Paris of the Midwest? How Detroit can use the Arts to Spur Neighborhood Revitalization

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Recommended Citation
Nahas, Juliana (2013) "Paris of the Midwest? How Detroit can use the Arts to Spur Neighborhood Revitalization," SPNHA Review: Vol. 9: Iss. 1, Article 6. Available at: http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/spnhareview/vol9/iss1/6
PARIS OF THE MIDWEST?
HOW DETROIT CAN USE THE ARTS TO SPUR NEIGHBORHOOD
REVITALIZATION

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Abstract

Growing interest in the arts’ ability to revitalize neighborhoods and spur economic growth has led to a number of studies on how government can cultivate artistic epicenters in hopes of benefiting from their positive effects. Drawing on a broad base of literature, this article studies the major theories of the arts as economic drivers, discusses arts-based neighborhood revitalization tactics, and explores emerging cultural and economic trends in Detroit. Finally, public policy recommendations are made based on these findings.

INTRODUCTION

Growing interest in the arts’ ability to revitalize neighborhoods and spur economic growth has led to a number of premises on how government can cultivate artistic epicenters in hopes of benefiting from their positive effects. However, contradictory studies, various theories, and vague outcomes contribute to equally ambiguous arts-focused public policies and government commitment.

In response to a downturn economy, Detroit is currently experiencing a resurgence of small-scale arts-based revitalization. Effective public policy could have a dramatic influence on the success of these efforts. As Detroit moves forward into a post-industrial economy and aims to recover from record high unemployment rates, attracting talent back to the city will be the key to growth and development. Lessons in community-based arts revitalization can be learned from similar manufacturing-based cities, such as Philadelphia, who are engaging in artist recruitment and community murals.

The objective of this paper is to provide an overview of the major theories of the arts as economic drivers, discuss arts-based neighborhood revitalization tactics, explore emerging cultural and economic trends in Detroit, and make policy recommendations that may speed the city’s recovery based on these findings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Detroit: A Brief History

Detroit’s development as an economic powerhouse began shortly after its founding in 1701. Ideally situated on the Detroit River, the town quickly became known as the center of the Great Lakes fur trade (Woodford, A., 2000). Over the next 100 years, Michigan’s population grew slowly and Detroit was established as the region’s capital in 1802, which it would hold until 1847. With 500 inhabitants and around three hundred buildings, “including homes, sheds, stores,
outhouses, barns, sties” and churches (Woodford, p. 37), Detroit incorporated, adopted city ordinances, and appointed a slate of municipal officers.

After a significant fire in 1805 destroyed the town, Detroit rebuilt and by the mid 1840s had “lost most of its characteristics of a riverfront trading post” (Woodford, p. 61). The population quickly grew to nearly 20,000 and Detroit became known as a busy commercial town of businessmen and shopkeepers. The population continued to rise, in part due to Michigan’s abundant natural resources and Detroit’s convenient waterfront location. Between 1850 and 1870 Detroit established itself as an industrial center and was the site of several important rail-related innovations, including “the real McCoy” automatic lubricator created by Elijah McCoy. All in all, Elijah McCoy is credited with over eighty inventions and fifty-seven patents (Woodford, 2001), but he certainly was not alone. A number of other innovators and entrepreneurs led Detroit toward economic success, culminating in Detroit’s most well known innovation: the automobile.

The first “horseless carriage,” built by Charles B. King, appeared in Detroit in 1896 and was quickly followed by Henry Ford’s “quadricycle.” A few years later in 1903, Ford incorporated the Ford Motor Company and in 1908 the first Model T rolled off the plant floor. “By 1917 Detroit had twenty-three automobile companies providing jobs for almost 93,000 [workers], and 132 parts firms employed an additional 44,000” (Woodford, p. 97). The automotive industry in Detroit was born and would remain the city’s primary economic driver for the next 100 years.

The early part of the 20th century, just prior to the Great Depression, was a time of great prosperity, growth, and investment in Detroit. The population grew nearly 58%, reaching 1,568,662 by 1930 and industry in Detroit was booming. “Although the automobile industry unquestionably ranked first, pharmaceuticals, tobacco, copper, steel, printing, meatpacking, and leisure goods industries all contributed to Detroit’s phenomenal economic boom” (Woodford, p. 114). During this time, many of Detroit’s most famous buildings were constructed, including: Orchestra Hall (1919), the Book Cadillac Hotel (1924 -the world’s tallest hotel at the time), the Detroit Institute of Arts (1927), the Guardian Building (1928), and the David Stott Building (1929), among others. As a result of Detroit’s iconic architecture and open spaces it was nicknamed “the Paris of the West” (Woodford, 2001).

Similar to today, Detroit’s significant reliance on the automobile industry positioned it to be among the first to feel, and magnify, the effects of the Great Depression. At the onset of the Depression, Detroit had a “worldwide reputation as one of America’s most progressive cities. It represented all of what the country strove to be: hardworking and innovative” (Clemens, p. 7). Within a few years, however, Detroit became known for devastating unemployment. Production dropped and Ford Motor Company laid off more than two-thirds of its workers, with the other third only working part-time. “All told, 223,000 workers were jobless and out walking the streets of Detroit by the winter of 1931-32” (Woodford, p. 121). As part of a recovery plan President Roosevelt established relief programs, which included the Public Works of Art Project and the Works Progress Administration’s Federal Art Project of the 1930s New Deal.

The Public Works of Art Project and the Works Progress Administration’s Federal Art Project of the 1930s New Deal was implemented as aid to unemployment relief and to provide income support for artists. “Paid for out of public money, their work would belong to the public” (Kellogg, p. 279); the works created from the initiative were intended to benefit the artists as well as the public and resulted in hundreds of thousand of new works of art ranging from prints to the Coit Tower in San Francisco. Artists worked with “complete freedom” (Kellogg, p. 279) to create pieces that would decorate “schools, zoological gardens, libraries and hospitals, municipal
auditoriums, state universities and normal schools, city halls, county courthouses, post-offices, customhouses, museums, Ellis Island, [and] the Naval and Military Academies” (Kellogg, p. 279). Artists became a valued addition to the economy during the depression and felt a renewed sense of pride in their work and their country.

The WPA [Works Progress Administration] literally transformed Detroit, both physically and emotionally. It built structures of great usefulness and created works of great beauty. As important, it lent citizens the sense of dignity and the hope for the future that had disappeared when they lost their means of providing for themselves and their families. (Clemens, p. 8).

As a stronger financial base was built nationally, Detroit was one of the first to begin recovery. By 1940, Detroit’s population was at 1,623,451, and by 1950 reached a record high of 1,849,568. “The auto industry was booming and the first steps toward renewal were being taken” (Woodford, p.160), however, further devastation was looming. During the mid-1950s Detroit’s white population declined by 23% as residents began to flee the city, preferring suburban over urban living; but much more was lost than just physical residents. Because of substantial discrimination between white and black Americans during this time period, the remainder of Detroit’s population was less well-educated, financially established, and in lower occupational positions. As Detroit became segregated from the surrounding suburbs, racial tension grew and culminated in 1967 when riots erupted throughout the city (Woodford, 2001). Following the recession of the 1980s, prosperity returned to the region. However, following an all too familiar cycle of growth and decline, Detroit is again in a period of deterioration since the 2008 recession. Today, Detroit’s population hovers around 713,000, unemployment is far above the national average at 17.8%, long-term debt is at more than $12 billion and “the number of vacant housing units doubled in the past decade to nearly 80,000, more than one-fifth of the city’s housing stock” (Linebaugh, 2011).

**Arts Revitalization Theories**

Major theories of the arts impact on revitalization fall into three categories: Didactic, Discursive, and Ecological. The first path, ‘Didactic,’ “sees the arts and culture as instructive; they can be used to improve the public’s understanding of civic issues and moral stance” (Stern & Seifert, 2009, p. 15). Often, this is the rationale used when rallying support of large-scale nonprofit arts and culture institutions. The second theory, ‘Discursive,’ approaches the arts as a thought provoking means to further public dialogue. The discursive theory is often tied to the transformation of public areas into works of art, such as community art murals. The third, ‘Ecological,’ are the unintended, positive consequences focused on the social impact of the arts, such as civic engagement and community vitality (Stern & Seifert, 2009).

Following the Ecological Theory, the Artistic Dividend (Markusen & Shrock, 2006) is the historically underestimated hidden economic contribution of arts to a region. Through this lens, artistic activity stimulated the economy in two primary ways: current income streams and returns on previous investments. Artists are not only creating works that earn an income, but are also actively contributing to the region’s economic base when the works are paid for by consumers and businesses elsewhere and business are able to grow because of the aid of artistic work. Moreover, a strong arts community encourages recruitment of business, employees and other artists to a region.
Promoting artists to relocate to a particular region is especially important in that city’s ability to grow and develop. “The more creative types working in a regional economy, the better is its outlook for improved earnings, productivity, and competitiveness.” (Nivin & Plettner, p. 33). The ‘Creative Class,’ as discussed by Richard Florida, describes the emergence of a new social class who are paid to create and innovate. This group is distinctly different from the other classes in their behaviors and ability to stimulate economies. The Creative Class makes up 30% of the nation’s workforce and is employed in fields such as science, pedagogy, engineering, architecture, design, and the arts. It is the responsibility of this group to “create new ideas, new technology and/or new creative content” (Florida, p. 8). While the creative class is among the smallest percentage of the workforce, they are among the highest paid and most influential because of their critical economic role.

The Creative Class “is strongly oriented to large cities and regions that offer a variety of economic opportunities, a stimulating environment and amenities for every possible lifestyle” (Florida, p. 11). The Creative Class wishes to live in diverse environments that offer hosts of cultural experiences, from symphonies and museums to festivals and art galleries; environments that offer not only diversity in thought and opinion, but distinct personal niches in which to ‘blend in’ (Florida, 2006). The Creative Class is looking for quality of place when making decisions on where to relocate. Primary drivers include: lifestyle, social interaction, diversity, and authenticity.

To the Creative Class, Lifestyle often trumps employment when choosing where to live. They are no longer satisfied to work in one place and live in another; their home must offer ready access to recreation and a vibrant nightlife in the form of late night dining and small jazz clubs. Likewise, Social Interaction, in the form of coffee shops, bookstores and cafes, provide the Creative Class with venues in which to meet, form acquaintances, and recharge. A Diverse community is another draw to the Creative Class, signaling that the community embraces new ideas and is open to innovation. Finally, Authenticity and uniqueness is a primary attraction, which is derived from historic buildings, established neighborhoods, and a unique music scene or specific cultural attributes right alongside urban grit. The Creative Class desires to live in places that offer original experience, and form an identity within the unique ecosystem.

**Detroit Population Trends**

Of major concern to policy makers and businesses alike are the rapidly declining population rates within the city of Detroit. Figure 1 depicts percent population changes between 2000-2008 throughout the city. While a few Detroit neighborhoods have been able to maintain a relatively stable population, most of the city has experienced a dramatic decline, with the total population dropping to 713,000, the city’s lowest since the beginning of white flight to the suburbs in the 1950’s. In response to declining populations, Detroit public officials have created a number of strategic plans to stimulate growth; documents of specific note include Detroit’s **2009 Master Plan of Policies** (Appendix B) and **2010 Policy Audit: Neighborhood, Community Development and Housing**. However, despite these efforts significant improvements have not been achieved.

The city’s Master Plan of Policies is organized into nine major categories, which include:

1. Land Use, Zoning, & Land Development
2. Economic Recovery
3. Neighborhoods, Housing & Amenities
4. Landscape & Ecology
While “Historical & Cultural Resources,” which include the Arts, are listed as a major development category, little to no attention is paid to the arts as a legitimate resource for economic growth in the city’s strategic plans. This may in part be due to widespread misconceptions on the true effects of the arts and contradictory studies that conclude a non-significant impact of the arts on non-artists businesses and the regional economy.

Revisiting the three major arts-impact theories shows that those who examine the economic return on arts investment as merely a local serving industry (didactic and discursive), ignore the full economic contribution of an artistic community to a regional economy and overlook the output of artistic talent. Methodologically, this may be due to traditional analysis that does not capture the enhancements to manufacturing products or marketing efforts, the success of artists selling their products via the internet, art fairs or traditional sales routes are not totaled, the revenue and income of touring groups is not accounted for, human capital created by artists sharing information is not captured, incomes created by those who aid in the final creative product (for example, set builders) is not traced, and finally, arts impact analysis does not assess the proportion of community members who choose to spend income on art rather than commercial goods (Markusen & Schrock, 2006).
Cultural Districts

Focusing on arts development should be of primary concern to Detroit in order to attract members of the Creative Class, specifically by promoting naturally emerging cultural districts. Artists are well known for moving into ‘unfashionable’ areas in search of affordable housing and gallery/studio space. In the process, they revitalize the community by establishing a thriving creative space, serve as economic generators, foster community cultural connections, and bring about physical changes in their community (Crane, 2011) through development of unused or underutilized buildings.

As part of a larger urban development strategy, organizations in Philadelphia have engaged in capital loan investments renovating underused properties in low-income areas for use as affordable artist live/work spaces. The refurbished buildings become “unique cultural destinations” (Crane, p. 2) often hosting community events, exhibits and art festivals, in addition to the artists who live there. Such spaces have the power to draw art enthusiasts from across the city and become a beacon of activity in areas that have battled decline for decades (Crane, p. 3).

Arts-based activity can already been seen in small pockets of Detroit, specifically in the Midtown, Woodbridge, and West End Industrial neighborhoods. Figure 2 (below) shows areas identified as “steady markets” within the city, the circled area being these three neighborhoods. Interestingly, each neighborhood boasts either a high-density of arts-assets, or is located next to an area with high-density arts-assets.

Figure 2 (Adapted from Detroit Policy Audit, 2010)
Detroit’s Midtown neighborhood, which may be defined as a “cultural district,” is a leading example of arts-based neighborhood revitalization boasting many of the city’s arts assets, including: the Cultural Center Historic District, the Detroit Public Library, the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Detroit Historical Museum, the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, the Detroit Science Center, and the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit. The term “cultural districts” identifies a neighborhood that has “spawned a density of assets—organizations, businesses, participants, and artists—that sets it apart from other neighborhoods” (Stern & Seifert, 2007, p. 1). Community-based arts efforts are also prominent in the Midtown area, with such efforts as the Lincoln Street Sculpture Garden, a community-based art project, and Dally in the Alley, a one-day art and music festival.

The Lincoln Street Sculpture Garden, affectionately nicknamed “The Ghetto Louvre,” is a collaborative arts project between local residents, artists, Recycle Here!, Detroit Synergy, Midtown, Inc., Michigan Council on Arts and Cultural Affairs, and the Detroit Recreation Department. The garden space was constructed in a previously vacant lot and is now home to impromptu community gardening, murals, sculptures, and BYOB neighborhood parties (“The Lincoln St. Sculpture Garden,” 2011).

Figure 3: Lincoln Street Sculpture Garden Prior to and Following Renovation
For years, arts and culture have been equated with large nonprofit organizations and “much cultural policy over the past generation has assumed that the health of the arts is the same as the health of these established groups” (Stern & Seifert, 2007 p. 3). While the importance of these institutions should be recognized and supported, it is equally good news that the emerging informal arts sector is gaining prominence and taking a central position in communities. In contrast to their large-scale institutional counterparts whose contributions are primarily educational, the contribution of art spaces, such as the Lincoln Street Sculpture Garden, “is that they serve as a conduit for building the social networks and social capital that contribute to both community revitalization and artistic development” (Grodach, p.75). Moreover, cultural pursuits have been found to strengthen relationships and “community efficacy”- the belief that they as individuals can make a difference and their willingness to do so (Grodach, 2011).

Clusters of cultural assets have the ability to push a neighborhood to a “regeneration tipping-point, attracting new services and residents” (Stern & Seifert, 2007 p. 1). Looking to Philadelphia, the advantages of developing creative ecosystems is evidenced by significant improvement in the housing market between 2001 and 2003. According to data developed by The Reinvestment Fund, 83% of housing block groups that improved two or more market value categories (reclamation, transitional, distressed, steady, regional choice) were natural cultural districts (Stern & Seifert, 2007).

While clearly effective, the creation of cultural districts via public policy as a means of revitalization presents specific challenges. First, cultural districts are distinctly self-organized and second, may lead to gentrification. As such, cultural districts must be carefully developed with a sincere understanding of the creative ecosystem.

A community-based approach with significant buy-in from residents is often the most successful means of government and organizations employing an arts revitalization strategy. For example, the City of Philadelphia’s Mural Arts Program, first known as the Anti-Graffiti
Network, began in 1984 as a response to pervasive graffiti throughout the city with a single initiative focused on removing graffiti and, in its place, engaging youth in creating murals after school. In 1996 the successful program was transferred to the City Recreation Department with a new focus on creating “major works of public art through a collaborative community mural process and offering high-quality art education at no cost to youth throughout the city” (Stern & Seifert, 2003, p. 1). A few years later, the program revised its mission again to incorporate commissioning professional artists to create murals, as well.

In a 2003 study examining the community impact of murals in Philadelphia, researchers found that while murals are not a one-stop solution to neighborhood transformation, they often “serve as an indicator of a neighborhood that has the ingredients to create revitalization, including a diverse population and a strong civic life” (Stern & Seifert, 2003, p. 6). Study results indicate that the presence of a mural in a neighborhood tends to raise property values by more than $8,000, and moreover, “for each 1% increase in the rate of cultural participation, housing values increase by over $1,000” (Stern & Seife, 2003, p. 20).

Policy makers can also look for signs of emerging cultural districts, and focus development efforts in these areas. Studies of cities with naturally occurring creative ecosystems, such as Philadelphia, San Francisco, Atlanta and Chicago, have documented a distinct connection between social diversity and the arts. That is, communities with significantly mixed populations based on social class, ethnicity and household structure “are more likely to have high cultural participation, house many cultural groups, and provide studios and shelter for artists” (Stern et al., p.3). Furthermore, diversity does not just lead to the creation of a creative ecosystem with the residents who are already present, but attracts new creative people to the area. “Creative-minded people enjoy a mix of influences. They want to hear different kinds of music and try different kinds of food. They want to meet and socialize with people unlike themselves, to trade views and spar over issues” (Florida, p. 227).

Figure 4 depicts Detroit’s basic racial and ethnic breakdown by neighborhood. Interestingly, White and Asian residents show distinct patterns of overlap in Hamtramck, and White and Hispanic residents overlap in Detroit’s southwest end, while African-American residents show little overlap with either population. However, the Midtown, Downtown, Woodbridge and West Side Industrial Neighborhoods are well positioned as collision points of each group.

Figure 4: Racial and Ethnic Breakdown (Detroit Policy Audit 2010)
However, Detroit’s unfortunately segregated urban landscape may pose serious barriers when developing revitalization strategies. Gentrification, in particular, is a very real concern and must be handled with great care as urban renewal may give rise to “serious tensions between established neighborhood residents and [the] newer, more affluent people moving in” (Florida, p. 289). However, displacement of residents can only occur when conditions are “right,” according to Stern & Seifert (2007). First, slow urban real estate markets, high levels of owner-occupied housing, and a stock of unused/underused industrial structures will help prevent against a ‘takeover’ of artists. Second, to qualify as gentrification the “pace of displacement has to be fast enough to destroy the social fabric of a neighborhood” (Stern & Seifert, 2007 p. 6-8).

Figure 5: Detroit Housing (Detroit Policy Audit, 2010)

Figure 5 shows the majority of homes in Detroit are owner-occupied (38.5%), with an additional high percentage of vacant homes (27.8%), which may help the city avoid gentrification and displacement of current residents. Interestingly, as neighborhoods experience revitalization, rising rents may also drive out the artists, musicians and small shopkeepers responsible for its revival; thus losing the cultural capital it took so long to cultivate (Florida, 2002).

POLICY DISCUSSION

Arts Based Revitalization: A Process

The first step to devising effective policies that will have a positive impact on neighborhood revitalization in Detroit is to determine if/and where natural cultural districts are emerging. By re-examining maps of racial breakdowns and housing markets, and overlaying this information with the location of galleries, studios, artist live/work spaces, community theatres and large-cultural institutions, patterns appear and indicate a number of naturally emerging cultural districts.

While Midtown and Downtown Detroit are already fairly well established cultural districts, the surrounding neighborhoods of Woodbridge, West Side Industrial, and possibly North End (Appendix A) are well positioned for cultivation by a number of indicators. First, they are located near a number of cultural assets (Midtown and Downtown). Second, they are some of the only areas within the city that have any overlap between two or more racial populations (See Fig.4). Third, Figure 6 shows these areas (circled) have a relatively higher number of amenities including groceries, apparel, pharmacies, and restaurants, than surrounding areas, which have been shown effective in recruitment.

The second step is to attract artists to these locations. Policies including an artist relocation program, tax incentives for capital loan investment in low-income areas for renovation of unused/underused buildings into artist live/work spaces, and removal of unnecessary red tape to land use conservation should be implemented. Additionally, “cash strapped arts institutions [such
as small galleries] often locate in areas that are isolated from compatible community and commercial establishments...Planners can site or incentivize the development of artist studio and live-work space in areas surrounding existing art spaces” (Grodach, p. 84).

Once a fairly strong artist-base has been established, the city should begin to engage in “community beautification.” However, in contrast to current large-scale demolition and rehab projects, community beautification can be driven through small scale arts projects, such as neighborhood mural projects or donation of unused land to arts nonprofits for outdoor theatres, sculpture gardens or weekly artists markets.

**Figure 6 (Adapted from Detroit Policy Audit, 2010)**

Additionally, policy makers may aid art spaces in restructuring their activity base by offering incentives. “Incentives may stimulate interest in neighborhood engagement, [and can] be accomplished through funding for community outreach programs directly, attaching community engagement requirements to other forms of assistance, or providing support to encourage partnerships with more active organizations” (Grodach, p. 83).

Third, over time artists will advance economic growth by opening galleries and niche boutiques, creating festivals and building social capital. The city can aid this process by implementing policies that provide assistance to entrepreneurial residents and encourage business development, “planning and economic development agencies can offer site selection assistance and help navigate the permitting process as they do for small businesses” (Grodach, p.84). The combination of a growing cultural district and low rent will promote the relocation of additional artists.

Finally, with a vibrant buzz and “authentic” established cultural districts, the city should begin aggressive marketing campaigns positioning distinct neighborhoods as hubs of innovation. Authenticity is one of the top draws of the creative class to a region, marked by “real buildings,
real people, real history” (Florida, p. 228). Detroit’s history as a center of creativity and economic powerhouse, in addition to its unique cultural identity, number of historic buildings, and musical legacy, perfectly position Detroit as one of these “authentic” places. The key is harnessing the power of each individual piece and empowering current residents to engage.

Figure 7 depicts the cyclical revitalization process, where artist recruitment will lead to business development, which will in turn encourage recruitment, and so on, culminating in the recruitment of the creative class and economic development.

**Figure 7: Arts Revitalization Process**

**CONCLUSION**

While there may not be a single “silver bullet” solution to revitalizing significantly distressed areas such as Detroit, effective public policy and targeted projects may make a substantial positive impact. The arts have been shown throughout the literature to serve not only as an educational resource, but also as an economic driver and recruitment tool for the new Creative Class, whose presence is imperative to long-term sustainable growth. Cultivating naturally occurring cultural districts in Detroit, such as the Woodbridge, West End Industrial and North End neighborhoods, through effective public policy will be key to beginning the revitalization process. Moreover, city support of arts projects, such as the Philadelphia Mural Arts Program and Detroit’s Lincoln Street Sculpture Garden, will create vibrant hubs of activity that will encourage further development. Finally, Detroit needs to harness its authentic character as an innovative and progressive city, and return to its roots as *The Paris of the West*, *Motown*, and *The Motor City*. “We are downtrodden, perhaps” writes Detroiter Mitch Albom, “but the most
downtrodden optimists you will ever meet” (2009). By drawing upon the endless optimism of its citizens and nurturing the growing arts movement through effective public policies, Detroit may experience renewed community vibrancy and pave the way for a true renaissance.

REFERENCES


City of Detroit (2010). Policy Audit: Neighborhood, Community Development and Housing


Appendix A: Map of Central Detroit
Appendix B

Arts and Culture

Overview

Artistic works and cultural diversity contribute to the quality of life in a city. Improving the artistic and cultural climate in the City is critical to attracting and retaining visitors and residents. A thriving arts and culture scene can serve as an economic development tool. Art in private buildings, public spaces, museums, institutions, and neighborhood centers increases awareness of and enhances the creative energy of the city. In addition to special events and exhibits, arts and culture should be integrated into the everyday life of the city.

Issues: Detroit has numerous arts and culture venues. However, Detroit’s art and cultural attractions are not fully recognized. The lack of recognition for existing amenities hinders attempts to attract residents and visitors.

GOAL 1: Increase Detroit’s profile as a cultural destination

Policy 1.1: Publish and widely distribute maps and lists of art and cultural institutions and destinations.

Policy 1.2: Promote Detroit’s history, architectural heritage and diverse population as cultural resources and assets.

Policy 1.3: Incorporate arts and cultural activities into events, promotions, and marketing.

Issues: There is a lack of awareness in the value of art or culture in daily lives. Lack of outreach and access are among the barriers that prevent residents from discovering the manner in which arts and culture can positively impact their communities.

GOAL 2: Cultivate interest and appreciation for arts and culture

Policy 2.1: Support education programs that increase arts awareness and provide opportunities for creative expression.

Policy 2.2: Develop outreach programs that emphasize the contribution of neighborhood history, architecture, diversity and culture to increase pride
GOAL 3: Increase access to arts and culture

Policy 3.1: Advocate for public exhibitions, concerts, plays, and other events in neighborhoods and alternative settings.

Policy 3.2: Provide transit to connect residents and visitors to art and cultural venues.

Policy 3.3: Encourage developers and property owners to incorporate works of art into public spaces.

Issues: While Detroit artists and cultural figures produce a myriad of artistic and cultural products, the city is not able to fully capture the associated benefits and is often unable to retain and nurture its creative innovators.

GOAL 4: Improve the viability of the arts and culture community

Policy 4.1: Identify areas of the city that may be appropriate for live/work opportunities for artists.

Policy 4.2: Provide assistance to artists in the marketing and packaging of events and products.

Policy 4.3: Develop programs for provision of professional training in fine and performing arts.
Juliana Nahas-Viilo graduated from Grand Valley State University in 2008 with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology and in 2012 with a Master’s of Public Administration and Nonprofit Leadership. With a diverse background in music, leadership education, marketing, and social innovation, she is passionate about promoting the arts as an essential component of a healthy, thriving community.

Ms. Nahas-Viilo received the 2012 Best Paper Award from the School of Public, Health and Nonprofit Administration and was the recipient of the David and Carol Van Andel Leadership Fellowship (2011), Valerie Eggart Distinguished Award in Philanthropy (2011), and Joyce Hecht Distinguished Award in Philanthropy (2010). Ms. Nahas-Viilo was an active fellow of the Hauenstein Center for Presidential Studies Peter Cook Leadership Academy from 2010-2012, and now serves as a mentor to current students.

Ms. Nahas-Viilo resides in Eastown, Grand Rapids with her husband Tyler and their two dogs, Bruiser and Ellie.