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Somerset County Rural Cultural Plan

REINHOLT CONSULTING, NOVEMBER 2017



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FORWARD

Somerset Cultural Planning, a project of Wesserunnett Arts Council (WesArts), has created a countywide plan to raise awareness of cultural offerings by increasing cultural opportunities, improving facilities for events, and enhancing education. Through these activities, this plan is designed to enrich the quality of life for residents, strengthen the economic vitality of the region, and make Somerset County a cultural destination for visitors.

During our two-year planning process, it became evident that Somerset County is rich in cultural offerings. Visual and performing arts, crafts, museums, recreation, heritage, and the formidable 'farm-to-table' and 'back to the land' movements, provide our region with much to offer residents and visitors alike.

Guided by Chris Papagni of CP Management in Portland, WesArts partnered with Main Street Skowhegan to form the Somerset Cultural Planning committee (SCP) in the fall of 2015. From July 2016 through December 2017, under the guidance of professional planning consultants, Reinholt Consulting LLC, SCP researched existing community plans, conducted county-wide interviews, held focus groups, reviewed themes and cultural priorities pulled from survey data and, ultimately, shaped future action steps to create the Somerset County Rural Cultural Plan.

Background

Over the past year and a half, with Reinholt Consulting's guidance, SCP held nine well-attended public meetings in Fairfield, Hinckley, The Forks, Jackman, Skowhegan and two meetings each in Madison and Pittsfield. New connections helped forge alliances with several community cultural groups including Bossov Ballet, Maine Trails, Maine Grain Alliance, Skowhegan Opera House, farm-to-table restaurants, Main Street Skowhegan, the Canadian-American Center at the University of Maine-Orono and town managers in Jackman, Pittsfield, Madison, and Skowhegan, who have all helped in our planning project.

With assistance from the Quebec Government in New England and Francois Fecteau, Former Deputy Governor of St. George and member of Rotary 7790 covering both Somerset County and Quebec, nine SCP members travelled to Quebec to foster collaborations and attend the 2017 Network of Francophone and Francophile Cities of America. Skowhegan has recently joined the Network, which includes three other Maine towns: Lewiston, Auburn, and Biddeford. Improving Canadian connections will result in increased Canadian tourism by leveraging Somerset County's rich French heritage.

In addition to public meetings, we held several small group and individual interviews to assess interest in cultural activities and to hear from leaders in our region. We formed alliances with cultural leaders in Saint George and Quebec City, resulting in collaborations and discussions on how to strengthen our French-Canadian heritage in Somerset County. We have also been able to reach the Native American community and have interviewed some of their cultural leaders and now have Native American representation on our Committee. As we develop these heritage connections, we hope to strengthen cultural awareness throughout our region.

Profound thanks are due to Reinholt Consulting for guiding us through the planning processes. Special thanks must go to three funding agencies that allowed us to complete the work: Maine Arts Commission, Maine Community Foundation and the

Betterment Fund. We could never have completed this process without their financial support and belief in our project.

Thanks also goes out to the members of Somerset Cultural Planning and its Advisory Council; their dedication, hard work and faith in our cultural future has made the Somerset Cultural Plan a reality.

Implementation of the Somerset County Rural Cultural Plan, will strengthen the voices of our creative community in local and regional planning initiatives.

-Jon Kimbell

The cultural planning process helped to fulfill the mission and vision of the SCP:

***MISSION** SCP will cultivate creativity, harness historic strength and weave culture into our future as we tell the story of Somerset County.*

***VISION** SCP envisions a region where residents, educators, businesses and government value, support and fully integrate the arts, in all their diversity, into the fabric of civic life.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SCP Members

Jon Kimbell, Chair, Resident Producer, SenovVA, Inc. • **Margi Browne**, Vice Chair, Owner, Lakewood Golf Course • **Mary Burr**, Treasurer, Owner, Blue Ribbon Farm & 122 Corson Restaurant • **Elizabeth Tilton**, Secretary, Registered Nurse • **Ann Pollard-Ranco**, Representative of Gedakina & Native American Descendant • **Barbara Sullivan**, Artist & Educator • **Darryll White**, Associate, Main Street Skowhegan • **Emma Glencross** • **Gwen Hilton**, Community Planning Consultant • **Jason Gagne**, Executive Director, Skowhegan Area Chamber of Commerce • **Jordan Powers**, Manager, Bigelow Brewery • **Julie Cooke**, Manager, Happy Knits • **Kevin James**, Artist • **Kristina Cannon**, Executive Director, Main Street Skowhegan • **Maria Landry**, Associate, Main Street Skowhegan • **Mary Haley**, Staff Liaison, Main Street Skowhegan & Wes Arts • **Nancy Carbone**, Actress • **Nina Pleasants**, House Manager, Colby College • **Pamela Powers**, Owner, Bigelow Brewery • **Patricia Horine**, Skowhegan History House • **Rhonda Emerson**, CPA • **Serena Sanborn**, FedCo Seeds & Waterville Creates • **Steven Dionne**, Dionne & Son Builders • **Tim Curtis**, Town Manager, Town of Madison • **Travis Weeks**, Executive Director, Cornville Regional Charter School

SCP Advisory Council

Wesley McNair, Maine Poet Laureate & Author • **Rick Hopper**, President, Kennebec Valley Community College • **John Alsop**, Assistant Attorney General, State of Maine • **Sarah Workneh**, Co-Director, Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture • **Warren Cook**, Film Producer/Former CEO, Sugarloaf Mountain and Saddleback Mountain • **Lynn Plourde**, Children's Book Author • **Amber Lambke**, President, Somerset Grist Mill and Maine Grains • **Joanna Smit Nelson**, Director, Snow Pond Community Music School • **Jay Cromarty**, Wealth Management, Boston, MA • **Steven E. Saunders**, Professor of Music, Colby College • **Kimberly N. Lindlof**, President & CEO, Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce/Executive Director of Central Maine Growth Council • **Jamie Gluck**, Owner, Bell Street Farm Eatery & Market, Los Alamos, CA • **John Wentworth**, Executive Vice President, CBS Television • **Heather Johnson**, Executive Director, Somerset Economic Development.

THANK YOU FOR PROVIDING COMFORTABLE, WELCOMING MEETING SPACE

Skowhegan Free Public Library
Bigelow Brewing Company
Lakewood Golf Course
Pittsfield Public Library

Good-Will Hinckley
Canaan Farmers Hall
Kennebec Valley Community College
Fairfield Community Center

Northern Outdoors, in The Forks
Jackman Municipal Office

THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS, BUSINESSES, AND INDIVIDUALS CONTRIBUTED INVALUABLE TIME AND RESOURCES:

Amber Lambke, Maine Grains for hosting our first fund raiser in her home
122 Corson Restaurant for hosting our second fundraiser and meetings
Bigelow Brewing Company for hosting fundraisers at no charge
VB Design-Victoria Blaine-Wallace for poster/t-shirt designs
Skowhegan Savings Bank for marketing support
Bangor Savings Bank for marketing support

Maine Grain Alliance for wood oven use
Betsy Arntze, Canadian Studies Outreach, Canadian-American Center, University of Maine
Maria Parent for WesArts logo design
WesArts committees of WXNZ and Open Arts
Skowhegan Chamber of Commerce

Photo Credits: Elizabeth Tilton, High Peaks Creative Council, Mary Burr, Serena Sanborn, WesArts

INTRODUCTION

Across the world, cultural planning is utilized as a means to help communities remain buoyant when navigating fluctuating economies and populations. Wesserunsest Arts Council and Main Street Skowhegan were awarded the Maine Arts Commission Creative Communities = Economic Development Phase 1 grant in 2016 to support creation of a cultural plan. Reinholt Consulting LLC was contracted to complete the study on cultural development in Somerset County with an overarching goal of:

Document a comprehensive study to find new methods to increase participation in cultural activities, enhance innovative economic development, and strengthen the arts and cultural network.

Somerset County's draw is highlighted by its geography; abundant waterways, trails, and vast forests have positioned outdoor recreation and sporting to be corner stones of tourism. Notably, Somerset County is home to the longest stretch of white water rapids in the eastern United States. For thousands of years its fertile river valleys have provided bountiful agricultural harvests that continue to evolve with the support of growing enthusiasm and renewed dedication. The 'back to the land' movement of the 1960s and 70s brought an influx of those attracted to the region's innate richness; resulting in a concentration of sustainable farms, breweries, artists, craftsman, and performers. The Kennebec Chaudière National Scenic Byway follows the Kennebec River and is an important Canadian gateway presenting an opportunity for greater connections with international tourism and celebration of Somerset's Franco-American heritage.

This cultural plan provides a rural roadmap promoting social and economic prosperity; a high quality of life and a durable creative economy. Socio-economic prosperity, requires a steady flow of young people and families to help preserve a sustainable population and healthy workforce. Technological advances have brought flexibility in selecting workplace location; allowing value to be put on quality of place when selecting where to live and raise children. Young people and families are attracted to places that sustain arts and cultural offerings and places that provide jobs and opportunities for entrepreneurs. Community arts, cultural, and heritage activities are valuable avenues that help to supplement arts programming availability in school districts impacted by budget constraints.

With coordination and collaboration across sectors, Somerset has an opportunity to position itself for multi-layered cultural destination development. This plan is intended to support and enhance initiatives that are already underway across sectors. Bringing creative components to existing projects will increase appeal and help reach more audiences.

METHODOLOGY

The cultural development study was conducted over eighteen months. At each phase of the planning process, feedback from the larger community was collected and used to inform the direction of the plan. Five key stages of plan development are listed below.

Initial Research

The first step entailed examining existing plans and documents to help ensure that the cultural plan would build upon existing action plans and support work already under way. Research included the following:

Online research scans of Somerset cultural, historic, and creative assets
Somerset County Towns' Comprehensive Plans
Central and Northern Somerset County, ME Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2015

Forest Society of Maine Strategic Plan 2015 - 2020
Skowhegan Strategic Plan for Community Transformation 2016
Somerset Cultural Planning Committee meeting minutes and interviews
Kennebec Valley Council of Governments CEDS Report

Qualitative Data Gathering

A string of five public meetings and several key sector interviews were facilitated in Somerset County in order to collect community input. The consultant team explored what participants perceived as strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and realities. We heard from more than 150 community members.

Quantitative Data Gathering

The consultant team designed three surveys in order to vet common ideas that came out of the qualitative meetings. The three surveys included: Public Opinion Survey, Artist and Performer Survey, and Business and Cultural Organization Survey. Wes Arts promoted and collected online and hard copy surveys for six months across the county. Hard-copies were made available at Town Offices, Public Libraries, and places of business. Wes Arts and Main Street Skowhegan utilized e-blasts, press releases, social media campaigns, and e-newsletters on a monthly basis. Many partner organizations, such as the Skowhegan Chamber of Commerce, included survey links on websites and e-newsletters. We received 454 Public Opinion Survey responses, 48 Artist and Performer Survey responses, and 28 Business and Cultural Organizations Surveys.

Identifying Goals

Goals and objectives were identified through careful analysis of qualitative and quantitative data. Feedback was sought on data findings and recommended goals through a series of public meetings. Over 60 community members participated in these meetings.

Refining the Draft Plan

Meetings with the public and lead organizations were held to discuss and improve the recommended actions and strategies. More than 60 community members participated in these meetings.

VISION

Somerset County is a region where residents, educators, businesses, and government value, support and fully integrate the arts, in all their diversity, into the fabric of civic life. Cultural activities are widely available and appeal to Somerset County residents of all ages. Arts and cultural organizations, community groups, businesses, and community leaders enjoy a supportive community and work together to provide quality cultural events and facilities.

Somerset County is home to a growing number of entrepreneurs and innovators, drawn to the regions high quality of life. Residents regularly take advantage of the various educational opportunities available while businesses benefit from an enthusiastic and skilled workforce.

Communities welcome a steady flow of visitors, drawn from the regions authentic mix of scenic beauty and outdoor recreation, a bustling agricultural industry, an array of visual and performing arts, and rich cultural heritage. Residents enjoy a rural, rustic way of life; rooted in the regions geography, heritage, and culture.

Overarching Goals:

1. Encourage greater participation by county residents of all ages in cultural activities.
2. Create a welcoming region for artists, artisans, crafts people, recreation and agriculture.
3. Make our county a cultural destination for visitors from near and far.
4. Bring cultural groups together to encourage cultural events and improve cultural facilities.
5. Educate and retain our entrepreneurial youth.
6. Increase financial support for cultural activities by creating partnerships with leaders of the arts, agriculture, industry and innovation.

ACTION PLAN OVERVIEW

The plan has been designed to be a resource to help guide cultural development. Each goal emerged from data that supports the recommendations for action. This information is useful to reference when preparing applications for funding and creating capital campaigns. In the interest of keeping this document succinct and accessible, all supporting materials, including qualitative and quantitative data sets, are available at: reinholtconsulting.com/somerset

The following section is the heart of the Somerset County Rural Cultural Plan and the culmination of eighteen months of planning processes. The goals, objectives, and strategies laid out in the action plan are imbedded in values, priorities, and aspirations identified through a process of inclusive public engagement. Efforts were made to ensure the final outcome was based on a broad cross-section of the community.

The action plan is organized into four goals that reflect challenges and opportunities that emerged from community based qualitative and quantitative data collection. Each goal represents a section of the action plan and is broken down by objectives, strategies, and sub-strategies. Goals are of equal importance.

Each of the four goals are accompanied by 1) Findings that support the goal and 2) Examples and/or resources intended to inform and inspire implementation. At the end of the action plan is an implementation table that includes goals, objectives, and strategies, as well as additional details including suggested key players, and timelines. This implementation grid is intended to serve as a tool for those organizations and individuals who are actively involved in carrying out the Somerset County Rural Cultural Plan.

Action Plan



GOALS

The following table provides an overview of the goals and objectives established through the cultural planning process:

<p>A</p>	<p>BENEFIT PUBLIC HEALTH BY ENSURING OFFERINGS ARE WIDELY ACCESSIBLE, AVAILABLE, AND RELEVANT</p> <p>Objective A.1 Respond to local interests and barriers to participation Objective A.2 Expand creative programming that engages youth Objective A.3 Engage public health resources to enhance creative services</p>	<p><i>To engage Somerset County’s varying demographics, organizations must strive to provide diverse offerings that appeal to a broad spectrum of residents while responding to identified barriers effecting participation in arts, cultural, and heritage offerings.</i></p>
<p>B</p>	<p>PROMOTE AGRICULTURAL, ARTS, CULTURAL, HISTORIC, AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p>Objective B.1 Identify, connect, and boost Somerset County assets Objective B.2 Build recognition for being a local food and beverage hub and destination for agricultural tourism Objective B.3 Highlight natural and recreational strengths</p>	<p><i>As a region rich in arts, cultural, historic, and natural assets with a bustling agricultural industry, Somerset County provides a robust quality of life and an authentic experience for visitors. Through strategic promotion of assets, Somerset County could strengthen its appeal to visitors and those looking to relocate.</i></p>
<p>C</p>	<p>UTILIZE CREATIVE PLACEMAKING PROJECTS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE REGIONS POSITIVE IMAGE AND SENSE OF PLACE</p> <p>Objective C.1 Create opportunities for cultural and creative initiatives Objective C.2 Further understanding and sensitivity of cultural heritage to help create a welcoming community</p>	<p><i>Somerset County’s vast, rural landscape presents unique challenges including population loss and general strain on financial, civic, and human capital. Placemaking projects help to build community pride; galvanize residents to collectively shape the future of their communities; and bring diverse people together creating social connections and new understandings. Being a warm welcoming community benefits business and quality of life.</i></p>
<p>D</p>	<p>STRENGTHEN SUPPORT FOR SOMERSET COUNTY’S CREATIVE AND CULTURAL SECTOR, TO INCREASE THE RESILIENCE OF THE CREATIVE ECONOMY</p> <p>Objective D.1 Foster a supportive environment that encourages creative industries</p>	<p><i>Like many Maine communities, Somerset County experienced economic decline brought, in part, by loss of a once thriving manufacturing industry. Cultivating a robust creative economy is a proven strategy for economic revitalization and local resilience.</i></p>

Expand Access, Reach, & Relevance

To engage Somerset County's varying demographics, organizations must strive to provide diverse offerings that appeal to a broad spectrum of residents while responding to identified barriers affecting participation in arts, cultural, and heritage offerings.

From the Somerset County Community...

The following insights are drawn from data collected during the cultural planning process through surveys and community conversations.

There is broad support for ensuring arts, cultural, and recreational opportunities are accessible and available for Somerset County's varying demographics.

92% agree that arts, culture, & recreation should be accessible & affordable to all

93% agree arts, culture, and recreation should contribute to the quality of life

Engaging youth in creative activities stood out as a prominent theme in both community conversations and the Somerset County Public Opinion survey.

Over 85% support putting time and resources towards ensuring youth have access to arts, cultural, and recreational opportunities in schools and the community

GOAL A

BENEFIT PUBLIC HEALTH BY ENSURING OFFERINGS ARE WIDELY ACCESSIBLE, AVAILABLE, AND RELEVANT

GOAL A. BENEFIT PUBLIC HEALTH BY ENSURING OFFERINGS ARE WIDELY ACCESSIBLE, AVAILABLE, AND RELEVANT

Objective A.1

Respond to local interests and barriers to participation

Actions

Increase diversity and relevancy of offerings by responding to public interests identified through the public opinion survey

- Survey participants demonstrated a high level of interest in agricultural activities, craft fairs and festivals, performing arts, and outdoor recreation

Address identified barriers to increase participation

- Assess regional availability of cultural offerings and use findings to provide offerings to underserved areas and populations
- Create an inventory of spaces appropriate for cultural uses in Somerset County and explore providing satellite displays and performances
- Increase the availability of information about offerings and events

Ensure the community has access to affordable offerings, regardless of socio-economic status

- Provide free and low-cost activities
- Establish funding for scholarships
- Offer reduced family rates

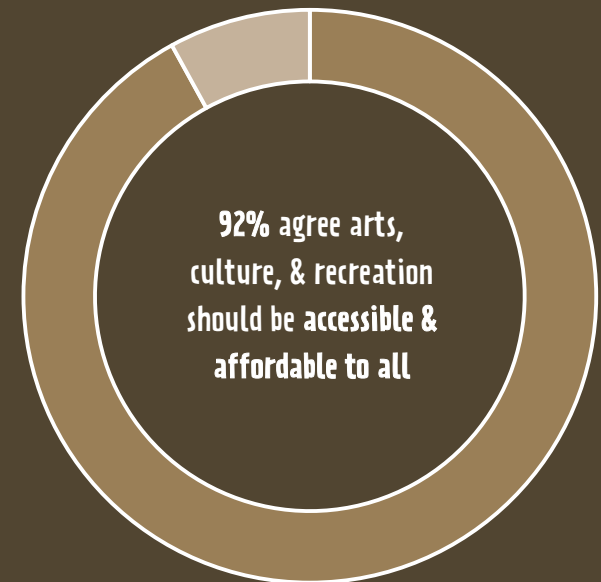
COMMON BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION:

56% Lack of information

35% Cost

32% Lack of time

28% Driving distance



Youth Art Month, Council for Arts Education

HOW CAN ORGANIZATIONS CELEBRATE YOUTH ART?

Youth Art Month is a program of the Council for Arts Education that works to do just that by providing communities with resources and strategies aimed at recognizing art education and youth art.

National Youth Art Month program exists to:

- Recognize art education as a viable factor in the total education curriculum that develops citizens of a global society.
- Recognize art is a necessity for the full development of better quality of life for all.
- Direct attention to the value of art education for divergent and critical thinking.
- Expand art programs in schools and stimulate new art programs.
- Encourage commitment to the arts by students, community organizations, and individuals everywhere.
- Provide additional opportunities for individuals of all ages to participate in creative art learning.
- Increase community, business and governmental support for art education.
- Increase community understanding and interest in art and art education through involvement in art exhibits, workshops, and other creative ventures.
- Reflect and demonstrate the goals of the National Art Education Association that work toward the improvement of art education at all levels.

*For more information, visit:
www.councilforarteducation.org*

GOAL A. BENEFIT PUBLIC HEALTH BY ENSURING OFFERINGS ARE WIDELY ACCESSIBLE, AVAILABLE, AND RELEVANT

Objective A.2

Expand creative programming that engages youth

Actions

Encourage healthy pathways for youth by providing programming that encourages healthy self-expression

- Collaborate with youth services
- Identify opportunities to work with high-risk populations

Support school arts events, by promoting them on community webpages and e-newsletters

Collaborate with community organizations, school teachers and administrators and the private sector to seek funding and develop arts programming

- Establish volunteer and internship opportunities for youth at cultural organizations and businesses involved in the arts
- Work with the Maine Alliance for Arts Education to meet the criteria for "Every Student Succeeds Act" Title 1 funding for the arts in local schools
- Consider developing opportunities for youth art displays and performances in the community
- Encourage schools and community organizations to celebrate Youth Art Month
- Develop an inventory of local artists interested in mentoring youth
- Consider bringing artists in residence programming to schools
- Support and encourage schools in providing field trips to area museums and performances

Engage youth in planning events designed for youth

GOAL A. BENEFIT PUBLIC HEALTH BY ENSURING OFFERINGS ARE WIDELY ACCESSIBLE, AVAILABLE, AND RELEVANT

Objective A.3

Engage public health resources to enhance creative services

Actions

Establish relationships with public health providers

- Inventory community resources and services that provide creative programming
- Facilitate discussions to explore opportunities for collaboration

Encourage use of creative expression to address public health concerns

- Work with providers to identify key public health concerns; top concerns in the public opinion surveys were: substance abuse, crime, and aging

Explore models and opportunities for use of Creative Aging Programs

Example from Project HEAL

Smoketown Life | Line Project: sculptor Andrew Cozzens generated dialogue with community members to understand the impact of collective trauma and to visualize the multi-dimensional impact of poverty in a new way. The project is being featured in the Public Health Department's 2017 Health Equity Report. (Louisville, KY).

For more information, visit: www.ideasxlab.com/proj-heal/

Case Study: Project HEAL is a cultural blueprint for creative, just, healthy communities. A model that can be replicated across America

A CONVERGENCE OF CULTURE, COMMUNITY AND SCIENCE

IDEAS xLab's community health development model, Project HEAL (Health. Equity. Art. Learning.), introduces arts and culture as the key drivers for learning, action and evaluation by communities seeking to increase civic engagement toward greater participation in policy making and improved wellbeing.

Project HEAL requires cross-sector collaboration, bringing together arts and culture, community development, and health information sciences, to promote wellbeing.

Project HEAL stands as a proclamation of connection and social justice, establishing the care and celebration of one another as the highest priority of arts in America.

BENEFITS OF PROJECT HEAL:

1. Improved social cohesion and civic engagement.
2. Policy changes that positively impact health.
3. Increased opportunities for building inclusive economies through social and cultural entrepreneurship.
4. Increased opportunities for improving social emotional skills leading to improvements in educational achievement.
5. Improved wellbeing of communities experiencing chronic and/or traumatic stress.
6. Improved physical environment.

Visit www.ideasxlab.com for more information

Promote Opportunities

As a region rich in arts, cultural, historic, and natural assets with a bustling agricultural industry, Somerset County provides a robust quality of life and an authentic experience for visitors. Through strategic promotion of assets, Somerset County could strengthen its appeal to visitors and those looking to relocate.

From the Somerset County Community...

The following insights are drawn from data collected during the cultural planning process through surveys and community conversations.

Tourism is already an important economic driver for Somerset County and could be further enhanced by leveraging the region's creative assets through careful marketing and development.

95% agree arts, culture, and recreation should promote opportunities to residents, visitors, and tourists

85% say that growing tourism by promoting the region's assets is very important to the future of Somerset County

Local agricultural and natural assets stand out as important features of Somerset County's culture; further efforts to connect and unite Somerset County's agricultural and natural assets with the arts will help to establish Somerset County as a cultural destination for visitors from near and far.

72% are very interested in agricultural fairs, farmer's markets, farm-to-table meals, etc.

Farms & local food based businesses account for approximately 1/3 of responding businesses & organizations making this the largest responding sector

87% are very interested in experiencing arts, culture, & recreation at parks, trails, nature preserves, waterbodies, etc.

80% are very interested in outdoor recreation activities

Atlas of Rural Arts & Culture

WWW.PLACESTUDIES.COM

This Rural Arts and Culture Map presents new perspectives from rural America, with a focus on rural youth, rural-urban exchange, and a sustaining interest in the changing face of rural America, including the next generation, and their membership in diverse ethnic and cultural communities.

GOAL B

PROMOTE AGRICULTURAL, ARTS, CULTURAL, HISTORIC, AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Cultural Asset Mapping, Maine High Peaks

HOW CAN A NETWORKING GROUP RAISE THE VISIBILITY OF RURAL CULTURAL STRENGTHS?

The Western Maine nonprofit, High Peaks Creative Council (HPCC), was formed in 2013 after receiving the Maine Arts Commission Creative Communities = Economic Development grant. Their mission is to connect regional arts and cultural organizations around creative public projects that benefit the community's quality of life and support resiliency in the local economy. They host regular networking meetings with the cultural, business, and municipal sectors. Together, the group created and manages an online cultural asset map, a printed map/guide of the region, and five kiosks. The project led to creation of the popular self-guided cultural destination tour: High Peaks Arts & Heritage Loop.

GOAL B. PROMOTE AGRICULTURAL, ARTS, CULTURAL, HISTORIC, AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Objective B.1

Identify, connect, and boost cultural assets

Actions

Coordinate a network of agricultural, arts, cultural, historic, and recreational sectors

- Identify stakeholders and organizations to engage
- Establish a committee to meet regularly, share information on offerings, build trust, and explore collaborations
- Establish and promote the use of a comprehensive online cultural calendar, informational website, and cultural e-newsletter
- Utilize statewide tourism resources to promote offerings

Work with Somerset Economic Development Corporation to create and promote a Somerset County asset map

- Inventory Somerset County agricultural, arts, cultural, historic, and recreational assets
- Encourage municipalities and local organizations to include links to the online asset map
- Consider including geocaching activities

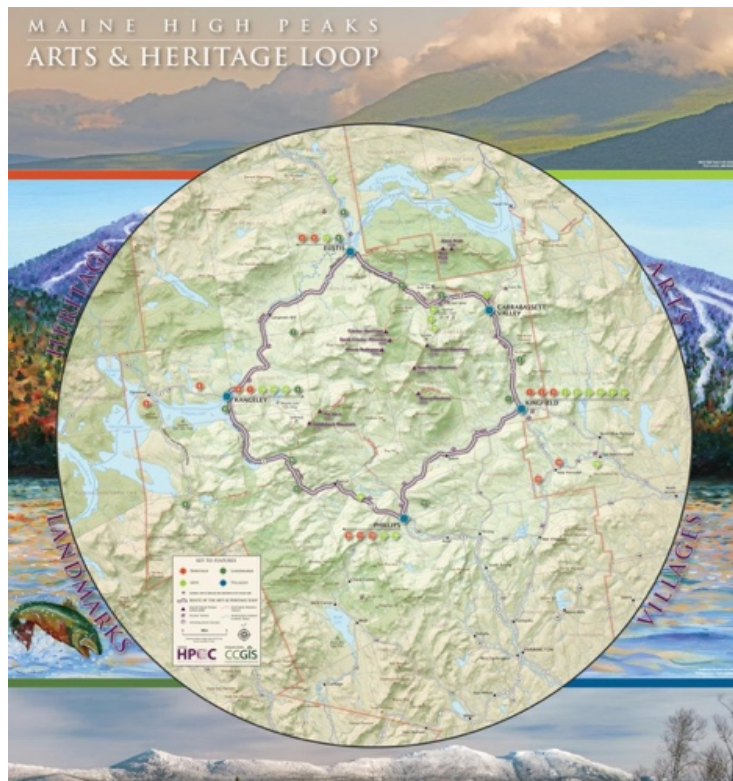
Consider creating a printed map guide of local assets; include advertising space to pay for costs

Collaborate with the hospitality industry to bolster promotion of amenities and cultural features

- Consider packaging cultural activities with lodging and eateries

Collaborate with local chambers and business organizations to encourage establishments to use online tools, including google places, Facebook ads, and Yelp, to promote business

Pool resources to establish a brand for Somerset County's unique cultural assets



67% of responding businesses and organization say that working with the tourism industry is very important

GOAL B. PROMOTE AGRICULTURAL, ARTS, CULTURAL, HISTORIC, AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Objective B.2

Build recognition for being a local food and beverage hub and destination for agricultural tourism

Actions

Continue to provide and develop agricultural based festivals and fairs

- Coordinate new events that piggyback on existing successful events
- Consider a fermentation festival

Become a leader for the Maine farm-to-table movement by establishing and promoting a farm fresh network of restaurants, farmers, and diners

- Model after the successful Vermont Fresh Network

Consider establishing and facilitating a Somerset gleaning project

- Utilize best practice resources such as, the Vermont Gleaning Collective

Further investigation and study of destination development for unique agricultural assets

- Reach out to MOFGA, Get Real Maine, and Maine Farmland Trust as potential resources



Case Study: YoloArts Art & Ag Project

YOLO COUNTY, CA

The Art & Ag Project cultivates a dialogue between artists, farmers, and the community to raise awareness of the importance of preserving farmlands and the visual arts in Yolo County California.

Art & Ag invites farmers to open their land to local artists, providing unique opportunities to capture private landscapes that would otherwise remain inaccessible and unseen.

Each month artists can visit a different farm in Yolo County to create a work of art on-site, including but not limited to plein air painting and photography.

Artful Plate

Part of the Art & Ag project, Artful Plate, creates an opportunity to enhance the full farm to plate experience by commissioning original works of art by local artist to be printed onto dinner plates. Dinner plates are then featured and sold at restaurants or nonprofit and community events serving locally sourced meals. The project is supported by YoloArts' collaborative partner the County of Yolo.

For more information, visit yoloarts.org

72% are very interested in agricultural fairs, farmer's markets, farm-to-table meals, etc.

85% say that growing tourism by promoting the region's assets is very important to the future of Somerset County

Grow your audience by responding to feedback.

RESEARCH FROM THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS INDICATES THAT...

Rural arts organizations rely heavily on audience and community feedback in developing programming and are more likely to draw audiences from surrounding communities than those located in urban areas. Responding to community interests can help Somerset County cultural organizations grow their audiences through expanded reach and relevance.

The American Planning Association suggests linking heritage with outdoor spaces:

The American Planning Association encourages communities to utilize “venues such as parks, open spaces, and public streetscapes as places for arts and cultural expressions which can be an effective way to integrate history and heritage into the everyday lived experience.”

87% of respondents are very interested in experiencing offerings at parks, trails, nature preserves, waterbodies, etc.

80% of respondents are very interested in outdoor recreation activities

GOAL B. PROMOTE AGRICULTURAL, ARTS, CULTURAL, HISTORIC, AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Objective B.3

Highlight natural and recreational strengths

Actions

Support groups working to raise the visibility of public trails and natural landmarks

- Utilize the Maine Trail Finder platform
- Work with Maine D.O.T. categorical signs program to mark trailheads and natural landmarks with state road signs

Continue to collaborate with the recreational sector to develop creative installations at parks, trails, and other outdoor venues

Support and enhance existing recreational based festivals with creative components



Enhance Sense of Place

Somerset County's vast, rural landscape presents unique challenges including population loss and general strain on financial, civic, and human capital. Placemaking projects help to build community pride; galvanize residents to collectively shape the future of their communities; and bring diverse people together creating social connections and new understandings. Being a warm welcoming community benefits business and quality of life.

From the Somerset County Community...

The following insights are drawn from data collected during the cultural planning process through surveys and community conversations.

Placemaking can help Somerset County enhance its living cultural legacy.

90% of respondents feel arts and culture should reflect and celebrate our diverse people and cultures

77% agree that preserving the community's heritage and traditions is very important to the future of Somerset County

72% feel that celebrating Franco-American & Native American heritage & culture is very important

72% agree developing public art projects and creative events is very important to the future of Somerset County

67% agree that creating visual markers identifying landmarks and gateways is very important

91% agree arts, culture, and recreation should attract new residents, talented people, and business

WHAT IS 'PLACEMAKING'?

"In creative placemaking, partners from public, private, nonprofit and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, tribe, city or region around arts and cultural activities. Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire and be inspired."

National Endowment for the Arts

How Arts & Culture Enhance Sense of Place:

KEY POINTS FROM THE AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION

1. Understanding Community Context
2. Celebrating Community Character
3. Local Implementation Framework
4. Arts and Cultural Programming

GOAL C

UTILIZE CREATIVE PLACEMAKING PROJECTS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE REGION'S POSITIVE IMAGE AND SENSE OF PLACE

GOAL C. UTILIZE CREATIVE PLACEMAKING PROJECTS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE REGION'S POSITIVE IMAGE AND SENSE OF PLACE

Objective C.1

Create opportunities for cultural and creative initiatives

Actions

Consider developing creative placemaking projects that connect agricultural, historic, and recreational assets to the arts

- Look at successful models such as, the Farm Art DTour project, quilt barn tours, historically based public art, and the farm to ballet project

Explore the feasibility of developing signage

- Work with Maine D.O.T. categorical signs program to mark historic sites with state signs

Develop cultural attractions at scenic gateways and scenic byway turnouts

- Consider interpretative signage and creative installations historically relevant to locations

Encourage communities to explore options for establishing “museum in the streets”

- Follow guidance provided through the Museum in the Streets website (<http://www.themuseuminthestreets.com/>)



Case Study: Museum in the Streets

“The Museum in the Streets creates heritage discovery trails for the benefit of a community's inhabitants and tourists.

Working closely with town historical societies, we design free walking tours that foster a sense of historical identity, educate, encourage preservation of local historic sites and promote knowledge of stories, events and traditions. Our historical panels, rich with local archival imagery, are installed in cities and towns around the United States and Europe.

The panels that make up the tour invite people to discover a town's unique story at their own pace, over the course of an afternoon or several return visits.”

SUCCESS ACROSS MAINE COMMUNITIES

More Maine towns have adopted the Museum in the Streets model as a means of promoting local heritage than any other state in the country. Relying heavily on cross-sector collaboration, the program provides a step-by-step process for implementation that has proven successful across communities, regardless of size or geographic location.

Visit [themuseuminthestreets.com](http://www.themuseuminthestreets.com) for more information

72% agree developing public art projects and creative events is very important to the future of Somerset County

67% agree that creating visual markers identifying landmarks and gateways is very important to the future of Somerset County

Confluence Project, Washington & Oregon

ENVIRONMENTAL REMEMBRANCE & RESTORATION

The Confluence Project, “shares stories of the Columbia River through six public art installations, educational programs, community engagement, and a rich digital experience.”

Based along a 300-mile stretch of the Columbia River in the states of Washington and Oregon and focusing on sites important to Native Americans, the project uses public art to transform historic sites into “teachable places”, drawing attention to historic and environmental assets, while preserving Native American heritage and culture.

Confluence is the result of a decade-long collaboration among Pacific Northwest Tribes, local communities, regional civic groups, and artist Maya Lin.

The Celilo Falls Tribute Project will feature onsite and online interpretive features, a school-based art program, and artwork by Lin.

Visit www.confluenceproject.org for more information

90% of respondents feel arts and culture should reflect and celebrate our diverse people and cultures

72% feel that celebrating Franco-American & Native American heritage & culture is very important future of Somerset County

GOAL C. UTILIZE CREATIVE PLACEMAKING PROJECTS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE REGION'S POSITIVE IMAGE AND SENSE OF PLACE

Objective C.2

Further understanding and sensitivity of cultural heritage to help create a welcoming community

Actions

Work to build trust and positive relations with the Native American community

- Establish procedures to ensure Native Americans have a voice in community development initiatives
- Initiate community conversations around appropriating Columbus Day as Indigenous People's Day

Encourage and facilitate opportunities for Native Americans to share their history and culture, as well as current realities facing their communities, through the arts

- Explore working to bring programming into schools
- Facilitate opportunities for Native American performance art exhibitions and public art projects
- Continuously integrate the cultural Native American narrative, as told by Native Americans, with the evolving regional story

Ensure Native American artists and crafters are invited to be vendors at high profile events

Continue to integrate Native American recipes onto menus in local restaurants

Raise the visibility of the Franco-American heritage

- Strengthen communications and relationships with the Quebec Embassy in Boston
- Establish a line of communication with resources including Maine Memory Network, University of Maine, and the Office of State Historian to promote heritage
- Maximize the potential of Somerset County's geographic connection to Canada
- Promote the 201 Kennebec-Chaudière corridor's geographic location as a scenic gateway to Canada
- Continue to expand French translation projects to enhance Canadian tourism

Foster a Resilient Creative Economy

Like many Maine communities, Somerset County experienced economic decline brought, in part, by loss of a once thriving manufacturing industry. Cultivating a robust creative economy is a proven strategy for economic revitalization and local resilience.

From the Somerset County Community...

The following insights are drawn from data collected during the cultural planning process through surveys and community conversations.

Somerset County's growing population of artists and performers represent an important industry sector. Ensuring creative professionals have opportunities to sell, display, and promote their work within the county while cultivating an environment that promotes entrepreneurship and innovation will help to build a vibrant and resilient creative economy.

83% say that they would consider accessing new places to display, sell, and promote their work

Over half of all artists say they would like to see more exhibition or gallery space available in Somerset County

Somerset artists and performers would benefit from services designed to enhance communication and networking across creative industries.

80% of artists and performers say that they would consider attending regular gatherings of artists and performers if provided locally in Somerset County

80% say that they would consider using a regional artist directory and online resources

71% of artists and performers say that networks of communication are not very available in Somerset County, as a building block for the creative economy

74% of businesses and organizations and 85% of artists and performers report that money is not very available in Somerset County, as a building block for the creative economy

GOAL D

STRENGTHEN SUPPORT FOR SOMERSET COUNTY'S CREATIVE AND CULTURAL SECTOR, TO INCREASE THE RESILIENCE OF THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

In his state creative economy initiative, Maine Gov. John Baldacci wrote:

The Creative Economy is a catalyst for the creation of new jobs . . . People who create jobs want to live in places that have a diverse cultural mix and an innovative and educated workforce. Maine will be competitive economically if we continue to capitalize on the synergies between entrepreneurship, education, the arts and quality of life.

Case Study: MASS MoCA/Assets for Artists

NORTH ADAMS, MA, NEA GRANT

Assets for Artists serves low-income artists in New England with a cross-sector approach to capacity building, financial wellness, and asset development. In partnership with GreenPath, a nonprofit financial wellness organization, MASS MoCA will extend the reach of the program to serve artists nationwide.

For more information, visit: www.assetsforartists.org

Case Study: Fusebox Project

AUSTIN, TX

Fusebox connects arts, community, and health and culminates in a community café space in a location where renovation and reinvigoration of a deteriorated part of town are taking place through an ArtPlace grant. Fusebox's project thinkEAST teaches students about curating, producing, and managing events in cultural spaces, and it operates a pop-up café during Austin's annual Fusebox Festival.

For more information, visit: www.fuseboxfestival.com/about

GOAL D. STRENGTHEN SUPPORT FOR SOMERSET COUNTY'S CREATIVE AND CULTURAL SECTOR, TO INCREASE THE RESILIENCE OF THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

Objective D.1

Foster a supportive environment that encourage creative industries

Actions

Bolster historic assets

- Research and pursue grants to support historical assets and museums
- Consider establishing an event where historical societies and museums are promoted as being open on the same day throughout Somerset County

Encourage organizations and creative enterprises to utilize local television communication networks to highlight arts and cultural offerings and developments

Support the development of Hoo-Skow Community Radio

- Pursue funding to create a live link from the station to the tower and to establish online streaming
- Communicate with local successful models such as WRGY Rangeley Community Radio

Increase community involvement in Hoo-Skow Radio and increase its listening base by raising public awareness

- Develop radio station internships for local students
- Consider issuing regular press releases and e-newsletters about the radio and its programming
- Utilize social media tools to raise awareness

91% of respondents agree that arts, culture, & recreation should add to regional economic vitality

GOAL D. STRENGTHEN SUPPORT FOR SOMERSET COUNTY'S CREATIVE AND CULTURAL SECTOR, TO INCREASE THE RESILIENCE OF THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

Objective D.1

Foster a supportive environment that encourages creative industries

Actions

- Promote the Open Rural Studio Tour
- Build fund raising for marketing and promotion by researching grants and seeking out local sponsorships
- Explore the feasibility of creating a printed map of art studios and galleries that stay open year round

Provide professional development and networking opportunities for creative professionals

- Establish an online networking and skill sharing resource for local artists and performers
- Provide creative professionals and organizations with workshops on utilizing social media tools
- Continue to facilitate and expand networking gatherings for artists and performers
- Consider updating and publishing the Somerset County Artist Directory

Promote reuse of under-utilized properties for cultural installations and community events

- Identify under-used properties
- Support efforts to improve and renovate cultural spaces
- Continue to work to enhance the usability of the Skowhegan Opera House; the largest venue in Somerset County

Case Study: NUNU Project, Arnaudville, LA

The NUNU Collective is an educational nonprofit that works to encourage the development of artistic talents, skills, knowledge and business savvy by connecting artists with other artists, businesses, organizations and programs. It serves as a stage/platform/gallery for creative living by facilitating community, economic, and artistic/cultural development.

At the core of development is a dedication to fostering a living culture using a combination of art, music, dance and Louisiana French. Retaining authenticity is the central driving force.

Initiators in Arnaudville adopted a regional strategy (radical for their area) to promote artistic and cultural offerings across a series of nearby towns and sought support from stakeholders outside the town's borders, from parish tourism offices to the Consulat général de France à La Nouvelle-Orléans.

Visit nunucollective.homesteadcloud.com for more information

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation Grid Key:

ST = Short Term 1 - 3 years

MT = Mid Term 4 - 6 years

LT = Long Term 7 - 9 years

MDA = Maine Department of Agriculture

MOT = Maine Office of Tourism

MSS = Maine Street Skowhegan

PRD = Parks and Recreation Departments

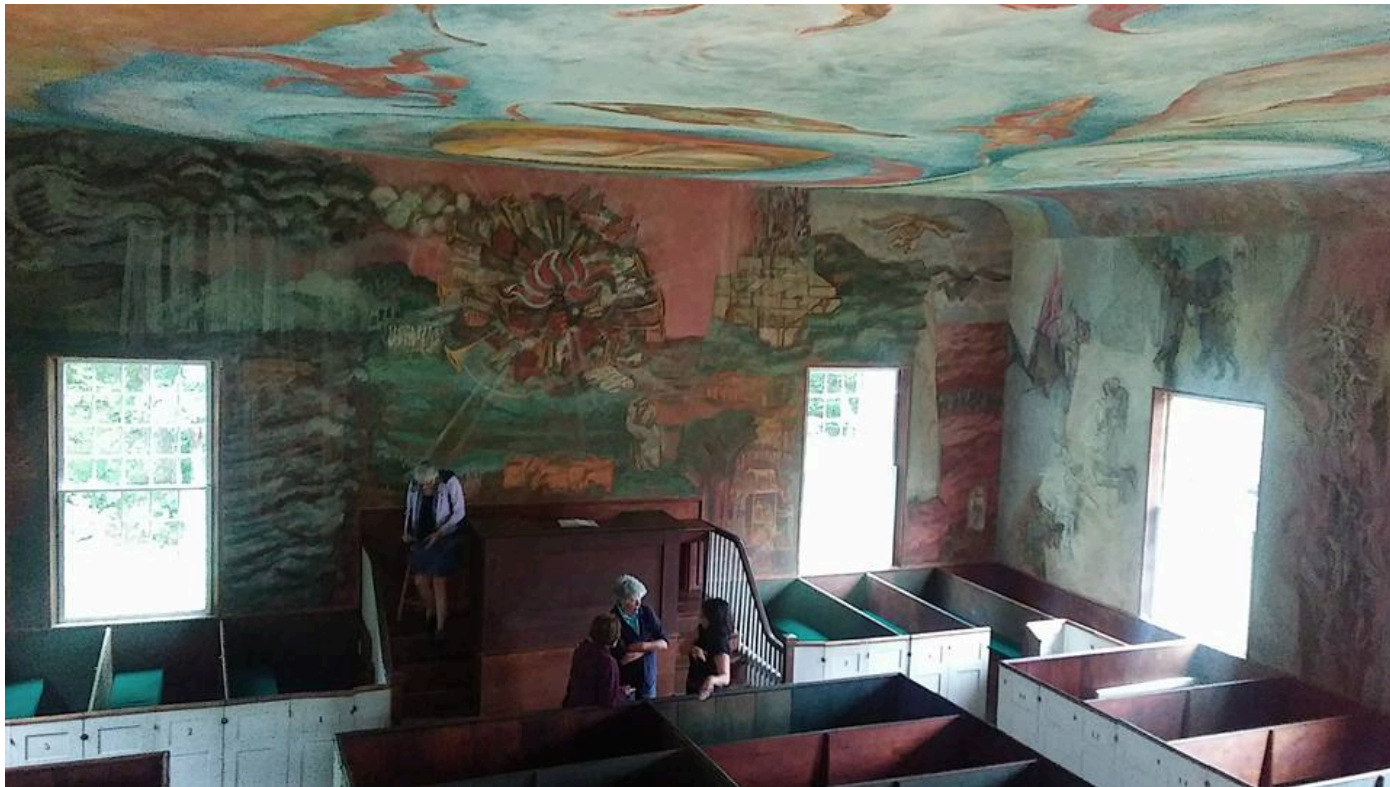
RCO = Regional Cultural Organizations

SEDC = Somerset Economic Development Council

SPH = Somerset Public Health

SWT = Somerset Woods Trustees

Wes Arts = Wesserunsetts Arts Council



South Solon Meetinghouse Fresco, for more information, visit: <http://www.southsolonmeetinghouse.org/>

A. Benefit public health by ensuring offerings are widely accessible, available, and relevant

OBJECTIVE A.1 RESPOND TO LOCAL INTERESTS AND BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

Strategy	Action Steps	Priority	Key Players
Increase diversity and relevancy of offerings by responding to public interests identified through the public opinion survey	Survey participants demonstrated a high level of interest in agricultural activities, craft fairs and festivals, performing arts, and outdoor recreation	LT	Wes Arts, MSS, RCO
Address identified barriers to increase participation	Assess regional availability of cultural offerings and use findings to provide offerings to underserved areas and populations Create an inventory of spaces appropriate for cultural uses in Somerset County and explore providing satellite displays and performances Increase the availability of information about offerings and events	MT	Wes Arts, MSS, RCO
Ensure the community has access to affordable offerings, regardless of socio-economic status	Provide free and low-cost activities Establish funding for scholarships Offer reduced family rates	MT	Wes Arts, MSS, RCO

OBJECTIVE A.2 EXPAND CREATIVE PROGRAMMING THAT ENGAGES YOUTH

Strategy	Action Steps	Priority	Key Players
Encourage healthy pathways for youth by providing programming that encourages healthy self-expression	Collaborate with youth services Identify opportunities to connect with high risk populations	LT	Wes Arts, Youth Centers, Libraries, Schools, SPH
Support school arts events, by promoting them on community webpages and e-newsletters		ST	Schools, Wes Arts, MSS, Chambers
Collaborate with community organizations, school teachers and administrators and the private sector to seek funding and develop arts programming	Establish volunteer and internship opportunities for youth at cultural organizations and businesses involved in the arts Work with the Maine Alliance for Arts Education to meet the criteria for "Every Student Succeeds Act" Title I funding for the arts in local schools Consider developing opportunities for youth art displays and performances in the community Encourage schools and community organizations to celebrate Youth Art Month Develop an inventory of local artists interested in mentoring youth Consider bringing artists in residence programming to schools Support and encourage schools in providing field trips to area museums and performances	LT	Schools, Wes Arts, Maine Alliance for Arts Education, Regional Cultural Organizations
Engage youth in planning events designed for youth		ST	Students, Wes Arts, MSS, Schools

OBJECTIVE A.3 ENGAGE PUBLIC HEALTH RESOURCES TO ENHANCE CREATIVE SERVICES

Strategy	Action Steps	Priority	Key Players
Establish relationships with public health providers	Inventory community resources and services that provide creative programming Facilitate discussions to explore opportunities for collaboration	MT	Wes Arts, SPH
Encourage use of creative expression to address public health concerns	Work with providers to identify key public health concerns; top concerns identified in the public opinion survey were: substance abuse, crime, and aging	LT	Wes Arts, SPH
Explore models and opportunities for use of Creative Aging Programs		LT	Wes Arts, SPH



B. Promote agricultural, arts, cultural, historic, and recreational opportunities

OBJECTIVE B.1 IDENTIFY, CONNECT, AND BOOST CULTURAL ASSETS

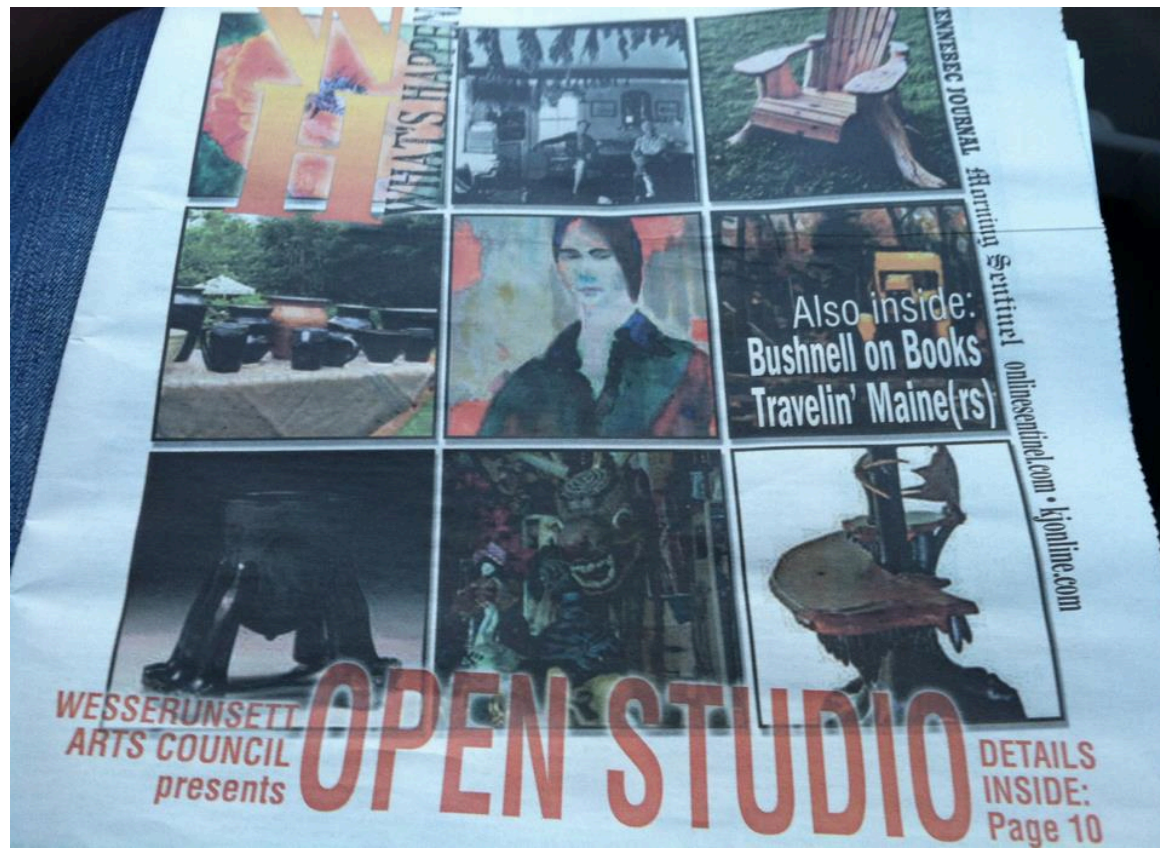
Strategy	Action Steps	Priority	Key Players
Coordinate a network of agricultural, arts, cultural, historic, and recreational sectors	Identify stakeholders and organizations to engage Establish a committee to meet regularly, share information on offerings, build trust, and explore collaborations Establish and promote the use of a comprehensive online cultural calendar, informational website, and cultural e-newsletter Utilize statewide tourism resources to promote offerings	ST	Wes Arts, MSS, RCO
Work with Somerset Economic Development Corporation to create and promote a Somerset County asset map	Inventory Somerset County agricultural, arts, cultural, historic, and recreational assets Encourage municipalities and local organizations to include links to the online asset map Consider including geocaching activities	ST	SEDC, Wes Arts, MSS
Consider creating a printed map guide of local assets; include advertising space to pay for costs		MT	Wes Arts, MSS
Collaborate with the hospitality industry to bolster promotion of amenities and cultural features	Consider packaging cultural activities with lodging and eateries	MT	Wes Arts, Hospitality Businesses
Collaborate with local chambers and business organizations to encourage establishments to use online tools, including google places, Facebook ads, and Yelp, to promote business		MT	Wes Arts, MSS, Chambers of Commerce
Pool resources to establish a brand for Somerset County's unique cultural assets		LT	Wes Arts, MSS, RCO, MDA, SEDC

OBJECTIVE B.2 BUILD RECOGNITION FOR BEING A LOCAL FOOD AND BEVERAGE HUB AND DESTINATION FOR AGRICULTURAL TOURISM

Strategy	Action Steps	Priority	Key Players
Continue to provide and develop agricultural based festivals and fairs	Coordinate new events that piggyback on existing successful events Consider a fermentation festival	ST	Wes Arts, Farms, MSS
Become a leader for the Maine farm-to-table movement by establishing and promoting a farm fresh network of restaurants, farmers, and diners	Model after the successful Vermont Fresh Network	LT	Wes Arts, MDA, Farms, MSS
Consider establishing and facilitating a Somerset gleaning project	Utilize best practice resources such as, the Vermont Gleaning Collective	LT	Wes Arts, Farms, Farmer's Markets, MOFGA, MDA
Further investigation and study of destination development for unique agricultural assets	Reach out to MOFGA, Get Real Maine, and Maine Farmland Trust as potential resources	MT	Wes Arts, MOT, MDA

OBJECTIVE B.3 HIGHLIGHT NATURAL AND THE RECREATIONAL STRENGTHS

Strategy	Action Steps	Priority	Key Players
Support groups working to raise the visibility of public trails and natural landmarks	Utilize the Maine Trail Finder platform Work with Maine D.O.T. categorical signs program to mark trailheads and natural landmarks with state road signs	ST	Wes Arts, MSS, SEDC, SWT, PRD, MH&T,
Continue to collaborate with the recreational sector to develop creative installations at parks, trails, and other outdoor venues		MT	Wes Arts, SWT, Parks & Recreation Departments
Support and enhance existing recreational based festivals with creative components		LT	Wes Arts, MSS, MH&T, Recreational Outfitters, PRD



C. Utilize creative placemaking projects to contribute to the regions positive image and sense of place

OBJECTIVE C.1 CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INITIATIVES

Strategy	Action Steps	Priority	Key Players
Consider developing creative placemaking projects that connect agricultural, historic, and recreational assets to the arts	Look at successful models such as, the Farm Art DTour project, quilt barn tours, historically based public art, and the farm to ballet project	LT	Wes Arts, MSS, SEDC
Explore the feasibility of developing signage	Work with Maine D.O.T. categorical signs program to mark historic sites with state signs	MT	Wes Arts, Maine Department of Transportation, MSS
Develop cultural attractions at scenic gateways and scenic byway turnouts	Consider interpretative signage and creative installations historically relevant to locations	LT	Wes Arts, Scenic Byway Committees, Maine Department of Transportation, Municipalities
Encourage communities to explore options for establishing "museum in the streets"	Follow guidance provided through the Museum in the Streets website (http://www.themuseuminthestreets.com/)	LT	Wes Arts, Municipalities, Historical Societies

OBJECTIVE C.2 FURTHER UNDERSTANDING AND SENSITIVITY OF CULTURAL HERITAGE TO HELP CREATE A WELCOMING COMMUNITY

Strategy	Action Steps	Priority	Key Players
Work to build trust and positive relations with the Native American community	Establish procedures to ensure Native Americans have a voice in community development initiatives Initiate community conversations around appropriating Columbus Day as Indigenous People's Day	ST	Wes Arts, Municipalities, Native Americans
Encourage and facilitate opportunities for Native Americans to share their history and culture, as well as current realities facing their communities, through the arts	Explore working to bring programming into schools Facilitate opportunities for Native American performance art exhibitions and public art projects Continuously integrate the cultural Native American narrative, as told by Native Americans, with the evolving regional story	MT	Wes Arts, Gedakina, Abbe Museum, Maine-Wabanaki Reach, Schools
Ensure Native American artists and crafters are invited to be vendors at high profile events		ST	Wes Arts, MSS
Continue to integrate Native American recipes onto menus in local restaurants		ST	Wes Arts, Native Americans, restaurants
Raise the visibility of the Franco-American heritage	Strengthen communications and relationships with the Quebec Embassy in Boston Establish a line of communication with resources including Maine Memory Network, University of Maine, and the Office of State Historian to promote heritage Maximize the potential of Somerset County's geographic connection to Canada Promote the 201 Kennebec-Chaudière corridor's geographic location as a scenic gateway to Canada Continue to Expand French translation projects to enhance Canadian-based tourism	ST	Wes Arts, Quebec Embassy, University of Maine, Maine Memory Network, Office of State Historian

D. Strengthen support for Somerset County’s creative and cultural sector, to increase the resilience of the creative economy

OBJECTIVE D.1 FOSTER A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT THAT ENCOURAGES CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Strategy	Action Steps	Priority	Key Players
Bolster historic assets	Research and pursue grants to support historical assets and museums Consider establishing an event where historical societies and museums are promoted as being open on the same day throughout Somerset County	MT	Historical Societies, Wes Arts
Encourage organizations and creative enterprises to utilize local television communication networks to highlight arts and cultural offerings and developments		ST	Wes Arts, Local Communications Networks
Support the development of Hoo-Skow Community Radio	Pursue funding to create a live link from the station to the tower and to establish online streaming Communicate with local successful models such as WRGY Rangeley Community Radio	LT	Wes Arts
Increase community involvement in Hoo-Skow Radio and increase its listening base by raising public awareness	Develop radio station internships for local students Consider issuing regular press releases and e-newsletters about the radio and its programming Utilize social media tools to raise awareness	ST	Wes Arts
Promote the Open Rural Studio Tour	Build fund raising for marketing and promotion by researching grants and seeking out local sponsorships Explore the feasibility of creating a printed map of art studios and galleries that stay open year-round	MT	Wes Arts, Open Studio Maine
Provide professional development and networking opportunities for creative professionals	Establish an online networking and skill sharing resource for local artists and performers Provide creative professionals and organizations with workshops on utilizing social media tools Continue to facilitate and expand networking gatherings for artists and performers Consider updating and publishing the Somerset County Artist Directory	ST	Wes Arts, MSS
Promote reuse of under-utilized properties for cultural installations and community events	Identify under-used properties Support efforts to improve and renovate cultural spaces Continue to work to enhance the usability of the Skowhegan Opera House; the largest venue in Somerset County	LT	Wes Arts, MSS, Municipalities