



Creative Assets Inventory

10 Points

Pre-Requisite: Establish a Creative Team

Knowing what your community's creative assets are (compiling a Creative Assets Inventory – CAI), will help your community to explore its strengths and discover what makes it distinct. This action is an important first step for the Creative Placemaking Plan action and can play a significant role in a municipality's planning efforts. The CAI can be added as an overlay to an existing community asset map, or used to enhance an existing cultural map. In order to facilitate planning for the future and insure that communities identify, understand and value their current assets, municipalities should create an inventory of their cultural, historic, natural, creative and human resources. A Creative Assets Inventory (CAI) typically includes information on local artists, cultural activities and events, buildings/venues, and arts and community organizations, but can also include resources like parks, local historic buildings, restaurants, etc. that fit within the greater cultural context of the community. The assets included within the CAI are determined by whatever the community itself considers to be an asset. The CAI facilitates the flow of information between interested stakeholders and creative individuals, professionals, and entities within the municipality by providing a clearinghouse for arts and cultural information.

Inventorying your Creative Assets involves a process of collecting, recording, analyzing and synthesizing information in order to describe the cultural resources, networks, links and cultural patterns of usage of a given community or group. A more comprehensive creative asset mapping initiative can provide a deep understanding of the key networks and cultural attitudes that shape the community and indicate gaps that require further investment.

These are just a few of the questions that a creative asset inventory will help you to address in your Creative Placemaking Plan:

- Who are the creative people, organizations, companies and other resources in our community/region? How do those assets connect with each other?
- What are the creative and cultural issues, challenges and opportunities? What are the issues, challenges and opportunities for enhancing spaces for creativity and cultural activities?
- How can our area's creative assets enhance tourism promotion?
- How do the creative assets of our community connect with and advance other Sustainable Jersey action efforts?

Identifying the people, organizations, spaces, activities, and other assets in your community/region is a key component for building creative communities and economies.

Who should lead and be involved with this action?

A CAI is most successful when the Creative Team engages as many members of the community as possible in organizing and leading the process. The Creative Team should begin by reaching out to the following individuals and groups in order to help identify potential leaders, as well as to capitalize on their diverse perspectives:

- Elected officials and municipal staff and agencies
- Artists, arts organizations and cultural institutions
- Local businesses and Chambers of Commerce

- Educational institutions, health care facilities, civic organizations, faith-based groups, other community groups and
- Residents, professionals, and students within the community

Timeframe

Depending on the resources and project support available, the timeframe for compiling a Creative Assets Inventory will vary between 3-8 months. The time it takes to complete the CAI depends on how much information the municipality already has collected, or if it already has a similar document available on which to build. It will also depend on the size of the municipality and the depth of its data collection process, the number of staff/volunteers and time they have available, and/or whether the inventory is conducted in-house or by outside consultants.

The CAI is a dynamic document; it needs to be updated regularly in order to maintain currency. Once the municipality completes a CAI, it should formalize the process for updating it. Municipal staff, volunteers, or consultants can update the CAI at regular intervals during the year or as new data becomes available. Again, the amount of time will vary depending on the amount of time staff or volunteers have to dedicate to the task.

Project Costs and Resource Needs

The cost of the project will vary, depending on the type and skill-level of staff and volunteers involved, as well as the level of detail of the data being collected. A basic inventory can be conducted with a minimal budget and volunteers, but will take a longer time. If paid professionals or consultants are involved, the project cost will increase, but the final product will likely be more comprehensive and polished.

Why is it important?

Once established, the CAI will help to share, recruit, promote and expand on existing creative resources. As an initial step in developing your Creative Placemaking Plan, it opens up the dialogue about local arts and culture, helping to make connections between them and economic, environmental, and community development work already being done. Rather than focusing on importing culture from outside of its environs, the information gained from the CAI process helps a community grow from the inside-out and strengthens the weave of its social fabric.

A CAI helps communities to identify and engage potential stakeholders: The process of conducting a CAI will reveal leaders within your creative community and allow you to connect them with each other. This process will help you discover and leverage new or hidden creative assets.

A CAI helps communities to identify gaps and opportunities: Compiling a CAI allows communities to identify cultural connections and issues relating to municipal land use and master planning. Additionally, the process will highlight the relationship between the economic benefits of arts and culture spending and overall economic development and community vitality. A gap analysis can inform economic development strategies, and lay the foundation for creative placemaking planning.

What to do, and how to do it (“How to”)

Below we have listed the requirements for earning points for this action.

The CAI must include, at a minimum, a list of all assets that exist in your community, including associations, organizations, community gathering spaces, environmental assets, cultural activities, arts organizations and individual artists. It should be compiled or updated during the 18 month period prior to the municipality’s application for certification. Additional guidance is provided in Appendices A and B.

The Creative Team must make an effort to reach a broad spectrum of the community to invite them to participate in the inventory process.

In order to earn points, your submission must meet the following standards:

1. Provide a short narrative in the text box (300 words maximum) describing your efforts to complete the Creative Assets Inventory.

2. Upload the completed CAI in text, map or spreadsheet form. Your CAI should be updated **from within 18 months of the June submission deadline**.
3. Upload documentation of significant stakeholder involvement. This may include: meeting minutes with a list of attendees and their affiliations, promotional materials used to increase awareness of the community meetings and surveys; or the survey document itself. You should document activities that have taken place **from within 18 months of the June submission deadline**.
4. If the Creative Assets Inventory is older than 5 years, be sure to document the public participation process that you utilized to update the inventory.

In order to create a Creative Assets Inventory, you will need to conduct outreach to a diverse group of community members. Below we have listed some steps to help you to get started:

1. The Creative Team initiates initial outreach to help identify potential members of the community who will be involved in the process of compiling the Creative Assets Inventory.
2. The Creative Team plans the first steps of the project and perhaps appoints or serves on a committee that executes the project.
3. The Creative Team explores tools to best categorize and inventory the creative assets. See **Appendix A** for suggested categories and mapping tools. The CAI can be added as an overlay to an existing community asset map or used to enhance an existing cultural map.
4. The Creative Team hosts an open public meeting to brainstorm creative assets and collect thoughts about the cultural identity of the area.
 - Make sure to promote the meeting; it is essential that the community is invited to participate.
 - Ask open ended questions about the community's values, culture and heritage (please refer to **Appendix B** for the types of questions that could be asked).
 - Provide a questionnaire that will serve as a reference for the preferences and thoughts of attendees and identify those interested in becoming more involved.
1. The Creative Team organizes project volunteers.
2. Using the public meeting as a starting point, the Creative Team (or sub-committee) plans the collection phase of the inventory, which involves creating a budget and identifying funding sources. If applicable; the Creative Team develops a comprehensive survey (please refer to **Appendix C** for help in creating your survey), and determines how data will be collected (printed, online, or face-to-face interviews). See also **Woodbridge's Art Survey (also found in Spotlight section)**.
3. The Creative Team uses responses to create the CAI and makes it available to the public. The municipality's final CAI can be in the form of a map, text, or spreadsheet.
4. Once the municipality completes a CAI, it should formalize the process for updating it. Municipal staff, volunteers, or consultants can update the CAI at regular intervals during the year or as new data becomes available. In order to receive credit for this action, the CAI Inventory should be updated in the 18 month period prior to applying for Sustainable Jersey certification.

What to submit to get credit/points

In order to earn points, your submission must meet the following standards:

The CAI must include, at a minimum, a list of all assets that exist in your community, including associations, organizations, community gathering spaces, environmental assets, cultural activities, arts organizations and individual artists. It should be compiled or updated **from within 18 months of the June submission deadline**. Additional guidance is provided in **Appendices A and B**.

The Creative Team must make an effort to reach a broad spectrum of the community to invite them to participate in the inventory process.

Submit the following documentation to verify the action was completed to the above standards. (Log in to the password protected webpage where you submit your online application for certification to write in the text box and upload documents)

1. Provide a short narrative in the text box (300 words maximum) describing your efforts to complete the Creative Assets Inventory.
 - Upload: Completed CAI in text, map or spreadsheet form. Your CAI should be updated **from within 18 months of the June submission deadline.**
 - Upload: Documentation of significant stakeholder involvement. This may include: meeting minutes with a list of attendees and their affiliations, promotional materials used to increase awareness of the community meetings and surveys; or the survey document itself. You should document activities that have taken place **from within 18 months of the June submission deadline.**
1. If the Creative Assets Inventory is older than 5 years, be sure to document the public participation process that you utilized to update the inventory.

IMPORTANT NOTES: You can upload up to six separate documents for each action. Please excerpt relevant information from large documents. Please remember that your submissions will be viewable by the public as part of your certified report.

Spotlight: What NJ communities are doing

There are several organizations and municipalities that have undertaken listings of local artists and arts organizations; cultural sites, and other creative assets and resources. While they do not include all of the information that needs to be included in a CAI, they are good examples of where to start and are useful resources.

- **Arts Coalition of Asbury Park (Asbury Park, NJ)** has an artist directory with the names and contact information of the creative sector, including categories such as: arts venues, businesses/organizations, design and architecture, film, literary arts, performing arts and visual arts. They also have the beginnings of an ArtMap. <http://www.artscap.org/>
- **Newark Arts Council (Newark, NJ)** features a comprehensive website that includes an arts calendar, information on arts education, an artist directory and newsletter highlighting artists and events in the city. <http://newarkarts.org/>
- **Woodbridge Township:** Woodbridge has created an Arts Survey that you can utilize to develop your own survey. While Woodbridge created this survey primarily to identify artists in the community, this survey can be a good starting point for your Creative Assets Inventory. [Woodbridge Arts Survey](#)

Resources

Here is a list of links that will help guide you through the process of building a Creative Assets Inventory.

Culture Planning Toolkit - A Partnership between 2010 Legacies Now and Creative City Network of Canada. This toolkit describes the entire cultural planning process. Step 2, outlined on page 21, walks a municipality through the information gathering and research process that is required for cultural mapping.

https://www.creativecity.ca/database/files/library/cultural_planning_toolkit.pdf

Guide to Cultural mapping - This cultural planning toolkit has a section on cultural mapping, starting on page 27 of Chapter 4. <http://www.ontariomcp.ca/library-2/>

NJ State Council for the Arts (has a listing of Arts Councils throughout the State): <http://nj.gov/state/njsca/index.html>

The **Northwest Connecticut Arts Council Cultural Assessment Report** details a regional cultural assessment process, which includes survey development, promotion and distribution and a discussion of findings, issues and recommendations <http://www.artsnwct.org/pdf/Final%20Cultural%20Assessment%20PDF.pdf>

The **Tennessee Arts Commission publication**, "Art in Action! A Cultural Inventory Toolkit," gives instructions on how a community can go about collecting the necessary information for a cultural inventory. It also includes resources on how to fund such projects and examples of other cultural inventories and assessments that have been conducted. NOTE: the questions in Appendix B and C have been excerpted from this more extensive document.

<http://www.tn.gov/arts/resources/artinaction.PDF>

Robert Voigt (Community Planner, Town of Collingwood) provides an eight minute update on the February 11th, 2009 Cultural Asset Mapping Workshop that was designed as a module within the Urban Design Standards Project.

<http://vimeo.com/3232552>

Appendix A:

To help your community to organize its assets into categories, please see the useful diagram at:

<http://www.georgianbaymappingculture.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/cultural-framework.png>. Some suggested categories are: Creative Cultural Industries, Community Cultural Organizations, Spaces and Facilities, Cultural Heritage, Natural Heritage, Festivals and Events

The Kentucky Arts Council provides a guide that outlines the categories and types of artists, organizations and events/programming that should be included when putting together the inventory Buildings/sites/businesses

- Artisans
- Performing Groups
- Artisan/Regional Foods
- Events
- Recreational Activities
- Cultural Organizations
- Civic Organizations
- Meeting/Small Event/Workshop/Exhibition Spaces
- Lodging
- Restaurants
- Transportation and Parking
- Parks
- Diverse Cultures in community <http://artscouncil.ky.gov/Opportunities/Cultural/AssetInventory.pdf>

**Or some communities have organized their cultural assets with the following categories: **

Creative Infrastructure e.g. non-profit and for-profit arts organizations, creative businesses, museums, art collections, tv/radio, arts agencies, creative networks, professional arts bodies arts trade associations, existing private/public community partnerships, local talent.

Education/training e.g. arts education resources, programmes, professional development/ artists skills set that could be shared

Places/Spaces - where it happens etc - universities/galleries/venues

OTHER RESOURCES:

Additional resources to consider include: funding programs, foundations/philanthropic donations, information, government employees and agencies, cultural heritage, innovation, university research teams /art professors, volunteers, press profile.

Crowdmap is open source software that allows you to crowdsource and visualize information, and it can be used for cultural / creative mapping. It is not meant to replace face to face engagement, but to augment and engage different communities or be used in creative workshops. <https://crowdmap.com/>

Greenmap is a tool to help a community create an interactive mapmaking tool that helps people identify significant ecological, cultural and civic resources in their community. www.greenmap.org.

Also, see the Community Asset Mapping action to see help NJ communities are already using this tool as an aid for

Appendix B: Leading Questions for Public Meetings and Community Discussion

The public meeting is a valuable tool for brainstorming arts and creative assets, as well as for identifying people who are interested in participating in the CAI process. It is up to the Creative Team to choose questions that are appropriate for identifying local resources and assessing strengths and weaknesses. *Source: This list of questions is adapted from the "Art in Action! A Cultural Inventory Toolkit," (Tennessee Arts Commission), "Findings of the Artists and Creative Workers Survey" (Madison Cultural Plan), and from an informal survey of common questions featured in other arts and cultural surveys.*

Our Community's Value

1. What special people, places or activities make our community distinct?
2. Of which of our cultural assets are we most proud?
3. What cultural challenges does our community face?
4. Which associations/organizations/networks are regarded as most important for defining the value of our community?
5. What associations/organizations/events or community gathering places are the most successful in linking together people of different family, ethnic, class or gender affiliations?

Our Community's History

1. What are the most interesting historical hallmarks of our community?
2. What documents, books, or artifacts exist about the history of our community and community culture and where can they be found?

Our Community's Culture

1. What languages are spoken in our community and at home by students in our schools? How does this affect our cultural offerings?
2. What cultural and heritage celebrations occur in our community?
3. Where does our community gather to celebrate debate, worship, eat and visit?
4. Do we have seasonal residents who live here part-time? What do they do?
5. What creative, cultural, or history activities are available for seasonal residents/tourists in our area?
6. Who are the creative people in our community?
7. What arts-related groups exist in our community?

Our Community's Creative and Cultural Opportunities

1. What school-based (on-school time and afterschool) creative and cultural opportunities are available to young people in our area?
2. What creative and cultural opportunities improve young people's college prospects?
3. What cultural assets draw people to return to our area after college?
4. What creative and cultural opportunities are available for senior citizens?
5. What creative and cultural opportunities are available for families?
6. What creative and cultural opportunities are available for people with disabilities?
7. Does our area have community centers that provide creative and cultural activities for all ages?
8. Which faith-based organizations provide creative opportunities for their members and/or the community?
9. Are there other community organizations that provide creative opportunities for the community? (For example, libraries, hospitals, prisons, educational institutions, service organizations, etc.)
10. What creative activities exist in our community?

Our Community's Arts and Culture Support Systems

1. Is there available funding for arts activities in our area?

2. Who are the people most likely to lead creative activities here?
3. What kind of small businesses provide creative support and/or do creative work in our area?
4. Do we have any nationally branded creative businesses in our community?
5. Does our community have a local arts agency or council? What programs/services does the arts agency/council offer?
6. How do people find out what is going on in our area?

Appendix C: Sample Survey Questions

Surveys provide an efficient way for gathering the most information from the greatest number of respondents. They can vary in length, depending on the resources available and level of detail sought, but should be able to be completed in less than half an hour. A survey tool can be especially useful for gathering information about artists/creative individuals and professionals in your community. Questions can be open ended when necessary, but using multiple choice questions simplifies data analysis (for more information on appropriate survey question types, see here:

http://www.utexas.edu/academic/ctl/assessment/iar/teaching/plan/method/survey/survey_tables_questiontypes.pdf).

Most arts and cultural surveys include some form of the following questions, but again, choose questions that are relevant to your community and the kind of information you are seeking. Please include ranking as outlined above.*

General

1. How long have you lived in this community?
2. What do you do for a living?
3. Why do you live in this community?
4. What keywords describe our community?
5. What people, places and activities make our community unique?
6. Of what are we most proud? Of what are we least proud?
7. Where does our community gather to celebrate, debate, worship, eat and visit?
8. What creative activities already exist in our community?
9. What creative activities would we like to see take place here?
10. How do people find out what is going on in our area?
11. Who are the people/organizations most likely to lead creative activities here?
12. What do tourists need to know about our area?
13. Who are the creative people in our community?
14. Do young people receive arts education in our schools?
15. What do young people in our community do with their free time?
16. What do retired people in our community do with their free time?
17. What types of creative and cultural activities do you attend or are you involved in?
18. Would you volunteer your time to help plan cultural activities in our community?
19. If you are interested in assisting with the Creative Assets Inventory, please provide your contact information

Artists and Creative Professionals

1. What is your arts-related work status (i.e. full time, part time, amateur, student, professional)? What percentage of your income comes from art?
2. What is your art field/discipline?
3. Do you work alone or with other artists?
4. Does your art stem from a cultural tradition? If so, please describe.
5. Where and/or on what types of locations do you rely for producing your work?
6. Where and/or on what types of locations do you rely for exhibiting your work?

7. Is your creative output protected under intellectual property laws?
8. Would you offer lessons or mentorship to local adults? To youth?
9. Do you offer tours of your studio or facility?
10. Do you create commissioned or custom art work?
11. Are you available for performances or demonstrations?
12. Are you available and qualified to teach workshops or classes?
13. How adequate are the creative resources (i.e. production resources, sales outlets, peer dialogue, mutual support and criticism, local marketing opportunities, community recognitions, information, affordable space) in our municipality?
14. How frequently do you participate in civic dialogue and public policy formation?
15. Provide a brief description of yourself and your art activities. Be specific.
16. Do you agree to be listed in a public cultural directory? If different from the above, please provide contact information that can be made public in print and/or on the Internet.

*Source: This list of questions is adapted from the "Art in Action! A Cultural Inventory Toolkit," (Tennessee Arts Commission), "Findings of the Artists and Creative Workers Survey" (Madison Cultural Plan), and from an informal survey of common questions featured in other arts and cultural surveys. *