Members of the Cultural District Task Force

**Robert J. Schumm**, Chair – City Commission Representative

**Cindy Maude** – At-Large Representative

**Susan Tate** – Lawrence Arts Center Representative

**Mike Logan** – Downtown Lawrence Representative

**K.T. Walsh** – East Lawrence Neighborhood Representative

**Jacki Becker** – East Lawrence Neighborhood Representative

**Brenda Nunez** – East Lawrence Neighborhood Representative

**Grace Peterson** – Lawrence Cultural Arts Commission Representative

**Mandy Enfield** – Lawrence Cultural Arts Commission Representative
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Cultural District Task Force was created by the City Commission by Resolution 7021 on April 2, 2013 and was given the charge of identifying three (3) cultural arts district models that combine private, public and grant funding to support improvements in cultural districts and examine the following questions: What are the best practices for making necessary improvements in cultural districts? How can the cultural district maintain its unique cultural and socio-economic mix? What existing cultural organizations play a role in the creative economy in Lawrence? What existing policies currently govern the creative economy? What recommendations for changes in policies and practices are appropriate to enhance the creative economy of Lawrence?

The Task Force included eight initial members and one member was added to the Task Force early in the process. The members include a diverse representation of the Lawrence community, including representatives from the Lawrence Cultural Arts Commission, the East Lawrence Neighborhood Association, the Lawrence Arts Center, Downtown Lawrence, Inc., the public at-large, and a City Commissioner. The Cultural District Task Force held public meetings beginning in April 2013 through October 2013. During the course of the meetings, the agendas, minutes and resources utilized by the Task Force were made available on the City’s website, along with a mechanism for the public to sign up for notification of meetings. Additionally, public comments were solicited through the website and reviewed by the Task Force as it was submitted.

The City of Lawrence created a Cultural District on February 12, 2013 by Resolution 7017 and consists of the area bound by 15th Street on the south, Kentucky Street on the west, the Kansas River on the north and the Burroughs Creek Trail on the east.

This document is the Final Report of the Task Force and includes various recommendations for the City Commission to consider.

VISION FOR THE CULTURAL DISTRICT

The Cultural District Task Force discussed and agreed upon the following as a narrative for the Cultural District:

The Lawrence Cultural District identifies a concentrated area of historic interest and innovative creative investment. A well designed and marketed Cultural District will capitalize on Lawrence’s cultural assets, increase community economic investment, and broaden the tax base throughout Douglas County.
The Cultural District will:

- Inspire revitalization while preserving historic identity
- Build community identity
- Stimulate the growth of the creative economy
- Elevate status of Lawrence as a destination for tourism and business investment
- Improve community health by encouraging biking, walking and outdoor gathering places
- Encourage public access to visual and performing arts
- Host regularly occurring cultural events

**CULTURAL DISTRICT ASSET INVENTORY**

The Cultural District area includes a wealth of assets that should be leveraged to benefit the community. The following is a listing, though not inclusive, of cultural assets within the district:

**History-** The area has a rich history dating back to the original founding of Lawrence. The area includes several historic districts and structures that are listed on the local, state and national historic registers. *(See map of Historic Properties/Districts in the appendix.)*

**Geography-** One of the key geographical features of the area is the Kansas River. The historic and cultural tie to the Kansas River is an important asset for the district. Further strengthening pedestrian accessibility between the Cultural District and the Kansas River is a desired goal of the Task Force. The Burroughs Creek Trail is a key recreational and bicycle/pedestrian route that runs along the length of the district along the east edge.

**Non-profit Arts Organizations-**

The Lawrence Arts Center, Van Go Mobile Arts, Marla’s Quilts, The Lawrence Art Guild, Lawrence Maker Space, Percolator Art Space

**Cultural Institutions-**

Watkins Historical Museum, Freedom’s Frontier, Lawrence Public Library

**Creative Sector Businesses-**

Art and Design: Callahan Creek, Miller-Myers, Kern Marketing Group, Allen Press
Architecture: Treanor Architects, Sabatini Architects, Gould Evans Architects, Clark Huesmann Architects, Struct Restruct

Commercial Galleries: Phoenix Gallery, , Seed Co., the Invisible Hand Gallery, the Cider Gallery, Wonder Fair, Signs of Life

Chef-Based Restaurants: 715, Pachamama’s, Zen Zero, Free State Brewery, Wheatfield’s, Merchant’s

Live Music Venues: the Granada, the Jazz Haus, Liberty Hall, the Bottleneck, the Replay, Tap Room, Jack Pot

Film: Liberty Hall

Film Makers: Through a Glass Productions, Light Lyre Films, TLC FILMS LLC.

Creative Sector Retail: Sarah’s Fabrics, Yarn Barn, Stitch On, Richard’s Music, Mass Street Music, Waxman Candles, Jewelry by Julie

Artists’ Residencies: Lawrence Arts Center at 821 New York; Pilot Balloon at 1000 New York

**Historical Sites**-
This list exists separately and will be added.

**Natural Sites:**
The Kansas River (described separately elsewhere)

Demographics- The District includes residents of a number of races and socio-economic backgrounds. Additionally, as a key center of employment, there are workers in the Downtown that represent many different races and socio-economic backgrounds. *See additional details on demographics included in the appendix.*

**STAKEHOLDER LISTING**
There are many stakeholders within the Cultural District. The following is a listing, though not inclusive, of stakeholders within the Cultural District:

- Government- the City of Lawrence and Douglas County
- East Lawrence Neighborhood Association/East Lawrence residents and businesses
• Downtown Lawrence, Inc.
• Lawrence Chamber of Commerce
• Lawrence Arts Center
• Watkins Community Museum of History
• Destination Management, Inc./Lawrence Convention & Visitors Bureau
• Freedom’s Frontier National Heritage Area
• Lawrence Art Guild

TOOLS AND BEST PRACTICES FOR PROMOTING THE CULTURAL DISTRICT

{Economic Development Incentives for the District}

{Add examples from other communities}

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The recommendations of the Cultural District Task Force assume that all current zoning and plans related to the area within the District would remain in place. The Cultural District Task Force generated the following recommendations for the City Commission’s consideration:

1. INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS:

The Task Force makes the following recommendations to be phased in.

• 9th Street Corridor
  We recommend the creation of a visually appealing walking route between downtown Lawrence and the Warehouse art block. Wider, passable walkways that are wheelchair and stroller accessible will be peppered with public art, low lighting, benches, trees, banners and way finding signage. It also includes bike paths, bike racks, bus stops - an appealing and safe way to walk, bike and move daytime and nighttime.

• Sidewalks
  In addition to the 9th St. Corridor, we recommend improved sidewalks in the Cultural District, including 7th, 8th, 10th and 11th streets to begin. This would not be as elaborate at the corridor, but may include low lighting with the improved sidewalks.

• William Burroughs Pathway
The William Burroughs Pathway should be extended north and across the Kansas River to improve access to this geographic asset and providing access to the Cultural District and protecting the south bank of the river.

- **Streets and Alleys**
  Street and alley improvements, including repairing brick streets and re-bricking streets.

2. **ADDITION OF AN ARTS ADMINISTRATOR**
   - To ensure the success of the Cultural District, a City Arts and Culture administrator/cultural planner should be hired to develop and implement a plan and provide ongoing marketing of the District.

3. **CULTURAL PLAN:**
   The City of Lawrence should develop a community-wide cultural plan. This plan should include specific planning for the District.

4. **EVENTS:**
   - Final Fridays events should be continued and expanded.
   - Identification of certain cultural events that would attract people to the downtown should be pursued.

5. **PUBLIC ART**
   - Opportunities for visual and performance art in the district should be encouraged.

6. **ARTIST WORK SPACE**
   - Affordable space for working artists should be identified.

7. **PRESERVATION OF THE CHARACTER OF THE DISTRICT**
   - There should be dedication to maintaining the unique culture and socio-economic mixture of the area.
   - A commitment should be made to provide affordable housing and work space for people in creative sectors.
   - A commitment to maintaining the affordability of housing in East Lawrence is important.

8. **STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT IN FUTURE PLANNING**
   - There should be special care to involve key stakeholders, including the East Lawrence and downtown residents in plan development and implementation of the cultural district.
9. **FUNDING**
   - The City must prioritize funding of the Cultural Administrator/Planner; Cultural Plan and marketing; infrastructure improvements, public art and implementation of the plan through various funding sources to include but not be limited to the general fund, capital fund, federal funds, grants, bed tax and other sources determined in the plan.

**CONCLUSION**

**Appendix**

*Cultural District Maps*

*Cultural District Area*

*Historic Structures and Districts*

*Zoning Map*

*Parcel Map*

*Aerial Map*

*Minutes from the Cultural District Task Force Meetings*

*Resolution establishing Cultural District Task Force*

*Resolution establishing the Cultural District*

*Demographic information for Cultural District*