



The Flint Cultural Center

Arts and Culture Based Economic
Development

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The Flint Cultural Center: Arts and Culture Based Economic Development

Regional Analysis by *UP454: Local Economic Planning* Students

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School of Planning, Design and Construction

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Introduction

The Urban and Regional Planning Program has a long tradition of linking theory to practice, and offering students the opportunity to contribute to Michigan's planning process. The analysis presented in this report is the result of applied research conducted by students in UP454: Local Economic Planning during fall 2014. The course addressed the economic development process in cities and regions and we were pleased to be able to partner with the the Flint Cultural Center and the Prima Civitas Foundation in an analysis of arts and culture based economic development in Flint. The results displayed in this report show the energy and creativity of our emerging urban planners as they serve the needs of Michigan communities.

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Transforming a Campus: The Potential for Mixed-Use Development at the Flint Cultural Center Joel Arnold

The Flint Cultural Center is one of the finest and most concentrated collections of major cultural assets in the Midwest. Located in Flint, Michigan, a former industrial community of roughly 100,000 residents, the Cultural Center is a collection of eight institutions on a campus-like setting just east of Downtown Flint. While the campus does have some assets more commonly found in towns of this size such as a public library and a large performing arts venue, some of the campus' assets stand out as uniquely grand for a city of Flint's size. Despite the city being the seventh largest in Michigan, the campus is home to the state's second largest art museum, the Flint Institute of Arts, and the state's largest community arts school, the Flint School of Performing Arts (Flint Cultural Center Corporation, 2014). These outsized cultural assets stand as major opportunities on which to create economic development within the City of Flint.

Thankfully, the City has recently completed its first comprehensive master plan, titled *Imagine Flint*, in fifty-three years (Adams, 2013). This plan touches on nearly every aspect of city development from public safety to education and devotes an entire chapter to one topic, arts and culture. This chapter delves deeply into how the arts and culture scene within the community, and especially those institutions located on the campus of the Flint Cultural Center, can be catalysts for sustainable urban growth and development (City of Flint, 2013, pp. 261). With a dense collection of the city's largest art museum, performing art space, historical museum and more, the campus should be able to be a vibrant, lively district that feeds off of these main institutions as support systems for ancillary development.

However, the campus of the Cultural Center seems to fall short of its true potential in a few key ways here. After meeting with the heads of several institutions on the campus, it is clear that many feel that the campus is lively when there is an event happening such as the Holiday Walk or the Auto Fair, but dead when one is not. Several leaders expressed disappointment that institutions often existed in a "siloe" nature on the campus, not collaborating across centers to capitalize on the unique concentration of cultural capital. This lack of collaboration and of integration across venues creates a campus that seems more like a suburban arts complex than one located in the core of the densest city in the region (Blouin, 2013).

The campus also has an almost excessive amount of land devoted to parking, with eight separate parking locations identified on the campus map for eight institutions. Such a large amount of surface parking detracts from the walkable vitality that one would hope to see in an urban arts district and create this sort of dead atmosphere so derided by institution leaders. This massive amount of space devoted to parking also does not fit within the transportation goals of the Master Plan. "While many neighborhoods rely on parking to support commercial uses and other activities, lots can often have a detrimental impact on the aesthetic character of an area" (City of Flint, 2013, pp. 127). It seems that in the Cultural Center, such devotion of land to parking is indeed having this detrimental impact.

Upon interviewing several institution directors, multiple noted the concept of a "park-once" philosophy for the Cultural Center. Due to the Center's location cut from the city's vibrant and walkable Downtown by I-475 and the Center's own complete absence of any commercial development, it is very challenging for patrons to simply park their car once and enjoy a full day or evening with dinner and a show or a trip to the museum without needing to drive to another part of the City before or after visiting a campus institution. Reflecting on this lack of

commercial opportunities, lack of walkability and constant neighborhood vitality, it is then quite appropriate to look into something that could remedy this absence of a neighborhood feel. I propose that this remedy could be mixed use development located on one of the campus' many acres currently devoted to surface parking.

Mixed-use development is defined as, "a development that combines two or more different uses, such as residential, commercial, employment, and entertainment uses, in close proximity (Municipal Research and Services Center, 2013). In such a development, one is most likely to have ground floor retail or commercial uses such as shops or restaurants. Upper floors are most commonly then devoted to residential units and/or office space. Such developments are unique as they offer a mix of uses that create constant activity associated with the development rather than the dead times often associated with single use developments. For the Cultural Center, a mixed use development with residential units on upper floors and commercial spaces on the bottom could solve several complaints voiced by institution heads upon visiting the community. Vibrant commercial uses, especially restaurant locations, could create a true opportunity for the "park-once" philosophy to become a reality. Despite the fact that hundreds of thousands of people visit the Cultural Center's institutions annually, there is not a single commercial use located on the campus capitalizing on this captive audience. In such a development, potential businesses would begin in a location already seeing constant traffic from those looking to spend money on leisure activities.

A residential component could address two pressing issues with the center and the city. One, the activity created by those living in such units would give the campus constant activity rather than only activity during the business day and when a major event is going on. Secondly, a walkable development located so close to so many of the city's major cultural assets could stand to relieve some of the pressure currently being experienced by the city's Downtown where residential units in mixed-use developments are consistently at full occupancy. One Downtown development group specializing in mixed-use projects reports a constant waiting list for units, a clear sign of an underserved market (Allen, 2013). Mixed use development within walking distance of major cultural assets could offer those seeking the vibrancy of Downtown yet another neighborhood within the city to locate in, thereby keeping interested renters and buyers within city limits and addressing a major concern of campus leaders around urban vitality.

It seems that based on the layout of the Cultural Center, such a development would almost have to take place on one of the campus' many surface parking lots, large portions of which remain empty except on rare occasions. Understanding how effective such development has been nationally and whether or not these sorts of sites are ideal for this form of development is essential to understand. In a 2013 paper, Jan G. Laitos and Teresa M. Abel of the University of Denver discussed the potential for large unused parking lot spaces to be transformed into mixed-use developments. In this writing, the two use the term "greyfields" to discuss areas like abandoned shopping centers or very large parking areas. The two discuss how such areas are considerably more attractive to develop on than traditional brownfields due to their low likelihood for significant environmental contamination and significant cleanup costs for potential mixed use developers (Laitos and Abel, 2013, pp. 151).

Greyfields...are ideal for sustainable development. State and local support can help to transform [these sites] into vibrant and profitable centers for mixed use. And redevelopment projects that focus on such spaces have strong potential to increase surrounding property values and benefit a mixed class of local residents. (Laitos and Abel, 2013, pp. 151).

Clearly this sort of development could not only benefit the campus of the Cultural Center itself, but also the property values in adjacent neighborhoods.

This sort of development has not only proven successful nationally, but it falls in line with the vision laid out in the city's master plan. The Cultural Center lies within the Civic/Cultural Campus place type, and this place type specifically calls for mixed use development supporting the campus' main functions. When discussing this district the plan states that, "Neighborhood-scale retail and dining should be encouraged in select areas to capitalize on the large number of visitors to the area" (City of Flint, 2013, pp. 58). The city's draft zoning ordinance available at the time of this writing also encourages this sort of development. Within the city's overview of this zoning district, explicit support for mixed use development is discussed. This zoning district, "establishes the civic/cultural campus place type as a core around which multi-family and mixed use development can occur" (City of Flint, 2014, pp. 53). Such development would need to be properly scaled within the context of the adjacent neighborhoods, as the master plan states that "commercial development should be encouraged that is sensitive to the scale and character of the surrounding neighborhoods" (City of Flint, 2013, pp. 59).

Development on one of the many parking lots around the campus' periphery is a strategy that is both consistent with national norms on mixed use development and within the specific wishes of the Flint community as spelled out in the *Imagine Flint* master plan and draft zoning ordinance. Knowing that this sort of development is a generally advisable path nationally and that the community supports its development, understanding comparable projects nationwide is then necessary. Two projects seem similar in some aspects to the development that would take place on the campus. One was the Lockwood Place development near Baltimore's Inner Harbor neighborhood which opened in 2004. A second would be The Auburn development in Detroit's Midtown neighborhood which opened in 2012.

Lockwood Place shares characteristics with a mixed-use development at the Flint Cultural Center as it was developed on what was previously a surface parking lot for the Baltimore City Community College. Much of the parking used at the Cultural Center is also shared with the adjacent Charles Stewart Mott Community College. Rather than do a full property sale of the land to the developer, the site was secured on a long-term ground lease from the college wherein the college could retain some revenue generated from the development (Parkway Commercial Properties, 2014). Understanding that the loss in surface parking would need to be replaced in some fashion, structure parking was incorporated into the design of the 125,000 square foot, \$150 million mixed-use development. Since the project's completion, the revenue that the Community College has received tripled from \$400,000 annually to \$1.2 million annually. In addition, what was previously a surface parking lot was converted into a neighborhood asset that still included parking but also included retail and office space (Parkway Commercial Properties, 2014). Such a development was able to retain parking but also understand that the sort of activity created by a structure with ground floor retail could activate an area previously dead. The agency granting the land also saw an increase in their financial return on the property and the neighborhood received increased retail options and greater activity.

While the Baltimore example is a positive story of mixed-use development occurring on a former "greyfield" its scale is almost too large to fit consistently with the city's clear desire for development that conforms to the size and character of adjacent communities. For a mixed use development also located near cultural institutions, The Auburn in Detroit stands as a successful model that seems more scale appropriate to the Flint Cultural Center.

The Auburn is a \$12 million project that took place in Detroit's Midtown neighborhood, within blocks of that city's major cultural institutions such as the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Detroit Historical Museum, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Wayne State University and many more assets. This concentration of cultural institutions while more dispersed throughout an existing neighborhood is still comparable to the concentration of cultural institutions on the Flint Cultural Center campus. The Auburn was built on a vacant site and is three stories with the upper two stories housing 58 rental apartments and the ground floor housing 11 storefronts with the explicit requirement that the storefronts be rented by independently owned businesses (Gallagher, 2011). The project was financed with many financing tools that would also be available to the City of Flint and the Flint Cultural Center such as foundation grants, tax credits, and grants from the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (Gallagher, 2011). To this date, the development's apartments as well as its storefronts are completely occupied, pointing to the success that mixed use developments that occur on a scale sensitive to their adjacent neighborhood and capitalize on cultural institutions can have (Beshouri, 2013).

If the Cultural Center does want to create the sort of consistent activity that seemed desired by the heads of several campus institutions, then activity beyond just that associated with only the institutions themselves must be created. In the 1960s, urban theorist Jane Jacobs wrote specifically on what made civic and cultural campuses lack activity; a lack of diversity. "In the case of nonresidential projects, such as cultural or civic centers, the fundamental problems can be much like those presented by the has-been parts of downtowns which have suffered the self-destruction of diversity" (Jacobs, 1961, pp. 393). Mixed use development can reintroduce that diversity of activity to the cultural center and serve as a mixing point for the campus' institutions. Such development would solve the inability to have a "park-once" enjoyment of the cultural center and would create the sort of adjacent activity that could turn the campus from a place of sporadic life to one of consistent vitality. Lessons from other communities make it plain that this sort of development is possible and understanding these lessons and utilizing the tools that other communities have been successful with can lead the Flint Cultural Center to become the truly vibrant cultural district that it has the potential to be.

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Transportation and the Flint Cultural Center Nick Tafelski

When thinking of the economic recovery of Flint and the city's goal of cultural and economic resurgence, transportation is unlikely to come to mind. While it is true that transportation and economic development are two different areas of urban planning, there is more overlap than one would imagine. Cities cannot function properly without a functional transportation system, so improving the efficiency of transportation systems can spread benefits to many areas of the economy (Litman 7). This does not just mean roads, however. Mass transit such as busses and light rail are also key components for some major cities. Flint is likely not a large enough city to require a light rail system, but the need for busses does exist. The city already has a bus system, which is operated by the Flint Mass Transportation Authority (MTA). While an existing bus system is in place, there is always room for improvement. Several of the busses currently used by the MTA are from before 1990. The MTA began utilizing alternative fuel vehicles in 2012 (Mass Transportation Authority).

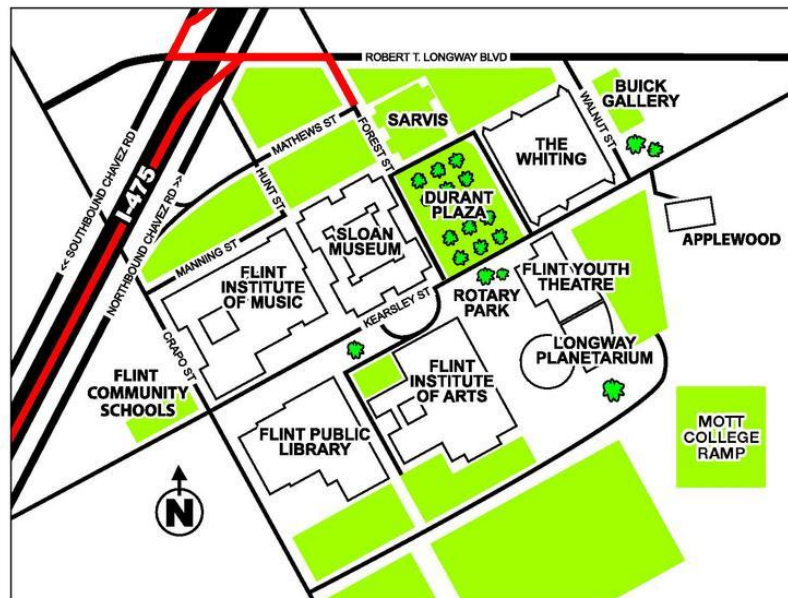


Figure 2: The Flint Cultural Center has a variety of unique assets, and proximity to educational institutions is a unique feature that should be utilized.

Source: Wikimedia Commons

The primary goal of a transportation system should be accessibility. Traditional planning, however, has focused more on mobility, which focuses on metrics such as vehicle miles traveled (Litman 7). This is not to say that mobility does not have its place in the planning and improvement of transportation, but it should not be emphasized to the point where accessibility is neglected.

When considering the Flint Cultural Center (FCC) and the current transportation network, it is most easily accessible by car. There are sidewalks along the streets, but the FCC's location leaves it isolated from downtown by I-475. The Center's close proximity to downtown Flint provides a prime opportunity to connect to other local assets that could increase economic activity through agglomeration. Mott Community College (MCC) is adjacent to the FCC, separated only by a creek. This provides the

opportunity for MCC to promote the cultural center as a place for cultural learning. Increasing the connectivity of the two sites by developing pedestrian linkages will be crucial to the success of this idea. Currently the only connection between the two sites is use of a pedestrian bridge that leads to a parking deck behind the Flint Institute of the Arts. Developing a more aesthetically pleasing and pedestrian friendly crossing would be greatly beneficial. The University of Michigan – Flint Campus is just down Kearsley Street from the Flint Cultural Center, but again I-475 creates an uninviting and awkward barrier. There is undoubtedly no clear way to eliminate this barrier, and just the thought of removing that stretch of I-475 is unreasonable. UofM Flint should also explore the possibility of a cultural partnership with the FCC, and offering arts and cultural classes at the FCC.

There are two possible solutions to improve the connectivity between UofM Flint and the FCC. First, improving the aesthetics of the Kearsley Street overpass; pedestrians are far more likely to utilize this connection if they are in an environment that they feel is safe and visually appealing. Currently there are small planters along the sidewalks passing over I-475, but they are underwhelming. Exact specifications for aesthetic improvements for the overpass are beyond the scope of this paper, but any improvement will be beneficial.

Second, providing a shuttle between the UofM Flint campus and the Flint Cultural Center could be seen as a beneficial alternative to utilizing the Kearsley Street overpass on foot. During the winter months especially, people are much less likely to walk the ½ mile stretch between the two campuses; snow and wind are major deterrents to walking.

There is only one bus route that currently connects to the Flint Cultural Center. This is a serious problem for those who rely on public transportation to get around. To further increase visitation to the FCC for leisure and educational purposes, Flint's MTA should explore additional connections to the center. These connections could be in the form of new routes that link the FCC with downtown Flint and key neighborhoods, or modifications of existing routes that come near the center but do not have stops on the Flint Cultural Center campus.

Improving the MTA's bus fleet is not only a necessity for its connections to the FCC, but for the City of Flint as a whole. As previously mentioned, the MTA currently has 22 busses that are from before 1990. Older vehicles are rarely as fuel efficient as newer models, so replacing dated busses with new hybrid models will be crucial. Not only will hybrid busses be more fuel efficient, they will also be better for the environment, and can lead to college students appreciating them more.

There is also a stigma with busses that they are often dirty and only for those of low economic status. The MTA should explore the possibility of a campaign to improve their image to potential riders. It is sometimes the case that busses are not the most clean form of transportation, and any food or drink spilled is likely ignored until the end of a shift, or perhaps even longer. Increasing cleaning routines and working with the riders to ensure a comfortable trip in this sense will go a long way to improve the community's willingness to utilize the bus system.

In focusing on the campus of the Flint Cultural Center itself, there are a number of things that can be changed or improved to increase both the accessibility and mobility of visitors to the campus. Aesthetics should also be of concern. Currently, the easiest way to access the FCC is by car. There are sidewalks along the streets, but the spread-out nature of the campus along with the lack of non-motorized connectivity to nearby assets is a major limiting factor.

The first step should be implementing bike lanes on the FCC campus, and working with the City of Flint to extend these bike lanes to downtown. This will allow for those who wish to ride a bike to the cultural center to do so without the fear and risks that are associated with riding a bike on a typical street;

cars often feel that bikes do not have right-of-way (cyclists actually do have right-of-way in Michigan) and will often become frustrated or even attempt to pass the cyclist, which can cause a variety of problems.

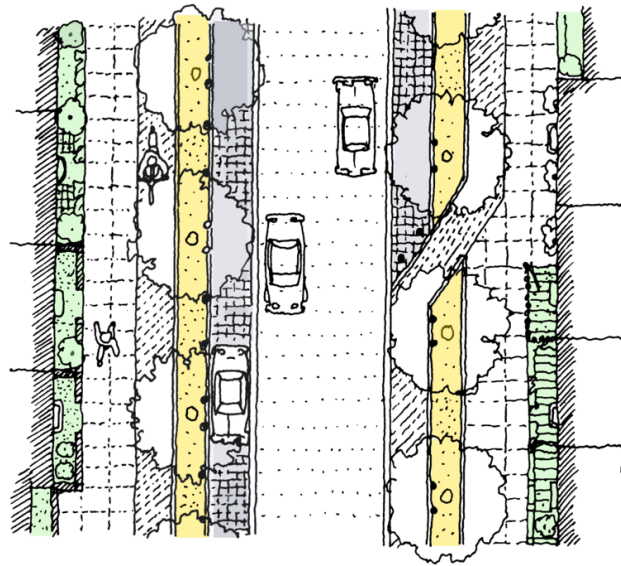


Figure 3: Bike lanes, either on or off-street, should be implemented to improve cyclist safety Source: Wikimedia Commons

Implementing aspects of the Complete Streets policy will be greatly beneficial to the Flint Cultural Center. In addition to adding bike lanes, ensuring that sidewalks on the FCC campus are safe will go a long way towards promoting non-motorized transportation. Updating all sidewalk ramps at intersections and crosswalks to ensure they are ADA compliant will go a long way to ensuring equity for those with disabilities who wish to visit. In the long run, it may also be beneficial to install speaking crosswalk guides to allow those who are visually impaired to traverse the campus.



Figure 4: Streetscaping can go a long way towards improving the aesthetics of a space, and can also make it feel smaller. Source: Wikimedia Commons

As previously mentioned, aesthetics will go a long way toward increasing the appeal of the Flint Cultural Center. The current campus feels very spread out because of the large expanse of grass between the facilities. The best remedy to this problem is through improved landscaping and streetscaping. Lining sidewalks with trees and plants will improve the visuals of the campus in addition to making it feel less spread out.

There are a lot of changes and improvements that can be made to the Flint Cultural Center from a transportation standpoint. Improving the pedestrian access through connections to the nearby institutions of higher education would be a great first step. Working with the Flint Mass Transportation Authority to improve and increase connections with their services, as well as improving their public image, will likely increase use of the bus system to the FCC. Lastly, utilizing Complete Street best practices to improve the non-motorized transportation options on the FCC campus will be of great benefit. People are much more likely to visit a place if they find it safe, inviting, and visually appealing. The current campus of the cultural center feels very spread out, and people are less likely to feel welcome because of it. Through the improvements outlined in this paper, real change can come to the Flint Cultural Center. With real change comes a better public image, which is the first step towards increasing visits to the center.

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Contribution of Arts/Culture to local economic development

Alex Wong

The Arts and Culture is an important part of local and state economies. They are the defining feature of a city or region, and no two cities or regions have the same exact Arts and Culture infrastructure.

Arts and culture-related industries, also known as “creative industries,” provide direct economic benefits to states and communities: They create jobs, attract investments, generate tax revenues, and stimulate local economies through tourism and consumer purchases. These industries also provide an array of other benefits, such as infusing other industries with creative insight for their products and services and preparing workers to participate in the contemporary workforce. In addition, because they enhance quality of life, the arts and culture are an important complement to community development, enriching local amenities and attracting young professionals to an area.

Below is a table by the American planning association listing creative strategies for improving economic vitality.

Table 1. Creative Strategies for Improving Economic Vitality

Strategy	Description
Promotion of Assets	Promoting cultural amenities for the purpose of attracting economic investment and skilled workers
Development	Promoting community development through artistic, cultural, or creative policies
Revitalization	Promoting community and neighborhood revitalization through artistic measures and strategies that emphasize creativity
Economic/Job Clusters	Creating economic or job clusters based on creative businesses, including linking those businesses with noncultural businesses
Education	Providing training, professional development, or other activities for arts, cultural, or creative entrepreneurs
Arts-Oriented Incubators	Creating arts-specific business incubators or dedicated low-cost space and services to support artistic, cultural, or creative professionals
Branding	Developing visual elements that communicate a community's character; using logo development and graphic design for advertising, marketing, and promoting a community
Districts	Creating arts, cultural, entertainment, historic, or heritage districts

Live-Work Projects

Providing economic or regulatory support for combined residential and commercial space for artists

Arts-Specific and General Public Venues

Providing public or private economic or regulatory support for marketplaces, bazaars, arcades, community centers, public places, parks, and educational facilities of various types

Events

Using celebrations or festivals to highlight a community's cultural amenities

Urban Design and Reuse

Implementing the reuse of existing sites or buildings for arts and culture purposes

Public Art

Supporting temporary and permanent public-art projects

Some of the economic contributions that arts and culture provide include: Education; Placemaking; Attracting residents and firms; and Tourism. These factors are discussed below.

Education

The Arts and Culture is often overlooked in the education system as schools try to push more science, engineering, technology and math. However the arts and culture is still important in the education system. As Dr. Terry Bergeson of Washington State quotes

The Arts are an essential part of public education. From dance and music to theatre and the visual arts, the arts give children a unique means of expression, capturing their passions and emotions, and allowing them to explore new ideas, subject matter, and cultures. They bring us joy in every aspect of our lives. Arts education not only enhances students' understanding of the world around them, but it also broadens their perspective on traditional academics. The arts give us the creativity to express ourselves, while challenging our intellect. The arts integrate life and learning for all students and are integral in the development of the whole person.

The Arts communicate and speak to us in ways that teach literacy and enhance our lives. We must continue to find a place for arts programs and partnerships not only for what it teaches students about art, but for what it teaches us all about the world we live in.

--Dr. Terry Bergeson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Washington State, November 2001"

She is quite correct. Arts and Culture give us a unique way to express ourselves and our emotions, without being judged. In the arts and culture, there is no sense of 'right' and 'wrong' like there is in the STEM subjects. However as schools cut back on funding, the arts are often the

first classes to go. The Flint Cultural with its classes on Arts could provide students with the Arts they may want.

As Flint has a lot of unused land, it could convert some of that land into something. For example, in downtown Detroit, there is Campus Martius Park. Established in 1788, originally as a drill ground for militia training. It was named after the Campus Martius at Marietta, Ohio, a 180 foot stockade. The park is also where the "point of origin" of [Detroit's coordinate system](#) is located. For example, 7-mile road is 7 miles north of this point; 8 mile road is 8 miles north of this point and so on. Today, it includes two performance stages, sculptures, public spaces, and a seasonal ice skating rink.

The Campus Martius Park decorates yearly for Christmas and opens its ice skating rink around that time. This promotes the local economy as a lot of people need to be hired in the area locally to prepare for this. People need to be hired to put up and take down the decorations, advertise the event, rent the ice skates and more.

Flint could also follow suit, perhaps by decorating its cultural center for the holidays, and even putting in an ice skating rink in its cultural center or in the center of its downtown. This would be a great way to create place making. If there is one thing I remember from visiting downtown Detroit, it was that beautiful ice skating oval that was in the center of the city. That has changed my perception of Detroit for the better and erased all the bad beliefs that the news often spreads about Detroit. The skating rink would be a great public place for the community to gather and create a sense of place.

Another thing the Flint Cultural Center or the town of Flint could do during the holidays is have a big ice sculpture event. I remember right at East Lansing, during the holidays, there was a winter festival which included ice sculpture carvings which were very impressive, as well as some reindeer and Christmas food. Flint could create an annual festival, and it would surely draw a lot of people from nearby.

Music could also be a way Flint could promote its Arts and Culture. A lot of big cities, such as Miami, Philadelphia, and Boston have wind symphonies, symphony orchestras etc. Flint already has its own symphony orchestra but could promote it by advertising it in the newspaper and perhaps giving a promotion such as a free drink at a nearby restraint when people show the ticket they have purchase for the concert.

Food could also be a big part of the Arts and Culture for a place. Flint could also make food a part of its culture. For example, some famous Detroit foods include *Better Made Potato Chips*, and Detroit style pizza. Flint has already followed suit as it has a Flint style Coney dog. Flint could continue this by building more restraints with their own specialties such as a specialty pizza or ice cream flavor. Like Detroit, combining a meal at new restaurants it could build with a good show at *The Whiting* performing arts center could really help spur some economic activity. Flint could also build a one of a kind sculpture or piece of art for public viewing. A lot of other places have become big tourist attracts for one, or several pieces of art or sculptures. Paris has the Mona Lisa (the best known, the most visited, the most written about, the most sung about, the most parodied work of art in the world), the Eiffel Tower, and more. New York City has the Empire State building, and the Statue of Liberty. Egypt has the Pyramids, and Xi'an of China has the Terracotta Warriors.

Another similar comparison between Flint and Detroit is the car cruise events. While Detroit has its annual Woodward Dream Cruise, Flint has a lesser known car cruise called Back to the Bricks. Flint could also advertise this in the Newspaper. Another way to promote this cruise is to try to have companies come to the cruise and set up tents with events or

demonstrations. The Woodward dream cruise is also great for restaurants, car clubs, and almost any business on Woodward Avenue. If Flint could make its annual car cruise bigger, the businesses in the area would benefit also.

Detroit is most likely the best city Flint can learn from as they both have a lot of things in common. Here are some aspects they share: reputation for high crime rates; suffering financial emergencies; peaked during the boom of the auto industry but since then have declined; and having a low cost of living

Flint has a very low cost of living like Detroit; however people mostly do not notice this. There have been several programs showing the lost cost of living in Detroit compared to other countries, and although, the wages in other cities (such as Chicago, Los Angeles, or New York City), are higher, the cost of living is higher by a bigger portion than the income, which means you get to keep a bigger portion of your income and that Detroit is cheaper to live. Detroit has actually been continuously ranked as one of the top 10 cities where a paycheck stretches the furthest. Flint could attract people by also providing programs and advertising in the news and media. Flint could also advertise in those other big cities such as Chicago, New York, Denver, especially for people who either do not have a job or are struggling living paycheck to paycheck.

The Whiting Center in the Flint Cultural Center is a 2,000 seat performing arts venue. Flint and its Whiting Center could be easily compared to Detroit and its successful Fox Theater. The Fox Theater became well known by Detroit, through advertising through the newspaper such as *The Detroit Free Press*. Flint does not currently advertise in *The Detroit Free Press* or even other newspapers of nearby places such as *The Oakland Press*. To get better well known, it should start advertising in local newspapers, as many people may not be aware of it, and may start going to *The Whiting* if it is closer to where they live than Fox Theater. With many famous plays going on at *The Fox Theatre* such as Shakespearean plays like Macbeth or Romeo & Juliet, The 70's show, and Mama Mia as well as some nice restraints nearby, Detroit made a lot of 'dinner and a show' packages to bring people into Detroit. Flint could easily follow suit.

The Flint cultural center could also be compared to *The Detroit Institute of Arts*. *The Detroit Institute of Arts* has one of the largest, most significant art collections in the United States. *The Detroit Institute of Arts* relies heavily on donations for financing. Flint could start fundraising activities such as a fun run, an ice bucket challenge or spaghetti dinner, etc to help raise money.

One of the biggest reasons a lot of people have a negative perception of Flint and are reluctant to visit it is because of its high crime rate. So the goal should be to reduce the crime rate, and in order to do that, we should look at what causes people to commit crimes, and how to prevent them from doing so. Since, Flint has met the first layer already (Physiological needs), its next priority is the second layer of the pyramid (Safety needs).

There can be a beautiful city with great potential and infrastructure, but if there is crime always happening there, people will be afraid to visit that city. The Arts and Education could help reduce crime rates. As life gets stressful for many people, it is not unusual to feel mad or angry and want to lash out at people, scream, punch pillows, or worse. The problem is that a lot of people mistakenly believe that this kind of catharsis or open expression is the best way to overcome angry feelings. On the contrary, not only will venting, fail to improve your psychology state, it may actually worsen it. As Brad Bushman, one of today's leading researchers on anger and aggressive responding quotes "venting to reduce anger is like using gasoline to put out a fire--it only feeds the flame." The Arts and Culture are the appropriate way for people to let out their anger. As it is not violent, it will not 'feed the flame' like venting would.

Also The Flint Cultural Center could improve its website. Its current website is quite plain. Other cultural centers, do not have a website of their own, but have a page for it from the town's web site. Having the cultural center page as a sub page of the city website is a better way to go, as people will also be able to see what the rest of the town offers, and its people. Flint could also promote its *Art of Video Games*. A lot of people (specifically males) would find this a great attraction since everybody enjoys video games. The Flint Cultural Center already has a great shop of some Nintendo items, it could also advertize that since a lot of people do not know it is there. This may also not only attract people who love video games, but people who are into graphic design and may want to design video games for a career.

Another option Flint could take is to develop some tourist attraction. Flint could start giving regular factory tours of its General Motors plant. Giving children in primary and secondary school a tour would perhaps spark their interest in working at the plant. Yearly events are also a great way to help economic development. For example, the annual Detroit auto show in Detroit is perhaps the busiest time for Detroit. The Detroit auto show gives thousands of jobs to Detroiters each year. People have to prepare, renovate, and clean Cobo center for the auto show. There also needs to be many people at the auto show, such as models to stand by the car, ticket sellers, people who sell parking tickets, people to keep the cars looking nice with feather dusters, people who manage the coat check-ins and much more.

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Placemaking A Feasible Solution

Omar Al Braiki

All over the world cities strive to make their communities happy, safe, healthy, economically viable, and have their residents interact with public facilities. A way that has been proven to bring success in these categories is placemaking. There are many forms of placemaking, but the type that I will concentrate on, is placemaking using arts and music. Since the Flint Culture Center (FCC) is a regional hub for the arts, I believe it would be relevant as a case study of placemaking.

The FCC has goals of increasing the number of tourists they wish to attract to the Center. They also have a goal of trying to attract the community around them to participate and be a part of the events at the FCC. This can be difficult for many reasons including the sometimes negative image that Flint carries. The city is working hard to change this and turn Flint's image into a positive one. Now all this is relevant to the FCC because there are a few ways where the FCC can revitalize itself, attract more tourists and in the process play its part in revitalizing Flint. One approach is art and music based placemaking that involves the community.

Principles Of Placemaking

There are certain principles that need to be followed when pursuing a placemaking project. The first principle is "The Community is the expert", what I mean by that is the importance of involving the community in the process because at the end of the day, the community members are the main population that will be using these facilities the most. So whether it is forming community meetings, making surveys or holding charrettes, it is very important to have the community's input taken into consideration. Second is that you will always find people in the community that will be against placemaking projects, the idea is to find where the majority agrees with you and keep on pushing from there. Third, money can be an issue sometimes but the beauty of placemaking is that not all placemaking projects are expensive. Lastly is that placemaking is never finished, once the project is completed it still needs to be watched and supported.

Placemaking Examples

Wooden Street Lamps: The idea behind wooden street lamps is based on the history of Flint, which used to be a lumber city. To signify some of Flint's history and at the same time bring some uniqueness to the FCC would be to put in artistic wooden street lamps. A simple change like this could bring some attention to the center and enhance its identity. The idea is not to replace the current ones but to add additional ones in places where there isn't efficient lighting. It's not a very expensive change, and to have more light around the premises also means more safety, which combines two positive aspects in one.

Piano Sidewalks or Stairs: In one of Brussels metro stations, Dole fruit company changed a part of one of the stations' staircases into a piano set. Every time you stepped on a stair it played a key, this was not really a placemaking effort but rather to have people use the staircase versus escalators, and choose the healthier option. Although that doesn't mean it can't be used as a placemaking project in the FCC. To have such a unique design that no facility in Michigan has will attract tourists and community members alike. It would be an experience that could be enjoyed along with the other facilities that the FCC provides.

Boston's Adult Playground: Another great example of placemaking is the Adult playground in Boston, Massachusetts. It's a park that is filled with circle shaped swings that illuminate at night. You usually find old and young people that come and sit down and enjoy the atmosphere and mingle. There are a few great things to this particular project that made it successful. The first is that this project was built because the community asked its leaders for it, so basically the idea was from the people, making it very popular because it was built for the sole purpose of bringing the community together and making use of an unused parcel of land. The second is its unique shape; they aren't normal swings. Not really meant for swinging actually, there are there for people to sit on and relax. Sometimes the touch of difference and uniqueness makes a difference. It has become an iconic meeting destination for the community and I believe that is what the FCC needs to be a destination where everybody comes together.

Paint Offs: To have an event that gathers people to come in and showcase their talent and win prizes brings the community together and gives the opportunity for talented people to showcase their skills and to attract people to the Center. If the FCC had a paint off, which is basically a competition where you have people come in and paint on empty canvas versus each other, or people from the community bring their work in and compare it to other community members. This is a simple very cost effective event that can bring a people into the FCC, and spend money on services in the FCC whether that is food, drinks, or even visiting the other facilities during or after the paint off event.

Piazza: Another popular placemaking strategy that is popular in Italy and is growing in the US is piazzas. These circular shapes of art that are usually painted on the floors and are very attractive and can enhance a places' identity. An example of a piazza project that was a success was in Portland, where Mark Lakeman traveled to Italy and fell in love with the art of piazzas, and brought the idea back to his hometown. He suggested the idea to his community, who joined in and helped in painting a huge piazza on the corner of an intersection, sending a message to all people passing that this wasn't an ordinary intersection. People were so intrigued by this rare art that they would get out of their cars to observe it.

I should mention that the idea of piazzas in Italy signifies a place where people gather to either celebrate or relax; it is basically the common area for people to mingle. I believe this is another way to bring a lot of positivity to a community or place, and having the community all work together is an even bigger plus. Since the size of the FCC is quite substantial it should be feasible to have a couple of piazza around the Center. Maybe even printing the names of the community members that helped create each piazza as a way of recognition. By recognizing people, it is a way to link them to the facility, as they will feel like they are apart of the piazza and the facility as a whole.

Mojo Robot in San Pedro: An interesting example of placemaking is the Mojo in San Pedro, California. This robot is a device that sheds light on people passing by, shining a spotlight on them. The idea is to make people interact with it; it randomly picks people on the street trying to make you feel like your own a stage in a theatre. It also serves as a security camera, in order to keep unwanted activity out of the premises. There can be some controversy about this example of placemaking, as some people are not comfortable being under the spotlight, or the idea that a camera is constantly filming your every action. This particular placemaking idea has its positives and negatives, and I believe the communities around the FCC and the Center leaders should weigh the positives and negatives and decide whether such a project would work for the FCC. I should also mention that this is one of the more expensive placemaking examples that would need a larger financial budget, but nonetheless it should be considered as an option.

The Bean (Cloud Gate): The bean is one of the most popular and successful examples of placemaking, located in Chicago, Illinois and a tourist hotspot. People that visit Chicago put it as a must visit. Its unique shape is why people love to see it. Plus it's located in the middle of Millennium Park, and in walking distance from the Art Institute of Chicago. Very close to many attractions, while being a great attraction itself only enhances its worth. It has a similar atmosphere to the FCC, which is Art galleries and close exhibits that are walking distance from each other. Having a unique structure like the cloud gate in Chicago could make a positive placemaking project for the FCC, but again all needs need to be weighed accordingly as this is a more expensive project, and the most expensive out of all the options given here.

Conclusion

Placemaking is a great opportunity to bring communities together, to capture tourism and to bring uniqueness to an area. The placemaking examples I chose were highly based on either art or music or both. The reasoning behind that choice was solely because it is the core of the FCC; an art and cultural center with theatres where its placemaking should focus on art and music. You aren't creating an identity but you are enhancing what already exists and trying to make it better. The FCC is striving to increase community involvement, attract tourism, and make its center the best in the area. What better way to tackle such a dilemma than to incorporate a unique structure, or a different design that enhances that purpose of the facility? That is exactly what placemaking accomplishes

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Marketing and Promotion

Market Potential and User Base Analysis for the Sloan-Longway - Matthew Kloviski

The Flint Cultural Center: A Regional Attraction for the Arts, Sciences, and Humanities – Sean Campbell

The Marketing of Flint Michigan – Matt Oliver

Arts and Historical Tourism in Flint – Gregory Porretto

Market Potential and User Base Analysis for the Sloan-Longway Matthew Klovski

The Flint Cultural Center is an incredible collection of institutions that provides many different cultural opportunities to not just Flint residents, but also residents from the communities surrounding Flint and nearby metropolitan areas as well. One of the key institutions in the Flint Cultural Center is the Sloan-Longway, which consists of three facilities, the Sloan Museum, the Longway Planetarium, and the Buick Gallery. The purpose of this paper is to determine how to effectively promote the Sloan-Longway complex.

The Sloan Museum is a facility with a wide variety of offerings. The main focus tends to be more on science and technology, but also incorporates many elements of a “hands on” museum, along with some cultural exhibits. They also tend to have traveling exhibits oriented more towards children. The Longway Planetarium’s main focus is on astronomy, but also incorporates various other science fields into its exhibits. The Longway is also about to undergo (in December 2014, the time that this was written) a \$1.8 million renovation, with \$1.5 million of that money being provided by the C.S Mott Foundation (Thorne). The renovation consists of totally remodeling the interior of the planetarium and upgrading the projection system so that a wide variety of scientific programs can be offered besides the usual astronomy features. The Buick Gallery is a collection of historic Buick and other GM vehicles, with an emphasis on the vehicles that were produced in Flint at the various automotive plants in the area that is incorporated into the Sloan Museum. Altogether, the three facilities have around 40,000 visitors annually, as well as 65,000 visitors in the form of school groups (Sloan-Longway). However, for the purpose of this paper, the main focus will be on successfully maximizing the potential of the Sloan Museum and the Longway Planetarium as unique assets for community outreach and potential visitor base growth.

When our class visited the Sloan-Longway, we had an opportunity to briefly meet with the director of the Sloan-Longway, Todd K. Slisher, who voiced some of his main desires and concerns about the complex. One important topic was the desire to expand the Sloan-Longway’s visitor base into Northern Oakland County, as much of that area is closer to the Flint Cultural Center (and the Flint Metropolitan Area as a whole) than Detroit and its cultural institutions. Another issue is that not very many visits to the Sloan-Longway come from the City of Flint proper, they mostly come from the immediate metropolitan area, and the outlying communities. Another main topic of discussion was the desire to make the Sloan-Longway an even more attractive place to hold events. Currently, the site is a relatively popular location for weddings, according to Mr. Slisher, but they believe there are more untapped potential opportunities for the Sloan-Longway to expand into this market. From the brief discussion that was had, and the author’s own research, there exist two main areas that would be beneficial for the Sloan-Longway to focus on, awareness, and outreach.

In terms of awareness, with a relatively small population base it is important to grow the visitor base outside the Flint Metro area, and into the surrounding rural communities. In order to do so, it was important to consider their context and place within the greater scope of Southeastern Michigan. For the Longway Planetarium, there are two other dedicated planetariums nearby, Abrams Planetarium at MSU, and the Delta College Planetarium in Bay City. The Abrams Planetarium is operated by Michigan State University, and opened in 1964. In terms of technical specifications and location is most similar to the Longway, with 140 seats (roughly the capacity of the Longway after renovation) and a Digistar 5 projection system

(Abrams Planetarium). Although it does have some exhibition space, it does not have the same exhibit capability that the Longway has. The Delta College Planetarium is more recent than the Abrams and Longway, as it was constructed in 1997 with \$8.75 million in NASA grant money awarded to Delta College, the local community college serving Bay City. The dome size is 50 feet tall, with 146 seats and a Digistar 4 projector system. (Delta College Planetarium).

Due to the presence of these two planetariums, the Longway's population base is perhaps smaller than a normal planetariums base, as having three full-size, dedicated planetariums (as opposed to small facilities within high schools or community colleges) in a relatively lowly populated region is somewhat unusual. Due to these circumstances, the only real route of visitor base expansion is south, to northern Metropolitan Detroit. Although Metro Detroit is the 12th largest metropolitan area in the county (U.S Census Bureau), there is only one real planetarium in the metro area, the Dassault Systemes Planetarium, located within the Michigan (formerly Detroit) Science Center. The planetarium has a 30 foot dome (compared to the Longway's 60 foot dome) and the number of seats is not listed on the website, although from images, it would seem to be around 50-60 seats. This means that while there are three full sized planetariums for three cities whose total metro population (Flint, Lansing, and Tri-Cities combined) is 863,508 people roughly, there is only one full sized planetarium for a metro area of 5,311,449 people, leaving a vacuum (especially in the more outlying areas of Metro Detroit, where it would be quicker to travel to Flint than to Detroit or Lansing) that the Longway should attempt to fill.

For the Sloan, a similar strategy applies, but their reach is somewhat expanded, as they do not have any real competitors in the Tri Cities area, as the only real equivalent to the Sloan Museum in the Tri Cities area is the Castle Museum, a museum located in Downtown Saginaw that shares a focus on local history, but does not have the natural history exhibits or touring exhibits like the Sloan Museum does. In Metro Detroit, the field is somewhat more crowded, with The Cranbrook Science Center, The Henry Ford complex, The Hands-On Museum in Ann Arbor, and The Michigan Science Center competing for visitors in the local area. Of the four museums however, only one--the Cranbrook Science Center--is located in Oakland County, which means that there is still the potential of having access to a large population base for the Sloan Museum, although it is not quite as clear-cut as the Longway Planetarium's situation is. In order to determine the key population centers where it would be most efficient to market and target for the Sloan-Longway, a travel distance analysis was conducted. The location of the Sloan-Longway was put into the analysis tool, and travel time of an hour (a rough estimate of 55 mph was used for the speed of travel) was calculated. An hour was chosen because that is about the furthest that would seem reasonable for a day trip to the Flint Cultural Center.

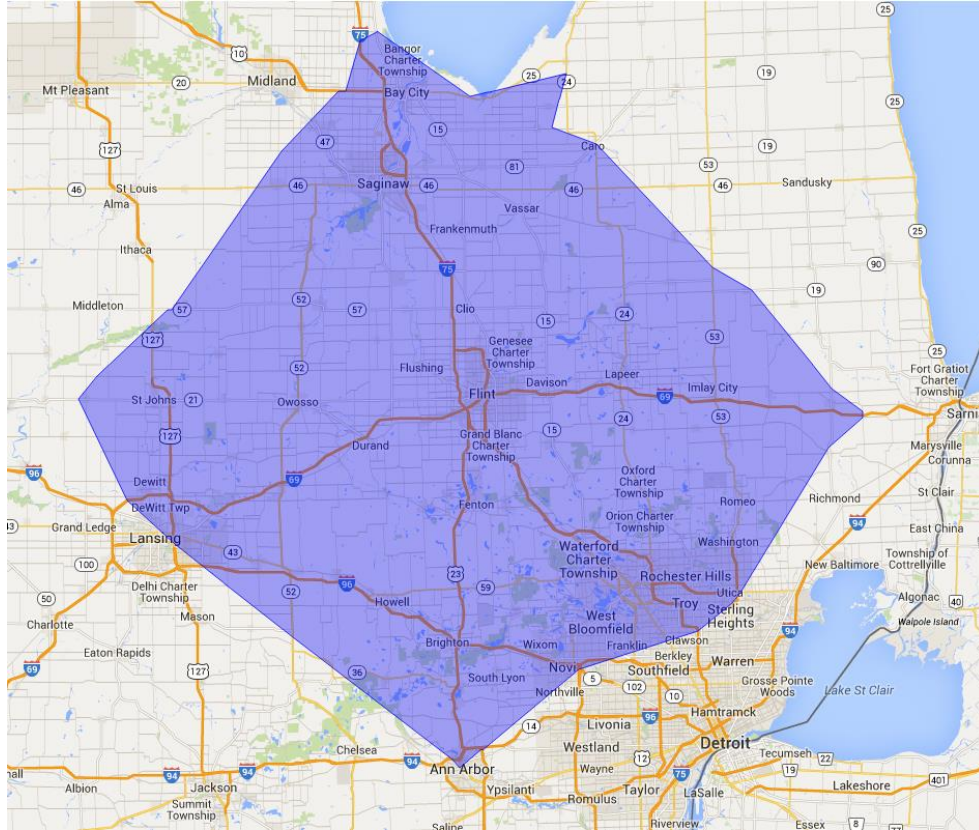


Figure 1: Areas within One Hour's Driving Distance to the Sloan-Longway
Created using FreeMapTools.com- How Far Can I Travel

Table 1: Total Number of Cities in Oakland County with 10,000 or More People, Within One Hour's Driving Distance

City Name	Population	Rough Travel Time	City Name	Population	Rough Travel Time
Auburn Hills	21,412	34 min	Oakland Twp.	16,779	47 min
Birmingham	20,103	46 min	Orion Twp.	35,394	37 min
Bloomfield Twp.	41,070	48 min	Oxford Twp.	20,526	33 min
Clawson	11,825	48 min	Pontiac	59,515	40 min
Commerce Twp.	40,186	48 min	Rochester	12,711	44 min
Farmington Hills	79,740	54 min	Rochester Hills	70,995	42 min
Highland Twp.	19,202	36 min	South Lyon	11,327	46 min
Holly Twp.	11,362	20 min	Troy	80,980	43 min
Independence Twp.	34,861	27 min	Waterford Twp.	72,166	31 min
Lyon Twp.	14,545	47 min	West Bloomfield Twp.	64,690	50 min
Milford Twp.	15,736	46 min	White Lake Twp.	30,019	36 min
Novi	55,224	46 min	Wixom	13,498	45 min
Total Population	853,866				

Data Sources: U.S Census Bureau, Google Maps

As visible in the table, there is a large, generally well-off, nearby population base that the Sloan-Longway can utilize. Some of the key cities to target would be Orion Twp., Rochester Hills, Troy, and Waterford Twp., due to a combination of nearby location, wealth, and large population. A recommendation to capitalize upon the potential visitor base in this geographic area would be to target these areas with advertising, through local newspapers, flyers, the internet, etc., in order to raise awareness of the Sloan-Longway as a potential destination that they had perhaps not considered before. As a side benefit, attracting people to one of the gems of Flint will also hopefully play a small part in helping the public perception of Flint as a whole.

Another key tactic in raising awareness of what the Sloan-Longway has to offer is by upgrading its current internet and social media presence. There are some real positives to this, notably, on TripAdvisor, the Sloan Museum, Longway Planetarium, and the Buick Gallery are numbers four, six, and eleven, respectively on the list of "Top Things to do in Flint" (tripadvisor.com). Areas that could especially use improvement is the overall design of the website, clearer information about what each museum offers, rather than having it split up into different tabs, and having an increased social media presence. While there is a blog and Facebook page present, as of December 11th 2014 the Facebook page only has 127 likes. One way to fix this is to consider changing the classification of the page from a "Community" to the "Museum/Art Gallery" designation. The reason to do so is because by not having it classified as a Museum, it makes it more difficult for Facebook's search engine to find it when people search for museums.

Another potential method to promote the museum's online presence would be to offer a potential unpaid internship to students from the three institutes of higher education in Flint, to work on improving the Sloan-Longway's digital brand and website. By doing so, this provides

valuable work experience for the students, and helps the Sloan-Longway in return. Another recommendation would be to have an advertising campaign push coinciding with the conclusion of the renovations sometime in May 2015, in order to help project a “new image” of the remodeled institution. Perhaps the most well-known example in Michigan of this was the advertising campaign with the tagline “Let Yourself Go” by the Detroit Institute of Arts in collaboration with Perich Advertising + Design of Ann Arbor. This multimedia advertising campaign was unveiled after the DIA finished a six-year, \$158 million renovation, and was so successful, that the museum reached its expected revenue goal for the year in eight months. In order to help share the burden of financial costs, conducting the advertising campaign in conjunction with the Flint Cultural Center should be considered.

The other main area of focus is outreach. As mentioned by Mr. Slisher, most of the walk-in visitors to the Sloan-Longway are from the surrounding area, not the City of Flint itself. Another challenge for the Sloan-Longway, and the Flint Cultural Center as a whole, is its relative distance and separation from the rest of Flint. One way to help remedy this is by community outreach programs. While there is an “Outreach” section on the Sloan-Longway’s website, there is almost no information there, other than a phone number to call. In order to find methods to help the Sloan-Longway build a better connection with the community, two main case studies were used, one from The Children’s Museum of Atlanta, and the other from the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History.

In terms of outreach, the two main case studies used mainly focus on after-school education; helping children K-12 increase their competence at STEM related concepts and fields. One of the better programs at actualizing this concept that the author found was a program pioneered by The Children’s Museum of Atlanta, called “Connected Learning... Connected Communities”, henceforth referred to as CLCC. The CLCC program is somewhat unique from most of the museum outreach programs that the author found, in that it engages members of the communities that the children are from, not just the children and parents. To quote the website,

The Museum is engaged in multi-year partnerships working with seven neighborhoods in metro Atlanta. With guidance from the parents, teachers, and community partners, the Museum works with these neighborhoods to bring fun, educational hands-on - and minds-on -programming to their children. (The Children’s Museum of Atlanta)

There is also outreach to the classrooms as well, with museum workers bringing these “museums in a box”, which are essentially science labs for younger children (Arthur M. Blank Foundation). These “museums in a box” were one the main reasons that the program received a two-year grant from The Institute of Museum and Library Sciences to take the concept onto a national level. A similar approach may be useful for the Sloan-Longway, and the Flint Cultural center as a whole, in order to successfully engage with the community. What really stood out from this case study is the concept of focusing on a couple key neighborhoods. While doing a city-wide outreach program could be somewhat daunting, being able to focus on a few selected neighborhoods would be more feasible.

Another case study, but for high-school students, comes from the Peabody Museum of Natural History, at Yale University. A program has been established there called “The EVOLUTIONS After School Program”, oriented towards high school students interested in science, who would be the first in their families to go to college (Peabody Museum of Natural History). The program gives community service hour credits and academic credits for whatever high school the student is attending. The program also offers, in addition to the science-based

learning programs, college visit trips, tutoring, and SAT/ACT prep. The program is entirely free, and is open to any 9th and 10th grade student from New Haven or West Haven schools. (Peabody Museum of Natural History). Besides the basic concept of the program, which is very unique and intriguing, what is also worthwhile to note is that New Haven is similar to Flint in many respects. Despite the wealthy areas surrounding Yale University, 24.4% of the population there lives below the poverty line (Flint has 36.2% of its residents below that line) with a median household income in New Haven of \$29,604, Flint's is \$28,010 (U.S Census Bureau). The fact that this program was able to be successful in similar conditions speaks well for its potential to work in Flint.

While these programs are both good case studies to learn from and follow, having the necessary staffing and resources to provide these services could be an issue. However, one of the main assets of Flint is its three higher education institutions, University of Michigan-Flint, Kettering University, and Mott Community College. Staffing for after-school programs could be provided by college students volunteering to help with science education. For the high school students, a program could be set up wherein college students from the math and science fields provide tutoring for the high school students, in a similar manner to the Evolutions program at the Peabody. Not only does this strengthen the bonds between the community and the museum, it also provides an opportunity for students at the colleges who may otherwise be disconnected from the urban fabric of Flint, (by commuting, or staying on campus) to participate in community service, building their bonds with the community as well. Investigating into the possibility of receiving grant money from various institutions (The National Science Foundation, Federal Government, Mott Foundation, etc.) to help fund the after-school programs may be a worthwhile path to pursue. By following these recommendations, the Sloan-Longway will hopefully be able to expand its visitor base, and grow deeper connections with its community.

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The Flint Cultural Center: A Regional Attraction for the Arts, Sciences, and Humanities

Sean Campbell

Introduction

The City of Flint, often acclaimed as a key player in the formative years of the automobile industry, is seldom placed under the spotlight for its rich arts and culture scene. Flint's historic automobile image has been kept alive by television, radio, and other media sources, despite the city's current efforts at shifting away from the waning manufacturing industry. On the downside, this image has thwarted many attempts at convincing non-Flint residents that Flint is more than just the typical Midwestern, rustbelt city and that it possesses unique qualities that cannot be found in other Michigan communities. The Flint Cultural Center (FCC) offers testimony to this statement with its eight world-class arts and culture institutions, ranging from art galleries, to live performance venues, to even a planetarium, all within walking distance of each other. Since its establishment in 1992, the Flint Cultural Center Corporation has put emphasis on promoting a campus that serves as a hub for education, entertainment, and economic development in the community. Making note of the current strengths and weaknesses, this report will explore ways to help elevate the FCC into regional prominence while harnessing its local economic potential.

Current Advantages

The FCC's location is perhaps one of its strongest characteristics. Downtown Flint is situated in the heart of Genesee County, intersected by I-75, I-475, and I-69, along with a large number of major thoroughfares such as M-54 and M-23. Genesee County is also landlocked by 6 adjoining Counties - Saginaw, Tuscola, Lapeer, Oakland, Livingston, and Shiawassee - none of which possess anything quite like the FCC. See Figure 1 for a map of the 7 counties region.

Insert Figure 1 here

An ArcGis assessment of 2010 Census data reveals that 2,080,552 people live in a 40-mile radius of the Flint Cultural Center, which encompasses the majority of the seven county region. With that said, cities like Pontiac and Auburn Hills, whose residents often rely on the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) for an arts and cultural experience, are about the same travel distance from the DIA and FCC. With three interstate highways capable of funneling in traffic from all across the Mid-Michigan and Flint/Tri-Counties regions, downtown Flint boasts itself as an accessible destination for family events, school field trips, and employment. See Appendix A for a map of the 40-mile buffer in the seven county region.

Many initiatives are also lending support for arts and culture in Flint, such as the recently adopted master plan, *Imagine Flint*, which includes a chapter on how arts and culture will be incorporated into the community's vision and objectives that will allow it to be achieved during the coming years. Objective 6 in the Arts & Culture chapter, in particular, underpins the need for the FCC to bring itself to the regional forefront by aiming to "brand Flint as a regional creative hub and market Flint's cultural offerings both internally (to residents) and externally (to tourists, prospective residents, and businesses)" (City of Flint 2013). The plan also coordinates key organizations such as the Flint Chamber of Commerce Art Council and Downtown Development Authority to follow strategies that will enhance information access and marketing. It is for these reasons that the master plan, if followed by city public officials, planners, and entrepreneurs, will be the guiding force behind fostering cultural economic development.

The Flint Public Art Project has helped breathe new life into Flint's urban character. Since 2010, the group has been involved in arranging public events, workshops, and temporary installations that engage residents to envision a future for their city and steer the way Flint plans itself through artistic expression. Most importantly, this organization has helped sustain arts and culture in the community alongside the Cultural Center and strengthened the local creative economy. Organizations like Flint Public Art Project have been instrumental in creating a unique sense of place in the community and are thereby important promoters of tourism centered on arts and culture.

Problems to Overcome

One major dynamic of economic development focuses on the creation of jobs in not just one or a few basic industries, but in all sectors. Like many Midwestern cities today, Flint still holds onto its manufacturing roots in areas where automation has not eliminated the need for human labor. But with the new, creative- and knowledge-based economies beginning to take the edge, more attention must be given to the emerging young professionals who are fervently pursuing employment. With that said, arts and culture alone is currently not a highly employable sector in Flint: in 2013, there were more people employed in the city as security guards (1,690) than all arts and media occupations combined (1,530) (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2013). With FCC's 8 institutions, it comes as much surprise that arts and culture is not currently one of the city's strongest economic bases.

The FCC also has not established a strong web presence. As of now, the Center does not have a Facebook page or Twitter account, both of which are essential platforms for advertising and event promotion. Having a web presence not only attracts tourists from outside of the Flint metropolitan area to visit the Cultural Center, but it creates jobs for marketers, web designers, advertisers, and other professionals who are willing to share their expertise to contribute to the development of the community.

Lastly, current wayfinding from the interstate highways to the Cultural Center campus does not effectively navigate tourists. Signs, where present, are often difficult to understand and leave drivers confused. Once on campus, visitors are then troubled with locating institutions and their respective parking areas (Wade Trim 2013). Having adequate wayfinding not only serves a directional purpose, but can also be used as a branding tool. By designing signage to reflect the values of Flint, it will give those unfamiliar with the area a sense as to the nature of art, science, and culture and how it feeds into the community, and vice versa.

Guiding Principles for Planning Cultural Economic Development

Now that the strengths and weaknesses have been identified, the course for the future has come into clearer focus. Guiding principles were carefully chosen and tailored to fit the specific components that will bring the FCC to the regional attention that it deserves. Additionally, the following principles will form the necessary framework from which recommendations can be made.

- **Integrated Approach**

Successful planning for a regional attraction hinges on the collaboration of government, business, education, and community. A bottom-up design will engage input at the neighborhood level, channel in support from enterprise, and prompt local units of government to carry out the objectives for regional development. As of 2014, the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs has awarded a total of \$211,000 to Flint to support its arts and cultural scene, showing that a public-private relationship currently

exists (Michigan Economic Development Corporation 2014). Furtherance of this system will be the driving force behind bringing the community vision for arts and culture stated in the master plan to fruition.

- **Human Capital**

As it was previously mentioned in this report, much attention must be given to young professionals. With the number of people between the ages of 20 and 34 holding bachelor's degrees on the rise, the demand for jobs will follow suit (Rampell 2013). With that said, in 2010, there were 337,763 people in this age group living within 40 miles of the Cultural Center, indicating a considerable population that is versed in skill-based working traits (U.S. Census Bureau 2013). This demographic can therefore be thought of as the human capital that will make the Cultural Center an economically thriving asset. As marketing strategies and plans for talent attraction and retention come into the picture, the people who are graduating from college and entering the workforce must be zeroed in on.

- **Agglomeration Economies**

The agglomeration of economies describes the benefits firms or industries can realize by locating their operations within close proximity of each other. Firms can achieve economies of scale by locating near other firms because they may use the same type of labor or materials, or there is better access to information regarding competition and technologies. This type of economic activity can certainly benefit the Flint Cultural Center, as it has densely clustered its institutions within one campus. For example, Cultural Center can take advantage of the co-location of its institutions by pooling its managerial resources to offset operational costs and free up more capital that can be spent on marketing and organizing events.

- **Regionalism**

The concept of elevating the Cultural Center to regional forefront has been heavily embedded in this report. But the point that absolutely needs to be stressed with respect to the concept of regionalism is the need to act upon opportunities to strengthen interjurisdictional relationships. Capturing workers and dollars outside of the metropolitan area's boundaries is something that will happen in due time and will make demands on communicating with neighboring municipalities and counties. Flint is currently not associated with a regional council of governments, which precludes many attempts at regionalization. This is something the city must consider when pursuing ways to become a regional hub for the arts, sciences, and humanities.

Recommendations

While it is important to prescribe strategies that immediately resolve the issues that were previously stated in this report, the carefully articulated guiding principles have been integrated to ensure that cultural economic development is at the core of each recommendation (Local Government Commission 2013).

1. Enhance Online Database and Web Presence

In order make the Flint Cultural Center more of an informational resource, it must establish a comprehensive database for online users. Enhancement of old databases includes designing the

site to have basic static catalogue-style image and text (for general visitors), detailed catalogues (for scholars), high resolution browsing features, and virtual tours of the exhibits. One example is the Google art project, which allows users to explore some of the world's most renowned museums with its street-view technology.

Connection to guiding principles: First and foremost, this process will require a high level of Human Capital. Web designers, graphic artists, and any other professionals with advanced computer skills will bring the data interface together. Since the information is contained with 8 institutions, the database would allow the Cultural to act on Agglomeration Economies in the exchange of information regarding web visitor traffic and art/exhibit donations.

2. Reinvent Signage and Branding Tools

Signage, ranging from intermittent messages displayed across the city to large billboards along freeways, will be the most effective strategy at communicating the message of the Cultural Center. Additionally, the Cultural Center would benefit from branding itself through merchandise. Merchandising does not have to be limited to the sale of shirts and stickers, but can call forth local artists to vend their unique crafts that relate to a specific art, culture, or science.

Connection to guiding principles: This recommendation, in particular, highlights Regionalism. The presence of advertising along highways outside of the Flint metropolitan area will at worst simply catch people's attention – which may not influence them to drop what they are doing to visit the Cultural Center, but at least make it known to them next time they want to spend an afternoon or an evening educating and entertaining themselves.

3. Hold Large-Scale Events

Every year, the Flint Institute of Arts hosts the Flint Art Fair. By including the 7 other institutions in the fair, it would become a well-rounded event centered on arts, sciences, and humanities for people all over the region to experience.

Connection to guiding principles: This recommendation strikes a chord with the Agglomeration Economies principle. The traffic generated by large events would not only benefit the institutions and the professionals that are directly associated with it, but nearby local businesses and restaurants. An Integrated Approach would also come into play, as a relationship between community, enterprise, and local government would be essential to the production of a large-scale event at the Cultural Center.

4. Scout Michigan Colleges and Universities for Future Employees

As graduates enter a robust job market, it is important for the Flint Cultural Center to follow the new economic trend where jobs follow people, rather than the reverse. That said, the Cultural Center would acquire talented individuals by reaching out to students at academic institutions across the state about employment upon graduation. Schools like College for Creative Studies, Michigan State University, University of Michigan, and Grand Valley State University are all home to preeminent arts and design programs where students are eager to work.

Connection to guiding principles: It goes without question that this recommendation hits on Human Capital. Universities are catalysts for equipping younger populations with skills that will mature with experience. By localizing these opportunities for employment, the Cultural Center will capture these skills from all over the state.

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The Marketing of Flint Michigan

Matt Oliver

One of the main aspects of planning that cities rely on is economic development, which helps to build up cities and to help grow their economy. Economic development refers to "...sustained, concerted actions of communities and policymakers that improve the standard of living and economic health of a specific locality." (whatisconomics.org). Flint, MI is a perfect example of a city that is in need of economic development. Flint used to be a thriving city in the mid-1900s because of the presence of automobile industry. However, once the auto industry started to suffer and factories began to close, Flint plummeted into a crisis with population and the labor force declining, unemployment and the number of vacant houses. This has led to the challenge of how the City of Flint can be revamped and become a more economically developed. The building blocks for these two things to happen are with Flint Cultural Center and the marketing of Flint to the surrounding areas.

The Flint Cultural Center (FCC) is not just one building but a campus consisting of a number of institutions that is dedicated to promoting culture, science, and art to the community as well as promoting the diversity of different cultures that make up the Flint community. Some of the institutions that make up the FCC consist of the Flint Institute of Art, the Flint Institute of Music, and art gallery, performing center, a planetarium, and a museum. With all of what the FCC has to bring for the residents of Flint, it is now time for the city to build on this by using the resources it has to expand and spread the word about the FCC to the surrounding areas. This is where the topic of marketing plays an important role because without marketing, no one else besides the residents of Flint will know about the FCC and what Flint is trying to do with economic development. There are a few different ways that marketing can help shine some light on the City of Flint consisting of branding the city as a regional creative and cultural hub, exploiting existing resources around arts and culture, improving access to arts and culture, and placemaking, which will all help lead to an increased level of local economic activity in Flint.

Branding Flint

Branding is one of the most important tools a city can use that turn a city from a location on a map into a destination that people want to live, work, and visit. Places around the world are competing with each other for business, resources, and people, which is why branding as a city can help to target businesses, resources, and people to bring to that city. Some examples of successfully branded cities are New York City, San Francisco and Paris because they marketed their brands by their quality of life, lifestyle, culture, and/or history. While Flint begins to grow, these successfully branded cities should be used as a model to help guide Flint in the branding process. The process of place branding begins with the existing and created assets of a place. These assets consist of the public's perception, infrastructure, events, and policies. These assets are then communicated to the public via the TV, radio, Internet, social media, etc. In the case for Flint, Flint has a perfect opportunity to find a brand that fits them and what they are trying to do, which starts with the Flint Cultural Center.

Branding Flint as a regional creative and cultural hub is the first stepping-stone for increasing economic development and activity in the city. By creating this brand, Flint can offer a unique picture of the city to the outside world as a place where you can come and experience different creativity and cultures from around the world whether its coming to study art at the Flint Institute of Arts, music at the Flint Institute of Music, seeing a show at The Whiting, or

learning about automobiles and automobile history at the Buick Gallery. By branding Flint as a creative and cultural hub, it serves as an invitation to other businesses based around creativity and culture. Restaurants are one target because they can be a staple for culture with different foods, tastes, and smells from all around the world. This will help the local economy of Flint and will help increase economic activity around the area that will hopefully lead to more economic activity and development.

Case Study on Branding

A good example of a city that tried to rebrand itself is San Marcos, Texas. In July 2009, San Marcos set out to rebrand themselves with the goal of increasing development, attracting more tourism, and to create a constant brand for themselves. San Marcos is located between the two heavily populated areas of Austin and San Antonio. With San Marcos population not even being close to those two cities, they needed to do something that would make them stand out. San Marcos first started the branding process by finding their target audience, which consisted of young families, working professionals, and graduates of Texas State University, business investors, and tourists. Next, the city set up a SWOT analysis, which is used to help evaluate strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats involved in a project or business venture” (Harber, Kelley McCall, p. 25). Next they tried different methods, sketches, and rough drafts of different brands to find the one that fit best.

The logo and brand incorporates elements of nature and water, using neutral earth tones to further move the branding process of establishing the identity of San Marcos. This logo also incorporates the city’s name written in lowercase letters. The reason for this is because the city wants to show a friendly and approachable attitude to the rest of the world. San Marcos successfully rebranded itself as a friendly and approachable city that shows they care about nature and water and are down to earth.

Exploiting Existing Resources

Exploiting the existing resources of Flint and improving access to art and culture are two other key ways that marketing can help Flint with economic development. The reason for this is that the resources that need to be exploited are the resources that make Flint, Flint. This means culture and art related to the auto industry because Flint played a major role in the auto industry in the mid-1900s, art and culture that reflect the diversity make up of Flint, and the FCC all need to be promoted to the outside world through marketing. The definition of marketing is the action or business of promoting and selling products or services, including market research and advertising. The product, in the case for Flint, is art and culture. Exploiting existing resources can be related to branding because when you find your city’s brand, it usually will have something to do with what resources your city is known for or already has. With the FCC and all it has to offer to the city of Flint and the surrounding areas as a useful resource (art, music, theater, museum), it is time for the city to spread the word about the FCC.

One problem that I’ve already come across is that the FCC has no presence on social media, which is one of the most useful tools to spread the word and advertise the city. Although the FCC does have a Facebook page with pictures and information, the only information that is given about the FCC is a URL to their website and a very short overview sentence. This page does not talk about what the FCC is, what its mission is, what is on the campus, or any other information that would be relevant for people looking to go there. This is not a very good strategy to promote the FCC because it needs more than one way to advertise than word by

mouth. The Facebook page should be way more detailed with information about the FCC and should include upcoming events and information like weekly updates about what is happening.

Updating the FCC's Facebook page should be the first step to exploit existing assets. The next step should be getting more involved with social media by creating a Twitter and/or Instagram account to be more involved with social media, which is one of the best tools for advertising. Next, the FCC should be focused on other ways to exploit their existing resources with TV commercials, billboards, or even advertisements on the Internet. The more places where people can hear about the FCC and learn about it the better known it will become. Without advertising, how will people know what Flint has to offer? How will people know that if they want to learn and experience different art, culture, and/or creativity, they can go to FCC's campus?

Placemaking

Placemaking is an approach to the planning, design, and management of public spaces. Placemaking capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well-being. This means that communities use whatever resource they have to create a strong connection between people and the places they live. Placemaking is connected to branding and exploiting existing resources because it focuses on local assets to create unique places where people want to live, work, and play. The FCC is a perfect asset for the Flint community that can be used as a building block to continue growing Flint as a creative and culturally diverse hub.

Case Study on Placemaking

In 2011, there was a case study conducted by Alexander Rupp Stewart, a graduate student at George Washington University titled, "Ethnic Entrepreneurship and Latino Placemaking in Suburban Washington: The Case of Langley Park, Maryland." The study addressed the growing foreign-born population of Washington, D.C., the semi-isolated immigrant populated neighborhoods, and using the power of place to structure the economic and social actions of ethnic communities. This case study was conducted at ethnic grocery stores at a neighborhood-level across Langley Park, Maryland and shows the significance of ethnic retail establishments within localities. Symbols, sounds, and spatial configurations found on the inside of an ethnic grocery store are all related to the role of placemaking in creating a meaningful cultural environment and landscape. Although this case study might not be directly related to what Flint is trying to do, it shows how different ethnic and cultural establishment like a grocery store, restaurant, or performing arts venue are important in communities to broaden the diversity of a community and to bring in more ethnic and culturally diverse establishments.

Increasing Economic Activity

Marketing is an important tool for increasing economic activity because it "satisfies the individual and social values, needs and wants through production of goods, supplying of services, fostering innovation, or creating satisfaction" (Ifezue, 2005). Advertising is another important tool because it is a way to reach more people and lead to an increase in economic activity. Branding, exploiting existing resources, and placemaking, can all be used in marketing and advertising for a city like Flint. Branding Flint as a regional creative and cultural hub could help to bring in more cultural businesses like restaurants or grocery stores, as well as more people and tourism for those looking to experience different cultures and creative opportunities.

Exploiting Flint's existing resource of the FCC through advertising on billboards or social media is a great way to get the word out about the FCC. Using placemaking to capitalize on Flint's assets and potential for being a creative and cultural hub to people's health, happiness, and well-being can help turn Flint into a culturally creative and diverse city, full of different sounds, tastes, smells, people, entertainment, and activities that create a place where people can come and learn about and experience different cultures. Overall, Flint will not change overnight. There are many different things that the city has to do to recover, however a marketing approach brands Flint as a regional creative and cultural hub, exploiting existing resources, and placemaking, are all related to the goal of increasing economic activity.

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Arts and Historical Tourism in Flint Gregory Porretto

In more recent times in America, one may not view the city of Flint, Michigan as a place to be prospering in the arts. Its image to the nation surely does not have the American public racing with their families for the next family getaway either. Despite some blight, crime, and lack of sense of place, Flint is home to an unknown diamond in the rough. The Flint Cultural Center (FCC) is a campus-structured environment centered on learning and appreciation of the arts, culture, and sciences. The FCC offers the benefit of education, entertainment, and appreciation of the fine arts to its viewers. The configuration and inventory is impressive and gives a jolt of thrill and excitement to anyone who visits. These places have given Flint new identity and the ability to draw people in to visit the city and even help generate new economic activity. In addition to the FCC, there are other fine attributes to Flint as well as tourist attractions that make Flint a true family-friendly American vacation destination.

The FCC campus is composed of eight places of interest, all of which are closely knit together on the campus, enhancing the walkability for visitors and providing efficient accessibility to different buildings. There is even a landscaped plaza for public use and enjoyment during the warmer times of the year. The location of the campus is quite convenient for both local and visiting guests, situated right off of Interstate 475 and just northeast of the Flint downtown area. The main goal of the FCC is not solely about collecting money and revenue for Flint, it is about enhancing the cultural aspects of the community and encouraging citizens of all ages to participate in entertainment of culture and art.

This collection of not-for-profit organizations are funded and operated by the Flint Cultural Center Corporation (FCCC).

As a nonprofit organization established in 1992, the Flint Cultural Center Corporation is committed to making sure the Flint Cultural Center continues to be a vibrant and comfortable gathering place for everyone in our community by taking care of the campus grounds and buildings, coordinating Cultural Center campus-wide programs and events, and directly supporting its member organizations: Sloan*Longway and The Whiting” (FCCC).

The FCCC helps with leadership for each institute, provide administrative assistance, and supply resources at any given time. One of their most significant responsibilities is representation and being a liaison for the FCC. This helps the FCCC in orchestrating public events with the local communities and municipalities as well as maintaining public interest.

Within the confines of campus is the Fine Institute of the Arts (FIA) and the Flint Institute of Music (FIM). These are two separate and independent museums and are probably the most renowned additions of the FCC. Both bring in approximately half a million visitors each year. The FIA is the second largest art museum in Michigan and has over eight thousand artifacts and art. The free admission entices visitors to come all year round and participate in FIA events and enjoy new exhibits. There is also a community school with several studio facilities that runs for twelve hours everyday. They offer additional media related services such as a free email list and memberships, even a college student program called, “College Town”.

A College Town membership includes FREE admission everyday to all exhibitions and lectures, discounted admission to weekend arthouse films, discounts in the Museum Shop and the Palette Café featuring espresso and coffee

beverages, fresh baked goodies, homemade soups, sandwiches and so much more (FIA).

Incentives such as these are more than rewarding for college students. Considering that the University of Michigan Flint campus is located just on the other side of I-475, this type of membership seems appropriate to draw in a younger, more eager learning crowd. Having university student present also benefits the community and enhancing the general public interest.

Flint Institute of Music is home to the Flint Symphony Orchestra (FSO) and the Flint School of Performing Arts, an all ages' community school. "The tenth largest community school for the arts in the country with 3,500 students in music and dance" (FIM). The Maestro of the FSO is a two-time Grammy nominee who also performs in concerts all around the world. The orchestra also does special student outreach sessions during performance intermissions. FIM is also home to the Flint Youth Theatre. This youth group has had a fifty-year history in allowing educators to help children discover their talents, passions, and interests in the theatre arts.

In addition to the eclectic attributes of the FCC, Flint is home to one of the campuses of the University of Michigan, which hosts the Department of Theatre and Dance. This department offers more than ten different Bachelors of Arts degrees in conjunction with two honor options degrees. "They learn the fundamentals of acting, build a foundation of directing principles, develop their own creative design lens, and study effective management and communication; they learn to master dance technique and theory" (University of Michigan). Students already in the area who want to study dance or theatre have the luxury and convenience of visiting the FCC to enhance their learning experiences. This also means that the FCC can be secure that as long as there are dance and theatre majors, the performing arts will always have an audience for the general public.

The FCC takes the lead in displaying culture and the arts for Flint, however this is not the only advancement for acknowledging the tourism industry. There are numerous attractions that make Flint a wonderful place to visit. Besides art and culture, the history of Flint can be seen in other attractions. One place offering historical adventure is the Whaley Historic House Museum (WHHM).

Figure 1: Present day Whaley House



“Since 1976, the year of the Association's creation, the house has gone through extreme renovations to return it to its original form” (Whaley Historical House Museum). The house was originally built in 1885 for the Whaley family and was family owned in until 1974. After the last relative decided to leave in 1976, several community organizations came together to renovate and protect the original craftsmanship and architecture of the house. The goal was to preserve historic identity of what homes were like in nineteenth century Michigan. Eventually leading to the formation of the WHHM. Its aesthetics are truly divine and tours are given Monday through Friday.

Another historic attraction that offers a slightly more thrill and fun for the whole family is Crossroads Village and Huckleberry Railroad.



Figure 2: Part of Crossroads Village depicting an earlier twentieth century street.

This late nineteenth/early twentieth century theme park is geared to show what life was like in past through representation of old Michigan towns and villages complete with shops and trade posts with the employees in authentic costume. Many of the structures there are completely original and even have authentic looking replica props, all handmade and painted. The villages are seasonally themed during the summer, Halloween, and Christmas. There is even an opera house with live performances. During the summer months, the railroad is open to relive a forty-

minute train excursion through the woods along Lake Mott. “The narrow-gauge railroad's collection of cars includes 11 original and replica wooden coaches plus a classic red wooden caboose” (Crossroads Village & Huckleberry Railroad). Also, there is a Christmas themed train complete with illuminated lights.

It is important to note that just because a city may be negatively perceived in such a way, it does not represent the entire culture of a place. Flint has proven itself to overcome such barriers with the development and success of many tourist attractions and cultural, scientific, and fine art institutes. The FCC clearly shows the appreciation for the arts and continues to encourage public interest year round. The separate tourist attractions aim to preserve history and historical appreciation of the lives and living conditions of the past generations who began to settle in Flint and build this city. The arts and tourism industries additionally create jobs and give the people of Flint a sense of pride to embrace their home.

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Festivals and Events

Third Spaces in the Whiting Lobby – Wendy Caldwell

Developing Flint Cultural Center as a Hub for Festivals, Entrepreneurship, and Collaboration – Andrew Fedewa

Need for Additional Event Venues – Callie Lama

Flint Cultural Center and Food – Andrew Streeter

Temporary Festivals - Abdulla Alhmoudi

Incorporation of the Arts into a State Tourism Strategy - Aubreanne Meintsma

Third Spaces in the Whiting Lobby

Wendy Caldwell

Located in the Flint Cultural Center, The Whiting has been Flint and Genesee County's most treasured premier performing arts venue for over 40 years. Since opening its doors as The James H. Whiting Auditorium in 1967, local, national, and international acts have been enriching the community with music, dance, comedy, theater, dramatic readings, and many other inspiring performances. (1.) The 2,043 seat theater provides facilities, programs and services to promote and support the presentation of regional, national, and international performing artists. Each year, The Whiting Presents Broadway, music, dance, theatre, comedy and much more throughout the season. (2.) It is home to the Flint Symphony Orchestra, Annual Holiday Pops, Magnus Midwest Dance Intensive, Flint Youth Theatre's learning through Theatre Series and many other community graduations, recitals and other events and not (2.) Including public school shows, seats about 45,000 to 50,000 patrons annually operating at approximately 70% capacity on average.

As a cultural non-profit institution, the Whiting is committed to student and community education and engagement of the arts. The venue offers a variety of on-site performances and workshops and residences to provide education and engagement activities to community groups, teachers, and students. With a list of educational opportunities that is continually growing, the Whiting seeks to provide lifelong learning programs to Genesee County and beyond through music, culture, language, or theater activities with touring and local performers. (3.) These workshops take place at The Whiting, and to make things easier for educators, options are also available to host workshops at local schools with On-Site School Workshops at no cost. (4.) The Whiting also offers an intro to tech and theatre for high school drama students through its Introduction to Tech Theatre (ITT) program which gives students the opportunity to experience the theater from backstage. Students are invited through the innovative new education program to watch shows load in, shadow technicians from IATSE Local 201, hear lectures from traveling company professionals and meet with The Whiting staff. (5.)

Staff members at The Whiting recognize the venues' role as one of the leading arts and educational anchors in the region. Visiting the Whiting for the first time with my Local Economic Planning course provided me with the opportunity to speak with Executive Director Jarret Haynes, on future plans for the performing arts venue. Haynes discussed two questions currently circulating amongst The Whiting staff that aim to identify the most practical uses of the venue's facilities to spur the creation of economic activity within the Cultural Center. The first question posed "Is there an increased viability of a venue with a different size and design and what would that look like?" intends to determine if things could be done better at The Whiting in a more purpose built facility. The second question; "What are the best practices for The Whiting to draw residents and tourists to the venue for single, multipurpose visits and how can we use live performing arts to fulfill goals of creating the common experience?" seeks to explore opportunities to better activate the campus.

One method of activating the campus, suggested by Haynes is to use the lobby space to encourage the exchange of ideas and to get people comfortable with being at The Whiting. The Whiting staff is looking closely at similar venues in Michigan and around the nation to find innovative practices with lobby space as a destination. This essay will focus primarily on an analysis of current uses, a review of proposed uses, current concerns and the leveraging of assets to recreate the lobby as community space. In conjunction with the efforts of The Whiting staff,

this essay will analyze opportunities for the Whiting. Source material will include information provided on The Whiting's website, a reference of best placemaking practices in Washington D.C. and an interview with Jarrett Haynes, Executive Director of The Whiting.

In an effort to create another avenue to serve its patrons and extend branches of operations, The Whiting staff is focusing on the creative transformation of its lobby space as a 'Third Place,' permanent or temporary public space on neutral ground where people can gather and interact. Temporary third places, like those that will exist in The Whiting, tend to be more innovative using more technology and offering more choice for patrons. In contrast to first places (home) and second places (work), third places allow people to put aside their concerns and simply enjoy the company and conversation around them. The Whiting is looking to do just that with the incorporation of innovative lobby space. They plan to specifically target millennials as they are the technologically connected, diverse and creative generation. The priority that Millennials place on creativity and innovation augurs well for future economic growth, while their unprecedented enthusiasm for technology has the potential to bring change to traditional economic institutions. (6.)

So far, staff has proposed one idea to accomplish these goals for future events. This event is unofficially titled "College Night" to expectantly be held on the third Thursday of each month starting at some point in 2015. These events aim to attract students from local colleges including Mott Community College, U of M Flint and bring them together for a series of events held in the evenings. College Night considers the diversity of Flint's millennial population and staff is expecting to offer a wide array of experiences accordingly. This includes events with live bands and DJ's with dance parties some months and events like solo acoustic sets and dueling piano other months. Staff is currently brainstorming for more ideas to continually attract millennials to the Cultural Center campus and with ideas like College Night, they are off to a great start.

LUMEN8 Anacostia in Washington D.C is a great example of this type of utilization of lobby space to demonstrate the economic potential of a region, highlight local artists, and showcase the potential of opening up space for creative uses. The DC Office of Planning received a grant of \$250,000 from an unprecedented new private-public collaboration, Art Place and added an additional \$75,000 (\$50,000 in money and \$25,000 in-kind staff time) to transform vacant and/or underutilized storefronts and empty lots were into an artist showcase/village for 3-6 months. LUMEN8 Anacostia is a first of its kind 3-month arts initiative that will transform a section of the historic Anacostia Business District into a beacon of light, art, and creative expression. It is a temporary public art project and festival to promote creative arts in Historic Anacostia through the temporary illumination of vacant storefronts, lots, and public spaces along Historic Good Hope Road and Martin Luther King (MLK) Avenue, as well as gallery open houses and 'showcases' of select artist productions. The LUMEN8 title was selected based on the definition of illumination. It is loosely based on the all-night arts event, "Nuit Blanche" or White Nights in the cities such as Paris and Toronto. The number 8 is representative of the Washington, DC ward where the event took place. Local and international artists and arts organizations have committed to participating in this historic event. LUMEN8Anacostia will turn a bright spotlight on the Anacostia community using the creative economy.

Although The Whiting lobby space is not nearly as expansive as the Anacostia neighborhood, staff can still gain knowledge of using the creative economy to open up space. An all-night arts and light event in the Flint Cultural Center is sure to attract attention from residents, tourists and business leaders. Illuminating the entrance way and providing space (particularly during the summer months) for local young artists to showcase their work can have a substantial

impact on the perception of The Whiting making some Lumen8 practices worth researching to determine feasibility. If a project of this magnitude is deemed unfeasible perhaps a smaller scale event for younger children and families can be assessed.

The Whiting hosts a tremendous number of events for school aged children. Younger children, ages 6 and under, on the other hand have little to no events purposed specifically for them at the Whiting. Although The Whiting currently seeks to engage the millennial primarily, staff mustn't underestimate the influence that children indirectly have on local economic impact.

One of the primary reasons for a lack of planning for younger children at The Whiting is the architecture and seating in the main auditorium. The main auditorium was designed and built to offer superb sound during performances however severely lacks in adequate seating for smaller children. Theaters that service young children usually have two architectural components; a low stage and close seating to the performance. The reason for this being that maintaining the attention of smaller children is a lot more difficult than that of older kids.

The elevated box seats on the lower middle and upper balcony on both sides of the venue face inward and are considered "obstructed view" for any attraction requiring full-stage coverage such as a Broadway-style show, opera or dance production. Unfortunately funding is not available in The Whiting's immediate budget to reconstruct the seating. To somewhat mask the problem of obstructed view seats, the Whiting has a "kill seat" method where seats that were sold with obstructed views are "killed" and patrons are provided more adequate seating. They may still sell tickets as "limited view" but those that have substantially poor view usually will seat no one.

A possible solution to this problem would be the innovation of lower level lobby space to accommodate events for young children. The Whiting could explore a number of events such as "mini-shows" for children or perhaps arts/crafts/technology workshops that involve children and parents working together to create fun projects. Use of lobby space to educate young children through hands-on activities follows suit with The Whiting's mission to educate the regions students. To take this idea a step further, staff could also explore the possibilities of allowing high school students involved in their 'experience programs' facilitate the creation of shows and workshops furthering their project management and leadership skills. Offering events like these in the lobby for small children can easily influence parents and families to be more comfortable at the whiting and also make adults more likely to come back to see shows hosted in the main auditorium. The Whiting has not yet explored these options for younger children's shows but their lobby space could pose a great set for that venture.

The Washington D.C. Office of Planning's Temporary Urbanism program transforms vacant spaces into active ones through arts, cultural, and other programming like the ones mentioned above. The Lobby Project, made possible through a grant from the DC Office of Planning is a Third Place initiative started in November 2013 and ending in February 2014 with the NoMA BID. Bring on the Nerds: A Speaker Series Featuring Pop-Up Lobby Activation Project 'Nerds in NoMa' is a free speaker series that allows people to explore their favorite nerdy topics, from transportation to beekeeping to local brewing. NoMa offers a new hub of activity, where you can connect, learn, use free Wi-Fi and enjoy tasty treats. A three-month pilot project, the Lobby Project is the brainchild of Harriet Tregoning, Director of the DC Office of Planning, and is being implemented by the NoMa Business Improvement District. Events such as these can be easily transformed with families and children in mind as the primary audience and encourage participation of whole families in lobby events.

The Whiting's biggest challenge moving forward with their lobby recreation projects will be promotions. The Whiting has not been updated since 2006, and contains an uninteresting interface that does not adequately capture the audience. The information provided on the website is detailed however comes with little to no detailed images of the facilities. The only image of the lobby clearly available displays the upper level and a small portion of the lower level. This may not seem like a major issue however The Whiting publicizes special events on its website without high quality images to back up its facilities.

Along with determining plans for lobby space use, staff should also look for additional funding to hire someone that could update and run their website efficiently. In today's day and age it is pertinent that a webpage is easily accessible, enjoyable and user friendly experience. If taken seriously, the Flint Cultural Center can then begin competing with other cultural centers in southeast Michigan (particularly the one in Detroit) to attract more people. According to the U.S. small business administration, 97% of consumers look online for local products and services, 70% of smartphone owners have connected with a local business after a search. (7.)

A solidified web presence can also help with renting for other venues. Wedding and other event planning is listed on the website however with no high definition pictures of the venue online, people are less likely to visit the venue. As a business, The Whiting should give people an experience on the internet to encourage their physical presence.

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Developing Flint Cultural Center as a Hub for Festivals, Entrepreneurship, and Collaboration

Andrew Fedewa

The Flint Cultural Center (FCC) campus has two fundamental strengths, its cultural institutions and its location. They are also its largest sources of potential. The cultural institutions of the Applewood Grounds, Buick Gallery, Flint Institute of Arts, Flint Institute of Music, the Flint Youth Theatre, Longway Planetarium, Sloan Museum, and The Whiting provide unique cultural experiences and spaces for many visitors from the area and surrounding counties. Many shows, programs, and classes take place on the campus. The campus is located in the relatively stable and affluent East Village neighborhood of Flint adjacent to Downtown just on the other side of highway I-475, placing it in the center of the city. This location has cemented the campus as the city's cultural center and destination for outlying areas, but there is the potential to strengthen that branding and its accessibility with other parts of the city through in-fill redevelopment projects, community collaboration, program diversification, and festival growth.

Bluntly put, the Flint Cultural Center campus feels and looks like a suburban business park. The buildings are separated and criss-crossed by roads. Surface parking lots dominate the area with almost every building adjacent to their own lot. The buildings are plain and the grass lawns are featureless. On a regular day the campus looks drab and feels abandoned. Only the Flint Institute of Arts building has any color to it. The FCC bought the Sarvis Conference Center in late 2013 with the plan to demolish the outdated building. When the building comes down a sizable piece of the campus will be opened north of Manning Ct. and bounded on the north by Robert T. Longway Blvd. This clearing presents a tremendous (and ambitious) opportunity for the campus to redevelop itself from looking like a business park to feeling like an urban village with mixed-use development and recreational green space.



Above: Areas covered by surface parking lots in red bordering campus buildings. Jarvis Center in blue.

Below: Reimagining of area currently covered by surface parking lots and unused green space.



Surface parking lots and unused green space make up about half the FCC campus when excluding Applewood. While introducing housing into the campus is not within FCC’s current skill set the potential to completely reshape and rebrand the area as a cultural center to “live, work, play” should not be overlooked. Mixed-used development could introduce new commercial spaces as well as housing for students and “empty nesters” looking to be near downtown and cultural amenities. Currently, parking lots are the first thing a visitor sees upon entering the campus as well as everywhere else they look. Attractive landscaping and recreational green space will complement the new buildings with commercial/office space lining streets, while parking structures are pushed to the back and sides of the main thoroughfare. While parking ramps are more expensive to construct they are less environmentally detrimental than surface lots, could be designed attractively incorporating art, save campus space, and possibly introduce a source of revenue. The area in which the campus sits is not currently zoned for mixed-use (but it is listed as a complementary use in the 2013 Master Plan) so there would need to be rezoning or a variance would have to be obtained.

The cultural center is an economic engine and site of learning so using the first floor of the mixed use buildings for new ideas would be a giant step forward for the campus. It could house new developments such as galleries and intimate performance space for music, business incubator space for startups within the arts, food services, and other newly developed or expanding programs. Again, housing is not really a concern of the FCC, but it could partner with a local management company and could provide housing for students of UM-Flint and Mott Community College as well as baby-boomers whose kids have moved out of the family home and retired citizens wishing to live within walking distance of downtown and the Cultural Center. Mixed-use buildings should only be two to four stories to fit in with the scale and

character of the neighborhood. Branding the campus as a place to live-work-play is the most important aspect of this idea, but also important is that it introduces sources of revenue (rent) for the Flint Cultural Center Corporation that would make it more independent from donations/grants and more economically sustainable.

A new modern conference center would be a boon for the campus as well. FCC currently takes on many types of rentals and a conference center with rooms designed to be versatile and changeable depending on the needs of the guests with modern audio visual support would give the campus a competitive edge in the area. It would be smart to add a kitchen as well that could work for culinary arts/food sciences programs, a restaurant incubator, and catering for shows at The Whiting or other events hosted around the campus.

Neighboring the FCC on the west are two closed schools, Central High School and Wittier Middle School. Declining enrollment and costly renovations shuttered these schools. The Flint Cultural Center could take an active part in the redevelopment of these two sites either through their renovation or the rebuilding should they be demolished. The FCC could partner with Flint Community Schools to share space, driving down costs for both and possibly collaborating on college prep courses, programs, and job training for students of all ages as well as other city residents. Collaboration between four sites (with Mott Community College) is mentioned in the 2013 master plan and there is much potential there. New programs in design like fashion, engineering, and even furniture could be launched. Another prospect is brewing and distillery certification. Craft brewing is continuing to explode in Michigan and only two sites in the state have any sort of programs. Michigan State University has a small three course “specialization” in “beverage science and technology” and Central Michigan University is hoping to launch their program of “fermentation science” in 2015. Working with the appropriate institutions could bring the first complete certification program to Michigan. The only other midwest programs are in St. Paul, Minnesota, Madison, Wisconsin and Chicago, Illinois even though Michigan is a larger beer producing state than any of those three.

Above are the big ideas to revolutionize the campus. On the smaller scale “placemaking” and connectivity would also do wonders for the area. As mentioned before, campus buildings with the exception of the Institute of Arts are nondescript and the grounds are very bare. Colorful cosmetic additions to the outside of campus buildings would really give the area a sense of place and cohesion, making it special within the neighborhood as well as the greater city. It is surprising to not see sculptures, fountains, or large works of arts sprinkling the grounds considering it is an arts and culture campus. Sculptures could be displayed on a temporary basis before being sold, moved around town, or placed at community gardens to make way for new ones, creating a physical environment that is continually new to visitors.

The area would also benefit from benches or movable furniture. The campus is not inviting and makes one feel like the only place to go is from one’s car to their destination and back. With the addition of places to sit and gardens, the grounds could be very inviting to students, employees, and visitors wishing to eat or take a break outside. While there are some bike lanes within the campus there aren’t many places to lock up one’s bicycle. This is another perfect opportunity to introduce art and sculpture to the area in a functional form. Instead of typical metal racks numerous artistic bike racks in the form of sculptures should dot the outside of all buildings. Such cosmetic additions would be a relatively easy and bring a breath of air to the area and make it aesthetically invitingly as well as functional.

Another important component linked to design is the campus’ connectivity to other parts of the city. Urban freeways rip through the center of the city. While this makes it easier for

visitors to get in and out as fast as possible, it splits the city in a very physical way and reinforces an auto-centric mentality. Complete Streets, that is the redesign of city roads to safely accommodate for bicyclists and walking pedestrians alongside automobile drivers, is heavily mentioned in the 2013 master plan as well as being a non-binding Flint city resolution. This redesign is most easily done through road diets and during regularly scheduled street/utility renovation. The Cultural Center could benefit heavily from its implementation and should lobby the city to help make it a reality.

The FCC area is bounded by frontage roads (aka expressway feeder roads) that run parallel to the freeways and is connected to downtown by a few streets crossing over the freeway. Complete Streets redesign on sections of Robert T Longway Blvd., Chavez Dr., E. Court St, and Crapo St. makes the area more safely accessible from other parts of the city and more equitable for a greater percentage of the populace. The most important street however is probably Kearsley Street. The Cultural Center campus is only a half mile from Downtown and making the two areas safely linked could not only invite more people to the Cultural Center in general (especially if mixed-use development was built) but also make people think the Cultural Center is an extension of Downtown, incredibly important to bringing visitors to the area during festivals.

The Cultural Center as urban village extension of the Downtown sets up the area as a major player and contributor to area festivals. The FCC could not only contribute more to Downtown festivals, but could spearhead the development and hosting of new cultural festivals and events becoming a de facto go-to destination. Having Kearsley Street blocked to automobile traffic to create a pedestrian only corridor during events should also be strived for. It makes the campus easier, safer, and more desirable to visit, again creating an extension mentality. While the FCC is definitely involved already there is the potential to be redundant and overlap resources with the Flint Parade of Festivals, an advertising effort by the Greater Flint Arts Council.

While so many things are being done already there is untapped potential everywhere from food, wine, and beer festivals, to ethnic events, season specific fests, variety of 5K/races, using the river for dragonboat races or “lazy river” parties, cook-offs like Lansing’s BWL chili cook off for example, to art contests like sidewalk chalk art all over city blocks, mural paintings, or a “scrapfest” (sculptures that put together using locally sourced and recycled material) to name only a few. The Flint Cultural Center should collaborate and have a hand in all sorts of festivals and events from hosting to sponsoring, advertising, craft making, and holding workshops on the premises. There should be a drive to make the FCC synonymous with city festivals so everyone knows there is something going on at the campus during the year.

Transforming the Flint Cultural Center from a prototypical suburban looking office park to a mixed-use urban village hub and extension of downtown is an expensive, dream-big proposal and partnerships with developers and most likely management companies would have to be sought, but it could have enormous benefits for the area. It would completely revolutionize how the campus is thought of and used. Adding housing, business incubators, and arts/culture/food-centric commercial space would add revenue and transform the area into a desirable, modern place to “live, work, and play”. Adding colorful cosmetic additions to the existing drab buildings as well as art installations, aesthetic and functional alike, throughout the campus would make the campus stand out and original, creating a new sense of place.

Collaborations and partnerships with area schools, colleges, businesses, arts and culture organizations, and especially citizens to grow existing programs as well as develop new ones is

central to creating a go-to cultural hub brand. Valuing public input as well as making it easy for common citizens to float ideas to the FCC could have profound effects on future growth. No one knows the city better than its populace. The FCC could foster a do-it-yourself culture where it helps give people the tools and resources to reinvent themselves and the city. New festivals, scholastic opportunities, and cultural-centric commercial space could help create a whole new educated “creative class” dedicated to retaining resources and people and growing new types of businesses in Flint helping to halt population loss and stemming a “brain drain” suffered at other midwestern city-campuses like Lansing and Michigan State University.

The Economic Development Potential of Event Venues

Callie Lama

The Flint Cultural Center is an underutilized asset for the city of Flint and should be a target area for increased community involvement and tourist attraction. Event spaces and venues are a very important feature for a city to have to attract tourists and can provide space for a variety of uses such as weddings, conferences, meeting rooms, birthday parties, group events and field trips for students. As of 2012, Genesee County has only 9 establishments offering event services, whereas Oakland County has 65 (Census.gov, 2012). The city of Flint can benefit from opening additional event venues by attracting more residents from in and around Genesee County. Through the collaboration of ideas, funds, and space, the Flint Cultural Center can rehabilitate the recently purchased Sarvis Center and update the landscaping of the surrounding area to provide quality spaces for events to be held.

Rehabilitating an existing structure and landscaping are not cheap, easy, or quick processes to carry out. The Flint Cultural Center will need to determine what it is they hope to accomplish, how they will fund the project, who will be involved in the process and when it should be completed. The FCC should begin the process with a collaborative meeting involving staff and on-campus stakeholders, i.e., Applewood, Buick Gallery, Flint Institute of Arts, Flint Institute of Music, Flint Youth Theatre, Longway Planetarium, Sloan Museum and The Whiting. The staff and stakeholders should assess the existing structures in the Flint Cultural Center, discuss event services their individual institutions offer, and review the existing open space within the FCC Campus. Next, they should come up with a plan for public input sessions and begin drafting a vision for the Sarvis Center site as well as the open space. After holding public input sessions with nearby residents and other interested stakeholders, the staff should use the vision as a guide for creating goals and action steps for the site. It is important that the Imagine Flint master plan is considered when drafting the vision to prevent future backlash when approaching the city for approval and is also important to include the public in the discussion due to the ownership history of the Sarvis Center.

The Flint Cultural Center stakeholders should meet with developers and landscape architects to assess the cost of renovating the Sarvis Center and updating the open space to be suitable and attractive for events. The stakeholders can discuss potential funding sources such as donations, profits, fundraisers, crowd funding initiatives, grant money, budget adjustments, potential investors and loans, and develop a plan to get the project moving. By working together and contributing to the activation of space, the stakeholders can then formulate a revenue plan for the spaces to maximize return on investment and have a successful establishment.

Formerly a Flint Public School Board building, the Sarvis Center is already designed to host events and includes an attached kitchen. It would make sense financially for the Flint Cultural Center to continue using it for this purpose to reduce renovation costs. With an updated interior and façade improvements on the exterior of the structure, the Sarvis Center could be a prime location for weddings and banquets. In addition to façade improvements, the Flint Cultural Center could invest in updating the landscaping in front of the center- bordering Durant Plaza as well as the parking lot in the back of the Center and the surrounding streets. By converting the parking lot in the back to open space, and adding in features such as a trees, shrubs, sculptures and fountains (see green rectangle below) the area could be transformed into an outdoor wedding venue for warmer months. The sidewalks along Forest St. and in front of The Whiting could be

redesigned to promote a more pedestrian friendly environment, and with the implementation of low street lamps and benches (see yellow rectangle below), could provide an area for visitors to gather and relax. In addition, the road between the Sarvis Center and Durant Plaza (see orange rectangle below) could be converted to open space with a pathway for pedestrian access, reducing the amount of asphalt and enhancing the natural beauty of the area.

Assuming that the removal of parking spaces will be an issue, there are alternative options to the existing parking. Currently there are about 480 parking spaces in the lot. The proposed removal of the lot behind the building would remove 76 spots, leaving about 390 left. The building has the capacity to hold about 300-400 people, many of which will travel together due to the type of events. Because many of the events will be held after business hours, staff can park in the Art Institute lot, leaving enough room for guests to park. The delivery/emergency vehicle entrance on the southwest corner of the building will remain connected to the street and be fully operable.

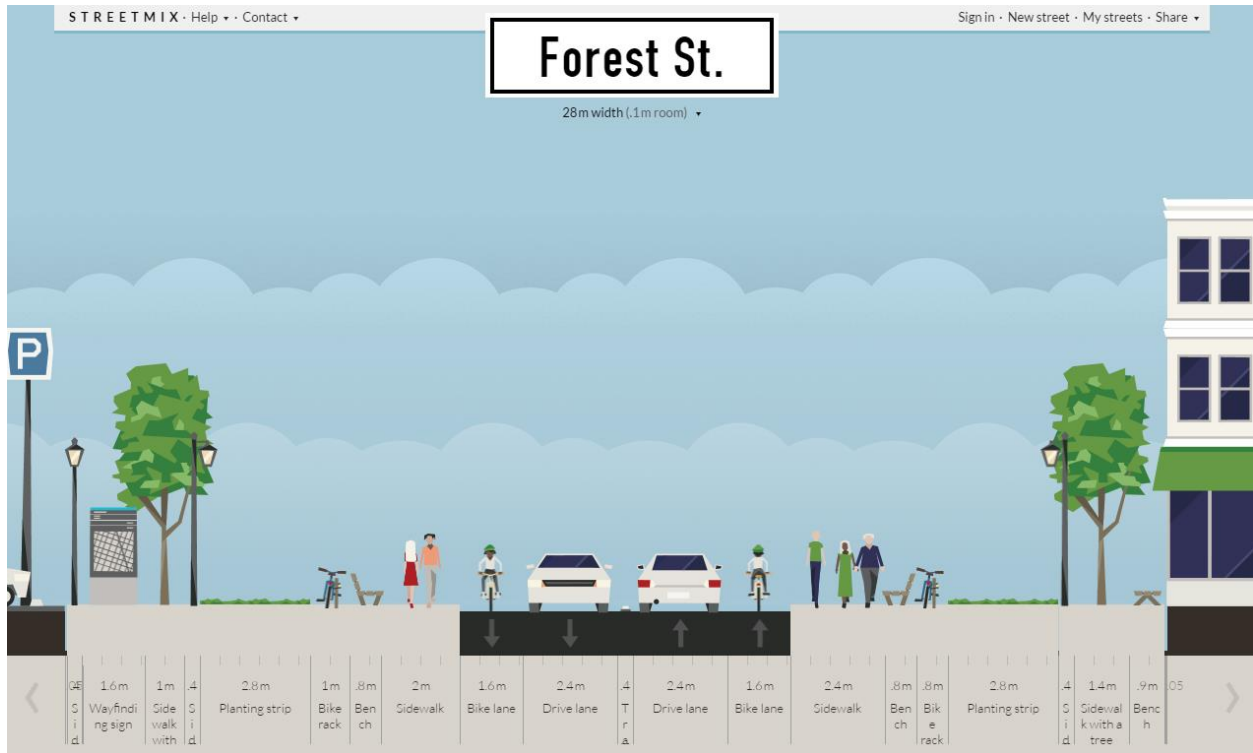


After completing research on building size and available interior space, it seems that at least 50% of the entire area of a building should be available for interior use. The Sarvis Center is approximately 22,500ft², at 50% of that there will be roughly 11,250ft² of available interior space. Banquet Tables Pro, a banquet table rental center website has a free calculator to approximate space and area needs based on guests. With 500 guests, and a banquet style set up, the room would need to be at least 6,000ft² (Space Calculator, 2014). According to The Knot, a popular website for wedding planning, the average guest count at a wedding in 2013 was 138 (XO Group, 2014). With all of this information in mind, the Sarvis Center has the capacity to host a wedding of at least 500 guests, and also has the capacity to provide parking.

When looking into options for street designs, the Flint Cultural Center staff can utilize a tool called Street Mix, which enables users to adjust road width, transportation types, sidewalk widths, street lights, information booths, and more. This website is designed to be user friendly

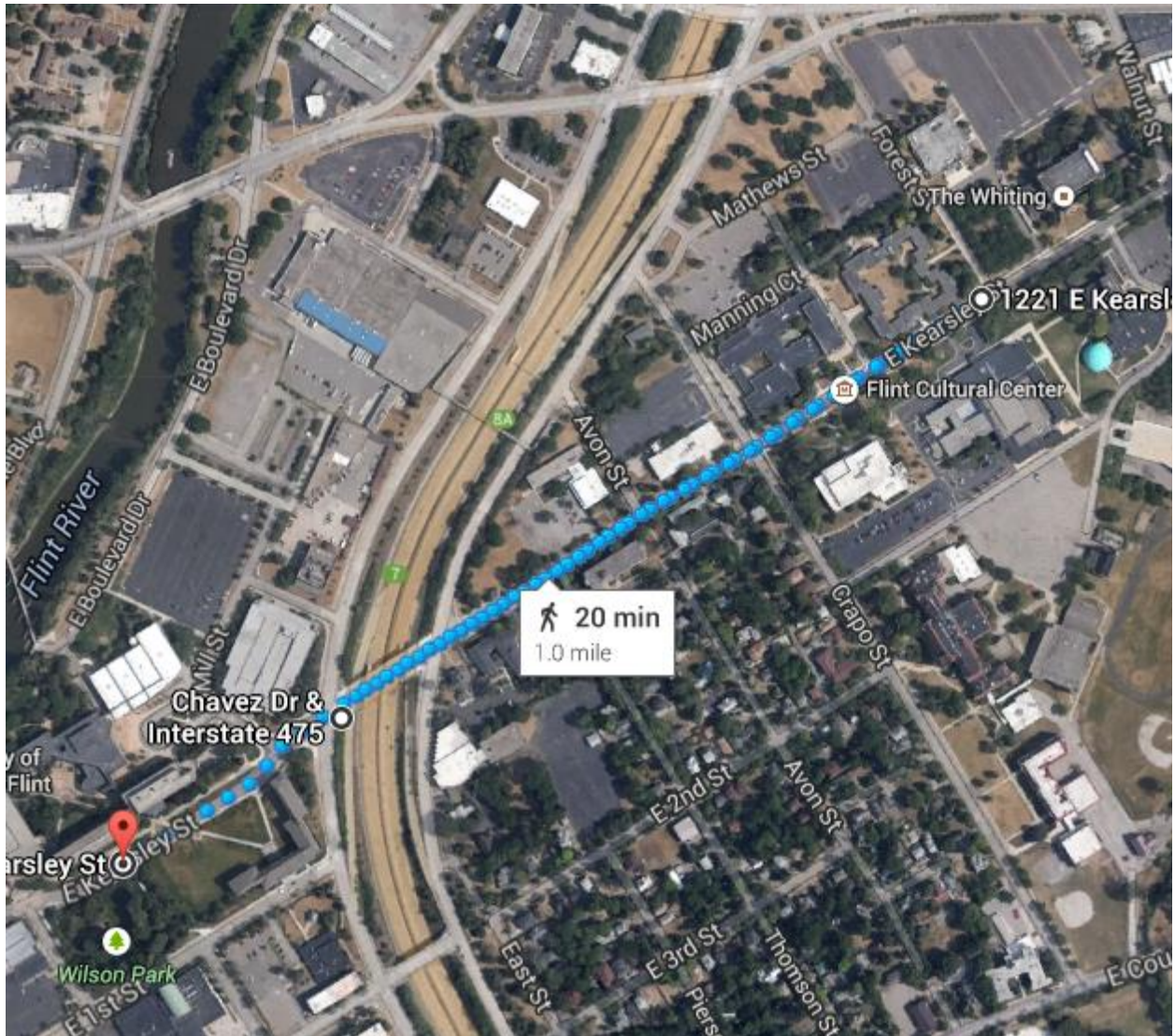
for anyone and can show the benefits of creating a walkable, aesthetically pleasing street. Inserted below are two pictures, the first is a screen shot from Google Street View which shows Forest Street as it was July of 2011, which is still relevant. The second picture is a screen shot of how the street could look, via Street Mix. It uses the same dimensions as the current street and incorporates bike lanes, benches for leisure, low-hanging street lamps for a calming effect, an information booth and parking sign on the left for visitors, and wide sidewalks and bike racks to promote non-motorized transportation. While the road is not located in the central downtown area of Flint, it is important to provide a walkable environment in which people feel comfortable visiting.





The John Michael Kohler Arts Center in Sheboygan, Wisconsin is similar to the Flint Cultural Center as it combines open space, public art, performing arts centers and museums, and is used for exhibits, art lessons and external events. The main website has a tab listed on the top titled “Visitor Center”, under which you can find a link for Facility Rentals with room rates and pictures. The Kohler Arts Center has multiple venues similar to the FCC, but rather than having to navigate to each center’s website to find a facility, the user can go to the rental page straight from the home website and see all facilities in the center. Having an easily accessible area on the website for visitors to find rental rates, photos and policies will encourage users to consider those venues for an event. The Kohler Arts Center utilizes indoor and outdoor space for events and posts multiple pictures to provide customers with examples. Photos on the website include set-up for outdoor weddings, which is a step away from the traditional indoor ceremony and can add interest for potential customers. The Kohler Arts Center, like the Flint Cultural Center is located just outside of downtown and also borders residential neighborhoods, but unlike the Flint venue, it has the advantage of being directly connected to downtown Sheboygan.

The Flint Cultural Center should work with the City of Flint to create a more walkable, connected corridor from the Cultural Center to downtown Flint to increase the amount of activity between the two and generate interest in the Cultural Center. Currently the Cultural Center is somewhat secluded from downtown due to the interstate cutting through the middle of the two. The City of Flint could enhance the connectivity by adding a bus route from downtown to the Cultural Center, implementing bike lanes to encourage non-motorized transportation, and constructing a street-scaping project to enhance the overall look and feel of the walk from downtown to the Cultural Center, which is only about 20 minutes. The City should focus these efforts on the 1 mile strip of E. Kearsley St. which would begin at the cultural center and connect to the Wilson Park area, shown below.



To maximize the benefits from a project like this, it would be very beneficial for the Flint Cultural Center staff and stakeholders begin the visioning process as soon as possible. The City of Flint recently underwent a master plan update and the Cultural Center could utilize the information from the public input sessions and visioning of Flint as a whole to help promote their vision and drive the overall direction of the future of the Flint Cultural Center. As any big project, the FCC faces many challenges, specifically; funding, marketing, the image of the city of Flint, connectivity to the downtown and the competition of Oakland County to the south. It is critical that the institutions within the Cultural Center campus collaborate and work together to get the project moving forward to help simplify the process. With only 9 venues in the area, the need for additional event space is evident and the Flint Cultural Center has the space and capacity to provide for it. By collaborating funds, working with the community to support a vision, marketing the positive aspects of the Cultural Center and Flint as a whole and creating a walkable corridor in connection to the downtown, the Cultural Center can become not only a “1-stop” place, but a destination for people to come back to.

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After visiting the Flint Cultural Center, one thing struck me that would improve the success of this great center. Food! Bringing food to the cultural center will have many benefits for their hungry visitors. The Flint Cultural Center attracts many people every year who come to visit the Buick Gallery, Flint Institute of Arts, Flint Institute of Music, Flint Youth Theatre, Longway Planetarium, Sloan Museum, and The Whiting. With so many venues in this cultural center there is so much to do that you could spend your whole day there.

The reality is that so few do this! This is in large part due to the fact that there is no food at the cultural center. People need to eat, and that's why most people that come to visit the Flint Cultural Center stay for 1-3 hours and then leave to eat. I was hungry when I visited the Cultural Center and I was only there for 2 hours! If there were food offered, people would turn their "one stop" visit into a multipurpose visit. This would bring more traffic to all the different venues at the center as well as greatly increase their economic performance. The average visitor who visits only one venue spends (a) amount of dollars, but after visiting all the different venues the visitor spends (a + b + c + d + e + f + g). This would result in more "word of mouth" as well thus driving in more first-time visitors.

Bringing food to the Flint Cultural Center would be extremely beneficial, but how would they serve the food? The first option I have for the Flint Cultural Center is that they could convert the bar area in The Whiting into a full-scale kitchen with the help of the Flint Farmers Market. The farmers market produces full-scale kitchens and they look like they could be the perfect size for this bar area without having to make any serious renovations. The Whiting could then have the farmers market cater their food and they could cook and prep their food in the new kitchen. This would be unique because the farmers market offers a lot of ethnic cuisines and craft beers that you do not find at your average restaurant. This would be a win-win situation for both the Cultural Center and the farmers' market/community. The Whiting could hire a local pianist to play on their grand piano located in the lobby to provide a source of entertainment as well. The Whiting seats up to 2,000 people, so imagine the economic impact of the audience ordering food at the Whiting. Let's say only $\frac{1}{4}$ of these people end up staying after the concert because they aren't hungry and they find themselves wondering over to the other venues. The kitchen would be operational based on the needs of the cultural center. I believe it would be more cost effective for the cultural center to work together and figure out on a calendar which days would be the best to have the kitchen open for business.

The second option I have for the Flint Cultural Center is that they could contact local food trucks and work with them to serve food to the people visiting the Cultural center. This option wouldn't offer food all the time, but it would serve the purpose of delivering food to people during big concerts/events at the Whiting. This would still be a better option than not serving food at all! There are already a few food trucks that currently serve food in the Flint area! Wraps N' Rolls is a Vietnamese food truck that offers unique food such as stir-fry dishes and pho. There is also a food truck called the Banana Boat, which only serves dessert, but I feel that if you used both food trucks it could be a good combination. It is a good idea to incorporate the use of what's already offered in Flint, but if these food trucks don't sound appetizing then there is always the option of reaching out to the various food trucks that serve other areas.

The third option I have for the Cultural Center is that they could hold Farmer

Dinners. “Farmer dinners re-connect diners to the land and the origins of their food, and honor local farmers and food artisans who cultivate it. Long tables are set at farms or gardens, on mountaintops or in sea caves, on islands or at ranches. Occasionally the table is set indoors: a beautiful refurbished barn, a cool greenhouse or a stately museum. Wherever the location, the consistent theme of each dinner is to honor the people whose good work brings nourishment to the table.” (Outstanding In The Field, 2014). Imagine a long table assembled outside in a field near the Whiting right before a big concert/event. This would be something that would bring everyone together and it would be unique! You could only hold one of these dinners for big events, so this would only be operational based on the scale of The Whiting’s events. The fourth option would be to build a small food court in the nearby vacant school. This option would provide a food source that could be operational every day. With little knowledge of what the school looks like in the inside, it is tough to make an estimation on how much it would cost to renovate the building into a fully operational food court. The cultural center could outsource to local restaurants to see if they wanted to operate a small scale restaurant in the food court. The cultural center would receive monthly rent from these restaurants, which would be a good source of revenue. These restaurants would most likely get a lot of business from people who aren’t even visiting the cultural center so more reason to these restaurants to want to open their business in the food court. This could essentially be considered another venue of the cultural center.

Of all the options, I think that building a kitchen in the lobby and having the local restaurants of the farmers market come in and cater their food would be the best way to grow the cultural center. Having a full scale kitchen built and being able to have the option of catering food or even possibly cooking it themselves offers the most scope. Food trucks are cool and would work well for events at the Whiting, but that means that everyone would have to wait outside in a line and wait to get food and if you happen to be the 2000th person in line then you probably won’t be getting any food. Also, food trucks have extremely small menus, so there isn’t enough variety that would ensure everyone’s tastes are satisfied. Keeping everyone in the lobby for events and entertaining them there would be a popular activity. Option 3 is a good option as well, but this can only be operational during the big events at the Whiting. Option 4 is also possible but will be extremely costly to renovate part of the school into a fully operational food court. Plus, it might be a challenge to try to convince restaurants to move into the food court as well.

The city of Flint is in a revitalization stage and I think that it is very important to work with and support other businesses in the area. Working with the Flint Farmers Market would ensure growth for both parties. It is time to make the Flint Cultural Center a well-known destination and I think that starts with food.

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Temporary Festivals

Abdulla Alhmodi

There are many who believe that art is just a way of designing or expressing feelings. However, planners have a different point of view. They use art to vitalize cities' economies, attract tourists, and make a city a world destination. Local amenities, including art and culture, can be reflected in a willingness-to-pay to live in a specific city. Visitors will spend more money, which increases the economy. In addition, investments in arts-related activity create local economic development. Neighbors gather in local festivals resulting in economic and social benefits. Planners make connections between the arts sector and other sectors such as tourism or manufacturing to improve the skills of workers. Festivals are a way to enhance the economy by offering jobs and showing the creativity in arts so visitors will come. Flint is one of Michigan's top arts and culture destinations. As a planner, I would use this advantage to boost the local economy by proposing the idea of temporary festivals.

Temporary festivals

Temporary festivals are a way to boost the economy in Flint for three main reasons. First of all, it is exciting because it occurs during a period of time, for example a month every year. Therefore, people will have been waiting for the event the whole year. Secondly, usually these kinds of festivals do not require a permanent structure because it lasts for a short period of time, so there is no need for a lot of resources to start the project. Thirdly, various temporary festivals are appropriate for different ages and preferences meaning all of the community can be included in the festivals. In other words, attracting children, youth and even parents to festivals makes Flint a tourist destination. I have identified examples of temporary festivals that will increase the economy such as Global village, winter carnival, light building, and competition to build houses from recycled materials. I would also love to add simulating Las Vegas Boulevard in the downtown of Flint.

Global Village

Global village is the largest seasonal cultural extravaganza in the Middle East that offers visitors an amazing array of festivals, shopping and entertainment in an open-air theme park. The festival lasts from November through April, which means five months. It hosts 70 participating countries presented in over 36 pavilions, with more than 50 fun rides and 26 restaurants offering food from around the world. Also, there are over 12,000 cultural and entertainment shows, culinary attractions from across the world and Fantasy Island fair rides by Mellors Group and games. Furthermore, included at the global village this year, there is "Illumination World" a lantern with popular monuments of the world. Global Village is expecting over 50 million visitors during the 2014/2015 season. The festival is appropriate for many different ages. In other words, children could go on rides or buy toys, while parents have the chance to see the world through the international pavilions and buy clothes or foreign food. Visitors can walk around and enjoy the cultural shows. The sophisticated restaurants are for all ages, so everyone may enjoy eating there.

Global Village is an appropriate project for Flint because of several reasons. Firstly, the festival is mostly about various cultures, and Flint is known for being the top city in the arts in Michigan. Secondly, there is a vacant space in the area, which is enough to accommodate the participating countries and the future visitors. By using vacant land, we achieve one of the

master plan goals of Flint, which is to transform vacant land into vibrant installations. The costs would be low because the pavilions could be built from temporary wood stands, or other sustainable materials if they will be used in other occasions. Furthermore, I would not expect Flint to build as big as the Global village in Dubai because of the economy, but using the same idea, which is inviting other cultures to present themselves in a certain season, would attract visitors in America and even Canada. The best time for this festival is May through September because of the nice weather. In addition, most of the students would be done with school so youth can get involved in the festival. Engaging youth in festivals is another goal of the master plan of Flint. Finally, Global Village is my first option to drive the economy and engage the youth of Flint.

Winter Carnival

My second temporary festival is Winter Carnival. I have this idea from the German Winter Carnival. Some people, in Flint, would rather stay home than walk around the city because of the cold weather and snow. Therefore, the carnival helps make the city more viable. Starting from the middle of December until the beginning of February is the best time for the carnival. There are many things to do to make people happy. First of all, dog sledding is an opportunity to teach people how to drive their dogs; besides, the gathering and enjoyable time each family could have worth trying the adventure. Actually, dog sledding has been used a lot in the past, so this is a chance to teach children about some old heritage. Secondly, winter is the time to practice certain sports outdoor. For example, Ice Hockey is a very popular sport in the US. I have seen a lot of students playing Ice Hockey on the frozen Red Cedar River. Coordinating a community Ice Hockey tournament would have social and economic benefits. Ice-skating is another example of winter sports. Thirdly, Ice Fishing involves people in participating in the winter events. It is full of fun even though it is really hard to catch a fish. The last thing to do in Winter Carnival is making ice sculptures. A competition of ice sculptures discovers the talents of the residents and makes them closer to each other. Even though winter is seen as a sorrow, it is full of adventures for different ages.

3D Light Show

The third temporary festival is a 3D light show. It is not just a light show, but an ingenious means of creativity with light. The show makes the visitors amazed by the high technology that convinces people what is seen is real. In big occasions such as Independence Day, a 3D story of the country is recommended to be showed. Veteran's day, Martin Luther King and Labor day are all occasions to have 3D shows. As a planner, I see this festival very important because Flint could use large old buildings to do the show on them. That is, it is making the old areas viable. Redeveloping areas from the beginning requires much money, but this festival brings money to Flint. I believe that Flint planners ought to advertise and market the event then start several shows in a couple of months, which would drive the economy. Besides, there is not a specific age audience for this show. Moreover, the show can be seen whenever there is a big ceremony, but winter season might not be a good time to watch the show because the weather is very cold in Flint. Finally, 3D Show or even 4D show are beyond expectations. When I go back to my country, United Arab Emirates, I would suggest they have a 3D show on the tallest tower in the world "Burj Khalifa."

Las Vegas Boulevard:

The fourth option to drive the economy is to simulate Las Vegas Boulevard in the downtown of Flint. It might sound funny, but it will boost the economy. What attracts me to Las Vegas is the architecture of the buildings that represents many places in the world. Some hotels are unique such as the Luxor hotel, which looks like one of the Egyptian pyramids. All these architectures made me love the place. Shows, plays and concerts can attract visitors if they take place near the downtown. The Flint Cultural Center has the Whiting Theater that can host plays and concerts. The idea is to make the downtown look unique in the Midwest, and get loved by the residents and visitors.

Building Houses From Recycled Materials:

The fifth option is a competition to build houses from recycled materials for homeless people. It is very hard to collect the required used materials and build a good-looking house from them. In fact, I would say it is kind of art. There is a number of homeless in every county; taking care of them is necessary for many reasons. From a human perspective, they have the right to live in a good standard house. In addition, the houses take the homeless from streets, which increase the safety in the area, and then they will not bother the tourists. Besides, it protects the environment from the municipal waste disposal. The idea of recycling could be accepted among people and they will start saving money. The winner of the competition gets a cash money gift in order to get the youth involve in it.

Other Considerations:

Flint should be a regional creative hub with a dynamic economy. This is a goal in the master plan of Flint. The above festivals are a way to achieve the goal. There are other points that have to be considered to accelerate the process of achieving the goals. The first point is advertising as the FCC is not well-known in Michigan. The second point is to attract restaurants and hotels to satisfy the tourists. The satisfaction of the tourists is important because they might bring other tourists. The third point is to improve the conditions of the streets, avenues and the pedestrian's area to make the area walkable. Therefore, there are two things to take care of, making the city walkable and beautifying the paths. The quality and look of the street is also a factor in making tourists satisfied.

Conclusion:

In urban planning, arts and culture mean more than design and painting. Arts give life to every project they are involved in. Also, people are moved by creative arts in cities; these people bring money and boost the economy of the city. Flint is a city that cares about the arts and is ready to start projects to improve both arts and economics. As an urban planning student, I am willing to use my humble experience in my country UAE and the time I have spent studying urban planning to come up with solutions or arts projects to drive the economy. My favorite one is the Global Village because I have been to it many times and I have seen the success of it. The second one is the Winter Carnival. I like it because I want to get people away from the sorrow of the winter. The third one is 3D lighting building that shows the mixture of creativity of arts and high technology. The fourth one is the Las Vegas Boulevard that I dream to have one in Flint or in Dubai. The fifth one is to consider homeless people and build houses from recycled materials for them. The main goals of all of them are to drive the economy and engage the community in the festivals.

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Incorporation of the Arts into a State Tourism Strategy

Aubreanne Meintsma

When searching for the next vacation spot, travelers are no longer making decisions based solely on the surrounding natural resources, but instead, what a place contributes to the seeker's cultural palette. Every tourist's travel experience is unique to them; however, all share the "pull" to their particular destination, whatever that may be. So perhaps then the answer is to not focus on Flint, Michigan's less than colorful branded past and instead be instrumental in the creation of a very vibrant future.

Increasing tourism through the arts is not a new concept. Numerous studies from around the world have conclusively shown that people who do include the arts in their travel plans often have higher income levels than other tourists to that locale, have a greater likelihood of staying in local hotels, take longer trips and shop more. Artistic tourism attracts people who are willing to spend money, therefore a promise to pump much needed funds into the local economy.

Festivals and events are inevitably a key element in this "cultural tourism" package. The ability to get an entire community engaged in looking at and critiquing art is certainly impressive and not impossible. A specific case study of an area that has capitalized on economic development and improved city branding through art tourism, specifically of the festival variety, is Grand Rapids, Michigan with their creation of ArtPrize. Grand Rapids, like Flint, had previously been branded negatively on a national level on more than one occasion. Forbes magazine in years past has published articles on Grand Rapids, referring to the city as "run-of-the-mill, Middle American", "unimportant", "provincial", and even "dying". Within the last two years, Forbes has since released articles citing Grand Rapids as "The Number One City for Raising a Family" and "The Fourth Best City for Finding Employment". Why the change of heart? Although there have been many great changes and improvements in Grand Rapids in the past five years, including an upswing in the economy, but arguably the most impactful change has been the introduction of ArtPrize.

ArtPrize has given people from all over the nation, and even the world, the opportunity to really experience Grand Rapids and engulf themselves in the rich culture and lifestyle of the city that has been long underappreciated. The city has truly transformed in the past five years, thanks in large part to this social experiment. It has been a clear and positive impact on Grand Rapids. It has generated heightened earnings for businesses, households, and the city as a whole. The economic impact from ArtPrize 2013 alone was over \$22 million in new net output, including \$6.3 million in earnings and 253 jobs created bringing \$4.5 million into local households (Kaczmarczyk 2014). Although the \$22 million in new economic activity is impressive on its own, the more promising value lies in the event's annual nature. This event is still new, relatively speaking, and with momentum continuing will only grow.

ArtPrize visitors came from every U.S. State and 18 different countries according to a study commissioned by Experience Grand Rapids. The report analyzed overall event attendance and spending as well as the overall economic impacts. The study has overwhelmingly determined that ArtPrize is providing "long-term, intangible benefits" to the Grand Rapids area through increased social capital, cultural enrichment, and created awareness of the region. Kris Larson, president and CEO of Downtown Grand Rapids Inc. summed it up perfectly: "ArtPrize successfully builds a stage for our downtown to perform to our community and beyond, and it sets the pace for attracting a broad and inclusive audience to downtown Grand Rapids."

Demographically speaking, Flint and Grand Rapids are somewhat similar. According to Census information from 2010, Flint's population was 102,434, not far behind Grand Rapids' 188,040. Both are in the top ten largest metropolitan areas in Michigan. It is clear that an event such as ArtPrize would never be successful in a city like New York where there already exists an abundance of activity, a city like Flint could successfully follow suit with the Flint Cultural Center as a noteworthy starting point. The Flint Institute of Arts would indeed see increased membership and foot traffic during and after the event took place as well as the rest of the cultural center campus as this would serve as an event for all ages, bridging generational gaps; Art for everyone, regardless of socioeconomic standing.

Placemaking is the movement that helps reimagine existing public spaces as the beating heart of every community. Placemaking strengthens connections between community members with each other and the places that they share. It has long been a technique of planners and economic developers to create vibrant areas that will in turn thrive socially and economically. These places not only improve and keep around existing businesses, but also bring in new businesses. It is the concept of making a place more desirable, creating a pull factor and overall creating a sense of "place" for residents. Effective placemaking will capitalize on a community's already existing assets to create public spaces that will promote people's happiness and overall well-being. A placemaking mindset in moving forward with better utilizing the already existing space of the Flint Cultural Center will allow economic developers the springboard they need to revitalize the Greater Flint area.

Having an event similar to that of Grand Rapids' ArtPrize would allow Flint to become a destination rather than a location. The activities that would come along with an event like this would promote tourism and increase community involvement. The overall atmosphere of an art festival can lead to an economically sound and developed region as well as a popular tourist attraction for people. Although establishing a following for an event like this does not happen overnight, word about the Festival would be spread through promotional material, including regionally and nationally distributed brochures; news releases; feature stories in the media.

An art festival could be a great source of economic benefit to the Greater Flint Area. With what Flint already has to offer in the way of space and an already existing interest in art and culture, an ArtPrize like event would make a great fit and attract thousands of people to the area. It will attract people who are looking to do something new in Michigan and is easier to access for the large Detroit population than the Grand Rapids festival. It will even attract people who have never been to that area and these people are the ones who want to explore, potentially targeting them to keep coming back for other local events that happen throughout the year.

One of Flint's largest issues is the current brand that it carries and providing an event that it can be known for, not only within Michigan, but nationally can greatly change perceptions. Once in Flint, the community and the people alike will make any preconceived negative notions a fleeting thought. When the only interaction with Flint is hearing and seeing the city's challenges aired in the media, it is seemingly impossible to create a "pull factor" for visitors. Flint is colorful and inspiring, and visitors could be better changed by the people and the experiences that lie within the city boundaries. There seems to be a vibrant local culture, strong neighborhoods, and a growing downtown core, full of promise of an area that could serve as a model for revitalization of a de-industrializing space. Flint was built by entrepreneurs and the economy continues to grow again because of new ideas. Is Flint dying? No. It's just in need of a breath of fresh air.

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Comparative Analysis

The Mid-City Cultural District – Arik Zaleski

Flint Cultural Center: Lessons from the Masan Art Center - Seong Hwan Kim

The Mid-City Cultural District

Arik Zaleski

In 2014, the City of Flint Michigan is often stigmatized as an urban failure. Stories perpetuate in the media regarding the city's economic downturn and the resulting population decline, budgetary deficits and high crime rates. While there is no denying that Flint has faced tough times over the past 40 years there is ample cause to believe a return to prosperity is within reach. Between 1930-and the early 1970's Flint was a thriving community bolstered by the automotive industry which created great wealth for its residents. This wealth and prosperity allowed Flint to foster a well-respected educational system and a strong cultural environment that still exists today. Flint is home to several colleges and universities including Mott Community College, University of Michigan at Flint, Kettering University and Baker College that serve an estimated 30,000 students (Scorcone, 7). It is also home of the Flint Cultural Center (FCC); a cultural cluster consisting of 8 major arts and cultural institutions situated blocks from Flint's downtown central business district. This paper will discuss the FCC and how this community asset can be used as a driver for a new creative economy in Flint formed by its art and cultural strengths.

Recently the city has become proactive in determining ways to reinvent itself. In 2013, the city released a brand new comprehensive master plan, replacing the previous plan which had been in implementation for the previous 43 years. Prior to 2013, the official plan of the city predicted continued population growth and a robust economy, neither of which came to fruition. The new plan dubbed "Imagine Flint" presents a new agenda for Flint's future growth based on the current conditions and aims to stabilize and restore the vibrancy of the city. In the Imagine Flint plan, emphasis is placed on utilizing arts and culture as a means to create social equity and sustainability, rework the economy and improve the quality of life for Flint's residents (Houseal, 263). Flint is imagined as a place where art and culture thrive in every neighborhood, with homes, churches, schools, and community centers acting as artistic laboratories of creative innovation, community engagement, and civic pride.

The atmosphere in Flint is abuzz for what is to come, and in order to fully establish an art and creative community culture orienting the Flint Cultural Center as the primary element could be a viable option. The FCC is truly unique in the experiences that it offers. Any other community would be lucky to have one of the facilities located in the center, Flint is fortunate to be home to them all. A majority of the institutions in the center first opened in the late 1960's which correlates with the peak period of Flint's economic success. Development plans regarding the cluster were sculpted by the City's previous master plan which was enacted in 1960. As previously mentioned the plan at that time anticipated further population growth and continued economic success which did not occur. Fortunately the FCC has remained intact and financially solvent since Flint's economic downturn and has been assisted greatly from philanthropic grants and other outside funding. The surrounding community has not been afforded such luxury. From 1960-2010 Flint lost nearly 100,000 residents, surged to a 34% unemployment rate and the local government has faced serious financial deficits (Scorsone,10). Established as a complementary venue in an already vibrant city its purpose was to provide additional entertainment options for the local elite. The FCC of today is more of a cultural oasis surrounded by a city that is completely different than it was 40 years ago.

The FCC of today has the opportunity to anchor Flint's budding creative market economy. Creative economies are sustained by a variety of different contributors including local artists,

musicians, entrepreneurs, cultural amenities, tourism related industries and more (Fuller, 8). Creative economies possess the ability to revitalize neighborhoods and can lead to population increases, higher housing values, and decreased poverty rates while only causing minor ethnic displacement (Stern, 264). The FCC's influence as a predominant cultural venue can entice and support many of the contributors associated with a creative market economy. In order to best facilitate this Flint can promote the FCC's history and cultural offerings as must visit cultural attraction. The promotion in essence works to brand Flint as a regional creative hub. This will not only increase demand for the FCC, but also other cultural offerings available in Flint. The demand stimulated by the city's cultural attractions will invite a host of tourists, new residents, and businesses to Flint.

In order to brand Flint regionally, the FCC and local planners must implement a basic strategy for supporting the creative economy beginning at the **local** level. Some layers of the strategy include:

- Education: Provide residents with the skills necessary to work in a creative market economy.
- Community development: Enhance the opportunities for all residents to participate and be involved with the arts culture.
- Promotion: Attract investment and create a buzz surrounding Flint's arts culture.
- Infrastructure: Address other challenges for access such as safety in public spaces, communication, efficient geographic distribution, and transportation.
- Strategic Planning: Revise zoning and building codes to encourage artist live/work, incubator, and retail spaces.

These strategies provide the building blocks for supporting a community based arts/ culture economy. The FCC plays a key role in facilitating these strategies by not only anchoring Flint's creative economy but supplying the resources needed to build it. However the FCC cannot support a creative economy alone. It is essential that a dynamic mix of complementary conditions exist in order to successfully brand Flint as must visit cultural destination.

An example of a successful cultural economic mix is the Mid-City district in Washington D.C. The Mid-City district is home to landmarks such as the Lincoln Theater and African American Civil War Memorial and Museum, it also was an aging neighborhood in need of revitalization. In 2005, the city council implemented the DUKE plan, a development framework for creating a cultural destination district. The goal was to create a more complete destination neighborhood where cultural landmarks are as 'pearls on a string' in supporting mixed-use development (Fuller, 8). The plan encouraged the establishment of complementary venues geared to enhance the city's cultural and entertainment offerings. A cluster of businesses were formed including restaurants, catering services, niche and life-style retail outlets, accommodations, live performance venues, educational institutions, and redeveloped unused cultural facilities in order to brand itself as a premier cultural destination.

The agglomeration of connected attractions associated with art, culture and entertainment based amenities has allowed Mid-City to attract visitors from adjacent jurisdictions as well as overnight business and leisure travelers. Mid-City has successfully nurtured a strong marketplace by creating a cultural district where locally-owned businesses complement the city's historic roots. In the Mid-City district neighborhood revitalization has occurred and with it the quality of life for current residents has improved and the city has become attractive to new residents. The Mid-City district has become one of the Washington D.C.'s hottest real estate markets over the past five years (Fuller,8).

The Mid-City example for creating a cultural district relies heavily on businesses and private developers who have seen the opportunities for investment. While Mid-City's strategy has had success it doesn't mean it is the only model for creating a thriving creative hub. Art and cultural attractions are by their nature designed to be unique and it is impossible to assume a one size fits all approach. Taking a closer look at the character of the community around a cultural district can assist in determining the best way to expand. In Flint, surveying the neighborhoods around the FCC will help establish the best approach to creating Flint's brand.

The Imagine Flint plan emphasizes the neighborhood structure around the FCC, with venues surrounded by some neighborhood retail facilities which would typify the developments in Mid-City where retail and other complementary services make up the district. The FCC is mainly surrounded by single family households and various open spaces. While it does pose a challenge to redevelop these areas to complement a cultural district, there are ample opportunities for cultural districts to exist in an organic form. Residential neighborhoods can fill a niche in cultural districts in a variety of complementary ways including, murals, street art, home studios, historic sites, bed and breakfasts, the list goes on and on. But first, in order to penetrate into local neighborhoods the FCC must first become more intertwined with the needs of the people who reside there. Many concerns have arisen from community residents regarding their sentiments towards the FCC, those being: Not feeling welcomed; Programming offered is not representative of cultural or aesthetic needs; Price is unaffordable; Location is inconvenient; Time and/or day of programs do not fit their lifestyle; and no information or communication about the events (Houseal,270). These issues will undoubtedly need to be addressed if Flint wants to establish an organically grown cultural district.

Cultural districts serve a twofold purpose by supporting local economic growth and providing neighborhood revitalization. The City of Flint has the facilities in place to embrace the growth of a cultural economy it now needs to develop a strategy to determine the ways to truly make its district unique. Cultural districts thrive where cultural assets complemented by a full range of supporting services. Thus Flint must strive to ensure those entities have a place within the district. In doing so Flint can utilize the world class assets found in the FCC to create a unique atmosphere for arts and culture throughout the city forming a strong creative economic base.

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Lessons from the Masan Arts Center Seong Hwan Kim

Culture-related businesses can increase the local economic development of a region and attract tourists; so many cities invest in culture-related businesses.

Urban renewal, which had its genesis in the 1980s, spurred interest in arts and cultural activities as bringing social and economic benefit to previously blighted areas... They began to focus on the instrumental benefits of the arts as a means of achieving social and economic goals that have little to do with art itself. (Brady 2009, page ,2)

In the City of Flint, there is the Flint Cultural Center, which has a lot of potential economic viability and will promote local economic development. This research paper provides a case study of the Masan Arts Center in South Korea as an example of arts led economic development.

The Flint Cultural Center has a good location and an opportunity to attract tourists. It is near highways (I-475 and I-69) and the major cities of Detroit (68 miles), Ann Arbor (55 miles) and Lansing (57 miles). There are a total of 8 institutions in the Center--Applewood, Buick Gallery, Flint Institute of Arts, Flint Institute of Music, Flint Youth Theatre, Longway Planetarium, Sloan Museum and The Whiting--offering educational, arts and culture, and entertainment resources. "The Flint Cultural Center campus provides area residents with an array of cultural, scientific, and artistic experiences and promotes understanding of the diverse cultures reflected in the Greater Flint community." (Flint Cultural Center official website).

Case Study: Masan Art Center

In South Korea, the Masan Art Center is similar to the Flint Cultural Center, and contributes to the local economy. The Masan Art Center is located in Chanwon, Masan, South Korea and close to the major metropolitan area of Busan. The art center made a cultural space by remodeling a closed school and created open space for cultural experiences. The art center used environmentally friendly construction and opened in September 2004. The center has a total land area of 14,527 square meters, a building area of 1,193 square meters and includes a gallery, outdoor sculpture exhibition, creative studio, print making, pottery studios, art book cafes, seminar rooms and guest houses.

Masan is a small provincial city that worked with local government, residents and artists to build the Masan Art Center and increase tourism. The Center is famous in Masan and other cities in South Korea. Annually, they hold many art exhibitions and a number of seasonal events; more than 40 exhibitions of concerts, international competitions, ceramics experience, and workshops. These events and exhibitions are automatically promoting the Masan Art Center to tourists.

During the event or exhibition days, residents are providing guest house services to tourists and share their local culture. Local businesses have used abandoned houses for coffee shops, rest area for tourists, and other retail stores. They invited amateur artists and young artists to give them an opportunity for exhibitions with feedback from professional artists. This event is promoting the discovery of new talent in the art world, with artists continuing on to the largest art fairs such as Beijing Art Fair, Taipei Art Fair, Daegu Art Fair, Seoul International Book Fair, London Art Fair and KIAF. The Masan Art Center has become a major tourism resource and destination. (All sources from Changwon Grandculture official web site)

Future Prospects

The Flint area also has vacant housing that might be used for arts and culture purposes. Using these houses would help to promote the Flint Cultural Center and save the cost of new constructions. The Masan Art Center used abandoned houses to provide convenience for tourists as local residents operate coffee shops, restaurants, retail stores and guest houses. Flint has a lot of potential for development.

Langs said that there are upwards of 15,000 abandoned homes in Flint and that Project Green House was born based on the idea that there are more effective ways to tear down and dispose of these thousands of residential and light commercial buildings in the cities of Detroit and Flint – ways which could pave the way for the rebuilding of all post-industrial cities in the Great Lakes Region... The problem of abandoned houses ... is enormous and it's a growing problem," Aspegren said in a pitch video featured on the organization's website. "In Detroit alone, there's almost 50,000 abandoned homes at this point in the foreclosure crisis and many of these homes will never be inhabited again. (Allen 2012)

It is difficult and expensive to invite and promote professional and famous artists or musicians, but the FCC could focus on cultivating the talent of young artists. Give them chance to exhibit their work and participate in other art centers. There are many colleges and schools in Flint area such as the University of Michigan-Flint and Mott Community College. Working with universities and colleges provides opportunities for exhibitions and to promote the FCC.

The Flint Cultural Center has eight institutions (Applewood, Buick Gallery, Flint Institute of Arts, Flint Institute of Music, Flint Youth Theatre, Longway Planetarium, Sloan Museum and The Whiting). These organizations hold many events to attract tourism, such as wine tasting, art fairs, beer tasting, community gala, the party, holiday walk and print fair. However these events were opened only one day. Increasing the number of days might increase tourism in the Flint area. It will improve demand for local specialties and raise brand awareness of the Flint Cultural Center.

Conclusion

The Flint Cultural Center has the great potential to improve local economy. It is important cooperate with local residents, planners and local government to improve the Flint Cultural Center. Local residents have a greater role in improving local economy. They should be concerned about the Flint Cultural Center and understand how this cultural enterprise is important.

The arts, as an agent of urban renewal, are well-documented. Economic developers nationwide have become acutely aware of the power of cultural offerings and other "consumption amenities" to attract high quality employers and workers. According to a report published by the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia (Hawley, 2009), cities rich in the attractions that make a city fun disproportionately attract highly educated individuals and experience faster housing price appreciation. The study's authors concluded that investing in cultural and recreational opportunities helps bring together talented people in the same place more than investing in traditional infrastructure. (Brady 2009, page 3)

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Arts/Culture and Education

Role of Arts and Culture in the Education System - Cody Roblyer

The Role of Art in Education – Mark Kere

Role of Arts and Culture in the Education System

Cody Roblyer

The Flint Cultural Center is a local amenity that many cities don't have to provide a city with arts and cultural resources. Flint is largely known through the media, which shows that crime and unemployment have stricken the community. Although parts of this image may be correct, Flint is a thriving city that has opportunities that cannot be found anywhere else. The Flint Cultural Center, along with prospering colleges and universities in the area, allow Flint both economic and educational development in the future. The Flint Cultural Center provides access to resources such as the Flint Youth Theatre, Sloan/Longway Planetarium and Museum, the Flint Institute of Art, the Whiting Theatre, and other interesting institutions (Flint Cultural Center 2014).

All of these venues provide Flint with the convenience of infrastructure to build upon for educational and economic development. After visiting the Flint Cultural Center in person, it became obvious that some of the buildings were challenged with options of how to use their space and where to go in the future. However, some places such as the Flint Institute of Art, were building on the idea of mixing education with arts and culture. This concept allows the provision of education to all learning institutions in the area and provides the Flint Cultural Center with a starting point in terms of economic opportunity. Allowing students from these various learning institutions and possibly reaching to even younger students in high school or middle school, creates a unique educational platform as well as a reason for future investment in the Flint Cultural Center.

The economic intent of basing the Flint Cultural Center around education creates a system where the already developed learning institutions can benefit. There are many small colleges located in Flint, but the major institutions include Mott Community College, University of Michigan – Flint, Kettering University, and Baker College. The combined enrollment for these exceeds 20,000 students (Colleges in Flint, Michigan 2014). This student population, combined with students from the surrounding secondary education institutions, creates a basis for the further development of the Flint Cultural Center. The main appeal of this approach is to provide students with a different learning experience. The different buildings and programs provided within the Flint Cultural Center create an atmosphere based around the development of more creative and hands on skills. The focus is learning about arts and cultural aspects that many students don't experience in a regular educational curriculum.

The main opportunity that would set the Flint Cultural Center apart is to provide unique educational experiences learning about the arts and culture. In the United States and most other countries, there is a strong desire to teach certain types of curriculum in schools. This curriculum usually contains learning about English, mathematics, science, social studies, and other general educational subjects. Arts and cultural classes aren't usually required for students and are usually left as options for individuals. Many students make it through secondary education without taking any classes about the arts or culture. Providing this education gives students benefits that could help them in the future.

As countries are becoming more globalized and interaction between various countries is much more common, an understanding of cultural aspects is a necessity (Sharp and Metais 2000). Exploring art and cultural curriculum helps develop this understanding of cultural importance across the world. Learning how to understand art allows a student to become more aware of concepts such as diversity, creativity, and promotes inter-cultural relation

conceptualization (Sharp and Metais 2000). Although it may seem like arts and culture are more disposable subjects in the American educational system, they provide benefits for students in their future careers. Exploring how to interact with people who are different from oneself is something that may never be picked up from the typical curriculum. There are other aspects that arts and cultural education might explore that a typical educational institution might not. Some of these ideas include that art and cultural education help an individual feel included and valued, understanding of cultural and social change, hands on development in terms of creativity, and other personal development skills (Sharp and Metais 2000).

The Flint Cultural Center has the infrastructure available to implement this type of educational experience. After visiting, it seemed like the main intent for the center was to be an entertainment venue, but displaying it in an educational manner may attract more attention. This in turn would allow more publicity to the Flint Cultural Center and develop a stronger economic basis by changing principle use. This goes along the lines of the concept of branding. Branding allows an industry or organization to change its appeal to the consumer, hopefully generating more return in terms of finances. Branding the Flint Cultural Center as an educational institution might achieve some of the goals each individual organization wanted to meet.

Some of the institutions incorporated within the Flint Cultural Center are already achieving this educational approach. The Flint Institute of Art offers a variety of choices in art school that can be taken by people of all ages and artistic abilities. The school was initially founded in 1928 and since then has become the 11th largest Museum Art School in the United States (Flint Institute of Art 2014). Thousands of students are already taking advantage of the curriculum that is provided through the art school. Their programs cater to students that want to further develop their knowledge and understanding of visual art from grade levels K-12. Additional programs are available for high school and college students that build upon their artistic strengths and make them more available for careers related to arts and cultural understanding.

Based on psychological theory, certain brain development occurs when being exposed to artistic knowledge. According to theory, the left-brain is used for logic, language skills, and analytical thinking, which that are mainly developed through mathematics, science, and English studies (Kendra Cherry 2014). These developmental skills are generated from general education that is learned from schools regular curriculum. However, the right side of the human brain is dominated by a whole different set of developmental traits. These traits are triggered by color, images, creativity, music, and other visual understandings (Kendra Cherry 2014). Learning about mathematics and other common educational topics don't allow a student to develop many of these characteristics. Learning about visual arts and culture allows exposure to different learning techniques that allow further right-side brain development to occur. Having these types of institutions within the Flint Cultural Center that provide programs in better understanding arts and culture allow for students to achieve complete brain development. Experiencing a different type of learning environment will let students reach higher levels in future careers by broadening their interpersonal strengths.

Combining a traditional education with the development that occurs from arts and cultural experiences supports the capacity building of the area. A few of the activities that can be created through this benefit include improving a community's competitive edge, integrating the vision of community and business leaders, and contributing to the development of a skilled workforce (American Planning Association 2014). Having a well-educated workforce available can allow an area to reach many goals it couldn't without such a knowledge basis. Economic

development can occur by the concentration of a creative population that can implement new firms, ideas, and additional community amenities. This in turn attracts a strong workforce from outside communities that are willing to take part in the development of Flint. Eventually this will generate more people visiting Flint and spending their money at the places that have been developed over time from the educated students. Educating students in other ways can have a multiplier effect on the economy; to educate the population so they can create all of these additional amenities that a community can use to grow.

The Flint Cultural Center is an asset to further educate the population when looking towards future development. Taking advantage of the many learning institutions that are already available within the city of Flint allows people to use the Flint Cultural Center to further their development and understanding of arts and cultural education. Creating a knowledge base of people who can go out into the world and develop industries within the area allows for economic growth. Generating this economic growth through the Flint Cultural Center would allow Flint to achieve much more when looking towards the future. Having a better understanding of arts and culture through the institutions available maximize the potential for Flint for community engagement, educational attainment, and economic development. This could take away the status quo of Flint and give it a much better image socially while also taking the initiative to improve the city in all different aspects of planning theory.

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The Role of Art in Education

Mark Kere

I believe there is hope for resurgence in Flint's economy in the future by incorporating fine arts in the education of youth. A Fine Arts program implemented in schools helps diversify the curriculum as well as allow learning in a distinct way. Also, incorporating different cultures in the community will help drive economic development. A community that has diverse knowledge flourishes as opposed to the communities that do not. A community of diverse backgrounds and cultures that are recognized leads to more diverse views that will aid in the community being open-minded and being able to create better experiences. The purpose of my research is to see how incorporating arts and culture in education in a community would drive economic development.

Flint is a city that is best known for its history in lumber, automobile production and the home of many autoworker strikes that eventually led to the formation of the United Automobile Workers union which I one of the largest labor unions in the nation. During the course of history Flint fell into a downward spiral of economic activity and became a city far from what it was once known to be. At one point the city of Flint was among the most dangerous cities in the United States and also a city in a state of economic turmoil.

An area like Flint influenced by art could bring changes that would develop both the economy and community. It can be noted that the city of Detroit, Michigan has been on a cultural rise in the past couple of years. What is most distinct about this cultural and economic rise is that the arts are an important part of this remodeling. There are many new festivals, concerts, community events, and you can even see the city visually changing with paintings, murals, and intentional graffiti. As desolate as Detroit once was it has made a comeback within the community, thus economically, essentially with the help of the arts. The Flint Cultural Center plays a similar role of resurgence for the city of Flint; festivals, concerts, and community events bring in tourists as well as tourist spending.

The best way to spark a change and promote future economic development is by starting with young people and the things they are being taught. In grade school, students are taught the basics of reading, writing and math. Abstract thinking is not really stimulated with the generic way of learning. Incorporating art and culture in education is the missing link to community development:

An effective education in the fine arts helps students to see what they look at, hear what they listen to, and feel what they touch. Engagement in the fine arts helps students to stretch their minds beyond the boundaries of the printed text or the rules of what is provable (Eisner)."

Eisner states in *Why the Arts are so Basic* that arts are essentially important in the world of education. The arts allow students to be educated in a refreshing, hands-on way. Having an even more dynamic way of educating allows students to retain information and knowledge in abundant, diverse ways of learning.

The Flint Cultural Center is a great start to introduce the community to culture, art and history. When I think about the many different forms of art I notice that it takes an artist a great deal of thought to create a new work. Considering that a picture is worth a thousand words, the viewer is forced to another level of thinking to understand an artist's ideas or to put together their own interpretation of an artist's work. In an article by Eric Jensen, there is a lot of support for fine arts in education as well. Jensen goes on to say "Is the study of fine arts important? They

engage many areas of the brain and also have far-reaching effects on the learner's mind (Jensen, 2001)."

Jensen shows how cognition and logic within in the brain is strengthened through art being a part of education. His own question is answered In Burton et al (1999):

The fine arts enhance perceptual and cognitive skills. The Burton study of more than 2000 children found that those in the arts curriculum were far superior in creative thinking, self-concept, problem-solving, self-expression, risk-taking, and cooperation than those who were not" (Burton et al., 1999).

In a study conducted by authors Burton, Horowitz, & Abeles shows the extreme advantages any student has by having the arts as an active part of their curriculum; it simply adds to better-thinking, cognitively advanced, creative people. And people with more education and a high level of cognition generally add to society and in turn a better economy.

For a community to move forward the best time to make changes is in the education system. A substantial investment in adding fine arts and culture into the curriculum of any school system would achieve sustainable economic development. Even the role of urban planner would benefit from a background in art that would shape ideas that influence a community's economic development plan.

The arts host so many benefits that would lead to a better community outcome. Fiske lists in *The Impacts of the Arts on Learning* several factors that display why the arts are so significant. "The arts reach students not normally reached, in ways and methods not normally used, it changes the learning environment to one of discovery, and students connect with each other better (Fiske, 1999)." With Fiske's research on art all of these positive outcomes lead to better students and even more connected, socially positive people.

Fiske goes on to note, "The arts provide challenges to students of all levels, and students learn to become sustained, self-directed learners (Fiske, 1999)." We can see that the arts generally create better students. Also those students who are disadvantaged receive a universal way of learning that seems to speak to them. It gives these students a productive outlet, as well as a positive outlook on life. This may be the reason why many artists including musicians, poets, dancers, painters, rappers, music producers, actors, reference low socioeconomic backgrounds in which they tell a tale of triumph over adversity. If the arts can help people make it from rough backgrounds and become something aspiring and successful, it is a positive aspect of society and can boost society and the economy positively as well.

When I was younger I was introduced to the arts very early. I had my first art class when I was in the second grade and have enjoyed art ever since. At the time I couldn't really understand the impact that art would have on my life later on when I got older until I started going out of the country and seeing that art and different cultures were changing my perception of the world around me. Another element I have been exposed to is the range of different cultures around the world. It has enriched my understanding of myself and that the world and that I can be viewed in many different ways. I can see the distinct ways in which any culture chooses to show off art that is a part of their community and gives understanding what is meaningful to them. Art being a significant form of expression allows artist to show off and inspire so much in a creative light not matching any other form of education or expression.

In every community there are many different kinds of people who live together and a work together. People living in one community come from all different backgrounds, religions and cultures as well. Having such a diverse group of people offers many things to learn from one another that will promote self-growth and awareness. "Diverse organizations draw upon the

The Flint Cultural Center (FCC) offers great potential to serve community interests and needs to leverage tourism, to foster creativity and knowledge development, and to serve as an anchor for placemaking around Flint. This project used the FCC as a case study in economic development potential analyzing opportunities for the FCC as well as linking FCC opportunities to the arts and culture elements of the Flint Master Plan.



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widest possible range of views and experiences so it can listen to and meet the changing needs of its users. The encouragement of diversity benefits society (Sarah T.)” The best plans for economic development come from a planner with a wide range of influences.

Author Sarah T. writes on *The Importance and Benefits of Diversity* and just how important diversity, correlating to art, is so significant within communities. If the most sustainable community is desired, diverse knowledge is needed to make up that community. A community can make great strides in development by incorporating the community’s diversity and experiences when making decisions for the future. There cannot be any progress without cooperation from different races and cultures. “When these problems are not paid attention to it may lead to an inability to endorse ideas, the inability to gain agreement on decisions, and inability to take united action (Sarah T).”

The arts are obviously essential to any society, culture, city, or group of people. My research question is whether the arts proves to be economically beneficial or not. I’ve learned the many benefits of the arts in education and what it can provide if implemented. First, the differences between Flint and Detroit are observed with how a city can begin to uplift due to the arts. The Flint Cultural Center is a great step forward in bringing art to a community that will eventually help drive economic development.

Fine arts helps students learn and develop in new ways. Cognition and logic is strengthened and the minds of students are stretched to view the world from different perspectives. To raise standards socially and economically, societies need to begin with their youth, by implementing art education within their current curriculum that will result in positive ways of thinking, having a creative outlet, learning to be accepting of other cultures and perspectives. The arts in education is definitely beneficial and will aid in raising socioeconomic standards and driving economic development.

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