Develop a Creative Placemaking Plan

This action has a pre-requisite: “Establish a Creative Team.”

Introduction

Creative Placemaking is a new way of making places better through and for arts and culture. The term was coined in 2010 by the National Endowment for the Arts, and the concept is still being fully developed. If you’ve been involved in cultural planning, you have probably been doing some parts of Creative Placemaking. If you’ve never heard of Creative Placemaking or seen a Creative Placemaking Plan you’re not alone.

No one needs a plan to succeed. Good things could happen just by accident. But you are more likely to succeed if you have a written document that provides focus and direction….in other words—a Plan.

A Creative Placemaking Plan includes a set of strategies to make a place more sustainable through -- and for -- arts and culture in ways that enhance the positive, distinct qualities of the place and make the most of existing resources.

The Creative Placemaking Plan should be considered the third step in a municipality’s efforts to make a community more sustainable through arts and culture. The first is to establish a Creative Team. This step is a pre-requisite for the Creative Placemaking Plan action in Sustainable Jersey. More information on building a Creative Team can be found on the website: www.sustainablejersey.com under “Actions.” The second step, which is recommended, is to develop a Creative Assets Inventory. More information on the Creative Assets Inventory action is also available on the Sustainable Jersey website under “Actions.”

Creative Placemaking could be considered an extension and expansion of cultural planning. While cultural planning works to enhance the climate for creative and cultural expression, Creative Placemaking focuses on how arts and culture can enhance community and economic development in sustainable ways. A Cultural Plan may mention that arts and culture are good for communities. A Creative Placemaking Plan draws the connections among cultural, community and economic development.

Who should lead and be involved

The Creative Team should take the lead in developing the Creative Placemaking Plan. This is because the previous work of the Creative Team -- including creating a vision and compiling a Creative Assets Inventory -- has been leading up to the Creative Placemaking Plan.
(PLEASE NOTE: If your community hasn’t already established a Creative Team or done a Creative Assets Inventory, please note that establishing a Creative Team is a prerequisite to this action in the Sustainable Jersey program. It is recommended that a community have compiled a Creative Assets Inventory before developing a Creative Placemaking Plan.)

If it hasn’t already, the Creative Team should work closely with the community’s planning officials, a local arts council, and the county-wide cultural and heritage agency. Municipalities have Master Plans and county agencies have Cultural Plans. The more your Creative Placemaking Plan can connect with and influence municipal and county plans, the more successful it will be.

**Timeframe**

Depending on how much work the Creative Team has done in connecting arts and culture with community and economic development, writing the Plan can take a few weeks to a few months.

A Creative Placemaking consultant will probably be able to write the Plan faster than volunteers will. But the faster you want it completed, and the more information and graphic design you want, the more expensive it will be. (If your goal includes persuading funders, developers and businesses to invest more funding in your community, it may be worth spending the money to have a Plan that can be used for fundraising and place marketing.)

Having several public meetings, focus groups, or other types of public engagement can also slow down the creation of the Plan. But it may be worth the time. The more you engage stakeholders and decision-makers in the Plan, the more likely you are to get widespread support. And if there are ideas or issues that may be controversial, you will know about them with time to address them in your Plan. The extra time you spend engaging people before the Plan is written can help you avoid more time dealing with upset stakeholders after the Plan is drafted.

Even if the Creative Team has done a lot of groundwork and thinking before the Plan is written, do not expect to have a final plan done in a first draft. When you start to write the Plan, it will probably feel like organizing ideas, rearranging notes, and copying information from previous work. But by putting the pieces together in a draft, Creative Team members may see new connections or ideas or find gaps that should be addressed in the final Plan. The draft Plan should be presented for public comment.

**Project costs and resource needs**
The total project costs will depend largely on whether your Plan is written by volunteers, professionals providing in-kind services, or by consultants. Assume a minimum of 40 hours of time to prepare the keystone elements of the Plan -- vision, values and goals’ statements; discussion of current conditions; strategies to get to the vision in ways that keep with stated values; a discussion of how the Plan will be monitored, reviewed and updated; and, if known, determining who should lead the implementation of the strategies.

Depending on how well organized the Creative Team is, assume another 10 to 40 hours to organize and connect background elements of the Plan, such as the Creative Assets Inventory.

If the final Creative Placemaking Plan will have extensive graphic design, or the Plan goes through several rounds of edits, the number of hours could increase substantially.

Your time to complete may be less; Creative Placemaking is a new field, and there are no clear precedents for the kind of Creative Placemaking Plan (and planning process) described in this and other actions.

The minimum resource needs are at least one person who has experience producing plans that deal with complex, interconnected systems (such as community or organizational plans) and someone with experience in graphic design or illustration. Plans persuade with both style and substance. Since the real impact will be if the Creative Placemaking Plan is adopted as part of an Economic Development Plan, a Main Street or Business Improvement Plan or a municipal Master Plan, it will be important to factor in time for public meetings where stakeholders can provide input.

**Why is It Important?**

The arts foster beauty, creativity, innovation and vitality. They inspire, soothe, provoke and engage us, they connect us as people, cultures and communities. They teach us empathy and tolerance. But the arts have wonderful by-products. The presence of a vital arts community can improve the economy by revitalizing the community. The National Governors Association wrote about this benefit of the arts in New Engines of Growth. With a concerted effort to tie your cultural assets to economic development, the economic benefits will not be a by-product but rather a targeted strategy which will amplify the benefits.

**What to do, and how to do it (“How to”)**
Below we have listed the requirements for earning points for this action.

A Creative Placemaking Plan is a document that provides focus and direction for Creative Placemaking in a community. It can be a few pages or set of volumes, but it should have at least these elements:

1. A description of the partners and the partnerships that led to the Plan. In this case, a description of your Creative Team and its members will serve the purpose.

2. A vision statement that summarizes the most important outcomes that the community wants to see achieved through this Plan.

3. A statement of values that identifies the principles that leaders and stakeholders should use in determining strategies.

4. A set of goals and strategies designed to enhance the quality of life for as many residents as possible through arts and culture. This part of the Plan should also describe opportunities for and challenges to achieving these goals, as well as who should lead the implementation of the strategies.

5. A set of goals and strategies designed to enhance economic opportunity and prosperity for as many people as possible through arts and culture. This part of the Plan should also describe opportunities for and challenges to achieving these goals, as well as who should lead the implementation of the strategies.

6. A set of goals and strategies designed to enhance the climate for individual creativity and collective cultural expression. This part of the Plan should also describe opportunities for and challenges to achieving these goals, as well as who should lead the implementation of the strategies.

7. A description of the distinct qualities of the community -- both positive and negative -- and how the Plan will respect and promote the distinctiveness of the community.

8. A description of resources -- people, buildings, and environment -- that can be connected and mobilized to further the goals and implement the strategies in the Plan. The Creative Assets Inventory can serve this purpose. In addition, you will want to include a budget with a projection of possible sources of financial resources, as well as a timeline for implementation.

9. A discussion of how the Plan can be implemented and by whom, as well as who will be responsible for sustaining the Plan -- and revising it as needed.
Developing the Creative Placemaking Plan

One of the easiest ways to develop the Plan is to work to answer at least these questions:

- What is the purpose of this Plan?
- Why was this Plan written now?
- What is the timeframe of this Plan? (Anywhere from 5 to 20 years is standard for community-based plan timelines.)
- What would the community look like, feel like, or be if this Plan were implemented? (This is your vision)
- What ranking of values should guide the choice of recommendations and their timing?
- What are the priorities for implementing the recommended strategies? What should be done now (or at least within the next few months) and what should wait?
- What are the current or likely quality-of-life problems that the Plan is trying to address? How does the Plan address them? What other plans are available or in the works that are addressing these goals? What are the opportunities for and challenges to implementing strategies and achieving goals?
- What are the current or likely economic development problems that the Plan is trying to address? What other plans are available or in the works that are addressing these goals? How does it address them? What are the opportunities for and challenges to implementing strategies and achieving goals?
- What are the current or likely community development problems that the Plan is trying to address? What other plans are available or in the works that are addressing these goals? How does it address them? What are the opportunities for and challenges to implementing strategies and achieving goals?
- What are the current or likely challenges to enhancing creativity that the Plan is trying to address? How does it address them? What are the opportunities for and challenges to implementing strategies and achieving goals?
- If it isn’t answered in the earlier questions, what should the community...
  - Do more of?
  - Start doing?
  - Do less of?
  - Stop doing?
- What are the elements that make this community distinct from its neighbors? How does the Plan work to enhance or promote the best qualities of this community?
- How can existing resources be engaged, re-used or best connected to most cost-effectively pursue the Plan’s goals? (You don’t need to do extensive financial analysis to answer this question. For example, it’s usually cheaper to re-use an old warehouse for creative space than construct new buildings.)
• What else should readers know about current conditions in the community that can help them make informed decisions?
• What does success look like? In other words, how would you know if the Plan is working? (Some people might rephrase this as: How do you measure success?)
• Who should be responsible for implementing the strategies? (If you are recommending people or organizations from outside the Creative Team, make sure that they agree to take on the responsibilities.)
• Who should be responsible for promoting the Plan and encouraging its implementation?
• How and how often should the Plan be reviewed and monitored? How should leaders in the community and members of the public be engaged in reviewing and revising the Plan. (Every six months? Every year?)
• Who worked on the Plan? Identify other stakeholders who were engaged in the development of the Plan. In other words, to whom did you reach out and how?
• How did they develop the Plan?

Don’t forget to thank your funders, volunteers and contributors in the Plan.

It would be great, but not necessary, to identify funding sources for strategies. Some people involved in Planmaking may want to focus on where the money would come from. This is a reasonable approach, but it could also be self-defeating. Often, the opportunities to fund initiatives don’t make themselves available until the ideas have been developed. In other words, it’s unlikely that someone is standing around with a big pot of cash waiting for your team to come up with a good idea.

Of course, this does not mean the plan should just offer ‘pie in the sky’ ideas. Visions should be grand and expansive, but strategies should be achievable.

The Plan should be incorporated into the municipality’s Master Plan, or the municipality’s Economic Development Plan or Business Improvement District Plan. At minimum, the Plan must be accepted by resolution of the municipal Planning Board and there should be plans to incorporate the Creative Placemaking Plan into the Master Plan.

There are several ways to incorporate the Creative Placemaking Plan into the municipal Master Plan. Pieces of the Plan can be incorporated into any of the optional elements as described in New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (40:55D-28 B 3-12). The Creative Placemaking Plan can also be incorporated as a 'special report' (40:55D-28 B 11). The Creative Team should consult with the municipality’s Planning Board representatives or planner(s) to determine the best ways to make the Creative Placemaking Plan part of the municipal Master Plan.

What to submit to get credit/points
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 produce a Creative Placemaking Plan.

2. Upload the Creative Placemaking Plan document. The minimum requirement for submission is a document that addresses the nine elements in the “What to do and How to Do It” section of this action. The document can be in the form of standard report text, a slideshow presentation, a poster, or another form that:
   • Can be delivered as a stand-alone product,
   • Is easily portable (for example, the Plan can be a single attachment in an email),
   • Can be easily understood by someone who was not involved in creating the Plan,
   • Provides clear guidance to anyone who is expected to implement strategies or review the Plan.

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3. Upload documentation identifying the community members and organizations involved in developing your Creative Placemaking Plan.

**Spotlight: What NJ Communities are doing**

What you are being asked to do in this action is new and innovative. Not just in New Jersey, but in the United States. But some New Jersey communities have done Plans that have some of the elements described in the Creative Placemaking Plan.

**Arts Plans**

**2005-2010 Monmouth County Cultural Arts Plan**
Developed for the Monmouth County Arts Council (MCAC), this Plan was made possible through a 2004 grant from the New Jersey State Arts Council. The grant was used to commission a cultural development planning firm, ArtsMarket, Inc. to facilitate the research and planning process. Planning and implementation teams and committees were formed and made up of local stakeholders, including MCAC, Monmouth University, the Monmouth County Planning Department, and other civic leaders. The process also involved a number of interviews and roundtables with various arts and culture-related individuals and entities, as well as a survey for public input. To see the plan, please visit: http://www.monmoutharts council.org/pdf/blueprint.pdf.

2006-2012 Asbury Park Cultural Plan
This Plan was a direct result and born out of the Cultural Arts Plan for Monmouth County. In Asbury Park, the Plan developed out of a partnership between the Arts Coalition of Asbury Park (ArtsCAP), Black Box, Asbury Park Urban Enterprise Zone Program, and the Monmouth County Arts Council. Funding came from a Community Arts Collaboration grant from the NJ State Council on the Arts, New Jersey Natural Gas, the Asbury Park Urban Enterprise Zone Program, the Mary Owen Borden Foundation, and the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation. From this process, ArtsCAP emerged as a local arts council and is responsible for facilitating the development and advancement of the plan. To see the plan, please visit: http://www.artscap.org/viewpage/culturalplan.

2005 Cumberland County Cultural Plan
A joint collaboration between the South Jersey Economic Development District, a regional agency, and the Cumberland County Cultural Heritage Commission, this Cultural Plan includes extensive research and self-assessment within a greater regional context.
To see the plan, please visit: http://www.ccculturalheritage.org/cc-plan-05.pdf.

Arts and Culture Overlay District (Hamilton Township, NJ)
By creating a dedicated overlay district, this designation provides for additional development beyond what is permitted in the underlying zoning and further promotes investment by providing density bonuses where an art or culture use is incorporated in the development or redevelopment

Resources
The following are a collection of resources, including a range of Arts and Cultural Plans and policies from across the United States. Based on a survey of these plans, they all share common aspects which are all requirements for Sustainable Jersey certification. Looking to municipalities outside of New Jersey gives a better idea of similarities and best practices across plans/policies, as well as innovative measures that have proven successful elsewhere.
Arts Plan New Jersey is a state-wide Plan outlining a broad set of creative placemaking goals.


Cultural Planning: Understanding Your Community is a website that lists several resources for cultural planning (which can be adapted to creative placemaking.) A particularly good resource is *The Creative Community Builder’s Handbook* by Tom Borrup. Unlike other guides, this one is oriented towards community and local economic development through arts and culture.

The City of Madison (WI) Cultural Plan provides a good model for a Creative Placemaking-oriented Cultural Plan


Create Austin, is the cultural plan for Texas’ capital city.