

# Lawrence Final Fridays Impact Analysis and Economic Development Recommendations



City of Lawrence, Kansas  
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# I. Preface

## A Vision for Lawrence

Lawrence is a creative, artistic, and innovative community. Our experience with Final Fridays has shown that art and other creative activities not only improve the quality of life in our community, but also bring significant opportunities for economic development.

Lawrence is in competition with communities across the country for good paying jobs. Such jobs are increasingly in the creative industries – in fields like the arts, design, sciences, media, publishing, R&D, and advertising.

Not every city could enter into this competition and win. Lawrence is in a very fortunate position – we have a pool of creative talent, an outstanding research university in the middle of our city, amazing cultural institutions, and many of the other resources necessary for success.

We have an opportunity to build on our successes, make Lawrence a more vibrant and exciting place to live, and lay the groundwork for sustainable economic development.

This document describes the successes of Final Fridays, proposes that the City of Lawrence adopt culture, arts, and creativity as the centerpiece of an economic development strategy, and recommends steps for turning the vision into reality.

## With Contributions from throughout the Community

Dozens of people contributed to these recommendations, including the authors and other members of the Science, Technology, and Art (STArt) Alliance; civic leaders; business people; artists; KU faculty; students; and leaders of non-profit groups. We humbly thank the many people who volunteered their time for the arts census and survey, attended our public meeting, filled out forms, responded to emails, took time out for phone calls and interviews, and shared their visions of the future.

## The Final Friday Project Steering Team

Special thanks go to the members of the Final Friday Project Steering Team. Every one of them contributed to this work.

Ben Ahlvers, Lawrence Art Center  
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Kristy McKinney, Signs of Life Bookstore and Art Gallery  
Molly Murphy, Lawrence Art Center  
Jane Pennington, St. Paul's Episcopal Day School  
Adam Smith, Invisible Hand Gallery  
Susan Tate, Lawrence Art Center  
Darin M. White, Hava Studios  
Diane Stoddard, City of Lawrence  
John Wysocki, Lawrence ArtWalk

## II. Executive Summary

### Background

This is a low-cost, rapid study, undertaken at the request of the Cultural Arts Commission of the City of Lawrence, Kansas. The purpose of the study is to provide an analysis of the economic impact of Final Fridays in Lawrence, and to make recommendations on strategies for promoting Lawrence as a city of the arts.

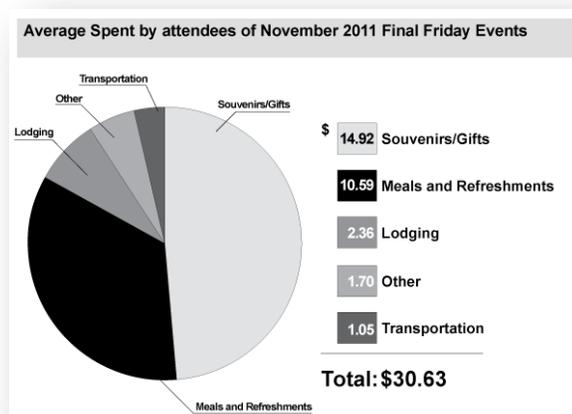
### Findings and Conclusions

## Final Fridays has had Very Positive Impacts

Final Fridays has been an experiment in culture, arts, and creativity. There is no centralized planning or management. Final Fridays is a labor of love for hundreds of Lawrence-area people who have organized events, shown their work, provided marketing and publicity, opened their businesses and vacant storefronts to local artists, and contributed financially to make it happen.

There is no average Final Friday weekend. Each Final Friday weekend is different, depending on whether KU is in session, it's a game or holiday weekend, the weather, and other factors. But regardless of the weekend, Final Fridays is a special day in Lawrence, and thousands of people attend every month, rain or shine.

The arts census and survey taken on Final Friday on November 25, 2011 demonstrates the economic value of Final Fridays. At least 2,730 people flocked downtown to enjoy art, and spent an estimated \$30.63 each on Final Friday related expenditures – a total of almost \$84,000. How the money was spent is shown below.



## Arts and Culture Are Good For Business

Arts, Culture, and Creativity are good for business. Cultural tourists bring large amounts of money into the local economy, and spend more and stay longer than others when they visit a city, as shown below.

### ARTS & CULTURE TOURISTS SPEND MORE AND STAY LONGER

As communities compete for a tourist's dollar, arts and culture have proven to be magnets for travelers and their money. Local businesses are able to grow because travelers extend the length of their trips to attend cultural events. Travelers who include arts and culture events in their trips differ from other U.S. travelers in a number of ways.<sup>iii</sup>

Arts and culture travelers:

- Spend more (\$623 vs. \$457)
- Use a hotel, motel, or bed-and-breakfast (62 percent vs. 55 percent)
- Spend \$1,000 or more (19 percent vs. 12 percent)
- Travel longer (5.2 nights vs. 3.4 nights)

A 2001 research study by the Travel Industry Association of America and Partners in Tourism<sup>iv</sup> indicates that:

- 65 percent of all adult travelers attended an arts and culture event while on a trip that was 50+ miles away from home.
- 32 percent of these cultural travelers stayed longer because of the event.
- Of those that stayed longer, 57 percent extended their trips by one or more nights.

*Source: Arts and Economic Prosperity III, Americans for the Arts, 2007<sup>1</sup>*

*Source: Arts and Economic Prosperity III, Americans for the Arts, 2007<sup>1</sup>*

## Arts, Culture, and Creativity are Critical to Economic Development

Ann Markusen recently wrote: “In creative placemaking, partners from public, private, non-profit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, 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. In turn, these creative locales foster entrepreneurs and cultural industries that generate jobs and income, spin off new products and services, and attract and retain unrelated businesses and skilled workers. Together, creative placemaking’s livability and economic development outcomes have the potential to radically change the future of American towns and cities.”<sup>2</sup>

As Richard Florida and others have shown, the U.S. has shifted from an industrial economy to a creative economy, in which “innovation and economic growth accrue to those places that can best mobilize humans’ innate creative capabilities from the broadest and most diverse segments of the population, harnessing indigenous talent and attracting it from outside.”<sup>4</sup>

Becoming a winner in the battle for economic development requires becoming a regional or national hub and magnet for the creative economy. Lawrence is uniquely situation to compete and win.

## **Lawrence has Competitive Advantages for Creative Industry Economic Development**

The City of Lawrence has significant competitive advantages over the vast majority of U.S. cities in the battle for attracting and retaining creative workers and the businesses that employ them, and benefiting from the clustering forces that are driving the creative economy. These advantages include having an outstanding research university in town, and the huge numbers of creative faculty, students, and others attracted to Lawrence, as well as outstanding cultural institutions like the Lawrence Art Center.

## **Lawrence Must Overcome an Institutional Disadvantage**

Lawrence also has a significant competitive disadvantage - a very limited cultural governance and management capability. This is a hindrance to economic development in the creative economy, and in 2011 was a factor in Lawrence losing a major NEA grant opportunity to plan an arts, science, and technology incubator.

The purpose of this incubator was to help build, nurture, and launch creative businesses— as is being done in cities across the country with which Lawrence is competing.

Several of Lawrence’s economic development “comparison cities” have robust cultural planning management capabilities, including Bloomington, Indiana; St. Cloud, Minnesota; Lincoln Nebraska; Chapel Hill, North Carolina; and Fort Collins, Colorado, which was awarded an NEA arts incubator grant at the same time Lawrence was turned down.

Many of these cities, unlike Lawrence, have cultural staff and Cultural Plans that guide their investment, development, and other decisions, and ensure they have the infrastructure needed to compete in the creative economy.

## Recommendations

### **Create a Cultural Economic Development Management function and position**

To maximize its competitiveness for economic development, Lawrence should create and staff a cultural economic development position.

This position would help the community by developing and encouraging economic development opportunities that require creative skills and generate creative jobs, including the arts, design, media, science, engineering, computer programming, and research. The person holding this position would market Lawrence to a national audience, help creative businesses and individuals, including the diverse arts community and businesses in Lawrence, achieve a broader audience and increased economic success. A proposed list of responsibilities is included in Section VI.

### **Develop a Cultural Economic Development Strategy and Plan**

Develop a Cultural Plan to set goals and strategies for establishing Lawrence as a national and internationally known center of creativity, innovation and the arts, and generating new economic development opportunities. Determine how to define, build, and improve Lawrence attractiveness to creative individuals and industries and increase its clustering force for attracting creative individuals and the businesses that employ them.

### **Improve Final Fridays**

With management and improvements, Final Fridays could provide additional economic and other benefits to Lawrence and its citizens. This would be done by the cultural economic development manager, guided by the Lawrence Cultural Arts Commission.

Recommended improvements include development of an advisory group, volunteer program, and underwriting program. Increase Final Fridays advertising. Widen the focus of Final Fridays to all arts, including visual, literary, and performing arts. Deliver more street music, theatre, and other activities scattered throughout downtown Lawrence. Encourage “clusters” of downtown Retail

businesses to work together to plan Final Friday activities. Increase KU, Haskell, and primary/secondary school involvement in Final Fridays. Improve coordination between events, consider periodic theme shows, and develop signage to identify locations of venues and routes for travel between them. Use online surveying and periodic attendee surveying to gauge the success of marketing efforts and determine how to improve the events.

## **Expand Final Fridays to monthly weekend events**

Develop and maintain an annual calendar of events, and coordinate planning. Develop a focused marketing program. Include Saturday and Sunday events to overnight guests and increase retail and other restaurant sales. Develop hotel packages to encourage cultural tourists to stay in town longer, attend more events, and shop. Develop merchant events, perhaps including weekend street sales or sidewalk sales, and outdoor dining events. Develop events for local and regional artists to interact with the public and each other. Incorporate workshops, classes and demonstrations. Include science and technology exhibits and events, tours of creative businesses, and music in various downtown locations,. Develop new art and creativity events for adults and children.

## **Develop annual national and international events consistent with the Lawrence Cultural Plan**

Build on the expertise and talent present in our community to improve our national and international visibility as a center of culture and creativity. Possibilities include a national juried sculpture exhibition and/or art fair, other outdoor festivals, international videoconferences on artistic and scientific topics, events for creative youth, inventors fairs, and locally organized Technology Entertainment and Design (TEDx) events.

## III. Background

### A. Study Purpose

This project was undertaken at the request of the Lawrence Cultural Arts Commission. The purpose of the study is to provide an analysis of the economic impact of Final Fridays in Lawrence, Kansas, and to make recommendations on strategies for promoting Lawrence as a city of the arts.

### B. Constraints and Approach

This was a very brief, low-cost study, carried out in approximately two months, with limited funding, and conducted largely by volunteers. To accomplish as much as possible in a short time period, we learned from and built on outstanding work done by others, including Americans for the Arts (AFA) and National Endowment for the Arts.

As the AFA stated in *Arts and Economic Prosperity III*, their study documenting the economic impact of arts in 156 communities and regions, “communities that invest in the arts reap the additional benefits of jobs, economic growth, and a quality of life that positions those communities to compete in our 21st century creative economy.”<sup>1</sup> We were inspired by the lessons learned in this document, and applied the knowledge and tools provided by the AFA in conducting this study.

AFA has mature and proven tools and methodologies for carrying out many of the objectives of this study, and has made them freely available to communities like ours. They have been invaluable in carrying out this study. We used the AFA survey methodology and Audience Intercept Survey Instrument to survey November Lawrence Final Friday attendees, gather demographic information, and estimate their economic impact.

To formulate our recommendations, we considered successes and best practices used in other communities. Most importantly, we tapped into the considerable expertise in our community. We relied on artists, art patrons, KU faculty, business, political, and non-profit organization leaders and members for surveying, brainstorming, recommendations, editing, and much more. We drew on a collective experience of dozens of very talented and generous people.

### C. Description of Final Fridays

Final Fridays is a monthly event in Downtown Lawrence featuring visual and performing arts, and other entertainment activities. In most months, 25-35 venues participate, including art galleries and museums, nonprofit cultural organizations, retail stores,

restaurants, coffee shops, bars, pop-up spaces organized by individual artists or groups of artists, and street activities. While the official hours of Final Fridays are 5-9 pm, thousands of Lawrence residents and visitors descend on Downtown Lawrence, venues are often open until 10 pm or later, and restaurants and bars are busy until late in the evening serving Final Friday patrons. Final Friday is ‘owned’ by no organization, but limited coordination and marketing support is provided through contributions by the City and other organizations.

Lawrence Final Fridays was launched in August, 2010, sponsored by the Downtown Lawrence Arts District (DLAD). The DLAD is a non-profit corporation whose mission is “to educate the public about the variety and quality of the visual and performing arts that are available throughout the Lawrence Community.” The DLAD (currently inactive) was created through a collaborative effort by Downtown Lawrence, Inc., the Lawrence Chamber of Commerce, the Lawrence Arts Center; the Lawrence Convention and Visitors Bureau; and the Lawrence Cultural Arts Commission.

#### D. Methodology

##### 1. Sources of Data and Information

The Final Fridays Impact Analysis relied on eight primary sources of data and information,

- a. Literature Review on economic development, the creative economy, and the arts. We reviewed key studies on competition between cities for economic development, the importance of arts and the creative economy, and on best practices for arts economic development. We reviewed plans and analyses from other cities that were relevant to Final Fridays in Lawrence. We identified innovative techniques used by other cities to harness the arts for economic development. Lessons learned from successes in other cities were applied to all facets of this project.

Census and Survey. Using the Americans for the Arts (AFA) Audience Intercept Survey Instrument, we conducted a census and survey of attendees at ten Lawrence art venues on Final Friday, November 25. The survey collected demographic and other information from event attendees, including attendee reports of their spending related to Final Fridays. Using the AFA methodology and survey allowed the City of Lawrence to benefit from the work of AFA economists, survey scientists, and their extensive field work.

The art venues at which we conducted the art census and survey were 1109 Gallery, Bourgeois Pig, Copt/Feiden Holiday Gallery, Invisible Hand, Lawrence Art Center, Lawrence Art Party, Percolator, Phoenix, Signs of Life, and Wonder Fair.

- b. Survey of Downtown Businesses. In partnership with Downtown Lawrence, Inc., we conducted an online survey of Downtown Lawrence businesses. We asked what kind of impact Final Fridays has had on their cash register receipts over the last year, and if the impact was on Friday only or affected sales for Saturday and Sunday. We requested estimates regarding percentage increases in sales on Final Friday weekends as compared to non-game weekends. We received similar data from one business that is not a member of Downtown Lawrence, Inc.
- c. Survey of Art Sales. We surveyed the proprietors of the ten Final Friday venues at which we had conducted audience surveys, and obtained the November Final Friday art sales figures for seven of the venues.
- d. Interviews and meetings. We followed up with one-on-one or small group meetings and interviews with several downtown business people and artists, the directors and/or staff of Downtown Lawrence, Inc. and the Lawrence Art Center; the board of Lawrence Corporation for the Advancement of Visual Arts (operators of the Percolator), and others. We conducted phone interviews with people involved in arts activities in other cities.
- e. Artist Survey. We conducted an online survey of area artists, and asked them about their unmet professional needs, the impact Final Fridays have had on their careers, their recommendations for improvements, and related questions.
- f. Final Friday Focus Group Public Meeting. We held a public meeting with artists, business people, and art patrons, and solicited their opinions, observations, and recommendations. Working in teams, they developed recommendations for the improvement of Final Fridays.
- g. Steering Team. We worked with a panel of experts convened for this study, the Final Fridays Project Steering Team, to draw on their extensive experience in the arts and business to help us formulate conclusions and recommendations. The membership list for the team is provided in the Preface to this document.

## 2. Analytical Methods and Tools

For the economic analysis, we relied primarily on the arts economic impact methodology and survey developed by Americans for the Arts (AFA).

We augmented the AFA methodology with standard analytical tools and techniques, research on best practices, and the knowledge and advice of the Final Friday Project Steering Team, artists, public meeting participants, and others.

## IV. Findings

### A. Economic Development, the creative economy, and the arts.

The City of Lawrence is in competition for economic development with cities and regions throughout the United States. Art, creativity, and innovation are key to winning that competition, and building a better community.

As Richard Florida wrote in “The University and the Creative Economy”, “innovation and economic growth accrue to those places that can best mobilize humans’ innate creative capabilities from the broadest and most diverse segments of the population, harnessing indigenous talent and attracting it from outside.”

Bart Peterson, Mayor of Indianapolis, put it this way in “Arts and Economic Prosperity III”, “Not only do the arts provide a much needed social escape for many in our communities—they also help drive local economies. Having an abundance of unique arts and events means more revenue for local businesses and makes our communities more attractive to young, talented professionals—whose decisions on where to start a career or business are increasingly driven by quality of life and the availability of cultural amenities.”

In “Who’s Your City”, Florida made the case that a clustering force of people and productivity, creative skills, and talents is powering economic growth, resulting in economic benefits for some cities and regions.<sup>4</sup>

### B. Lawrence Has Competitive Advantages

Lawrence has important competitive advantages on which to build. Because of the presence of the University of Kansas, Lawrence is (as of 2006) #5 in the country for University R&D, inventions, and patent applications; and for student and faculty concentration. Lawrence ranks #40 of 149 regions in the country on the University-Creativity Index. Lawrence has been named one of the top ten college towns and top ten places to retire. The NEA named Lawrence one of the top 12 cities for artists in the work force. It has top flight cultural institutions, including the Lawrence Art Center, Lied Center, and Spencer Art Museum.

### C. Lawrence Has an Institutional Disadvantage

Lawrence also has a significant institutional competitive disadvantage in the competition for funding for art and creativity, because the City of Lawrence government has a very limited cultural governance and management infrastructure. While many of our economic development “Comparison Cities” (See Table 1) have cultural arts staffing and plans, Lawrence relies on volunteers and unpaid LCAC

commissioners, and is handicapped in terms of demonstrating the commitment and capabilities that some funding agencies seek.

For example, in 2011, Lawrence failed to win an NEA “Our Town” grant opportunity for planning funds to develop a science, technology, and arts incubator, while Fort Collins Colorado was awarded a \$100,000 grant for a similar initiative.

**Table 1: Suggested Comparison Cities for Lawrence**

City	County	State	Nearest Major City	Distance (Miles)
Davis	Yolo	CA	Sacramento	15
Athens*	Clarke	GA	Atlanta	70
Bloomington	Monroe	IN	Indianapolis	53
St. Cloud	Stearns	MN	Minneapolis	66
Lincoln	Lancaster	NE	Omaha	53
Norman	Cleveland	OK	Oklahoma City	21
College Station	Brazos	TX	Houston	98
Fort Collins	Larimer	CO	Denver	65
Chapel Hill	Orange	NC	Raleigh	32
<b>Lawrence</b>	<b>Douglas</b>	<b>KS</b>	<b>Kansas City</b>	<b>43</b>
Average Distance				52

*Source: “Retail Markets in Lawrence and Peer Communities, July 2010*

Fort Collins boasts a Cultural Services Department and a Cultural Plan – “the guiding document for the work of the city and for community wide efforts in ensuring that arts, culture, and science thrive in our community, add to our excellent quality of life, help drive the local economy and tourism, and become an integral part of Fort Collins' unique identity.” The Cultural Plan includes a Vision, Goals, Objectives, Recommendations, Cultural Facilities Plan, Cultural Inventory, and more.

Several other economic development comparison cities also have formal cultural management infrastructures. For example:

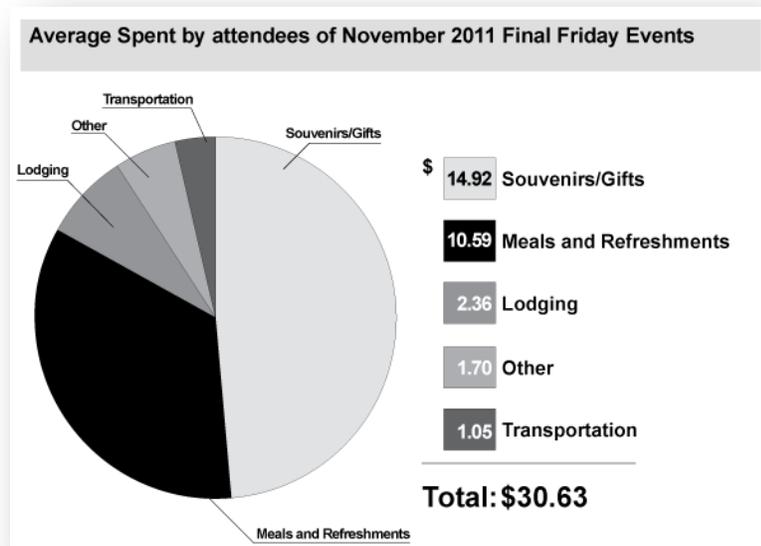
- The Bloomington, Indiana Assistant Economic Development Director for the Arts is responsible for the Bloomington Entertainment and Arts District, which is central to Bloomington’s economic development strategy.

- The St. Cloud, Minnesota Arts Commission is part of the Planning Department and oversees development and execution of the City's Community Cultural Arts Plan.
- The Chapel Hill, North Carolina Public and Cultural Art Administrator runs the Public and Cultural Arts Office, which develops and implements art programs to increase public access to the arts, provides opportunities for local artists to display their work, and promotes public understanding and awareness of the arts,
- The Lincoln, Nebraska Arts Council serves as the central arts information and service agency for the city of Lincoln.

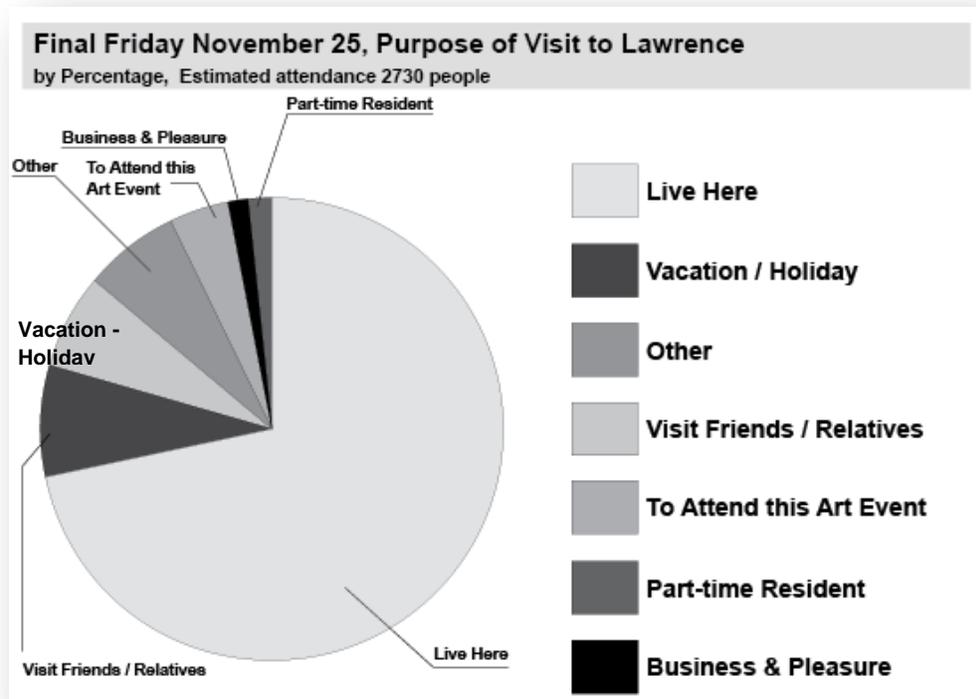
D. Final Fridays Art Census and Survey.

Final Fridays attendees were surveyed on Final Friday, November 25, 2011. Approximately 25 volunteers staffed ten venues, counted new visitors, and asked randomly selected visitors to take the AFA self-administered survey. Results are summarized below:

- We counted 2,730 unique Final Fridays attendees at 10 venues. (Visitors were counted once, regardless of how many venues they attended.)
- We randomly surveyed 191 people, who answered for 565 people in their groups of families or friends (a response rate of 20.7% )
- Those surveyed spent or planned to spend an estimated \$30.63 per person. Details are illustrated below.

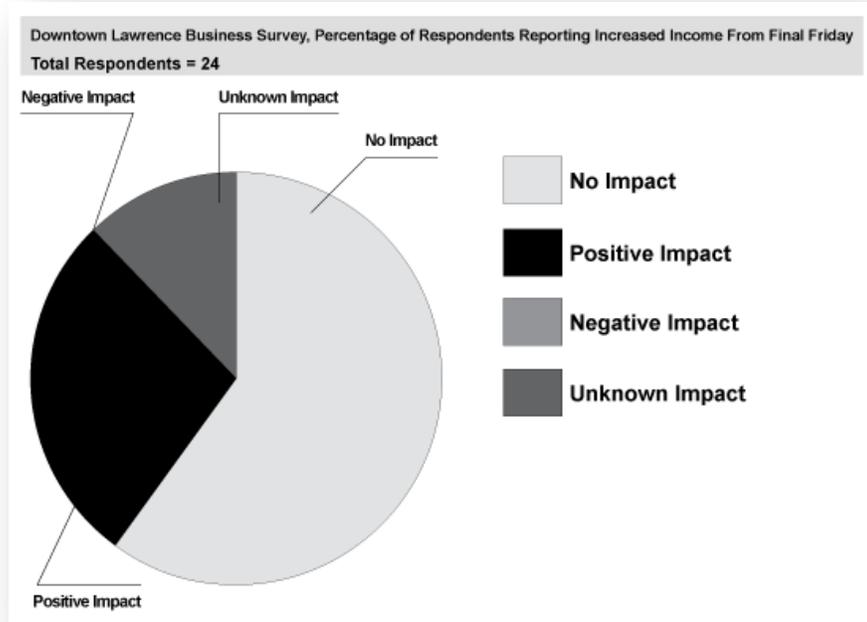


- Applying the survey results to all attendees, November Final Friday attendees spent almost \$84,000 directly related to Final Fridays events that day.
- Approximately 28 percent of attendees were visitors to Lawrence. Approximately 4 percent of attendees, an estimated 112 individuals, traveled to Lawrence specifically to participate in Final Fridays. More details on the purpose of attendees' visits to Lawrence are below.

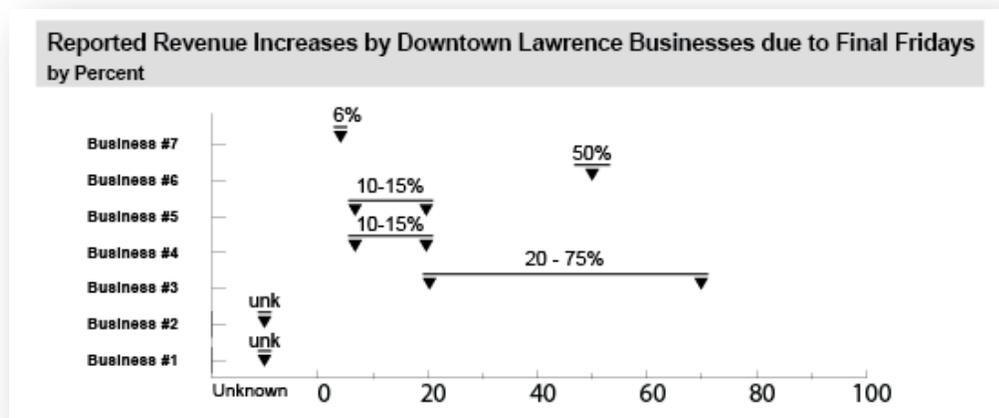


E. Survey of Downtown Businesses.

24 businesses responded to a Downtown Lawrence Inc. survey, or provided information directly to the Final Fridays Project Team. Of these 24 businesses, seven reported that Final Fridays caused an increase in their revenues, either on Final Friday or the subsequent Saturday or Sunday. No businesses reported a negative impact. Details are below.



Seven businesses reported that their revenue increases on First Fridays. Five of the seven made specific percentage estimates or estimated a range.



Comments from downtown merchants on the survey revealed very different experiences and positions regarding Final Friday. Some had successfully increased their business, for others it was irrelevant, and some had tried but not succeeded.

F. November Final Friday Art Sales.

Art sales were reported for only seven of the ten art venues included in the census and survey on November Final Friday. The seven venues reported total art sales of \$6,070. Most significantly, this excludes what was very likely a high volume of art sales at the Lawrence Art Center, because sales at the Bizarre Bazaar event are made by individual artists, and not otherwise tracked or recorded.

G. Interviews.

Interviews were conducted formally and informally throughout the course of the study, with people in Lawrence and elsewhere.

The four most important things learned from people who manage or participate in events similar to Final Fridays in other cities are:

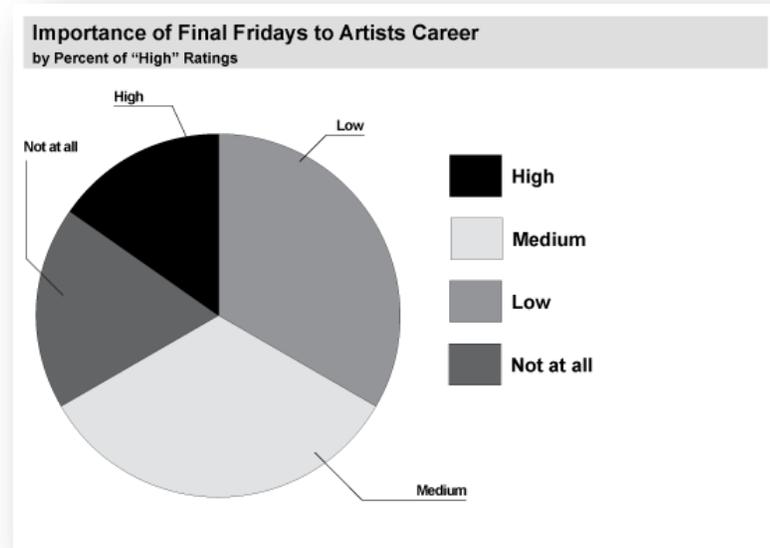
1. Achieving success with a monthly Friday art event takes time. For example, one of the founders of First Fridays in Woodland California, near the Lawrence “Economic Development Comparison City” of Davis, California, emphasized that they have been doing it for seven years, and that at just over a year, Lawrence is in its infancy.
2. Monthly Friday evening art events often do not generate significant non-art retail sales on Fridays, except for restaurants and bars, and in some cities do not generate large art sales that day either.
3. Most often, the perceived payoff for art retail businesses are long-term benefits rather than immediate sales. Respondents discussed introducing customers to their business, developing a positive community image, supporting the community and arts, and increasing sales throughout the year.
4. Nevertheless, there are techniques for increasing the financial return from arts and cultural activities. These will be referenced in the “Conclusions” and “Recommendations” sections of this document.

H. Artist Survey.

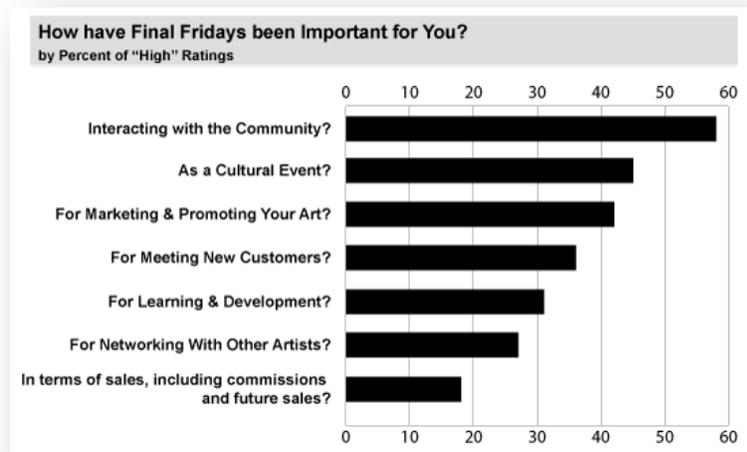
33 of approximately 280 invited artists answered the online survey, a response rate of almost 12 percent.

The most important findings are summarized and illustrated below.

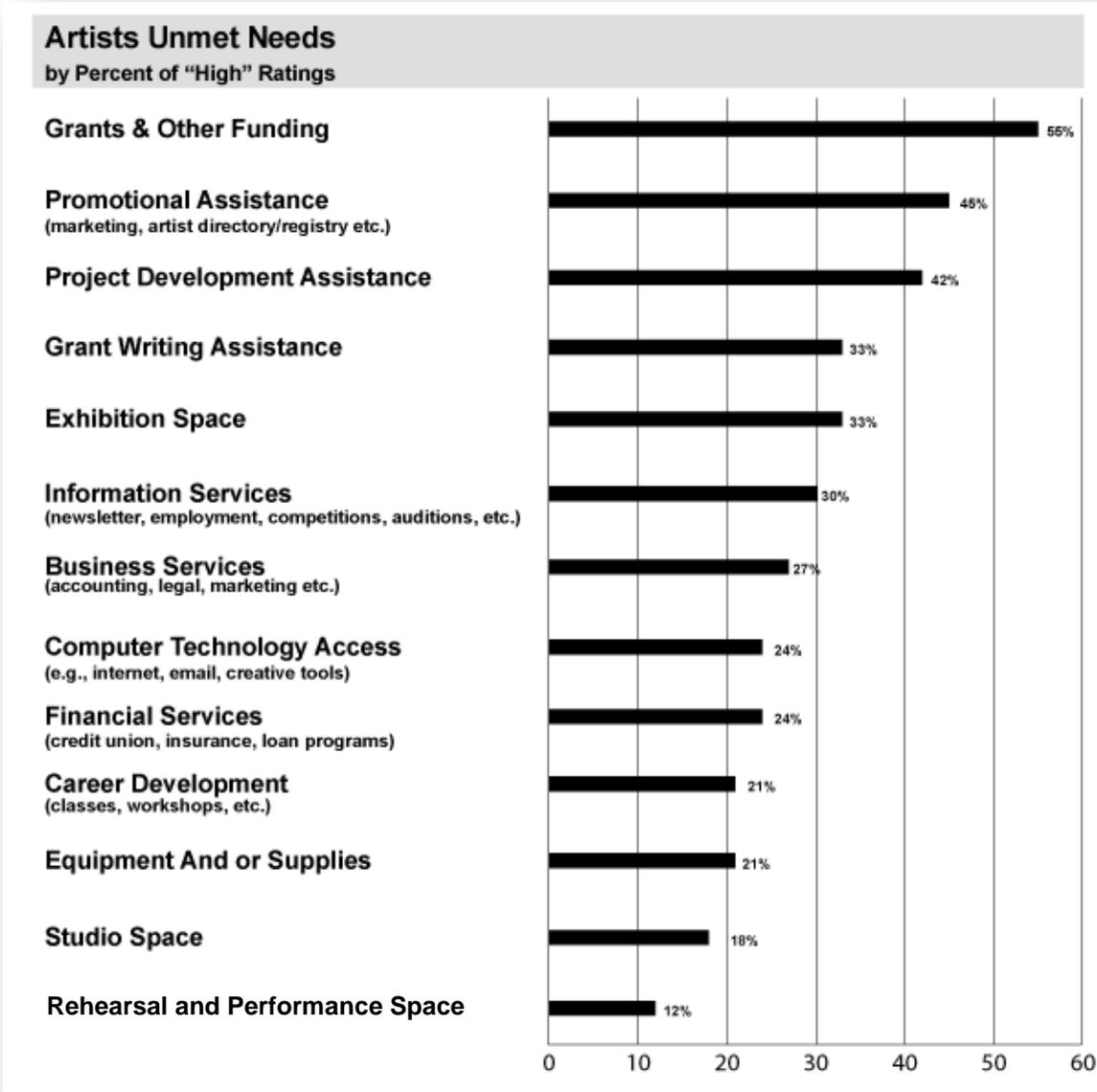
1. Importance of Final Fridays to artist's careers. For almost half of the respondents, Final Fridays is of high or medium importance to their career as an artist.



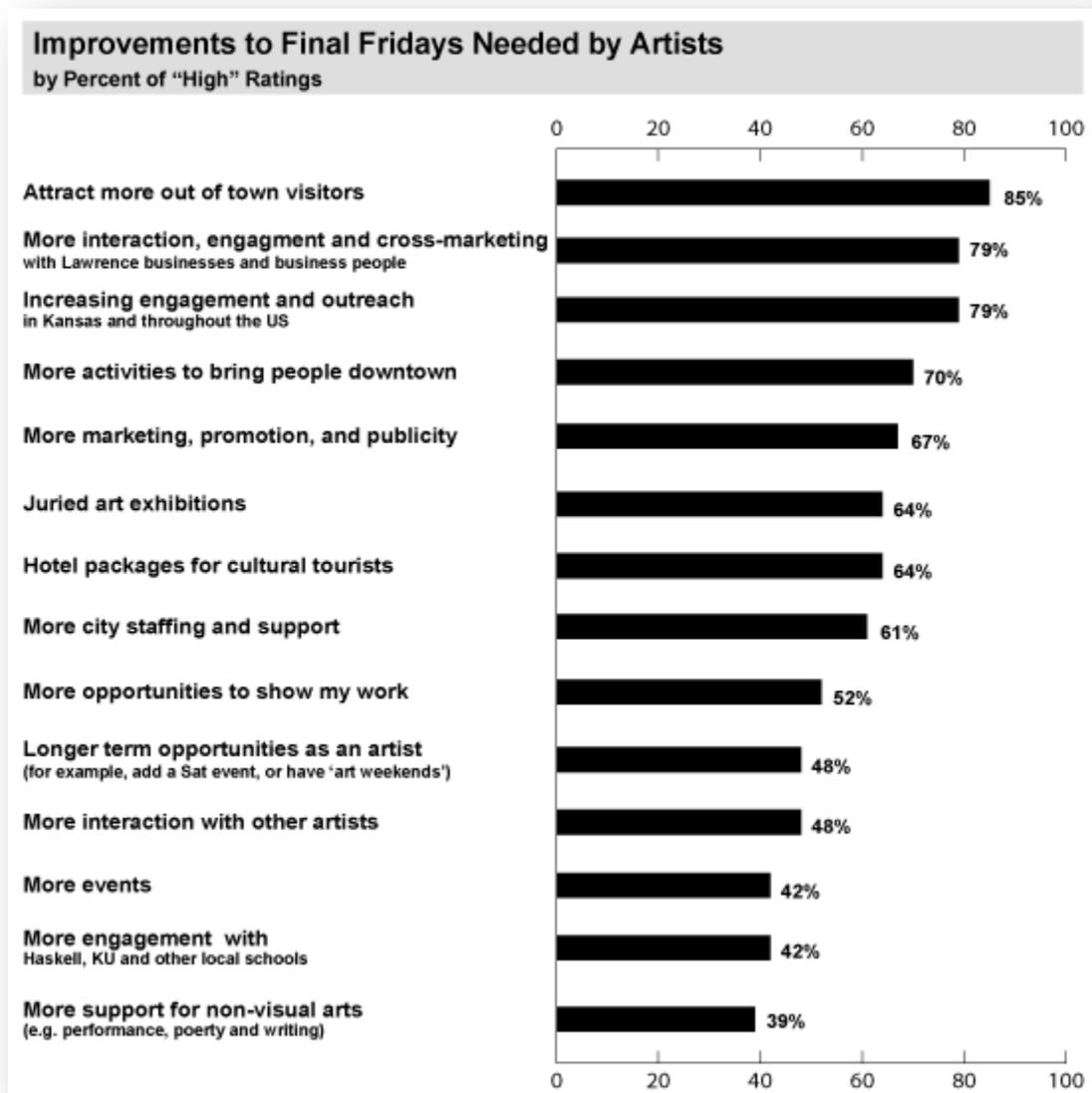
2. The most important aspects of Final Fridays. As shown in the graph below, Final Fridays are most important to Lawrence area artists as an opportunity to interact with the public, a cultural/social event, a way to market and promote their art, and an opportunity to meet new customers. Sales are a relatively minor aspect of Final Friday for many artists, but very important for some.



3. Area artists have many unmet needs. The most pressing needs are grants and other funding opportunities, and promotional and project development assistance. More information is provided in the graphic below.



4. Artists want many improvements to Final Fridays to support their careers and businesses. The top five improvements artists want are attracting more out of town visitors; more interaction, engagement and cross- marketing with Lawrence businesses; increasing engagement and outreach in Kansas and the USA; more activities to bring people downtown; and more marketing, promotion, and publicity. The chart below provides more information.



5. In written comments, artists also made a number of specific recommendations for improving Final Fridays, included in Appendix 1.

I. Public Final Friday Focus Group Meeting.

A public focus group meeting was held to get opinions on impacts and recommendations from members of the public. Although the turnout was light, the recommendations and ideas were excellent.

1. Recommendations for improving Final Fridays and Promoting Lawrence as a city of the arts
  - a. Continued Investment in Final Fridays by the City
  - b. Cultural arts division with dedicated staff support
  - c. Marketing Program
  - d. Improved FF space, more space and/or longer shows
  - e. Cover all arts
  - f. Reach out/engagement with all local universities and schools, including Haskell, KU, primary, middle, and high schools
  - g. Business sponsorship of shows
  - h. Expand beyond just Friday
  
2. Other ideas
  - i. We need fliers and maps
  - j. Connect cultural tourists with local businesses
  - k. Public art
  - l. Art contests
  - m. Retail space sponsorship
  - n. More neighborhood buy-in
  - o. Hold receptions, and invite well known artists to gallery walks
  - p. National/regional artist tours
  - q. Provide services to special needs populations
  - r. Create an art buying network
  - s. Events for children

J. Final Friday Project Steering Team.

The Final Friday Project Steering Team provided comments and ideas throughout the course of this study. Their ideas are incorporated throughout this document.

## V. Conclusions

- A. The City of Lawrence has significant competitive advantages over the vast majority of U.S. cities in the battle for attracting and retaining creative workers and the businesses that employ them, and benefiting from the clustering forces that are driving the creative economy.
- B. However, lack of a cultural governance and management infrastructure will impede economic development... This shortcoming, unless remedied, will prevent the City and its citizens from fully taking advantages of those opportunities.
- C. Lawrence should develop a cultural economic development strategy. To maximize its economic development opportunities, the city should develop an explicit cultural economic development strategy focused on the arts, creativity, and innovation.
- D. Success will require a focused effort. Developing and implementing the strategy will require appropriate staffing, planning, and execution.
- E. A cultural economic development strategy will pay off in many ways. This is not a short-term project, but rather a long-term investment that can pay off in enhanced quality of life, better employment opportunities, and a more attractive community in which to live, work, play, and retire.
- F. Lawrence should build on the success of Final Fridays. Final Fridays in Lawrence has been very successful, given its short history. It has provided a promotional, marketing, and sales opportunity for many artists, a very good cultural event for all involved, and improved retail sales for some but not all downtown Lawrence businesses. As part of its economic development strategy, the city can and should improve on Final Fridays, expand it to an 'art weekend', develop other art events for Lawrence residents and attract cultural tourists to visit and experience the joys of Lawrence.

## VI. Recommendations

### A. Create a Cultural Economic Development Management function and position.

To maximize its competitiveness for economic development, the City of Lawrence should create and staff a cultural economic development position.

This position would help the community by developing and encouraging economic development opportunities that require creative skills and generate creative jobs, including the arts, design, media, science, engineering, computer programming, and research. The incumbent holding this position will market to a national audience, and help creative businesses and individuals, including the diverse Lawrence arts community, achieve a broader audience and increased economic success.

Recommended responsibilities for this position are:

1. Lead the development of a Cultural Plan, which will set goals for the City of Lawrence relating to the arts and other creative industries.
2. Provide staff support to the Lawrence Cultural Arts Commission (LCAC). Develop evaluation and other processes and tools to assist the LCAC in its advisory role to the City Commission.
3. Event development, planning and coordination. Working in partnership with the private and non-profit sectors, lead and coordinate the development and operations of Final Fridays and new events, including arts events and festivals.
4. Identify and pursue creative economic development opportunities and planning and infrastructure grants.
5. Manage the Lawrence Percent for Art Program.
6. Develop partnerships and build relationships with creative sector businesses, local universities and school districts, and state, Federal, and private sector arts and other funding organizations.
7. Develop, maintain, and implement a sustainable funding plan for the function, staffing, and activities. In the first year, a plan should be put in place to develop this function, and fund and expand activities using creative funding sources, funds from non-profit organizations, and Federal and other grants.
8. Provide management of City of Lawrence cultural economic development marketing, including the arts and cultural tourism, and coordinate with private-sector and non-profit marketing groups to leverage capabilities and build a consistent image for the Lawrence brand.
9. Develop and maintain a resource catalog of Lawrence cultural, creative, and other facilities, tools, and other assets available for creative industries and individuals,

including artists. This catalog also will provide a resource for city personnel to identify gaps and avoid duplication of assets.

10. In partnership with the private sector, non-profit organizations, and others, identify and coordinate fulfillment of infrastructure requirements such as gallery space, performance and rehearsal space, and art studios.
11. Determine requirements for services needed by artists and other creative entrepreneurs such as business and financial, career development, project management, grant writing, and goal setting and counseling services. Develop a creative services catalog and coordinate fulfillment through referrals, service contracts, or other means.
12. Work with the private sector and funding agencies to develop funding sources for artists. Evaluate the possibility of establishing a micro-lending program for artists and creative entrepreneurs, and implement as feasible.

B. Develop a cultural economic development strategy to develop and promote Lawrence as a city of creativity and the arts.

1. As part of the Cultural Plan, set goals and strategies for establishing Lawrence as a national and internationally known center of creativity and the arts, and improving economic development.
2. Working with the best strategic economic development and marketing minds in the community and local universities, determine how to define, build, and improve Lawrence's national and international cultural and creative image, and increase its clustering force for attracting creative individuals and the businesses that employ them.

C. Improve Final Fridays.

1. Provide management and coordination of Final Fridays. This would be done by the cultural economic development manager, guided by the LCAC.
2. Develop a Final Friday advisory group, with representation from all sectors of the city.
3. Develop and implement a volunteer program to assist with Final Fridays, graphic design, gallery sitting, planning, and other activities.
4. Improve Final Fridays advertising to include a professional web site, email newsletter, online map, social media, and printed material for Final Friday venues. Include art reviews and artist interviews.
5. Develop and implement a Final Fridays underwriting program, to involve the Lawrence private sector and interested individuals, assist artists, and increase event funding.
6. Extend Final Fridays events to all arts, including visual, literary, and performing arts.
7. Deliver more street music, theatre, and other activities scattered throughout downtown Lawrence.

8. Encourage the development of “clusters” of downtown retail and other businesses to work together to plan Final Friday activities.
9. Increase KU, Haskell, and primary/secondary school involvement in Final Fridays.
10. Improve coordination between events, consider periodic theme shows, and provide signage identifying locations of venues and how to travel between them.
11. Use online surveying and periodic attendee surveying to gauge the success of marketing efforts and determine how to improve the events.

D. Expand Final Fridays to monthly weekend events.

1. Develop and maintain an annual calendar of events, and coordinate planning and marketing.
2. Develop a focused marketing program, targeting those most likely to be interested in Lawrence, and most likely to spend weekends in Lawrence, and buy art and other goods. Examples include KU alumni in high income area codes, and cultural tourists from cities within a 3-4 hour drive of Lawrence.
3. Include Saturday and Sunday events to encourage overnight stays and increase retail and other restaurant sales.
4. Develop hotel packages to encourage cultural tourists to stay in town longer, attend more events, and shop.
5. Develop merchant events, perhaps including weekend street sales or sidewalk sales, and outdoor dining events.
6. Develop events for local and regional artists to interact with the public and each other.
7. Incorporate workshops, classes and demonstrations.
8. Include science and technology exhibits and events.
9. Include music in various downtown locations, perhaps shifting every month.
10. Develop new art and creativity events for adults and children.
11. Include tours of creative businesses.

E. Develop annual national and international events

Build on the expertise and talent present in our community. Possibilities include:

1. A national juried sculpture exhibition and/or art fair
2. Other outdoor festivals
3. International videoconferences on artistic and scientific topics
4. Events for creative youth
5. Inventors fairs and Technology Entertainment and Design (TEDx) events

## VII. Appendices

1. Artists Suggestions for Improving Final Fridays, from the Artist Survey
2. Notes from the Final Friday Focus Group Meeting
3. Final Friday Survey Instructions
4. Selected Bibliography

## Appendix 1

### **Summary of artist suggestions for improving Final Fridays, from the Final Fridays Artist Survey**

1. Encourage local businesses that benefit from Final Fridays, but don't have the means to participate, to sponsor local artists to help offset costs for materials, fees and gallery commissions.
2. Possibly an open venue for artist booths. If galleries would take in a vendor each month. Galleries could ask a percentage of sales. It would bring in revenue for the gallery and customers for the artist.
3. Figure out how to cultivate art buyers for the city of Lawrence. We have to be able to make this sustainable.
4. More events that attract people from out of town (music, other performance, street parties, etc.) in order to increase the selling of local art, show the importance of Final Fridays for local business, and expand the awareness of local art and events outside of the local area.
5. (We need) a full time arts coordinator position at the City.
6. Make a coordinated effort to do something "special" to the downtown area to make it an arts destination; i.e., "Art in the Alley" murals
7. Targeting art buying audience seems to help sales.
8. More local shops/vendors participating. It should be an event that is highly promoted.
9. As much high end fine art as possible
10. Brenna Buchanan's tours could be a fantastic addition to the Weekend events to promote downtown, and the historical significance of Downtown Lawrence.
11. Lawrence has a wealth of talented visual artists. We need more advertising on a national level to attract serious art buyers to Lawrence. Final Fridays are entertainment for the majority of people, with few serious buyers. We need art sales!
12. Work with the press to get more publicity and maybe a picture or two in the Lawrence Journal World on Final Friday
13. Some sort of a spring/summer art and music festival event. Sort of like a SXSW in Austin for the music but include the galleries to incorporate art and artist events.

## Appendix 2

### **Notes from the Final Friday Focus Group Meeting**

Monday, December 19, 2011, 5-6 pm

Lawrence Public Library Auditorium

#### Meeting Purpose

The purpose of this meeting was for a group of citizens, businesspeople, artists, and others to work together as a focus group, and provide information and ideas for use in the Final Fridays Impact Analysis.

#### Process and Outcome

The group worked together to generate a first-cut of “Impacts and Benefits”, “Opportunities for Improvement”, and “Recommendations for improving Final Fridays and Promoting Lawrence as a city of the arts”, as described below. Attendees were:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>
Ben Ahlvers	Lawrence Arts Center
John Clayton	Artist
Christie Dobson	Lawrence Cultural Arts Commission
John Hachmeister	University of Kansas
David Hahn	Kansas Author
Richard Kershenbaum	Retired
Jennifer Lattimore	Retired
Brad Levy	Artist
Patti McCormick	Eldridge/Oread Hotels
Molly Murphy	Lawrence Arts Center
Trae D. Rickford	Lawrence Art Party Gallery Director
Susan Tate	Lawrence Arts Center
Lesa Weller	South Mass Art Guild
Darin White	balm

## Impacts and Benefits

1. Brings the community together
2. Education for everyone
  - a. Young people
  - b. Old People
  - c. Artists
3. Social Impact
  - a. Community gathering
  - b. People talking to artists
  - c. Brings artists together
  - d. Public focus on artist
4. Draws visitors from out of town.
5. Wide exposure for artists
  - a. Exposure and experience for new artists
6. Access to Art
7. Economic Benefits
  - a. Art Sales
  - b. Other merchant sales
  - c. Keeping dollars in the community
  - d. Bringing in cultural tourists and their dollars

## Opportunities

1. Increase engagement and reaching out to faculty and students
  - a. KU and Haskell
  - b. Local schools
2. Thematic Shows
  - a. To increase public interest and ensure relevance
3. Hotel packages
  - a. To get more people from out of town, and induce people to stay longer
4. More publicity about and marketing for Lawrence retail businesses
  - a. More small business involvement
5. Better system for increasing engagement and outreach in Kansas and throughout the US
6. More art spaces for longer periods of time, up to a year, and open more days.
7. Another large space, specifically for the arts
8. Artist-reviewer in Newspaper and on the Web

### Recommendations for improving Final Fridays and Promoting Lawrence as a city of the arts

1. Continued Investment in Final Fridays by the City
2. Dedicated staff support
  - a. Cultural arts division
3. Marketing Program
4. Improved FF space, more space and/or longer shows
5. Cover all arts
6. Reach out/engagement with all local universities and schools
  - a. Haskell, KU
  - b. Primary, middle, and high schools
7. Business sponsorship of shows
8. Expand beyond just Friday

### Other ideas (From post its and other notes taken during the meeting)

1. We need fliers and maps
2. We should use the opportunity to connect cultural tourists with local businesses
3. Public art
4. We should include art contests
5. Benefit – artist development
6. Retail space sponsorship
7. More neighborhood buy-in
8. Hold receptions, and invite well known artists to gallery walks
9. National/regional artist tours
10. Special needs populations
11. Opportunity – creating an art buying network
12. Benefit – Collaboration between artists, planned or spontaneous, and helping to build the art community.
13. Benefit – Quality of life in adjacent neighborhoods
14. Benefit – Help to support artists
15. Opportunity - Events for children

## **Appendix 3**

### **Final Friday Survey Procedure**

#### Setting up

1. If you are the first to arrive at your assigned venue, introduce yourself to venue staff upon arrival.
2. Ask venue staff for materials and supplies which have been left for you.
3. Ensure that the following materials and supplies are provided:
  - a. A copy of this document
  - b. Sports counter (1)
  - c. 3M stickers for new attendees
  - d. Blank survey forms
  - e. Clipboards (1 or 2) for surveys, with pens attached
  - f. g. Paper storage box (1) for completed surveys and respondent business cards (Survey Box)
  - h. Sign – “Final Friday Count and art survey underway, please help”
  - i. Painters tape for hanging up the sign
4. Set yourself up near the front door or other logical location. Venue staff can help you with that if necessary. Keep the materials and Survey Box nearby.

#### **General Guidance**

1. If there are two volunteers at your site, one person should count and one person should oversee survey completion. One person might be able to count and survey participants when the crowds are not too large.
2. Check with venue staff for help with counting if you run short of people.
3. If you are short staffed, focus on counting, and stop or delay surveying. The count is most important.
4. If you have questions, problems, or need more help, text or call Eric at 785-550-3408 (cell).

#### **Counting**

1. Position yourself near the door and begin counting each Final Friday attendee as they enter, using the sports counter.
2. Count only attendees who DO NOT have a small brightly colored sticker on their clothing. The sticker color has no significance.
3. Count each attendee only once.
4. After you count, hand each attendee a small brightly colored sticker to place on or near their right breast pocket area.
5. Encourage the attendee to put on the sticker so that they are not counted again – or put it on them yourself. Sometimes that is easier.

6. Keep a running tally through the night on the Sports Counter.
7. Do not zero out the counter. If you accidentally do that, write down the original tally, so you can report total for the evening later.
8. Write the tally for the evening on the lid of the Survey Box at the end of the night.

### **Surveying (Second priority to counting)**

1. Ask every 5th or 10th attendee over 18 years old if they can take 2 minutes to fill out a confidential survey that will help the arts in Lawrence.
2. The survey should be completed only by adults 18 years of age or older.
4. If they ask for more information, tell them that this is part of a City of Lawrence study to improve Final Fridays.
5. Hand attendees the survey on a clipboard, ask them to fill it out nearby, and return it to you when they are done.
6. Don't allow people to take surveys away from the immediate area and return them later. You can offer to write their response if that is easier for them.
7. If you don't get a clipboard back in time to survey the 5th or 10th person to come in after them, just select the first person to come in after you get it back.
8. The survey recipient may choose to answer for their "immediate travel party", so members of that group (e.g., family) should not be interviewed again
9. Put the survey (and business card if they wish to enter the drawing) on your clipboard under the blank surveys, or into the Survey Box.
10. If you can't get the 5th or 10th attendee to complete the survey, ask the next person.

### **Coordination and Help**

If you have problems during the event and need help, please call (Name) at 785-xxx-xxxx.

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