City of Elgin: 
Arts and Events Market Study and 
Strategic Plan 

Final Report

Submitted by:

Create Today LLC
April 2024
acknowledgements

Thank you very much for engaging Create Today LLC for the development of a comprehensive and long-range strategic plan informed by market research. It has been an honor to partner with the City of Elgin as it develops a holistic vision for local arts and culture programming—one that incorporates a range of needs and perspectives from arts organizations, artists, policymakers, funders, civic leadership groups, audiences, key stakeholders, and local communities.

Planning should be a comprehensive and inclusive process that gives voice to community residents, builds on their collective wisdom, lifts up cultural assets, and culminates in a needs-based, well-researched, and data-driven outcome. This work has ensured that racial equity and community participation were at the heart of our approach and believe the planning process itself will stimulate the kind of collaboration and engagement needed to realize the City’s vision for creating relevant, accessible, and competitive arts and culture programming that can be successfully sustained for years to come.

The goal of this project was to create a plan for the City that was informed by a combination of internal and external engagement, listening, and investigations. Specifically, we looked to facilitate a planning process that:

- was community-led and community-informed.
- honored the diversity of Elginites’ lived experiences, cultural expressions, creative practices, beliefs and values, and the ways in which we communicate, connect, and share space.
- identified and then fostered a greater awareness of and participation in the City’s cultural assets, resources, and the diverse cultural offerings and events already in place.
- inspired and engaged the local and regional communities.
- used a combination of research methodologies that were grounded in rigorous evaluation practices to provide objective analysis while also ensuring community participation at every stage of the process.
- prioritized goals, initiatives, and practices that are viable and can be sustained by the City.
- ensured that Elgin’s commitment to diverse cultural narratives and expressions is further strengthened and that the City’s rich tapestry of cultural assets is shared with and preserved for future generations.

The final plan was crafted in concert with the Department of Cultural Arts and Special Events and the community and includes actionable strategies to ensure the identified opportunities are financially viable and accessible and inclusive to the wider community, including audiences and artists.

We would like to thank Amanda Harris and Butch Wilhelmi for their commitment to leading the process and the members of the Advisory Committee for their guidance and direction.
This Strategic Plan is the synthesis of a thorough, collaborative process between the City of Elgin, the Advisory Committee, and your community. The plan itself is a blend of inspiration, creativity, and operations, considering both the dreams and the reality of Elgin’s envisioned future for its arts and culture programming. Paramount to the process was reaching out to a diverse cross-section of key stakeholders, soliciting broad feedback through a community survey, and contextualizing the local landscape through market research and an environmental scan. These informed the vision for success and strategic direction for the City, which were tested with and guided by your community, collaborators, and municipal leaders.

The work was divided into four phases – Listening, Learning, Planning, and Ensuring Success. Our process was extremely iterative and responsive to what we learned throughout all phases of the work.

Concurrent with the Strategic Plan, the City of Elgin participated in the 2022 Arts & Economic Prosperity® (AEP) series, which is conducted by the national arts service organization, Americans for the Arts. The 2022 AEP is the sixth economic impact study of the nonprofit arts and culture industry in the U.S. and is highly regarded research that documents the economic power that the arts and culture wield in 373 participating communities representing all 50 states and Puerto Rico—communities ranging in geography (Alaska to Florida to Maine to Hawaii), population (4,000 to 4.7 million), and population density (rural, suburban, and large urban). The City of Elgin participated in the 2022 study by collecting and submitting data that was incorporated into the AEP6 report.

AFTA reports that in 2022, nonprofit arts and culture organizations and their audiences generated $151.7 billion in economic activity—$73.3 billion in spending by the organizations, which leveraged an additional $78.4 billion in event-related spending by their audiences. The impact of this economic activity is far reaching, supporting 2.6 million jobs, generating $29.1 billion in tax revenue, and providing $101 billion in personal income to residents.

One-third of attendees (30%) traveled from outside the county in which the event took place. They spent twice that of their local counterparts ($60.57 vs. $29.77). When asked, 77% of those nonlocal respondents said the primary purpose of their visit was to attend that cultural event. When local attendees were asked what they would have done if the event where they were surveyed had not been available, 51% said they would have “traveled to a different community to attend a similar arts or cultural activity.”

Elgin’s Strategic Plan positions the city to expand programming, increase resources for artists and organizations, and enhance the audience experience for patrons. These investments will have a positive impact on cultural tourism, economic impact, residents, and businesses in Elgin.
listening

The Listening Phase allowed the City, residents, and the local cultural community to share more about their history with and relationship to the arts in Elgin, identify any current challenges or barriers, and define future successes and opportunities.

Identifying and Reviewing the Vision of Success

Two online community meetings that were open to the general public and a workshop with the full Advisory Committee were held to identify the questions and issues that would be investigated as part of the community engagement and market research (see Appendix 1). Three questions were asked: what’s working well, what are some opportunities, and what are some of the challenges with arts and culture in Elgin (see Appendix 2). There were 40 individuals that participated in the community meetings.

What’s working well

- A commitment from the City to support the arts and culture
- Collaboration, collegiality, and partnerships
- Notable cultural assets and resources (e.g., venues)
- The strength and diversity of the arts and culture community

What are some of the opportunities

- Expand programming and events to beyond downtown
- Intentionally engage under-represented communities
- Activate and increase utilization of open spaces and parks
- Encourage new partnerships, collaborations, synergies, etc.
- Strengthen relationships between the City and educational institutions
- Distinguish programming to grow demand in a competitive market

What are some of the current challenges

- Marginalized communities are not able to fully participate
- The lack of a comprehensive marketing plan
- Constant justification of the value and impact of arts and culture
- Insufficient Special Events/Cultural Arts staff capacities
- Scarce funding and barriers to accessing what’s available
These key areas became the research points for the market study and were tested and revisited throughout the planning process.

**Key Stakeholder Interviews**
The Create Today team, with guidance from the Advisory Committee, developed an interview protocol to help guide the conversations. The questions covered a range of topics, including familiarity of Elgin Arts & Special events programming, current successes of the City, and future opportunities for the City. The group of stakeholders represented the breadth of Elgin’s diverse communities and the different intersections with the City. In total, we connected with 11 individuals with unique perspectives, experiences, and expertise that covered a range of areas, including: arts and culture, education, philanthropy, tourism, community development, government, and community organizing and volunteerism (see Appendix 3).

**Current Familiarity and Engagement**
- Interviewees appreciated being involved in the strategic planning process.
- They shared a broad definition of “arts and culture” that went beyond Eurocentric forms.
- Aurora, Naperville, Dundee, and St. Charles were identified as other communities with similar and/or exemplary arts and culture activities.

**What’s Working Now in Elgin**
- The City is home to a thriving arts and culture community that is welcoming, diverse, has strong programming, and is uniquely Elgin.
- Nightmare on Chicago St. and Elgin Fringe Festival were the two most referenced programs.
- The variety of venues and artist makerspaces is a contributing factor to Elgin’s success.
- The City is a committed partner to the arts and cultural communities through dedicated investment and transparent and authentic relationships.

**Opportunities For the Future**
- Expand what is already successful but also allow for new programs that reach new communities.
- Grow City resources, investment, and support that strengthens the local sector while ensuring City processes are more streamlined and accessible.
- Increase awareness, promotion, and marketing of events, programs, and available resources.
- Ensure that programs and processes are more inclusive and accessible.
- Activate and unify Downtown Elgin, both for the arts and as an economic driver.
- Present more events in less formal settings (parks, libraries, community centers).
- Greater cohesion between nonprofits, the City, and local educational institutions.

**A Vision of Success for the City of Elgin**
- More artists of color and broader representation of the community at events.
- A downtown Elgin that is thriving and the place to be.
- Engage more young people and new perspectives.
- Greater integration of the arts in non-arts activities.
The results of these interviews helped to further refine the vision for success and informed the protocol for the creation of an online survey.

**learning phase**

The next phase included market research and community investigations to test the vision for success, and further contextualize any challenges, barriers, or opportunities that were broached during previous conversations with the Advisory Committee, in the community meeting, and in the key stakeholder interviews.

**Greater Chicago Benchmarking & Environmental Scan**

Elgin supports a rich and layered arts and culture community; however, it is also part of the larger Chicagoland (i.e., Chicago Metropolitan Statistical Area) cultural ecosystem that is broad, diverse, and offers myriad opportunities to experience, create, and celebrate arts and culture. The goal of this work was to assess and evaluate the current internal and external conditions that affect the arts and culture community of Elgin to better determine potential strategic opportunities (see Appendix 4).

**Greater Chicago Demographics**

The Create Today team collected data on local demographic trends, with a focus on historical and projected changes in race/ethnicity. This information provided important context for Elgin, especially since there have been numerous studies that have demonstrated the relationship between arts and culture participation rates and demographics (e.g., outdoor, informal events and higher attendance rates by BIPOC communities).

The Chicago Metropolitan Statistical Area (Chicagoland) has experienced complex and dynamic population trends over the past century. As a percent of total population:

- White residents has steadily declined: 97% of total pop. in 1920 to 50% in 2020
- Black residents has grown and been relatively stable: 3% of total pop. in 1920 to 16% in 2020
- Latinx residents has increased significantly: 7.9% of total pop. in 1980* to 23% in 2020
- By 2050, the Chicagoland area is projected to be majority BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) communities.

**Environmental Scan & Analysis**

The Create Today team also conducted an environmental scan and analysis, which examined performing arts venues and centers (both indoors and outdoor) within a 50-mile radius of Elgin. The goal of this research was to contextualize Elgin’s value proposition, including anticipated strengths, challenges, and opportunities, as well as identify other venues that could compete for resources and audiences.
The image to the right shows the spatial relation of the 28 venues that were included in the environmental scan, with an overlay of projected population growth over the next five years, from 2023-2028. The darker the green, the greater the increase in population.

The City of Elgin is uniquely situated geographically to capitalize on future population growth in the suburbs – growth in both total population as well as the growth in BIPOC communities (see Appendix 4).

To round out the environmental analysis, the Create Today team did a deep dive into two local municipalities, the Village of Schaumberg, and the City of Aurora. DCASE staff selected these two communities due to a variety of factors, including similarities in demographic composition, level of public and private investment in the arts, and the overall breadth and depth of both city- and privately produced and presented arts and culture programming and special events. The goal of this work was to help DCASE: 1) contextualize the City of Elgin’s current and future level of resources, staff, and monetary investment in arts and culture; and 2) better understand the local arts and culture landscape, including market saturation, regional competition, and opportunities for new and/or expanded programs (see Appendix 5).

**Schaumburg**

Schaumburg primarily supports arts and culture through public funding, which includes a municipal Cultural Services Department and authorized staff of ~24 full- and part-time employees that are responsible for:

- Overseeing programs, operations, and an annual presenter series at the municipally owned and operated Al Larson Prairie Center
- Producing a range of large-scale special events, including Septemberfest and the Prairie Arts Festival
- Manages a video production studio and develops a variety of content for the Village’s training programs, website, social media, and cable television channels.

The Al Larson Center is supported in partnership with the 501(c)(3) Prairie Center Arts Foundation that helps to secure grants, corporate sponsorship, and individual donations. Schaumburg does not have a public art department however it is home to the Chicago Athenaeum’s International Sculpture Park, which is maintained through a public-private partnerships with the municipality.

**Aurora**

Aurora supports arts, culture, and special events through a combination of public, private, and programming partnerships. The city’s Special Events Division has ~8 authorized full- and part-time employees and is responsible for:

- Producing City-sponsored special events (e.g., Fiestas Patrias, 4th of July Celebration)
- Assisting the public with acquiring approval for events
Serving as a liaison for various appointed and volunteer boards

Paramount Arts Centre, a private 501(c)(3), owns and operates the Paramount Theatre, but is overseen by a public board (ACCA) and receives modest city support. The Public Arts Division has 2 full-time staff and oversees new and existing public art projects as well as manages the city-owned David L. Pierce Art & History Center. City staff partner with several city-appointed boards and commissions to leverage municipal resources and ensure programming is grounded in community voice (e.g., Hispanic Heritage Advisory Board and the Fiestas Patrias celebration).

Community Survey

The consulting team, in partnership with the Advisory Committee, designed and fielded a general audience and community survey. The final survey was programmed into an online survey platform and distributed and promoted by the City, local arts groups, key stakeholders, and community organizations to their proprietary lists, patrons, and communities. The survey was offered in Spanish and English. The online community survey received a total of 650 responses: 449 of the total sample were Elgin residents and 25% of Elgin respondents identified as BIPOC/Multi-racial (see Appendix 6).

General participation in cultural activities in any location

Participation and attendance at arts and entertainment events was broad, diverse, and inclusive of the many ways that communities engage in cultural activities. The five activities with the greatest frequencies or percentages – ranging from ‘Live musical performance’ (85%) to ‘A movie’ (73%) – indicates a breadth of genres and disciplines but also a variety of different settings/venues and degrees of engagement (passive to active) where these activities normally occur.

Barriers to attending arts and cultural events in Elgin

‘Lack of awareness’ and ‘timing of the events’ were the two most frequently reported types of barriers that prevented respondents from attending arts and cultural events in Elgin. Lack of awareness was even more frequently reported by BIPOC respondents (48%) as well as for respondents who live outside of Elgin (50%). Marketing, publication, and awareness were one of the most frequently cited themes in the qualitative,
open-ended survey responses about Elgin’s greatest challenges. Tapping into social media and word-of-mouth promotion (the two most frequently cited sources of information to learn about events) could help to increase awareness and participation.

Preferences for future types of programming in Elgin

Large performance-based events, such as ‘concerts of touring companies’ and ‘outdoor concerts,’ received the highest interest for programming that respondents would like to see more of in Elgin. ‘Visual art in public spaces’ was also cited as a top preference for future types of activities and arts experiences in Elgin. For BIPOC/Multi-racial respondents, visual art received the highest rate of ‘high interest’ (66%). In general, more than two-thirds of all respondents reported some level of interest (high + some interest) in all the different programming and artistic activities tested in the survey.

The City’s Role in Supporting the Arts and Culture Ecosystem

Elginites who responded to the survey overwhelmingly confirmed that arts and culture activities are important to their quality of life – 94% of the sample. ‘Funding to support local organizations and artists’ was most frequently selected when it came to the most important role for the City of Elgin. ‘Provide free programming to the public’ had the highest frequency from BIPOC/Multi-racial respondents in terms of how they would like to see the City support the local sector. Local artists and representatives from local arts organizations were also interested in seeing additional resource support in the way of ‘grants or funding opportunities’ as well ‘marketing support.’

The Community Survey data tells a compelling story, but it does not tell the whole story – these findings were one of several pieces of market and community research. These observations are also a tool to further engage the community. The focus groups and community conversations in the next phase allowed us to learn more about the lived experiences, cultural contexts, and local nuances of Elgin’s diverse communities to provide a fuller understanding of the data and how it could best be applied to create more thoughtful and inclusive goals and priorities for Elgin’s arts and cultural landscape.
Focus Groups and Community Conversations

The Focus Groups and Community Conversations concluded the Learning Phase of the Market Study and Strategic Plan. These conversations were an opportunity to further contextualize key areas of inquiry that had come up during the planning process but also go deeper and test specific programming ideas and activities. These conversations focused on several key research questions:

1. What should be the City’s future priorities for arts, culture, and entertainment programs and events?
2. How can Elgin create more inclusive, accessible events that welcome and engage the diverse local communities?

The Create Today team, with guidance from the Advisory Committee, developed a focus group discussion guide to help drive the conversations and ensure consistency across each of the different focus groups and community conversations.

A total of six focus groups/community conversations were held: three virtually over Zoom, and three in-person community conversations in Elgin – two at the Hemmens, one of which was bilingual and included Spanish translation, and one at The Centre of Elgin.

Participants were recruited through a variety of channels. For the focus groups conducted in English, participants were recruited from a pool of respondents who completed the Community Survey and expressed interest in participating in a focus group. Participants for the in-person, bilingual conversation at the Hemmens were recruited through community partners and local organizations, including: the Gail Borden Library, Ecker Center for Behavioral Health, and the Centro de Información. A total of 68 individuals participated across all the conversations: 15 virtually and 53 in person (see Appendix 7).

Concert or performance of touring companies, bands, or artists.

**Likes:** Residents don’t have to travel to see performances that would normally take place outside of Elgin; keeps entertainment spending inside Elgin; would like to see a range of different events, including cover bands/tribute bands, family programming, culturally based programming (Ballet Folklorico), as well as the events already taking place at Hemmens (e.g., ESO).

**Challenges:** Would further centralize programming by providing opportunities that are too downtown focused (i.e., if new programming take place at Hemmens); programming
should take place at different venues, both indoors and outdoors, to ensure residents feel welcome and comfortable in their preferred setting.

**Visual art in public places.**

**Likes:** A simple and easy way to engage residents and draw people in through art; the surprise of public art and happening upon it unexpectedly; physical environment beautification; a perceived increase in public safety by creating an inviting environment and community pride.

**Challenges:** The need for better funding for public art (e.g., percent for art); a more streamlined and accessible permitting process; more money for artists to create public art and a less onerous process for artists to submit work; unclear about what constitutes public art and the City’s role in supporting it.

**Arts and cultural events that celebrate and showcase the different cultures of Elgin, such as the Juneteenth Celebration or La Fiesta de Elgin.**

**Likes:** Celebrates Elgin’s diversity and provides opportunities for community building; residents can learn about different cultures and create connections (e.g., social bridging); creates meaningful interactions within cultures and connects generational gaps (e.g., social bonding); distinguishes Elgin as a place that celebrates diversity/humanity through the arts.

**Challenges:** Consistency and continuity of programming from year to year; programs should be grounded in community voice and guided by the respective communities/cultures being celebrated, Latinx/Hispanic communities would like to see more opportunities to celebrate the breadth and diversity of their cultures (e.g., a Latin American Independence Day Celebration during Hispanic Heritage Month); more multi-faceted types of programs that include food, clothing, music, dance, and interactive activities for kids.
Large outdoor concerts or performances that take place in an open space, such as Festival Park.

**Likes:** Open-air, casual environment where residents can bring their dogs, children, and friends and have a picnic; opportunities for more family-friendly programming; opportunities for free events.

**Challenges:** Lack of parking and accessibility at Festival Park; need for more culturally diverse artists and performers that represent the diversity of Elgin’s communities; performances/events and/or presentations solely in Spanish or another language besides English; desire to see bigger name artists/acts (both at the parks and at the casino), similar to what Elgin used to do pre-Covid.

Immersive entertainment experiences that are hands-on and provide a more interactive experience.

**Likes:** Attracts people to Elgin to see something that is unique; opportunities for participatory and healthy types of classes such as Zumba, yoga, dance; family friendly programming; active participation that everyone can do and enjoy.

**Challenges:** A desire for more interactive programming without alcohol; perception that Nightmare is too scary (e.g., doesn’t align with values); some of the immersive experiences are not easy to participate due to accessibility issues (e.g., requires a lot of walking).

Programming that takes place in different neighborhoods throughout Elgin block parties or smaller arts and cultural events or performances.

**Likes:** These types of programs bring people together and unite the different neighborhoods of Elgin; allow residents to get to know their neighbors; easy to access and don’t require travel; opportunities for artists to sell their art throughout the neighborhoods.

**Challenges:** Obtaining a permit can be a slow and frustrating process; lack of information about where/how to start the process to get a permit; lack of general advertising about these various neighborhood events; concern about more “party-like” atmosphere and less of a focus on arts and local cultures; neighbors should be incorporated into the planning process about additional/increased neighborhood programming; neighborhood programs need to feel welcoming to both local neighbors and those who live elsewhere.
Based on the information gathered in the previous phases, the Create Today team worked with the Advisory Committee to build a roadmap to success for the Plan.

**Determining the Program Activity Mix**

Based on the outcomes of the work completed to date, there was a need to create a mix of programs and activities for the future. Create Today used a well-tested template to outline:

- the goals and outcomes for the City and its venues and cultural spaces in which it programs,
- the desired level of activity in the programming spaces and across the City of Elgin,
- the resources needed to accomplish these plans successfully.

DCASE, supported by Create Today, created a Program Logic Model (see Appendix 8) of the potential mix of activities that would take place and look at ways to evaluate if the new plan for programming would achieve its desired outcomes. Based on the Listening and Learning phases, the following three themes became the priority for the next five years:

1. **Accessible, well-communicated community engagement**
   The community communicated that it would like increased awareness of programming, greater accessibility and information about the event, and increased representation.

   Over the next five years DCASE will take the following steps:
   - Incorporate authentic and intentional representation in programming and promotion
   - Promote events and activities through new channels
   - Ensure events are welcoming & accessible (e.g., parking accommodations for persons with disabilities, improved wayfinding signage, descriptions of events and programming)
   - Increase free programming
   DCASE will look for support from its Community Partners to collaborate with community groups to promote DCASE events and programming to their members.

2. **Authentic, balanced programming**
   The community would like to see more events that celebrate and showcase the diverse interests of Elginites, visual Art in public places, and programming that takes place in Elgin neighborhoods.

   Over the next five years DCASE will take the following steps:
   - Celebrate Elgin’s diversity and opportunities for community-building (multi-faceted programming e.g., food, clothing, music, dance, and interactive activities for kids)
   - Engage residents and draw people into Elgin through visual art
   - Increase funding and access for public art
   - Ensure programming is balanced across different venues/neighborhoods, both indoors and outdoors

   DCASE will work with community and neighborhood groups to leverage programming opportunities.
3. Changes in DCASE Infrastructure and Policy
The community would like to see continued opportunities for feedback on programs, increased grant funds available, and increased channels of communication.

Over the next five years, DCASE will take the following steps:
- Increase staff and funding for additional programming
- Invest in marketing staff and resources to deepen communication and engagement opportunities (e.g., earlier postcards, posters that are spread widely throughout the community and postings in relevant newsletters and websites, including local channels)
- Increase funding and access for artists and culture bearers
- Increased services for Hemmens community partners (e.g., customer service, box office, marketing)

DCASE will engage with partners earlier to collaborate on projects, host community conversations and feedback opportunities, and encourage community partners to utilize box office services at the Hemmens Cultural Center.

Building a Sustainable Financial Model
Financial modeling is a standard component of any Strategic Business Plan. The model helps to assess operational needs going forward, provide economic projections, and create a dynamic and flexible tool that can be modified to accommodate future planning at the City.

Based on the inputs from the previous phases of the work and in collaboration with the DCASE leadership, a five-year pro forma financial operating model was built that includes the desired program activity, revenues and expenses, marketing, staffing, contribution to overhead, and/or the required amount of support/fundraising. We examined how to balance income-generating activities with possibilities for increased programming and engagement (see Appendix 9).

The charts below show the balance between earned revenue, grant money, and the requested city allocation over the next five years. This is displayed on a 100% scale, similar to how we look at earned versus contributed revenues in the nonprofit sector. As we know, the ideal balance of these revenue streams is not a good or bad calculation but rather based on a variety of factors.

Hemmens and Special Events both generate earned revenues that offset requested City funding. Hemmens Cultural Center programming is comprised of rentals and ticketed, fee-based events. Hemmens becomes less dependent on City funding over time (as a percentage of overall revenues). Special Events programs are community-focused and the majority are free to access. Additional financial support comes from a
combination of sponsorships, grants, and City funding. Cultural Arts Commission will have a separate nonprofit to seek external grants/funding starting in 2025.

These charts look at the actual dollar amounts on a scale from $0 to $4 million (shown in thousands of dollars). The largest increases take place in 2025 and 2026, as the majority of changes occur in the first two years and then are followed by modest increases in 2027 and 2028, that mostly align with COLI (cost of living increases).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2024</th>
<th>2025</th>
<th>2026</th>
<th>2027</th>
<th>2028</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hemmens</td>
<td>$1,233</td>
<td>$1,425</td>
<td>$1,703</td>
<td>$1,732</td>
<td>$1,805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Events</td>
<td>$1,775</td>
<td>$1,913</td>
<td>$2,470</td>
<td>$2,547</td>
<td>$2,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAC</td>
<td>$147</td>
<td>$150</td>
<td>$154</td>
<td>$156</td>
<td>$159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$3,156</td>
<td>$3,488</td>
<td>$4,327</td>
<td>$4,434</td>
<td>$4,614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% increase</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ensuring success

This phase of the work delivers the final roadmap to reach the vision of success for the City of Elgin and offers tools for the City to use in future evaluations of its desired outcomes. Checkpoints will need to be established at which the Advisory Committee will re-convene and assess success and outcomes and determine if the strategic roadmap needs to be reviewed.
Hemmens Center projections for 2024-2029
Hemmens Cultural Center is projected to increase presented programming by 28% over the next five years. This will include genres that were most requested by the community: Rock & Roll, Comedy, Touring Shows, Performing Arts for Young People. Hemmens will also be expanding in-house ticketing services for all of its users to have an improved rental experience and streamline this service for audience members.

In order for the additional programming and services to be successful, Hemmens will require additional staffing to support these increases to maintain the front-of-house experience for patrons and visitors.

Special Events projections for 2024-2029
Special Events is projected to increase access to free programming by 36% over the next five years. This will include increased and new programming that takes place all over the City. Special Events will also expand its marketing channels and communication efforts to reach a broader and more diverse audience – including visitors from neighboring communities.

In order for the additional programming and marketing to be successful, Special Events will require additional staffing to support these increases, maintain majority free tickets, and continue to provide a comfortable environment at its events.

Cultural Arts Commission projections for 2024-2029
The Cultural Arts commission is projected to increase its investment in public art by 25% over the next five years. CAC will also expand the amount of grant monies that will be available for both individuals and organizations. It is projected to increase the funds that are available by 81%.

In order for there to be additional monies, a new nonprofit will need to be established to increase access to state and foundation support.

Impact
In summary, the next five years are projected to see a 31% increase in arts and events programming, an 81% increase in grant funds, and a 25% increase in funds available for Public Art in the next five years. These will
only be possible and successful with an additional investment from the City. The amount projected would be $1.45 million, which is an increase of less than 0.4% of the total 2024 Elgin City Budget.

Community Review Process
DCASE leadership and Create Today presented the final strategic plan and recommendations to the Advisory Committee for their review and consideration. Their feedback was incorporated into the high-level summary report (see Appendix 10) that was then recorded for the community to review and share their feedback.