CREATIVE PROVIDENCE
A CULTURAL PLAN FOR THE CREATIVE SECTOR
June 2009

PROVIDENCE THE CREATIVE CAPITAL
David N. Cicilline, Mayor
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Dear Friends,

It is my great pleasure to share Creative Providence: a Cultural Plan for the Creative Sector with you. Creative Providence arose from a comprehensive process that engaged thousands of Providence citizens in opinion research and hundreds of community activists, individual artists, arts administrators, and business leaders in cultural planning. Creative Providence honors the voices of a tremendous community of participants who generously shared their time, expertise, and experiences to help map, analyze, and collectively think about the evolution – and future direction – of our city’s creative ecosystem.

This blueprint for Providence’s arts, culture, and creativity reflects significant public participation and we can proudly, and authentically, proclaim community-wide stewardship of Creative Providence. The cultural plan outlines strategies for cultivating a more sustainable creative sector and the high intentions it describes are already achieving results. Creative Providence is partly prescriptive, outlining long-range goals and some bold outcomes that may take decades to realize or that will require new resources and improved economic conditions. This plan also calls out and endorses new initiatives, partnerships, and plans already well underway. Planning conversations have already enabled new partnerships and initiatives among funders, arts education advocates and researchers, neighborhood services, providers of management assistance and information, and those branding and marketing the city’s rich cultural assets.

Our city’s cultural life is a cornerstone of Providence’s economy and unique sense of place. The response to our cultural planning efforts signals a shared sophistication and deep appreciation of the public value of Providence’s creative sector. In the coming months, the Department of Art, Culture + Tourism will lead the City’s efforts to implement the cultural plan’s strategies. I invite you to visit http://providenceri.com/ArtCultureTourism to learn more about Creative Providence: a Cultural Plan for the Creative Sector.

Sincerely,

David N. Cicilline, Mayor
City of Providence, Rhode Island
A Vision for Creative Providence

Providence is a place built upon innovation and creativity. For centuries, creative businesses, cultural institutions, artists, designers, writers, and scholars have shaped the city’s economic development, social progress, and quality of life. This legacy has inspired, and at times challenged, successive generations of Providence residents to define the city by its art, scholarship, and creative entrepreneurship. The city’s artists in particular have made Providence the region’s creative capital. Providence artists and institutions are widely recognized for their commercial and critical success – an impressive marker of creativity for a city of our size.

In 2007, a national survey conducted by Americans for the Arts demonstrated that Providence’s non-profit arts and cultural organizations generated over $111.8 million annually and supported almost 3,000 jobs in Rhode Island. As astounding as these figures are, they do not even fully calculate the creative sector’s economic impact. Hundreds of small, creative businesses, including individual artists, also drive the state’s economy – generating new ideas, designing original products, and creating innovative solutions to difficult problems. In addition, it would be virtually impossible to quantify the wide variety of people who cultivate an individual creative practice.

Our economic well-being is only one part of developing a healthy, strong, and creative Providence. The local creative sector also nurtures society’s young leaders, transforms some of our most troubled youth, and is a critical component of fostering creative problem-solvers in our schools. Across the city, theaters, libraries, public media, and humanities programs require and allow citizens to ask provocative questions about the human condition and support rigorous civic dialogue.

Today, cities are leaders in the shaping of a global society. As the first decade of the 21st century approaches its end, the world is in a historic state of transition. The U.S. is faced with difficult questions and is searching for thoughtful, fresh answers. We are all being asked to redefine our values, to develop sustainable ecological practices, to build an equitable and rigorous education system, and to rediscover the principles our forebears outlined for us in our country’s founding documents.

In these challenging times, it is appropriate for the City of Providence to design a blueprint for the continued evolution of our city. In the past, citizen-led efforts to generate new ideas about Providence’s future prosperity have offered the city rich opportunities to redefine itself – to move rivers, to revitalize the downtown, and to invest in healthy neighborhoods. Downtown’s renewal was anchored in the belief that our high quality arts organizations would drive economic activity and provoke the public to re-imagine the city’s center.

The city’s artists have driven redevelopment in neighborhoods and city streets. They have breathed life into our aging industrial infrastructure and been the catalysts for civic engagement. Creative Providence has been a broadly inclusive, community-wide effort that capitalizes on the energy of a 21st-century local art and culture movement gaining momentum in cities across the globe.

Our cultural plan calls upon leadership from our creative sector – artists, arts organizations, poets and scholars, designers and creators, the entertainment and tourism industries – to ask hard questions and solve difficult problems alongside government and business leaders. The plan charts out an ecosystem of interdependencies and opportunities for collaboration. Creative Providence lays the groundwork for Providence to strengthen and realize its next generation of potential as a creative center while recognizing there are incredible, unprecedented challenges ahead – challenges that require bold, imaginative thinking.

The future will not be a replication of the past. Creativity is one way to claim our city’s future.

Lynne McCormack, Director
Department of Art, Culture + Tourism
PURPOSE

Mayor David N. Cicilline and the Department of Art, Culture + Tourism launched Creative Providence: a Cultural Plan for the Creative Sector to explore the strengths and weaknesses of the capital city’s creative community. The community-wide cultural planning effort will better position the city to realize its full potential as a creative center and deliver on its promise of innovation and change. Creative Providence will become a guide to public policy, private initiative, and investment.

The creative sector is a key part of Providence’s economy. At the core of this economy is the creative sector with its three main domains:

1. The arts, humanities, and cultural heritage;
2. The media, tourism, and entertainment industries; and
3. Creative business-to-business services and design-based business.
CREATIVE PROVIDENCE
TIMELINE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

September 2007 – September 2008
Preliminary Planning: Early related discussions about art, culture, and creativity in Providence
• Creative Conversation with Emerging Arts Leaders
• Providence Tomorrow charrettes
• Arts Investment Taskforce
• Relationship-building

September 2008 – December 2008
Cultural Assessment: Identify cultural resources, critical needs, and opportunities for the creative sector in Providence
• 2 community forums: 150 participants
• Interviews with 20 community leaders
• Online survey (RISCA collaboration): 2,000+ respondents
• 25 focus group discussions: 275 participants
• Evaluation and feedback from Steering Committee and Working Group: 50 participants

January 2009 – June 2009
Cultural Planning: Plan community-wide actions and secure necessary resources to respond
• Senator Claiborne Pell Lecture on Arts & Humanities: 200+ attendees
• 6 planning studios: 200 participants
• Evaluation and feedback: Steering Committee

June 2009 & Beyond
Implementation: Act on prioritized strategies
• Launch cultural plan at public event
• Publish Mayor’s Action Plan for Creative Providence
• Create implementation plan
• Continue relationship-building
• Evaluation and feedback

Discover Creative Providence at providenceri.com/ArtCultureTourism and creativeprovidence.com
CREATIVE PROVIDENCE
GOALS OF THE CULTURAL PLAN

Mobilize the creative sector by positioning the Department of Art, Culture + Tourism as a leader in creative economic development
Catalyze Providence’s creativity to leverage economic, social, and cultural capital.

Build community and foster neighborhood vitality through increased access and diversified cultural participation
Invest in neighborhood art, culture, and creativity to sustain social diversity and engage communities.

Educate and inspire the next generation of creative thinkers
Develop creative practice in youth for 21st century global citizenship.

Foster sustainable cultural organizations
Nurture agile, healthy, resilient organizations able to anticipate and meet all forms of new challenges.

Create conditions for creative workers to thrive in Providence
Support a vibrant community of individual artists, scholars, writers, designers, and entertainers to sustain the creative city.

Raise public awareness of the creative sector
Strengthen marketing, advocacy, and tourism to increase participation and engagement.
The ideas and concepts used throughout the cultural planning process have evolved alongside Creative Providence. This glossary is a tool to help readers better understand this document. We gratefully acknowledge Tom Burrup, Craig Dreeszen, New Commons, and the Creative Providence participants for helping us to develop our definitions of these terms.

**501(c)(3)** A tax status of a nonprofit organization obtained from the Internal Revenue Service that allows tax-deductible gifts to the organization and exempts the organization from federal and state income taxes.

**Artist** Broadly defined and inclusive visual and performing artists, craftspeople, writers and editors, designers, entertainers, and more.

**Business cooperatives** Encourage collaboration among symbiotic creative industries professionals, to help streamline backend services like finance and database management, develop collaborative marketing, and to access group buying options.

**Creative sector** All commercial and nonprofit occupations and industries that focus on the production and distribution of cultural goods and services, as well as intellectual property with a cultural component.

**Creative** The ability to transcend traditional ideas, rules, patterns, relationships, or the like, and to create meaningful new ideas, forms, methods, interpretations, etc. and other concepts; originality, progressiveness, or imagination.

**Cultural participation** We are borrowing a broadly inclusive definition of cultural participation (formal and informal, conventional and nontraditional): creating, witnessing, preserving, and supporting artistic and cultural expression.

**Live/work housing** A building or complex designed, zoned, and otherwise designated space to be used for both residences and commercial or light industry. Often refers to space used by artists as studio, office, and living accommodations. Zoning codes often do not permit mixing these uses thus requiring special dispensation or changes in zoning.

**Nonprofit** A corporate structure governed by state law in which activities are driven by social purpose rather than financial gain. Ownership is vested in the entity itself and governed by a volunteer board of directors. Nonprofits are generally, but not necessarily, “tax-exempt” under local, state, or federal tax statutes. When federally tax-exempt, they can accept charitable contributions that are tax-deductible for the giver. (See also 501(c)(3).)

**Sector** A distinct part, especially of society or of a nation’s economy: i.e. the housing sector; the education sector

**Sustainability** An ecological approach to strengthening nonprofit organizations to maintain their capacity so they may fulfill their missions.

**Tax credits** A legal transference of tax deductions in exchange for a sanctioned activity. This could include construction of low-income housing, preservation of historic properties, or investment in a neighborhood with a difficult economy. Tax credits are awarded to the developer of record but may be transferred or sold for a fee. Nonprofit developers often sell the tax credits to a nonprofit and use funds for the sanctioned purpose.

**Tax Increment Financing (TIF)** Public investment usually provided to a developer in a designated TIF area on the assumption of future tax revenues. A city may loan or grant a developer funds to complete a project, paid back to the city through future tax revenues from the project.
**GOAL:** Mobilize the creative sector by positioning the Department of Art, Culture + Tourism as a leader in creative economic development

*Catalyze Providence’s creativity to leverage economic, social, and cultural capital.*

Providence’s creative workforce and enterprises create jobs, strengthen neighborhoods, and enhance the City’s quality of life. This workforce includes: entrepreneurs creating companies, people employed in both not-for-profit and commercial organizations, and the legions of self-employed creative workers. This plan mobilizes the City’s remarkable creative assets to help stimulate the economic recovery for Providence and contribute to the City’s long-term prosperity.

Recent research studies document the creative sector’s significant economic impact. Creative enterprises are a formidable industry in the United States. As of January 2008, 6,318 people work for 1,231 arts-related businesses in Rhode Island’s Congressional District 1. (Americans for the Arts, 2008) In Providence, nonprofit arts and cultural organizations generate $111.81 million annually in local economic activity. This spending supports 2,759 full-time equivalent jobs, generates $55.56 million in household income to local residents, and delivers $11.08 million in local and state government tax revenue. (Americans for the Arts, 2007)

**OUTCOMES OF CULTURAL PLANNING**

- The Providence Department of Art, Culture + Tourism (AC+T), with an expanded role, will be a leader in economic development for the creative sector.

- Creative enterprises — in arts, humanities, cultural heritage, media and entertainment, design and creative businesses — will drive Providence’s robust economy and guide the City in implementing creative solutions to complex urban problems.

- Creative professionals will join other critical civic leaders in shaping and implementing the City’s economic development, workforce growth, and sustainability initiatives.

- The City will fully realize *Providence the Creative Capital* with adequate recognition for, and investment in, the creative sector.

- Providence will be recognized as a center for film, design, and entertainment because conditions will exist for these creative industries to thrive and generate work.
STRATEGIES TO MOBILIZE THE CREATIVE SECTOR

REORGANIZE THE DEPARTMENT OF ART, CULTURE + TOURISM
Reorganize the Department of Art, Culture + Tourism (AC+T) to focus on economic development initiatives set forth by Providence’s mayor for the creative sector in collaboration with the Department of Planning and Development and to lead implementation of this cultural plan.

- **AC+T reorganization**
  AC+T plans to reorganize programs and staff responsibilities to better serve and represent the creative sector in accordance with the community’s new strategic priorities for the creative sector.

- **Permanently establish AC+T by ordinance**
  City Council affirms the Department’s critical role in arts, humanities, culture, tourism, and creative economic development with an enabling ordinance.

- **Co-locate AC+T with the Department of Planning and Development**
  AC+T will co-locate with the Department of Planning and Development to achieve close cooperation with the City’s other economic development efforts.

- **AC+T Advisory Board**
  The Mayor will establish a broadly representative AC+T advisory board to advise and advocate for the Department and creative sector.

- **Creative sector visibility**
  AC+T, as ombudsman for the creative sector, will continue to make the creative sector’s contributions to the city’s economic and cultural life known and recognized in boardrooms, the civic realm, and by other agencies.

  - AC+T will continue to work collaboratively with national, regional, and local agencies, including Americans for the Arts, the New England Foundation for the Arts, the New England Council, and the Providence Economic Development Partnership, to collect, analyze, and publicly distribute information about the economic and social impact of the city’s creative sector.

POLICY AND PLANNING
The City integrates the cultural plan’s recommendations for the creative sector into its policies and planning in order to cultivate creative responses to complex urban issues such as sustainability, social mobility, and equity issues.

- **Providence Tomorrow**
  The City incorporates the major tenets of the cultural plan into the comprehensive plan.

- **Integrate into economic development**
  In accordance with the Providence Economic Development Strategic Plan, the City will cross-reference key recommendations of the cultural plan in Providence’s other economic development strategies.

  - Implementation will reinforce other current policy platforms including Providence’s *Operation Opportunity* (2009) and *Pathways to Opportunity* (2007).

  - The cultural plan intersects and reinforces the *Greenprint* (2008) goal of encouraging creative public engagement in green design.
STRATEGIES TO MOBILIZE THE CREATIVE SECTOR

• Planning
The City Plan Commission adopts the cultural plan as the blueprint for creative sector development moving forward.

• Leadership
The Mayor continues to appoint creative sector representatives to city boards and commissions such as the City Plan Commission, the Providence Economic Development Partnership, Providence Tourism Council, Zoning Board of Review, Providence School Board, and the Board of Park Commissioners to connect creativity with development and other economic interests, and to assure creative economic development remains a priority.

  • Where no conflict exists, City employees are encouraged to serve cultural organizations on boards, as volunteers, and as donors.

• Development incentives and bonuses
The City should develop provisions in zoning regulations and other ordinance incentives for real estate development to make space and facilities available to cultural organizations and creative programming.

• Tax stabilization, tax increment financing, or other financial incentives from the City
The City should require in-kind support for Providence’s cultural organizations and nonprofit community in return for tax or financial incentives such as mandating a percentage of employee time be dedicated to serving on cultural boards during the compliance period for the incentive.

• Regulations
Review city codes and ordinances to encourage creative enterprise development and/or art programming in Providence.

ENTREPRENEURIAL INCENTIVES
AC+T, in collaboration with the Providence Economic Development Partnership, will continue to encourage creative entrepreneurship in the City of Providence.

  • Workforce development
Design a creative industry workforce development strategy that invests in Providence’s existing workforce, recruits new creative workers, and prepares the next generation.

  • Social entrepreneurship
Establish competitions that encourage creative entrepreneurship directed toward addressing civic issues (i.e. Apps for Democracy program solves social issues through technology).

  • Financing
Departments should work together to connect creative entrepreneurs with all available City financing programs and grants.

DOWNTOWN CULTURAL AUTHORITY
Establish a Downtown Cultural Authority to strengthen, centralize, and effectively market current downtown creative activity and public space.
STRATEGIES TO MOBILIZE THE CREATIVE SECTOR

BRANDING AND MARKETING
Integrate the City’s branding as the Creative Capital into messaging and overall marketing of Providence and assure that support to the creative sector matches the message.

• Buy Art
  Increase funding to expand the Buy Art program, a partnership between City, artists, and venues across the city intended to increase art patronage and bring greater visibility to the city’s creative community.

• Business recruitment
  AC+T will continue to support and assist the business recruitment efforts of the Providence Economic Development Partnership to incorporate creative sector information into their strategies.

• Promotion and public relations
  Continue to work with the Arts & Business Council of Rhode Island on the arts marketing study to coordinate and tailor messaging to audiences.

PARTNERSHIPS
The creative sector will develop stronger relationships across sectors to encourage new ideas and innovation.

• Business partners
  AC+T will encourage creative professionals to seek leadership positions in business organizations.

• Relationship-building
  AC+T will continue to partner with the Small Business Administration, Providence-Warwick Convention and Visitors Bureau, Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation, Business Innovation Factory, colleges and universities, Providence Foundation, Providence Hospitality Resources Partnership, and the business community.

• Social networking
  AC+T will lead efforts to formalize the interconnected social network of creative workers to encourage cross-pollination of ideas and leverage social and economic benefits of a tight-knit community.

• Cross-sector residencies
  Develop opportunities for the creative sector to participate in cross-sector artists-in-residence programs (i.e. collaborations between arts and sciences professionals).

INVESTMENTS IN THE CREATIVE SECTOR
A mix of private, government, and philanthropic investment in creativity will strategically stimulate employment and economic opportunity.

• Start-up assistance
  The City works closely with partners to encourage new designers, small creative businesses, and other new creative entrepreneurs.

  • Identify and make more visible and transparent existing financing opportunities for creative enterprises, including loans available through the Department of Planning and Development.

  • Assess the potential for new financing resources through Tax Increment Financing, a Downtown Development Authority, venture capital, a larger proportion of bed tax, infusion loans, New Market Tax Credits, and/or other options.

  • Identify available financing that encourages creative social entrepreneurship and connects with creative sector innovators.
Strategies to Mobilize the Creative Sector

• Operating assistance
  The City works closely with its partners in economic development to sustain existing creative enterprises.
  • Explore new models for alternative financing options (i.e. hybrid loan/grant) to support innovation.
  • Market state-designated enterprise zones in Providence to creative businesses.
  • Develop one or more creative industry business cooperative to encourage collaboration among symbiotic creative industries professionals, to help streamline backend services, such as finance and database management, to develop collaborative marketing, and to access group buying options. In a co-op, each partner owns a share of the business.
  • Promote and connect creative businesses with the Providence Department of Planning and Development business loan programs.
  • Connect existing creative industries to opportunities for generating work through an online creative industry job listing.

• Creative workforce development
  Develop or link creative workers with job creation and training initiatives through Providence/Cranston Workforce Solutions and the Mayor’s Economic Development cabinet.
  • Work with the higher education institutions and the Rhode Island Small Business Development Center to offer business development training and access to expertise, information, and assistance geared toward creative enterprises.
  • Link creative entrepreneurs with professional development opportunities available through Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce, the Rhode Island Small Business Administration, the Arts & Business Council of Rhode Island, and others on topics including accelerating profitability, improving management, raising venture capital, and writing business plans.
  • Integrate creative learning into training for designers, crafts people, and others who are rehabilitating and retrofitting buildings for energy efficiencies and using other sustainable technologies.
  • Include creativity in training for trades at the intersection of work, imagination, and craft (such as historic restoration, cabinetry, restoration and related industries).
  • Encourage the creative sector to apply for grant funding through the Governor’s Workforce Development Board, a program of the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training Human Resources Investment Council, to provide skills and training for the existing and future creative sector workforce.

• Facility Maintenance and Development
  Identify sources of capital for facility maintenance and development and connect with creative sector innovators to support diverse cultural and artistic activities.
  • Encourage property owners to seek assistance to restore and rehabilitate buildings housing creative industries.
  • Explore use of New Market Tax Credit program for creative facility development.
  • Encourage cultural facility development in
STRATEGIES TO MOBILIZE THE CREATIVE SECTOR

the Jewelry District and other existing and emerging cultural hubs in the city where there is a concentration of creative businesses and cultural activity. The Providence waterfront also provides opportunities for creative programming.

- Develop one or more creative industry incubator facilities to encourage collaboration among symbiotic creative industries and help streamline backend services.

- The City should consider bonding through the Providence Redevelopment Authority to acquire and develop property for creative workers.

NURTURE DESIGN, FILM, AND DIGITAL MEDIA
Nurture design, film, and digital media as specific industries with high potential for economic development in Providence.

- Art as civic value
  Providence will continue to work with the Mayor’s Institute on City Design to set high standards for design excellence in the construction and renovation of all City buildings and buildings that receive financial incentives from the City.

- Creative economic development initiatives
  Coordinate industry-specific incentives and initiatives with the Rhode Island Film and Television Office, the Business Innovation Factory, and other creative economic development efforts.

- Tax credits
  Advocate to the Rhode Island General Assembly to amend film tax credits to require more use of local businesses and services.

- Public bidding
  Review the City’s public bidding process and explore new ways of nurturing emerging creative businesses through collaboration.

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT VENUES
The City supports further development of small and mid-sized venues for galleries, music, performances, and visual arts exhibitions downtown, in nearby areas and, where appropriate, neighborhood commercial corridors. This will serve local artists and attract creative workers, innovators, and entrepreneurs to develop sustainable businesses in the city.

- Assessment
  Conduct an assessment of entertainment venues to determine economic and social impacts and identify strategies to promote a healthy arts and entertainment district downtown.

- Music scene
  Encourage Providence’s music scene to regain strength and thrive by working with partners to reverse the loss of small to mid-sized music venues downtown.

- Providence Hospitality Resource Partnership
  The Providence Hospitality Resource Partnership continues to work with stakeholders in the entertainment economy in order to diversify entertainment options, ensure public safety, and drive economic development.
GOAL: Build community and foster neighborhood vitality through increased access and diversified cultural participation

Invest in neighborhood art, culture, and creativity to sustain diversity and engage communities.

A vibrant Providence depends on activities and institutions that are comprised of — and serve — the many cultures in the city’s 25 distinct neighborhoods. Providence is rich in cultural diversity and artistic and creative expression, yet for many of its residents, limited money, education, and transportation prevent them from fully accessing and participating in arts and cultural opportunities.

Participation in arts and culture builds communities and stabilizes neighborhoods’ social diversity. The cultural plan works to break down barriers to participation, make the local arts and humanities communities more representative of the city’s population, and pave the way for fuller access to the arts for all. To do this, we must broaden our understanding of cultural participation, recognize and support the many ways in which citizens engage with the arts, and promote Providence’s culturally distinct neighborhoods as sites of rich cross-cultural exchange. Authentic cultural participation includes a wide variety of artistic and cultural expressions, reflective of a pluralistic American society.

OUTCOMES OF CULTURAL PLANNING

- Arts, culture, and creativity will be present in each neighborhood as a lifelong creative learning and community-building strategy.

- Public policies and private programs will empower people to express their own creativity and explore their individual cultural curiosity.

- Each neighborhood will have a signature cultural center that utilizes the existing civic architecture: public libraries, recreation centers, schools, parks, and community centers.

- All people should feel welcome – socially, physically, economically, and intellectually – and have opportunities to participate in cultural offerings that represent and reinforce the many cultures and wide-range of creative practices present throughout the city.

- Cultural life will attract people to – and link – Providence’s neighborhoods.
STRATEGIES TO BUILD COMMUNITY AND FOSTER NEIGHBORHOOD VITALITY

INVEST IN THE CULTURAL LIFE OF NEIGHBORHOODS TO PROMOTE VITALITY
The City will strengthen neighborhoods by increasing public access to arts, culture, and creativity.

• Socially inclusive
The City will adopt policies that are broadly inclusive of the wide range of opportunities for cultural participation: creating, witnessing, preserving, and supporting artistic and cultural expression.

• Leadership
The Department of Art, Culture + Tourism (AC+T) partners with the City’s Office of Neighborhood Services, Department of Planning and Development, Public Safety, and other community organizations to identify, convene, and cultivate a network of community and cultural leaders.

• AC+T will coordinate with leadership from the Neighborhood Markets Program to identify and build a database of community leaders from cultural, educational, civic, community development, and commercial sectors.

• Partners will identify, convene, and encourage neighborhood community and cultural leaders to become a network of ambassadors – making connections in and among Providence’s neighborhoods.

• Connections
Invest in and empower community leaders to work with each other in, and between, neighborhoods and cultural institutions.

• Explore culturally specific governance, fundraising, and engagement strategies.

• Encourage cultural organizations to diversify the ethnicities, races, ages, and cultures of boards and staff.

• Space incentives
Provide housing and work spaces in neighborhoods for artists who work directly with families and with youth in those neighborhoods.
STRATEGIES TO BUILD COMMUNITY AND FOSTER NEIGHBORHOOD VITALITY

CREATE SIGNATURE CULTURAL CENTERS ACROSS THE CITY

The City collaborates with partners to identify, develop, and establish neighborhood cultural centers utilizing the existing civic buildings: libraries, recreation centers, schools, parks, and community centers.

- **Map**
  In coordination with the Pathways to Creative Learning Partnership, identify existing cultural assets, opportunities, and potential alliances.

- **21st century civic institutions**
  Identify and secure funding to develop plans for cultural centers.

- **Coordinated learning community**
  Cultural centers will convene and coordinate providers of out-of-school cultural and educational programs (i.e. libraries, colleges, cultural organizations, etc.) to offer adults and children access to creative learning and opportunities for social mobility.

  - Expand the model used by the Providence After School Alliance to designate downtown and neighborhood hubs for promotions and events.

- **Residencies**
  Cultural centers will have a site coordinator to facilitate artist residency opportunities in neighborhoods.

AC+T will work in partnership with Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, Rhode Island Council for the Humanities, the Rhode Island Foundation, and other organizations to encourage and preserve cultural organizations that collect, present, produce, or give voice to the cultural traditions and expressions of ethnic communities.

- **Policy**
  The City will adopt policies that encourage and preserve culturally specific organizations and programs that are reflective of the city’s population.

- **Preserve organizations**
  AC+T will lead the City’s efforts to make preservation of culturally specific organizations a priority, especially through the current economic recession.

- **Resources**
  AC+T will seek to leverage additional resources and designate funding and technical assistance for culturally specific organizations.

- **Leadership**
  AC+T will work with partners to assist organizations in recruiting diverse boards and staff.

  - Encourage established cultural organizations to partner with culturally specific organizations.

- **Innovation**
  AC+T and partners will encourage culturally specific organizations to pursue new methods of cultivating donors, volunteers, and audiences.
STRATEGIES TO BUILD COMMUNITY AND FOSTER NEIGHBORHOOD VITALITY

INVEST IN THE CITY’S PUBLIC ART, PROGRAMS, EVENTS, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Increase neighborhood-based creativity by encouraging the proliferation and preservation of existing free and accessible public cultural programs.

• Public art
  Install mechanisms that allow arts presenters and artists to create art for public places.

  • The City revisits and enforces the 1980 Art in City Life ordinance which requires one percent of total project costs for the construction or remodeling of any building, decorative or commemorative structure, park, street, sidewalk, parking facility, or utility paid for in whole or in part by the City to be expended on works of art.

  • AC+T will facilitate and encourage temporary public art and programming in quality public spaces throughout Providence.

  • The City should develop policies governing decisions about the construction, renovation, or restoration of commemorative art, architecture, and landscape architecture in public spaces and directs investment for the preservation of existing public monuments.

• Public programming
  AC+T will facilitate programming as part of targeted placemaking strategies tailored to locations throughout the city to cultivate civic pride and activate the city’s public spaces as vibrant cultural commons.

  • AC+T continues its role as performing arts presenter with programs such as the Friday Night Concert Series at Waterplace Park, the Neighborhood Performing Arts series, Sound Session, and other free and publicly accessible cultural events throughout the calendar year.

  • AC+T will encourage nontraditional partners in and out of City government to develop programs with the creative sector, such as the Office of Neighborhood Services, infrastructure managers (transportation, public works, public safety), social service providers, the Providence Hospitality & Resource Partnership, and others.

  • Encourage projects that reach across populations, ages, experiences, neighborhoods, and socioeconomic levels. Schools, libraries, and recreational centers can facilitate cultural exchanges.

  • Encourage property owners to sponsor cultural programs by making private spaces available to the creative community for temporary public programming (i.e. storefronts, blank walls, etc.).

  • Offer collaborative incentives such as marketing and shared audience development to encourage robust cultural programming.

  • Encourage the creative sector to develop diverse and innovative experiential public programs in accessible neighborhood locations throughout the city.

  • AC+T will continue to offer programming grants and facilitate event planning across City departments (including working with the Parks Department, Public Safety, and others) to allow community-based organizations to develop and present cultural programs for the neighborhoods.
STRATEGIES TO BUILD COMMUNITY AND FOSTER NEIGHBORHOOD VITALITY

• The City will continue to provide technical advice to neighborhood groups to help them successfully implement their public programming ideas, including offering assistance matching neighborhood organizations with artists and other creative professionals.

• Explore programming partnerships, like a neighborhood passport program, to highlight the cultural identity of neighborhoods and promote visitation to arts and cultural sites, neighborhood markets, and public spaces throughout the city. Partners may include branch libraries, merchants associations, transit authority, online ticketing services, utility companies, and more.

• Encourage cultural organizations and neighborhoods to forge new relationships and bring programming to neighborhood venues directly.

• Public events
  AC+T will continue to collaborate with Public Safety, the Department of Public Works, other government agencies, property owners, and the tourism industry to ensure that high quality public events continue with as few disruptions in service to city residents as possible.

• Public infrastructure
  Integrate art into existing civic architecture to increase cultural participation and provoke public dialogue and engagement.

• Mobility
  Help remove transportation barriers and improve physical access to cultural sites, events, and programs. Where appropriate, use transit as a critical component of collective community-building — connecting neighborhoods and nearby cities and towns and the city’s peripheries to the city’s core.

• Continue to work with RIPTA and other city agencies on public art and programming projects (i.e. bus shelters and Greater Kennedy Plaza), corridor enhancements, improving connections to and between neighborhood-based cultural activities, and exploring bus routes and schedules driven by current and emerging cultural activity. Tie art and transit efforts to the City’s goals for a more ecologically sustainable future.

• Encourage transit near cultural hubs and creative clusters.

• Plan events that encourage walking.

• Increase access to cultural activities by making connections to bike paths and waterways.
STRAATEGIES TO BUILD COMMUNITY AND FOSTER NEIGHBORHOOD VITALITY

• Public works
  The creative sector can develop creative public engagement strategies to meet service demands, to help grow the creative and green economies, and as a learning tool to explain the city’s infrastructure to residents, help encourage conservation, and stoke civic pride.

  • Outdoor public spaces like neighborhood parks, sidewalks, and trees can all serve as outdoor classrooms.
  
  • Integrate public art and programming into the City’s goals of opening one community garden each year over the next three years and to add over 20 acres of park space primarily along the rivers and waterfront by 2012.
  
  • Signage can serve dual function of providing (multilingual) way-finding and showcasing the city’s creativity.
  
  • Use the City’s cultural liaison with neighborhoods to build relationships and develop more interdepartmental connections.

ACCESSIBILITY
The City will assure cultural programs are fully accessible to people with disabilities.

• ADA compliance
  VSA Arts RI encourages cultural organizations to be compliant with ADA requirements.

• Artists with disabilities
  VSA Arts RI encourages artists with disabilities.

LIFELONG LEARNING
Partnerships make lifelong learning in creativity accessible to all Providence residents.

• Pre-school
  Begin creative learning and teaching as early as possible. Coordinate service with data from the Providence Plan.

• Out-of-school adults
  Promote and coordinate lifelong learning programming publicly accessible through libraries, arts, humanities, and cultural institutions, galleries, and universities.

• Elders
  Plan also to serve older, active adults (e.g. Citizen Schools, where people volunteer to share their creative practice, expertise, and knowledge).
GOAL: Educate and inspire the next generation of creative thinkers

*Develop creative practice in youth for 21st century global citizenship.*

Providence has many exceptional arts service providers, recognized nationally for making excellent creative learning opportunities available to students outside of school. These after-school arts learning providers have led the way in quality arts experiences for our city’s youth and are anxious to make a larger contribution. Currently, most of the city’s community arts programming focuses on the high school level. Collaborative efforts between Hope High School and RISD have demonstrated amazing results. The arts proficiency graduation requirements provide an opportunity for Providence to rebuild the creative learning curriculum and reach outside school walls to the city’s rich arts community.

Creative learning provides youth with critical thinking skills essential for a creative life and prepares students to participate fully as citizens and members of the 21st century global workforce. Studies find that the arts can help students gain skills in areas valued by today’s employers, such as innovation and creative problem solving. However, creative education opportunities grounded in arts learning experiences are diminishing in schools and community life. In many schools, creative learning is often forced to compete against other district priorities for time and funding. Compounding this problem, many educators themselves are part of a generation who did not experience arts education when they were students. When arts education is offered, it is not accessible to all students. The creative sector can help strengthen pathways for all students to have access to creative learning.

Providence has a reputation as a center for arts, culture, and creativity, yet participants in the *Creative Providence* cultural assessment persistently cited dissatisfaction with the current state of arts education in Providence – in interviews, community forums, focus group discussions, and the online survey.

**OUTCOMES OF CULTURAL PLANNING**

- Substantial K-12 pathways in arts learning will be available in school, after-school, and through community-based opportunities.

- The role of creative learning in students’ lives and in building the strength of communities will be recognized as preparing youth for 21st century global citizenship and workforce.

- Opportunities will be available for young artists and social entrepreneurs to invest in children, youth, and families.

- Providence will have a nationally recognized program of artists who integrate teaching into creative practice.

- Providence will be recognized as a leader in cultivating and sustaining a cadre of teaching artists.

- The community recognizes and sustains the significant contributions of Providence’s after-school providers and high quality arts organizations.
STRATEGIES TO EDUCATE AND INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION OF CREATIVE THINKERS

PATHWAYS TO CREATIVE LEARNING PARTNERSHIP
The Pathways to Creative Learning Partnership (henceforth throughout this goal referred to as “the partnership”), made up of the Department of Art, Culture + Tourism (AC+T), Providence Schools, Brown University, the Providence After School Alliance (PASA), The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and the Rhode Island Arts Learning Network, continues to work collaboratively to create stronger pathways between neighborhoods, schools, cultural organizations, and creative professionals in K-12 through extended day learning.

• Framework
The partnership defines where and how youth access meaningful creative learning activities broadly including both formal educational settings, such as schools and libraries, and non-institutional settings, such as cultural organizations, community centers, recreation centers, parks, and faith communities.

• All Providence children and youth will have curricular experiences in school, supported by the community, which will allow them to demonstrate proficiency in one or more art forms by graduation.

• All children will have access to community-based arts learning to enrich and extend the knowledge and skills learned at home and in school.

• All children and youth will have ongoing access to professional arts experiences that are school-linked and community based.

• Research
The partnership will continue inquiries and analysis of creative learning systems in Providence including: personal maps and interviews about creative learning with youth who have a strong interest in the arts, PASA survey data, census of arts offerings in neighborhoods and schools, provider interviews, and interviews with selected Providence elementary and middle school administrators.

• Assessment and engagement
With support from the Mott Foundation’s A New Day for Learning project, the partnership will assess the demand for arts learning in Providence K-8 students and families, the supply of K-8 arts learning across Providence neighborhoods, and develop a K-8 strategy for re-building and strengthening arts education in Providence that will dovetail with other complementary efforts underway in the city (i.e., PASA, Creative Providence cultural plan, etc.).

• Project recommendations
The partnership will endorse and adopt the recommended strategies about how to strengthen arts learning pathways.

• The partnership will collaborate to build access to information by developing an integrated interactive map, kiosks, social events, and alert systems for schools, families, and youth to learn more about arts learning pathways in Providence.

• The partnership will collaborate to increase access to arts learning activities by creatively addressing economic and transportation barriers.

• The partnership will collaborate to create an arts ambassadors program that will expand and support more mentorship and internship programs through PASA, community-based organizations, and in K-8 programs.

• The partnership will create public programs and community events about arts learning activities in Providence where youth and families access information about
opportunities, applications, enrollment, and planning.

- The partnership will facilitate development of neighborhood community cultural centers by identifying potential sites based on data, community interests in creative learning and potential partners.

- **Policy recommendations**
  The partnership will engage in a statewide advocacy effort to adopt policy recommendations over the next three years.

  - Implement the Rhode Island standards for in-school arts learning opportunities.
  
  - The Mott Foundation’s *A New Day for Learning* project will support existing district policy on expanded learning as a key support to poor and underachieving students, ensuring prominence for creative learning in students’ lives.
  
  - Make extended learning part of student funding formula, especially for the neediest students.
  
  - Develop incentives for community-based arts organizations (such as access to funding and spaces/facilities) to form deep partnerships with community sites.
  
  - Establish a citywide incubator system for new arts learning enterprises with funding for a network of experienced community organizations to mentor, house, and offer technical assistance to emerging projects.

- **Program Recommendations**
  The partnership will engage in a collaborative effort to adopt program recommendations over the next three years.

  - Ensure that new building projects and renovations are designed to support arts learning (i.e. schools, libraries, residential developments) and develop a strategy to make facilities available to the community for public use.

**PREPARE THE NEXT GENERATION**

The City encourages community-wide stewardship and responsibility for providing youth with substantial opportunities to access cultural activity across the city.

- **Service Providers**
  Recognize and sustain the significant contributions of Providence’s after-school service providers.

  - Develop new in-school curriculum with embedded units of study that partner students with cultural organization.

- **After-school**
  Providence After School Alliance (PASA) continues to lead the city’s efforts to expand and improve the quality of after school opportunities, including creative teaching and learning instruction for the youth of Providence.

  - Continue to identify and promote spaces that can serve as hubs for students during and after school.
  
  - Recognize and sustain significant contributions made by organizations that are supporting creative learning in Providence.
STRAATEGIES TO EDUCATE AND INSPIRE THE NEXT GENERATION OF CREATIVE THINKERS

• Explore other models for after-school funding and support, (e.g., The Hunt Alternative Fund matches individual donors with after-school arts programs).

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
Position creative practice as preparation for a broadly defined creative workforce. AC+T will assure that creative learning interests are represented in planning workforce development initiatives.

• Creativity essential to future prosperity
Prepare Providence’s youth for the 21st century by positioning creative learning as preparation for global citizenship and community building.

  • Integrate lifelong arts learning, creativity, and innovation into workforce development initiatives aimed at generating work and wealth, e.g., knowledge economy, adult workforce training, and school curricular development.

  • Emphasize creative learning curriculum in the Career & Technical Academy to provide best job training facilities in the state.

• Recruiting the next generation of leaders
Create workforce development strategies to introduce youth to creative sector jobs.

  • AC+T and Providence/Cranston Workforce Development will work with cultural organizations to coordinate a salaried employment program for underserved young adults that would make work experiences available while giving them field experience, mentorship, and increased access to cultural experiences.

SUSTAIN A CADRE OF TEACHING ARTISTS
Sustain Providence’s national reputation as a place where teaching is understood to be a core part of creative practice for many artists because of the excellent community-based arts organizations that work with artists and students.

• Teaching artists
Encourage arts spaces and other arts learning service providers to continue to sustain a cadre of teaching artists and support the institutions doing this work.

  • Challenge artists for whom teaching youth may be a career goal to integrate creative practice into their life, work, and citizenship.

• Arts Corps
Create an Arts Corps for Providence (or link to any similar, developing national WPA-like program) putting artists to work in communities, schools, and businesses.

• Commit to teaching artists
Challenge Providence schools, foundations, and cultural organizations to make a commitment to teaching artists using incentives. “If you make a commitment to both artist practice and to teaching practice, we’ll make a higher commitment to you – salary, retirement plan, health insurance benefits.”

• Residencies
Encourage Providence’s Community Development Corporations and Community Centers to coordinate opportunities for artists to work in residence in communities, public schools, higher education institutions, and corporations.

CREATIVE SECTOR IN SCHOOLS
Establish a creative presence in neighborhood schools to strengthen communities and provide opportunities for youth to interact with the creative sector.
GOAL: Foster sustainable cultural organizations

Nurture agile, healthy, resilient organizations able to anticipate and meet all forms of new challenges.

The city’s nonprofit arts and cultural organizations anchor the local and regional creative sector, employ and present Providence artists, provide cultural and educational opportunities for citizens, and attract tourists. The thirty-eight nonprofit arts and culture organizations that responded to a 2005 economic impact study survey reported an economic impact of $111.8 million and support close to 3,000 jobs. Their aggregate attendance for events was 2.7 million; these attendees spent a total of $71.18 million, excluding the cost of event admission. (Americans for the Arts, 2007)

Ironically, cultural organizations are both successful and precarious. Nonprofit cultural organizations are critical to Providence yet many face an unprecedented crisis, as dramatically reduced funding, increased costs, and changing audience habits converge into a perfect storm that threatens their survival. Many need help with funding, board and staff development, and management assistance. Even before the recession, staffs were not well paid and worked beyond a sustainable pace. Most are undercapitalized, under-funded, and lack overall capacity. Most nonprofits entered 2009 and the growing financial emergency with no reserve capacity.

The international financial crisis is affecting virtually all nonprofits and mid-sized cultural organizations are especially vulnerable to funding cuts. Contemporary dance and experimental theatre are in jeopardy. Many are laying off staff. Funders are increasingly receiving appeals for emergency funding without the discretionary funding to respond. Some organizations are likely to fail. Nonprofits are challenged as never before. This plan should address short-term strategies to mitigate the impact of the crisis and long-term strategies to help make the sector more resilient.

OUTCOMES OF CULTURAL PLANNING

- Information, training and assistance will be provided to assist cultural organizations adapt to fundamentally changing immediate and long-term conditions.

- Critical cultural organizations and jobs will be preserved.

- Creative restructuring assistance will encourage resiliency and innovation, collaboration, programmatic and administrative integration, mergers, and reinvented organizational structures.

- Cultural organizations will convene regularly to share information and strategies.

- The landscape of cultural organizations, including the staff, board, volunteers, programs, donors, and audiences, will be appropriately diverse, reflecting the full socioeconomic, racial, educational, and cultural diversity of Providence.
STRATEGIES TO FOSTER SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

PROMOTE RESILIENCY
Assist cultural organizations to adapt and thrive in fundamentally changing conditions over the long term.

- **Leadership**
  Programs, like The Initiative for Nonprofit Excellence at The Rhode Island Foundation, will lead and coordinate training and access to forums, workshops, networking opportunities, and consulting services for cultural organizations.

  - Develop 21st century skills including: developing best practices in governance, management, marketing, financial management, planning, evaluation, income generation, communication and messaging, evaluating community impact, and recruiting and developing boards representative of the city’s communities.

  - Convene and provide support to established leaders.

  - Establish an Emerging Leaders network in Providence to foster mentoring and networking among the next generation of Providence’s arts and humanities leaders.

- **Inclusion and outreach**
  The Department of Art Culture + Tourism (AC+T), Rhode Island State Council on the Arts (RISCA), The Initiative for Nonprofit Excellence at The Rhode Island Foundation, Art & Business Council of Rhode Island, and other community partners will encourage traditional cultural organizations to diversify organizations and programs to reflect community demographics, engage the public about programming, and build relationships with communities.

- **Board development**
  The Arts & Business Council of Rhode Island and partners will renew a program like the Business Volunteers for the Arts program to match business leaders with nonprofit boards. Service organizations match organization leaders with board development training in policy governance and fundraising.

- **Networking and convening**
  AC+T will lead efforts to coordinate face-to-face and social media networking systems so that cultural leaders can exchange news and information, build partnerships based on common outcomes, and gain support from each other.

  - Organize informal creative sector networking events as the Providence Geeks’ dinners and Green Drinks do for technical and environmental workers.
STRATEGIES TO FOSTER SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

COMPREHENSIVE RESOURCES
Help preserve critical nonprofit cultural organizations and jobs through the economic recession and recovery.

- **Increased funding**
  Generate increased funding from public sources and retained private-sector contributions to infuse cultural organizations with resources critical to their survival and cultural to sector jobs.

- **Convene funders**
The Providence mayor convenes major funders including the City of Providence (AC+T, Department of Planning and Development, and the Providence Economic Development Partnership), Providence Tourism Council, RISCA, the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities, Providence foundations, corporations, and selected philanthropists to negotiate a collaborative strategic approach to emergency funding and/or contribute to pooled funds.

- **Triage**
AC+T and its partners design a triage system to establish 21st century priorities and best practices as criteria determining which organizations would most benefit from emergency technical assistance and strategic funding, which will survive without emergency assistance, and any that may not be saved.

  - The City allocates emergency funding of $1 million over two years to help stabilize cultural organizations critical to Providence’s recovery as the region’s *Creative Capital*.

  - AC+T shifts grant funding for the duration of the emergency from programming to technical assistance and operating grants.

ALTERNATIVE FUNDING
Identify and create funding sources through a City-led initiative with other funders to post links to information about alternative sources of funding on AC+T, RISCA, and foundation Web sites.

- **Earned income training**
Cultural organizations will adopt entrepreneurial business models where appropriate to diversify their income sources and meet contemporary challenges.

- **TIFs**
Explore a Tax Increment Financing as a long-term solution for cultural development.

- **Leverage funding**
Educate and encourage cultural organizations to appeal to their donors to designate their agencies in corporate United Way campaigns.

- **New models**
The City will establish a non-governmental controlled funding mechanism for the arts.

  - Consider a locally responsive model of the united arts fund and/or cultural trusts.

- **Art in Public Life**
Revisit and enforce the Art in Public Life ordinance.
STRATEGIES TO FOSTER SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

RESOURCE AGGREGATION
Collaborations and restructuring among cultural organizations achieves increased effectiveness and creativity in programs, marketing, services, and facilities.

• Technical assistance
AC+T will work with The Initiative for Nonprofit Excellence at The Rhode Island Foundation and other willing arts service providers to provide technical assistance that will enable cultural organizations to obtain consulting help, attend critical workshops, or enroll in courses.

  • Offer funding for consulting help to negotiate collaborations and/or mergers and the development of shared resource units such as shared databases, financial services, and collaborative marketing efforts.

• Strategic alliances
AC+T will coordinate with The Initiative for Nonprofit Excellence at The Rhode Island Foundation to host capacity-building workshops and seminars on strategic alliances and mergers. Invite likely partners from the creative sector to discuss potential collaborations.

• Business co-op
Explore coordination of creative enterprises through a creative chamber of commerce.

  • Investigate other models for application, e.g., Creative Economy Association of North Shore and Berkshire Creative in Massachusetts.

COMMON GRANT APPLICATION FORM
Encourage funders to adopt a common grant proposal form, as being considered by Grant Makers Council of Rhode Island.

  • Simplify grant process
AC+T reorganizes its granting system to use a simple, consistent process for all grants.

INFORMATION HUB
AC+T becomes a central hub of information about training, assistance, and opportunities for collaboration by upgrading its web site and e-newsletter to complement current promotion of cultural events.

  • Online
AC+T upgrades its web site and e-newsletter to provide information to help cultural organizations become more resilient with instruction, links to other providers of cultural news and information, and links to resources.
GOAL: Create conditions for creative workers to thrive in Providence

Support a vibrant community of individual artists, scholars, writers, designers, and entertainers to sustain the creative city.

Many creative individuals call Providence home. Visual and performing artists, designers, writers, and scholars are critical to Providence’s creativity, prosperity, and reputation as the region’s Creative Capital. Creative workers and a creative city are mutually interdependent. Providence will not succeed without the support of its creative individuals (and vice versa). Their livelihood and quality of life depends on the city’s ability to thrive, as a dynamic, creative city.

Providence is home to more artists per capita than any other U.S. city. Individual artists, designers, and other creative workers are responsible for the City’s rich diversity of disciplines, cultural institutions, creative industries, and cultural products. Creative workers are the basis of Providence’s national reputation as a center for creativity. Accordingly, the City recognizes the tremendous benefits associated with the presence of many different kinds of artists – artists stimulate the local economy and enhance the quality of the city’s social and cultural life.

While artists and other creative workers are the foundation of the creative economy, individual creative workers are vulnerable. Nearly two thirds of Providence artists responding to the 2008 Creative Providence survey report they must work at non-arts jobs to support themselves or their families. Health insurance, affordable studios and housing, and revenue are critical needs. The recession has exacerbated their struggle to be creative and make a living.

OUTCOMES OF CULTURAL PLANNING

• Providence artists and creators will be recognized as community leaders who make significant contributions to the social and creative capital of the city.

• Providence will be a dynamic, regional arts market and center for creativity.

• Individual artists will have access to a robust infrastructure for technical assistance and support, allowing them to generate adequate revenues, working capital, and to reduce costs through information, training, marketing, online directories, grants, financing, and earned income.

• Artists will have access to multiple options for creative workspaces, living spaces, and presentation venues.
STRATEGIES TO CREATE CONDITIONS FOR CREATIVE WORKERS TO THRIVE IN PROVIDENCE

GENERATE REVENUE
Help creative workers generate adequate and flexible sources of income and reduce costs.

• **Buyers, audiences, collectors, and contracts**  
  Help artists connect with buyers, audiences, collectors, and contracts.
  
  - Rhode Island State Council on the Arts (RISCA) upgrades its online artists’ directory to help connect artists with customers and links with the Department of Art, Culture + Tourism (AC+T), Rhode Island Division of Tourism, Providence-Warwick Convention and Visitors Bureau, Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce, Arts & Business Council of Rhode Island Indie Arts, and other online sites.
  
  - AC+T continues to promote artists and events on its website, weekly e-newsletter, and through programs like Buy Art.
  
  - Arts & Business Council of Rhode Island will continue to offer artists training and assistance in building their marketing capacity through the marketing co-op.
  
  - Create a centralized listing for information about jobs, work exchange, and skills sharing.
  
  - Coordinate marketing campaign to strengthen gallery sales.

• **Capital**  
  Help connect artists with capital.
  
  - AC+T will collaborate with the Department of Planning and Development to connect artists with financing options such as Providence’s micro enterprise loan program and other related opportunities.
  
  - Encourage philanthropists and venture capitalists to invest in individual creative enterprises.

• **Grants**  
  AC+T leads efforts to encourage funders to retain and enhance grants for individual artists and to develop new substantial funds.
  
  - AC+T will continue to make grants available to artists through the Neighborhood Performing Arts Initiative, grants for teaching artists, youth workforce development program, and other initiatives.

• **Assistance**  
  The Arts & Business Council of Rhode Island will link artists with professional coaching and financial advising opportunities.
  
  - The Arts & Business Council of Rhode Island, RISCA, Rhode Island Council for the Humanities, AC+T, and the Rhode Island Foundation will collaborate to serve the city’s artists more effectively and efficiently.
  
  - Look for models of creative support for artists (e.g., Creative Capital, a national nonprofit organization, commits to working in long-term partnership with the artists it supports, making a multi-year financial commitment and providing advisory services and professional development assistance along with financial support).
  
  - Grant makers will develop training workshops and toolkits for individual artists in financial planning, project and time management, promotion, and marketing.
STRATEGIES TO CREATE CONDITIONS FOR CREATIVE WORKERS TO THRIVE IN PROVIDENCE

- AC+T will provide linked sources of information, assistance, and training opportunities on the Department Web site.

SUSTAINABLE ARTIST SPACES
Develop mix of spaces for artists.

- **Permits**
  AC+T continues to work with other City departments to help creative space developers navigate building, zoning, fire codes, and permitting.
  - The City encourages artists to access small business services already available through the local economic development efforts coordinated by the Providence Economic Development Partnership.
  - City departments simplify the permitting process for special events to encourage cultural tourism and facilitate community building.

- **Development incentives and bonuses**
The City should develop provisions in zoning regulations and other ordinance incentives for real estate developers to create permanently affordable and accessible artist workspaces.
  - AC+T and RISCA will jointly promote benefits of arts districts and strategically market activities.
  - Encourage new construction projects to accommodate space for creative programming in building developments as an alternative to mitigation fees.
  - Encourage existing building owners to upgrade buildings without displacing existing communities of artists.

- **Workspaces**
  AC+T, in collaboration with the Department of Planning and Development, will continue to encourage private and public development and redevelopment of creative workspaces.
  - Continue to support nonprofit efforts to provide workspaces for artists.
  - Recognize artist work-only studios as “jobs” to ensure they can be located in areas designated as “Jobs Districts” in future land use planning.

- **Live/work spaces**
The City will work with housing organizations to encourage more development of mixed-use live/work spaces where artists may live and work in community.
  - Continue to support developments in which artists have equity in their property so they are not forced out as property values inevitably increase.
  - The City and one or more cooperating banks will develop a program that encourages artists to occupy, rehab, and own vacant buildings and foreclosed homes (as done through Paducah Kentucky’s Artist Relocation Program).
  - Encourage development of a range of mixed income spaces for different life stages.
  - AC+T will continue to encourage public policies that provide affordable housing for creative workers.
STRATEGIES TO CREATE CONDITIONS FOR CREATIVE WORKERS TO THRIVE IN PROVIDENCE

• Link eligible creative workers with low- and middle-income housing services and advocacy organizations.

• AC+T collaborates with Department of Planning and Development to promote opportunities to artists for existing owner-occupied housing programs through the city (e.g., foreclosures).

• The creative sector will advocate for New Market and historic tax credits.

• **Alternative spaces**
  Continue to encourage building owners to accommodate temporary creative programming in vacant, transitional, or under-used spaces (as the Providence Foundation does with the Providence Art Windows programming).

• Revive or repurpose now defunct Sustainable Artist Space Initiative, a collaborative effort between RI Citizens for the Arts, RISCA, the Housing Network of Rhode Island, and advocates.

• Coordinate opportunities for artists to work in residence in communities, public schools, higher education institutions, and corporations.

**VENUES**
City initiatives, private galleries, and artist-driven ventures continue to encourage the development of a diverse mix of educational and nonprofit institutional venues to show and sell artists’ work, providing opportunities for artists to engage audiences at multiple levels.

• **Public gallery**
  Create a public gallery as a showcase for craft workers.

• **Music venues**
  Encourage development of live music venues.

• **Programs**
  Create programs for local businesses and individuals to buy and show the work of local artists.
STRATEGIES TO CREATE CONDITIONS FOR CREATIVE WORKERS TO THRIVE IN PROVIDENCE

CREATIVE COMMUNITY
Facilitate connections among creative workers and across other sectors.

- Leadership
  Cultivate individual artist leaders by encouraging participation in leadership opportunities such as serving the City Plan Commission, Providence Economic Development Partnership, Providence Tourism Council, Zoning Board of Review, Providence School Board, and the Board of Park Commissioners and business development events, annual meetings, and conferences sponsored by other sectors.

- Networking
  Stimulate the development of a more formal artist network by creating additional social networking opportunities online and face-to-face.

- Business cooperative
  AC+T will educate and inform artists about the benefits associated with shared ownership in a business cooperative to help streamline backend services like finance and data base management, to develop collaborative marketing, and to access group buying options.

- Creative gatherings
  AC+T and partners organize a periodic gathering of creative workers.
  - Plan a biennial arts conference.

- Health
  The City will make information available to Providence artists about healthcare access through artist advocacy programs like Leveraging Investments in Creativity.

Showcase
The City will showcase and incorporate the work of local artists into the fabric of its activities, including installing artwork in the built environment, the landscape, and at special events.

POLICY
The creative sector advocates for, and practices public policies and attitudes that value and respect creative workers as professionals.

- Artists are professionals
  AC+T continues to advocate that artists are individual workers and must be compensated fairly for their services.

- Legislation
  Explore options to strengthen arts districts legislation.
GOAL: Raise public awareness of the creative sector

Strengthen marketing, advocacy, and tourism to increase participation and engagement.

The cultural plan intends to leverage the city’s arts, culture, and creative assets to secure strong and consistent support for creative industries from area businesses, government, civic organizations, and the public. The Americans for the Arts 2007 Arts & Economic Prosperity III study documented that nonprofit arts and culture organizations in Providence generate $111.81 million in local economic activity. Economists have long recognized that the cost of cultural programming nearly always exceed earned revenues. Public benefits require public support. The challenge for the cultural plan is to more effectively communicate the powerful impact of these critical community benefits.

OUTCOMES OF CULTURAL PLANNING

- Employ consistent messaging to market cultural attractions to visitors and residents.
- Residents and visitors will easily locate the city’s arts, culture, and creativity with coordinated information, calendars, ticketing, and links to events and opportunities.
- Links with tourism, the hospitality industry, cultural organizations, and events will be strengthened.
- The creative sector will be recognized as central to the City’s quality of life, attractiveness to business and investment, and returning prosperity.
- There will be a clear process for the creative sector to post information about their work on a central online data portal.

MARKETING:

Providence is home to world-class higher education institutions, a growing knowledge economy, preeminent cultural institutions, many high-quality artists and designers, creative businesses, and creative workers. Performances, museums, festivals, and events draw a regional audience. Many people view the City’s new branding efforts — in which Providence claims the title The Creative Capital — as an authentic reflection of its identity as a creative and cultural center.

ADVOCACY:

An advocacy campaign promotes, supports, and defends arts-related issues that are important and about which the general public, the media, and elected officials should be informed.

CULTURAL TOURISM:

One cannot mistake Providence for somewhere else. Providence is fortunate that it need not invent an identity for itself like many American cities are forced to do. The city’s historic landscape, restaurants, niche tourism markets, and thriving art scene attract a diverse range of visitors from near and far to the city. Cultural facilities and programs have been significant catalysts to downtown revitalization.
STRATEGIES TO RAISE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE CREATIVE SECTOR

MESSAGING
Create consistent messaging to more effectively market Providence’s cultural resources to visitors and residents.

• **Providence, The Creative Capital**
The City builds and implements the *Creative Capital* campaign to help promote Providence’s arts, culture, and creativity.

• **Arts Investment Task Force**
The City of Providence’s Arts Investment Task Force completes its mission and introduces the results of that work to develop a robust messaging campaign about the importance of arts, culture, and creativity in Providence.

• **Local ownership**
Develop a *My Creative Capital* message and campaign to help residents feel a sense of ownership of the city’s arts, culture, and heritage.

• **Spanish messages**
Integrate messages in Spanish and use multiethnic images in City branding and promotions.

CENTRAL INFORMATION PORTAL
Create an information portal with linked cultural calendars and directories.

• **Tourism calendar**
The Rhode Island State Council on the Arts (RISCA) will continue to develop a Web site in collaboration with the Rhode Island Department of Tourism with links to a calendar of events and information about the creative sector.

  • AC+T will coordinate efforts to build the *Creative Capital* Web site with these efforts.

• **The Arts & Business Council of Rhode Island** will coordinate with RISCA on ways to integrate the comprehensive ticketing system currently in development.

• **RSS feed**
Search and collect information from multiple web sites and news agencies to provide the public with a central location for content about arts, culture, and tourism.

• **AC+T e-news**
AC+T continues to distribute an e-newsletter.

  • Explore media partnerships with ethnic newspapers to develop a paper version of AC+T e-news in different languages.

  • Partner with local telecommunications providers to investigate Internet penetration throughout the City.

• **Personalized calendar**
Create a central calendar that users can tag, personalize, and select content via email alerts or RSS feeds.

CROSS-MARKETING
The City of Providence, Providence/Warwick Convention & Visitor’s Bureau, and the Providence Tourism Council will continue to develop strong partnerships and more robust cross-marketing and bundling of events and services among arts and cultural organizations and the city’s cultural providers, hotels, and restaurants.

• **Providence Tomorrow**
Future efforts will include the branding, aligned event calendars, increased visibility for the visitor’s center, improved signage, and new tourism products.
STRATEGIES TO RAISE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE CREATIVE SECTOR

• **Hospitality training**
  Provide coordinated marketing and capacity building training targeted to the hospitality industry on topics of joint interest such as creating hotel packages, pre-theater dining opportunities, and others.
  - Coordinate efforts with the goals of the Providence Hospitality Resource Partnership.

• **Link with niche tourism markets**
  Continue to develop links between cultural and other targeted marketing efforts as interests often overlap.

• **Regional marketing**
  Develop strategies for regional marketing based on the Arts & Business Council of Rhode Island’s regional market research.

• **Kiosks**
  Establish strategically placed bulletin boards (printed and/or electronic) to promote cultural tourism.

• **Coordinated events**
  Encourage the creative sector to coordinate events and marketing, such as gallery owners have organized for Gallery Night programming, to increase tourism and quality of life.

**SECTOR CAPACITY**
Strengthen the ability of artists and arts organizations to fulfill their missions.

**VISIBILITY**
Look for ways to make cultural organization’s impact literally more visible on the streets of Providence.

• **Partnerships**
  Partner with merchant associations, RIPTA, and other agencies in making streetscape improvements that showcase the city’s arts, culture, and creativity.

**FUNDING**
AC+T will work with elected officials, RI Citizens for the Arts, foundations, and individual cultural organizations to cultivate sustained public and private sources of funding and cultural organization’s capacity to raise operating and programming funds.

• **Increased appropriations to AC+T**
  The City allocates increased funding to AC+T for granting and operations.

• **Training**
  Encourage and train the creative sector to strengthen their appeals to individual donors through cultivation of major donors, the next generation of philanthropists (who want to be engaged with projects), and broad, grass roots appeals.

**COORDINATED ADVOCACY**
Rhode Island Citizens for the Arts coordinates statewide advocacy to enhance appreciation of the value of arts and culture. The Creative Providence cultural plan endorses their 2009-2014 Policy Agenda:

• **Economic impact**
  Increase public recognition of the arts’ role in the economy and build support measures through the governor, legislature, and planning and economic development offices.
Creative Providence Acknowledgements

Cultural Plan Launch September 24, 2008
Renaissance Providence Hotel

David N. Cicilline, Mayor
Kristin Adamo
Rebecca Allen
Mary-Kim Arnold
Onega Astaltsova
Nick Bauta
Mercedes Bernal
Christina Bevilacqua
George Born
Heidi Born
Erik Bright
Margie Butler
Elena Calderon-Patino
Tree Callahan
Lisa Carnevale
Demetria Carr
Carolyn Castro
Alan Chille
Ethan Colaiace
Umberto Crenca
Bronwyn Dannenfelser
Donald Deignan
Thomas Deller
Robert DeRobbio
Josephine DiRuzzo
Mihailo Djuric
Deb Dormody
Craig Dreeszen
Michal Ducharme
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Bernard Fishman
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John Garrity
Donna Lee Gennaro
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Micah Salkind
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Anna Shapiro
Dave Sharp
Frank Shea
Adam Short
Bill Shuey
Lynn Singleton
Kristin Street
Caitlin Strokosch
Nina Tegu
Mary Tinti
Patricia Trosclear
Kathleen Tucker Pavlakis
Valerie Tutson
Edward Twyman
Jermaine Whitehead
Barbara Wong
Clifford Wood
Sarah Zurier
Toots Zynsky

Cultural Assessment Interviews
Interviewer: Craig Dreeszen, Dreeszen & Associates

Cathy Bert
Peter Bramante
Leticia Carter
Kim and Liz Chace
Joseph Chazan
David N. Cicilline, Mayor, City of Providence
Sr. Ann Keefe
John Maeda
Tony Maione
Kathy O’Donnell
Merrill Sherman
Bill Simons
Cheryl Snead
Paul Sproll
Neil Steinberg
Laurie White

Focus Groups Participation List

Pablo Alvarez
Jane Androski
Tom Aquino
Amy Barlow
Deborah Baum
Jonathan Bell
Chris Belleau
Rick Benjamin
Mike Bernier
Indigo Bethea
Christina Bevilacqua
Romeo Blouin
April Brown
Emily Brown
Grace Brown
Zac Bruner
Morgan Calderini
Elena Calderon-Patino
Mitch Capel
Alma Carillo
Quentin Chafee
Chris Chabot
Nate Chartier
Minna Choi
Rita Cidre
Robert Cleasby
Deb Clemons
Reza Clifton
Liz Collins
Pat Conley
Serena Conley
Susan Connery
Jean Cozzens
Donna Cupelo
Jim Darce
Mary Darcey
Stanley DeAngelis
Don Deignan
Thom Deller
Chira DelSesto
Aram Deramdoorian
Tamara Diaz
Maggie Dooley
Ginny Dunleavy
Barry Eager
Barnaby Evans
Caitlin Fisher
Jamale Fisher
Richard Fishman
Gerry Fitta
Arthur Fixler
Kate Flanders
Stephanie Fortunato
Hannah Fry
Focus Groups Participation List (continued)

Renee Fullerton  Paula Martiesian  Jen Smith
Jodi Glass  Jesus Matos  Julie Smith
Tom Goddard  Anne McAuliffe-O’Donnell  Erika Springer
Fran Gorman  Lynne McCormack  Sue Stenhouse
Richard Goulis  Bob McKenna  Doris Stephens
Daniel Hagerty  Nicole Merola  Cindy Sweetser
Megan Hall  Sarah Meyer  Miranda Summers
Seth Handy  Kiri Miller  Arley-Rose Torsone
Francisco Hernandez  Matt Montgomery  Judith Tannebaum
Ciriaco P. Herrero  Leo Morales  Raymond L.Tetrault
Zeljka Himbele  Pat Moriarty  Shaunne N. Thomas
Peter Hocking  Don Morton  Laurie Tierno
Geralyn Hoffman  Paula Muggleton  Sidney Tillett
Mark Hogan  Carlos “Fausto” Munguia  Mary Tinti
Alyssa Holland Short  Leah Namihas  Lou Tomasso
Liz Hollander  Ronnie Newman  Jose Torrealba
Bobby Husband  Dr. Nirschel  Jeff Toste
Ghislaine Jean-Mahone  Dana Nugent  Meghan Townes
Herb Jeschke  Lawrence Nunes  Jason Tranchida
Eva Jimenez  Paul O’Donnell  Maria Trappa
Christopher Johnson  Jerry O’Halloran  Valerie Tutson
Hilary Jones  Ken Orenstein  Jorge Urea
Dorothy Jungels  David Ortiz  Emily Ustach
Cheryl Kaminsky  Domenick Panzarella  Anne Valk
Shelly Katsh  Marcia Pena  Eberhard von Heyden
Rick Keller  Steven Pennell  Kik Williams
Dan Kelley  Carol Ann Penney  Emily Wingfield
Sarah Kern  Gene Perry  Shirley Winslow
Jori Ketten  Arides Pichardo  Jim Wolpaw
Pam Kimel  Kim Polson  Barbara Wong
Jennifer Klemmer  Alicia Preza  Liliane Wong
Al Klyberg  Jeremy Radtke  Michaela Colette Zacchilli
Delia Kovac  Maureen Reddy  Sharon Zagorsky
Martha Kuhlman  Bruce Reilly  Berge Zobian
Scott Lapham  Hannah Ressegger  Ramon Zorabedian
Clarice LaVerne Thompson  Munir Rihi
Dean Lawrence  Phil Ritchie  Silent Lotus
Matthew Lawrence  Butch Rovan  Ketsia Louis
Pam Lawrence  Sebastian Ruth  Joseph MacDonald
Robert Leaver  Susan Sakash  Ponce Magaly
Michelle LeBrun  Melissa Sanchez  Darren Marinelli
Elizabeth Manekin  Joel Santos  Xander Marro
Jon Mahone  Aliza Schiff  Paula Martiesian
Pat Malone  Anna Shapiro  Allison Maxell
Anthony Marandola  Kate Schapira  Adrienne Marshall
Mariani Lefas-Tetenes  Matthew S. Schulte  Adrienne Marshall
Jennifer Marrapese  Duane Schock  Mariana Lefas-Tetenes
Adrienne Marshall  Chelsea Shriver  Jennifer Marrapese

Community Forum
The Creative Ecosystem
Rhode Island Convention Center
October 7, 2008

Facilitator: Robert Leaver, New Commons

Kristin Adamo  Silent Lotus
Tony Aguilar  Ketsia Louis
Nick Bauta  Joseph MacDonald
Christina Bevilacqua  Ponce Magaly
Magali Boutiot  Darren Marinelli
Margie Butler  Xander Marro
Tree Callahan  Paula Martiesian
Lisa Carnevale  Allison Maxell
Demetria Carr  Jarrett McPhee
Catherine Carr Kelly  Wanda Miglus
Chris Chabot  Lisa Miller
Paul Clancy  Mercedes Monteiro
James Clements  Matt Montgomery
 Humberto Crenca  Laura Mullen
Jay Critchley  Frank Mullin
Meredith Cutler  Kathleen Pletcher
Thomas D’Amore  Anisa Raaoof
Loriana De Crescenzo  Holly Ratafia
Ruth Dealy  Munir Risani
Claudia DeCesare  Mike Ritz
Thomas Deller  Randall Rosenbaum
Craig Dreesen  Sebastian Ruth
Jason Eckenroth  Natasha Sperdutti-Brooks
Barnaby Evans  Neil Schriever
David Everett  Anna Shapiro
Bernard Fishman  Dave Sharp
A.G. Gertsacov  Anna Shea
Vanessa Gilbert  Rebecca Siemering
Charles Hewitt  Michael Stoddard
Caitlin Stroksch  Mary Tinti
Christopher Johnson  John Taraborelli
Elizabeth Keithline  Jose Torrealba
Daniel Kertzner  Jason Tranchida
Marc Kohler  Valerie Tutson
Lisa Kuffner  Okechukwu Umezuruike
Steve Kums  Karen Usas
Lisa LaDew  Annie Valk
Frank LaTorre  Victoria Veh
Peter Hocking  Jon Mahone
Matthew Lawrence  Anthony Marandola
Robert Leaver  Mariana Lefas-Tetenes
Nancy Lloyd  Jennifer Marrapese
**Creative Providence Acknowledgements**

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Creative Providence Acknowledgements
Cultural Planning Studios

Foster Resilient Cultural Organizations
March 4, 2009
Providence Performing Arts Center
Facilitator: New Commons
Moderator: Craig Dreeszen, Dreszen & Associates
Panelists: David Beauchesne, Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra & Music School
Michael Gennaro, Trinity Repertory Company
Participants:
Hope Alswang
Christina Bevilacqua
Peter Bramante
Margie Butler
Tree Callahan
Shawn Anthony Christien
Lori Erbes
Barnaby Evans
Vanessa Gilbert
Francisco Gonzalez
Danielle Kemley
Daniel Kertzner
Andrew Losowsky
Xander Marro
Wanda Miglus
Drake Patten
Seth Ressler
John Zib

Create Conditions for Creative Individuals to Thrive in Providence
March 9, 2009
The Dirt Palace
Facilitator: New Commons
Moderator: Robert Leaver, New Commons
Panelists: Louisa McCall, consultant and Artists in Context Fund
Caitlin Strokosch, Alliance of Artists Communities
Participants:
Tom Anderson
Mark Binder
Natasha Brooks Sperduti
Jim Brown
Morgan Calderini
Brian Chippendale
Aarin Clemons
Christina DiChierio
Deb Dormody
David Everett
Elena Gonzalez
Bekah Greenwald
Larson Guinness

Infuse the Economy with Creativity
March 4, 2009
Durkee, Brown, Viveiros & Werenfels Architects
Facilitator: New Commons
Moderator: Charlie Cannon, LOCAL/risd
Panelists: Rebecca Blunk, N.E. Foundation for the Arts
Meri Jenkins, Massachusetts Cultural Council
Jack Templin, RI NEXUS/Providence Geeks
Participants:
Carolyn Fahm
Wayne Franklin
Linda Gillis
Francisco Gonzalez
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Ben McOsker
Andrew Panciotti
Holly Ratafia
Anna Shea
Josh Silverman
Elaine Smollin
Valeria Tutson
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Increase Community Access and Cultural Participation
March 12, 2009
The DaVinci Center
Facilitator: New Commons
Moderators: Daniel Kertzner, Rhode Island Foundation
Marta V. Martinez, RI Latino Oral History Project/Hispanic Heritage Committee RI
Panelists: Ricardo Barreto, UrbanArts Institute
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Participants:
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Tom Anderson
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Mercedes Bernal
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Paul Clancy
Lori Erbes
Holly Ewald
Crystal Gardiner
Elena Gonzalez
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Creative Providence
Raise Public Awareness of Arts and Humanities
March 17, 2009
International Institute of Rhode Island

Facilitator: New Commons
Moderator: Deborah Obalil, Obalil & Associates
Panelists: Matt Montgomery, RISD Museum of Art
              John T. Longo, attorney-at-law
Participants:
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    Rachael Binning  Karen Marshall
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    Shawn Anthony Christien  KZ Nunn
    Sam Costello  Kathleen Pletcher
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Creative Providence Planning Team

Creative Providence Steering Committee
Barbara Fields, LISC, Chairperson
Cliff Wood, Providence City Council
Hope Alswang, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design
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Ethan Colaiace, GTECH Corporation
Umberto Crenca, AS220
James V. DeRantis, arts and business advocate
Carol Grant
Peter Hocking, Rhode Island School of Design
Daniel Kertzner, The Rhode Island Foundation
Jennifer Marrapese
Tony Mendez, Poder 1110
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Toots Zynsky, glass artist

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Dave Sharp, The Steel Yard
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Jenny Peek
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PROVIDENCE THE CREATIVE CAPITAL
David N. Cicilline, Mayor

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