

A Cultural Plan as Strategy

How Creativity Can Drive Economic Development

Dr. David Wohl, Dean, College of Arts and Humanities, WV State University

What is a cultural plan?

- A community-driven plan of action for achieving its goals through specific cultural objectives.
- Involves diverse sectors of the community
- Grass-roots support
- An open process
- Combines fact-finding and consensus-building

What can a cultural plan do?

- Find new answers to old problems
- Tap the full economic development potential of local cultural organizations
- Strengthen resources for artists and arts organizations
- More fully Integrate the arts into education and life-long learning
- Reposition image, and enhance community access to cultural resources

Our Cultural Spaces

- What spaces currently exist?
- What facilities are planned, and what are needed?
- How do these spaces function in re-vitalizing neighborhoods and our communities?

Our Cultural Learning

- Is there sufficient access to cultural learning and arts education in schools and community based settings?
- How could programs be enhanced and better integrated into school curriculum and at-risk youth development efforts?

Our Creative Economy

- What is the nature and scale of our community's "creative economy"?
- How can the creative economy more fully into regional economic development efforts?

Our Community Identity

- How do the arts, culture and creativity contribute to our community's distinct identity, vitality and success?
- What are the extrinsic and intrinsic values and benefits and how could they be enhanced?
- How can the arts and cultural activities help to better "brand" our community?

Public Policy

- What tools and resources can we employ to create a more supportive climate for our community's creative sector.
- What are the formal and informal arrangements among governments and community entities that impact our creative climate?
- How can we better involve colleges & universities so that they contribute to improving our creative economy?

Our Resources and Support

- Is there adequate private and public funding and support to sustain our creative resources?
- What strategies and mechanisms could sustain and increase support?

Leadership & Coordination

- What structures, leadership and strategies are needed to promote better coordination and collaborations among cultural stakeholders?
- How can the capacities of these entities be enhanced?

“What If?”

- A cultural plan emboldens a community to dream and develop a structure plan designed to turn their visions into reality
- Cultural planning combines creativity and economic development by unleashing our imaginations to improve nearly every aspect of community life