

Connecting Creative Resources to Assist Downtown Revitalization

INTRODUCTION

What Are We Proposing?

Eastman's Institute for Music Leadership is proposing a plan to engage a consortium of arts, community, civic, education and business leaders to develop a vision for a revitalized Main Street that connects and capitalizes on Rochester's unique creative sector assets: *MUSIC ON MAIN* (working title).

What are the Expected Outcomes?

- Establishment of a working group of arts, community, civic, education and business leaders that will develop and advocate for a *MUSIC ON MAIN* vision.
- A *MUSIC ON MAIN* vision that attracts support and investment from private, government and community leaders.

***MUSIC ON MAIN* will be a part of a comprehensive plan to leverage Rochester's unique strengths, address its needs and create a sense of pride and ownership within the community.**

What is the Concept?

Downtown Rochester is on the cusp of becoming a dynamic hub of innovation, artistic activity, entrepreneurial thinking, neighborhood engagement, and economic activity. The *MUSIC ON MAIN* project can be an important catalyst for achieving this goal for the city and the region.



PRELIMINARY REPORT OVERVIEW: *MUSIC ON MAIN*

Report Structure

MUSIC ON MAIN is a **preliminary** report based upon the analysis of published research and information by IML Graduate Research Assistant Blaire Koerner and IML Director Jim Doser. This is a *work in progress* that reflects our activity from November, 2017 to April, 2018. It serves as the starting point and foundation for the continued work that we are proposing today.

Section 1: Creative Economy Overview

A brief explanation of the ‘Creative Economy’ concept as reflected in the writings of several organizations, including the American Planning Association, National Endowment for the Arts, Americans for the Arts, and economists Richard Florida, Tom Borrup, and others. Harris, Collins and Cheek describe the creative economy as being “*whose principle orientation is to apply creative ideas and processes to generate goods, services and innovations that provide both economic and aesthetic value.*”¹

Section 2: Assessment of Five Cities

Assessment of five cities and their economic revitalization plans based on the Creative Economy concepts (Grand Rapids, Minneapolis, Nashville, Pittsburgh, Brooklyn). Assessments include examination of each city’s:

- Cultural Specialties
- Long-Term Creative Economy Plan
- Summary of Creative Economy Reports
- Description of Specific Artistic Endeavors, Focuses and Programs

Section 3: Inventory of Rochester’s Creative Sector Assets and Initiatives

A partial and preliminary inventory of the city of Rochester’s creative sector assets and initiatives in downtown and the Greater Rochester region that may contribute to the vision for *MUSIC ON MAIN*, such as ROC the Riverway and Downtown Innovation Zone.

Section 4: Now’s the Time

Reasons to move forward, strategic goals of the proposed work, challenges, timeline, budget, and summary statement.

¹ Christine Harris, et al., *America’s Creative Economy: A Study of Recent Conceptions, Definitions, and Approaches to Measurement Across the USA*. (Oklahoma City: The Creative Economy Coalition, 2013), 7.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PRELIMINARY REPORT OVERVIEW: *MUSIC ON MAIN* (cont.)

Key Findings

Key factors for successful urban revitalization initiatives based on the creative sector include:

Leverage a Unique Identity

The recognition of a community's creative assets (and the marketing of them) is an important element of economic development. Creatively acknowledging and marketing community assets can attract a strong workforce and successful firms, as well as help sustain a positive quality of life.

Create Creative Clusters

Economic development is enhanced by concentrating creativity through both physical density and human capital. By locating firms, artists, and cultural facilities together, a multiplier effect can result.

Design for Diverse Cultural Appeal

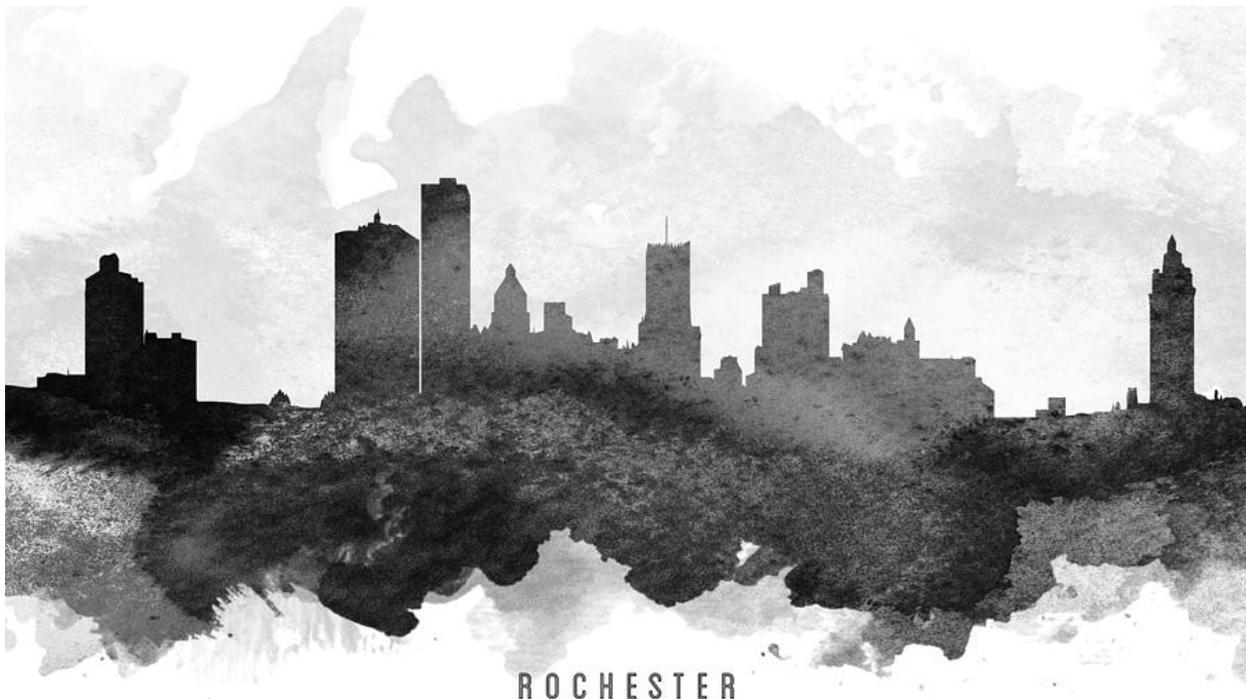
Arts, cultural, entertainment, and recreational activities must appeal to a diverse community of residents, employees, and tourists, and be easily accessible within the arts/innovation zone, creating a 'Work – Live – Learn – Play' hub of activity.

Empower Effective Partnerships

Making deliberate connections between the arts and culture sector and other sectors, such as tourism, education, and manufacturing can improve economic outcomes by capitalizing on local assets.

Ensure Entrepreneurship Training and Affordable Housing for Creative Artists

Availability of low-cost housing/work spaces for artists and cooperative educational/entrepreneurship training increases successful initiatives and community identity.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NOW'S THE TIME

Why Now?

Multiple factors suggest that a positive climate for investment exists in Rochester, specifically for projects that show connection to well-constructed and comprehensive community and economic planning. The City of Rochester is in the midst of an exciting revitalization that leverages new investment, effective collaborations, and connects related projects. Evidence of this revitalization includes:

- \$900M + of new investment in a variety of public and private projects
- Increase in downtown residential property development and occupancy
- ROC the Riverway Initiative and funding (\$50M)
- Rochester Downtown Innovation Zone
- The Inner Loop Project
- Rochester 2034 Comprehensive Planning Effort
- Main Street Streetscape and Wayfinding Project

The *MUSIC ON MAIN* plan fits well into the city's vision to “weave together the urban fabric into one connected and accessible city.”² Rochester's downtown and surrounding neighborhoods have valuable assets to make up that ‘fabric,’ including:

- *Arts & Cultural Organizations, Programs and Festivals*
- *Higher Educational Institutions and Resources*
- *Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Economic Development Resources*
- *Diverse Residential Spaces and Neighborhoods*
- *Dining, Entertainment, and Recreation*
- *Hotels, Convention and Meeting Space*
- *Partners, Collaborators, and Stakeholders*

Scope of Proposed Work

A representative work group will be assembled to continue analysis and complete the *MUSIC ON MAIN* report, including:

- Continue study of other cities and their initiatives
- Identify and analyze Rochester's assets, cultural identity and needs
- Submit recommendations, potential plans and designs for *MUSIC ON MAIN* to public and private stakeholder groups and funders

Strategic Goals of Proposed Work

- Assemble a representative, engaged, and effective team
- Identify, select, and collaborate with consultant(s)
- Expand analysis of extant research
- Expand study of selected cities
- Consider additional cities for study
- Complete an inventory of Downtown Rochester assets
- Create potential designs of the *MAIN STREET* corridor
- Present plan to stakeholder groups

² “ROC the Riverway Executive Summary,” *City of Rochester, NY*, December 2017, <http://www.cityofrochester.gov/roctheriverway/>.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NOW'S THE TIME (cont.)

Project Timeline

Summer/Fall 2018

- Assemble Team
- Develop Work Plan
- Meet with consultant
- Continue research

Fall/Winter 2018

- Complete research
- Complete report

Spring 2019

- Share with stakeholder groups/seek feedback/modify recommendations
- Develop implementation recommendations

Spring/Summer 2019

- Share with stakeholder groups/seek feedback/modify recommendations
- Contribute to city, county, regional and university planning
- Develop next steps and implementation strategy

Challenges

- Rochester's multiple projects competing for public resources and development funding
- Agreeing upon a vision supported by a consensus of diverse stakeholders

SUMMARY

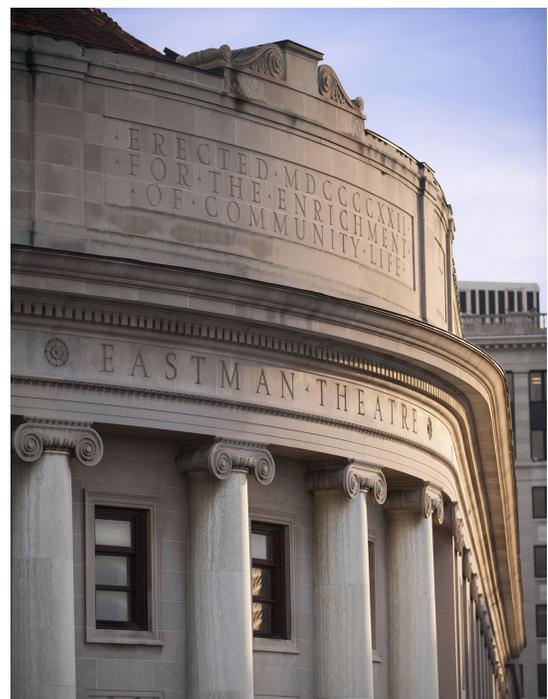
George Eastman commented:

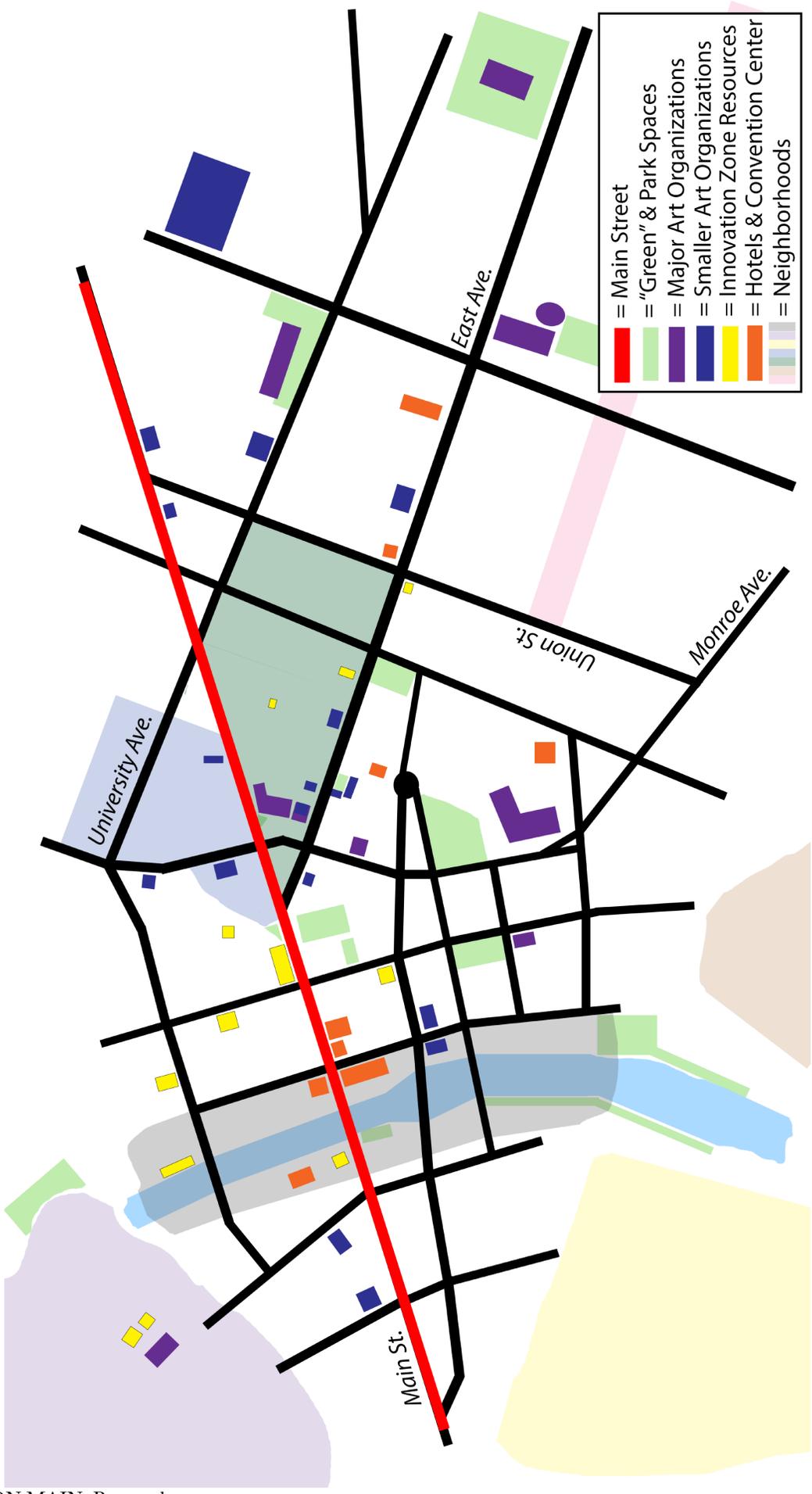
"I used to think that music was like lace upon a garment, nice to have but not necessary. I have come to believe that music is absolutely essential to our community life."

The world-class cultural resources of Rochester can serve to connect our unique creative assets because they cut through *each* of these sectors: culture, arts, entertainment, technology, education, entrepreneurship, and business.

Rochester is indeed 'on the cusp.' Downtown is poised to return to the center of community life for the region. Rochesterians are ready to identify and embrace their *sense of place and pride*.

The Preliminary Report that follows is the starting point for the work that is proposed.





- = Main Street
- = "Green" & Park Spaces
- = Major Art Organizations
- = Smaller Art Organizations
- = Innovation Zone Resources
- = Hotels & Convention Center
- = Neighborhoods