

University of New Hampshire

## University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository

---

Manchester Research Group

UNH Community Projects

---

1-1-2010

### Manchester arts and cultural development

Manchester Office of Economic Development

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholars.unh.edu/mrg>

---

#### Recommended Citation

Manchester Office of Economic Development, "Manchester arts and cultural development" (2010).  
*Manchester Research Group*. 41.  
<https://scholars.unh.edu/mrg/41>

This Text is brought to you for free and open access by the UNH Community Projects at University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Manchester Research Group by an authorized administrator of University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. For more information, please contact [Scholarly.Communication@unh.edu](mailto:Scholarly.Communication@unh.edu).

# Manchester Arts and Cultural Development

## Discussion Facilitators

Michael Kane  
Stephen Michon

## Sponsored by

Manchester Office of Economic Development

# Today's Objectives

- Review Findings and Recommendations
- Engage Participants in Joint Strategy/Action Planning
- Get Agreement on Priority Action Items & Next Steps

# Overview of Topics

- Arts and Cultural Impact
- Findings: Strengths & Challenges
- Areas of Recommendation
- Facilitated Action Planning
- Identification of Action Items/Next Steps

# Impact of Arts and Culture



# Cultural Landscape

- Attractions - Cultural and Heritage Sites
- Performing Arts Companies & Venues
- Visual Arts & Literary Arts
- Creative Education

# Attractions: Cultural and Heritage Sites

- City has concentration of diverse attractions
  - Currier Museum of Art, See-Science Center, Credit Union Museum, Franco-American Centre, Aviation Museum, Millyard Museum and Library, Amoskeag Fishways, American Canadian Genealogical Society Library, Institute of Politics, and more....
- Over 175,000 annual visitors, employs about 140 full- and part-time workers



- City has concentration of performing arts groups — both theater and music
  - Profile Chorus, Theater Knights, Palace Theater, Majestic Theater, NH Philharmonic, Acting Loft, Manchester Choral Society, Manchester Community Theater Players, Manchester Gay Men's Chorus, New Thalian Players, Opera NH, Stage One Production, and more...
- Performing arts groups employ 24 full-time and 250 part-time workers, and spend about \$3.5 million annually



# Performing Arts Companies & Venues

- Good range in size of venues
  - Very large (Verizon Wireless Arena) to mid-size (Palace —both company and venue) to very small theaters (Acting Loft just moved into new 100-seat venue in Jefferson Mill Building).
  - Other venues are in churches, hotels, and schools
- While total visitors and impact data are not readily available
  - Verizon Wireless Arena: 770,000 audience/yr, \$31M in direct spending, total of 661 jobs through direct and indirect output ('04)



- The segment consists of individual artists, art associations, and galleries
  - 2 associations — Sopha for photographers and the Manchester Art Association
  - A small number of commercial galleries
    - Art3 Gallery, East Colony Fine Arts, Hatfield Gallery, Sopha...
  - Other galleries embedded in larger institutions
    - McInich Art Gallery (SNHU), McInich Family Gallery (Health Dept), Art on the Wall (City Hall), Chapel Art Center (St. Anslem College)

## Visual Arts & Literary Arts

- Literary Arts is relatively small in the city, consisting of a small nonprofit organization (NH Writers' Project) and the Hippo Press



- The New Hampshire Institute of Art is a significant creative organization
  - 203 employees, payroll over \$5M and expenditures of \$10.4 million
- The Manchester Music School contributes substantially to the city
  - 61 jobs, \$1 million spending
- Many of the performing arts organizations also provide education programming for youth and adults



- Over 1 million visitors a year to cultural attractions, performances and Verizon Arena-related events
- \$24 million in spending (not including Verizon Center)
- 660 full- and part-time jobs in cultural activities (not including Verizon Center)

# Strengths and Challenges



City's arts and cultural assets are formidable and very diverse

- Several performing arts facilities and venues
- Strong mix of museums, w/ a range of cultural experiences
- Deep manufacturing and immigrant heritage
- Symphony and opera
- Art galleries, strong visual arts & crafts base
- River adds significantly to the persona of the city

## Good number and range in size of facilities

- The Verizon Center — 11,000 seats
- The Palace — 900 seats
- St. George Parish — 750
- Dana Center — 700
- Derryfield High School — 400
- Franco-American center — 350
- Jewish federation Theater — 300
- Police League Building — 150
- Majestic Theater — 230
- Currier — 140
- And more...





## The audience and visitor base is quite diverse

- The age range for performances and shows is “birth to death”
- Markets — MA, VT, and ME
- 15,000 college-age people
- Thousands of people come for the primaries
- Verizon Wireless audience

## Impressive infrastructure investment

- Verizon Wireless Arena (Public)  
\$70 million
- Currier Museum of Art (Private)  
\$21.4 million expansion
- New Hampshire Institute of Art  
(Private) \$18 million expansion
- Public Sculpture — \$145,000
- Fisher Cats Baseball Stadium  
(Public) \$29 million



## Higher Education in city and region -- very strong arts and cultural asset

- Degree programs, museums, galleries, performing arts facilities, etc.
- Great collaboration, with A&C and K-12 public schools
- 10,000+ students attend these institution
- NH Writers Project housed at SNHU; also hosting design competition
- St. A's brings in artists from Africa; works with kids in the K-12 schools
- NH Institute Art has grown significantly
  - Bought new buildings in downtown; expanding presence; about 450 undergrads in BFA program and 500 people in CE

The Trolley has been helpful in bringing the community together

- Expanded service, and knit community together in a new and exciting way
- Also, Trolley helped more places and venues being open



Past attempts to collaborate, but efforts were relatively short-lived and not terribly successful

- Arts Build plus other efforts, Chamber has tourism committee/group in “hibernation”
- These efforts didn’t last — multiple issues/challenges
- Little/No appetite for another formalized structure

## Limited organized activity to capitalize on current visitor base

- The See Center's new exhibit and Antique Show attract tens of thousands, but little coordination
- Performing arts & entertainment organizations collaborate, but not to a new level
- Could be the jewel of the state — in the other cities, the mayors and the business community are intimately involved

**"Other cities in the state, like Concord, are better organized than Manchester, yet Manchester has more to offer."**

## Limited organized activity (continued)

- Primaries — No organized effort to promote the cultural assets, create opportunities to attend events, or build brand to bring them back
- Radisson — gets thousands of people for conferences and workshops, some coordination and collaboration – could do more

Current brand/identity of city as arts destination is very weak

- Strong assets, however, no clear brand or identity that defines the city's creative economy
- Lack of brand/identity is barrier to capitalizing on assets and position city as arts and cultural destination



Relationship between the cultural and business community not nearly as strong as it could be

- Business community still looks at A&C as nonprofit amenity
- Lack of understanding about revenue and job-generating capacity of the A&C = serious challenge to further growth of this economic asset

A general recognition that the city could do more to attract and engage young people

- There are 15,000 young people who attend colleges -- modest effort to keep/bring them into the cultural community
- A few organizations have a younger demographic — the NH Creative Club, the Graphic Artists Guild, and a web designers group
- New dynamic — young people who grew up in the city coming back

## Signage and parking are a serious issue

- Poor signage makes it difficult for newcomers and visitors to navigate the city
- Presents real problems to many of the cultural institutions that want broaden and expand their audience base

## Conclusions

- The arts and cultural community and assets could bring a higher level of economic impact to the city
- But, it won't occur unless the community is more organized and able to better capitalize on its strengths



# Preliminary Recommendations

- Strategies/Actions
  - Create new visual ‘arts points’ throughout the City
  - Develop clear brand and identity for the City’s Creative and Cultural Community (markets: Merrimack Valley, Canada, northeast corridor)
  - Improve signage and use arts community to make the improvements (Pandora)
  - Create highly-visible programs/events focused on the arts (Merrimack River “Mill Lights” event)
- Models
  - Storefront Artists Project in Pittsfield
  - Grand Rapids’ Art Prize project
  - Portland (OR) and Pittsburgh Design Zones

- The Storefront Artists Project in Pittsfield was initiated several years ago. Artists worked with building owners to locate artists' studio in empty or underutilized storefronts. The downtown became a much more vibrant and attractive location, and artists were able to gain a higher profile in the city.
- Grand Rapids has started a project called Art Prize – artists in the city submit art work to a jury. Those items selected are located in stores and businesses through the city, and the public votes on the winner. The winner for the best work of art gets a prize (in the case of Grand Rapids it's \$250,000). The long-term, broader impact is that this project gets tens of thousands of people looking at and evaluating art work. One educational institution had 30,000 people visit its gallery during the exhibit.
- Portland (OR) and Pittsburgh have created designated neighborhoods for the development of a Design Zone. The Zone attracts individual artists and design-related firms to the neighborhood. In each city, the Zones have become a destination for artists and designers in both commercial and live-work space, but the organizers of the Zones sponsor events that bring in people from all over the cities.

- Strategies/Actions
  - Reciprocal discounts and customized information to extend audience stays (Radisson, Verizon Wireless, MHT airport)
  - Leverage one-time impact events (political campaigns, summer antique show, etc.)
  - Knit together stand-alone exhibits and museums thru maps and common themes of industrial heritage, river, mills, native American-French-Canadian-immigrant heritage
- Models
  - Connecticut Wine Trail
  - Convention Center cross selling



- Strategies/Actions
  - Create relationship between Creative Economy and the Arts Directors/Coordinators in each institution
  - Work with the institutions on building and programmatic expansion plans and offer the assistance/support of the Creative Economy
  - Organize Art Education courses/programs that can bring in new audiences/customers
- Models
  - Savannah School of Art & Design
  - Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design
  - Campus Provincetown

## Models

- The Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design (MIAD) has developed strong partnerships and relationships with for-profit businesses and the arts community that have led to new products, new arts and cultural events, and the revitalization of one neighborhood.
- Campus Provincetown is an effort on the part of the arts and educational communities in Provincetown to bring in new audiences to the city. The program offers a variety of art-related educational and instructional programs in the arts and helps bring in new visitors and tourists.

- Strategies/Actions
  - Create more effective outreach to the business community; CEO tour of venues with signature event
  - Educate the business community about the revenue and job generating capacity of the Creative Economy
  - Develop mutually-beneficial programmatic relationship with the business community
- Models
  - Milwaukee Artist-in-Residency program
  - Maine's Creative Economy program
  - Washington DC Business Improvement District
  - New Mexico's Arts and Business Partnership program

- In Milwaukee one of the hotels in the downtown created an Artist-in-Residency program in which a local artist worked on his paintings in the lobby of the hotel. The program elevated the visibility of the arts and artists and also made the lobby of the hotel more attractive
- Through Maine's Creative Economy program groups have been organized to make formal presentations to business and political leaders about the economic role of arts and culture.
- In Washington DC, the local Business Improvement District (BID) play a major role in advocating for and supporting the work of artists and arts organizations – most BIDs have very little to do with the arts.
- New Mexico's Arts and Business Partnership program stimulates commerce through business training for artists and business collaborations.

- Strategies/Actions
  - Create programs to bring in new audiences to downtown and to arts and cultural community
  - Develop new relationships and collaborations that target audiences who may only be marginally connected to the Creative Economy
  - Connect to other regional events to build “shoulder” opportunities
- Models
  - Indianapolis’ Art Garden
  - MFA’s Art in Bloom
  - Lowell’s Destination World

## Models

- The city of Indianapolis created something called the Art Garden, a series of arts-related exhibits and demonstrations. And, the Art Garden is located in a large Shopping Mall in the downtown. The Mall attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors each year – the visitor experience is enhanced by the presence of arts, and individual artists have an opportunity to sell art to a large and new customer base.
- The Museum of Fine Arts in Boston holds an annual event called Art in Bloom. The Museum works with garden clubs that create flower arrangements and designs around specific pieces of visual art in the Museum. The event brings in 20,000 over the 3-day period – many of them new to the Museum and it also provides a significant revenue stream for the Museum
- The City of Lowell, MA has an event called Destination World. It brings together all of the city's immigrant and ethnic communities around a single event. The event highlights the contribution and work of the city's immigrant population and it brings in new audiences to the downtown.

# Develop Mechanisms for More Effective Partnerships and Collaborations

- Strategies/Actions
  - Hold monthly/bi-monthly/quarterly “Strategic Action” meetings
  - Focus on specific/targeted issues — e.g., collaborations on special events, new audience development
  - Convened and facilitated by neutral party, but accountable to selves and flexible enough to allow self-defined groups to work on prioritized action items
  - Create an electronic system for sustaining and building collaboration and partnership development
- Models
  - Berkshire Creative’s bi-monthly SPARK program and its Social Media platform

- Berkshire Creative hosts a bi-monthly event called SPARK in which artists and for-profit commercial enterprises come together for a networking and partnering opportunity. The event attracts several hundred people from both the arts and cultural world, as well as the business community.
- Berkshire Creative has also developed a sophisticated communication and coordination system through Social media and its web site.





# Action Planning

## **The following are areas of recommendation identified by participants during the April 5<sup>th</sup> 2010 meeting at the Dana Center**

- Build a closer relationship with business community that benefits both – the arts can help business with design, product development, etc and business can help the arts with marketing, customer development, etc.
- Get more organized internally within the arts and cultural community and find more consistent mechanisms for communication. Related, meetings that are organized should be strategic in nature, have CEO level participation, and include CEO counterparts in the business community.
- Get brand clarity
- Tell the story of the economic significance of the arts and cultural community in a clear, concise, and a compelling way. Then the arts and cultural community needs to “systemize” the story telling so that it is part of a strategic process reaching a wide and diverse audience.
- Initiate more multi-venue, cross sector (visual arts, design, performing arts, creative education) marketing and promotion.
- Create more opportunities for new audience development.
- Investigate incubator space that accelerates enterprise development of artists and arts community.

## Prioritization of Next Steps

- First get organized with high level CEOs from both the arts and cultural community. Identify those likely CEO allies/champions in the business community.
- Second, craft and tell the story of the economic significance of the arts and cultural community.
- Third, get organized internally among arts and cultural organizations, commercial enterprises, and institutions.



**Mt. Auburn Associates**

Michael Kane  
413-586-0403

[mkane.mtauburn@crocker.com](mailto:mkane.mtauburn@crocker.com)

Stephen Michon  
603-320-2147

[michon@futureworks-web.com](mailto:michon@futureworks-web.com)