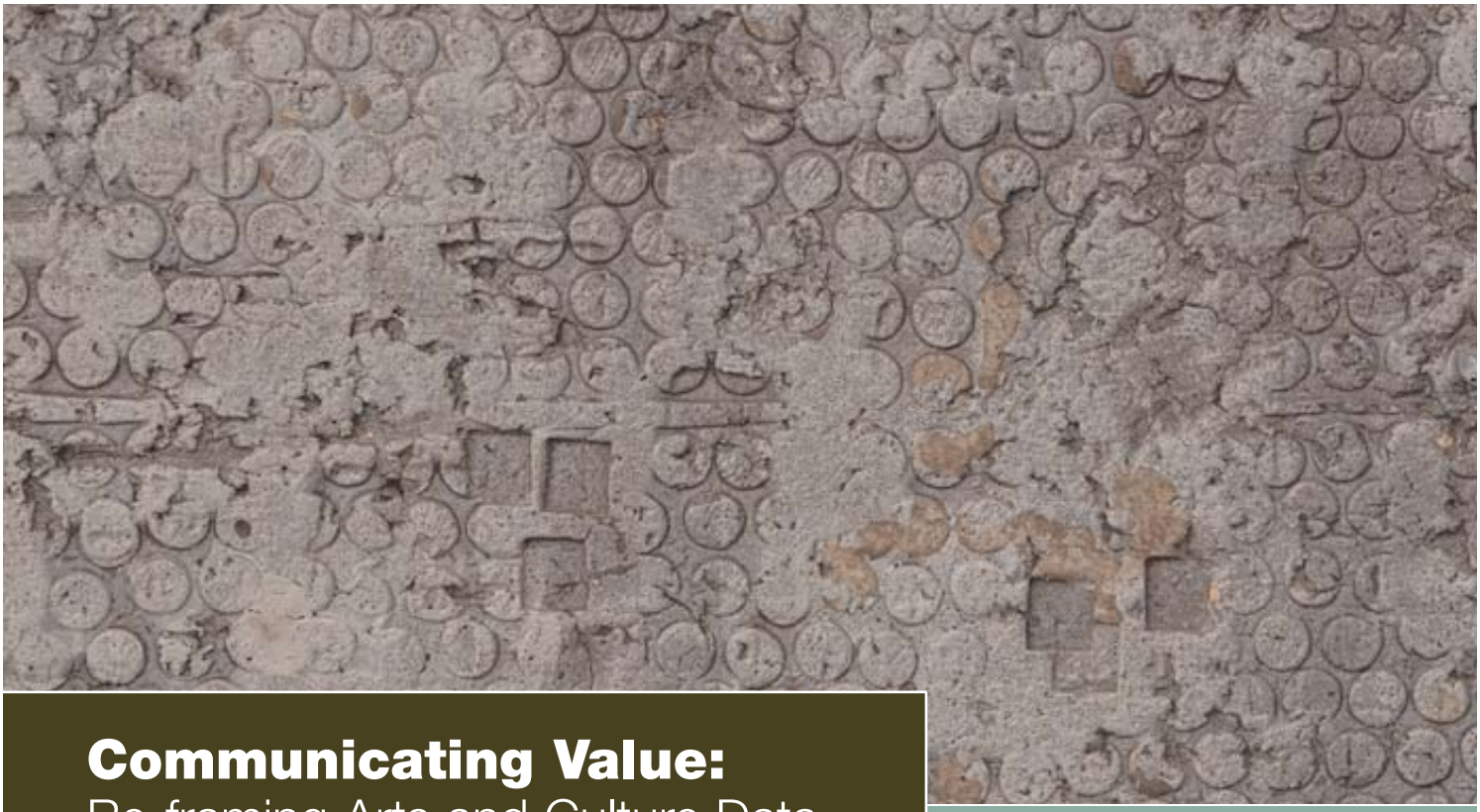
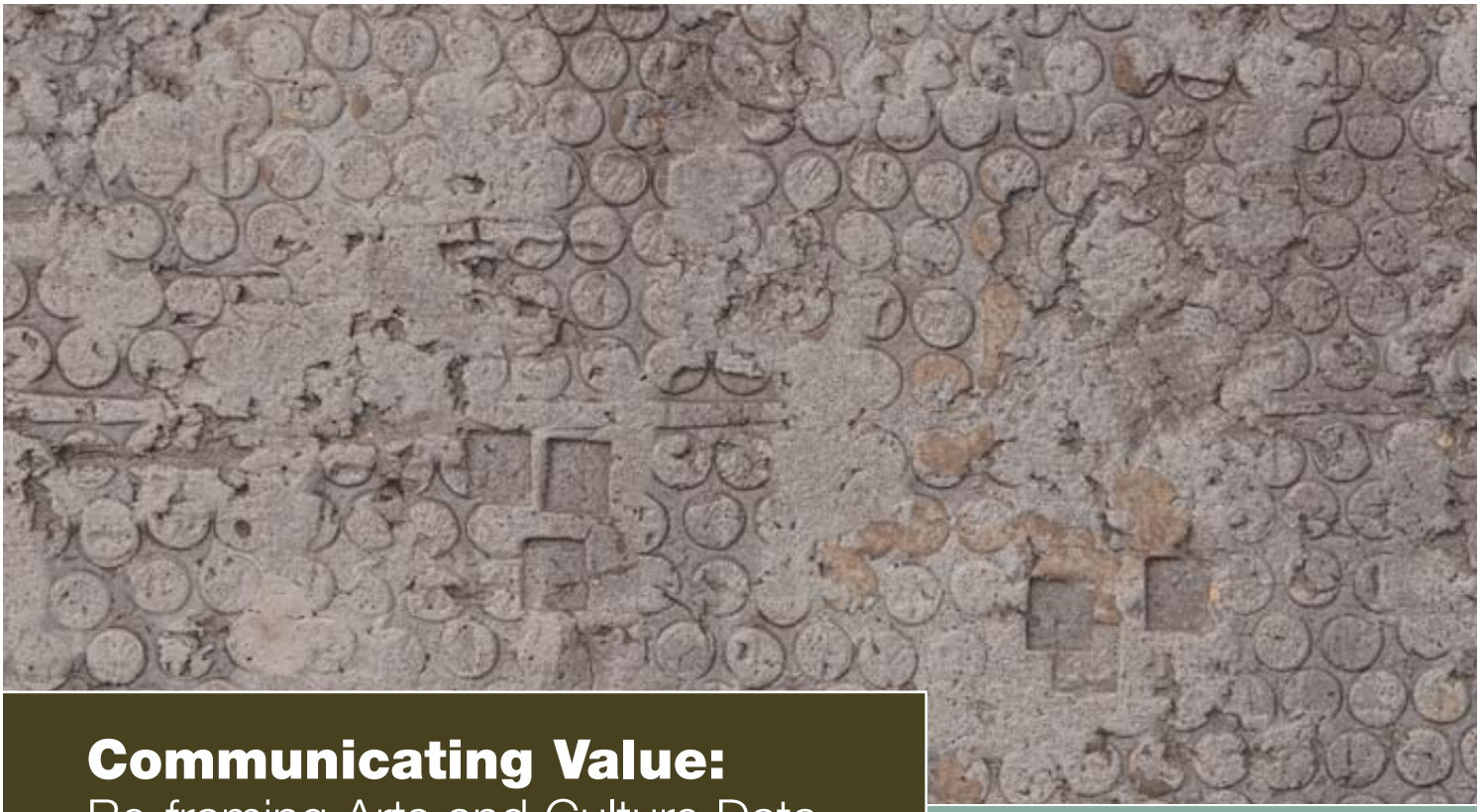


Communicating Value:
Re-framing Arts and Culture Data

M. Christine Dwyer
RMC Research Corporation
September 2008



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Executive Summary

Over the past ten to twelve years, quantification has come to the field of arts and culture. With a flurry of pilot efforts that have at least partially filled in the information gap about arts and culture activity, the sector has moved beyond traditional arguments of whether or not cultural activity could be captured in statistics. The paper reports results from an inquiry about the reactions of potential data users from outside the arts and culture sector, specifically planning and economic development professionals, to the types of data and findings that are emerging from the sector. Planning and economic development professions were the targets of the inquiry because they play central ongoing roles in communities in shaping allocation of resources for community investments and implementation of policies relevant to quality of life in communities.

Focus groups and interviews were used to gather responses in a systematic way to: (a) six types of data (employment, economic impact, assets, infrastructure, participation, and opinion about value), and (b) examples of synthesized findings from studies in the arts and culture sector.

Although it may seem like a paradox, there was relatively little interest expressed by participants in using existing types of data about arts and culture for planning and investment but strong interest in the ways in which arts and culture investments can potentially contribute to community building and economic outcomes. Participants acknowledged a valued role for the arts and culture sector but were skeptical about the types of data they have encountered and the sector's interpretation and use of the data. The report provides an analysis of perspectives from outside the sector as a way to assist arts and culture advocates understand when and how they might employ quantitative methodologies and how to more effectively position information about the sector.

I. The Inquiry: Purpose and Process

Over the past ten to twelve years, quantification has come to the field of arts and culture. With a flurry of pilot efforts that have filled in the information gap about arts and culture activity, the sector has moved beyond traditional arguments of whether or not cultural activity could be captured in statistics. Those pioneering attempts have been funded by foundations, regional and state art organizations, and academic institutions and carried out by a wide range of researchers and institutions. While these attempts at quantification have created attention within the arts and culture sector, we were interested in the reactions of potential data users from *outside* the sector. Do others find the types of currently available data about arts and culture compelling and useful?

With support from The Rockefeller Foundation, RMC Research led an inquiry designed to answer that question and inform future investments in data collection in the field of arts and culture. We focused on learning about the reactions to arts and culture data from two audiences: professionals from the fields of planning and economic development. We chose the two groups because they shape many decisions that affect the quality of community life, including advising elected officials about the allocation of resources and implementation of policies that affect the sector. Further, they are likely to be potential users of the types of data that have emerged from the last ten years of quantification initiatives in the arts and culture sector. The planning and economic development professions influence decision making about a wide range of policies that affect quality of life—investments for economic development, promulgation and enforcement of land use standards, protection of natural and man-made resources, design of neighborhoods, and so forth. Planners and economic developers are data-oriented, typically collecting and using data on population characteristics, industries and employment, economic trends, housing conditions and needs, transportation routes and capacities, as well as community preferences and attitudes.

To carry out the inquiry, RMC partnered directly with the American Planning Association (APA), the national membership organization of planning professionals, and the Northeastern Economic Developers Association (NEDA), a regional membership group

of economic development professionals. The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) provided consultation during initial phases.

In this paper we report on aspects of the inquiry that are likely to be of most interest to those in the arts and culture field, including those who commission, collect, and use data about arts and culture. In the remainder of Section I, we briefly summarize the approach we used to collect reactions from planning and economic development professionals about data from the arts and culture sector, including the approach used to organize information about existing types of arts and culture data and findings from studies and evaluations. We believe that the data typology that we created and the illustrations of synthesized study findings will be of use to others interested in quantification efforts in the arts and culture sector.

Section II summarizes observations made by economic development and planning professionals which are relevant to those involved in the arts and culture sector, emphasizing perspectives about the interpretation and use of data by the sector. Based on those observations, in Section III we present implications for communicating data about the sector and for future development of data sets and studies.

THE INQUIRY

We conducted focus groups and individual interviews with leaders from the two professional groups, selected and recruited through our national and regional partners. Through a series of eight focus groups and several individual interviews we gathered reactions in a systematic manner from forty-five national and regional leaders. Included were professionals who worked for municipalities, regional planning groups, independent planning agencies as well as consultants to those groups. In this paper we refer to the sample with these terms: participants, professionals, and planners and economic developers.

In each case, whether a focus group or individual interview, each data collection "episode" began with a presentation of background information about the arts and

cultural data typology and study generalizations described further below. We then systematically pursued reactions to each type of data, asking participants about:

- familiarity with the type of data and related methods;
- reaction to the usefulness or potential usefulness of the data, including ideas for specific applications;
- perceptions of validity and credibility of the data and related methods;
- ways that the data and methodologies could be most appropriately employed and/or improved; and
- suggestions for the types of information that would be useful to them.

During the focused discussions, we sought areas of common opinion as well areas where opinions diverged. As necessary, we provided clarifying information and examples, attempting to ensure that participants were reacting to consistent information about arts and culture data and study findings.

DATA TYPOLOGY AND SYNTHESIS OF STUDY FINDINGS

In order to discuss arts and culture data with others in a meaningful way, we first needed to organize a wide variety of information in a way that would be meaningful and readily accessible. We were faced with addressing an array of quantification options: data sets, analyses of secondary data sets, pilot studies associated with particular locales, quality of life indices, economic impact studies, surveys of various types, marketing information, and so forth. For discussion purposes, we organized data in six categories as follows:

- Data about Employment in Cultural Jobs and Cultural Fields
- Data about the Economic Impact of Cultural Activity
- Data about Cultural Assets
- Data about Infrastructure Supporting Cultural Activity
- Data about Participation in Cultural Activities
- Data about Public Opinion of Value of Cultural Activity

A seventh category, data about cultural vitality which addressed cultural indicators, was subsumed into the other six at the suggestion of the partners. For each category, we created an information summary that included:

- Definition and related terms
- Assumptions about value, i.e. why the data might be relevant to the arts and culture sector
- A short example of an actual data collection effort, including summary of findings
- Potential utility for developers/ planners, i.e. policy actions where such data might be relevant
- Similar initiatives, i.e. other actual data collection efforts to show the range of interest
- Typical sources of data, i.e. secondary data bases, unique data collection efforts
- Data challenges and issues, i.e. known limitations associated with the type of data.

Attachment A includes information summaries for the six categories of data; references used in the inquiry are embedded in the summaries.

We were also interested in testing out reactions to the value of a series of synthesized findings culled from a range of studies to determine whether participants would find such information useful. For that purpose we created three examples of synthesized findings or generalizations, each a plausible "reading" based on the results or findings of five to seven different types of studies. The studies were typically descriptive, correlative, or qualitative. Examples of synthesized findings are:

- Cultural investments promote economic development.
- The nature of venues and locations of venues matter to equity of cultural participation.
- Cultural participation, especially informal arts, enhances community building.

Participants received short summaries of the studies supporting each generalization; see Attachment B which includes references to the studies.

II. Findings: Interest in Arts and Culture But Skeptical about the Data

We found a great deal of interest on the part of planning and economic development professionals in the larger topic of how the arts and culture sector influences community capacity and economic development. Community arts and culture assets, e.g., museums, performing arts venues, educational opportunities, were generally accepted by focus group participants as positive contributors to the quality of life in their communities independent of quantitative proof of their value. For a variety of reasons, however, this acknowledgement of the valued role of arts and culture does not necessarily translate into interest in the currently available types of data and research about the value of the sector and investments in the sector. Instead we often encountered skepticism about the validity and utility of existing data and research findings from the professionals we interviewed. For those who already subscribe to a theory of action about how arts and culture influence positive outcomes, some types of data such as economic impact information do have confirmatory value and as such are thought to be useful in the "backup toolkit."

Through the inquiry we gathered insights about the reasons that data sets and research studies about the sector do not seem to be influential with professionals outside the circle of arts and culture advocates even when they are positively inclined toward arts and culture activity in their communities. The sources of skepticism are of two types: (1) perspectives about the sector and its characteristics and (2) limitations of the prevailing data collection methodologies used in the sector as well as experiences with the interpretation and use of the data. In this report, we present information about the viewpoints expressed by professionals outside the sector in order to assist arts and culture advocates understand how to effectively use and position quantitative information. First, we discuss viewpoints about the sector and its characteristics and then issues with the interpretation of particular types of data.

VIEWPOINTS ABOUT THE SECTOR AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS

In this section we offer observations about how those outside the sector understand the arts and culture field in the context of discussions about data. We think perceptions of the sector are an important backdrop for understanding the skepticism that was expressed by participants.

For those outside the sector personal connection to the arts sometimes obscures understanding of arts and culture as a sector of community and economic life.
Some professionals outside the arts and culture field view the arts and culture sector exclusively through their own personal and individual experiences, e.g., a son or daughter's passion for music or a recent entertaining evening spent at a local theater. We found that participants who had limited professional experience with arts and culture tended to approach the topic of arts and culture data with highly contextualized examples or anecdotes rather than from the larger vantage point of sector or system. It was difficult for them to move away from specific examples to consider the generalizations suggested by data or research findings.

By way of contrast, in discussion of transportation sector data, the same participants probably wouldn't spend a lot of time talking about their favorite car or their son's bicycle shop. But it was not at all unusual in a discussion of arts and culture data for a developer to describe his worry about the employment prospects for his drama-major daughter, or a planner to talk about the amazing offerings of the little theater in her neighborhood without recognizing connections to the larger arts ecology.

Although highly personalized perspectives may be useful for building affinities (e.g. getting the attention of an elected official) or initiating conversations, they can also distort one's ability to understand the sector as a sector. If cultural interests are thought of only in the private or personal realm, it can be hard to "see" arts and culture as contributing substantively to the local economy or understand the role that small cultural groups play in the community. It certainly makes is difficult to understand the value of quantifying, studying, or generalizing from those experiences.

Comprehensive and inclusive definitions of the arts and culture sector are rare; professionals outside the sector tend to think of the sector as synonymous with the fine arts.

Professionals who have not had experience working with arts and culture activities rarely understand the sector as encompassing an array of disciplines and domains, i.e. applied as well as fine arts; traditional and folk culture as well as literature, media, and historic preservation; professional for-profit and nonprofit as well as informal activity. In fact, we found that even when repeatedly and formally provided with information about the components of arts and culture, it was difficult for some participants to hold onto a comprehensive definition throughout discussions. Participants tended to revert in their examples to narrow stereotypes of fine arts, i.e., ballet, classical music, opera, and painting.

Of course the lack of clear definition of the sector is not at all surprising given the differences of opinion within the sector itself about the boundaries of the sector. Many inside the sector would likely be only barely familiar with efforts to bring clarity to the boundaries of the sector. So, why does a robust definition matter?

If economic developers or planning professionals do not have a solid and realistic grasp of arts and culture as a sector of community and economic life, i.e. if perspective on the sector is limited by personal experience or anecdote and overly narrow in definition, data have little meaning and opportunities will be lost. Certainly, without such an understanding there would be little perceived utility in some types of arts and culture data, e.g., employment data, economic impact, or even information about the participation of community members in various cultural activities. More important, limited understanding of the sector could lead to underestimating development opportunities or ignoring cultural interests of entire population groups. For example, while we would typically expect planners to consider the transportation, education, and recreational needs of a wide range of demographic groups, they may overlook the importance of planning cultural opportunities for the same groups if they think about culture only in terms of the fine arts.

Some professionals view the business of arts and culture as unconnected to the usual economic life of communities.

We encountered some participants who tended to think about the sector's economic contributions through highly visible events or productions, i.e. specialized performing venues, headline performers at a high-profile event, or the occasional blockbuster museum exhibit. Those participants tended to assume that arts and culture enterprises and jobs do not depend on local suppliers and markets. In other words, they do not see the role of arts and culture in the local economy in the same way they would view the contributions of other local businesses and sole proprietors.

This type of skeptical observer judges that the talented performer on tour will spend profits from the performance outside the local area, but overlooks the economic role of the numerous front-of-house, back-of-house, marketing and sales, administrative, and technical personnel who are local members of the workforce. Along the same lines, the newspaper headline about the museum's purchase of a work from a distant auction house overshadows the understanding that the same museum invests its endowment with a local bank, uses a local accounting firm, works with local caterers for functions, purchases its specialized light bulbs from a local supplier, regularly engages a local printing firm, and so forth. In other words, the lack of understanding of how arts businesses operate may lead to undervaluing their contributions, and, as discussed later means that data types that are familiar in other fields may not convey the same meaning when applied to the arts and culture sector.

Prevailing stereotypes associated with those who work in the arts shape interpretations of some types of data.

The tendency to ascribe "maverick" characteristics to those engaged in artistic pursuits sometimes overshadows thinking of their roles as consumers, suppliers, members of the business community, taxpaying residents, and community advocates. One consequence of the lack of familiarity of sector operations is the dominance of stereotypes that influence the interpretation, meaningfulness and utility of data emerging from the sector. For example, the combination of stereotypes of those who work in the sector and narrow sector boundaries affects whether or not a professional might pay attention to employment data from the sector. Some participants described

arts and culture employment as typically undesirable from an economic standpoint based on personal experiences, stereotypes and/or narrow definitions of the sector. They characterize employment in the sector as generally part-time, short-term or episodic, and low-wage. These views were strongly held, and held fast even in the face of data that suggest a contrary employment pattern within a locale or job cluster. It was difficult for some participants in our focus groups to believe data that showed employment characteristics (e.g., weeks worked per year, median wage, household income) in the arts and culture sector to be quite similar to the average characteristics of the overall workforce. Lack of understanding of employment and the nature of jobs in the arts and culture sector becomes a barrier to accepting the meaningfulness of data about the sector on a par with similar data about other sectors.

The sector includes many small businesses (e.g., dance studios, bookstores, and specialty suppliers) and sole proprietors (e.g., visual artists, writers, and craftspeople)—which can make it difficult to develop a picture of the "industry," including the way supply and distribution mechanisms operate. Understandably, economic development professionals tend to be most interested in activity that rises to a certain scale. Depending on one's perspective about the boundaries of the sector and the linkages within the sector, lack of "scalability" may dissuade interest in the sector. If one's picture of an "arts worker" is limited to "one of a kind" objects made by a local sculptor, the imagination may not expand to the picture of a pottery-producing region that boasts individual artists, collectives, and related manufacturing.

There is confusion over the degree to which arts and culture activities of all types are publically subsidized.

Related to narrow definition of the sector is the incorrect assumption that most activity in the sector is carried out by not-for-profit organizations and further that those organizations are receiving large subsidies of public dollars from national, state or municipal sources. This assumption can lead to skepticism about the validity of data from some economic impact studies. For example, those who hold the belief that arts and culture activity is largely subsidized by public taxpayer dollars believe that the economic value of such activity should be discounted. Similar to the experience with

employment and wage data, we found that the belief was maintained even in the face of contrary information about the percent of the sector that is comprised of for profit or individual employment and the information that shows charitable contributions from individual donors as the source of the vast majority of "subsidy."

ISSUES RELATED TO TYPES OF DATA, METHODS, AND USES OF DATA

In this section, we highlight selected issues that we heard professionals raise about particular types of data, methodologies, or interpretations in response to the examples we shared with them. The observations in this section are not intended as a complete account of technical issues associated with arts and culture data but illustrations of reasons given for caution. While some points raised by participants are specific to data from the arts and culture sector, others are associated with the nature of the type of data or method of data collection and would apply regardless of sector. As would be expected, professionals' perspectives on validity, limitations, and utility of types of data in another field depend on experiences with similar data in their own fields.

Inappropriate use of arts and culture data has created a cloud of suspicion.

Professionals in other fields are wary of the ways in which advocates for increased arts and culture investments have used data, including over-interpreting or over-generalizing results and claiming causal impact from descriptive or correlational designs and data. Wariness typically stems from direct experience with interpretations that have been made by local advocates, including arts organizations and elected officials. Elected officials are perceived as more tolerant of a lower evidence standard than professionals, using data to help generate political support for particular courses of action, e.g., the economic return from building a new performing arts venue or sports stadium. The professionals we interviewed noted that advocates have not necessarily distinguished between the standards of elected officials and those of professional administrators when presenting arguments based on arts and culture data.

Professionals have often come into contact with data about cultural assets and amenities through the ubiquitous quality of life indices that show comparative advantages of one community over another. For lots of reasons (including the way

indices are constructed as well as the underlying data components), professionals tend to be suspicious of these types of "promotional" or competitive uses of data (other than those associated with public relations on the part of elected officials and boosters). But those same professionals readily accept the importance of arts and culture as a component of quality of life and do not feel that data are necessary to prove the place of arts and culture in quality of life discussions.

Relatively little arts and culture data is designed to be useful for the types of decision making of interest to economic development and planning professionals.
Basic data about the sector, e.g., level of economic activity, employment, and public perceptions, are useful as descriptive information. But for stakeholders looking to results of studies and data to assist in making rational investment choices (i.e. promoting cultural choices over others or deciding among arts and culture investments), the available types of data are not found to be useful, or even credible. The data do little to illuminate the path of influence or value, i.e. the specific public benefits that accrue and sustain over time from various cultural actions. Professionals recognize that arts and culture initiatives will influence community and economic outcomes and impacts in complex ways. But the familiar types of arts and culture data and research (economic impact, cluster employment, participation, perceptions, and vitality indicators) are seen as emanating from an overly simplistic view of how valued outcomes are produced.

Professionals understand that community context and quality of implementation are critical factors in the success of any type of investment/initiative. Interest in research tends to be about the conditions under which various types of initiatives succeed or fail.

Some methodologies are not as well suited to the arts and culture sector as to other traditional uses.
When data types and methodologies "imported" from other fields are less well-suited for application in the field of arts and culture, professionals are quick to point out the flaws. For example, skeptics raise issues about the value of employment cluster information given the nature of enterprises in the cultural sector, i.e. lots of smaller scale of

businesses and individual proprietors, and definitional issues, specifically the localized nature of what constitutes cultural employment. Small businesses may not show up in some types of economic statistics that are routinely collected; even a robust industry that is largely comprised of small businesses may not be "visible" in a region so the cluster approach may not be an efficient way to view cultural activity.

III. Implications for Communication and Data Collection

This section of the report outlines a few suggestions aimed at arts and culture researchers, policymakers, and funders to consider as they strive to communicate effectively about the sector with existing data and research findings to those outside the sector. We have also included suggestions about other types of data that are of interest to those outside the sector.

IMPLICATIONS FOR COMMUNICATION

Audience goals. Understanding one's audience, including audience priorities, existing background knowledge, and preferred communication modes, is always the starting point for effective communication. In our inquiry, it was clear that the value of the arts and culture sector and data about the sector were viewed through the lens of particular professions. The viewpoints of members of a professional group depend on the nature of their "bottomline" goals and how arts and culture activity is perceived to contribute to those outcomes. Contrast the "bottomline goals" of community planners with those of economic developers: strengthening communities based on their assets versus stimulating economic activity, specifically by creating jobs. Obviously, members of the two professions will differ in their interests in types of cultural data and perhaps even their beliefs about the credibility of arguments based on cultural data. Planners caution arts advocates to be thoughtful about deciding what types of outcomes and data to promote: "jumping on the economic bandwagon speaks the language of those who want to reduce everything to dollars." On the other hand, economic development professionals charged by their communities with making wise investments of limited resources for measurable return are going to be naturally skeptical of information that promises economic return, as they would be of information about the economic potential for a new sports arena, shopping center, or manufacturing facility.

Audience background knowledge. While it is always important to provide context for quantitative information, those in the field of arts and culture bear a greater obligation. As described earlier in the report, there are abundant stereotypes about the sector that may impede accurate understanding. Arts and culture spokespersons must be

especially vigilant about helping others to understand sector operations, including the types of roles and the nature of employment; basic definitional boundaries; relationships among activities including markets and distribution; connections to other sectors; and so forth. Addressing directly any potential for misunderstanding is wise: always define the boundaries of the sector; provide examples that expand viewpoints and counter stereotypes; and offer contextual and comparative information along with subgroup details.

Information about assets. In the rush to "prove" the sector's worth in order to attract investments, arts and culture advocates may overlook relatively straightforward forms of information that are more highly valued by those outside the sector than economic or public perception data. We found a great deal of interest, for example, in basic descriptive information about tangible (e.g., historic sites, arts schools, performing arts institutions) and less tangible cultural assets (e.g., clusters of ethnic populations, unique talents). Planners and economic developers see data about assets as the most useful type of information for meeting some of their priorities, e.g., attracting investments in the form of jobs and housing, creating vital neighborhoods and downtown centers, enhancing safety and improving infrastructure. Professionals were interested in ways that information could be organized, framed, easily accessed, and promoted to make local assets more visible.

The potential to link arts and culture assets to related resources is especially interesting; examples of such linkages are public art and transit routes and facilities; performing and visual arts venues and hospitality amenities; artisans, suppliers of raw material, and distributors of products; designers and manufacturing capacity, and so forth. Planners want to be able to identify and strengthen sense of "place" (as one said, "no one wants a cookie cutter community") by working with assets as a system, making meaningful connections among assets. Asset mapping is seen as "story generation," the foundation for articulating what a community has to work with and an important bottom line goal of planners. Economic development professionals also want to promote "place" as a way to attract workers and retain higher paying industries.

Acknowledging limitations. Professionals understand the limitations of methodologies used in their fields and expect others who employ the same methods to recognize and accept the same limitations. They accept, for example, that economic impact data may be a useful component in the set of arguments for subsidizing investments in a particular industry, but may not be the stimulus for decision making or the deciding factor in choosing one path over another. Using data or study findings as part of a multi-pronged rationale is likely to be more successful than assuming that study findings lead or create the argument.

Unpacking contributions. Arts and culture advocates who want to garner interest from professionals in other fields must take care in how they use and promote data about arts and culture. Rather than focus on the global "value" of investments in arts and culture, advocates need practice in articulating a coherent theory of how investments in arts and culture actually influence specific types of positive changes—in other words, learning to communicate evaluatively. Advocates should be well-versed in specific arts-connected "solutions" and the implementation qualities necessary to tailor them for specific community values—whether economic improvements, community capacity building, or other types of outcomes. Instead of promoting economic outcomes in a singular way, consider "double outcome" projects—those that aim for success in community building outcomes or building community capacities that may eventually lead to economic outcomes.

Critical mass. Related to the point about choosing appropriate outcomes is the relationship among prospective influences on those outcomes. The importance of arts and culture activity may only become obvious to those outside the sector when a certain critical mass of activity has been reached as a result of sustained and varied investments and initiatives that encompass different disciplines, and types of institutions and enterprises (nonprofit and for profit) along with related enterprises, e.g., restaurants and retail, educational institutions. By the time critical mass has been reached, it may be difficult to untangle the specific contributions of cultural activity to determine what is attributable to specific arts and culture initiatives. Sector advocates will need to become more comfortable with documented contributory roles (and methodologies that

document contribution) rather than necessarily claiming that particular investments have a catalyzing or starring role in producing valued outcomes.

IMPLICATIONS FOR DATA COLLECTION

Descriptive cases. Lessons about the ways in which investments in arts and culture affect community building and economic development are emerging. We found strong interest in cases and examples that describe how arts and culture investments unfold in particular contexts and include descriptive information that tracks intended outcomes, both intermediate and summative outcomes. Professionals are interested in the rationale for why particular outcomes were chosen, and how they evolved over time. Longitudinal information is highly desireable: the 6-8 year or longer time horizon is much more critical from the perspective of both planners and economic developers than the achievement of short term outcomes. They want to have detailed information about inputs, including subsidies, and elements of the context that hinder and support the evolution of project activities. They have a wide tolerance for the types of evidence used to document outcomes when the cases are specific and the context is well-described.

Cases with the following types of themes would meet participants' interests:

- How neighborhoods and communities have used arts/culture resources to attract development;
- How neighborhoods and communities have used arts/culture resources to enhance local pride on the part of residents and thereby improve safety of the environment;
- How planners or economic developers have recognized or built an economic cluster comprised of or centered on cultural enterprises and related small businesses/ individual entrepreneurs;
- How community leaders have developed and marketed a sense of place or sense of identify for a community or portion of a community based on cultural assets as a way to attract/retain residents/employers;
- How community leaders have used arts/culture to create understanding of particular community issues that have impeded community progress; and
- How professionals have expanded participation in planning processes, e.g., master plans, neighborhood redevelopment, through arts and culture activities.

Synthesized findings. At the outset of the inquiry, we were interested in determining the degree of interest on the part of those outside the sector in a collection of research-informed generalizations derived from studies. We wanted to know, for example, how valuable it might be to know that multiple studies had pointed in the same direction, i.e. that the general public tends to be more likely to participate in an arts activity in a non-arts venue or that participation in informal arts activity facilitates the development of community cohesion. We found relatively little interest in the utility of such generalizations compared to the utility of descriptive cases. In retrospective, this is not surprising given the skepticism about currently available arts and culture data. We would anticipate, however, that once the status of information about the sector has reached a different level of maturity, i.e. the types of descriptive cases referenced above, demand for generalized findings or principles based on acceptable cases and well-regarded studies would increase.

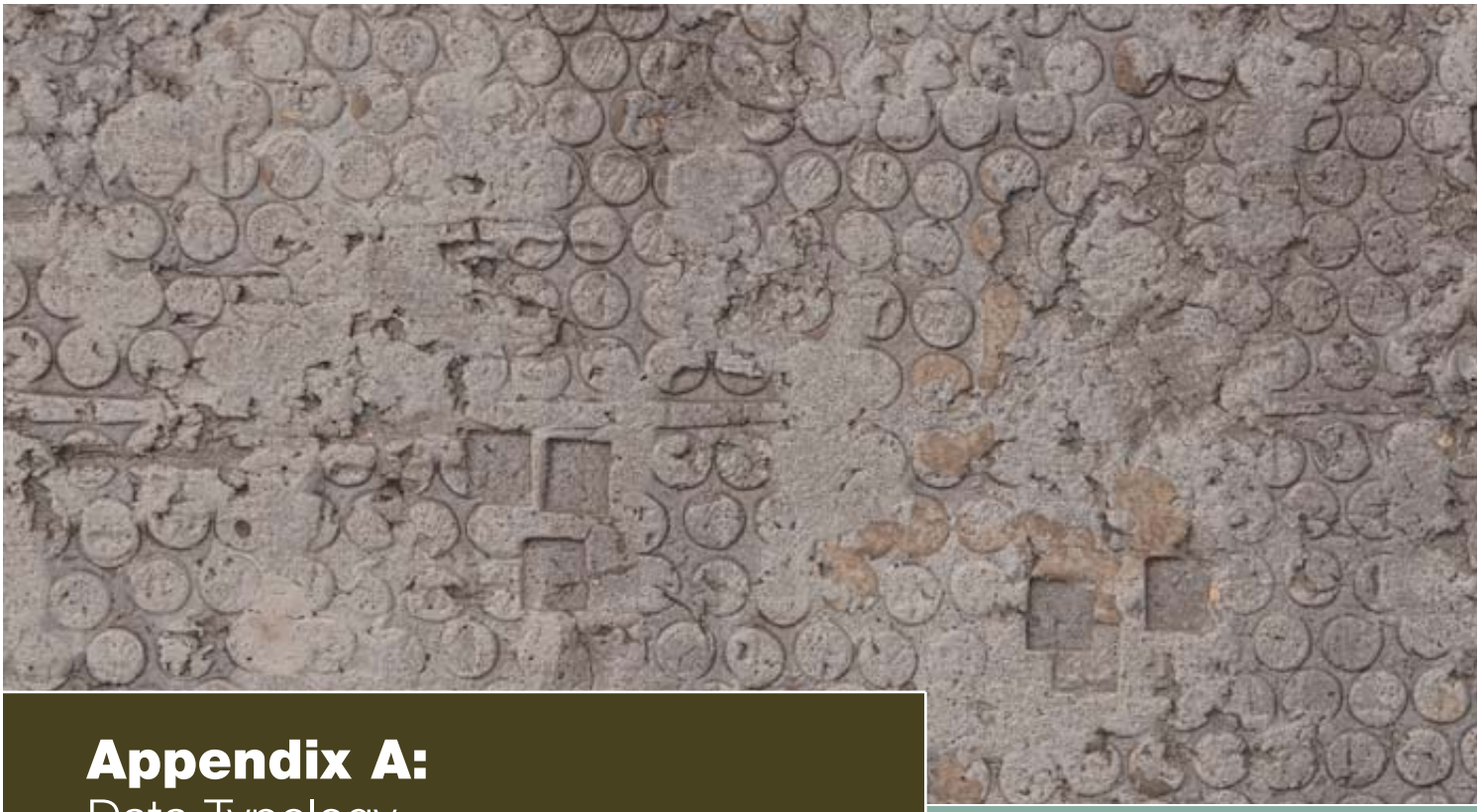
Information about participant behavior. Those who are interested in promoting arts and culture are interested in more nuanced data about patterns of behavior in the cultural consumer than is currently typically available to them. To make informed decisions about the allocation of resources among potential cultural investments requires knowledge about the behavior of cultural consumers that goes beyond simple preferences and may be locally specific. For example, what are the spending behaviors of those who are interested in certain types of cultural activities? Under what circumstances will participants in informal cultural activities also elect to participate in other types of cultural activities? How much cross-domain activity occurs? To what extent do participants in fairs and festivals also participate in other cultural activities? What is the relationship between participation via media and participation in live events? Ready access to data that informs answers to those types question would be very useful to planners.

Information about the role of arts education and training. We encountered a great deal of interest in the role played by arts education and training for young people in developing skills that are valuable in the work force. Further, formal and informal arts education programs were perceived to be important community assets, in part because

of their function in attracting and recruiting businesses. Arts education is highly valued by planners and economic developers—almost instinctively—even though there is little understanding of how specific characteristics or qualities of the experience might be related to other types of outcomes; or how characteristics of other types of arts participation for non-youth might yield similar benefits.

CONCLUSION

This report was prepared specifically for the arts and culture audience to share insights that we gained during the inquiry that might be useful in collecting and positioning data about arts and culture. Among other concluding activities associated with the inquiry, we are following through on the ideas suggested by participants for short case studies with themes of interest to planning and economic development professionals. The intent of the case studies to be prepared in concert with the American Planning Association is demonstration of ways that communities have invested in arts and culture activity with intended civic, community, and/or economic outcomes.



Appendix A:
Data Typology

#1: Employment in Cultural Jobs and Cultural Fields

Definition and Terms	Descriptive information about the size and composition of the cultural sector within an area's economy in terms of employment. Derived using industry cluster analysis and similar techniques.
Assumptions about Value of Employment Data	Size of employment in sector is a measure of economic activity driven by the cultural sector. Relatively higher concentration of creative enterprises and workers in a geographic area yields a competitive edge by elevating the quality of life and improving its ability to attract economic activity, especially creating the climate for innovation. Trends can be compared to other areas. Focusing on employment moves beyond the more limited focus of traditional economic impact studies on nonprofits.
Example of Initiative	The **New England Creative Economy Initiative** (CEI) has measured and tracked the size of the cultural sector in six New England states since 2000, comparing changes in size of sector to trends in other regions of the country. CEI measures **industry clusters** (enterprise and individuals that produce cultural products) and also **workforce** (workers with specific occupations that produce cultural goods, including those in enterprises not classified as cultural, e.g., graphics designer within financial firm). Policymakers in Vermont and Maine have successfully used the results to argue for resources to build on the competitive advantage in their states to invest more in cultural enterprises. CEI is sponsored by the New England Foundation for the Arts and the New England Council.
Potential Utility for Developers/ Planners	• Proxy for describing/determining quality of life and/or status of economic competitiveness of area • Placement of incubator spaces • Identification of services and resources required to spur development • Allocation of various types of development incentives

Similar Initiatives	• *The Creative Engine: How Arts and Culture is Fueling Economic Growth in New York City* • California: Sonoma County Economic Development Board on Financial Services • *Clusters of creativity: Innovation and Growth in Montana* • *The Dollars and Sense of Cultural Economic Development: Michigan's Cultural Capacity* • Louisiana: *Where Culture Meets Business* • *Creative Industries,* Americans for the Arts analysis of Dun & Bradstreet data by Congressional districts
Sources of Employment Data	U. S. Census Bureau Economic Census (employment, payroll, sales by industry—available at the county or lower level for some sectors; 5 year cycle) County Business Patterns (employment, payroll by industry—available annually) U.S. Decennial Population Census U. S. Current Population Survey (CPS) (workforce information from households on monthly basis) U. S. Census Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) and American Community Survey (ACS) designed to replace PUMS (workforce information from households) ES202 employment and wage reports (reported monthly to state labor departments) Occupational Employment Survey Internal Revenue Service Form 990 (non-profit organizations' financial data) Dun & Bradstreet establishment-level data, primarily on commercial businesses For classification purposes: North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS codes) and Standard Occupational Classification System (SOC); National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE)
Employment Data Challenges and Issues	• Different definitions of which industries and workers belong in cultural sector, e.g. does technology fit? and confusion between culture and creativity • Lack of fit with labor classifications that are oriented toward manufacturing economy • Some data sources are unreliable below state/regional level given small samples in cluster • Cultural field includes large numbers of self-employed workers and embedded organizations, e.g., university art galleries, that are missed in some data sources • Inconsistencies in use of classification codes by data sources and over time

#2: Economic Impact of Cultural Activity

Definition and Terms	Calculation of the direct and indirect spending that results from cultural activity, including the role of arts and culture enterprises as employers and attractors of visitors, new employees and businesses to an area. Indirect spending is typically related to the jobs and income associated with *related* businesses; induced spending is use of wages by employees and those of related businesses in the local economy. Visitor spending includes both direct spending as well as indirect effects on related businesses.
Assumptions about Value	While those in the arts community are quick to point out that the intrinsic value of arts and culture as primary, there is growing recognition that the presence of an active arts community contributes to economic success in many ways. Economic impact studies are typically rooted in advocacy efforts—getting arts onto the table with other sectors and in line with an output-oriented approach to valuing public sector investments.
Example of Initiatives	**Americans for the Arts** produces a study every five years of the economic impact of nonprofit arts organizations and their audiences based on a national sample of about 100 communities, including surveys of 3,000 nonprofit arts organizations and more than 40,000 attendees at arts. The economic models describe the impact of the spending by arts organizations and audiences in terms of four key economic indices: 1) number of full-time equivalent jobs supported; 2) amount of household income generated for residents; 3) amount of local government revenue (city and county) generated; 4) amount of state government revenue generated The most recent study (2002) found that America's nonprofit arts industry generates $134 billion in economic activity every year, including $24.4 billion in Federal, state, and local tax revenues. The $134 billion total includes $53.2 billion in spending by arts organizations and $80.8 billion in event-related spending by arts audiences.
Potential Utility for Developers/ Planners	• Allocate resources for development • Creation of tax incentives • Planning cultural districts • Redevelopment of vacant properties • Zoning that accommodates live-work spaces • Creation of loan programs

Similar Initiatives	• The *Historic/Cultural Traveler* (Travel Industry Association and Smithsonian) describes economic impacts of cultural tourism. • *The Impact of Craft on the National Economy*, Craft Organization Directors Association • *Cultural Economic Development Online Tool*, Michigan State University work in progress to further Michigan's Cultural Economic Development Strategy • Assessment of the economic impact of various institutions, e.g., The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston case study • Assessment of the economic impact of investments, e.g., Philadelphia FTV case study; UMass Center for Policy analysis study of New Bedford's AHA! Project
Typical Sources of Economic Impact Data	• National Center for Charitable Statistics • Regional and state databases, e.g., New England Cultural Data Base (information on over 19,000 organizations) • Americans for the Arts economic impact models for about 100 communities • Visitor surveys and user surveys of various types from institutions, communities • Administrative data from institutions • Commercial data sources, e.g., Dun & Bradstreet, Claritas
Economic Impact Challenges and Issues	• Credibility of various approaches to determining indirect/induced spending • Capturing economic impact only of audience-oriented institutions • Difficulty of obtaining proprietary data and data about individual artists resulting in limited view of economic impact • Applicability to non-urban areas • Combining in reliable and valid way the multiple factors that constitute economic impact, e.g., whether consumer spending on the arts is an addition or substitution • Comparison to other forms of investment often not considered

#3: Cultural Assets

Definition and Terms	Inventory of the cultural assets of a defined area. Includes artists, arts organizations, and informal activity as well as sites and structures. Other terms: asset mapping, asset identification, cultural inventory
Assumptions about Value	Recognition of cultural assets is foundational for defining sense of place/authenticity. The presence of cultural assets is not necessarily limited by population size. Preservation of cultural assets depends on adequate support.
Example of Initiatives	Many cities and communities have surveyed cultural assets as part of community planning. **Maine's Discovery Research** program encourages communities to identify and catalog artists and cultural activities as well as cultural institutions and locations—all of which enrich the lives of local residents and define the community's character. Examples of assets identified from various Maine communities include: • Maine's Swedish Colony directory which includes schools and churches and annual music and dance celebrations, as well as practitioners of traditional occupations associated with agriculture, building, recreation • Maine's Oxford Foothills cultural map which includes historic campgrounds and fairgrounds, galleries and museums, gravesites, summer theaters, covered bridges.
Potential Utility for Developers/ Planners	• Identifying gaps in cultural amenities • Preservation of valued assets • Marketing the community

Similar Initiatives	• *Chicago Dance Mapping Project*, survey of the landscape of the dance community in the region around and including Chicago • Various types of asset inventories in community cultural plans, master plans
Typical Sources of Cultural Assets Data	• Local and state inventories by geography and discipline • State arts agency directories, rosters, and folklife field surveys • Regional and state databases, e.g. the New England Cultural Database (NECD), a searchable, comprehensive data warehouse containing information about nonprofit cultural organizations, creative industry businesses, and individual artists in New England. The NECD currently houses over 19,000 records searchable, including by zip code. • Community indicator projects sometimes address assets.
Cultural Assets Data Challenges and Issues	• Identifying the universe of artists • Capturing informal opportunities such as festivals, fairs, parades • Capturing small enterprises such as dance schools, galleries, bars, clubs • Capturing cultural assets that are part of non-cultural organizations

#4: Cultural Infrastructure

Definition and Terms	Information about the various supports for sustaining and attracting artists, cultural workers, and cultural activity. Data could include information about availability of venues, access to markets, related businesses, concentration of disciplines, specialized talents, informal opportunities (e.g., festivals, fairs), live-work spaces, targeted funding, tax incentives, and so forth.
Assumptions about Value	Artists and cultural organizations will be attracted to and able to continue to live and work in areas where there are supports for their work.
Example of Initiatives	**LINC** (the acronym for Leveraging Investments in Creativity) is a ten-year national campaign to improve conditions for artists in all disciplines, so that artists can more readily do their creative work and contribute to community life. LINC's programs and initiatives are informed by the *Investing in Creativity* study which resulted in a framework that can be used for analyzing conditions and planning effective action at any level. The framework identifies six distinct but inter-related conditions that affect artists' lives and work: validation, demands and markets, material supports, training and professional development, community and networks, and information. The framework can be used to understand the strengths and weaknesses of support for artists in specific places, or for any subset of artists – by demographic characteristic, artistic discipline, or career stage. For example, this framework can help a city analyze the strengths and weaknesses of supports for artists in its area.
Potential Utility for Developers/ Planners	• Allocation of incentives for rehabilitation of spaces for cultural purposes • Changing zoning to permit live/work in residential and/or commercial areas • Collective marketing for artists and small arts venues • Innovative strategies to build and hold artistic space, e.g., non-profit land banks or collaboratives

Similar Initiatives	• *National and Local Profiles of Cultural Support* collected data on public and private support for nonprofit arts in ten communities (Americans for the Arts and Ohio State) • *Arts in Place: Philadelphia's Cultural Landscape, Institutional Networks Serving Artists, Artists and their Social Networks* (all from the Dynamics of Culture research, SIAP) • *Creative Community Index of Silicon Valley* tracks financial health of cultural organizations, contributed income, paid leadership, trends of volunteerism • *Artistic Dividend Project*; various studies of supports for artists in the Twin Cities, MN • *LINC* studies carried out in several cities
Typical Sources of Conditions Data	• State arts agencies surveys about conditions for artists and arts organizations • National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS)/Unified Database Arts Organizations (UDAO): annual nonprofit financial health (includes surplus/deficits of current assets; contributed income; investment income)
Conditions Data Challenges and Issues	• Identifying the universe of artists • Capturing informal opportunities such as festivals, fairs, parades • Capturing small enterprises such as dance schools, galleries, bars, clubs • Capturing cultural assets that are part of non-cultural organizations

#5: Participation in Cultural Activities

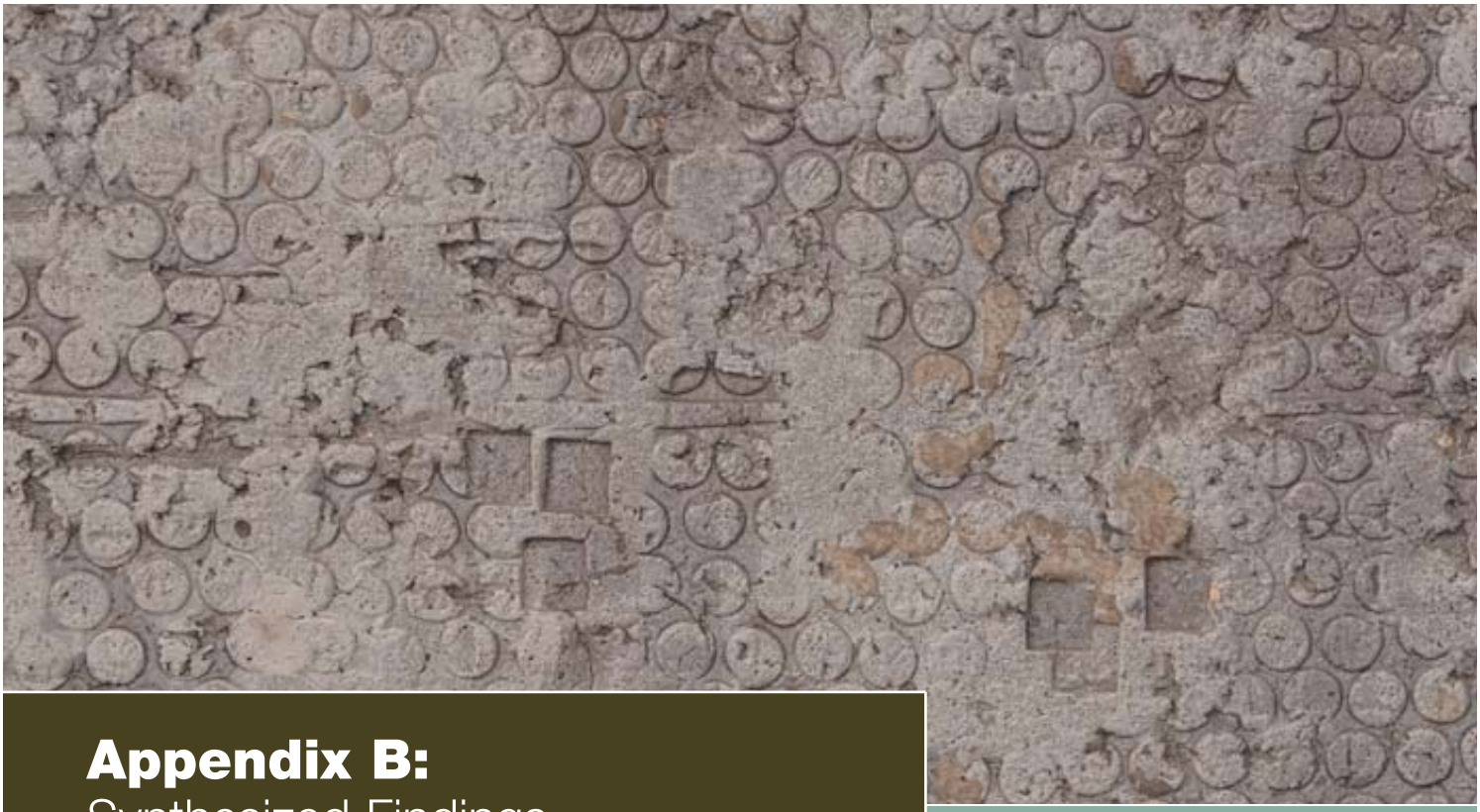
Definition and Terms	Descriptive information about the degree to which individuals take part in cultural activities of various types, the choices they make, and the influences on those choices. Can also include proxy indicators for participation, e.g., bookstore and record store sales.
Assumptions about Value of Participation Data	Frequency and extent of participation is an indication of the activities that people value, and therefore among the opportunities to which they want to have ready access. Participatory activities (often amateur interests) are related to the professional arts—amateur participants are frequent customers for professional products and services. Cultural participation encourages attitudes, values, and social ties that support a well-functioning society.
Example of Initiatives	**Community Partnerships for Cultural Participation,** an initiative of the Wallace Foundation, was created to broaden, deepen and diversity cultural participation in selected communities. The Foundation commissioned research about the extent to which people participate in cultural activities and why they do so. Findings include: people participate in arts and culture at much higher rates than have been previously measured when a broad definition of participation is used (close to 84%); this is true for people with low incomes and less than college education as well as for more advantaged groups. Most people participate in activities that span "classical" and "popular" forms. The CPCP initiative was designed to help organizations and artists to revise programming to respond to diverse audiences, improve awareness through marketing, perform in non-traditional venues, and improve access to overcome distance and cost barriers.
Potential Utility for Developers/ Planners	• Determining adequacy of types of cultural opportunities in terms of number, diversity, access, quality • Locating and designing cultural and other facilities, venues, and amenities, e.g., transportation, wayfinding Design of public spaces • Designing non-cultural spaces for cultural purposes • Generating citizen participation in planning

Similar Initiatives	• Performing Arts Research Coalition (national arts service organizations measure participation and support in 10 cities) • *Survey of Public Participation in the Arts* (national sample of household-level information collected every 5 years) • *Informal Arts: Cohesion, capacity and other cultural benefits in unexpected places* (Chicago area study, Columbia College) • *Immigrant Participatory Arts,* Cultural Initiatives of Silicon Valley • Wallace-funded START state initiatives designed to promote participation (various data collection activities in 13 state arts agencies • Americans and the Arts (Harris surveys) • Various NEA analyses, e.g., *Arts in the GDP*
Typical Sources of Participation Data	• Local and state arts agency surveys • Arts organization surveys • Portion of many multi-purpose community surveys (through various initiatives many cities have been surveyed) • General Social Survey (national sample, includes attitudes about arts and culture collected every few years)
Participation Data Challenges and Issues	• Taking an inclusive and broad perspective on culture so that traditional cultural practices, e.g., craft, religious practices, are accounted for • Including amateur participation (in contrast to audience participation) is a relatively new phenomenon

#6: Public Opinion about the Value of Culture

Definition and Terms	Perceptions of the general population (or targeted samples) about the various values of the arts or various aspects of culture. Value may be expressed in relative terms, that is, comparing arts options to other choices, e.g. when considering allocation of resources.
Assumptions about Value	The public will support what it values, including with tax dollars and special assessments as well as participation. Individuals may hold opinions about value that go beyond their own participation, i.e. having the arts available whether or not they partake (option value) and ensuring availability for future generations (bequest value).
Example of Initiatives	**Cultural Initiatives of Silicon Valley (CISV),** California, has periodically surveyed opinion leaders as well as the general public on a variety of topics related to culture. In 2005, CISV learned that regional leaders believe the area is slipping in its ability to attract creative talent to live and work in Silicon Valley. CISV also learned from a general population survey that residents want their children to receive 3-4 hours of arts education per week. Residents' assessments of whether or not their home city was a good place to exercise their cultural interests depended on the city in question.
Potential Utility for Developers/ Planners	• Developing community master plans and feasibility studies • Urban design

Similar Initiatives	• *Arts, Culture and the Social Health of the Nation,* Institute for Innovation in Social Policy (periodic national survey • Performing Arts Research Coalition (national arts service organizations measure participation and support in 10 cities) • *Survey of Public Attitudes Toward the Arts* (periodic) • Harris polls
Typical Sources of Public Opinion Data	• Various state and community surveys of public opinion about the arts as part of strategic planning
Public Opinion Data Challenges and Issues	• Difficult to interpret value when surveys don't included comparative options for judging value. • It is difficult to activate respondents' understanding of full range of cultural activities. • Survey language is frequently limited to traditional forms of culture.



Appendix B:
Synthesized Findings

Findings: How Compelling? How Useful?

Finding #1: Cultural Investments Promote Economic Development	
Social Impact of the Arts Project: University of Pennsylvania	Long term correlational studies of Philadelphia neighborhoods show that poverty is more likely to decline and population increase in blocks with high cultural engagement. High levels of cultural engagement in low-income neighborhoods are associated with higher than average increases in property values. Within the most distressed areas, those with high levels of cultural engagement were three times more likely to have had decrease in poverty.
The Economic Impacts of Film, Television and Video Production: A Case Study for the Philadelphia Region, Pierre B. Vilain, case study	This case study compared the expenditures associated with an agency's work in attracting film, television and video (FTV) production to the Greater Philadelphia area with the total direct and indirect economic activity generated, including state and local taxes. The study found extremely high benefit-cost ratios; over eight years, the state and municipal tax revenues are estimated to be approximately $3.6 million per year. Conservative estimates are that the "cost per job" to create the FTV work is only $6,000.
Reaping the Artistic Dividend, Ann Markusen, exploratory study	The Twin Cities have benefited economically from the concentration of artists who raise the overall productivity and earnings of the regional economy. The region is attractive to artists because of vibrant artistic networks, live/work spaces, membership organizations, wide array of arts venues, generous arts funding, and affordable quality of life. Attracting artists is less expensive than spending dollars to subsidize firms to relocate to the area or build large arts facilities.
Vermont Council on Rural Development, case studies	Case studies of tax revenue from the small communities of Vergennes and Rockingham in Vermont showed dramatic increases in local meals and sales tax revenues correlated with the renovation of the Vergennes Opera House and the restoration of the Exner Block in Rockingham for cultural activity.

Finding #2: The Nature of Venues and Locations of Venues Matter to Equity of Cultural Participation	
Reggae to Rachmaninoff, Urban Institute, national survey	People are more likely to attend arts and cultural events at community locations than at specialized arts venues. Schools, public parts, churches and other worship places, community centers are especially important to those who participate only in popular events.
Social Impact of the Arts Project: University of Pennsylvania	Cultural participation is highly correlated with the local presence of cultural organizations. There is a strong relationship between local and regional arts participation. 8/10 regional participants also attended neighborhood events. People in poorer neighborhoods had higher local and lower regional participation than average.
Immigrant Participatory Arts, Cultural Initiatives of Silicon Valley, CA, qualitative research	Performance in public spaces affects the meaning of the art-making for ethnic groups, connoting mainstream acceptance.
Arts, Culture, and the Social Health of the Nation 2005, Institute for Innovation in Social Policy, Vassar College, national survey	Distance of location of venues reduces attendance at live performance for 52% of the population; at museums and art shows for 48% of the population.
Artists and Local Economic Development, Twin Cities, MN, Ann Markusen	Multiple decentralized smaller artistic spaces have greater impact on communities than centralized arts districts; they increase the potential for community service on the part of arts organizations.

Finding #3: Cultural Participation, especially Informal Arts, Enhances Community Building.	
Social Impact of the Arts Project: University of Pennsylvania	Cultural participants bridge divides of geography, ethnicity, and social class. In Philadelphia, 4/5 participants for very small grassroots cultural activities come from outside the neighborhood where the venue is located. Cultural participation is highly correlated with social diversity.
Immigrant Participatory Arts, Cultural Initiatives of Silicon Valley, CA, qualitative research	Participatory community arts are one of the major ways that newcomers have for taking the role of authoritative adult, including the parent role, and building connections to neighbors/friends. Art-making is a tool to connect to mainstream civic life—bonding, i.e., building social capital.
Informal Arts: Cohesion, Capacity and other Cultural Benefits, Chicago Center for Arts Policy, Columbia College, ethnography	Informal arts activities help people to bridge a variety of social boundaries (age, gender, race, status) because informal arts tend to be inclusive, promoting trust building and respect for differences. Participation in informal arts builds leadership capacities and skills, including organizational skills, problem-solving and skills of inter-group cooperation, of individuals and groups to take collective action. Informal arts foster inclinations toward civic betterment.
Arts, Culture, and the Social Health of the Nation 2005, Institute for Innovation in Social Policy, Vassar College, national survey	78% of Americans reported that arts have helped them see things from other people's perspective.
Value of Performing Arts in Five Communities, PARC, community survey	More than 7/10 survey respondents agree that performing arts help them understand other cultures better.
Reggae to Rachmaninoff, Urban Institute, national survey	Frequent participants in arts and culture also tend to be very active in civic, religious, and political activities, and this is true at every income level. Frequent participants in arts and culture also volunteer, register to vote, belong to organizations, and attend religious services.
Cultural Initiatives of Silicon Valley, CA, population survey	Those who participate in some form of civic activity and those who volunteer regularly are significantly more likely to say that arts play a major role in their lives.

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