre Haute

## ARTS AND CULTURE INNOVATORS

The Wabash River Region is home to many successful arts and culture institutions. Some have emerged as innovators within the sector, through unique programs, widespread influence, and large impact on the local economies.



### 41|40 Arts and Cultural District

Terre Haute

Officially recognized by the Indiana Arts Commission in 2018, the 41|40 Arts and Cultural District in Terre Haute, Indiana, encompasses the historic downtown, the brewery district, and Indiana State University's campus. The district consists of more than 50 public art pieces, seven local galleries, five museums, and five performance spaces, contributing to the rich, diverse cultural landscape of Terre Haute. Within walking distance of the Wabash River, the 41|40 District provides community members and visitors alike a vibrant blend of history, heritage, and art, celebrating all that Terre Haute has to offer.



### Arts Illiana

Regional

Arts Illiana is the region's arts partner with the Indiana Arts Commission. They work to promote, support, and enhance the arts and cultural activities of the Wabash Valley. Learn more on page 27.



### Art Spaces, Inc.

Regional

Art Spaces, Inc. Wabash Valley Public Sculpture Collection is a nonprofit organization that brings public art to the Wabash Valley to enhance economic growth, enrich cultural experiences, and to build a legacy that is reflective of the diversity of the community. Learn more on page 39.

### County Public Libraries

Regional

The Wabash River Region is home to 14 public libraries, each offering a diverse array of programming to their communities. The public libraries are an invaluable asset for local arts and culture programming residents can experience in their own backyard. View the full list of libraries on page 45.

### The Covered Bridge Festival (Parke County CVC)

Parke County

The Covered Bridge Festival is the largest festival in the state of Indiana. This 10-day festival always starts on the 2nd Friday in October and attracts over 2 million visitors. The Parke County Covered Bridge Festival showcases the county's 31 historic covered bridges and features authentic arts and crafts, fantastic food, and beautiful fall foliage.





**Community School of the Arts - Indiana State University**

Terre Haute

The Community School of the Arts is a department within the Division of Student Experience and Engagement at Indiana State University, and is one of the few comprehensive educational outreach programs of its kind in Indiana, and one of the very few in the United States. Their programs seamlessly blend the realms of Fine and Performing Arts, including S.T.E.A.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) based learning, creating an immersive environment where creativity flourishes. The Community School of the Arts also offers Indiana State University students' outstanding opportunities for experiential learning through teaching. The Community School of the Arts offers a vast array of arts classes for all ages and an extensive summer camp program.

**Swope Art Museum**



Terre Haute

The Swope Art Museum, located in Terre Haute, is known for its extraordinary collection of nearly 2,500 works of American art including paintings, sculptures, and works on paper from the 19th century to the present. Changing exhibitions from the permanent collection include selections from American Scene Painting of the 1930s and 1940s, 19th century American art, early 20th century modernism, Indiana art, and Post-World War II figurative and abstract art.



**Terre Haute Children's Museum**

Terre Haute

The Terre Haute Children's Museum is three stories of fun, laughter and exploration located in the heart of Terre Haute. Since its early beginnings, the museum has more than doubled in size and has educated more than 650,000 children and adults from 22 counties in Indiana and Illinois. The museum has received funding from the National Science Foundation and participates in a national consortium of 14 science and technology museums. The museum is also part of the ASTC Passport program, giving its members access to more than 280 other museums across the nation. They aspire to create a fun and dynamic learning environment of the highest quality to introduce visitors to the world of STEM in everyday life.

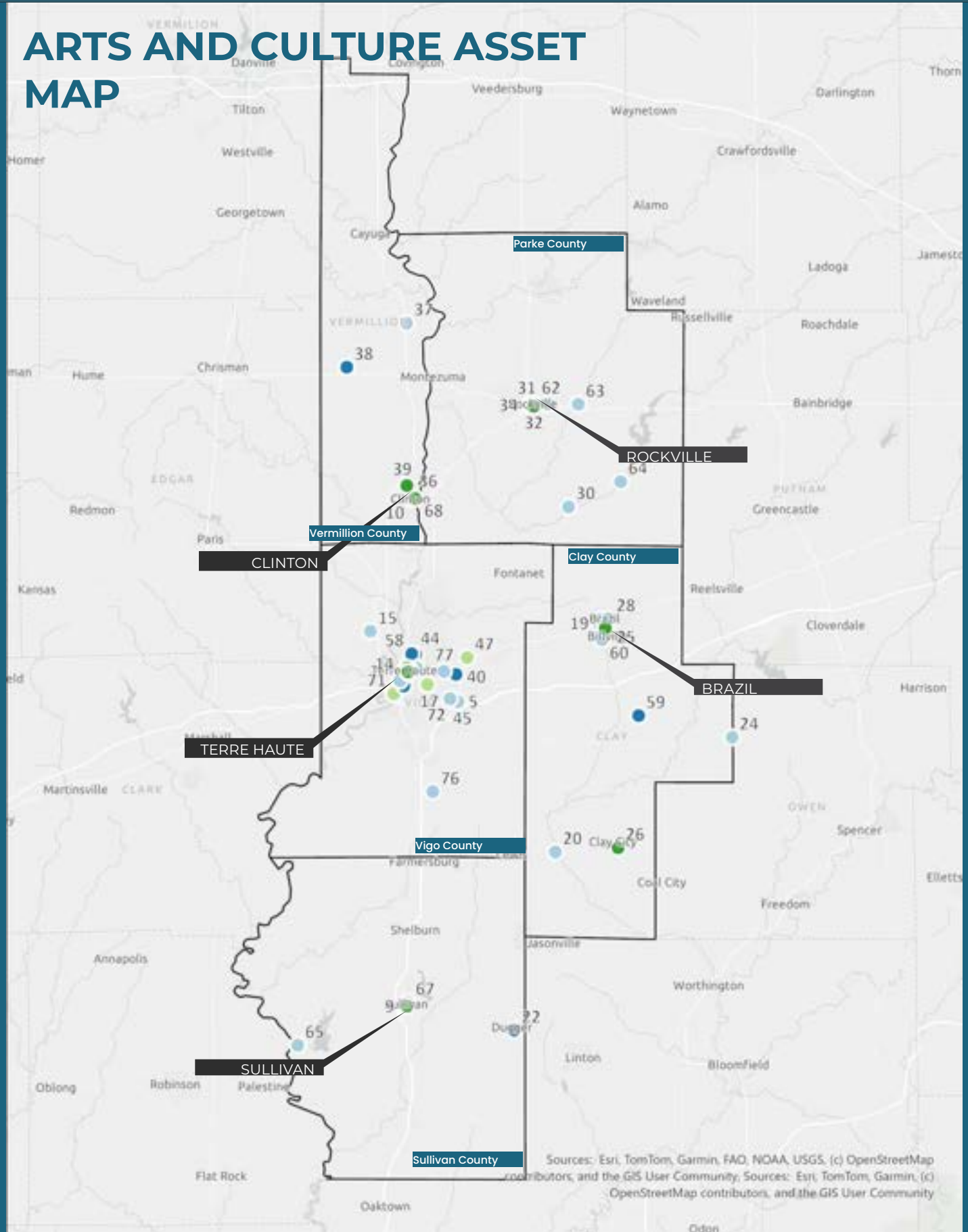


**Terre Haute Symphony Orchestra**

Terre Haute

The Terre Haute Symphony Orchestra (THSO), founded in 1926, is the oldest professional symphony orchestra in the state of Indiana. Evolving from a volunteer group to a professional ensemble, the THSO is a vital cultural institution in the Wabash River Region. They have a long-standing tradition of musical excellence, with a mission to bring "Great Music! Close to Home" through subscription and special concerts, and extensive educational outreach, which includes providing free concerts and resources to thousands of area students annually. The orchestra's continued presence enriches the community's quality of life and cultural landscape.

# ARTS AND CULTURE ASSET MAP



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community; Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

## Regional Assets

### Map Legend

#### ● Performing Arts

1	Community Theatre of Clay County
6	Terre Haute Symphony Orchestra
17	Community Theatre of Terre Haute
25	Forest Park Bandshell
33	Ritz Theater
47	Rose-Hulman Performing Arts Hatfield Hall
49	Hippodrome Theatre
50	Dreiser Theater (ISU)
51	Hulman Center
52	Tilson Auditorium (ISU)
71	The Mill Terre Haute
53	Indiana Theatre
16	Landini Center for Performing and Fine Arts
75	7th Street Theater (ISU)

#### ● Museums

2	Terre Haute Children's Museum
13	Vigo County Historic Center
18	Candles Holocaust Museum and Education Center
22	Dugger Coal Museum
34	Parke County Historical Society Museum
35	Sullivan County History Museum
36	LIFT Coal Town and Railroad Museum
38	Ernie Pyle World War II Museum
40	Dobbs Memorial Park Native American Museum
41	Eugene V. Debs Museum
42	Larry Bird Museum
43	Veterans Memorial Museum of Terre Haute
44	Wabash Valley Railroad Museum
45	Indiana Track & Field and Cross Country Hall of Fame Museum

58	Vigo Educational Heritage Museum
7	Clay County Historical Society
59	Clay County Genealogical Society
3	Swope Art Museum

#### ● Cultural Amenities

5	Terre Haute Convention & Visitors Bureau
9	Sullivan County Public Library
10	Clinton Public Library
11	14th & Chestnut Community Center
12	Vigo County Public Library
14	Fairbanks Park
15	Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College
19	Brazil Farmers Market
20	Tilted Compass Winery
23	Robin's Place
24	Clayshire Castle
27	Brazil Public Library
28	Clay County Courthouse
30	Historical Bridgerton Mill
31	Parke County Public Library
37	Historic Newport Jail
54	Charles E Brown Cultural Center
60	White Pine Manor
61	Parke County Convention & Visitors Bureau
62	Billie Creek Village
63	Historic Indiana State Sanatorium
64	Mansfield Roller Mill
65	Historic Merom Conference Center
66	Sherman Theatre
67	Sullivan Civic Center
69	The Station
70	YMCA of the Wabash Valley
72	Terre Haute Casino Resort
76	Fowler Park

77	Deming Park
78	Pride Center of Terre Haute

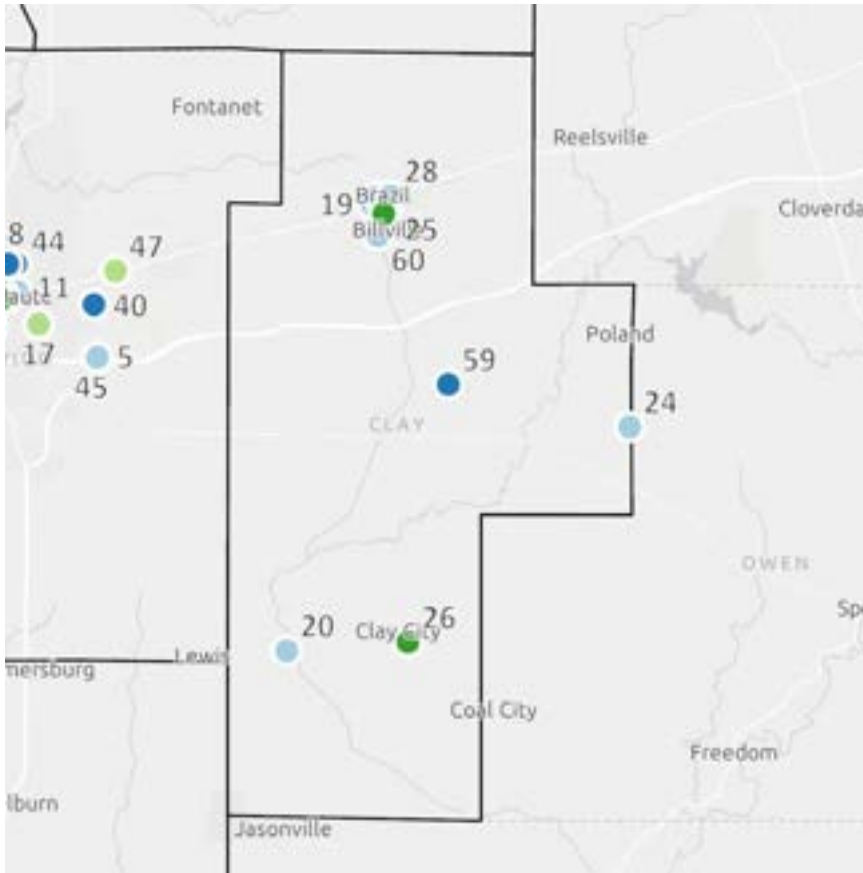
#### ● Visual Arts

4	Art Spaces, Inc. - Wabash Valley Public Sculpture Collection
8	Covered Bridge Art Association and Gallery
21	Sullivan Area Art Guild & Gallery
26	Clay City Pottery
32	Off the Square Artisans
48	ISU Yang Family University Art Gallery
55	Bare-Montgomery Gallery
56	Turman Gallery / The Community School of the Arts
57	SEEK Gallery
46	The Gallery at Arts Illiana

#### Orgs. without Brick and Mortar

Brazil Concert Band
Historical Clay County Cabins
Main Street Rockville
Ernie Pyle Rest Park and Covered Bridge
Henry Dana Washburn Educational Exhibit
41/40 Arts & Cultural District
River City Art Association
Rose-Hulman Permanent Art Collection
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods Historic District
Terre Haute Community Band
Wabash Valley Art Guild

# WABASH RIVER REGIONAL ARTS AND CULTURE PLAN



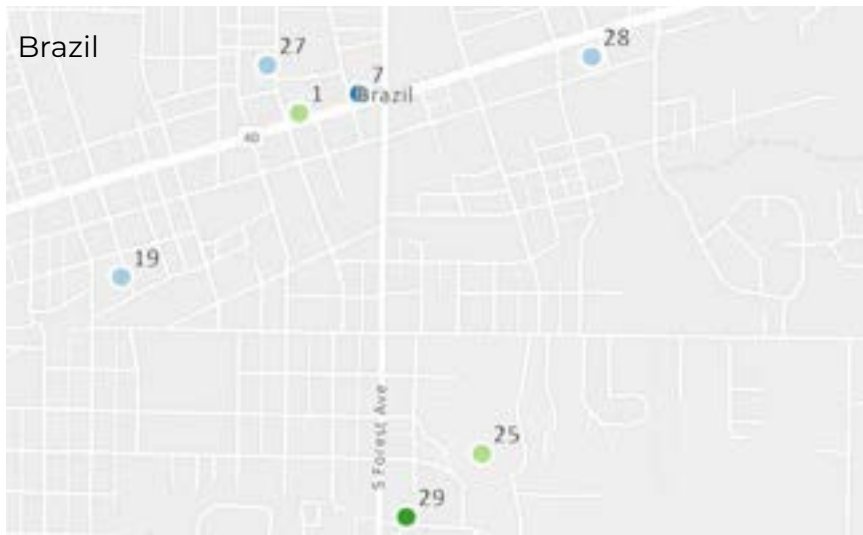
## Clay County Assets

### Map Legend

1	Community Theatre of Clay County
25	Forest Park Bandshell
7	Clay County Historical Society
59	Clay County Genealogical Society
19	Brazil Farmers Market
20	Tilted Compass Winery
24	Clayshire Castle
27	Brazil Public Library
28	Clay County Courthouse
60	White Pine Manor
26	Clay City Pottery

### Orgs. without Brick and Mortar

- Brazil Concert Band
- Historical Clay County Cabins



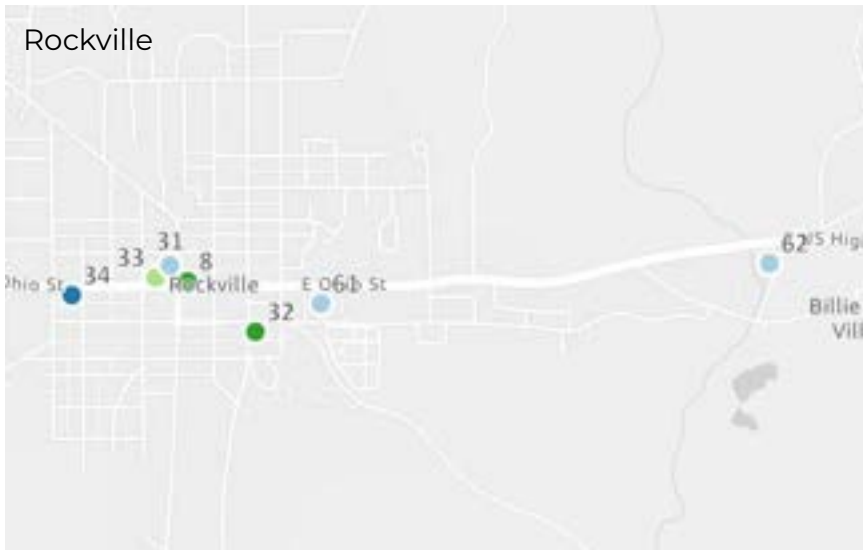
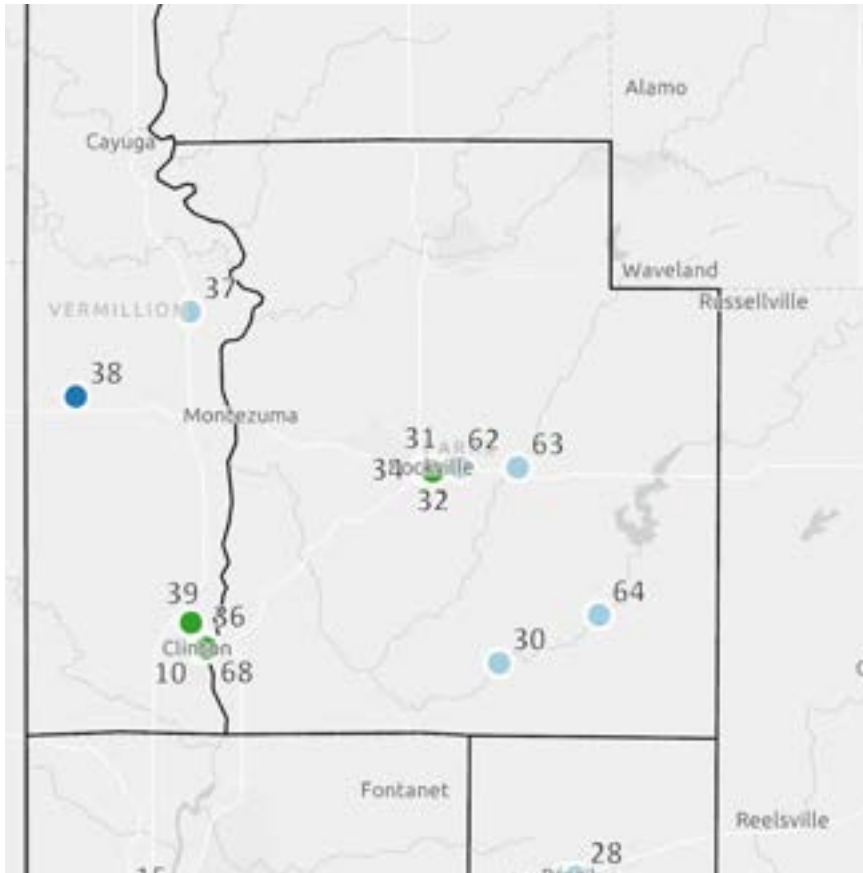
## Parke County Assets

### Map Legend

33	Ritz Theater
34	Parke County Historical Society Museum
30	Historical Bridgerton Mill
31	Parke County Public Library
61	Parke County Convention & Visitors Bureau
62	Billie Creek Village
63	Historic Indiana State Sanatorium
64	Histoirc Mansfield Roller Mill
8	Covered Bridge Art Association and Gallery
32	Off the Square Artisans

### Orgs. without Brick and Mortar

Main Street Rockville



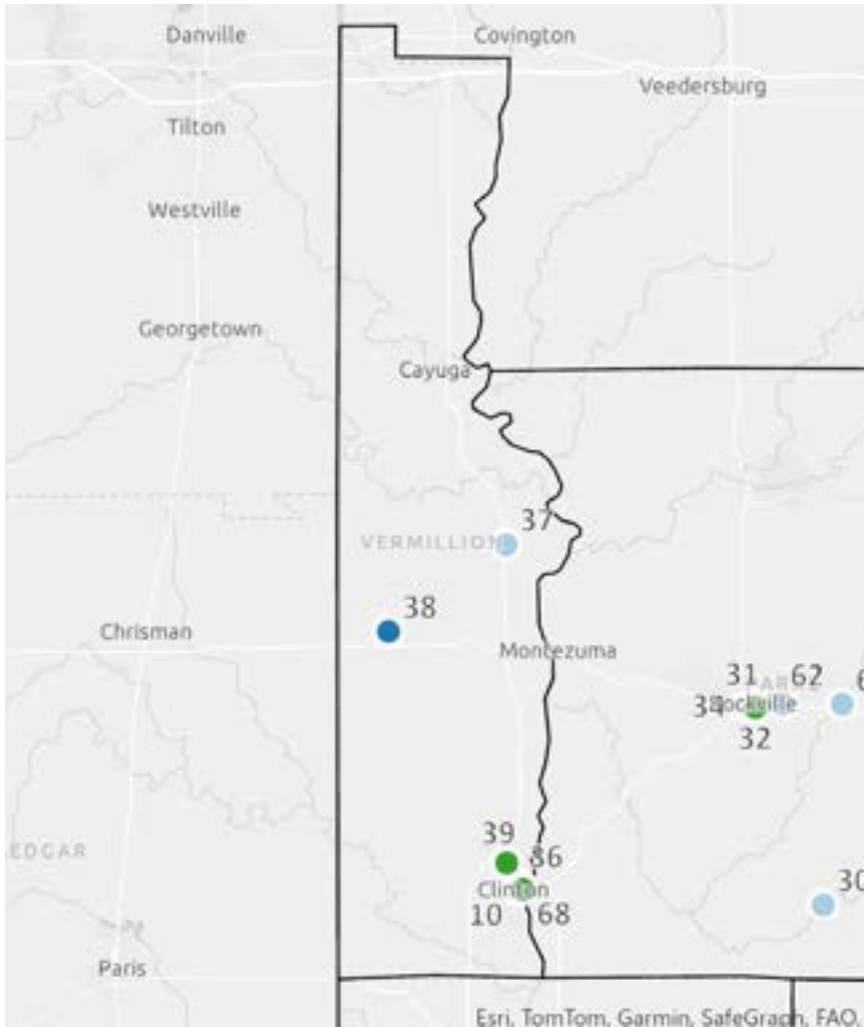
# WABASH RIVER REGIONAL ARTS AND CULTURE PLAN



## Sullivan County Assets

### Map Legend

22	Dugger Coal Museum
35	Sullivan County History Museum
9	Sullivan County Public Library
23	Robin's Place
65	Historic Merom Conference Center
66	Sherman House Theater
67	Sullivan Civic Center
21	Sullivan Area Art Guild & Gallery



## Vermillion County Assets

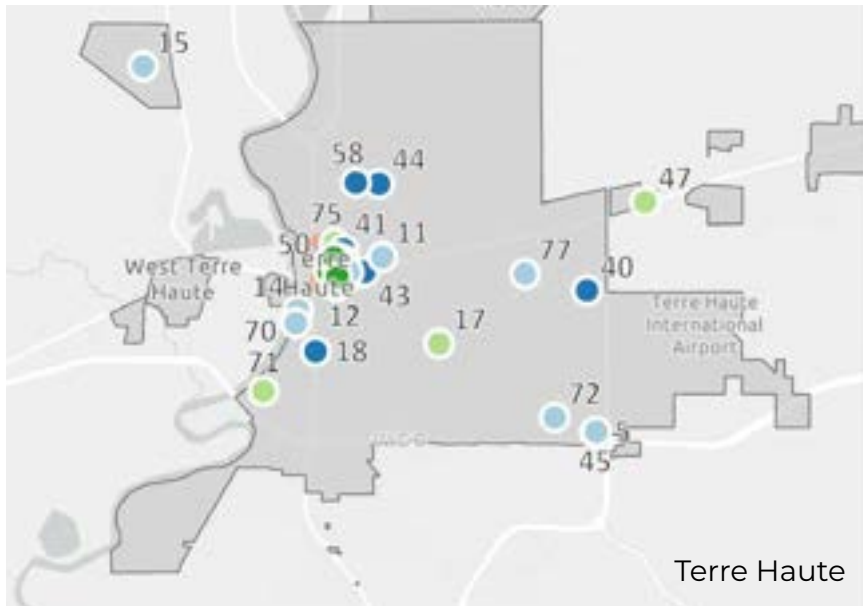
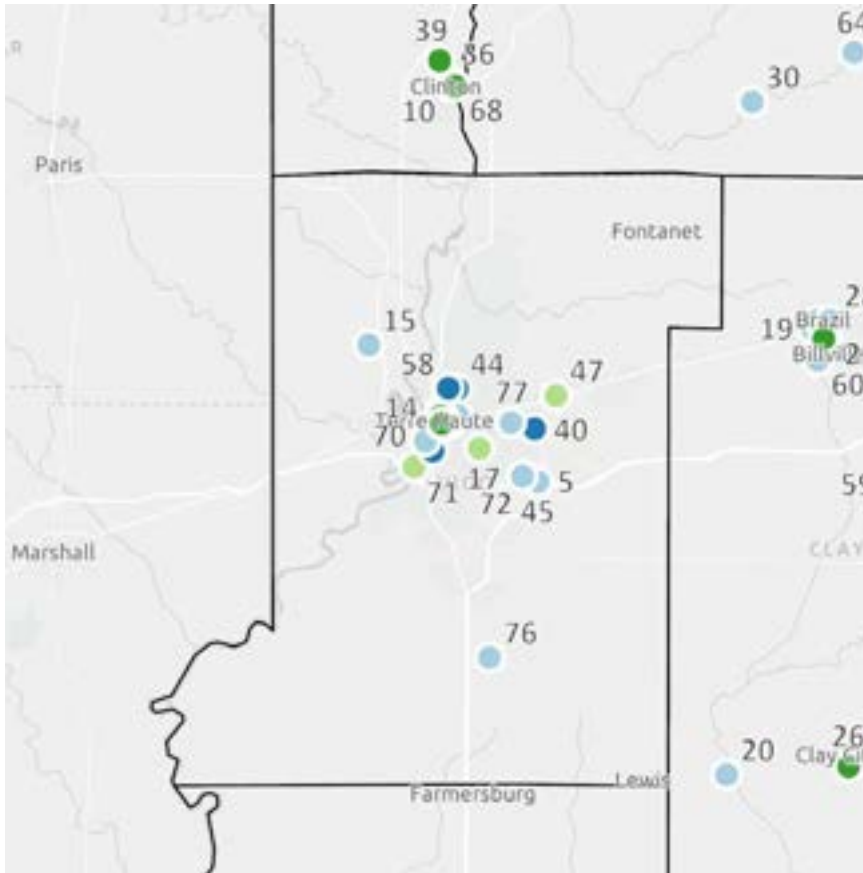
### Map Legend

- 36 LIFT Coal Town and Railroad Museum
- 38 Ernie Pyle World War II Museum
- 10 Clinton Public Library
- 37 Historic Newport Jail

### Orgs. without Brick and Mortar

- Ernie Pyle Rest Park and Covered Bridge
- Henry Dana Washburn Educational Exhibit

# WABASH RIVER REGIONAL ARTS AND CULTURE PLAN



## Vigo County Assets

### Map Legend

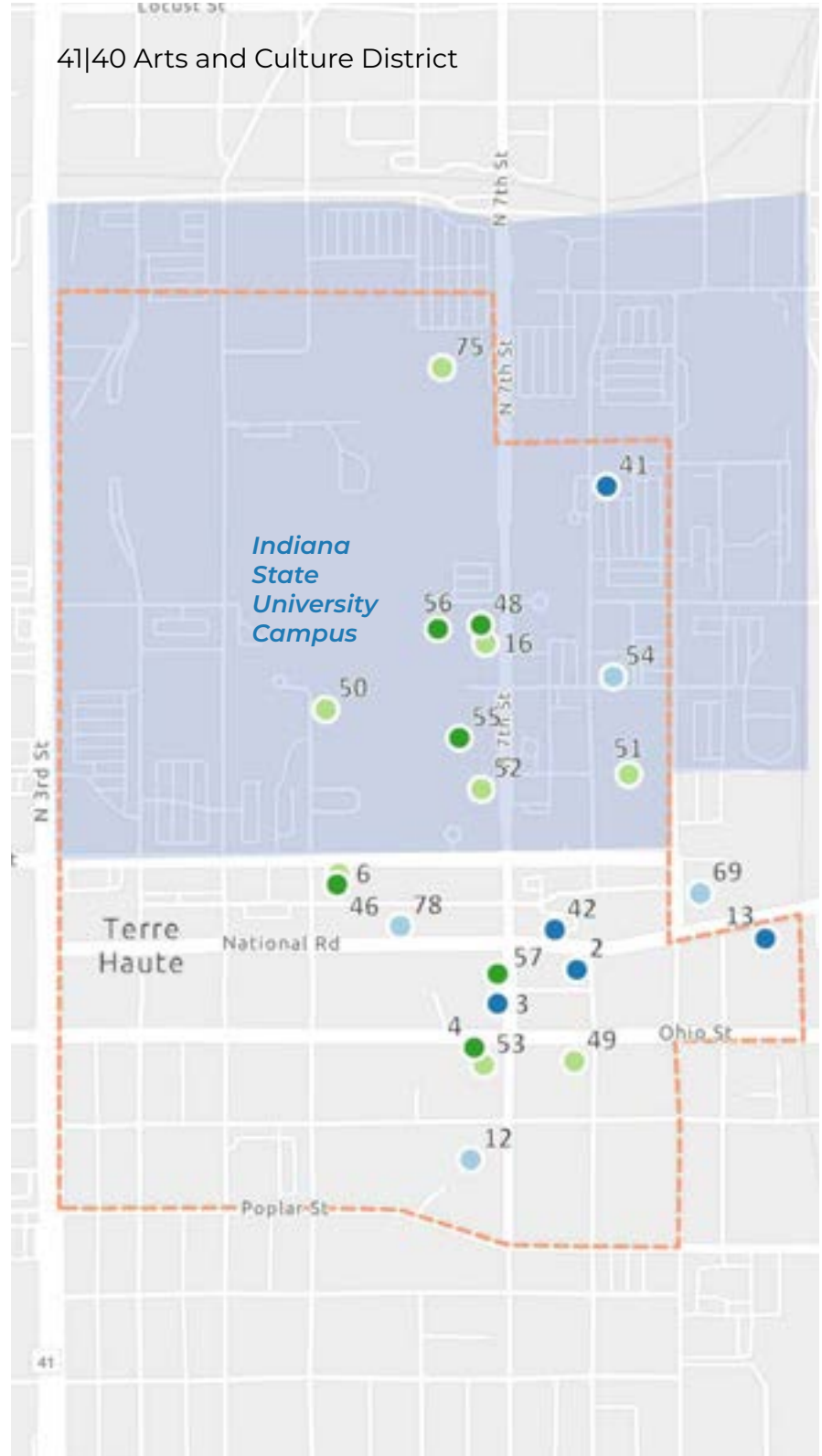
6	Terre Haute Symphony Orchestra*
17	Community Theatre of Terre Haute
47	Rose-Hulman Performing Arts Hatfield Hall
49	Hippodrome Theatre*
50	Dreiser Theater*^
51	Hulman Center*^
52	Tilson Auditorium*^
71	The Mill Terre Haute
53	Indiana Theatre*
16	Landini Center for Performing and Fine Arts*^
75	7th Street Theater*^
2	Terre Haute Children's Museum*
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44	Wabash Valley Railroad Museum
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58	Vigo County Educational Heritage Museum
3	Swope Art Museum*

\* indicates location within the 41|40 Arts and Culture District

^ indicates location on ISU Campus

5	Terre Haute Convention & Visitors Bureau
11	14th & Chestnut Community Center
12	Vigo County Public Library*
14	Fairbanks Park
15	Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College
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57	SEEK Gallery*
46	The Gallery at Arts Illiana*

Orgs. without Brick and Mortar	
41/40 Arts & Cultural District	
River City Art Association	
Rose-Hulman Permanent Art Collection	
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods Historic District	
Terre Haute Community Band	
Wabash Valley Art Guild	



\* indicates location within the 41|40 Arts and Culture District

^ indicates location on ISU Campus





2

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**A VISION FOR  
THE ARTS**

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# ENGAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS



## Methodology

Engagement for this process was conducted to help identify and assess existing resources and gaps and provide a foundation for transformative projects. Engagement was promoted through RDA social media and through stakeholder networks.

### April-July 2025 engagement opportunities included:

- **Community Survey**
- **Stakeholder Conversations**
- **Public Engagement**

The community survey was a nine-question survey put out to the public via the project website and RDA socials. This survey was designed to gather the community's big ideas, understand their current interests and challenges, and assess where they would like to see the arts and culture landscape grow.

Stakeholder conversations were 30-minute interviews with key business owners, artists, educators and stakeholders. These interviews were opportunities to dig deeper into issues and opportunities surrounding arts and culture development and programming in the Wabash River Region. Stakeholders were initially identified by RJL Solutions, and the list was expanded through stakeholder networks and in-person connections.

### 4|40 ARTS & CULTURE DISTRICT

**ADVISORY GROUP.** A focus group was held at Arts Illiana with members of the 4|40 Arts & Cultural District Advisory Group. This focus group was convened in person and was an opportunity for many local organizations, such as the Terre Haute Symphony, the Swope Art Museum, Art Spaces Inc., and the Ohio Building, to communicate with the planning team and explain their current programming, challenges, and aspirations.

Two public meetings were held, one at the Vigo County Historic Center in Terre Haute and the other at the Ritz Theater in Rockville. These open house-style meetings gave participants the opportunity to identify key assets in their community, prioritize types of placemaking and performing arts, and help create the foundation for the vision for arts and culture in the region.

**Arts Illiana** is a regional partner with the Indiana Arts Commission that works to promote, support, and enhance the arts and cultural activities of the Wabash Valley. Their primary service area includes the counties of Clay, Parke, Putnam, Sullivan, Vermillion, and Vigo in Indiana, as well as Clark and Edgar in Illinois. Arts Illiana provides broad local access to arts services and funding opportunities and provides services that include, but are not limited to, grant making and information and referral.

Vision: to transform the Wabash Valley into a vibrant cultural corridor.

## ENGAGEMENT TAKEAWAYS

1

### FUNDING FOR ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

Organizations struggle to maintain steady operations due to limited funding. This causes reduced hours, programming, and marketing capacity.

2

### PROGRAMMING SPACE

Larger organizations have limited options for performances, which hinders their ability to provide the programming they aspire to. Renovating existing assets, such as the Indiana Theatre, would give more options and allow for diverse programs.

3

### ATTRACTING AUDIENCES

Organizations struggle to communicate arts and culture opportunities with potential audiences. This reduces audience size and only engages the same people.

4

### CAPITALIZE ON THE RIVERFRONT

The Wabash River is a unique and valuable asset for the region. Arts and culture should be woven into development along the riverfront to encourage people to explore the communities along it and strengthen community identity.

5

### EXPERIENCE CULTURE

The region has limited opportunities to experience local cultures in community settings. With the success of events such as the Covered Bridge Festival, events celebrating what makes communities unique increase community pride and attract visitors.

6

### LOCAL INVESTMENT

Priority investment was focused on existing facilities and organizations before creating new ones. With many passionate, established organizations, efforts to expand and improve them were preferable for creating a cohesive and flourishing arts community.

# MAJOR SURVEY RESPONSES

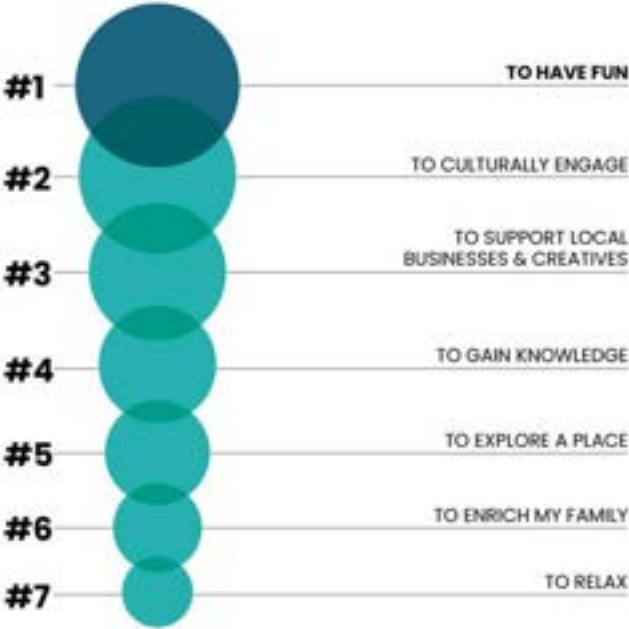
WHAT THREE WORDS OR PHRASES WOULD YOU USE TO DESCRIBE WEST CENTRAL INDIANA?



WHAT IMPACT SHOULD ARTS AND CULTURE HAVE THROUGHOUT WEST CENTRAL INDIANA?



WHICH OF THESE MOTIVATIONS FOR EXPERIENCING THE ARTS DO YOU MOST STRONGLY ALIGN WITH?



**The Wabash River Region is home to an exciting and deeply collaborative arts community. Together, they will cultivate compelling destinations for public art and diverse cultural experiences, making the region a vibrant and engaging hub for arts and culture.**

## Goals



**Beautification and Placemaking.** Arts and culture should play a central role in creating beautiful places with unique identities across the region. Beautification and placemaking efforts can encourage people to explore and feel comfortable in their communities. Public art is one tool that can be leveraged to achieve placemaking and beautification goals.



**Community Pride.** Arts and culture should make people feel proud of their communities. Encounters with cultural experiences and public art can accentuate what makes West Central Indiana communities unique and exciting while highlighting their specific opportunities, characteristics, and strengths.



**Health and Wellness.** Arts and culture have a large impact on and greatly affect the health and wellness of communities that invest in them. Access to enrichment, artistic outlets, and blight remediation is shown to positively affect people's mental health, while encouraging community exploration can similarly impact physical health.



**Local Investment.** West Central Indiana is home to many historic assets and buildings that contribute to its unique character. Preservation of these assets, as well as supporting organizations, facilities, and programs that invest in the community's wellbeing, shows investment in local stories, and builds interest from the community.





3

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**WEST  
CENTRAL  
STRATEGIES**

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## WABASH RIVER REGIONAL ARTS AND CULTURE PLAN

Long-range planning for cultural investment has historically coincided with an outcome that may feel shaped by certain financial conditions or structures; but as time goes on, such plans may no longer feel as relevant or as visionary as they once were. The flexibility provided in this proactive framework creates opportunities for decision-makers to pursue diverse funding sources and pivot implementation priorities to take advantage of changes and growth in the local cultural ecosystem. It also allows the community to continue to dream big, yet places emphasis on actionable, momentum-building steps for growing local arts and culture assets and tackle them as additional funding and capacity becomes available.

**The timing for each strategy has been defined as:**

**Now:** 0 to 3 years

**Soon:** 3 to 5 years

**Later:** 5+ years

**Ongoing**

**The scale for each strategy has been defined as:**

**Local:** Local strategies are focused on municipality-level development and improvement of quality of place at the individual scale.

**Regional:** Regional strategies have the potential to effect the entire West Central Indiana region.



Rockville, Parke County

## REGIONAL OBJECTIVES

### OBJECTIVE 1

Strengthen the Wabash River Region arts and culture community.

### OBJECTIVE 2

Promote regional arts development and tourism with a focus on the 41|40 Arts & Cultural District.

### OBJECTIVE 3

Increase the visibility of arts and culture in community spaces and downtowns.

*OBJECTIVE 1*

# STRENGTHEN THE WABASH RIVER REGION ARTS AND CULTURE COMMUNITY.

The communities of the Wabash River Region are already rich with arts and culture. By investing in these local experiences, we can forge stronger relationships and build new opportunities for collaboration. Already, the region has been supportive of arts and culture development, through existing funding streams from state/county entities, and efforts should be made to recommit and expand those funding streams to better support the arts community. These efforts will help to create a cohesive and well-supported arts community across the region. Ultimately, this will lead to more visible arts experiences for everyone and establish regular channels for communication and resource sharing among organizations.

The strategies for this objective center around ways to fortify the existing arts and culture community. These strategies encourage public art initiatives in two ways: policy-driven, which would certainly be facilitated at local or county government levels, but could also happen via strategic public-private partnerships; and organic, grassroots opportunities that may arise. A multi-pronged approach can be taken to building up the entities and programs that already characterize the region.

**1.1: Artist mixers and meet-ups hosted by Arts Illiana.**

Regular and dynamic artist mixers are an effective way to develop the region’s network of creatives and artists, generate buzz around upcoming local events and experiences, and provide knowledge and resource sharing opportunities. These events could vary in scale and topic and could rotate host sites to maximize reach across the region. Arts Illiana is the recommended organizer for these gatherings, given their established role in West Central Indiana. Funding for this initiative could support costs pertaining to ongoing programming, as well as fund a speaker series for invited experts.



**Action Steps**

- » Continue to develop and update a list of all arts organizations in the region
- » Create a set schedule for region-sponsored and hosted gatherings of the organizations on this list
- » Encourage similar events at the county level where possible
- » Host the gatherings



Arts Illiana Gallery

Goals



Timing


**Now**

Impact

**Regional**

Personnel

**WRRDA and Arts Illiana in collaboration with local CVBs**



## 1.2: Develop local policies to encourage, regulate, and fund public art.

The growth and development of public art across West Central Indiana yields many benefits for residents and visitors alike. Public art that feels authentic to each individual community will emerge from individualized planning processes at the municipal level. Cities across the region may be interested in pursuing long-term planning for public art or are curious about policy and funding strategies to support public art, given community feedback throughout this planning process. An investment in public art enhances quality of life, enlivens public spaces, and expresses a community's unique story.

### Action Steps

- » Adopt policy to govern a public art program
- » Evaluate the effectiveness of the adopted policy in 5 years to understand if any changes should be made
- » Utilize Art Spaces, Inc. and/or Arts Illiana as a resource for information on recommended local public art policy, funding, commission structure, etc.

Goals



Timing

**Soon**

Impact

**Local**

Personnel

**Developed by Municipal  
bodies and the WRRDA**

Local Subject Matter Experts

**Arts Illiana and Art Spaces,  
Inc.**

## Art Spaces - Wabash Valley Outdoor Sculpture Collection, Inc.

is a nonprofit organization that brings public art to the Wabash Valley to enhance economic growth, enrich cultural experiences, and to build a legacy that is reflective of the diversity of the community. Wabash Valley Arts Spaces has a robust permanent sculpture collection that adds visual interest and meaning to public spaces throughout the City of Terre Haute. There are currently over 20 sculptures installed throughout the 41/40 Arts and Cultural District, city parks, college campus, and various public places within Terre Haute. The sculptures are owned by the siteholder. Artists and artworks are selected by the Art Spaces, Inc. Site Selection and Acquisitions Committee.



*Runner*, 2009, Douglas Kornfeld, ISU Campus Terre Haute, IN, Art Spaces Inc.

## Sample Public Art Program

In order to establish a successful Public Art Program, counties/municipalities should adopt the following policies to govern Public Art Programs (if they do not yet have a public art program established): Maintenance, Collection Management, Donation, and Mural Guidelines. The aforementioned policies and guidelines will do the following:

- » Establish a definition for public art;
- » Develop a process for public art to be commissioned; and
- » Establish a Public Art Committee to oversee program duties and responsibilities.

Each policy directs a specific aspect of the Program and ensures the municipality is following consistent procurement practices, maintaining its commissions through long-term planning and maintenance, governing the Program with strong public trust, and providing clear direction for artists, private developers, and donors to follow when participating in the Program.

### Public Art Program Introduction

This policy establishes the overall definitions contained within the policy.

### Collection Management Policy

This policy establishes the management practices of artworks acquired through the solicitation and donation processes.

These pieces are considered part of the municipality's Permanent Collection and must be cared for in accordance with the Policy and Procedure for Maintenance and the Collection Management Policy. The Collection Management Policy is intended to maintain the value of the Municipality's Permanent Collection and guard against inappropriate disposal of any of its pieces.

## Donation Policy

This policy establishes the donation process for artworks not commissioned by the municipality. Each proposed donation must come with a plan to fund and deliver ongoing maintenance, or the resolution accepting the public art must identify how maintenance of the donated public art will be funded. Donation requirements, responsibilities of the donating party, and the process for donating a piece of public art are outlined in this policy.

## Maintenance Policy

This policy establishes the procedure for maintenance of the future art collection. Direction for surveying the collection, working with future artists to establish a maintenance plan for any commissioned work, and inspection guidelines are included.

In order to achieve the community's vision for public art, sustainable funding is a necessary first step. There are many options for funding a municipal Public Art Program and several factors are considered when determining the best mechanism for a municipality.

The municipality should allocate 1% of its capital improvement budget to public art. This funding stream will guarantee funding for public art projects regardless of economic events that cause constrictions in funding projects. This policy also guarantees that public art projects are planned for and executed annually as long as Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) are underway and municipal construction continues.

The allocation for all projects should be calculated based on the total construction costs, excluding all costs for demolition and real property acquisition for any given capital project. In addition, the appropriation for public art should be calculated only on the original appropriation for design and construction services, excluding any amounts appropriated for change orders.

A public art allocation should not be made for road maintenance, underground infrastructure, and underground utility projects with no aboveground components other than roads. When there are utility projects with aboveground components that are visible, a donation toward public art should be considered.

### 1.3 Develop a formalized performing arts alliance.

West Central Indiana is home to performing arts organizations of varying size, focus, and reach. In order to elevate and amplify the work of these groups, a performing arts alliance should be formalized. This alliance could support resource sharing for costumes, technology, set pieces, and beyond. Additionally, an established alliance would expand the region's ability to receive grant funding for specific projects shared between organizations, maximizing regional presence and increasing programming opportunities. An alliance would also allow for additional opportunities for broader promotion and marketing.

#### Action Steps

- » Compile and keep an updated list of performing arts organizations across the regions.
- » Conduct a needs assessment and assess interest in participating in a performing arts alliance.
- » Provide formalized pathways for resource and information sharing.

Goals



Timing

**Now**

Impact

**Regional**

Personnel

**Organized by Arts Illiana and  
the WRRDA in collaboration  
with local CVBs**

## 1.4 Community-sponsored art in greenspaces and underused plots along major corridors.

The central medians of major municipal corridors offer a unique opportunity for public art. Grassy, open spaces along underused plots are ideal for a variety of public art installations. Main thoroughfares into the heart of the city or vacant corner lots should be reinvigorated through public art that expresses a place's identity, enhances its green spaces, and welcomes visitors.

### Action Steps

» See *Public Art Project Planning* (p.43)

### Precedent



Ray Katz

Goals

Timing  
**Later**

Impact  
**Local Regional**

Personnel  
**Developed by Municipal agencies and the WRRDA**

Local Subject Matter Experts  
**Arts Illiana and Art Spaces, Inc.**

A photograph of a green abstract sculpture. It consists of a tall, thin, green vertical structure with a circular top and several thin, green lines extending downwards. It is set in a grassy area with trees in the background.

Windswept, Gary Kulak

## Public Art Project Planning

Every public art project is unique, and some may be more administratively complex than others. This high-level guide to project implementation provides a basic framework for ensuring a successful project.

- 1. Plan, Ideate, and Envision:** In this project phase, the planning team will want to establish clear goals and objectives for the project before any resources are committed.

  - a. Define the project's vision and desired outcomes. Some helpful questions to ask during this phase are:
    - i. What is the purpose of this project?
    - ii. What should it feel like?
    - iii. Who is the audience?
  - b. Identify the site(s) where public art will be placed. Some helpful questions to ask about the site include:
    - i. Who owns the site?
    - ii. Will site improvements be required?
    - iii. What are the existing conditions?
    - iv. Is this site accessible to the greatest number of people?
  
- 2. Artist Selection:** In this project phase, the planning team will determine how an artist will be procured.

  - a. Define Artist Criteria. Some helpful questions to support this step are:
    - i. Is this call limited to local artists?
    - ii. Will community engagement be required?
    - iii. What are the metrics for evaluating the artists who submit proposals?
  - b. Determine the Selection Process. It is critical in this phase to confirm:
    - i. Who will be selecting the artist?
    - ii. How the Call to Artists will be solicited and shared?
    - iii. How the selected proposal will be approved?
  
- 3. Artwork Implementation:** In this project phase, the project commissioner and selected artist will work closely to ensure the on-time, on-budget delivery of the artwork. The following steps and phases constitute this stage in the process:

  - a. Contracting, Permitting, and Insurance
  - b. Installation Oversight and Coordination
  - c. Anticipating maintenance needs
  - d. Project promotion and education

## 1.5 Organize County Libraries to maximize cultural program offerings.

In many communities throughout the Wabash River Region, the local libraries are a primary source of arts and culture events and programming. In order to sustainably elevate available programs offered, allowing for and supporting collaboration between the libraries should be pursued. This intentional partnership would support scheduling in a way that doesn't overlap or conflict with certain efforts branch by branch. Additionally, libraries could pull missions together in a way that encourages additional funding and grant opportunities.

### Action Steps

- » Assess interest in participating in resources sharing, etc. from local libraries
- » Meet regularly with library leaders to encourage collaboration

Goals



Timing

**Now**

Impact

**Regional**

Personnel

**WRRDA and County Libraries  
in collaboration with local  
municipalities**

Local Subject Matter Experts

**Arts Illiana  
ISU Community School**

Wabash River Region Public Libraries



**CLAY**

Brazil Public Library

**PARKE**

Parke County Public Library

Montezuma Public Library

**SULLIVAN**

Sullivan County Public Library

Carlisle Public Library

Dugger Public Library

Merom Library

Farmersburg Public Library

Shelburn Public Library

**VERMILLION**

Vermillion County Public Library

Clinton Public Library

**VIGO**

Vigo County Public Library

Vigo County Public Library West Branch

Vigo County Public Library 12 Points Branch

*OBJECTIVE 2*

**PROMOTE REGIONAL  
ARTS DEVELOPMENT AND  
TOURISM WITH A FOCUS  
ON THE 41|40 ARTS &  
CULTURAL DISTRICT.**

The 41|40 Arts & Cultural District in downtown Terre Haute is a unique and valuable asset to the region, with a dense concentration of arts and culture assets that help drive the region's tourism and economic development. Investment in this district will establish it as a cultural anchor, drawing in visitors, artists, and new businesses, which in turn boosts tourism and economic activity for surrounding communities. By fostering a hub for creative expression, the district will not only enrich lives and strengthen community pride but also establish a unique regional identity that makes the entire area a more attractive place to live and work. Recommendations within the 41|40 Arts & Cultural District can carry over into other communities to bolster centers of arts and culture throughout the region.

*Note: Specific projects are highlighted, collected via stakeholder interviews and feedback.*

**2.1 Develop a tactical public art plan to coincide with planned redevelopment in downtown Terre Haute.**

As Terre Haute continues to look toward future investments in its downtown public spaces, a united strategy for public art across the city can support many goals pertaining to conveying Terre Haute’s identity, improving walkability and safety, and beautifying its public spaces. The plan may be tactical and offer strategic public art implementation recommendations for specific spaces or more broadly offer themes, typologies, and a long-term framework to grow public art in Terre Haute.

**Action Steps**

- » Write and post an RFP from qualified public art planners
- » Hire a firm to facilitate and develop a public art plan



A Reading Space, 2015, Madeline Wiener, ISU Campus Terre Haute, IN, Art Spaces Inc.

Goals



Timing

**Now**

Impact

**Local with limited regional impact**

Personnel

**Municipal agencies, local partners, and WRRDA**

Local Subject Matter Experts

**Arts Illiana, 41|40 Arts & Cultural District Advisory Group, Art Spaces, Inc.**

## 2.2: Expand offerings at anchor museums and cultural institutions.

There are many opportunities to explore local culture through the museums in the 41|40 district. Museums and similar institutions are great ways to attract both tourists and residents to an area to learn about local communities and experiences. Many of these museums have the capacity to expand programming to become broader cultural hubs and/or better serve their community and the region at large, so long as these offerings are consistent with the institution's mission and align with overall programming strategy.

### Action Steps

- » Conduct a feasibility study (completed by consultant, overseen by project owner(s)) for program expansion
- » Develop a final design for the expansion
- » Conduct a capital campaign to support the project
- » Identify additional funding sources for the development and operations of the new program space
- » Work with the City of Terre Haute to understand permits needed to expand programming outside of the building
- » Assess and work with developers to create the designed space
- » Identify local partners for programming, education, and event promotion

Goals

Timing

**Soon**

Impact

**Regional**

Personnel

**Managed by project owner(s), in collaboration with municipal agencies (transportation, parks, etc) and WRRDA**

*Interested Institutions*

*Specific projects are highlighted, collected via stakeholder interviews and feedback.*



**Art Spaces, Inc.**

See page 39.



**Terre Haute Children's Museum**

Centrally located in downtown Terre Haute, the Terre Haute Children's Museum features both indoor and outdoor experiences for children and families year-round. As the Museum seeks to expand its offerings, its grand vision includes transforming 8th Street between Wabash and Ohio into two outdoor spaces: one that is enclosed for Museum programming and one that is open to the public for seasonal programming, engagement, and leisure spaces. By partnering with municipal or county agencies, the Museum hopes that the public space will anchor downtown through a space that features public art, landscaping, and places to gather.



**Swope Art Museum**

The Swope Art Museum is currently undergoing an unprecedented expansion of its physical and programmatic footprint as it looks toward its future. Through a major capital initiative, the Swope will provide more spaces for engagement and programming, as well as update its galleries and facilities to support the ongoing care of its collection. As a hub for arts education and hands-on learning for audiences of all backgrounds, the Swope meets the regional need to provide world-class encounters with visual arts. Funding its continued growth will support the mission of a vital regional institution, whose 80-year presence in Terre Haute has defined the regional arts and culture landscape.

## 2.3: Provide unique and effective performance and visual spaces for local institutions, using vacant and underutilized buildings.

The 4|40 Arts & Cultural District has many opportunities to revitalize existing and/or vacant buildings into hubs for arts and culture. Many local institutions are looking for viable space to create, often ending up in spaces that are mostly unsuited or unaffordable. Investing in, renovating, and/or creating spaces for arts and culture is an invaluable way to build an arts community and provide iconic locations where arts and culture take place.

### Action Steps

- » Assess cost for necessary renovations
- » Conduct a capital campaign to support the project
- » Identify additional funding sources for the development and operations of the facility as needed
- » Commence programming, including partnering as a venue for local performance art organizations
- » Assess other cosmetic and aesthetic renovations that will improve visitor experience

### Potential Priority Utilizations

- » Performance venues
- » Pop-up art studios
- » Maker spaces
- » Arts markets

Goals

Timing  
**Later**

Impact  
**Regional**

Personnel  
**Project owner(s) and partners with collaboration with the WRRDA, local municipalities, and CVBs**

*Interested Institutions - Performance Venues*

*Specific projects are highlighted, collected via stakeholder interviews and feedback.*



**Indiana Theatre**

In its century as an arts and culture beacon for Terre Haute, the Indiana Theatre’s legacy has been shaped by its significant architectural style and world-class programming and entertainment. As a site on the National Register of Historic Places, support for the theatre’s preservation efforts has been steady over the last few decades, but according to a recent feasibility study, the building is in need of extensive renovations in order to support its next chapter. Investment in the restoration of the Indiana Theatre could transform downtown Terre Haute’s current capacity for arts and culture activity and reinvigorate local businesses surrounding the theatre.



Forest Park Band Shell, Brazil



Vigo County Historic Center, Terre Haute



Indiana Theatre, Terre Haute



Ritz Theater, Rockville

## 2.4: Intentionally and thoroughly include arts and culture as a vital element of the Wabash River Riverscape.

Several concurrent, large-scale riverfront revitalization projects are occurring in West Central Indiana, each with their respective scopes, budgets, and funding streams. Although the vision for distinct portions of the riverfront varies across the region, a public art trail or an intentional public art strategy for the riverfront could celebrate the area's natural beauty and unite the region across county and city boundaries. A river-wide public art strategy could focus on regional history and local narratives and transform the riverfront into a natural destination for locals and tourists alike. This alignment and integration of public art along newly developed and programmable riverfronts supports cultural visions throughout cross-sector regional plans and increases general visibility of the arts.

### Action Steps

- » Communicate with project owners and implementers of the various expansion efforts happening across the region
- » Participate in planning processes for riverfront development where possible
- » Provide resources (i.e., knowledge, artist contacts) for arts inclusion in development efforts

Goals

Timing  
**Now**

Impact  
**Regional**

Personnel

**Organized by WRRDA and coordinated with project owner(s)**

Local Subject Matter Experts  
**Arts Illiana, Art Spaces Inc.**

### Wabash River Expansion Projects

Within Indiana, the Wabash River stretches from Mt. Vernon in the southwest through Berne in the northeast, passing through Sullivan, Terre Haute, and Clinton before moving up towards the City of Lafayette. As a major source of resources and entertainment, several efforts have been and are being conducted across the river’s path to expand access to the riverfront to communities impacted by it. The Wabash River Heritage Corridor is overseen by the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission, who work to protect and enhance the natural, cultural, historical, and recreational resources and encourage sustainable development of the corridor.

#### Efforts within the Wabash River Region



#### Wabash Riverfront Master Plan/Riverscapes (2025)

VIGO COUNTY AND TERRE HAUTE

RIVERSCAPE, CITY OF TERRE HAUTE, VIGO COUNTY, THRIVE WEST CENTRAL, STANTEC, USACE

Completed in early 2025, the Wabash Riverfront Master Plan provides a development strategy and implementation plan for redevelopment along the Wabash Riverfront in Terre Haute with a focus on community building. This includes access strategies such as crossing improvements and programming strategies such as new park and community spaces. The project is currently under design review and planning for implementation.



#### Wabash River Blueway Master Plan (2024)

FOUNTAIN, WARREN, AND VERMILLION COUNTIES

KIMELY-HORN, FOUNTAIN COUNTY, WARREN COUNTY, VERMILLION COUNTY, WARREN COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION, WESTERN INDIANA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Completed in 2024, this tri-county plan, including Vermillion County within the Wabash River Region, recommends improved boat and pedestrian access, programming such as festivals and tours, and art installations along the riverfront. The project is supported by a grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc., a considerable portion of which is dedicated specifically to public art.



## Turn to the River (Phase 1-2022, Phase 2 -ongoing)

DOWNTOWN TERRE HAUTE

ART SPACES INC., CITY OF TERRE HAUTE, OFFICE OF THE MAYOR AND ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT VIGO COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

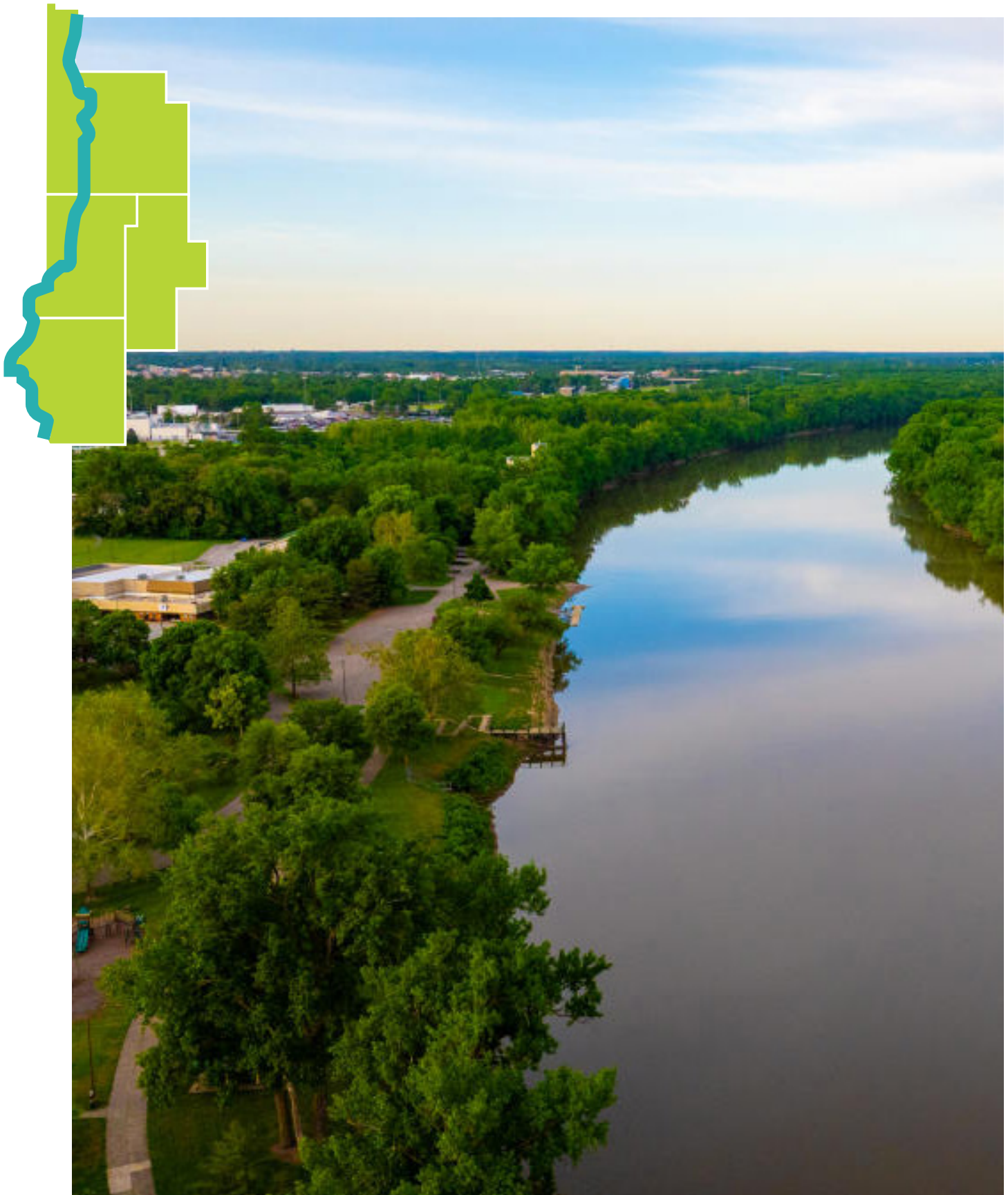
Turn to the River is a comprehensive multi-phase project of Art Spaces Inc. to reconnect downtown Terre Haute to the Wabash River through public art and design. The first phase of the project, the revitalization of the government plaza between Terre Haute City Hall and Vigo County Court house, has been fully revitalized and is now home to the sculpture *Turn to the River* by Dallas, Texas-based artists, Brad and Diana Goldberg.

The arts are at the core of this exciting placemaking initiative and professional artists have worked with Art Spaces to engage community members and stakeholders through charrettes, symposia, focus groups, and one-on-one meetings to develop the concepts.

Phase 2 of the project includes transforming the nearby parking lot into a new arts, cultural, or event space.

[wabashvalleyartspaces.com](http://wabashvalleyartspaces.com), [coldspringusa.com](http://coldspringusa.com)





Fairbanks Park, Terre Haute

## 2.5: Supporting Arts Illiana as the regional resource for arts programming and technical assistance.

With its expansive reach and expertise, Arts Illiana is positioned to support the region's creatives and artists in an impactful way. As West Central Indiana anticipates the growth of its creative industries over the next decade, Arts Illiana should be tapped as a critical partner in supporting individuals in creative fields through programming, grant assistance, technical support, and beyond. In order to continue and increase quality arts and culture services for the region, expanding financial capacity and staffing resources should be prioritized.

### Action Steps

- » Define the role Arts Illiana wants to play in regional arts development
- » Develop a media package outlining the proposed role and available resources and distribute it to local partners
- » Build a presence in regional localities through in-person interactions and organizational support

### Programming Opportunities

- » Organizing regional artist mixers **(Strategy 1.1)**
- » Assisting with public art resources **(Strategy 3.1-3)**
- » Supporting cultural festivals **(Strategy 3.4)**
- » Assisting with regional arts marketing, especially through collaboration with local higher education institutions (Indiana State University Terre Haute, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, Saint Mary-of-the Woods College, Ivy Tech Community College Terre Haute)
- » Provide and assist with grant funding for arts organizations
- » Develop arts education programs **(Strategy 3.5)**



Goals

Timing

**Now**

Impact

**Regional**

Personnel

### Arts Illiana supported by WRRDA and local partners

### Reaching its Full Potential

In order for Arts Illiana to be able to act as the region's primary arts council by implementing strategies from this document and creating a sustainable arts and culture community across the region, additional support is needed. Supports include funding and staffing to increase their capacity for arts programming and implementation.

**2.6 Adopt a cultural access tax.**

Terre Haute visitorship is largely generated by conferences, sports tournaments, and university activities. Implementing an excise tax on some combination of eligible hotel/motel and food/beverage fees generated by tourism can be dedicated to fund a variety of arts and culture activities, events, and organizations in the region. This strategy would require involvement and support from local governments participating in the excise tax, which would likely necessitate a revision in local tax codes.

**Action Steps**


- » Coordinate efforts to revise tax codes
- » Adopt and codify the excise tax

**BENCHMARK**

**City of Columbus, OH Lodging Tax**

The City of Columbus, Ohio imposes a 5.1% Hotel-Motel-Short-Term Rental Excise Tax for the purpose of generating revenue for the advancement of cultural development within Columbus, promoting Columbus as a destination for conventions, trade shows, and similar events to encourage visitor spending at local businesses and organizations, and supporting the production of affordable housing and opportunities for ownership within the city. 0.50% of the revenues collected are kept by the City of Columbus as an administrative fee, 2.39% of the revenues goes to the Columbus Convention and Visitor’s Bureau, 1.68% goes to Cultural Services and Community Enrichment, 0.60% goes to Emergency Human Services Fund of the City, and 0.43% goes to the Affordable Housing Trust.

Goals



Timing  
**Now**

Impact  
**Regional**

Personnel

**Adopted by local municipalities in collaboration with the WRRDA**

## 2.7: Invest in an amphitheater.

Increasing access to performing arts in the region can be achieved through an investment in alternative and expanded performing arts spaces, such as band shells or amphitheaters. These spaces increase capacity for performances in the region and can easily tie into seasonal programming in park or civic settings. Developing outdoor spaces for performing arts can also attract a broader range of musicians, theater groups, and beyond, while also ensuring that appropriate scaled arts and culture facilities are meeting the region's needs. Existing city-owned amphitheaters, such as the Fairbanks Park amphitheater in Terre Haute or the Forest Park Band Shell in Brazil, can be elevated via aligning programming with new venues and opportunities, and consider collaboration for a well-rounded and connected venue experience.

### Action Steps

- » Conduct a feasibility study (completed by consultant, overseen by WRRDA) for outdoor performing arts spaces, especially analyzing desired size, types of programming, and required technology
- » Identify primary locations for development
- » Conduct a capital campaign to support the project
- » Identify additional funding sources for the development and operations of the new program space

Goals  
 

Timing  
**Later**

Impact  
**Regional**

Personnel  
**Managed by project owner(s) and the WRRDA in collaboration with municipal Park Departments and other local partners**

Local Subject Matter Experts  
**Arts Illiana**



**BENCHMARK**

**Northside Hospital-Cherokee Amphitheater, Woodstock, GA**

Completed in 2016, the Northside Hospital-Cherokee Amphitheater in Woodstock, Georgia, is a highly successful and programmed amphitheater owned by the City of Woodstock and operated by the city's Parks and Recreation Department. The amphitheater consists of multiple terraces and a central main lawn, accommodating an audience of over 5,000. The Woodstock Summer Concert Series is held in the Northside Hospital-Cherokee Amphitheater, drawing in thousands of visitors to the community throughout the summer months. When not reserved, the amphitheater is open to the public for recreation, leisure, and relaxation use. The amphitheater is available to rent for special events, performances, and organized groups with an expected attendance of 5,000 guests or less. Rental of the amphitheater includes access to restrooms, the plaza, the stage, dressing rooms, green rooms, a loading area, and terraced lawn seating areas.



**BENCHMARK**

**Columbus Commons, Columbus, OH**

Located on the site of the historic City Center Mall in downtown Columbus, Columbus Commons transformed and revitalized the dying shopping center into a successful and vibrant public space. Construction began in 2010, and the Commons opened in 2011. The project was funded through a public-private partnership between the City of Columbus, American Electric Power, and Nationwide Insurance. Columbus Commons is managed by Downtown Columbus, Inc. staff and is sustained by parking garage revenue from the Columbus Commons Main Garage and Underground Garage, in addition to numerous sponsors who ensure that the over 200 events held at the Commons each year remain free and accessible to the Columbus community.

*OBJECTIVE 3*

# INCREASE THE VISIBILITY OF ARTS AND CULTURE IN COMMUNITY SPACES AND DOWNTOWNS.

Visible arts and culture interventions in spaces where people gather can be a powerful engine for revitalization. A vibrant arts scene attracts cultural tourism, bolsters local businesses, and creates a positive economic ripple effect into the broader community. Beyond the financial benefits, public art and cultural events cultivate a strong sense of community pride and identity, making these towns more attractive places to live, work, and visit. This renewed vitality can help to retain existing residents, attract new talent, and breathe new life into historic buildings and underutilized spaces, ensuring the long-term sustainability and unique character of the community.

This tactical set of recommendations for highly effective programs, public art recommendations, and placemaking initiatives work together to develop a sustainable arts landscape. Since community members are already accustomed to their downtowns being the center of gathering and community, the presented strategies enhance these spaces through arts and culture. While municipal involvement and/or county-level support may be needed, this shouldn't preclude local organizations from leading the way to implement any of these strategies.

**3.1: Develop gateways to downtown areas.**

With a goal of the recent Wabash River RDA Regional Plan (January 2025) being enhancements of gateways into the region, it will be important to incorporate the arts into those enhancements. Leveraging public art or consistent signage for gateways can create visually interesting and engaging entry points into cities or districts. Investment in these assets not only defines the physical border of an area, but also it creates a sense of identity around points of interest for residents, visitors, and businesses. This placemaking tactic can be used to foreground arts and culture experiences in the region by creating identifiable locations where these opportunities can thrive.

**Action Steps**

» See *Public Art Project Planning (p.43)*

Goals  


Timing  
**Soon**

Impact  
**Local**

Personnel  
**Local municipalities and the WRRDA**  
 Local Subject Matter Experts  
**Arts Illiana**  
**41|40 Arts & Cultural District Advisory Group**  
**Art Spaces Inc.**




**Precedent**



Michelle Newman, *Delray Gateway* (2013), Delray Beach Florida

Caswell Sculpture, *Gateway to the Gorge*, Troutdale, Oregon

## 3.2: Implement public art as traffic calming.

Many public art approaches—such as traffic cabinet art, ground murals, and median artwork—can support traffic calming in high-use or pedestrian areas. Cities in West Central Indiana should explore region-wide traffic calming strategies through public art activations that could benefit travelers, enhance drivability, and spark joy through public art in unexpected locations.

### Action Steps

» See *Public Art Project Planning* (p.43)

### Precedent



Sullivan Brighter Days

Goals

Timing  
**Now**

Impact  
**Local**

Personnel  
**Local municipalities and the WRRDA**

Local Subject Matter Experts  
**Arts Illiana**

Sullivan Brighter Days

**3.3: Implement iterative public art sculptures.**

Iterative public art sculptures can foster connectivity from place to place. Cities in West Central Indiana may desire an iterative, large-scale sculpture activation that is specific to each unique community or one that broadly speaks to the region’s identity. In either case, this strategy reveals communities’ spirit and offers iconic landmarks for engagement.

**Action Steps**

» See *Public Art Project Planning* (p.43)

**Precedent**



Russ Connel, *Carroll Boulevard Art Trail*, Denton, TX

Goals

Timing  
**Now**

Impact  
**Local**

Personnel  
**Local municipalities and the WRRDA**

Local Subject Matter Experts  
**Art Spaces Inc.  
Arts Illiana**

Urban Rock Design, *Looking Through the Past* (2009), Tempe, AZ

## 3.4: Develop and promote signature Cultural Festivals.

Signature cultural festivals in West Central Indiana should highlight the unique spirit, traits, and histories of the distinct communities that comprise the region. This programming should emphasize the region's diverse cultural traditions and experiences, highlighting the region's dynamic community. Distributing these events throughout the year will ensure a consistent programmatic experience that promises events that feel fresh and timely. Additionally, a series of signature festivals encourages visitorship and tourism into host communities, spurring the local economy and drawing increased foot traffic to local businesses.

### Action Steps

- » Work with local municipalities to identify prime markets to engage that celebrate unique local experiences
- » Assist with the creation of local festivals through resource allocation, knowledge sharing, technical assistance, and funding (when appropriate)

Goals



Timing

**Soon**

Impact

**Regional**

Personnel

**Arts Illiana with support  
from local municipalities and  
the WRRDA**



### BENCHMARK

#### Dublin Irish Festival, Dublin, OH

The Dublin Irish Festival is the world's largest three-day Irish festival held in Dublin, OH, celebrating Irish heritage, culture, and music. Since 1988, the Dublin Irish Festival has generated millions of dollars in economic impact on the City of Dublin, been recognized as a top cultural festival in the country, and enhanced the pride and identity of the Dublin community. Each year, held during the first weekend in August, the festival brings in over 100,000 patrons and features entertainment experiences from traditional performances to sports competitions and shopping from artisan vendors. Activities are available for all ages, ranging from family-friendly programming to Irish whiskey tastings, ensuring there is something for everyone at this beloved community festival.

**3.5: Develop municipal arts programs for all ages that encourage the community to participate in arts and culture, utilizing local institutions and organizations.**

Early exposure to arts and culture of all kinds is beneficial to all members of a community, especially youth during their formative years, and to maintain and provide enrichment opportunities for older adults. These kinds of programs could emerge through strategic partnerships between regional or local agencies and arts and culture organizations around West Central Indiana. Programming offerings should be scaled appropriately for all age groups; for example, programs for school-aged children should emphasize opportunities around discovering various art forms and connecting with other cultures, while experiences for young adults should offer young career readiness or extracurricular engagement.

**Action Steps**

- » Audit current programming to assess gaps in individual communities
- » Identify organizations that are able to partner with regional and county entities for arts education opportunities
- » Assess capacity for operating educational arts and culture programs at the municipal level
- » Establish a consistent schedule of classes for the community

Goals

Timing  
**Now**

Impact  
**Local**

Personnel  
**Local municipalities and the WRRDA**

Local Subject Matter Experts  
**Arts Illiana, ISU Community School of the Arts**





# 4

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## **FUNDING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

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## Funding Entities/Mechanisms

Securing financial support for arts and culture initiatives in the Wabash River/West Central Region requires a multi-pronged approach, exploring opportunities at the state, regional, and local levels, as well as from private sources. It should be noted that as national and state funding cuts impact available funding, local tools should be explored in the short term as the most viable solution for funding arts and culture initiatives.

### State and Regional Funding:

**The Indiana Arts Commission (IAC)** is the primary state agency for arts funding and they offer several grant programs. The IAC works through Regional Arts Partners across the state to administer some of its programs and provide local guidance. Key opportunities include:

- » Arts Organization Support: This opportunity provides annual operating support to eligible arts non-profits.
- » Arts Project Support: This opportunity provides funding to non-profits, governments, and schools for specific arts related projects, events, exhibitions, or workshops.

**Arts Midwest** is a regional organization that serves Indiana and other Midwestern states, offering grants and programs that support touring artists, creative projects, and community engagement with the arts.

**Indiana Humanities** often supports cultural programs with a humanities focus including those that intersect with artistic expression and storytelling.

### Local Arts Councils:

The Indiana Arts Commission has several regional partners that promote and expand participation in the arts in Indiana. The partners provide broad local access to arts services and funding opportunities and provide services that include, but are not limited to, grant making, information, and referral.

**Arts Illiana:** Clay County, Parke County, Putnam County, Sullivan County, Vermillion County, Vigo County

### Local Tools to be Implemented by Local Government Partners

Local municipal investment in arts and culture is crucial to realizing the community's vision for the future. A diverse range of options is outlined below and should be considered by each municipal partner, as each proposed solution will not be a fit for every community. By leveraging direct appropriations, dedicated revenue streams, policy frameworks, and public-private partnerships, municipalities can generate substantial measurable funding streams and high-impact economic benefits.

*For more information on specific tax opportunities, view the attachment.*

## **Fees**

Municipalities have home rule authority to charge many different fees for the services they provide and penalties for violating local ordinances.

### **Permit and Ordinance Violation Fees**

Municipalities may charge reasonable permit fees for municipally controlled permitted activities, like building permits or right-of-way access. They can also charge reasonable fees (with statutory maximums) for ordinance violations.

### **User Fees**

There are many user fees that can be charged for municipal services including trash fees, stormwater fees, park fees, etc. Municipalities have broad home rule authority over user fee rates.

### **Impact Fees**

Impact fees are charged on new development to help defray the cost of necessary public improvements, like road or parks, necessitated by the new development. Municipalities have broad home rule authority over the impact fee rates.

### **Transfers**

The state government provides many transfers of funding from various revenue sources to local governments for specific purposes.

### **Commercial Vehicle Excise Tax (CVET)**

The commercial vehicle excise tax was taken over by the state many years ago and a portion of the revenue is still transferred to local governments.

### **Financial Institutions Tax (FIT)**

Financial institutions are exempt from ordinary business taxation and instead pay the financial institutions tax. Local governments receive a portion of the revenue.

### **Motor Vehicle Highway (MVH) and Local Road and Street (LRS)**

The Motor Vehicle Highway (MVH) and Local Road and Street (LRS) funds are statewide road funding sources funded primarily by the gas tax and gas sales tax. Local units receive distributions from both of these funds earmarked specifically for road funding based on a combination of their population and center lane road miles.

### **Community Crossings**

The community crossings matching grant program is funded by gas sales taxes and supplemental vehicle registration fees. This is a matching grant program for specific road projects that can be applied for annually, up to \$1M, with local matching requirements of between 20%–50% based on community size.

### **Other Transfers**

There are other state grant programs and transfers available to local governments, but the major revenue sources are described above.

## Technical Assistance

Despite the recognized value, rural communities often struggle to translate arts and culture plans into actionable initiatives due to inherent resource limitations. These areas frequently lack dedicated economic development organizations, cannot afford professional grant writers or lobbyists, and are disproportionately underserved by philanthropy. Technical assistance is therefore essential to bridge this implementation gap, providing the expertise, tools, and networks necessary for constituents to effectively execute their plans and access available resources.

Despite the challenges, rural communities possess inherent strengths that can be leveraged to foster vibrant arts and culture sectors.

**Community Cohesion and Tight-Knit Networks:** Rural communities are often characterized by strong social capital and tight-knit relationships. This inherent characteristic can be a powerful tool for increasing access to arts and arts education by fostering collaboration and shared purpose, as seen in successful community-focused practices.

**Unique Cultural Assets and Identity:** The Wabash Valley boasts distinct cultural heritage, traditions, and local stories. These unique assets can be celebrated and leveraged through arts initiatives, fostering a strong sense of pride of place and attracting visitors seeking authentic cultural experiences.

**Entrepreneurial Spirit:** Arts and creativity foster the entrepreneurial spirit, which is crucial for these communities to survive and thrive. Many small businesses are based on the arts, and many others rely upon the creative skills honed by arts and creativity, contributing to local economic diversification.

## Direct Capacity Building

Direct capacity building focuses on equipping constituents with specific skills and knowledge needed to plan, fund, and implement arts and culture initiatives.

**Mentorship and One on One Consulting:** Providing tailored, individualized support is crucial for organizations that may lack in-house expertise or face unique, context-specific challenges. This direct, bespoke approach effectively addresses the identified capacity gap, offering practical solutions that are difficult to achieve through generalized resources. Examples include the Indiana Arts Commission’s “Creative Convergence,” which offers 50 hours of consulting support to rural communities for developing creative placemaking strategies.

**Specialized Workshops and Training:** Offering structured learning opportunities in critical areas will help build fundamental skills. The following key topics should be considered:

- » **Grant Writing and Fundraising:** Essential for navigating the complex funding landscape and overcoming rural funding disparities.
- » **Financial Management and Diversifying Revenue:** Training on earned income strategies, modern membership models, and building sustainable endowments, moving beyond sole reliance on traditional grants.
- » **Legal Matters:** Understanding business structures, contracts, copyright, and navigating municipal regulations specific to arts projects.
- » **Marketing and Audience Development:** Building brand identity, leveraging digital marketing tools, and effective community engagement strategies.
- » **Project Management:** Practical steps for defining, planning, organizing, and completing creative projects efficiently.
- » **Impact Measurement and Evaluation:** Developing frameworks to quantify social, educational, and economic contributions to strengthen funding cases and demonstrate value. Workshops should be designed for maximum accessibility, utilizing virtual formats where appropriate, offering sliding scale fees, and using clear, actionable language.

## **Network and Peer Learning**

Fostering networks and peer learning environments is essential for sharing knowledge, building collective capacity, and addressing the isolation often experienced in more rural places.

**Facilitating Regional Collaboratives and Peer Exchanges:** Connecting leaders in creative communities enables them to learn from one another and leverage collective resources. This approach promotes sustainable growth by empowering local leaders to learn from and support one another.

**Cross sector Convenings:** Bringing together diverse stakeholders—including artists, arts organizations, community and economic development leaders, government officials, mental health professionals, and social service providers—is vital. This approach considers how the arts can be strategically leveraged as an interdisciplinary tool for broader community development. This meetup will also allow the identification, building, and sustaining of these cross-sector partnerships, aligning arts goals with other critical municipal and community priorities to achieve synergistic outcomes and unlock new resources.





**ARTS AND  
CULTURE  
PLAN**

**WABASH RIVER**  
Regional Development Authority

**ATTACHMENT**

### **General Fund Allocations and Direct Grants**

One of the most common and fundamental ways municipalities participate in arts and culture funding is through direct allocations from their general operating budgets, which are then distributed as grants to support arts organizations and cultural programs. Across the Wabash River Region, arts and culture projects with developed plans and proposals are able to receive direct funding through this method. This approach typically involves a dedicated local arts agency or a specific department responsible for administering these funds. Local Arts Agencies generally receive funds directly from local government expenditures and are tasked with distributing these grants to artists and cultural organizations across their jurisdictions.

### **Partnerships with Local Agencies**

Community foundations and similar local agencies can be vital partners in sustaining the arts by creating a steady stream of financial support. Beyond offering annual grants, a powerful strategy is to establish a dedicated arts endowment. An endowment provides a permanent, self-sustaining source of funding, as the principal is invested and only the interest is used to support arts organizations, projects, and education. This long-term approach allows community foundations to provide reliable operational support, fund innovative initiatives, and offer direct grants to individual artists. By creating and managing an arts endowment, these foundations can help the arts community move away from a cycle of short-term funding and towards a future of stability and growth, ultimately enriching the entire region.

### **Special Tax Districts**

The establishment of special tax districts represents a highly effective strategy for generating substantial and consistent funding for arts and culture. These districts typically impose a specified tax level, often for a fixed period, on particular goods and services within a defined geographic area. Such initiatives generally require authorization at the state level and, crucially, require voter approval, which lends them significant public legitimacy and long-term stability. Once established, these districts are often administered by independent governing bodies, ensuring dedicated oversight and allocation of funds. These tax districts should be explored where there is significant community buy-in to the projects within each district and where there is economic advantage to a large number of small businesses and local partners.

### **Tourism-Related Taxes (Hotel-Motel Taxes)**

Tourism-related taxes, or hotel-motel taxes, represent a popular and effective form of local option taxation used to fund arts and culture. These taxes primarily target visitors, thereby reducing the direct financial burden on local residents while leveraging economic activity generated by tourism. This rate may vary county to county, per local capacity.

### **Percent for Art Ordinances**

Percent for Art ordinances are adopted into municipal code and offer a highly sustainable funding source for public art projects. The most common format is for cities to allocate a specific percentage of the total budget for capital improvement projects to be set aside for public art projects, and can be connected to overall beautification and landscape projects, as long as artists are leading the vision and design of these elements. These policies ensure that art is integrated into the urban fabric and public spaces as a consistent feature of civic development.

## **Taxes**

Taxes are the primary revenue sources for local governments. The two largest tax types by revenue are property taxes and local income taxes. Although Indiana is a home rule state for ordinance enforcement, it is not a home rule state for taxation. Only taxes explicitly authorized by statute may be implemented by local governments.

## **Property Taxes**

Property taxes are the largest revenue source for municipalities. Indiana's property tax system is controlled by property tax levy. Each unit has a maximum permissible tax levy, set by a statutory formula, that it may levy on property in their jurisdiction. The levy is the amount of money to be collected and it creates the tax rate. The normal property tax rate formula is  $(\text{Property Tax Levy})/(\text{Net Assessed Value}) \times 100$ . This amount will be reduced by applicable tax credits, especially the property tax caps and the supplemental homestead tax credit.

## **Local Income Taxes**

Indiana currently sets local income taxes at the county level. A single county adopting body, either the county council or a local income tax council made of the county government and all of the municipalities in the county, determines the tax rate. The rate can be set up to 2.50% for expenditure rate, which generates additional revenue, and up to 1.25% for property tax relief, which funds property tax credits in the county. Expenditure rate revenue is usually distributed to all of the taxing units in the county that levy property taxes other than schools proportionally based on each unit's share of the tax levy. The exception to this is the public safety rate, which is distributed only to units that provide police or fire protection, and the county carveout rates for specific purposes like the 911 system, county hospitals, county jails, or county court services.

Starting in 2028, the Indiana local income tax system is changing so that all cities and towns with a population of 3,500 or higher can adopt their own local income tax rate only on their own citizens without county approval with the county council remaining the adopting body for the income tax rate for all other units in the county, including the municipalities with populations under 3,500.

## **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)**

TIF is an economic development financing tool that allows municipalities to capture incremental property tax revenue generated by economic development projects to finance the debt that paid for those projects and to reinvest it in new economic development projects. If an area is designated as a TIF allocation area, the existing property tax base continues to be allocated to all taxing units but all assessed value growth attributable to physical improvements or new personal property is only taxed by the municipality that created the TIF to finance the public improvements that made the development possible.

TIF is the most effective and flexible economic development tool for local governments and is used on most significant new developments seen throughout the state.

### **General Obligation Bonds**

Municipalities can issue general obligation bonds, debt backed by property taxes, to finance public projects. Units may levy additional property taxes outside of the normal levy limits to support their general obligation debt. The constitution and state statute limit the total amount of general obligation debt to 1/3 of 2% of the net assessed value in a jurisdiction.

### **Wheel and Vehicle Excise Tax**

Counties and municipalities can adopt Wheel and Vehicle Excise Taxes to fund road projects in their jurisdictions. These taxes are collected on annual vehicle registration as renewal fees. The Wheel Tax is charged on commercial vehicles while the Vehicle Excise Tax is charged on passenger vehicles, but they must be adopted concurrently.

The Wheel Tax can be set at between \$5 and \$40 for each different commercial vehicle class while the Vehicle Excise Tax can be set at between \$7.50 and \$25.00 dollars for each passenger vehicle class.

### **Innkeepers Taxes**

Indiana code allows any county to adopt a lodging tax of up to 5.0%, with the tax being used for local tourism development and promotions. Some counties have a higher percent and they are either under their own legislation or have sought special dispensation from the Indiana General Assembly.

Authorized by a County Council, the Uniform Innkeepers Tax code establishes a local tourism authority appointed by various entities within the county to oversee its usage. These tourism commissions are sworn representatives of the community and must act in good faith to use these appropriations as stipulated in the tax code.

### **Food and Beverage Taxes**

There is no general statutory authority for food and beverage taxes. Each is created by a specific state statute for a specific county or municipality. They are usually set at 1% but there are some as high as 2%. They are charged on restaurants and collected as sales taxes. They are dedicated to specific projects or uses designated by the enabling statute, usually for specific economic development projects. All food and beverage taxes have a sunset of no more than 25 years.

### **Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)**

There are several statutes where municipalities can collect payments in Lieu of Taxes, or PILOTs, as an additional revenue source. These are payments that are voluntarily agreed to by otherwise tax exempt property owners for up to what their property tax liability would have been but for their tax exempt status. The most common form of PILOT is on tax exempt municipal utility property, but other forms exist.