Cultural Planners' Forum

Held in Conjunction with the Creative Places and Spaces[2] Risk Revolution Conference

September 29, 2005
Centre for Social Innovation
215 Spadina Street
Toronto, Ontario

Table of Contents

Report Prepared by:
Greg Baeker - Toronto, Ontario
Bill Bulick - Portland, Oregon
Victoria Stasiuk - London, Ontario

Meeting Context

A dialogue among practicing cultural planners from Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom took place Thursday September 29 in Toronto. The forum took advantage of delegates gathering in Toronto for the *Creative Places and Spaces[2] Risk Revolution Conference.* The meeting was convened by Greg Baeker and Bill Bulick with support from Toronto Artscape, the conference organizers.

The gathering grew out of conversations between Greg Baeker and Bill Bulick since the 2003 *Creative Places and Spaces Conference.* These conversations suggested that much could be gained by opening up cross-border conversations among cultural planners, particularly through a focus on actual practice.

Several CPS Conference sessions were devoted to or referenced cultural planning – reflecting a more integrated or 'whole systems' approach to local cultural development closely linked with creative city agendas and other community building frameworks, especially sustainability.

A draft agenda was circulated prior to the meeting (Appendix A) together with a list of potential topics for discussion (Appendix B).

Opening Roundtable

The forum began with brief introductions and people identifying one issue or challenge they faced in their work they wished to explore with colleagues. These topics included the following (now grouped and summarized)

- Political leadership is needed for long-term cultural projects and initiatives. The arts need to be repositioned on the political agenda and more support developed.
- We need to cultivate political champions and leaders for culture.
- How to support and cultivate political leadership that is comfortable with complexity?
- We must translate general support for culture among political leaders to real financial commitments – combating cultural priorities slipping to the bottom of city priorities – and making cultural activity and funding more sustainable.

- Cultural facility development.

- Understanding arts/heritage priorities – within a diversity framework.
- Strategies for integration and silo busting
- Integration of culture – across government departments and policy/planning fields and within the cultural sector.
- Getting economic development agencies and business leaders onside – making a more effective economic case for culture
- Promoting a dialogue between culture and education policy – this is occurring in European states.
- Cultural tourism – it is still not on the radar screen in Canada as much as it should be

- Dealing with regional cultural planning – connecting upper and lower tier municipalities and local government
- Placemaking – how to make cultural planning a powerful force for building quality of place and placemaking
- How to effectively translate plans into actions
- How to develop and implement 'emergent' policy and planning models where solutions emerge slowly and are not prescriptive
- Evaluation frameworks and methods for cultural plans.

Shared Concerns and Challenges

From all the suggestions raised, the following common themes and priorities were identified and discussed, briefly. Each topic was worthy of far more elaboration than was possible within the time available.

Integration

There are challenges associated with integration *within* the cultural sector (i.e., silo busting) and integration of culture more broadly across government. In some cities, politicians and senior staff are supportive and understand the integration arguments and needs, but the greater challenge is getting the cultural sector itself to come together as a sector and community of interest, especially across the border between the fine arts and heritage, informal arts and broader definitions of culture encompassing cultural landscapes, language, cuisine, etc.

Integrating culture across all aspects of city building means developing a *cultural lens* (a means of assessing the cultural impact of all planning and development decisions in cities) combined with 'relentless infiltration' (Sue Harvey) – working continuously with colleagues in other departments to help them solve their problems using cultural assets and perspectives.

In Peterborough, all new senior managers hired by the city are given a briefing on the Arts, Culture and Heritage Division, and cultural life in Peterborough.

Cultural planning under the Oregon (USA) Cultural Trust, undertaken for all counties and native tribes in 03/04, mandated the inclusion of arts, heritage and humanities and has resulted in permanent cultural coalitions and funding mechanisms reflecting this broad definition of culture.

New Organizational Forms and Purposes

New, complex challenges require new organizational forms able to move across traditional disciplines and sectors. Toronto Artscape, organizer of the CPS conference, is one example. It is a not-for-profit organization that supports arts-led urban regeneration strategies. Its work links the renewal of built form with creative enterprises and its mandate and purposes span the full spectrum of economic, social, environmental and cultural considerations. In part because it does not fit neatly into established categories of cultural organizations – and thus government funding programs – it earns significant portions of its operating revenue through consulting services.

In Canada there has been a call for a new funding program similar to the old Canada Council Explorations Program that provided funds for innovative projects outside of fixed disciplinary categories. The new program would focus not on artistic creation/ production but on capacity building, and on new organizational infrastructure.

New Governance Systems

Related to the challenge of new organizational forms is the need for new collective planning and decision-making systems that shift the focus from govern<u>ment</u> to govern<u>ance</u>. Mechanisms such as Roundtables or Councils representing government, business, community and cultural interests are beginning to appear in Ontario to build and sustain partnerships and mobilize cross-sectoral resources.

Problems of Different Scales of Activity

Many support programs of senior levels of government do not acknowledge different scales of activity and challenges associated with working in smaller communities where matching funds are more difficult to raise. For example, when the City of Peterborough applied for the Cultural Capital Program from the Department of Canadian Heritage, raising matching funds was a huge barrier.

Diversity and Inclusion

In the United Kingdom, the entire diversity agenda is still struggling. Most money for diversity, social inclusion, etc. comes from special dedicated funds rather than ongoing money. It remains difficult to integrate diversity agendas into discipline or sector specific funding programs.

UK developed more artist in residence programs dealing with social inclusion issues – runs up against old art world institutions.

The core challenge remains institutional change and the capacity of established cultural organizations to reform themselves to serve a wider and more representative group of people.

Established Institutions and Resources

In Chicago a study was completed that pointed to the issue of unequal access to resources. However, no one wanted to take on the political battles that would be associated with helping smaller cultural organizations gain access to funds when the implication was reduced funds for larger organizations. This issue plays out in nearly every community. The only solution is trying to grow the pie rather than take away from the traditional organizations.

Creative London

Creative London is the strategic agency for London's creative industries, and an initiative of the London Development Agency. It emerged out of the Mayor's Commission on the Creative Industries, a time-limited inquiry bringing together creative business leaders, policymakers and the Mayor's office to identify practical and sustainable interventions to grow the creative sector. A key part of Creative London's mandate is to act as a broker

to leverage funding and resources from other partners in support of creative industries. The Creative London programme is based around four cross-cutting themes: talent – the need to nurture talent at the grassroots and create progression routes, enterprise – to provide tailored business support & finance to enable creative businesses to thrive and grow; showcasing – to co-ordinate existing trade offers and develop strategic agencies such as London Design Festival to showcase London's design talent globally, and create local markets for local producers; property – to provide a portfolio of affordable workspaces for creative businesses at all stages of business cycle. The Creative London programme is underpinned by the development of a network of local creative hubs across London..

Key interventions include an intellectual property advice service, a Creative Capital fund to provide equity finance for creative businesses, and a Space Agency to provide artists with temporary space for display, performance and retail activities..

For more information, see: www.creativelondon.org.uk

The LDA has also initiated a 3 year project with Toronto to evaluate international best practice in creative city building. Graeme Evans reported that a searchable database of more than 250 abstracts is now available at www.citiesinstitute.org/creative spaces. – the result of the first global scan of issues. A full report of phase 1 of the project is available at www.creativelondon.org.uk

Centre for Creative Communities
Jennifer Williams reported on the work of the Center for Creative Communities, an organization with 28 years of experience working to put creativity at the heart of positive social change. CCC conducts research, provides technical assistance and facilitates planning and convening. They have recently revamped their web site, www.creativecommunities.org.uk to highlight a new online resource of hundreds of articles, downloadable reports and case studies that highlight the interdependence of different sectors working to address social, educational and community development issues. This new resource will be of use to policymakers and practitioners interested in collaborative partnerships between sectors, promoting citizenship and inclusion, and fostering creative learning. CCC aim's to consolidate and push forward thinking in three complex areas of cultural and social development: Collaborative Linking and Thinking, Citizenship and Diversity, and Creativity and Learning.

Advocacy Versus Policy

In all countries the cultural sector has been better at advocating for funding than at development of policy. We need to develop stronger descriptive models of how the sector works, and greater consensus around core concepts and vocabulary. Other sectors – such as economic development – have these core building blocks in place and have legitimacy and credibility. We need to understand the systems we operate in before we can intervene (Peter Senge). John Kreidler reported that Cultural Initiatives-Silicon Valley has just released version 2.0 of its Creative Community Index: Measuring Progress Toward A Vibrant Silicon Valley. The purpose of the study is to describe, based on quantitative research, the cultural landscape of Silicon Valley and to illuminate correlations between Silicon Valley's cultural vitality and its capacity to generate creative ideas significant to the region's economic and social well-being. The study is available at www.ci-sv.org

John Kreidler is also working with a group to create a Cultural Dynamics Map, as an on-going attempt to apply the methods and modeling language of systems thinking to the world of arts and cultural production, consumption, support, and experience in the United States. The Project is a collaborative effort of: The Bolz Center for Arts Administration (www.bolzcenter.org), National Arts Strategies (www.artstrategies.org), Cultural Initiatives Silicon Valley (www.ci-sv.org) For more information, visit the project web site: http://www.culturaldynamicsgroup.org/

The arts and cultural sector needs to "grow up" and develop more mature and sophisticated relationships with politicians. Effective policy entails identifying the pressure points where leverage and change are possible. It also involves the ability to identify the change makers/agents and dynamics, posit outcomes and identify measures and indicators of change (see below also).

Funding

In the United Kingdom and in Canada, Arts Councils have broadened the definitions of art and culture without increasing the size of the funding pie. In the U.K., lottery money is driving capital development with no assurance that the new facilities can be sustained.

Libraries as Cultural Institutions

In Canada and the US, there is a shift underway toward libraries conceiving of themselves as community development agencies – not simply book depositories.

In the U.K., municipal libraries are struggling but are also trying to reposition themselves as "Idea Stores." New facilities are being built in high traffic areas as part of urban renewal plans. One rule of thumb in planning for lively cities is that that strong places/spaces in cities are where you can do 10 things all in the same area – i.e., shop, doctor's offices, library, gallery, restaurant, take a class, etc.

Barcelona has launched a 10 year cultural plan with the integration of libraries as a key plank in the plan, very much seen as part of the cultural infrastructure (and not particularly linked to cultural tourism). The cultural plan promotes the idea of the City as a cultural project – i.e., to see the plan primarily in terms of city building.

"Arts as Culture"

We are stuck in a marginalizing discourse as long as we continue to talk about 'arts and culture' which suggests an equation of the two and acts to marginalize other facets of culture such as history, heritage, libraries, sense of place, etc. We tend to equate culture with expressed culture rather than lived culture. Our sense of cultural development privileges arts over heritage,

Changing Language and Boundaries

Our biggest barrier is the language we're stuck with. Rather than starting the conversation in communities talking about 'art', 'culture', etc. we need to start conversations where people are in their own lives in communities. Jennifer Williams talked about creative partnership models where the conversation starts with a

community issue - parking, drugs, etc. What does the community really need? The conversations are not a tutor/learner situation but about dignity and mutual respect.

Conversations that start with quality of life, sense of place, placemaking, liveability – these are the issues that engage communities.

However, language can be loaded. In Chicago the economic development agency talked about quality of life but it became a code word for keeping it white. Other people think "urban" means black.

Cultural Development and Sustainable Communities

The Federal government in Canada has embraced a vision of sustainable communities of the future built on a quadruple bottom line of social, economic, environmental/ecological and cultural health/well-being. Within several years, all communities receiving Federal infrastructure dollars will be required to table a sustainability plan reflecting the four pillars. It is unclear at this stage how the cultural pillar/dimension is being defined and what a plan would look like.

Colin Jackson, is a member of the External Advisory Committee (to the Prime Minister) on Cities and Communities and chairs a subcommittee that is responsible for developing a position on culture as the fourth pillar. Bill Bulick, Carol Coletta and others met with the Committee last November in Winnipeg to work towards a position. There is a huge opportunity here to assist Colin in framing these issues. The Creative City network has received Infrastructure Canada money to examine these issues among others, part of a three year grant in partnership with Simon Fraser University in Vancouver.

There is a challenge integrating existing institutions (that control significant amounts of current funding) into this broader vision of cultural development in cities.

Performance Measures and Indicators

We need to invent our own methodologies for evaluation to ensure that the things we measure and the way we measure them reflect our own values and beliefs – not those imported from other fields/sectors. There is a problem with short electoral cycles. We need to be funding longitudinal studies through collaborative funding.

We also need to support qualitative evaluation utilizing methods such as ethnographic research. Cultural Initiatives Silicon Valley (CISV) made use of cultural anthropologists to study arts practice and community engagement. This gets to the more intrinsic value of the arts.

CISV decided on the number of hours of standards based arts education in schools as a leading indicator to track progress. The community understands this. Unfortunately the arts community doesn't get it/isn't fully supportive.

More work is needed to identify, qualify and develop metrics to describe the connections between cultural activity and strategies on quality of life, community identity and sense of place. There is heightened interest in these factors in regional economic development and sustainability frameworks, but we are far from being able to describe correlations accurately.

Cultural Mapping

Toronto followed Chicago's model and used GIS to map cultural organizations and industries - by neighbourhood and by ward. This becomes a tool for identifying gaps and potential synergies.

Philadelphia and Minneapolis have used GIS mapping and qualitative research to correlate the presence of cultural facilities and activity at a neighbourhood level with issues of neighbourhood economic conditions and stability, etc. These had a strong correlation with cultural participation rates.

Kingston, Ontario was also making use of GIS to map existing community plans and studies onto neighbourhoods and looking for "spin points" – connections between existing plans and cultural opportunities.

Chicago Department of Culture used GIS data to support policy recommendations and to analyze financial needs. There is often excess capacity in GIS in many cities (i.e., staff time and technology) to be directed toward cultural planning issues. GIS can be used to map demand as well as supply of cultural facilities/activities/programming.

In Portland, Oregon GIS has been used to map cultural participation, the presence of arts education programs, dispersion of grant funding and other factors at a neighbourhood level along with ethnic diversity and income levels to explore correlations.

GIS is an amazingly powerful tool when it can be used to make planning issues and choices visual and to give them meaning.

Implementation of Cultural Plans

In Kitchener in Ontario, a cultural plan has just been completed using internal and external teams. The challenge now is to dissolve the distinction between planning and implementation and to make use of the army of people involved during the planning process to drive the implementation and to keep bringing people into the tent.

Greg Baeker's work in Orillia and Prince Edward County in Ontario resulted in cultural plans that also established new cultural governance systems responsible for implementing the plan – including a Cultural Roundtable as a coordinating agency, an annual Cultural Summit and monthly issue-drive Forums.

Economic Development and Tourism

Cultural tourism in Canada is still in its infancy in terms of recognition of the size and significance of the industry. The tourism industry is still dominated by 'old boys' that think in terms of hotels and tourism infrastructure but not in terms of what drives people to visit places – which is always a desire to have an integrated experience of someplace special and unique (i.e., to experience the culture of that place).

People take blended vacations but many in the cultural sector still think in sectoral terms for promotion i.e., all museums in one flyer. This is still a supply driven rather than demand/consumer driven strategy. .

In Chicago cultural tourism is being linked to culinary tourism in a more powerful way. They have also done important work in neighbourhood focused cultural tourism promotion.

Steven Thorne has been responsible for developing a Cultural Corridor in the Okanagan Valley in British Columbia that linked food, wineries and other cultural resources.

Appendix A: Draft Agenda

1:00 – 1:15 pm – Introductions

Here we'll ask everyone to identify one overriding issue or challenge they face in their practice they would like to explore with colleagues.

1:15 – Agenda Review

Finalize discussion topics, plenary or smaller group discussion, etc.

1:20 – 1:45 pm – Country Scan

Here we'll ask one person from Canada, the US and the UK to provide a quick snapshot of major issues or trends related to cultural planning in the three countries.

1:45 - 2:45 – Discussion Block One

See attached list of topics

2:45 – 3:00 pm – Break

3:00 – 4:00 pm – Discussion Block Two

See attached

4:00 pm – Adjourn

Appendix B: Possible Topics for Discussion

1. Quality of Place and Placemaking

Richard Florida and others have drawn a connection between quality of place and urban competitiveness, and demonstrated that key determinants of quality of place are fundamentally 'cultural': *uniqueness and authenticity* – a product of a distinctive local history, built heritage and natural landscapes; and a *creative milieu* – reflected in a lively and diverse arts and cultural scene, etc.

- How do we map and connect cultural assets and strategies with authenticity, quality of place, community identities and narratives, etc. in ways that enable us to create actionable plans, with measurable results - as opposed to more poetic vision statements?
- How do we integrate this with economic development within a creative community framework?

2. Scope of Cultural/Creative Resources

Whatever the planning practice is called ('cultural planning', 'creative cities/city development', 'community cultural strategies') what is the range of cultural or creative resources that form the basis of plans? Are we substituting new names for old 'arts and culture' or 'arts and heritage' agendas, or actually dealing with a different, wider set of issues?

- How are cultural resources being defined?
- What cultural and/or creative sector mapping methods are being used successfully?
- Are there examples of plans that continue to embrace the traditional agenda, while successfully integrating commercial cultural activity, the creative and cultural industries, the 'independent sector' of individual artists/creators/entrepreneurs working outside the subsidized not-for-profit sector, etc.?
- How have planning methodologies and approaches been altered or re-invented to address these issues?

3. **Other Possibilities**

- What is the state of leading practice in different countries on **performance measures, benchmarks and/or indicators** for use in both assessing progress in implementing plans and in evaluating impacts and outcomes from these plans?
- What successes are planners having in **incorporating creative practice and cultural expression into other facets of community planning?**
- In Ontario there is a great deal of interest in the idea of a **cultural lens** – a tool and set of questions for assessing the cultural impact of decisions made across local/municipal planning and decision-making. Do examples exist in other countries? Are there measures and indicators connected to questions that enable assessment of impacts?
- Are there successful examples of **local cultural governance systems** that connect leadership and resources from government, local business and community groups?