

5/16 Arts & Cultural ED Roundtable

Building Together Through Story

- Today we're connecting through stories —
our own and each other's
- We'll revisit our vision and values work
- And we'll practice a way of listening that we'll
carry into our work and the community

AGENDA

Today's to-do list:

- **Intros**
- **Vision and Values**
- **Intro to story circles**
- **Story circles**
- **Reflection and debrief**
- **Next steps and announcements**

INTRODUCTIONS

- Name
- Neighborhood
- A recent thing you created

MISSION

Our mission is to create a plan that reflects our community's commitment to arts and culture — and charts a path to broader access, stronger infrastructure, and meaningful local impact.

VISION STATEMENT

The Roanoke Arts & Cultural Plan envisions a vibrant and connected future for Roanoke — where creativity thrives, participation runs deep, and the arts strengthen our sense of community while supporting personal and economic growth.

We're committed to creating a plan that reflects the *spirit*, *stories*, and *aspirations* of the people who call this city home, and to ensuring that arts and culture remain central to shaping our region's next decade.

AND THE TLDR

We envision a Roanoke where
creativity builds bridges,
culture lives in every neighborhood,
and the arts help shape a
future we design — *together*.

VALUES

Bring people together.

We build relationships across neighborhoods, cultures, and generations — because collaboration is how we grow.

2011 A&C Plan

Builds on “Collaboration” and “Celebration” values

City Plan 2040

Reflects “Connected Community” and “Healthy Community”

Stickies

Neighborhoods, accessibility, connection, community — this was everywhere in the stickies

VALUES

Make space for everyone.

We design programs and partnerships that welcome a wide range of voices, needs, and ways of showing up. And we activate people already doing the work to help carry it forward.

2011 A&C Plan

Evolves “Inclusion” (reframed for today’s context)

City Plan 2040

Mirrors “Interwoven Equity” and “Livable Built Environment”

Stickies

Accessibility, education, cultural appreciation, collaboration, participation were thematic across categories

VALUES

Imagine what's possible.

We spark new ideas, challenge old limits, and turn imagination into momentum.

2011 A&C Plan

Builds directly from “Innovation”

City Plan 2040

*Supports “Resilient Economy”
and “Harmony with Nature” (via
creative solutions)*

Stickies

*Aspirational, evolving,
expansive — strong themes
around vision and change*

VALUES

Celebrate along the way.

We create moments of connection and delight — because joy is part of the work, not just the outcome.

2011 A&C Plan

Deepens “Celebration” in a more values-centered, human way

City Plan 2040

Supports “Healthy Community” and civic pride

Stickies

Joy, fun, appreciation, cultural vibrancy — this value emerged organically

VALUES

Nurture what's next.

We invest time, care, and energy into the people, ideas, and opportunities that will shape the Roanoke of tomorrow.

2011 A&C Plan

Evolves “Education” and “Advocacy” (action without the flagged word)

City Plan 2040

Aligns with “Resilient Economy,” “Responsible Regionalism,” and long-term planning

Stickies

Impactful, evolving, support for youth and creatives, growth, sustainability were common across time dimensions

VALUES

Bring people together.

Make space for everyone.

Imagine what's possible.

Celebrate along the way.

Nurture what's next.

VALUES

Bring people together.

Make space for everyone.

Imagine what's possible.

Celebrate along the way.

Nurture what's next.

Purpose

To provide space to engage personally with the value statements, envisioning how they've played out in our lives and might shape our community in the coming decade.

Prompts

- Value 1** **Bring people together:** Tell a story of a time you were surprised by the power of art to connect unlikely people
- Value 2** **Make space for everyone:** Tell a story of a time when you did or didn't feel fully welcomed and good being all of who you are
- Value 3** **Imagine what's possible:** Tell a story of a moment when someone's creativity or imagination shifted what you thought was possible in your community or your personal life
- Value 4** **Celebrate along the way:** Tell a story of a time when you found joy/had fun in working together with others toward a shared goal
- Value 5** **Nurture what's next:** Tell a story of how your work today has been shaped by an investment that someone made

Story Circles!

Story Offers

A way for people to get to know one another on an even playing field, learn new perspectives, build trust, and grow relationships.

A powerful entry point for fostering community change.

Story Circles offer a proven effective practice for accessing the power of stories in community gatherings.

Story Circle Origins

A Story Circle is a small group of people sitting in a circle telling their stories, led by a Story Circle facilitator.

A methodology developed by John O'Neal in 1964

A tool to help build trust in communities in Mississippi through his work supporting voter registration with the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee



Story Circle Origins

John shared the method with Roadside Theater, an Appalachian theater ensemble. Together they advanced the design and use of the tool in their creative and organizing practices.



Story Works for Roanoke

Goal

Activate activate story circles as a community engagement tool to help foster a sense of belonging in our community.

Objectives

- 1.Strengthen connections among Roanoke community artists through story circles.
- 2.Train community artists in story circle facilitation and support them in exploring ways they can build it into their practice in support of community goals.
- 3.Support neighbors in building trust, relationships, and a curiosity about one another.
- 4.Provide space where neighbors' imaginations are invited into planning for their community.

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November 9: Story Circle
Gathering for 2024-2025 Roanoke
Artist Residents (21 participants)



December 7: Story Circle
Gathering for Artists and
Neighbors (35 participants)

Purpose

Provide space for the executive directors to engage personally with the value statements, understand story circles as a mechanism for engaging with the community at large, and prepare to engage the public in the next steps.

Prompt

Tell a story of a moment when someone's creativity or imagination shifted what you thought was possible in your community or your personal life (Value: Imagine what's possible).

Story Circles!

NEXT STEPS

Where do we go from here?

Beginning in May, we're shifting into the Listening phase and engaging the community.

Formative Listening

Purpose: To listen, gather stories, ideas, priorities

Tone: Open, welcoming, exploratory

Outcome: Build excitement and shape the body of the plan

Key behavior: Listen and capture

Summative Listening

Purpose: To share back, validate, and refine

Tone: Reflective, transparent, iterative

Outcome: Make sure people and organizations see themselves in the plan

Key behavior: Reflect and adjust

SOME THOUGHTS TO LEAVE YOU WITH

- 1 How do we show up in the community in a way that feels aligned with these values?**
- 2 Who do we reach out to — and how do we make it easy for them to say yes?**
- 3 Where are people already gathering — and how do we meet them there?**

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