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# The Role of the Creative Economy in Sustainability Planning and Development

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# **THE ROLE OF THE CREATIVE ECONOMY IN SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT**

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**Balancing Quantitative and Qualitative Benefits**

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May 2013**



### **Abstract**

This paper reviews Creative Economy theory and practice and attempts to intersect the author's findings with Sustainability Planning and Development theory and practice. An extensive literature review, including over 40 publications (articles, reports, white papers, conference proceedings and books) as well as interviews, personal observations and website reviews was used to develop this paper and the author's conclusions. Current Creative Economy and Sustainability theories are explained and analyzed as well as the role of the artist, the entrepreneur, the city and cultural organizations. The author provides recommendations for the City of Portland, Maine and concludes that the qualitative benefits of the non-commercial creative economy such as clean air, beauty, cross-cultural communication, and community capital must be balanced with the predominant efforts geared toward developing the quantitative benefits of the creative economy's commercial sector and measures of GDP.

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**THE ROLE OF THE CREATIVE ECONOMY IN  
SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT:  
Balancing Quantitative and Qualitative Benefits**

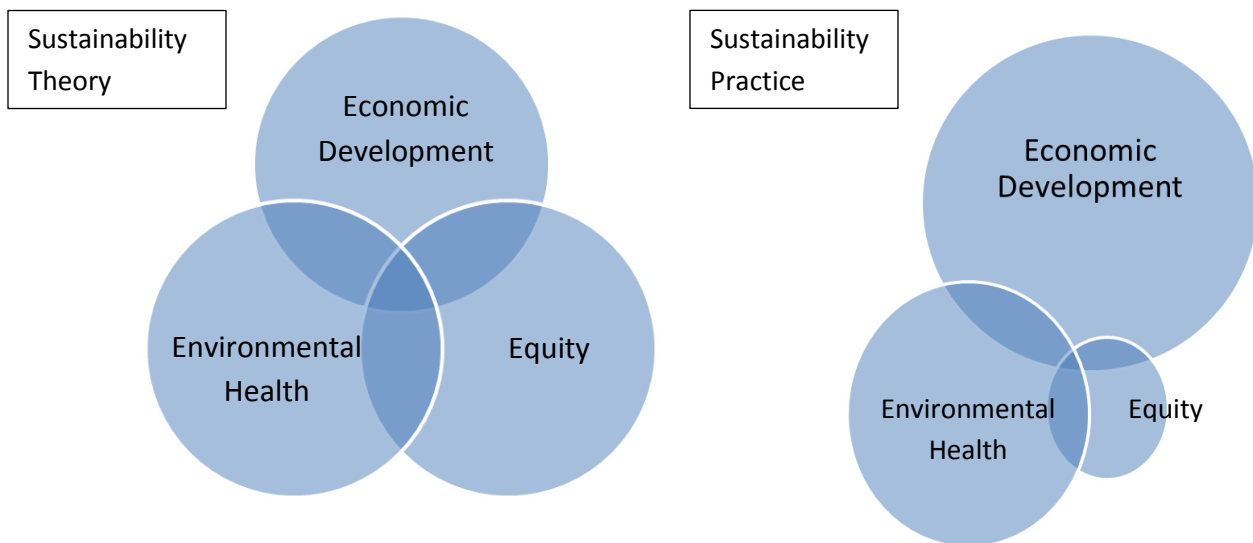
**Overview & Methodology**

The “Creative Economy” has become an increasingly popular new buzzword within the field of planning and development. Although it is difficult to pinpoint the term’s origin, it was capitalized on by Richard Florida who wrote “The Rise of the Creative Class” in 2004. Many communities, large and small, have embraced Florida’s theory and research in hopes of revitalizing blighted urban cores or stimulating their community’s economic growth. Billions of private and public investment dollars have been spent to foster the development of Creative Economies worldwide, and many debates and discussions have ensued as to what this new “Creative Class” is and how to measure its impact.

This paper evolves from an in-depth look at Florida’s work, as well as: interviews with planning and development professionals, leaders of arts institutions, and artists; research into several professional papers, journal articles and books regarding the creative economy, the cultural economy, and creative placemaking; and personal observations. I define these terms as I have understood them and describe how they intersect with each other and with current planning practice. This paper is inspired by my attempt to decipher between the validity and the obtuseness of Florida’s theories, as well as those of his critics and other experts in the field, and to intersect those that have authenticity into the framework of sustainability planning and development.

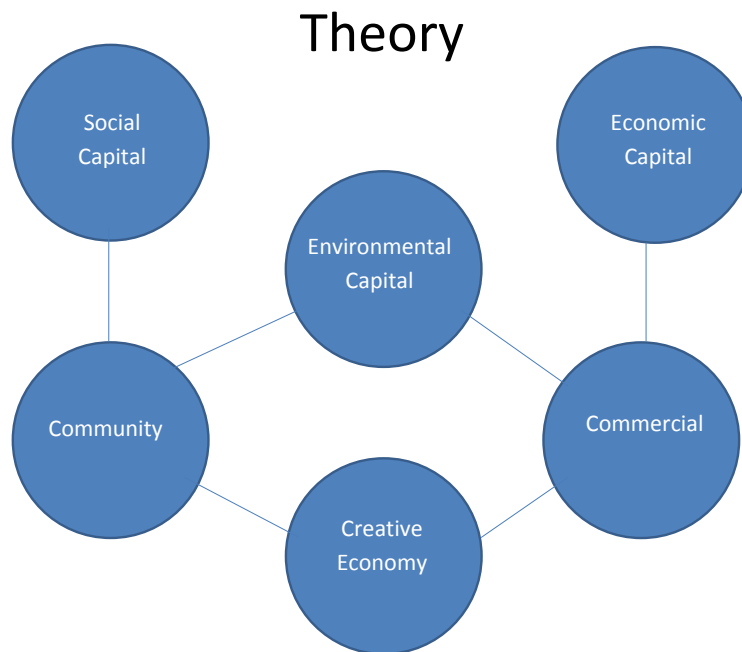
## Defining Sustainability

Before I dive into the Creative Economy, I want to briefly summarize my impression of sustainability theory and practice. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, “Sustainability is based on a simple principle: Everything that we need for our survival and well-being depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment. Sustainability creates and maintains the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony, that permit fulfilling the social, economic and other requirements of present and future generations.” (EPA, 2013) The goal of sustainability planning and development in theory is to create a balance in strategies and outcomes which benefit all three sectors of sustainability theory: economic development, environmental health, and equity. But what generally happens in practice is that the majority of resources and efforts go toward economic development, a decent amount goes toward environmental health, but equity ends up getting the short stick.



My theory, which is the basis for my capstone, is that the Creative Economy represents two different efforts within Sustainability Planning & Development. On one hand, it involves

community arts and cultural activities. On the other hand, it involves commercial activity. If planners support both sides of the creative economy, the result will be the development of benefits for all three aspects of sustainability theory: social capital, environmental capital and economic capital. But if we just focus on one side of the CE, then we will miss our goal.



I believe that our ability to universally define the occupations and industries which comprise either the creative or the cultural economy suffers from inherently different cultural norms and traditions and that the attempts to measure either's quantitative benefits or economic impacts are meaningless in a sustainable development framework without giving equal treatment to their qualitative benefits and impacts. The role for the artists in the creative economy has been seen as integral to almost everyone involved in the debate, yet most individual artists do not have economic growth as their primary goal. Furthermore, I argue that not only do the attempts to develop the creative economy, which focus only on economic growth, disproportionately advantage the intellectual and entrepreneurial elite at the expense of the poor and disadvantaged,

but they rely on a questionable belief system which promotes the predominant post-classical economic theory of dependence on continual growth and unsustainable levels of consumption.

Almost ten years later, we are at a point where we need to step back and re-evaluate the efforts to foster a creative economy as a tool to foster economic growth. There are several questions which need to be addressed, such as “for whom”, “why” and “with what implications” as well as “what were the assumptions and do they still hold true (if they ever did at all)”. For those of us working in the field of sustainable community planning and development we need to unpack the theories and strategies to see if they address the three primary legs of the sustainability stool: equity, the economy, and the environment. The needs of all three sectors need to be addressed and balanced within the sustainable development framework. We need to rethink our obsession with economic “growth” and instead look at how economic “development” is better suited to a more equitable and environmentally healthy future.

### **Defining the Creative Economy**

To begin my research, I needed to get a better understanding of what the creative economy is and who it includes. I began with Richard Florida’s “Rise of the Creative Class Revisited” book and then moved on to research and literature written by several of his critics. The terms “creative economy” and “creative class” are somewhat vague and overly broad as so many buzzwords typically are. From my interviews and readings, I discovered a variety of definitions of the creative economy which included everything from legal services to jewelry. It has been described as a tool for fostering “intellectual activity which attracts entrepreneurs and a young work force.” (Mitchell, 2013) It was referred to as the “knowledge and innovation economy” which focuses on intellectual capital. (Hutchins, 2013) Some traditional artists have commented that they do not feel like they are represented in the creative economy at all because



it focuses too much on economics, technology and more profitable industry sectors. (McNeil, 2013) Other artists stated that they define it very broadly and include the arts, academic institutions, foundations and small businesses.

Richard Florida uses occupational distinctions to define the creative class. He distinguishes the Creative Class from the Working Class and the Service Class and describes it as including those individuals who work within a wide range of diverse fields, including but not limited to: engineering, theatre, biotech, entertainment, education, music, architecture, computer science, design and fine art. He also includes occupations such as business, finance, law, and health care as being part of the broader creative class surrounding the basic “creative core.” His book focuses on how the creative class can be a vital force in revitalizing areas of urban decay. He posits that the creative class fosters and attracts an open, diverse and dynamic clustered urban environment which in turn attracts more creative people as well as more business and capital and hence, economic growth. His theories are reflected in his Tolerance Index which includes four variables: the Foreign-Born Index, the Gay Index, the Bohemian Index and the Integration Index (the level of racial integration versus separation). (Florida, 2012)

Florida writes that “the distinguishing characteristic of the Creative Class is that its members engage in work whose function is to ‘create meaningful new forms.’” In an attempt to further refine this overly broad definition, he defines the creative class by “the occupations that people have” and divides them into two categories: the “super-creative core” and “creative professionals.” (See Table 1) What he seems to use as a measuring stick to define the creative class, is the individual’s ability to think on their own and apply or combine standard approaches to problem solving in unique ways which require a great deal of personal judgment. He contrasts the work of the mind, which is performed by the Creative Class, to the work of those in the

Working and Service Class which are paid primarily to do routine physical work. We are still left, however, with an incredibly broad definition which can be interpreted in a myriad of ways. And there are those who consider themselves to be very creative, such as chefs and hair stylists, which Florida relegates to the Service Class, although he simultaneously acknowledges that their work requires high levels of creativity.

**Table 1**

<b>CREATIVE CLASS</b>		<b>WORKING CLASS</b>	<b>SERVICE CLASS</b>	<b>AGRICULTURE</b>
<b>Super Creative Core</b>	<b>Creative Professionals</b>			
Computer & mathematical	Management	Construction & extraction	Health-care support	Farming, fishing & forestry
Architecture & engineering	Business & financial operations	Installation, maintenance & repair	Food preparation & food-service related	
Life, physical & social sciences	Legal	Production	Building & grounds cleaning & maintenance	
Education, training & library	Health-care practitioners & technicians	Transportation & material moving	Personal care & service	
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations	High-end sales & sales management		Low-end sales & related	
			Office & administrative support	
			Community & social services	
			Protective services	

(Florida, 2012) Data was compiled & analyzed by Kevin Stolarick. Metro data for the classes are based on 2010 BLS OES data.

Despite the widespread acceptance of Florida’s theories, there have also been many outspoken critics. The three primary criticisms of Florida’s work have claimed that his approach is 1) elitist, 2) contains questionable data, and 3) does not provide any plan for how to handle issues associated with gentrification. (Kotkin, 2013) (Peck, 2005) Florida attempted to defend his

theory and research through a newly revised version of “The Rise of the Creative Class” which hit the bookshelves in 2012. (Florida, 2012) However, within months of its release, he was quoted in an article written by one of his critics as saying that the benefits of the creative economy, as he defined it in his book, “flow disproportionately to more highly-skilled knowledge, professional and creative workers” due to the resulting mismatch between blue-collar incomes and the increase in housing costs associated with gentrification. (Kotkin, 2013) Even in Florida’s rebuttal article printed online in the Daily Beast, he admits that “I’ve long been aware of the inequality that is a byproduct of the unvarnished creative knowledge economy and I’ve written about it extensively.” And yet he still has not been able to come up with any concrete ideas as how to overcome this issue of equity. (Florida, 2013)

But the criticisms do not end there. Others have criticized Florida’s work as a snake-oil attempt to rename an already well-known economic theory called “human capital.” Human capital is characterized by how many well-educated, skilled, talented, resourceful and experienced individuals you have in a community, regardless of whether they are artists, immigrants or gays. Universities are seen as the economic driver in human capital theory. These critics claim that the communities which are experiencing economic prosperity are ones which have a higher proportion of highly skilled (and higher paying) jobs which are attracting those individuals with the necessary abilities. (Bures, 2012)

But the definitions of the creative class and the creative economy get even more complicated. Several scholars have now argued for clear distinctions and normative definitions between the “creative economy” and the “cultural economy.” The terms “creative” and “cultural” often get used interchangeably without any attempt to clearly define them. The ability to empirically analyze and measure the impact of each sector on the economy therefore suffers

from a lack of uniformity and muddies the discussion. Others, such as Ann Markusen, have argued that Florida's use of the terminology "creative class" is limited to those workers that have higher education degrees, whether or not they are actually doing creative work. She describes his approach as "both crude and politically repugnant" and so chooses to not use the term "creative class" at all. Instead she prefers the term "cultural economy" and then further distinguishes "cultural industries" from "cultural occupations." Cultural industries may employ people whose work does not directly involve creative tasks and people who have cultural occupations include many who are self-employed and not associated with any particular industry. It is significant to recognize that many artists are left out of our classification systems because they do not claim art as their main source of income or they choose not to create art for commercial sales and so are not included in any state or federal employment figures. (Markusen, Wassall, DeNatale, & Cohen, 2008)

Markusen et al highlight three different approaches to defining the cultural economy within a set of metrics that were created through the New England Creative Economy project, Americans for the Arts (AFTA) and the University of Minnesota's Project on Regional and Industrial Economics (PRIE). Each of the three research efforts came up with various definitions of industries and occupations, used various differing data sources, and as a result, end up with very different measurements. Markusen et al emphasize the need for definitional clarity as well as a shared framework of categorical definitions that can be used universally in order to make informed policy decisions. They have attempted to create this framework through designing nested definitional sets of cultural industries and cultural occupations that can be used broadly by different constituencies. One region's cultural industry may have a very different occupational structure than the same industry in a different region. Therefore, they advocate for policy makers

to work from what is needed in their own regional economies by looking at the tools at hand, resource constraints, capacity utilization, long-term operating support, and neighborhood and fiscal impacts. (Markusen, Wassall, DeNatale, & Cohen, 2008)

For example, Boston's performing arts sector is heavily focused in the radio and TV sector, its visual artists work primarily in the specialized design industry, and its prominent higher education sector produces a much higher share of musicians, writers and performing artists than other US cities. In comparison, Los Angeles has a higher concentration in the sound recording industry and its visual artists and writers are primarily active in the motion picture and video industry. Both cities also have very different demographics, infrastructures, and municipal budgets. Therefore, the supply of each city's creative/cultural economy assets are markedly different from each other, and the demand for their unique creative/cultural economy production is also different. These forces and unique circumstances must be taken into consideration when creating a strategy for economic and community development. (Markusen, Wassall, DeNatale, & Cohen, 2008)

In a separate White Paper produced for The Mayors' Institute of the National Endowment for the Arts, titled *Creative Placemaking*, Markusen and Anne Gadwa say that creative occupations include workers such as:

1. Designers
2. Art Directors, fine artists, and animators
3. Architects
4. Writers and authors
5. Musicians and singers
6. Photographers
7. Producers and directors
8. Announcers
9. Entertainers and performers
10. Actors
11. Dancers and choreographers

These are the categories used by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) which are based on the American Community Survey (ACS) data for 2005-2009. Markusen and Gadwa estimated that in 2005, almost 2 million American workers reported artwork as their major occupation. They also acknowledge that their estimates do not include “hundreds of thousands of additional people who do artwork as a second job. Nor the tens of thousands of artists who work primarily as teachers (K-12, colleges and universities, private studios) or as art administrators. Nor the unknown numbers of artists who spend more than ten hours a week making art and sharing it beyond their families and close friendship circle but who earn no income from it.” (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010)

They then go on to define cultural industries as those which employ high concentrations of artists in their workforce. They estimated that in 2002, over 3.6 million Americans were identified as such, or otherwise referred to as “cultural workers.” Their list of cultural industries includes:

1. Civic, social, advocacy, grantmaking organizations
2. Printing and related support activities
3. Management, scientific, technical consulting services
4. Other amusement, gambling, recreation industries
5. Colleges and universities, including junior colleges
6. Computer systems design and related services
7. Restaurants and other food services
8. Elementary and secondary schools
9. Publishing
10. Motion picture and sound recording
11. Broadcasting and Telecommunications
12. Performing arts, museums, spectator sports (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010)

The Americans for the Arts organization uses a fairly conservative approach to defining creative industries by focusing only on the for-profit and non-profit business sector. They use the "Data Universal Numbering System" data to document the number of arts-related businesses and employees in any geographical region or political jurisdiction. They then assign each registrant

with an eight digit Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) code which identifies the arts industry sub-category in which the individual person or organization belongs. Their list includes over 600 SIC codes. For a complete list of SIC Codes for arts-related businesses see Appendix A. In brief, the main categories are listed below:

1. Museums and Collections
2. Performing Arts
3. Visual Arts/Photography
4. Film Radio and Television
5. Design and Publishing
6. Schools and Services

The source of their data comes from Dunn & Bradstreet which according to their analysis demonstrates an under-representation of non-profits arts organizations as well as many individual artists who are not employed by a business. (Americans for the Arts, 2013)

Clearly, architects are a very different demographic from bio technicians, which are a very different demographic from traditional artists. Even within the traditional artist sector, the needs of the individual artist are very diverse as well as the type of work which they produce. In this sense, the diversity of the creative class is as diverse as each individual community within it. In a paper by Michael L. Lahr and Cory Yemen at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, they write “details on precisely who was creative and what constitutes creativity have been less important than determining whether job growth has occurred where known agglomerations of so-called creative workers exist. As a result, the sets of occupations and skills that define the creative class have tended to err on the side of inclusiveness.” (Lahr & Yemen, 2008) Although the purpose of their critique is to draft their own new set of indexes for creating definitions, the point holds true.

Even within the arts community, the definitions of what constitutes “craft” and “art” are nebulous and are a constant source of debate. The dividing line seems to be whether or not the

creation is functional or not. (Teeples, 2008) What seems clear here is that no one really knows how to define creativity or is able to agree on its categorical boundaries because the word “creative” requires an inherently subjective definition. Indeed, it is clear to me that the attempts to classify “creatives” within a list of occupations or industries, is in itself an impossible task. Michelangelo was a sculptor, painter, architect, poet, and engineer and Leonardo DaVinci was a painter, sculptor, architect, musician, mathematician, engineer, inventor, anatomist, geologist, cartographer, botanist, and writer. What made them successful was their ability to harness and integrate their creativity in ways in which were applicable to better communication, contemporary life and to technologies for the future. There is no doubt that they were outstandingly talented and made significant contributions to humanity. But how would we categorize their occupations within the Creative Economy framework today? I’m not sure that we could. I will also posit that everyone is creative in their individual way and has the ability to increase their talents if given the opportunity and support. Even Florida has an entire chapter in his new book entitled, “Every Single Human Being Is Creative.” This is why we have no ability to agree on what should be included in the creative economy or not.

### **The Paradigm Shift**

I do not dispute Florida’s observation that changes are afoot or dispute the need for quantitative research to analyze current trends in order to develop informed policy. In fact, acute quantitative research and data gathering have been integral in our ability to understand and proactively begin to plan for abrupt climate change, to measure the impacts of policy decisions, and to efficiently allocate resources to the most needy. For example, economists have witnessed and reported on our national shift from a manufacturing-based economy to a service-based economy for some time. Scientists have been able to quantitatively link the impact of rising sea



temperatures on marine life such as lobsters, shrimp and cod. (Canfield, 2012) These studies have helped us to understand the past and current trends, to forecast future needs and impacts, and to devise policies which attempt to improve our lives.

Our demographics and social norms are also changing as has been shown in both quantitative and qualitative studies. Cities are becoming “hip” again and places which people, particularly the 20-30 something generation, are finding desirable for in-migration. Businesses are relocating to cities which offer good amenities such as parks, efficient and safe public transit, good restaurants and entertainment. There is a trend toward “dressing down” and more casual business attire. Work hours are rarely 9-5 anymore with more flexibility but longer hours. Time is money and many people are not interested in having to commute hours back and forth to work to live in a homogenous suburb. Our population is becoming more and more diverse racially, ethnically and socially. (Florida, 2012) (Rosler, 2012) The historical and exponential growth in technology and knowledge has made us better informed and better connected to the world than ever before. And it has allowed us to both live and work in locations that were never financially viable before, either from home or from smaller urban locations or even small towns. And we are becoming much more entrepreneurial. (Gilkey, 2009)

But can we really pin these trends on the “rise of the creative class” as a driver of the economy or use them to categorically improve destitute communities? Or are these trends a reflection of a broader shift in cultural and social values? If it is the latter, then using it as a strategy for economic growth is an incomplete strategy because it does not examine what is happening at a deeper level. Quality of life is becoming more important, perhaps because our free time to enjoy it is less. Perhaps it is due to the diminishing marginal utility of wealth. In economic theory, humans enjoy a certain level of consumption up to a point. Once we reach that

point, the enjoyment of further consumption begins to decline. For example, eating one chocolate chip cookie may be very desirable and enjoyable. Eating two may bring that individual just as much enjoyment. However, if that person continues to eat more and more chocolate chip cookies, eventually they will reach a point when they no longer enjoy eating them. Their utility (their enjoyment of consumption) declines after a certain point. This happens with wealth accumulation as well. After a certain point, more money or more consumer goods just do not have the same level of utility. (Thune, 2008) Unpack these trends even further, and one must consider them in the context of market failure and neo-capitalist policies.

### **Market Failure vs Neo-capitalist Policies**

Structural changes in our market economy such as deindustrialization, globalization, and the decline in unions has created an expansion of inequality. The overwhelming focus on economic development and the failure to give equal focus to community development has rewarded those who contribute to economic growth and has assumed that those who do not will benefit from those who do. The Creative Economy has piggybacked on this trend through its trickle-down economics model which creates winners and losers. Artists are especially vulnerable to this dynamic. The Social Impact of the Arts Project at the University Pennsylvania did a study in 2005 of artists in six U.S. metropolitan areas between 1980 and 2000. They found that artists were consistently among the occupations with the highest degree of income equality. Those who are trying to compete for jobs in the wave of the new Creative Economy who are not highly-skilled or even artists fair even worse. (Stern & Seifert, 2008) There is an argument here for considering art and culture as a public good which is therefore worthy of public investment.

Many libertarians like to argue that the neo-capitalist policies which have enacted regulations for environmental and worker protections have negatively impacted the “invisible

hand” of the market and have forced corporations to seek cheaper labor and resources abroad in countries which do not have such strict regulations and penalties. (Zwolinski, 2008) Social and environmental corporate responsibility, they argue, is misguided and “undermines private property, agency and wealth.” (Sternberg, 1999) But there were clear reasons why these regulations needed to be enacted. Many corporations were not willing to “do the right thing” by protecting their workers from unsafe and unhealthy working conditions or pay them a livable wage. Nor were they willing to take responsibility for the environmental pollution that their activities were creating. The neo-capitalist policies were the moral thing to do. (Nair & Pradhan, 2009) (Shapiro & Irons, 2011)

American society has had to adapt, however, to the loss of good paying manufacturing jobs and to relying more and more on cheap imported goods for consumption. We have become dependent on a service sector economy which is marked by two extremes: jobs that pay low-wages, have high turnover, and no benefits such as domestic services, hotels and restaurants, and retail; and jobs that pay higher wages, offer benefits, and typically have longer tenures such as education, communication, administration, and business and financial services. (The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development , 2001) Those who do not have the skills or education to fill the higher paying jobs are relegated to the lower paying service jobs at places such as fast-food restaurants and big box stores.

“On average across OECD countries, part-time work is a much more common form of working arrangement in the service sector than in the goods-producing sector... Within the service sector, the incidence of temporary work in the personal services sector is well above the national average in all countries...relative earnings for American service workers are substantially lower.” (The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development , 2001)

Very few Americans have long-term employment anymore and even fewer have any hope of getting pensions.

Private pension coverage rates have stagnated, at best, for decades—about half of the workforce is covered—and there has been a well-documented shift from defined benefit to defined contribution plans. That change has effectively shifted much of the risk associated with funding adequate pensions from employers to employees. Furthermore, rapidly rising costs of health insurance have discouraged employers from offering such insurance to retirees in recent years. (Leonesio, Bridges, Gesumaria, & Bene, 2012)

The tradition of workers being taken care of by the employers which was more common in the 1940's has come and gone. Florida writes that “increasingly, workers have come to accept that they are completely on their own – that the traditional sources of security and entitlement no longer exist, or even matter.” (Florida, 2012) This shift can be witnessed by the increasing rate of contingent employees in the U.S. “In 2005, the government estimated that 31% of U.S. workers were already so-called contingent workers. Experts say that number could increase to 40% or more in the next 10 years.” (Isidore, 2010)

Due in large part to this transition in employment status, many workers now move more horizontally for employment advancement than vertically. Some say this is a result of increased specialization which results in company positions that employers may or may not have any expertise in. (Florida, 2012) However, corporations have also grown in size and many have become multi-national corporations which do not need to have any employee loyalty. There is a vast source of labor found in other parts of the world which cost far less. (Mattera, 2003)

Additionally, “current tax, labor and employment law gives employers and employees incentives to create contingent relationships not for the sake of flexibility or efficiency but in order to evade their legal obligations.” By evading their legal obligations, such as making contributions to Social Security, unemployment insurance, workers' compensation, corporations save money. (The Commission on the Future of Worker-Management Relations , 1994) Corporations are, after all, according to economic theory, profit maximizing entities.

Humans, however, are an incredibly adaptable and entrepreneurial species. It is my opinion that we have adapted to this new economic reality by refocusing on community and activating our creativity which has fueled the trend which Florida calls the “rise of the creative class.” More and more people have decided to divest themselves from the grind of the institutional models created during the Industrial Revolution. (Gilkey, 2009) This creativity has manifested in an increase in entrepreneurialism and in movements to foster local economies and to become more self-sufficient. Technology has assisted with the rise of entrepreneurialism and the field of planning has evolved into “smart growth” strategies which leverage techniques to make communities more attractive, affordable, safer and healthier.

What is discouraging, however, is that we continue to measure our success by calculations of economic growth instead of measuring our success by qualitative growth. This results in trickle down policies which lack the ability to effectively manage gentrification. Florida even writes in his book that “what looks like neighborhood revitalization from one’s perspective is gentrification from another; rising housing values often go hand in hand with the displacement of long-term residents, a serious problem that demands serious responses.”

“We must shift from a way of life that valorizes consumption, in which we take our identities from the branded characteristics of the goods we purchase, to one that enables us to develop our talents and our individuality, to realize our truest selves through our work and other activities. Our fledgling Creative Economy needs to give way to a fully Creative Society, one that is more just, more equitable, more sustainable, and more prosperous: our economic future depends on it.” (Florida, 2012)

### **The Artists’ Dilemma**

Independent artists share a great deal in common with entrepreneurs and “share the same revolutionary spirit of modernism.” (Roberts, 2012) Over the last 50 years, artists have been drawn into the capitalist system and co-opted by many corporations as a tool to market and sell

their products. The historical antagonism between art and capitalism gave way most noticeably when Andy Warhol integrated art, culture and consumerism in the 1960s with his Campbell Soup designs and use of corporate logos in his art. (Roberts, 2012) This commercialization of art has been a tool to drive economic growth, not necessarily the work of those who prefer to focus on conceptual art, art for art's sake, or art for building community. And some would argue that this commercialization of art has furthered our addiction to unsustainable levels of consumption. It is the adoption of artistic techniques by the business, science and technology sectors which has created the link between the "creatives" and economic growth which Florida describes. (Rosler, 2012)

Unfortunately, because we continue to rely on quantitative measurements to gauge the success of the creative economy, we fail to recognize and celebrate its qualitative benefits. Art, if allowed to be qualitatively measured as a non-commodity, can be shown to have a significant benefit for sustainable community development. It can be used to bridge cultural differences by acting as a catalyst for open communication and sharing of values through storytelling, painting, and collage making, to name a few techniques. (Grodach, 2011) Planners and organizations, such as the New England Environmental Finance Center, have been using artistic modeling techniques, both through miniature physical modeling and through computer design, to better communicate with stakeholders. Software programs like ArcGIS, CommunityViz, and SketchUp are modern design programs which enable us to show stakeholders in a visual way how particular policy decisions may impact their landscape in the future. A picture, as they say, is worth a million words.

Traditional artists, however, are often taken for granted in the discussion of the creative economy. We rely on them to create "cool" and "vibrant" cultural hubs that get filled with

unique and trendy coffee shops, restaurants, and galleries. This unique quality of place which develops subsequently lures in the tourists and the larger capital firms which are the ones who generally drive economic growth and thereby generate public revenue and employment. This allows municipalities to fund social service programs and community benefits and it is why city planners and economic development directors love the concept of the creative economy. What we fail to recognize, is that it is those same bohemian artists who are primarily the ones working in the service sector (which Florida does not include in his “creative class”) and filling those low-paying jobs as the barista or server because it is the only way they can manage to have the time to create their art and pay their bills. The more affluent members of the creative economy, such as architects, software designers, movie producers, engineers and biotech employees, benefit from the foundation laid by the artists, by the quality of place that they generate. And the overall community benefits from the increase in employment, entertainment opportunities, and public services. (Deutsche, 1987)

Artists, obviously benefit too, because this means they have a more affluent crowd to sell their artwork to. But only a few will ever go on to be the next Andy Warhol and most will never be able to live on the sale of their artwork alone. (Barnett, 2010) According to the National Endowment of the Arts research (assembled from data in the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey averages from 2003-2005), one-third of artists work for only part of the year and generally earn less than workers with similar education levels even though they twice as likely to have a college degree as other U.S. workers. Additionally, this NEA study only focused on Americans who named an artist occupation as their primary job. They estimated that 300,000 Americans have secondary employment as artists. (Gaquin, 2008)

All of the artists I interviewed for this paper have at least one other job and many of them balance the needs of their families as well. Since the majority of traditional artists are low-income and work at least two jobs (including their studio job), they have little time to participate in the public policy-making process nor do they have the economic power associated with large firms and development corporations. Their ability to individually influence political decisions which impact their livelihood therefore is minimal even though it has been witnessed time and time again that where the artists go, commercial activity will follow. (Deutsche, 1987)

Traditional artists may then be the catalyst for revitalization, but they are generally not associated as being a driver for economic growth. They lay the foundation for a beautiful, vibrant community and are ambassadors of communication. They enable us to remember our humanity and our responsibility to humankind and to nature. One only needs to experience the full range of emotions that a song, a movie, a play, or a work of art can inspire in order to understand the power of art. It develops social bonds, community capital, and channels for communication and sharing of values. It is the yin to the yang of economic development. It reminds us that the rational planning model which focuses only on economic growth runs short if it ignores the negative externalities to our communities and to our environment. This puts art and culture into a unique and important role within the framework of sustainability planning and development.

### **Creative Placemaking**

Quality of life is integrally connected to “quality of place.” As Corson Ellis, a successful entrepreneur who moved his company to Portland, Maine from New Jersey, says in an interview for the Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce, “If you’re in a beautiful, beautiful place, you’re a more motivated and happy person.” (Ellis, 2012) Creative Placemaking, a term created by the National Endowment for the Arts is a relatively new concept which attempts to balance



the need for a healthy economy, society and environment. It is a socially inclusive community planning technique which leverages the arts to help shape and revitalize the physical, social, and economic character of neighborhoods, cities, and towns. Instead of focusing on a single cluster of large arts and cultural institutions, it advocates for a more decentralized portfolio of spaces which foster creativity. It is a process which is developed through partnerships from public, non-profit and community sectors which “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.” (Markusen & Gadwa, Creative Placemaking, 2010)

The National Endowment for the Arts created funding for Creative Placemaking initiatives through their Our Town federal grant program and through its private-sector grants and loans provided by ArtPlace, a collaboration of 13 leading national and regional foundations, eight federal agencies including the National Endowment for the Arts, and six of the nation’s largest banks. Forty nine cities across the U.S. are listed on the ArtPlace website as having received grants and/or funding to develop everything from artist live/work spaces, to public art projects, to cultural events. Artspelago, a regional partnership between Eastport, Maine and New Brunswick used ArtPlace funding to develop and foster tourism for its arts, culture and farming industries.

Entrepreneurship is at the heart of Creative Placemaking which emphasizes an asset-based approach to planning, drawing on the ideas and inspirations of people in the local community to develop public spaces, services and local business. An asset-based approach to planning is different than a needs-based approach in that it builds on the existing strengths within the existing community instead of focusing on the community’s needs. For example, Portland,

Maine has a lot of artists, due in part to the efforts of the Maine College of Art located in downtown. Using the strengths and talents of the artists living in Portland to make it a more beautiful city makes sense in an asset-based framework. Portland also has a rich and beautiful architectural history and a healthy stock of well-maintained historical buildings. It also has a large multicultural community. These are all assets which can be used to nourish Portland's unique character and make it a desirable place for tourists and in-migration.

Creativity in this context, however, is not seen as occurring in some sort of definitional silo or vacuum. It happens concurrently within the context of the arts, the economy and the environment (both natural and built). It recognizes the creative ability of everyone and the benefits of community and social capital. It also recognizes that these efforts, although supported from the top, must originate and grow up from the bottom. It is inherently a grassroots effort to create vibrant, resilient, and sustainable communities.

Good urban design is an important component of Creative Placemaking. Urban design has been described as “the art of creating and shaping cities and towns.” Typically, it is part of the larger planning and development framework. It is derived from planning and transportation policy, architectural design, economics, engineering and landscape design. Interdisciplinary by nature, it “draws together the many strands of place-making, environmental stewardship, social equity and economic viability into the creation of places with distinct beauty and identity.” (Urban Design, 2013) It is a craft, which if incorporated into a larger community-driven effort to enhance and improve their community, can be an incredibly useful and holistic tool for community development.

William Whyte was one of the first planners who measured the impact of architecture and design on the ability of people to interact socially. His books, *The Organization Man* (1956) and

*The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (1980), were based on his observations of human behaviors in urban settings and how design and policies that regulate spaces affect human behavior. One of his most significant discoveries was that by providing a place to sit, for people to not only congregate and linger, but also to be able to interact independently with the location (by say, moving the chairs to a more or less sunny area), good urban design could generate urban vitality. Public art is an important component of urban design and one which attracts human interaction and which can subsequently contribute to increased social capital and cross-cultural communication.

### **Portland, Maine**

Portland, Maine is one of many communities that have embraced the creative economy strategy to promote economic growth for more than 10 years now. Portland has also made a concerted effort to develop and foster its arts and cultural sector for a much longer time frame. One could easily point out that Portland has been an incubator for the arts for more than a century, beginning with the construction of the Portland Museum of Art in 1882 and then the financing and construction of Merrill Auditorium in 1912. The Maine College of Art was also founded in 1882 and is located in the heart of the Arts District. The Arts District was designated in the mid-1990s and the seven goals identified in the original 1995 plan were:

1. Improve the economic performance of arts institutions in the Arts district and throughout the city.
2. Enhance the economic impact of arts institutions in the city.
3. Create a more favorable business climate in the District and in downtown Portland.
4. Support the creative efforts of individual artists and safeguard artists continuing presence in the community.
5. Contribute to the overall quality of life in the community.
6. Establish an Arts District that is a permanent feature of downtown Portland.
7. To build community trust and collaboration of broadly diverse groups as a way of fostering cross-cultural communication and understanding. (Sprouse & Goldring, 1995)

In 1997, the Portland Arts and Cultural Alliance (PACA) was established as a quasi-municipal agency to assume the responsibilities of the Local Arts Agency. The Creative Portland Corporation (CPC) replaced PACA in 2008 as a non-profit agency to support “the City of Portland’s economic development efforts which enhance and create creative economy business and arts district development and employment opportunities.” (City of Portland, 2013) The decision to transition the PACA into CPC was due in part to the results of the Creative Economy Summit held in Portland in 2006.

I met with several individuals in Portland who are involved in the arts and/or Portland’s creative economy strategy to get a pulse on what the current status of Portland’s efforts are and where there may be some gaps. The first four individuals I met with included: Greg Mitchell, Economic Development Director, City of Portland; Donna McNeil, Arts Program & Policy Director, Maine Arts Commission; Jennifer Hutchins, Executive Director, Creative Portland Corporation; and Jessica Tomlinson, Director of Artists at Work, Maine College of Art. I also met with four working artists who have studios in Portland. My list of interview questions for the two different groups can be found in Appendices 1 and 2.

I have developed a list of recommendations and actions for the City of Portland based on my research into the creative economy, the cultural economy, creative placemaking, case studies of artist live/work spaces as well as my interviews and personal observations. A brief list can be seen below with a more detailed explanation with strategies following.

1. Foster more cultural clusters
2. Expand current and/or establish new Arts TIF Districts
3. Promote holistic urban design and public art principles
4. Create and promote a qualitative score card for the city that can be promoted in concert with Portland’s Economic Scorecard.
5. Support the Creative Portland Corporation as an economic development driver of the city.

- a) Develop an arts and technology incubator center which creates a physical space for the arts, culture and technology sectors to meet, engage, collaborate and share knowledge and for the display of conceptual art, new technologies and innovative community development projects.
- 6. Reestablish the Portland Arts & Cultural Alliance as the community development driver of the city.
  - a) Develop a Center for Collaborative Craftsmanship

### Foster More Cultural Clusters

Urban planning for the arts has historically been focused on designating and funding singular arts districts. This is in contrast to Jane Jacob's approach to urban development which emphasizes the need to foster a mix of uses for pluralism and decentralization. She celebrates the distinctive natures of neighborhoods (i.e. Little Italy, Greenwich Village, Chinatown) but notes that their benefits derive from their porous boundaries. (Jacobs, 1961) Arts districts are usually centered around large nonprofit institutions which benefit from public subsidies and large foundation grants. Although these institutions (i.e. Portland Museum of Art, Merrill Auditorium) are often initially built in economically depressed areas where cities are hoping to spur economic growth, their success can often be a double-edge sword. As nonprofit institutions, they do not have to pay property taxes on the large lots of land where they reside. This incurs an opportunity cost to city governments which lose out on the potential revenue which they would generate from for-profit enterprises. The rationale for the arts district strategy is to market these districts as regional and tourist destinations, hoping for a spillover effect that will boost revenues at private businesses such as restaurants, bars, and retail shops. As property values rise, however, due to the popularity of the districts, high real estate values can become a barrier to artists who are hoping to establish studios and galleries in close proximity to the larger institutions. (Grodach, Beyond Bilbao: Rethinking Flagship Cultural Development and Planning in Three California Cities, 2010)

Portland's Arts District is located on its peninsula and is anchored by the Maine College of Arts, the Portland Museum of Art, the Portland Stage and Merrill Auditorium. It has been celebrated by many as integral to the success in revitalizing Portland's peninsula (Congress Street in particular) and it would be difficult to debate otherwise. However, its success has been a double edged sword. There are a handful of artist studios and some new low-income artist lofts that have been developed in this area, but there is fierce competition for limited space. Although several local galleries and a few cooperatives have sprung up within the district, many have dispersed into the area known as Portland's Back Bay.

A report by the Creative Economy Steering Committee of Portland, which included municipal officials, academics, artists, and members of the business community, acknowledged this trend in 2008 and again in its 2012 revision. The conference report identified a study done by the Muskie School of Public Service which clearly illustrates the challenges faced by many communities which have chosen the Creative Economy as a strategy for economic growth. Although they discovered that Portland had grown and revitalized and that vacant storefronts had been filled, they also found that artists were struggling to keep up with the increasing cost of rents. In the Muskie School report, Dr. Charles Colgan stated that this "erosion" of the artist base was "Portland's greatest challenge to maintaining its creative economy." (Creative Economy Steering Committee, 2008)

However, I do not believe we need to fight our own success. More recent thinking about cultural arts district development focuses on fostering neighborhood-based creative clusters. (Stern & Seifert, 2008) For example, the development of the Back Bay as an artists' enclave has developed organically and is still very much in its initial stages of growth. The Back Bay is an area which is distinct from downtown Portland and the current artist and entrepreneur activity

there creates a more dispersed pattern of cultural development. Natural clusters of cultural districts like the Back Bay evolve more organically and encourage cross-neighborhood visits, resulting in an increase in cohesion and economic activity across the city. The existence of another unique and vibrant artist area provides residents, regional visitors and tourists alike, the opportunity to travel beyond the boundaries of downtown Portland for shopping and entertainment.

By identifying and fostering these areas of activity we could develop these cultural clusters that have their own identity – their own unique attraction index. And if developed equitably, supportive efforts could benefit neighborhoods outside of downtown and make Portland an even more attractive destination with several revitalized neighborhoods to visit or to relocate to. These are also potentially really great places to develop artist live/work spaces. The city of Portland could benefit both economically and culturally by fostering the development of the arts in these new areas. They could accomplish this by either supporting current efforts through subsidies and/or tax breaks, or by incentivizing artistic activity in other depressed neighborhoods. It could then market these areas as new arts districts with a somewhat different flavor. This would create an urban quilt of multiple arts districts that are each unique and interesting. Visitors could take an “arts district tour” of the various artsy neighborhoods.

One strategy that Portland could use to assist in this effort is to revisit zoning codes in areas where activity is occurring, such as the Back Bay. Portland’s Zoning Ordinances are very complex but have been made so because of a strong civic pride in retaining the historical character of the city and its built environment. This is part of what makes Portland so attractive and so unique. It is not one of those cities that people can call “anywhere USA.” However, the complexity of the zoning ordinances can also be an impediment to creating artist studios and

artist live/work spaces which generally are very diverse in their land use and space needs. For example, some artists need large spaces, many need lots of natural light, some need elevators, sprinklers and fire safe rooms, most need running water and others need ventilation systems and high amperage electrical outlets. Additionally, the places where artist studios generally begin to organically pop up are vacant industrial areas which are only zoned for industrial use (such as East Back Bay) which prohibits the development of a mixed use environment to foster retail development and pedestrian activity.

The City of Portland is experiencing a renaissance of urban redevelopment right now. It should take the lead in taking the opportunity to find and purchase space for artists to live and work long-term. This strategy has been used by ArtPlace (a collaboration of foundations and banks that invest in arts, culture and creative placemaking) and Artspace (a non-profit real estate developer specializing in creating, owning and operating affordable spaces for artists and creative businesses), in several locations throughout the United States. Artist live/work spaces are particularly desirable by younger artists who have not started families or purchased a home. These are the places which have been most successful in revitalizing blighted and vacant urban spaces.

One example of this is Riverside Artist Lofts in Reno, Nevada. The Truckee River District is an area located between the city's entertainment and financial districts that was blighted by the transition to suburban residential development and the large casinos to the north. The Truckee River district had assets, however, such as its stock of abandoned historic buildings, the Truckee River, and the city's main civic buildings. The Riverside Artist Lofts are credited with bringing investment and residents back into downtown and with efforts to restore Truckee River.



Another example is the Tashiro-Kaplan in Pioneer Square in Seattle, Washington.

Pioneer Square is known as the original skid road. There is still a large homeless population and social service provider network located there. Artists had located there primarily because of cheap rents and large spaces with lots of light. It is one of Seattle's oldest neighborhoods and is filled with old architecture and history. Its biggest challenge to success has been trying to balance the needs of the artists to attract buyers into the neighborhood (due to its large homeless population and its reputation as a location for drug dealers, prostitutes and bars) with the needs of the homeless population to remain in a place which they call home. However, there was a significant community participation process which articulated an objective to "promoting artist residents that might bridge class divisions between the homeless and very low-income population and a presumed growing contingent of condo-dwellers." Furthermore, since the religious and non-profit social service agencies serving the homeless owned their spaces, it was generally felt that the homeless would not be displaced. In fact, it was felt that by anchoring an artist community in the neighborhood that it would enhance safety for the homeless and low-income residents. (Gadwa & Muessig, 2011)

ArtSpace's assessment of these efforts, ten years after the development of Riverside and Tashiro-Kaplan, resulted in the following findings:

1. They repurposed and restored vacant historic structures and enhanced the tax base.
2. They influenced vicinity physical investment and increased area property values, with little evidence of contributing to gentrification-led displacement.
3. They fostered increased livability, safety, and helped bridge social divides.
4. They provide important regional artistic models, anchor arts districts, and expand arts offerings to the public.
5. They support, attract, and retain arts entrepreneurs, enhancing regional competitiveness.
6. They bolster other area businesses through artist-resident spending and by attracting visitors. (Gadwa & Muessig, 2011)

The East Back Bay is a natural location for consideration of this strategy because the buildings are in need of repair and the rents are relatively low. The timing is right for the city to consider purchasing some land in that area for development in partnership with AVESTA housing to develop non-market rate artist live/work spaces. Although the influx of artists into low-income neighborhoods is often blamed for gentrification, there has been no definitive research which proves any causality. (Gadwa & Muessig, 2011) However, neither has it been proven that it has not caused gentrification and there exists a healthy debate which cannot be adequately addressed in this paper. (Deutsche, 1987) Fortunately, the East Back Bay, similarly to Pioneer Square, already has several permanent low-income housing units which will anchor that population in this neighborhood in the event that gentrification might occur.

There are many benefits to establishing live/work spaces in the context of sustainability planning. The most obvious one is that it reduces dependency on the automobile. When you live where you work, and if you are located in a mixed use development area, there is little need to drive anywhere to get your basic amenities. Live/work spaces can also contribute to shared savings and a reduction in resource consumption from shared utilities, shared equipment, and shared labor. Successful projects have resulted in community spillover benefits such as safer neighborhoods, increased commercial activity, community gathering spaces, greater civic engagement of artists, as well as aesthetic improvements such as gardens and public art. (Gadwa, *How Artist Sapce Matters: Impacts and Insights*, 2010)

This strategy becomes particularly challenging in areas which are already in high demand since the city obviously has to balance the need for market rate housing (and their property tax revenue) and development revenues with the demand for affordable housing. The particular strategy which seems to work the best in areas which are already in high demand, such as

Munjoy Hill and the India Street Neighborhood, is one which involves the purchase of a building with joint ownership between the artists and an organization such as Artspace for studio space only. The types of artists which this generally attracts are the ones who are middle-aged and more established in their careers. This artist sector generally already owns their own home and/or has a partner or spouse which helps to support their artistic career. In s SIAP 2012 study they found that:

If arts districts are to stay artists' districts, the key appears to be ownership. Cultural organizations and artists who are willing and able to purchase property can stabilize a district and insure their continued presence. Programs that prepare independent artists and nonprofit groups for property ownership in terms of both knowledge and credit could serve multiple roles in helping to sustain "natural" cultural districts. (Stern & Seifert, 2012)

The Traffic Zone Center for Visual Art in Minneapolis, Minnesota is one such example. In this limited-equity model, the artists co-own the Traffic Zone via a for-profit corporation in 50/50 partnership with Artspace (the Canadian version of ArtPlace). Although the artists invested a great deal of time and money into the development of Traffic Zone, they were also financially assisted through grants and loans with favorable terms given by the TCF Bank, the City of Minneapolis, and a few local foundations. It is important to note, that although Artspace is a non-profit, it owns this property with investment partners via for-profit limited liability partnerships and so they still pay property taxes which assist the city in attaining their revenue goals. This is also the case for the two live/work artist spaces that they own (without artist investment) in the St. Paul/Minneapolis area. (Gadwa, How Artist Sapce Matters: Impacts and Insights, 2010)

The Creative Portland Corporation (CPC) and the City of Portland have been in consultation with Artspace for a few years, but nothing concrete has materialized. The process requires a survey of artists' needs as a first step, but the initial cost of an artist space needs

survey was too high to begin the process. So in early 2013, CPC has hired a local survey company to do so, but as of this writing, the results have not been finalized. In the 2012 SIAP report, they also found that mapping neighborhoods with areas designated by incomes and by existence of arts and cultural institutions was useful in understanding the impact of creative clusters over time. This is a project that would greatly benefit the City of Portland's efforts to foster its arts and cultural assets. (Stern & Seifert, 2012)

#### Expand and/or Establish New Arts TIF District

The city will need to consider expanding the current Arts TIF District in order to sufficiently fund the efforts of the Creative Portland Corporation, and/or consider establishing new arts TIF districts in order to financially foster new cultural clusters. The current Arts District TIF is restricted to the area of the Arts District around Congress Street in Portland, but it seems likely that the success of the Arts District could be shown to have increased property values within a much broader area surrounding it. Portland could increase its Arts District TIF revenue by geographically expanding it in order to provide more financial support to the Creative Portland Corporation and other artistic and cultural endeavors. If the city were to embrace the concept of fostering creative clusters, then those areas, such as Back Bay, could also have TIF districts established to support the creative cultural activities which are improving the attractability of those areas. With all the recent development activity happening now on Portland's peninsula and further out, it would make sense to expand the current and/or develop new TIF districts now.

#### Promote Holistic Urban Design & Public Art Principles

According to the Urban Land Institute, holistic urban design can “generate higher returns on investment for both investors and the public at large.” (Urban Land Institute, 2009) Often,

cities get mired in silo projects which do not provide a vision for the city as a whole. Developing one lot at a time or one neighborhood at a time without looking at how it plays in to the whole fabric of the city can lead to development which is fragmented and confusing. Good urban design has been touted as a tool for sustainability planning in regard to creating more pedestrian and bicycle friendly communities. Good urban design can create better connectivity and foster the use of transit systems which reduce the dependence on automobiles. In these ways it has been argued that good urban design can create attractive mixed use neighborhoods and encourage active, healthy lifestyles. (Falk, 2011)

Public art is an important element of good urban design. Much of the recognition and discussion about the benefits of good urban design that I have found have been based in Australia, New Zealand, and Europe. One of the best descriptions I found stated that “Art and design create a means for telling the stories that remind societies of their foundations. Public places art is more than the provision of out-doors art galleries. It is also making the public place an artwork in itself.” Furthermore, “When the process is socially inclusive and made equally important with the product, the outcome is an improved environment - socially, economically, culturally and politically.” (Worth, 2013)

Public art can also have its downfalls, such as the need for maintenance (and its associated cost) and acts of vandalism. This was most recently experienced in Portland with the “Tracing the Fore” sculpture installation and its subsequent removal on Fore Street. But part of the reason that “Tracing the Fore” did not succeed is because it was not inviting for the public to interact with. In contrast, the statue at Monument Square has sitting areas around it, and although you cannot directly interact with the statue, you can enjoy being next to it by sitting around its base. Public art can also serve as way to create community pride and identity and to promote

and celebrate local artists. The inter-relationship of the landscape, art and people to the built environment is the foundation of good urban design. “The physical enjoyment of the built environment by the community activates its presence. The holistic vision notices the relationships between objects and space, between artist and architect, and between diverse communities and their places. The intersecting trajectories are honoured and the laying down of memory reinforces this vision. The signature of communities recognises the integrity of place and ensures a long life.” (Stonehouse, 2013)

There are several examples of great public art which not only improves the aesthetics of place, but which act as catalyst for interaction of community. One such example is the Musical Swings in Montreal. Part public furniture, part playground, part art – it is a set of 21 musical swings each of which sound a different note or melody when swung. When swung together they can compose a musical composition. It is one of Montreal’s most popular works of public art. (Holmes, 2012) A project such as this would be perfect for the public space next to the Eastland Hotel at the intersection of Congress Street and High Street and it could facilitate community building efforts as well.

Freemont, a neighborhood of Seattle, Washington also has some amazing works of public art that Portland could learn from. Sculptor Richard Beyer created “Waiting for the Interurban” to commemorate the light rail Interurban line that used to connect downtown Seattle with all of its neighborhoods. Made from cast aluminum, the piece depicts five people under a shelter and a dog with a human face. The public is allowed, even encouraged, to participate in adorning the sculptures with costumes, displays, and “art attacks.” The only rules are that no commercial advertisements are allowed and that everyone must clean up their display when done (they are allowed to stay up for one week). Projects such as this could be used in Portland, even to animate

bus stops in order to make transit more fun and attractive. Portland, Oregon took this approach and incorporated artwork into their transit stops that reflect each neighborhood, resulting in an increase in ridership. (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010)

The Fremont Troll is another excellent example. Sculpted around an old Volkswagen beetle, the troll animates the space beneath the Aurora bridge and it is a source of community pride and identity. Community events such as “Troll-a-ween” and “Shakespeare at the Troll” have been successful community events inspired by the Fremont Troll. Something like this would be great to animate the space beneath Casco Bay Bridge. Working in concert with the Portland Public Art Program, a good urban designer would be able to facilitate projects such as this in ways which weave the fabric of the city together and create community identity and pride.

#### Develop a Scorecard for Quality of Place

When I interviewed Greg Mitchell, Portland’s Economic Development Director, I received a copy of “Portland’s Economic Scorecard.” It is produced by Portland’s Community Chamber, in partnership with the Portland Regional Chamber and the 2012-2013 version was the third such publication that they had produced since its inception in 2007. It includes a list of 32 primary and secondary economic indicators (See Appendix A) in which they measure Portland’s success in comparison to Maine, New England, the U.S. and a set of benchmark cities from around the country.

Portland could develop a similar scorecard for quality of place by using longitudinal qualitative measurements. A few organizations have attempted this, including the NEA, ArtPlace and OurTown through various types of indicators. ArtPlace developed a list of “vibrancy indicators” in order to “measure the change in people, activity and value in the communities in which ArtPlace invests and assess the overall impact of the ArtPlace portfolio on these

neighborhoods.” Their indicators are divided into three categories; people, activity and value. These categories are explained below. The “people” category includes Population Density, Employment, and Percentage of Workers in Creative Occupations. The “activity” category includes number of indicator businesses, number of jobs in the community, walkability, number of mixed use blocks, cell phone activity, percentage of independent businesses, and number of creative industry jobs.

However, even the author of NEA’s “Creative Placemaking” White Paper, Anne Markusen, a self-proclaimed “evidence gal,” has begun to question the usefulness of these indicators. Her primary criticism, which she acquired after listening to the concerns of several grantee teams, is that it is a misplaced “one-size-fits-all” method. Fuzzy terms such as “livability”, “vitality”, and “vibrancy” can mean many different things to many different people. Most creative placemaking efforts are efforts tailored to specific communities with specific assets, challenges and goals. As such, they should be evaluated on their goals, progress and outcomes. Both the Our Town and ArtPlace grants are short-term, providing funding for only 1-2 years. Communities, however, are not reborn or revitalized in such a short term scenario. And finally, many of these indicators ignore generational and ethnic differences, focusing more on characteristics and amenities valued by the young, white, hipster demographic.

“Where is the mission of bringing diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired? Shouldn’t creative placemaking advance the intrinsic values and impact of the arts? Heightened and broadened arts participation? Preserving cultural traditions? Better quality art offerings? Providing beauty, expression, and critical perspectives on our society? Are artists and arts organizations whose greatest talents lie in the arts world to be judged only on their impact outside of this core?” (Markusen, 2012)

Longitudinal studies could chart a neighborhood’s progress over a period of time as compared to its goals rather than comparing it to other particular places which are inherently



different economically, socially and geographically. Causal models, which also take into consideration other forces at work (i.e crime prevention, community development efforts, social services and infrastructure improvement), could paint a clearer picture of the impacts of increased investment in the arts and culture opportunities and activities of a particular place. (Markusen, 2012)

Portland could develop a quality of place scorecard, which is both quantitative and qualitative, that begins by establishing staged criteria for success. The criteria could be developed through community, stakeholder and/or neighborhood charettes. Every few years, they could evaluate their progress toward attaining their previously established quality of place goals to evaluate the success of their efforts in the context of other events (such as the Great Recession). This interval could also be a time to reevaluate their goals in light of an ever-changing community. This would not need to be an expensive endeavor. By communicating clearly that the charettes will be held on the same day every year so that everyone who has an interest or stake in the matter can attend, either in person or through an online format, maximum participation could be attained. Different neighborhoods could hold their own charettes and report back to the city. Or the city could commission a survey every few years such as the Parks and Recreation Community Needs Assessment Survey conducted in 2007. A survey would be more costly, however. Either way, the city could compile the information gathered into one scorecard similar to the one produced by the Portland Chamber with bullet graphs that are designed to display qualitative measurements.

#### Rethink the Role of the Creative Portland Corporation

As I have illustrated in this paper (and others have written extensively about this as well) the Creative Economy is vast in its number and type of participants. Its occupations and

industries are incredibly diverse and numerous and naturally vary from one place to the next. There is no one size fits all creative economy strategy. The Creative Portland Corporation (CPC) has been given a very tall order to foster the entire creative economy in Portland with one Executive Director and one part-time Program Assistant. With an annual budget of approximately \$100,000 contributed by the Arts District TIF, anyone would be hard pressed to support, nonetheless grow and foster, such a broad and diverse Creative Economy initiative.

The CPC was merged with the Portland Arts and Cultural Alliance in 2008 and was established as a non-profit organization to “receive donations, grants and contributions in support of the City of Portland’s economic development efforts which enhance and create creative economy business and arts district development and employment opportunities.” It seems clear that its mission is more in line fostering arts and entrepreneurialism as a driver for economic growth than in fostering arts and culture as a form of community building. This is not to say that their role is not an important one, because it is. Economic development and job growth are vitally important for a vibrant city. But I believe that there is a role for an additional organization which focuses purely on art and culture as a tool for building social capital. If we were to separate the Creative Economy into two goals, economic development and community development, I think the CPC would do well to foster the former. Both are huge goals and are too big for one small organization. The CPC could become the champion for innovative design and entrepreneurialism.

There are a lot of wonderful and exciting new entrepreneurial and creative industries that are birthing in Portland and CPC could serve as the incubator for fostering those businesses. Cottage industries such as Maine Mead Works, Tandem Coffee Roasters, Urban Farm Fermentory and others are just a few of the new businesses started in Portland who are focused

on community based, sustainable business models. Portland is also becoming home to many innovative financial and technological businesses such as IW Financial, Tilsen, Kepware Technologies, Local Thunder which are finding ways to drive economic development and provide local employment. (Kammerer, 2013) CPC could play a pivotal role in bringing these businesses together to share ideas and provide solutions to some of the environmental, social and economic challenges we are facing locally, regionally and globally.

CPC could essentially become a community development corporation that fosters innovative sustainability solutions through local cottage industry business initiatives as well as larger local technology business initiatives that work on a global level. CPC could develop an Arts and Technology Incubator Center which allows these creative minds to come together and share ideas in order to develop real solutions that could make Portland a sustainable economic powerhouse. We need creative minds to find solutions to challenges which we will be facing in our not too distant future due to the impacts of climate change such as: clean renewable energy; clean water; and sustainable food systems. Using CPC to foster that initiative would fulfill its mission to support the City of Portland's economic development efforts.

#### Reestablish the Portland Arts & Cultural Alliance

The other side of the coin is the need for advocacy and support for the arts and cultural sector in Portland. Recognizing the value of arts and culture as a tool for building social capital and not necessarily as a driver of economic development, Portland needs to reestablish the Portland Arts and Cultural Alliance (PACA). Ethnographers in Chicago “found that Mexican immigrants in Chicago ‘use artistic and cultural practices to break down social isolation, create new social networking relationships, strengthen... bonds among group members, and ... create local and transnational ties with [outside] institutions...’” (Stern & Seifert, 2008) Portland has

become extremely diverse multiculturally over the last 20 years. The Multilingual and Multicultural Center of the Portland Public Schools reports that there are over 60 different languages spoken by over 1400 students within the public school system. (Schools, 2013) According to Tae Chong from Coastal Enterprises, Inc., about 15% of Portland's population is foreign-born. This makes Portland rich with diverse cultural traditions – traditions which are often communicated through art.

There are many programs offered by the City of Portland and the Department of Health and Human Services to assist the immigrant and refugee community in regard to housing, food assistance, healthcare, English language proficiency, as well as employment counseling and job training. There are microenterprise development programs available through Coastal Enterprises Inc. which provide advice and financing that help immigrants grow or start a business. (Coastal Enterprises, Inc., 2013) But I have not seen many programs which offer a space for cross-cultural communication. The PACA could be the coordinator of efforts to foster the conceptual artists in the Portland community and to bridge the artist community with the immigrant/refugee communities. Many cultures communicate their history and values through art and craft. Portland has some really wonderful artist cooperatives but I have not seen many which include any artists or crafters from the immigrant/refugee community. Fostering the development of artistic cooperation between these communities could not only build social capital, but it could provide networking opportunities and skill building opportunities for the immigrant/refugee community who may want to pursue a career in the arts.

The Arts and Equity Initiative is a public/private partnership between the City of Portland and the arts nonprofit Terra Moto that was implemented in 2007. Their Art At Work program developed an initiative called “Portland Works” which recognized a need to “establish structures

for ongoing communication and relationships between municipal and community leaders; decrease tensions within and between immigrant/refugee communities and city departments; reduce incidence of lawsuits that charge city workforce with misconduct; leverage economic advantages that accompany Portland's diverse, international population." They choose to address this need through "artmaking workshops that address personal, practical, and political topics [and to] use works generated in this process to create public art installations that further the goals of the project." (Terra Moto Inc., 2013)

This a great first step to establishing a process of building social capital through means of communication derived from artistic expression. I would like to take this idea even further and develop a Center for Collaborative Craftsmanship (CCC). The CCC mission would be to facilitate communication and cooperation through cultural craftsmanship among Maine's multicultural community, Native American community as well as native New England types of craft such as weathervanes and clam baskets. It would be a place for sharing of culture and history as well as techniques, knowledge, equipment and space. It would include a gallery space where participants could sell their work and the community could learn about the cultures of Maine's increasingly diverse population. Funding would be generated through grants, private investors, charitable contributions and sponsorships. "Sponsor a Crafter" would be a program through which either individuals or corporations could contribute to pay for a year-long booth rental for an income-worthy artist. Community classes would also provide financial support as well as offer members of the larger community an opportunity to participate, socialize and learn.

This is a project which I have just begun working on and hope that the City of Portland will support. Benefits could include: cross cultural communication; empowerment; community building; resilience; sharing; and skill building. It could also become part of a larger effort to

develop a multicultural community resource center. I recently assisted in facilitating a break out group at the Sustain Southern Maine Knowledge Sharing Session for partnering with Maine's immigrant/refugee community to enhance Southern Maine's economic vitality. The biggest recommendation by the immigrant /refugee community that I heard was the need for a cultural resource and community center.

### **Conclusion**

There have essentially been three sets of goals which have driven efforts to foster the creative economy by planners around the world: economic growth, revitalization of blighted neighborhoods, and cultural advocacy. The predominant goal in the United States has been economic growth with a focus on creating jobs, economic output and public sector revenue. This myopic focus on economic development will not sufficiently address social equity issues or environmental sustainability. A groundswell has been happening, however, which is beginning to change the conversation from only quantitative measurements of economic growth, to also include qualitative measurements of quality of life and happiness. Several scholars, and even the World Bank, have begun to discuss how cultural investments should be measured by how they “confirm the identity for specific groups of people, build social cohesion by bridging across cultures, provide avenues for social and political critique, foster self-esteem in individuals in communities, counteract fear and insecurity, and offer pleasure, beauty, and food for the soul.” (Markusen, 2008)

Community participation means much more than just being a consumer. Many recent community efforts have sprung up which actually reject the current unlimited economic growth paradigm and which challenge us to rethink our culture of unsustainable resource consumption. Some examples in Portland include the Hour Exchange, Buy Local Campaign, and Transition

Town. The Hour Exchange's mission is based on the concept of reciprocity. It is a non-profit 501c3 service exchange organization which bases its currency on time, with no relation to market value. It is not a direct trade between two people. Rather, it is a membership organization in which one person's hour of time is eligible to be redeemed for an equal amount of any other member's time. They have specific programs geared toward including artists and members of the multicultural community.

The Buy Local Campaign was created in 2006 by a group of local business owners and citizens who subsequently incorporated themselves into the Portland Independent Business and Community Alliance (PIBCA). Its mission is to "support locally owned, independent businesses in Portland, to maintain our unique community character, provide continuing opportunities for entrepreneurs, build community economic strength, and prevent the displacement of community-based businesses by national and global chains."

The Transition Town Movement is a global movement which is based on local groups "comprised of vibrant, grassroots community initiatives that seek to build community resilience in the face of such challenges as peak oil, climate change and the economic crisis." It differentiates itself from other sustainability movements by its focus on engaging communities in citizen-led education, action, and multi-stakeholder planning initiatives. They do so by identifying and using their local assets for networking and collaborating efforts focused on creating a more fulfilling, more socially connected and more equitable local way of life that "can withstand the shocks of rapidly shifting global systems." (Transition United States, 2012) The Transition Town Portland group started in 2012 and is still in its initial stages of development and growth.

So how do we move forward as planners and policy makers? I would like to suggest that we think of our role as creating a “Creative Society” and drop the terminology “Creative Economy.” We need to expand our measurement of success beyond quantitative measures of its contribution to the state or national GDP.

A longer-term strategy would build on the social and economic benefits that cultural engagement generates in all types of cultural districts, including civic clusters. It would define cultural engagement broadly to include conventional notions of high art as well as the popular culture and folk traditions of all groups that inhabit the contemporary city. Rather than using government and philanthropy to reinforce market forces, a long-view policy would compensate for market failure and promote social equity. Over time, the strategy would promote social inclusion and the productive utilization of all of the city’s fiscal, human, and social capital. (Stern & Seifert, 2012)

I think it could a little like this:

1. Economic Development goals in a Creative Society would focus on things like Green Technology, Entrepreneurialism (including support for local business initiatives like Organic Alchemy Composting and the Urban Farm Fermentory), and developing sustainable innovation incubators to catalyze new ideas and solutions for issues like climate change.
2. Environmental Health goals would include things holistic urban design, smart growth design and artist live/work spaces. From my research I have found that the artist live/work spaces that have been most successful are ones in which artists are at least part, if not full owners of their space such as Riverside Artist Lofts in Reno, Nevada and the Tashiro-Kaplan in Pioneer Square in Seattle, Washington.



3. Equity goals would include things like developing Cultural Community Centers, Creative Clusters, and interactive public art. By focusing on equitably building up from community and for community we will have a better shot at reaching both economic and environmental sustainability goals.

Each of these three focus areas overlap at times – for instance artist live/work spaces help us reach environmental health goals because they contribute to a reduction in resource consumption from shared utilities, shared equipment, and shared labor, not to mention a reduction in transportation. And they can assist in economic development by helping artists save money which they can then use to purchase goods from other local businesses.

Any good gardener knows that if they want to produce beautiful flowers or healthy food crops, they need to begin with healthy soil. Sustainability planning and development is no different. We need to begin with healthy, equitable neighborhoods if we expect to grow beautiful, prosperous communities. The role of the creative economy in sustainability planning and development, therefore, is to not only foster our creativity and ingenuity in developing solutions to some of today's most dire problems such as climate change and a stagnating economy, but to also value and proliferate public goods such as public art and transit, to catalyze social interaction, equity and communication, and in the end, to effectuate our efforts toward balancing the needs of society, the economy and nature.

**Appendix A**

<b>Portland's Economic Scorecard 2012-2013</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Employment Growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Value of City Imports &amp; Exports per Capita</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total Municipal General Fund Debt Outstanding per Capita</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Private Sector Growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Retail Sales</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipal Full-Time Equivalent Employees per 1,000 Population</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employment Growth in Key Sectors (Biomedical/Life Sciences; Information &amp; Technology; and Business &amp; Financial Services)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Vacancy Rate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Property Valuation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employment Growth in Key Sectors (Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, &amp; Visitor)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Population Growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total Regional Cost Index</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Unemployment Rate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Population Growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Science &amp; Engineering Occupations</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Unemployment Rate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Educational Attainment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Venture Capital Investment</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Earnings per Employee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Educational Attainment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Patents Issued</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Personal Income Growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crime Rate per 100,000 Population</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Food Services &amp; Drinking Places Sales Growth</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Median City Household Income</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing Affordability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visitors to Greater Portland/Casco Bay Region</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Median Regional Household Income</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rental Affordability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Airplane Passenger Counts (Enplanement)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gross Metro Product Growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City Full Value Tax Rates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>

## **APPENDIX B**

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR INSTITUTIONAL LEADERS**

1. How do you define the Creative Economy?
2. How do you define Creative Placemaking?
3. What do you think should be their role in community development efforts?
4. What institution(s) should take the lead in fostering the creative economy? What do you think should be the role of government? Business? Non-profit?
5. What are some of the successes in Maine? In Portland?
6. What have been some of the failures?
7. What are some of the challenges?
8. What are the benefits of a healthy creative economy? Drawbacks?
9. How do you measure success?
10. How to you approach gentrification issues?

Other:

## APPENDIX C

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR ARTISTS

1. How do you define the creative economy?
2. What do you think the role of the artist should be in the What do you think is the role of the artist within the fabric of the Portland community, and more specifically within community planning and economic development?
3. Are you actively involved in your community? If so, in what way?
4. How do you think the city of Portland is fairing in its efforts to foster the creative economy?
5. How do you think the city of Portland is fairing in its efforts to foster local artists?
6. Why do you create art?
7. How do you define success?
8. What do you think are the barriers to success as an artist in Portland?
9. Is affordable living space or studio space more important to you?
10. Do you have any special space needs that are challenging to accommodate in Portland?
11. What do you think is more important: economic growth or quality of place?
12. Do you believe that community planning should be lead from the top down or the ground up?
13. Do you think that artists have a role in sustainable development? If so, what? If not, why not?

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