

Something Creative Is Taking Shape: Ankeny Art Center Unveils Plans for New Home

Nearly 10,000-square-foot facility would expand arts education, exhibitions, and community programming.

Ankeny, Iowa — October 5, 2026 — The Ankeny Art Center today announced plans to create a new, purpose-built Art Center in Uptown Ankeny, marking an important next chapter in the nonprofit organization's more than 40-year history.

The proposed nearly 10,000-square-foot facility at 315 Cherry Street would approximately double the Art Center's current space, providing additional classrooms and pottery studios, expanded gallery and exhibition space, a community meeting room, an Art Center store, and opportunities for outdoor art and sculpture.

More importantly, the new home would allow the Ankeny Art Center to serve more people as demand for arts education continues to grow.

"Ankeny and other northern suburbs have experienced extraordinary growth, and the opportunities available to our community have grown along with it," said Steve Van Oort, president of the Ankeny Art Center Board of Directors and campaign co-chair. "This is an opportunity to create a permanent home for the arts that reflects where the community is headed. We envision a place where people of all ages can learn, create, experience art, and connect with one another."

Growing Alongside the Community

Over the past three years, more than 35,000 people have participated in Ankeny Art Center classes, exhibitions, and events. Today, approximately 90% of Art Center classes are at capacity, limiting the organization's ability to add classes and expand programming.

"Our classes, particularly watercolor and pottery, continue to fill, and we simply need more room to meet the demand we are seeing," said Don Zuck, New Building Campaign co-chair. "A new facility gives us the opportunity to expand our programming and create new ways for people throughout the community to experience the arts."

The proposed facility would include expanded programming for children and adults, additional classroom and pottery space, a larger gallery for school, community, and professional exhibitions, and improved accessibility for visitors of all ages and abilities.

A New Home in the Heart of Uptown

The proposed location at 315 Cherry Street would place the Art Center in the heart of Uptown Ankeny, near the Ankeny Market & Pavilion, High Trestle Trail, local businesses, and other community gathering spaces.

The location would also strengthen the Art Center's connection to the neighborhood, which hosts one of its signature annual community events, the Ankeny Arts Festival, each May.

"Arts and culture are essential to a thriving, connected community. The Ankeny Art Center has been a cornerstone of creativity and education for decades," said Ankeny Mayor Bobbi Bentz. "This new facility represents an exciting investment that will expand opportunities for residents of all ages. We are happy to see further development take place in Uptown and look forward to the energy and activity it will bring to the central hub of our community."

Building the Vision

Planning for an expanded Art Center has been underway for several years. In 2025, the organization conducted a feasibility study to assess community interest and support for creating a new facility. The response affirmed what we were hearing from students, families, artists, and community partners: there is both a need and an opportunity to invest in the future of the arts in Ankeny.

The Ankeny Art Center is currently in the leadership phase of a capital campaign, working with individuals, businesses, and community partners who share the vision for creating a permanent home for the arts in Ankeny. A broader community campaign will be announced at a later date.

The proposed project is estimated at \$4.5 million. Construction would begin following completion of fundraising, with a target groundbreaking in 2027.

“This project is about much more than a building,” Van Oort said. “It is about creating a place where a child can discover a love of art, a student can see their work displayed in an expanded gallery space, an adult can continue learning and creating, and local artists can be celebrated. It is about creating a place where our community comes together through art.”

Additional information and project updates are available at **AnkenyArtCenter.org**.

About the Ankeny Art Center

For more than 45 years, the Ankeny Art Center has brought art to people and people to art through visual arts education, exhibitions, and community programming. Serving Ankeny and all of northern Polk County, the nonprofit Art Center provides opportunities for people of all ages to learn, create, and experience art while supporting local artists and strengthening community connection through creativity.

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