EVALUATING THE CULTURAL PLAN OF AUSTIN, TEXAS

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This is a concurrent, mixed methods study of the impacts of Austin, Texas’s cultural plan, *CreateAustin*. In the study, trend analysis and a t-test were used to examine variables before and after the cultural plan was in place. At the same time, interviews with cultural planners were used to uncover other effects. My research addresses a gap in the literature between understanding the desired and actual outcomes of a cultural plan. Cultural plans are being developed by many communities in an effort to attract creative workers but they are rarely evaluated. Evaluation using a mixed methods approach is necessary to capture all the outcomes of a cultural plan, rather than the limited scope of impacts that are captured by qualitative or quantitative analyses alone. My analysis of the quantitative variables showed some significant differences between when the plan was in place and the years prior to its creation. Interviews with key stakeholders revealed the formation of new networks as a powerful outcome of the planning process. The results allowed me to gauge the overall impact of *CreateAustin* and make some observations about the cultural planning process in general, as well as uncover new directions for future research.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I first considered the effects of the arts and culture on communities around 2008, when I lived in Columbus, Ohio. I had just begun a graduate program and was exploring possible areas for future research. In Columbus I lived near a neighborhood between downtown and my campus called the Short North. Through the early 1990s, the Short North was a rundown, unsafe neighborhood with a poor reputation. Gallery owners and artists, attracted by cheap rents, moved into the area and slowly revitalized it. The gallery owners began coordinating their openings to draw larger crowds, and over the years this monthly event, Gallery Hop, grew to enormous proportions. Soon the Short North became the hippest neighborhood in Columbus. New condo developments sprang up, and trendy bars and restaurants opened. During my residence, Gallery Hop’s identity as a “scene” centered in the newly fashionable Short North, began to eclipse its original identity as an arts event. As often happens, the Short North’s revitalization led to the standard gentrification process whereby the individuals responsible for bringing the neighborhood back to life ended up being priced out of it. Though the monthly art openings of Gallery Hop still go on today, many of the galleries have closed or moved to other neighborhoods.

After having some time to process what happened in Columbus, as well as more grounding in cultural planning and art education theory, I discovered that the experience proved to be an interesting springboard to a fascinating research topic. Whereas the Short North developed organically, with virtually no government intervention, many cities were now attempting to plan for the same process to occur. Following the success of
the Short North, the city of Columbus began to investigate policy interventions focusing on the arts as a way to redevelop other neighborhoods and the idea of cultural planning became very concrete to me. The transformation of the Short North illustrated that people and businesses were attracted to cultural amenities, and it followed that if communities put effort into developing cultural amenities in their areas, they could become vibrant city centers.

I got my chance to observe large-scale cultural planning firsthand when I moved to Texas, which was home to a city, Austin, that had already experienced its own organic cultural renaissance but which now, as I began my doctoral studies in 2010, had just finished engineering a plan to transform the city's culture. Through that plan, it was hoped, the city would undergo important social and economic transformations as well. Austin was part of an increasing trend among city planners toward using the arts and culture as a tool for development. But as an arts advocate myself, I thought that this interest in developing cultural plans reflected more than just a fashion in urban planning. A community requires some grounding in the arts before art could be a viable center around which to develop policy initiatives. Throughout time, art has drawn communities together, and I wanted to draw from a field that would give me a deep understanding of the theories and concepts surrounding art. Therefore, I choose to situate my research in the field of art education.

Art education also fascinated me for its rich and varied scholastic traditions supporting issues of human equity and fairness. This makes art education an important arena in which to situate my research. Art education also connects me to the intrinsic and transformational benefits of the arts rather than just the instrumental or
transactional benefits that I might be connected to if I isolated my research in a school of economics, urban planning or public policy. I decided to pursue research that focused on cultural planning, which is a merger of public policy and art education.

Since the early 1990s, the arts sector has struggled to maintain its value and legitimacy in the face of public controversies and funding scarcity. Increasingly arts advocates use economic arguments to prove themselves to policymakers, and policymakers have been receptive to these claims. These actors are turning to a new plan for improving their communities, a cultural plan. Cultural plans provide a way for arts advocates and policymakers to work together for mutual benefit. In a process that may take several years, cities develop plans with consultants, arts advocates, local policymakers and/or members of the community.

This dissertation focuses on cultural plans, which Markusen and Gadwa (2009) describe as an important area of research in the arts policy arena. However, the development of an academic field centered on cultural plans faces a number of challenges. For instance, the names scholars use to describe the process of cultural planning frequently change, the latest iteration being “creative placemaking.” Another challenge is that, unlike some other types of policies, cultural plans when implemented are rarely subject to any evaluation. This problem is partly due to the unique nature of each plan and to the fact that its ownership usually belongs to several groups within a city. Thus far, scholars have disregarded or overlooked developing criteria for evaluating cultural plans.

The development of cultural plans has been strongly influenced by popular scholars like Richard Florida (2002), whose claim that knowledge workers will form the
backbone of the new economy is often referred to as the “creative class thesis.” This concept relies on research that asserts that cultural amenities can address problems in economic and urban development. Arts advocates began supporting and utilizing the creative class thesis hoping to bring attention and resources to strengthen the cultural sector in their communities. However, evidence of the achievements of cultural plans is spotty and inconsistent. Though local governments are increasingly interested in this evidence (National Governors Association, 2008), few scholars work in this area. Those who do, among them Brooks, Dreeszen, Florida, Grodach, Long, Markusen, Gadwa, and Scott, come from many academic areas including the arts, economics, urban planning, and public policy. Research in this area also comes from independent think tanks on urban development such as The Urban Institute or RAND. The interdisciplinary nature of this topic requires a multifaceted understanding that includes arts and public policy. This dissertation, which evaluates Austin’s cultural plan, CreateAustin (2009), aims not only to build on the work of these scholars, but also to develop criteria for evaluating cultural plans and to position cultural plans as a meaningful tool for community development. In my graduate studies, I have taken classes in art, art education, organizational theory, policy analysis, statistics, and program evaluation. My coursework has given me the tools to successfully complete this dissertation study, which is a mixed methods evaluation of Austin’s cultural plan comprising statistical analysis of identified variables and analysis of interviews with key stakeholders.

In this chapter, I describe the problem this study addresses, as well as the study’s justification, research questions, significance, conceptual framework,
methodology, key terms, and limitations. Understanding cultural planning is important to local policy development. To understand and evaluate Austin’s cultural plan, I use a mixed methods approach incorporating statistical analysis and interview data and then analyze the collected data thematically to discover the impacts of the cultural plan. The intent of this exploratory study is that it will provide a steppingstone toward developing robust theories about cultural planning and will allow them to be tested using a variety of approaches in the future. Cultural planning may be a tool for economic development, urban redevelopment and increased social cohesion, but studies like this one are needed to help ground those claims empirically.

Background

This study represents a continuation of the work I began in my master’s thesis for Ohio State University’s Arts Policy and Administration program, which I briefly summarize. Sounds Like a Plan: Evaluating Cultural Plans (R. M. Smith, 2010) reviewed the pertinent literature on measuring the cultural sector in communities and analyzed the cultural vitality of Columbus, Ohio, and Austin, Texas. An important part of this research was a study developed to determine the cultural vitality of an area (Jackson, Kabwasa-Green, and Herranz, 2006). Cultural vitality is the permeation of arts and culture throughout multiple aspects of everyday life. Because cultural vitality resembles the state that policymakers try to create with a cultural plan, it was illuminating to examine cultural plans through the lens of cultural vitality research. To do this, I examined the indicators the study identified both before and after a cultural plan was developed, rather than as a snapshot of a city. But this dimension alone was not a
strong enough measure to capture all the effects of a cultural plan, because it captured only quantitative measures. The cultural vitality indicators study (Jackson et al., 2006) suggested using qualitative measures in future research but had no suggestions for how to execute such a study. Guided by my thesis advisors, I found a program in the European Union called Capitals of Culture, which was begun in 1985 and which had an extensive evaluation process that included both quantitative and qualitative measurements.

Combining an adaptation of the evaluation of the Capitals of Culture program with the cultural vitality indicators gave me tools to measure the outcomes of a cultural plan, specifically a proposed set of identified variables that might change in response to a successful cultural plan and a set of interview questions to pose to key stakeholders. Conducting interviews with the major actors in the cultural planning process was outside the scope of my master’s thesis but is a significant component of this dissertation study. In this study, I also apply a more sophisticated statistical analysis to identify changes in the variables that may result from the effects of a cultural plan. This dissertation tests and refines the methods developed in my master’s thesis and evaluates Austin’s cultural plan more completely.

Statement of the Problem

In the last ten years, the United States has experienced economic constriction and recession. Manufacturing and production operations have increasingly moved out of the country to places where products can be made more cheaply. Economists, journalists and urban planners have suggested that the future of the US economy is in
knowledge workers: highly educated professionals working in fields such as technology and engineering (e.g. Brooks, 2001; Pink, 2006; Florida, 2002 and 2009; Gardner, 2009). Prominent researchers in this area, including Richard Florida, posit that knowledge workers are attracted to cultural amenities. In response to this theory, numerous cities have developed cultural plans.

A cultural plan provides an overview of the cultural amenities a city currently possesses, assesses the needs of the city and the community, and produces a roadmap for future cultural developments so as to enrich the lives of its citizens, make the city stand out to tourists and businesses, and encourage economic development (R. M. Smith, 2010). Often these plans produce a vision of an ideal cultural environment for a community rather than an actionable strategy for change. They are also rarely integrated with other planning efforts in the community. Various stakeholders tend to implement parts of these cultural plans selectively and without coordination among themselves. Furthermore, these plans, when fully implemented, are rarely evaluated, and therefore their usefulness and impact are not well understood. Evaluation research on cultural planning can yield insights into the effectiveness and outcomes of this process.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to understand the impacts of CreateAustin using a new methodology to examine cultural plans. Research on cultural plans tends to favor either qualitative or quantitative data (Grodach, 2012a; Long, 2009; Evans, 2005; Hospers and Pen, 2008; Hoyman and Faricy, 2009), neither of which alone can capture
the many impacts of a cultural plan. Since cultural plans are not well evaluated, policymakers are unsure about what they can expect from one and may even depend too much on them to address problems. Expecting a cultural plan to address problems it cannot undermines the value of cultural planning and perhaps even the arts in general. By using a mixed methods approach that triangulates and contextualizes the quantitative and qualitative research, this study illuminates the full spectrum of impacts of the cultural plan for Austin, Texas. I anticipate that by using a stronger approach than has been used in other examinations of cultural plans, my study will yield valuable and usable insights into cultural planning and provide a model for other cities and communities to evaluate their cultural plans.

Rationale

Studying the cultural planning process is important for several reasons. The underlying purpose of most cultural plans is to improve a city’s economy. Changes in the economy such as job rates or production are difficult to credit directly to a cultural plan, as many environmental factors influence these results, but some research has correlated economic improvements with cultural plans (Markusen and Gadwa, 2009). Cultural plans are also developed to regenerate the urban environment and improve the community. Other research has stated that communities report network development and social cohesion resulting from the cultural planning process (ECOTEC, 2009). Cultural plans may be used to encourage or preserve an existing culture in a community. These other outcomes can be just as beneficial to the community as the economic outcomes. Building better communities and networks encourages the cultural
sector to be more self-sustaining and independent. To test the validity of the claims by Markusen and Gadwa (2009) and ECOTEC (2009) and to validate previous findings, more and repeated studies need to be completed. My study represents a step in validating previous research in the area and contributes new findings and theories about the function and outcomes of cultural plans.

Cultural plans are often undertaken as a partnership between the public and private sectors. For example, CreateAustin was developed with the city government’s Cultural Arts Division (CAD), a private consulting firm, and numerous nonprofit and community organizations. As cultural plans demand an investment of time and public funds, it is responsible for cities to evaluate whether they are an effective use of those funds. The arts sector in the US in general has faced adversity on several fronts in the last decade. The general economic downturn has forced arts advocates to make strong arguments to continue to secure funding and, like many nonprofits, the arts sector has been forced to do more with less. Controversial artworks have made some people question whether the cultural sector should be publicly funded at all. Plans developed with public funds that make grandiose claims that are never realized erode the public value of the arts and arts policy. Numerous and diverse benefits, both tangible and intangible, can arise from a cultural plan (Markusen and Gadwa, 2009), but their ties to outcomes need to be strengthened. If research can demonstrate stronger connections between cultural planning and outcomes, more cities may undertake cultural planning, resulting in a stronger cultural sector in the US.
Research Questions

Austin completed its cultural plan, CreateAustin, in 2009. The following research questions guide this study, whose aim is to present the impacts of this cultural plan:

- What plans have been developed to nurture the creative atmosphere in Austin and how have those plans been fulfilled?
- What changes have occurred in the following variables in Austin between 1998 and 2012?
  1. Artists’ jobs as a percentage of total employment
  2. Employment in arts establishments as a percentage of total employment
  3. Number of nonprofit arts organizations
  4. Number of arts establishments
  5. Arts establishments as a percentage of total establishments
  6. Nonprofit arts organizations’ revenue
  7. Nonprofit arts organizations’ assets
- What impacts on the creative community in Austin are identified by the cultural planners of CreateAustin?

Significance

In the public sector, stronger research is needed on current issues such as cultural planning. In recent years many communities have undertaken cultural plans but have little guidance in how to evaluate them. As many researchers have pointed out (Lim, 1993; Dreeszen, 1998; Throsby, 2001; Evans, 2005; Jackson et al., 2006; Markusen and Gadwa, 2009), more research in the field of cultural planning, especially
longitudinal studies, is necessary. This study could provide numerous benefits to the field of cultural planning such as greater understanding and awareness of best practices, resulting in stronger and more usable plans for communities. This research is intended to add to the growing body of evaluation research on cultural plans and serve as the basis for future research. More research on the impacts of cultural plans will shed light on how exactly a cultural plan can contribute to and change a community. With better understanding, communities can improve the ways they generate and refine cultural plans. Then policymakers, cultural planners and arts advocates will be able to develop more effective ways to employ cultural plans in their communities.

Conceptual Framework

This study is primarily informed by the fields of art education and public administration. The need for an evaluation of cultural plans is situated between these two fields. Cultural plans, at their heart, are grounded in a vibrant arts sector, yet they frequently happen within or with assistance from city governments. Evaluation unifies these two disciplines.

Evaluation is the act of assessing the value of something. Evaluation is used on everything from government policy to job performance to consumer products. Evaluation is familiar to many academic disciplines including both art education (Eisner, 1976; Murfee, 1995; Stake, 1976; Wilson, 1997) and public administration (Fitzpatrick, Sanders and Worthen, 2011). The process is a useful tool to distinguish options and as a guide for choosing among them. The assessment gained during an evaluation might be used to make comprehensive judgments about a program or policy or it might be
used to determine if a policy or program should be continued or not. Evaluation is often the first step in understanding how something works because it provides a foundational illumination on if it works or not. Research in public policy and administration often uses two types of evaluation, cost-benefit analysis and program evaluation. Cost-benefit analysis is most often employed before a policy is in place, to determine which options are most cost-effective, and thus can affect policy design (Boardman, Greenberg, Vining, and Weimer, 2006). Program evaluation is often used after a policy is implemented to gain some particular insight into the program (Fitzpatrick et al., 2011). Program evaluation can affect policy design in terms of changes made if the policy is transferred to another place or time.

Scholars have evaluated cultural plans using various methods over the years (e.g., Evans, 2005; Grodach, 2012a; Hospers and Pen, 2008; Hoyman and Faricy, 2009; Jackson, Herranz, and Kabwasa-Green, 2003; Jackson et al., 2006; Lim, 1993; Throsby, 2001; Zimmerman, 2008). Some researchers approach the issue from the angle of natural cultural districts that have materialized around a flagship institution or around a historic population (Jackson et al., 2003) in a particular community. This approach tends to emphasize the lack of policy intervention in facilitating these districts as well as their inherent sustainability. This type of research has led to the well-accepted belief among many cultural planning scholars that greater community involvement in a plan tends to produce better results (Markusen and Gadwa, 2009). Other scholarship focuses on the drivers of the creative economy: cultural workers (Markusen, Schrock and Cameron, 2004). Defining the creative class is by far one of the most challenging aspects of cultural planning research. Some criticize the definition
of a creative class, as delineated by Richard Florida (2002), that is flexible enough to include doctors and engineers (Donegan, Drucker, Goldstein, Lowe, and Malizia, 2008). Others point out that it is difficult to count artists using secondary sources such as census or Internal Revenue Service data because many artists do not make all of their living from their artwork (Markusen et al., 2004). This research is nonetheless important to cultural planning, because creative workers are both the attraction and the consumers that cities desire.

Another relevant major body of cultural planning research takes a stance in direct opposition to Florida’s claims. Florida has, without a doubt, been responsible for much of the attention and interest in cultural planning over the last 10 years. Many scholars, myself included, maintain a complicated relationship with his work. While he has spurred many communities to attempt their own cultural planning, several scholars have revealed the shakiness of his theory of the creative class (Donegan et al., 2008). Donegan et al. also note that many other scholars have attempted to recreate Florida’s work, in some cases even using his own data sets, but have been unable to replicate his results. Florida, in particular through his blog on The Atlantic, spends a great deal of time attempting to explain, bury or backpedal on previous statements he has made. He is also partly responsible for downplaying the negative externalities in his findings and has only recently starting talking about how to address these externalities.

For my own response to the research on cultural planning, I looked to scholars like Eisner and Wilson, using their theories to do more in-depth evaluations of similarly sticky issues. Art education has long grappled with evaluation by using a more robust approach that marries quantitative and qualitative research. Evaluation literature, which
initially leaned heavily on quantitative research, in general is moving towards including more qualitative research (Stufflebeam, 2001), especially for programs or policies that do not seem well explained by using only one approach. There is also the concern that evaluations are not always helpful in explaining why an outcome occurs. For example, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 calls for sanctioning, and even closing, schools that do not demonstrate adequate progress, as measured primarily through standardized test scores. But standardized test scores cannot explain why a school is failing or how to make corrections (Eisner, 1979; Stufflebeam, 2001; Vaughn and Winner, 2000). I see a parallel in cultural planning, the need for a middle ground, an evaluation with more explanatory power that helps to improve cultural plans and thus create a stronger cultural sector.

Summary of Methodology

This study is a mixed methods evaluation of Austin’s cultural plan using quantitative and qualitative data sets. This evaluation is an external, independent evaluation. No stakeholder group has asked me to evaluate the plan, nor am I affiliated with any. I chose a mixed methods approach that would allow me not only to triangulate the data and reveal dimensions not illuminated by either set alone, but also to enhance the credibility of my study within the two fields I am interested in.

I chose Austin as the backdrop for this study because it has frequently been named as a paragon of the new American city. It has a highly educated, creative population and a well-known music scene and has shown great interest in cultural planning. Other researchers have noticed these characteristics, and as a result Austin
has been the subject of several recent examinations of theories and practicalities surrounding cultural planning. Although this wealth of research on Austin promises to be helpful in building theories of cultural planning and while there have been a few studies on Austin (e.g., Grodach, 2012a; Long, 2009), by no means is the topic exhausted.

This case-study evaluation relies on both qualitative and quantitative data. For the quantitative data, I collected information from secondary sources such as US Census data and the National Center for Charitable Statistics database. I selected variables that had been researched and vetted in the literature (Jackson et al., 2006; Markusen and Gadwa, 2009). The identified variables are (a) artists’ jobs as a percentage of total employment (b) employment in arts establishments as a percentage of total employment, (c) number of nonprofit arts organizations, (d) number of arts establishments, (e) arts establishments as a percentage of total establishments, (f) nonprofit arts organizations’ revenue, and (g) nonprofit arts organizations’ assets. I examined these data for the 11 years prior to the publication of CreateAustin and for the three or four years afterward (depending on the availability of data), a study period that runs from 1998 to 2012. In this dissertation I not only examine these data individually, but also compare them using statistical analysis.

To contextualize these variables, I consider them in concert with qualitative interviews that I completed in the winter of 2013. At that time, I interviewed five individuals in person for 45 minutes to two hours, plus conducted other less formal interviews. The selection of interviewees depended on their involvement with the execution of Austin’s cultural plan. These individuals ranged from studio professionals...
to concerned citizens to journalists and city employees. I worked with the University of North Texas’ Institutional Review Board to ensure that the participants were contacted and interviewed in a manner consistent with their standards. My objective in these interviews was to identify what impacts if any Austin’s cultural plan has had on the community in addition to those captured in my quantitative analysis of the identified variables.

Finally, this study analyzes these two sets of data to determine what overall effect Austin’s cultural plan has had on the city. This information will be considered along with general information about Austin and the US between 1998 and 2012 to make overall assessments about the success of Austin’s cultural plan. The aim is to shed light on Austin’s cultural planning in ways that can be generalized to other communities.

Definition of Terms
For the purposes of the current study, it is essential to define additional terms. They are:

- Cultural plan: A cultural plan provides an overview of the cultural amenities that a city currently possesses, assesses the needs of the city and the community, and produces a roadmap for future cultural developments for the purpose of enriching the lives of its citizens, making the city stand out to tourists and businesses, and encouraging economic development (Smith, 2010).

- Cultural planner: Anyone engaged in the process of developing a cultural plan (Markusen and Gadwa, 2009). These might be city employees, elected officials, paid consultants, interested citizens, and in some cases the public at large.
• Cultural policy: In this study, cultural policy refers to governmental policies that directly affect or intersect with arts and cultural activities.

• Creative economy: The products and outputs of creative industries, including commercial and nonprofit activities; also the knowledge-based, rather than product-based, economy.

• Creative-class thesis: Attributed to Richard Florida (2002), the assumption that knowledge workers drive the creative economy and desire cultural amenities in their communities.

• CreateAustin: Austin’s cultural master plan of 2009.

• Imagine Austin: Austin’s comprehensive 30-year city development plan of 2012, which incorporated many of CreateAustin’s recommendations.

Limitations

Like any study, my dissertation has limitations. As I stated above, I am an arts advocate and believe that the arts are important to society and I bring that bias to my study. Austin, Texas, is well suited to this study because it is often cited as an example of a livable city that has attracted the knowledge workers Richard Florida and other scholars describe. Austin is the type of city other cities emulate with their own cultural plans, and therefore it is a good starting point for evaluating cultural plans in general. However, as a case study, it offers some limits to generalizability. Austin released its comprehensive cultural plan in 2009, which means that analyzable data since its release is limited to a short period, although this is the case with many public policies. That said, in public administration policymakers occasionally must make decisions with
only a few years of data at their disposal. In fact, by their very nature some policies change frequently and require responsiveness with little data.

Economic factors as a subject of study can be very complex. As a result, the data I examined may reflect general trends rather than economic responses to the cultural plan. In the last 10 years or so, the US economy has been volatile and experienced periods of recession. This study is meant to gauge the impact of a cultural plan, rather than forecast a city’s entire economy, but obviously the overall economy impacts the variables identified and is not controlled for in the analysis. Although a weak economy may reduce the impact of the cultural plan, it is still important to collect, report, and analyze data on existing cultural plans to help shape the body of literature on cultural planning.

Summary

This mixed methods evaluative study of the cultural plan in Austin, Texas, centers on statistical analysis and interviews with cultural planners to get their firsthand accounts of the results of the plan. I believe that cultural plans are an important tool that communities can use to develop their cultural sectors and will continue to be important as the economy recovers. Fully understanding how communities conceptualize this process and what they believe works and does not work is instrumental to the success of these initiatives. At this time, there is little research specifically on this aspect of the arts sector. The first step towards gaining valuable insight into the ways cultural plans work is by in-depth examination of established plans.
such as Austin’s. My research is well positioned to strengthen communities’ future understanding of and use of cultural plans.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Evaluation and Cultural Planning

Cultural planning has been of increasing interest to researchers as the US is attempting to replace the loss of manufacturing jobs with the so-called knowledge economy (Pink, 2005). Knowledge workers, typically associated with highly educated, tech-savvy young people, are thought to be interested in the cultural amenities their communities offer (Florida 2002 and 2009; Zimmerman, 2008). Striving to differentiate themselves from other cities and to attract these workers, cities turn to cultural planning to ensure that they will continue to have a vibrant cultural environment. To understand how to evaluate a cultural plan such as Austin’s, this literature review will consider the following areas: program evaluation, its strengths, its limitations and approaches to program evaluation that will be appropriate to my study; and evaluation of cultural plans, the purpose for conducting evaluation, its assistance in determining causal relationships, and some literature specific to Austin. The purpose of this literature review is to understand the ways evaluation has been applied to cultural plans and determine if a stronger method can be developed. It is important to look at wider selection of evaluation literature, such as cases from educational policy, to uncover methods that can be transferred to cultural planning evaluation. It is also important to understand the results of other examinations of cultural plans to guide my research. To begin, I first briefly discuss evaluation as the backdrop to understanding program evaluation, its various applications and iterations.
Evaluation

Evaluation is a concept with which most people are familiar. We evaluate everything from consumer products to education. We receive evaluation in school in the form of grades and test scores. Many of us are evaluated on our job performance. We rely on evaluations to measure our achievements or we look to evaluations to help us make decisions when, for example, we use consumer reviews before purchasing a product. Evaluations help us to make sense of our options and to choose the most efficacious. In the arts, evaluation helps us to make value judgments about works of art. In public policy, it helps to determine if government adequately addresses social issues and allocates public funds wisely. Despite the recent proliferation of cultural planning initiatives, there have been few attempts to evaluate them. In thinking about the evaluation of cultural plans, I discuss different types of evaluation, consider the uses and purposes of evaluation, critique several case studies pertinent to the issues in evaluation, and address issues in evaluation specific to cultural planning.

Evaluation can be approached from a variety of theoretical positions depending on the intended use of the evaluation and the availability of data. Uses of evaluation include making comprehensive judgments about program quality and characteristics, making decisions about continuing a program or policy, and determining levels of stakeholder participation. Researchers Fitzpatrick, Sanders, and Worthen (2011) have explained that evaluations focus on comprehensive judgments about a program. To do this they examined two approaches, expertise- and consumer-oriented. They described the expertise-oriented approach as the first model of formal evaluation. This type of
evaluation approach utilizes someone with specialized knowledge to examine and make a determination about a program. One example of expertise-oriented evaluation is the accreditation of educational systems. To receive accreditation, schools and universities must undergo a thorough review by education experts that encompasses many different aspects of the institution or program. Consumer-oriented evaluation approaches give information to the public about products they may purchase. These evaluations may be undertaken by someone who is knowledgeable about the type of product, someone who is knowledgeable about evaluating products in general, or a layperson. With the increasing use of technology and the Internet, just about anyone can evaluate consumer products in the form of reviews on the website of their favorite online retailer.

Program Evaluation

Program evaluation as most commonly used today in the academic, nonprofit and government sectors began developing in the 1960s (Fitzpatrick et al., 2011). Currently, program evaluation takes many, many forms and is used in virtually every field from healthcare to transportation. Because so many different types of program evaluation exist, knowing which to use is of paramount importance. If experts or others apply the wrong iteration of program evaluation, their evaluation may reveal nothing useful about a program or, worse, may misrepresent the effects of the program. Program evaluation is important, but it also expends precious resources, therefore it cannot be taken lightly.

Broadly, program evaluation can be broken down into two types: formative and summative. The two categories are problematic, because they sometimes closely
resemble each other. Further complicating matters is the fact that there can be formative criteria in a summative evaluation and vice versa. In general formative evaluation takes place while a program is in process, and summative evaluation examines it after completion. Formative evaluation is on a smaller scale, informal, and frequently undertaken by internal evaluators such as program stakeholders, usually on a regular basis. In contrast, summative evaluation is larger-scale and is typically done by external evaluators, either regularly (such as annually) or as a one-time undertaking. But in many cases the boundaries of the categories are murky. For example, many nonprofit organizations conduct annual reviews. They may be done by internal employees or external evaluators. The review may be a large undertaking and adhere to certain dates (such as the fiscal year), but in many cases the nonprofit’s regular activities remain ongoing during the review. Whether this type of evaluation falls into the formative or summative category is unclear, and the answer, as often is the case in public policy, is: it depends. As a result of this murkiness, policymakers and practitioners are typically less interested in these categories than are scholars, who sometimes find that the division between them yields theoretical insight and points toward conducting a particular type of evaluation.

Scriven (1996) states the purpose of evaluation above all else is to determine the value of an object. Determining the value of an object, or in this case a program or policy, is essential if policymakers are to make informed decisions about what to endorse, fund, or reform. The main reason for this sort of analysis is that policymakers cannot tell if a program or policy is good just by its composition and their observations of its results. First of all, it can be extremely difficult to isolate and quantify the impact of a
program or policy in the real world where many factors outside its scope may be an influence. Some programs are extremely expensive and yield few results. Sometimes policymakers have to decide whether to continue to fund a program despite its expense, because another policy solution is not available, the program is inappropriate for the free market, or its impacts are determined to be worth the expense. Evaluation often establishes whether an expensive program is worth implementing despite its costs.

Different types of evaluation tools can affect a policy before or after it is implemented. Cost-benefit analysis (CBA) helps policymakers to understand if a policy is worth implementing as determined by the Kaldor-Hicks principle, which states that a policy whose benefits outweigh its costs is deemed efficiency-increasing and helps to maximize social welfare (K. B. Smith, 2008). In turn, this principle is based on fulfilling the Pareto criterion of selecting an alternative that can make at least one person better off without making anyone else worse off (Boardman et al., 2006). CBA allows policy analysts to determine if a policy would meet these criteria and should be implemented. CBA can be difficult and costly to undertake, but if used properly it is a powerful tool in ex ante policy analysis.

While the aim of program evaluation is to inform the implementation of a policy, it also might indirectly affect policy design. Program evaluation helps evaluators to understand if a program accomplishes what it was designed to accomplish and to understand how it does that. The outcome of a program evaluation often leads to changes in policy implementation due to greater understanding of how the program is or is not working. If an aspect of a policy is found to be successful through program evaluation it may be transferred to other policies, affecting policy design indirectly.
Therefore, the insights and understandings yielded in program evaluation might be used to design future policies or to expand existing policies. When this occurs, it is known as policy convergence (Bennett, 1991). While the insights that come from program evaluation often drive policy convergence, sometimes it occurs with policymakers having little to no understanding of the outcomes or impacts of a program. In fact, that seems to be the case for cultural plans. Many communities undertake cultural planning despite little concrete research on or evaluation of its effectiveness and a poor understanding of whether a type of cultural plan that worked in another place and time can be transferred to their own place and time. A community typically bases its desire to emulate the policies of another community on the perception that the policy has benefited the original community. Program evaluation can illuminate whether the policy has actually benefited the original community by measuring its outputs and outcomes in a consistent way, and then determining whether the policy will benefit the community that wishes to implement a similar plan. The major points of consideration in a program evaluation are usually four of five areas around which policies converge: goals, content, instruments, and outcomes (Bennett, 1991). The fifth area, style, is less likely to be relevant to program evaluation.

Adding Qualitative Dimensions to Evaluations

Social science research methods were developed in large part by modeling laboratory research methods, which can prove problematic in a real-world setting. In recent decades, the use of broader methods in program evaluation, including qualitative evaluation, has gained acceptance in the scholarly community (LeCompte, 1994). In
1994, the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation published new standards for evaluating programs, titled *Program Evaluation Standards*. Although qualitative research had gained credibility in the educational sector in the years leading up to 1994, many researchers welcomed the endorsement implied by the Committee’s authoritative development of standards for qualitative evaluation.

LeCompte (1994) has written usefully of the struggle to incorporate qualitative methods in social science research. She located the problems that qualitative research has had in gaining credibility in its loose definitions and in the misunderstanding that qualitative research does not include quantification. Qualitative research in education has gained popularity because quantitative research is often unable to prove causality, and the findings often conflict with educators’ own experiences (LeCompte, 1994, p. 31). Influences from cultural anthropology have led educational case studies to resemble anthropological studies. To improve the likelihood of acceptance and the validity of qualitative research, LeCompte advised planning for the same rigorous foundation as one would find in quantitative studies by having solid, well-grounded research questions and then using the collected data to tell a story.

In a 2001 monograph, Stufflebeam, who has written extensively on evaluation and frequently collaborates with Scriven, reflected on the evaluation methods of the twentieth century and, using standards based on the Joint Committee’s 1994 *Program Evaluation Standards*, recommended nine standards for evaluators to continue to use and develop. In this part of the literature review, I discuss research on four of those standards that are pertinent to my study, including Stufflebeam’s own research: case
study, connoisseurship and criticism, and consumer-oriented and client-centered approaches.

**Case Study**

Stufflebeam (2001) provided overviews of all of the evaluation approaches he tested including case study. Describing it, Stufflebeam stated:

Program evaluation that is based on a case study is a focused, in-depth description, analysis, and synthesis of a particular program or other object. [...] A case study program evaluation’s main purpose is to provide stakeholders and their audiences with an authoritative, in-depth, well-documented explication of the program. (p. 34)

Case study evaluation, as Stufflebeam defined it, looks at the contexts, operations, and outcomes of a program by utilizing multiple methods and collecting and analyzing both qualitative and quantitative information. Looking at multiple aspects of a program can provide an overall characterization of the program. Stufflebeam’s characterization of case study evaluation is sound, but he also presents conflicting information. While saying that case study evaluation’s purpose may not be to make overall judgments about a program (pp. 35-36), he also cites as a potential weakness with this method the difficulty in collecting enough information to make overall judgments. It seems unnecessary to point out a pitfall of an approach as something the approach is not intended to do, leading me to believe that while Stufflebeam acknowledges that case study evaluation is not always employed to make comprehensive judgments, it often is.
Eisner developed the second standard, criticism and connoisseurship as used in
education (1976). A leading figure in art education, Eisner has for more than 30 years
advocated for the use of qualitative forms of evaluation, developing the criticism and
connoisseurship evaluation approach. His work is especially important because while
his training and teaching are grounded in art education, his methods apply to the field of
education in general. His position on this method was influenced by the field of fine arts
and the problems he perceived with other forms of evaluation (Eisner, 1979).
Approaching evaluation using the framework of the arts, Eisner developed the concept
of educational criticism and connoisseurship (Stufflebeam, 2001). Eisner argued that
the scientific method was inadequate for fully evaluating education and looked for tools
that fell outside that scope to evaluate educational programs (Eisner, 1976). His goal
was to better understand the overall outcomes of a program, rather than the outputs
that are most frequently measured in educational evaluation such as student test
scores. This approach aided understanding of teaching and education in subjects such
as music and the visual arts, for which there are often no standardized tests. Eisner
(1976) stated that heavily quantitative, scientific-method-backed evaluations do not
produce easily usable information about what works best and what does not, and thus
are not helpful in teacher and curricular improvement. Eisner (1979) argued that the
overall purpose of educational evaluation was not just to understand educational
programs’ outcomes, but to improve them.

Eisner (1976) spoke of four major consequences of applying the scientific
method to education: (a) the quest for absolutes minimizes individuals, (b) a focus on
achievement in the future undermines the present, (c) the objectification of knowledge results in detachment, and (d) the use of standardized goals causes an aspiration to uniformity. Though Eisner made these observations over thirty years ago, they remain salient. Pink (2005) has picked up these threads by asserting that creativity is the key to the new economy and business leaders desire creativity and innovation in the skills of new employees. As Eisner (1976) pointed out, the methods used to evaluate programs are of utmost importance, because over time they shape the way programs are executed. Evaluation methods that were initially intended to assess programs have come to alter them. For example, in the arena of education, standardized testing is so heavily weighted in evaluation that there is the criticism that teachers now “teach to the test.” In the nonprofit world, the United Way’s outcome-based assessment has had a tremendous effect on how nonprofits operate, to the point where nonprofits develop only those programs that have measurable outcomes. To secure resources, organizations have to be able to demonstrate the efficacy of what they do. The intention of this method is to result in better uses of resources, but it also results in organizations’ limiting programming only to what they can prove to funders.

In Eisner’s early articles and presentations, he detailed how and why he developed this framework (Eisner, 1979). Working with graduate students, he sought a method that better explained educational programs and provided direction to understand the causal relationship between education and outcomes (Eisner, 1979, p. 11). Using Aristotelian principles, Eisner positioned evaluation as the way humans come to know things. Positivists define cognitive as pertaining to words and numbers, things outside the sensory modalities. Yet the most basic way humans evaluate is by
using their senses. Some sensory modalities are better for understanding things than others. Eisner used the example of imagining one’s own mother’s face (1979, pp. 12-13). Describing it to others might happen in various forms—verbally, visually, or in dance, to name a few—but some of those forms are better suited to the task than others. Eisner believed that using a positivist framework of understanding that excluded sensory modalities was a dangerously limiting way to understand cognition, knowledge acquisition, and ultimately education (1979, p. 14). He defined four points of importance in his development of qualitative evaluation techniques (1979): (a) the limiting nature of positivist scientific techniques, (b) the importance of the sensory modalities, (c) the idea that concepts are formed in the imagination using sensory modalities, and (d) the idea that expressing these concepts requires a system of symbols.

The work of Eisner and his students developed into what he termed educational criticism and educational connoisseurship (1976). The concepts of criticism and connoisseurship are familiar to those working in the arts, because they are the most common methods of evaluation applied there, although both exist in many other realms. Educational connoisseurship and criticism are expertise-oriented approaches (Stufflebeam, 2001). In this approach, evaluators must have extensive knowledge of the content they are evaluating. This knowledge is acquired through a combination of education, experience and reflection on that experience. Used to determine the value or worth of a program, this approach is useful because it develops a more holistic view of the content under evaluation and encourages consideration from multiple perspectives.
Connoisseurship and criticism aim for a broad understanding of a topic through perception of obvious and subtle elements and the relationships between them, whether that topic is cultural policy, education, football or truffles. The concepts of connoisseurship and criticism are related (Eisner, 1979). Criticism cannot exist without a foundation of connoisseurship. Connoisseurship is the art of appreciation, which in this context means to possess two main competencies: the ability to recognize the full worth of something, rather than merely liking it, and the ability to distinguish among like objects and to compare them. To be a connoisseur, one must know the qualities something can possess and recognize how these things work with and against each other. Just as connoisseurship does not imply a love for all objects that fall within the topic of interest, neither is criticism is an inherently negative evaluation. Criticism refers to expressing those qualities and relationships that others may have overlooked and encouraging others to see differently, regardless of their feelings on the topic (Eisner, 1979). Criticism therefore is an educational process. In terms of evaluation, the critic is the instrument, and most of the labor of processing takes place within his or her mind relying on his or her expertise (Stufflebeam, 2001). The purpose of criticism is to expand the possibilities for perceptions of the topic or thing rather than to come to a single assessment of it. To be a critic, one must have the same broad expertise as the connoisseur. However, the two roles differ in that critics disseminate their judgments more publicly than do connoisseurs, who share their expertise with a limited audience. For example, evaluators are likely to be critics. They assess an organization or program and make that information available, often to the general public. In contrast,
philanthropists are more likely to be connoisseurs. They decide to contribute to programs based on what they know and like about the programming or organization.

**Consumer-oriented**

Consumer-oriented evaluations are the third of Stufflebeam’s four standards that I use to inform this dissertation. Scriven, like Eisner, is an important figure in evaluation. He has written extensively on formative and summative evaluation, the implications of different types of evaluation, and metaevaluation. Scriven’s work has specifically dealt with consumer-oriented evaluations (Stufflebeam, 2001). Scriven (1996) applied the principles of consumer-oriented approaches to program evaluation. Consumer-oriented evaluation is grounded in the idea that consumers, which can include taxpayers in the case of public programs, deserve excellent products and services (Fitzpatrick et al., 2011). It is objectivist, in the philosophical sense, while acknowledging that the answer may be extremely difficult to root out. This type of evaluation requires that evaluators analyze information on the product (the program) and determine if it is the best choice among the alternatives (Stufflebeam, 2001). Scriven’s approach (1996), like Eisner’s, relies on expertise to inform these judgments. Consumer-oriented evaluation is applied to finished products or programs. Consumer-oriented evaluation can be useful in public policy settings to address whether tax revenues are being spent wisely. This approach is comprehensive as it considers all aspects of a program. Decision-making relies on the expertise of the evaluator, which means that the evaluator’s credentials are crucial. The evaluation is difficult to undertake, in the case of public programs or policies, if information is not readily available to the evaluator (Stufflebeam, 2001).
Client-centered

The last of Stufflebeam’s standards of evaluation I wish to discuss is the client-centered approach (2001). Robert Stake (1976) wrote of evaluating arts programs and looking beyond measurable outcomes to consider their complete and intrinsic values. He stated, “[the evaluator] should not presume that only measurable outcomes testify to the worth of the program” (p. 118). He advocated a qualitative evaluation technique where the evaluator is the instrument, processing data collected from primary stakeholders. Like Eisner, he argued that conventional evaluation reports did little to convey the essence of a program and suggested that alternative reports be employed and sensory details be communicated. He diverges from Scriven’s objectivist position, instead asserting that while there is no one true value to uncover, the values of a program should be sussed out and measured (p. 126-127). Stake’s approach, by centering on clients instead of consumers, also differs from Scriven’s in other ways. Client-centered approaches put the interests of the clients, that is, those being evaluated, first. This approach includes clients in the evaluator role, rather than relying solely on an outsider’s expertise (Stake, 1976). This type of evaluation does not result in one objective conclusion, instead leaving the interpretation up to the eye of the beholder (Stufflebeam, 2001). The basis of this type of evaluation is equity and fairness to the clients, who, in the case of a cultural plan, are likely to be the citizens of the city governed by the plan.
Evaluating Cultural Plans

Evaluating cultural plans can be a difficult area to tackle. Some scholars important to the field of cultural planning are Dreeszen, Florida, Gadwa, Jackson, Kabwasa-Green, Herranz, and Markusen. According to Jackson, Herranz, and Kabwasa-Green (2003), cultural plans can be powerful tools that attract businesses and tourists and improve social cohesion in neighborhoods, but Dwyer (2008) warns that overstated or unsubstantiated claims about their benefits can make city planners leery of them. Some researchers have tried to evaluate cultural policies based on variables such as employment rates, but many aspects of a cultural plan, such as the increased public value of the arts, resist quantitative measures (Doyle, 2010). However, researchers and policymakers often want to see this sort of data to demonstrate the success of a program. To provide them with this information, evaluation of cultural planning needs to be done routinely and be undertaken in a way that captures the nuances of cultural planning, something that has not yet been accomplished in the scholarship.

Strom (2003) has examined the concept of arts-initiated urban renewal, an area closely related to cultural planning. The tradition of locating cultural organizations in city centers and urban planners’ recent interest in attracting the creative class has led to a heavy interaction between arts policy and urban planning. A strategy that has become more and more common is to renovate or relocate a flagship cultural institution to spur urban renewal. To validate her assertions, Strom used case studies of four American cities, Newark, Philadelphia, Seattle, and Charlotte, to demonstrate the successes and failures of this strategy. Strom pointed out that legislators support arts-initiated urban
renewal to achieve direct goals and indirect goals. The direct goal is to create a local entertainment industry. Entertainment in this sense refers to commercial entertainment such as music and movies, as well as nonprofit entertainment such as ballet or symphony performances. However, in general few people are directly employed in these industries compared to the overall workforce, even in cities with strong reputations in the arts. This is where the indirect goal becomes key to benefiting the city. Businesses, conventions, and tourists look to visit or settle in cities that have distinctive features like entertainment districts. Having a strong arts industries sector can be seen as a competitive advantage and a means of differentiation from other cities (Strom, 2003). Improving a city’s cultural environment and reputation so as to attract the creative class is the indirect goal, and the even more indirect goal is to improve the general quality of life of an area.

Another pertinent study to consider here is The Artistic Dividend Revisited, which examined where artists live and work (Markusen et al., 2004). This report continues research begun in 2003 on the contributions of artists to local and regional economies by studying artists’ migration. Markusen et al. used US Census data from 2000 to compare the 29 largest metro areas and their artistic makeup by population and discipline. The research reveals how using US Census data can pose problems to arts researchers, because it may fail to fully capture all artists working in the field. Artists may tend to make their livings in other ways and thus might not identify themselves as “artist” on their census or tax forms, resulting in their underrepresentation in census data.
Markusen et al. (2004) demonstrated how artists have historically been pulled to three cities, the “big three”: New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco, arguably the most important cultural centers in the US. Having so many artistic activities geographically concentrated has a symbiotic relationship with tourism. The authors found a second set of cities have emerged as important arts centers drawing higher concentrations of artistic workers (Markusen et al., 2004, p. 3). These cities are Washington, DC; Seattle; Boston; Minneapolis-St. Paul; Orange, California; Miami; Portland, Oregon; and San Diego. Several of these cities are fairly close to the arts “big three.” What makes these cities most attractive besides available work are the artistic community and residents’ access to cultural activities, funding and other resources. Cost of living in the “big three” is quite high, and with artists being paid relatively less than other similarly skilled workers, that can be a large factor in artistic migration to these secondary cities. The authors found that concentrations were not the same across all artistic disciplines and that no one city attracted more artists in all disciplines (Markusen et al. 2004). This research suggests that there is something specific about a place and its artistic community at work. For example, the authors found that architects are most concentrated in San Francisco, Seattle and Boston. They also found that designers have highest concentrations in New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles. Advertising clusters were found in Chicago and New York, cities where large advertising firms have resided historically.

The authors did not find a clear relationship between individual artists and artistic firms so as to establish whether artists or their employers arrived first in these cities; that is, the research was inconclusive about whether high concentrations of artists
caused firms to spring up or whether the presence of firms drew artists to the cities. For this reason, deriving policy recommendations from this analysis is difficult. Each community should strive to understand its individual needs and strengths to formulate policy based on those understandings. What the research of Markusen et al. indicates is that there is no one-size-fits-all strategy that can be applied to creative economy initiatives. The authors advocate the importance of artists at all levels and state that even small towns can benefit from a strong artistic community.

One of the most influential works for cities undertaking cultural plans is Richard Florida’s *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002). Florida, an urban planning scholar, claimed positive correlations between economic growth and factors he identified as talent, tolerance and technology. A large body of research has arisen in direct response to test Florida’s claims. The results are mixed, in that many scholars found that some of Florida’s claims were credible but others were not (Hoyman and Faricy, 2008; Donegan, Drucker, Goldstein, Lowe, and Malizia, 2008; Zimmerman, 2008; Hospers and Pen, 2008). Increasingly, cities are developing cultural plans to differentiate themselves in a challenging economic climate. City strategies for using a cultural slant to stand out have been in vogue since the publication of *The Rise of the Creative Class*. However, methods for evaluating these strategies are underdeveloped, and expectations for how a cultural plan will impact a city may be exaggerated. City governments need to be aware that it is unrealistic to expect a plan to address and improve every aspect of culture. Transforming a downtown into a bustling cultural district is not just a matter of settling upon the right plan. To this end, Stevenson has stated, “if cultural planning is to play any part in achieving socially progressive outcomes, then culture must actually
mean something, but it cannot mean everything” (2004, p. 129, original emphasis).

Markusen and Gadwa (2009) argued similarly that, in cultural planners’ excitement over the perceived outcomes of a cultural plan, what seems to be overlooked is weak explanation of the causal link between economic growth and cultural plans. This trend of more cautious scholarship has alerted me to the importance of understanding why certain cultural plans have succeeded.

**Why Evaluate Cultural Plans?**

As previously stated, evaluation can be used to examine parts of a program or process or make comprehensive judgments about it as a whole. Public policy is a field that relies increasingly on evaluation to inform decisions (Sanderson, 2002). Evaluation can be a high-stakes process, because failure to demonstrate significant, positive, quantifiable results may result in the (premature) termination of a policy or program. Bartik and Bingham pointed out, “if a program is not evaluated, one can always claim success” (1997, p. 20). They also cited the advice of economists Gary Burtless and Robert Haveman: "if you advocate a particular policy reform or innovation, do not press to have it tested" (Burtless and Haveman, 1984, cited by Bartik and Bingham, 1997, p. 20). What these researchers have revealed is that the evaluation process does not always capture the full impacts of a program or policy. Researchers are often either frustrated or motivated by this fact; they struggle with trying to communicate what they see about a program or policy in rigorous, empirical data that can be validated by others in their fields. But failure to evaluate a program can also have significant consequences, from the continuation of an ineffective policy or program to the missed
opportunity for strengthening or expanding a successful program. Without evaluation, it may be difficult to understand why a program or policy succeeds or fails.

Despite the efforts of respected researchers such as Eisner, Stake and Wilson (who will be discussed at length in Chapter 3), the field of art education struggles with its position on evaluation. Many arts educators argue that evaluation, such as assigning grades to student work, is antithetical to art education. But with cuts to educational budgets and recent policy developments such as No Child Left Behind, arts educators realize that if they do not determine multiple ways to prove their worth, the subject will be lost altogether. In the field of arts policy, there is less contention about whether or not evaluation should be used. Instead, the struggle centers on using evaluation effectively. Part of the problem lies in the fact that few scholars receive training specifically in arts policy; rather, scholars of arts policy have training in economics, sociology, art education, public policy and administration, and many other fields, within which training in statistics and various evaluation methods vary greatly.

Confounding the lack of consistent training arts policy researchers receive and methods they use in evaluation is that they are unsure what to evaluate. Determining the best evaluative criteria for arts policies has been the subject of several articles (Donegan et al., 2008; Doyle, 2010; Dwyer, 2008; Evans, 2005; Hospers and Pen, 2008; Hoyman and Faricy, 2009; Jackson et al., 2003; Jackson et al., 2006; Lim, 1993; Nielsen, 2003; Strom, 2003; Throsby, 2004; and Zimmerman, 2008), as well as one of the goals of my dissertation. While there are many different types of arts policies (on taxes, copyrights, and freedom of expression, to name a few), I focus on cultural planning. Cultural planning is an arts policy because in its most common form it is
shaped in some part by local government and receives at least some public funding. Many common threads and practices unite in the cultural planning arena, but not all cultural plans are the same. This variation poses challenges to evaluating cultural plans, as it is difficult to build cumulative knowledge or to know what to extrapolate from one plan to the next.

Determining the Direction of Causal Relationships

One of the greatest challenges in research is establishing causal relationships. Different fields have different standards for proving causality using statistics, inference, or other methods. This is a familiar problem to those working in the arts. Many arts educators and scholars have a deep-seated belief that the arts help students to do better in school. Any number of versions of this argument surface in the literature: The arts allow children more expression (Thomas, 1951); participation in the arts improves attendance and graduation rates (Barry, Taylor, and Walls, 1990); the arts engage children who use different learning styles (Murfee, 1995); and participation in the arts increases comprehension in other academic areas and improves test scores, including SAT scores (Vaughn and Winner, 2000). These assertions have become the backbone of advocacy efforts. Many of these arguments seem true because it is not hard to find an art teacher who can give a first-person account of a student with academic or behavioral challenges who appeared to improve through participation in the arts. These arguments are not limited to scholarship on education. “The Arts = jobs” recently became one of the advocacy messages put forward by Americans for the Arts, a national nonprofit organization that promotes the arts and art education. In fact, much
of the cultural planning that occurs in the US rests on an argument of improved economic climate. Complicating matters is that many studies reveal only correlation between the two tested variables rather than causation.

In the public sector resources are limited and competitive. In most cases when government funding is involved, it needs to be justified. While it would be shortsighted to eliminate arts programs because no one has yet definitively proved that art classes improve a student’s SAT score by 60 points, it is nonetheless difficult to devise compelling arguments for any of the other benefits that art education may provide. One of the most referenced works on the benefits of cultural planning is *Arts and Economic Prosperity*, the 2003 study that Americans for the Arts commissioned. Yet, as Sterngold (2004) argued the study used gross measures rather than net measures, an important failing. When these claims are tested empirically, correlation is the best relationship among the variables that researchers can find, if they find any at all.

Surprisingly little attention is paid to the causality problem that these strategies seem to be built on, especially outside of the academy. Richard Florida, whose work is often cited by researchers, perhaps mistakenly (Grodach, 2012b), as the reason for recent widespread interest in cultural planning, makes “if you build it they will come” claims, encouraging the development of the cultural amenities that knowledge workers supposedly desire with the expectation that if the workers are there, business will follow. While it is likely that businesses factor in the presence of a workforce when deciding where to locate a new enterprise, it is just as likely that cities build up cultural amenities in response to the desires of workers who were already there or came for the jobs. In
other words, do cultural amenities attract workers and businesses, or do businesses and workers attract cultural amenities?

UCLA professor Allen J. Scott addressed this issue in his work on urban planning and the creative city. He has suggested that ideally, urban developments do encourage creative workers in different sectors as well as the production workers needed to drive these creative businesses, while acknowledging that cities that historically have a cultural identity in place have the advantage (2006). Scott was careful to point out that city planners who envision what a creative economy might look like in their city must also consider the large pools of menial labor essential to its functioning (p. 6). He has used the fashion and entertainment industries in Los Angeles as examples to illustrate this idea (Scott, 2006, p. 9). These sectors of the economy have succeeded in bringing highly educated creative workers to the area, but they also require many minimum-wage workers to drive the sector. According to Scott, the expectation that bringing the “creative economy” to a city will produce an ecosystem composed solely of highly educated, creative workers is not realistic.

Scott (2006) is also cautious about investments in cultural amenities as a way to attract knowledge workers. He stated,

Any city that lacks a system of employment able to provide these individuals with appropriate and durable means of earning a living is scarcely in a position to induce significant numbers of them to take up permanent residence there, no matter what other encouragements policy makers may offer. (p. 11)

He has noted that because of the interactions in urban environments, policymakers must address all levels of that system if they expect to nurture the creative economy. That is, they must encourage the simultaneous development of the workforce and the urban environment, because these components work together. Scott did not
discouraged the use of cultural planning as a way to foster the creative economy, but he was skeptical that it can be artificially developed, postulating that this will encourage only an unstable and inequitable economy.

Zimmerman (2008) considers cultural planning from a critical theory perspective, that is, attempting to uncover those who are marginalized by the process, and has borne out Scott's assertions. Zimmerman (2008) compared Milwaukee's creative economy strategies with its previous economic development strategies. He found that while the creative economy strategies had a measure of success, they also contributed to growing class inequality in Milwaukee. Zimmerman has rightly revealed that, as with any good policy analysis, cultural planners must consider the negative externalities and unintended consequences that a policy may generate, difficult considerations many are eager to skip over in the planning process.

The question that emerges from the literature on evaluation is how to properly capture the benefits (if any) of a program and determine if they are enough to continue the program. Moreover, when discussing social problems, it is difficult to reduce the outcomes to just one program or incident. Clearly quantitative data is valuable and necessary, but it is not sufficient. The cultural implications of a plan or program cannot always be reduced to quantitative measurements (Throsby, 2001). The simplest way to determine if a program is effective is by asking managers and involved parties what they think (Bartik and Bingham, 1997). Many scholars (Dreeszen, 1998; Jackson et al., 2006; Markusen and Gadwa, 2009) working in the field of cultural planning recommend or use mixed methods approaches such as those employed by Eisner and Wilson, incorporating interviews, questionnaires and/or surveys with their recommendations for
quantitative data. Evaluation techniques that accurately capture the impacts of cultural planning are yet to be fully developed and tested. Teasing out these causal relationships is the primary goal of my dissertation.

Literature on Austin, Texas

Of particular interest to me in reviewing the literature on cultural planning and evaluation is research that has already been completed on Austin, Texas. In 2001, the City of Austin commissioned an economic analysis and contracted with a public policy consulting firm in Austin called Texas Perspectives (TXP) to do a study on music and the Austin economy. It produced a report titled *The Role of Music in the Austin Economy* (Texas Perspectives, 2001). While this study focuses on only one aspect of the cultural sector in Austin, its methodology is very similar to the one used for my dissertation study. To produce its report, TXP contextualized quantitative data previously collected by the Texas Music Office and the Texas Department of Economic Development. The quantitative data TXP collected and reported were the number of music-related businesses in Texas cities, the output impact generated by music-related businesses in Austin in dollars, the employment impact of music-related businesses in Austin in number of jobs, and the impact of music-related tourism in Austin. TXP adhered to the Texas Music Office’s definition of “music-related businesses” as well as its ten categories for such businesses: education, industry services, music videos and media, musical instruments and equipment, recording services, record production, distribution and sales, commercial music, tour services, and venues. Qualitative data consisted of interviews that the Austin Convention and Visitors Bureau conducted with
stakeholders in other communities (Orlando, Nashville, New Orleans, and Seattle) and interviews that TXP conducted with Austin stakeholders. The intent of the report was to establish the impact of the music industry on Austin’s economy and make recommendations about what could be done to ensure those impacts remained positive and strong.

This report provided compelling evidence for why qualitative data is essential to supply additional context. The interview data suggested that the proximity of creative workers and knowledge workers drawn by Austin’s music scene generated social tensions. The upwardly mobile, highly educated and, presumably, highly compensated technology workers, drawn to Austin’s reputation as a hip city, were pricing out the musicians that facilitated that environment. The musicians suffered a one-two punch because the tech workers consumed the affordable housing, and increased real estate values caused commercial real estate costs to escalate, which affected club owners, who were now less able to afford the services of the musicians. The study found that Austin musicians were also architects of their own demise, in that an abundance of supply depresses the price of the good supplied. In other words, musicians in Austin lost value because there were so many musicians in Austin. The interview data demonstrated the increasing pressure on the individuals generating the scene that was, and continues to be, beneficial to the city. Without that data, one might get the impression that the sector is healthy and thriving. At the time the report was completed that seemed to be the case, but it also pointed to the possibility that if gentrification continued its course in Austin, musicians might be forced to seek out a new community, and Austin would lose that scene that is so attractive to knowledge workers.
This report has illuminated another issue pertinent to cultural planning. While Austin has noncommercial music, such as the nonprofit symphony orchestra and opera, the public focus has been on the commercial music sector: popular musicians and the bars and clubs where they play. The issue then becomes how (or if) it is appropriate for the local government to subsidize this commercial sector. If the issue were nonprofit cultural institutions, there would be little question about the appropriateness of funneling tax revenue or other government money to the entities themselves. Because the government does not generally parcel out funds to commercial businesses such as bars, if it is going to have a role in encouraging the commercial sector, it will probably be as tax incentives and other policy tools. These might include reconsideration of regulations and ordinances as well as tax incentives or special district designations. But to fully understand the creative community in Austin, a similar type of study needs to be completed for the entire cultural sector.

It is essential to return to Richard Florida in this discussion of literature on Austin. His research is fairly recent, first published in the mass market in 2002. Similar ideas on variations of the creative class thesis have circulated for years; one of Florida’s self-professed inspirations is Jane Jacobs’ *The Death and Life of the Great American Cities* (1961). David Brooks’ *Bobos in Paradise* (2000) was also a precursor to Florida’s work. Florida’s work is probably so popular because of the contrast in his writing style with other, less readable research on urban planning, his research being published in the mass market rather than in an academic one, and his several celebrity endorsements. His books combine anecdotes and personal stories written in an almost idyllic prose with his quantitative indices on the tolerance, technology and talent present in cities.
Long (2009) asserts that Florida’s work has value, in that it has successfully identified locations where innovation has thrived such as Austin, San Francisco, Seattle and Boston. Where Florida’s work becomes shaky is in the leap he takes in claiming that the environments of those places can be replicated by other cities with certain types of strategies and investments.

Florida’s identification of Austin as the paragon of the new American city is certainly responsible for much of the attention Austin has garnered over the last five years. Austinites are as aware of this fact as anyone. But Austin’s reputation as a cool city long predates the work of Richard Florida (Long, 2009). The city began rapidly expanding in the 1960s and 1970s with the arrival of technology firms such as IBM and Texas Instruments, and increased enrollment at the University of Texas at Austin brought an influx of young, educated workers that contributed to a significant population increase during this time. At the same time the counterculture gained steam in the US, best exemplified by the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco. Austin had a reputation for being a regional center of the counterculture at that time, during which period Austin’s live music scene grew as well. In the 1970s and 1980s Austin’s city government continued to recruit and entice technology firms to the area. Austin was able to weather the bursting of the technology bubble better than places like Silicon Valley because of its dramatically lower cost of living. In the 1990s the city government was using a Smart Development strategy to invigorate Austin’s core. The joining of these factors contributed to Austin’s position as the ideal new American city, and it is this joining that Florida and other scholars believe can be developed in other communities.
However, negative externalities have also resulted from these strategies in Austin. The most notable is Austin’s skyrocketing cost of living, in some neighborhoods doubling over the last 20 years and far outpacing national averages of increase. As mentioned above, other research has shown that creative economy strategies tend to exacerbate wealth discrepancies (Zimmerman, 2008). In fact, much of the harshest criticism against Florida is based on his downplaying of these externalities. My own work agrees with this criticism. In fact, I argue that if any of Florida’s claims about the creative class and its potential for economic development are true, the strategy is itself unsustainable. As a region grows it will become increasingly gentrified and homogenized, losing the appeal it holds for the creative class and suffering through attrition as those residents potentially move to other communities.

Long has recently published research on the sustainability of the Austin music scene and the application of Florida’s creative class thesis to the city (2009). Long pointed out that Richard Florida’s work had received both fair and scathing criticism in academic circles, but much more universal praise in popular media, going so far as to say, “Florida has achieved near rockstar status” among city planners (p. 210). Florida has been able to capitalize on this success and spin himself into his own industry with consulting work, bestselling books, articles, blogs, and the like. Long was captivated by the discrepancy between the academy’s and the popular media’s approaches to Florida’s work and has revealed important insights into the creative class thesis and Austin’s culture. Long’s methods included field work, formal and informal interviews, and observational data taken from city documents, journalistic and academic sources. Interestingly, Long stated that he initially intended to investigate the origins of the
popular slogan “Keep Austin Weird” and expanded the scope of his research as his investigation of the saying began illuminating pitfalls of creative economy development strategies.

Long’s qualitative research (2009) has shown that many residents mourn the changes that Austin has gone through as it has developed. The “Keep Austin Weird” campaign demonstrates this struggle. Its originator used the phrase as a grassroots motto to spur people to patronize local businesses. He decided not to trademark it on principle, hoping that anyone would be able to use it. Instead, a design company leaped in and trademarked the phrase, then profited immensely from its use. The originator does not have the resources to fight the firm in court (Long, 2009, p. 216).

Although their stories may not be as dramatic, Long’s other interviewees were likewise nostalgic about the Austin of the 1960s and 1970s. Something that Long did not point out, however, is that these decades mark a fairly recent past when the city first started growing. The data he presented did not depict individuals longing for an idealized Austin of the 1950s, when it was a much smaller town. This finding may be attributable to the median age of the interviewees. Perhaps too few were alive in that earlier time to claim that it was better than the present. Another possible explanation is that some growth is good, but there was some tipping point beyond which residents grew unhappy with continued expansion.

Overall, Long has concluded that the creative class thesis and its ensuing economic development strategies have many outcomes, some of which are negative (2009, p. 218). Communities are probably not fully aware of these negative outcomes because individuals like Richard Florida tend to downplay them in their research.
Simply put, if a city employs a strategy to attract growth because of its uniqueness, it should also be aware that with that growth, homogenization is likely to follow, directly threatening that uniqueness at the core of the city’s strategy for growth.

In other recent research on Austin, Grodach (2012a and 2012b) examines the policy framework and coalitions in the quintessential creative city. The underpinnings of Grodach’s research underscore something which is not always clear in the literature. Richard Florida holds up Austin as a shining example of a creative city and with this and other national attention, Austin has shifted its language and branding to align accordingly. However, Austin’s growth and development were more happenstance and not nearly as intentional as the creative class thesis would suggest (Grodach, 2012b). I would add that Florida does not always make a clear distinction between emulating something that happened naturally in Austin (and other cities) and purposefully using a strategy to draw creative workers. This is probably further clouded, Grodach argues, by the fact that Austin was trying to draw technology workers and investing in the arts as part of a purposeful growth strategy, but this predates Florida’s work and the recognition of the creative class. At the time, Austin was just adding to something that was naturally occurring and continuing development strategies that seemed to be working. Ironically, as shown by recent events that have occurred alongside the development of Austin’s 2009 cultural plan, CreateAustin, the city is now backing away from Florida’s strategies in response to the recession (Grodach, 2012a).

Grodach, an urban planning scholar whose work often deals with cultural economics, situates this examination of Austin’s cultural plan in an institutionalist framework. He is particularly interested in how coalitions use the framework of the
creative city thesis to influence policy and the evolution of urban policy in the city.

Creative class strategies generally align with the other neoliberal strategies of
development-based (i.e. commercial) actors. While arts advocates have signed on to
promoting these policies, hoping for growth within their sector, they are still in a
secondary position. Grodach (2012a) names three factors that have been overlooked in
other literature on creative economy developments: (a) The opportunity for arts and
cultural actors to use the attention given to the creative class to influence policy,
perhaps in ways that do not align with development-based strategies, (b) the possible
division within groups of arts and culture advocates, and (c) the influence of prior
frameworks on future strategies. While I agree with Grodach about the latter two points,
I believe the first is only partially true. It is well recognized in arts policy circles that arts
and culture advocates have an opportunity to further their own agendas because of the
broader interest in and acceptance of creative class discourse by local governments.
The revelation that what arts and culture advocates might want out of this process may
conflict with what developers want is quite well-known in the field of arts policy, if rarely
considered in the literature. My disagreement with Grodach on this point may reflect
differences in the literature in our respective fields, but perhaps underscores the need
for an interdisciplinary approach to the study of cultural planning. Perhaps also
reflecting differences between the fields of arts policy and urban planning, Grodach has
stated that nonprofit organizations are underappreciated as actors in policy (2012a, p.
84), whereas I would counter that they actually play a large role in the development of
cultural plans.
For his case study on Austin, Grodach (2012a) conducted interviews and reviewed documentary sources. His focus was on Austin’s economic growth and development process between 1980 and 2010. His goal was to demonstrate how cultural economic policy affects and is affected by urban development governance and planning. Like Long (2009), he found that the rapid growth of the city was due in large part to the location or relocation of several technology companies to the area. This rapid growth raised concerns about the environmental impact on the area and about Austin’s focus on its central core and redeveloping disused areas. This period coincided with several developments in Austin’s cultural sector. With the influx of these companies and downtown building projects, Austin reviewed and reorganized its public art program. The city’s Cultural Arts Division was created under the auspices of the Economic Growth and Redevelopment Office. In 1991, Austin adopted its “Live Music Capital of the World” slogan, turning what was previously considered a weakness (lots of bars and live music venues in the central city, which critics thought constituted a seedy atmosphere) into a strength.

At the turn of the millennium, Richard Florida’s research began gaining steam. Austin now had a name and validation for the policies that it had already been using for the last 30 or so years (Grodach, 2012a). With now-global attention on the creative class, national organizations like the National Endowment for the Arts took notice as well. This change in attitude, along with grants from the NEA, allowed Austin to begin a formal cultural planning process. Through the CreateAustin plan, cultural planners presented a comprehensive view of the city cultural sector and the pitfalls of former development strategies, including threats to the creative class. With these
developments, tensions mounted between the commercial and the nonprofit communities within Austin’s creative class. The commercial music sector enjoyed a dominant, privileged position that it was not keen to give up so as to join the smaller nonprofit arts section within one cultural plan. The recession also caused tourism groups to challenge cities to reduce the Hotel Occupancy Tax, which would have a major impact on the nonprofit arts sector, which is partly funded by revenue from this tax.

Grodach found that while national and global trends do influence policymaking, historical strategies are also important and that overall, policymakers are receptive to creative economy strategies only when they aligned with the overall economic development goals of larger actors. In his conclusion, he identified four important factors on the case of Austin: (a) the city’s prior economic development strategies, (b) the acceptance and rise of the music sector, (c) the cultural sector’s organizational structure within the city government, and (d) the forum provided by the cultural planning process. Grodach’s research has highlighted some important areas in considering the success of cultural plans and offers valuable insight into Austin’s cultural planning.

Conclusion

In this literature review, I have discussed evaluation, the role of evaluation in policymaking, and the evaluation of cultural plans, and critiqued several studies and reports. The intent of this literature review is to determine what kind of evaluation is appropriate for cultural plans. By establishing specific parameters by which to understand the outcomes of a cultural plan—as well as their likely causes—this
dissertation study will help to clarify and contextualize the results of Austin’s cultural plan, and policymakers may then be better informed about using such a plan in their own communities. Doyle (2010) has addressed this issue in an article published by the Journal of Cultural Economics. She stated, “mainstream economic theories and assumptions do not always provide a made-to-measure framework for understanding and modeling cultural activities. [...] To lose sight of what is different and special about culture is to risk consigning cultural economics to obsolescence” (2010, p. 248). Nielsen (2003) has suggested that cultural policy be evaluated through quality, and policymakers should think of the process as one of overall learning rather than a simple measure of economic benefit. His suggestion is based on a Nordic understanding of cultural policy whose objective is to empower individuals by spurring their learning and growth, and thus benefiting society. The work of these scholars can be used as a foundation for my argument that cultural plans and policies provide benefits that are not easily quantified and that a richer, more complex evaluation is crucial to understanding their impacts and communicating them to policymakers.

My dissertation study is informed by the research reviewed here on policy analysis and evaluation. Policymakers use many different tools to design policy. Both CBA and program evaluation can include qualitative and quantitative components. My dissertation study uses evaluation tools that have been developed in the literature to analyze the cultural plan developed in Austin, Texas. Using multiple ways of understanding and analyzing the data, such as the use of quantitative statistical data as well as qualitative interview data, will produce a more robust understanding of a cultural plan. In public policy, some forms of analysis are better suited to some policies and
programs than others. In the literature on cultural plans, scholars who rely solely on one method, either quantitative or qualitative, have come to completely different conclusions. Those researchers approaching cultural plans and creative economies from an exclusively quantitative standpoint tend to find that the policies have no effect on or are no more effective than other policies. Researchers using an exclusively qualitative method tend to illuminate the benefits of cultural plans, such as increased cultural vibrancy and social cohesion, without considering their shortcomings. Cultural plans may be an effective tool for a city to use in its community and economic development. If better research can be produced about how and why cultural plans work, more communities might be motivated to use them. The effective use of cultural plans to improve communities should result not only in stronger communities but also in a more vibrant sense of culture in America. If policymakers better understand what they can expect from cultural plans through the evaluation of such plans and policies, they may be able to increase the public value of the arts. At present, researchers have not attempted to combine forms of analysis to determine results. I intend to address this gap in my dissertation study so as to help policymakers make more effective use of cultural plans and to consider their intended and unintended effects.

A strong basis in the literature is important to this study because there are any number of variables that could be (and have been) used to study cultural plans. By using variables that have been identified and acknowledged by other scholars, this study represents an accumulation of knowledge about cultural plans but also a refinement.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Researchers advocate choosing a methodological approach that fits the program being evaluated (Chelimsky, 2007). The qualitatively driven case study uses both quantitative data and qualitative data to form conclusions and has been demonstrated to result in increased insights, multilayered viewpoints, changes in social justice and deeper understanding between the researcher and any study participants (Hesse-Biber, 2010). To understand the precise impacts of a cultural plan, a wealth of information is needed about the case. Deeper understanding of cases where cultural plans have been used promises to lead to stronger theories about their effects. Stronger theories will allow researchers to better test and refine their understanding of the impacts of cultural plans.

My aim in this concurrent mixed methods study is to better explain the impacts of the cultural plan of Austin, Texas, by considering two main research questions: (a) What changes have occurred in the identified variables between 1998 and 2012, the period surrounding the 2009 implementation of CreateAustin? and (b) What do the cultural planners who developed CreateAustin identify as the impacts on Austin’s creative community? In the study, I use trend analysis and a t-test to examine the variables before and after the cultural plan was implemented. At the same time, I use interview with cultural planners to uncover other effects of the plan in Austin. The reason for combining both quantitative and qualitative data is to better understand the cultural plan by synthesizing quantitative impacts on arts jobs, nonprofits and commercial establishments with qualitative interview data. This approach allows for different
viewpoints and ways to understand the entire cultural planning process and its results. Mixed methods research also allows for triangulation of the data and helps to strengthen the validity of the study (Creswell, 2009). I have selected this methodology because of the nature of studying cultural plans and a need to capture both hard results in the form of numbers and statistics, and soft results in the form of impressions and opinions from stakeholders.

As a thorough review of the literature demonstrated, cultural planning, while increasingly popular, is only weakly evaluated and understood. Media coverage can downplay the negative externalities resulting from the process or overstate the economic benefits. Most analytical approaches to cultural plans are one-sided—usually either qualitative or quantitative, and only rarely both—and do not present a complete and accurate picture of the many and varied impacts of a cultural plan. This is problematic, because unrealistic expectations about what cultural plans can do can undermine their usage and possibly the public value of the arts in general. Additionally, if plans are poorly understood their strategies are difficult to transfer effectively from one place and time to another. Without an evaluation as the foundation of understanding, each community that undertakes a cultural plan could suffer the same pitfalls or unrealistic expectations as the last. Presently, the US faces a number of economic and social challenges ranging from the loss of manufacturing industries to a crisis in public education to increasing political gridlock. Few if any cities can afford to waste time and resources implementing policies or strategies that they unrealistically expect to address any and every problem yet whose inner workings and likely outcomes they do not understand. Stronger research on cultural planning is desperately needed to bridge
current understanding with new findings and experiences. Only then can the cultural planning process continuously improve from one community to the next or over time.

Mixed Methods Approaches

To better understand and demonstrate how mixed methods program evaluation has been used and to help to position my study, I provide some examples here. In 1997, The Getty Education Institute for the Arts published a landmark evaluation by Brent Wilson called The Quiet Evolution. Wilson aimed to elucidate the findings of his seven-year, Getty-funded evaluation of programs on discipline-based arts education (DBAE). DBAE was, and is, a movement in arts education that teaches art by using the disciplines of art history, art-making, criticism, and aesthetics. Approaching art education this way brings it into line with the instruction of subjects such as math and science rather than confining it to studio art practice. The Getty funded several regional programs charged with developing DBAE. The Getty did not prescribe methods; rather, individual partners were tasked with choosing the methods they thought best. Wilson’s methodology was informed by Eisner’s criticism and connoisseurship framework. Wilson and his evaluators were experts in the field of arts education. Most had advanced degrees and/or extensive experience in the field. Wilson led a team of several assistants who collected data through considerable observation and through meetings with stakeholders, among other methods, then reviewed the reports the grant recipients were required to make. The result was an exhaustive description and understanding of DBAE programs as well as recommendations for the field in general. This report has had an enormous influence on the field of art education, both in terms of
This mixed methods evaluation approach can be used not only to evaluate a program, as Wilson did, but also to evaluate policy. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) has increased focus on educational accountability, and many researchers and teachers have been displeased with its emphasis on quantitative measures at a time when qualitative measures were just gaining traction. Hall and Ryan (2011) used qualitatively driven mixed methods research in an educational setting to evaluate NCLB. These scholars reflect Eisner’s position that quantitative analysis alone is insufficient to produce a complete understanding of student learning and teacher effectiveness. Quantitative analysis can determine if a variable has changed, but qualitative analysis helps determine why. NCLB requires yearly standardized tests to measure student progress, then requires that those test scores be broken down by ethnic and socioeconomic groups so that disparities in student outcomes can be monitored. Schools that do not show adequate yearly progress are sanctioned, usually by reductions in funding and possibly school closure. Critics of this type of evaluation claim it results in teaching to the tests and that student education that cannot be measured by standardized tests, as in the arts, suffers. Hall and Ryan (2011) used a qualitative case study to balance the quantitative test scores and to more accurately report a complete picture of the school they studied. To do this they observed and interviewed and surveyed students, teachers and administrators at a middle school over one year. This in-depth study allowed them to present a robust picture of the school at the end of the year. While the study school’s nonwhite students did not perform
particularly well on quantitative measures, the case study managed to capture a qualitative sense of their progress in the classroom. Limitations of this type of study include the heavy time commitment, the low generalizability of the results, and the lack of support for this type of research in the academy.

Method of Inquiry

Using the research and theories explored in my review of the literature, I have developed the method of inquiry for my study. The impetus for executing this research comes from my interests in art education and public policy. My belief is that the arts are vital for society in ways that can hardly be named, let alone quantified, but I am interested in an organized society as well. The combination of these two theoretical positions makes cultural planning a natural fit for my research. Cultural planning is a way cities protect and develop the arts in their communities and, ideally, reap other benefits as well. Often these benefits are communicated in economic terms such as creating jobs or attracting tourism. My research will address the gap in the literature between an understanding of the desired outcomes and an understanding of the actual outcomes of a cultural plan. Closing this gap is essential to upholding the public value of the arts. Cultural plans that are never implemented, or that do not fulfill their promise to increase jobs or tourism dollars, undermine the instrumental value of the arts. Furthermore, the very act of executing a cultural plan solely to reap other benefits also undermines the intrinsic value of the arts. My study also illustrates the role that cultural plans play in developing cities and communities. This study is important to validating the assumptions about existing cultural plans under which some scholars and city
planners operate, namely that a certain kind of cultural environment will necessarily attract businesses and workers. With the information this study provides, cultural planners will be better able to articulate the expected and realistic results of a cultural plan.

The literature reviewed in the previous chapter provides a solid foundation for the present study to help solidify the field of evaluation of cultural policies. The literature on evaluation in art education and public policy reveals the need for cross-disciplinary studies in the field of cultural policy. My case study evaluation of Austin’s cultural plan fulfills this need. It uses quantitative analysis to determine the effects of the cultural plan on variables such as jobs in the arts arenas and donations to nonprofits, but also uses qualitative analysis of interviews with key stakeholders in the cultural planning process to determine other effects they identify. This study will help me to discern and define the worth of Austin’s cultural plan.

This study is an external, independent evaluation. It was not initiated or requested by the City of Austin, nor by any of the nonprofits or other organizations instrumental in developing the plan. Since this evaluation originates from the academy rather than from a stake-holding person or organization, it promises to test and improve the theoretical underpinnings of cultural planning. The benefits to completing an evaluation this way include its being reviewed by an academic committee. Because of the lack of stakeholder sponsorship, I have less motivation to slant my results to fit a particular theory or agenda. The focus of this evaluation is more transparently to determine outcomes with the intent to provide the information policymakers need to make policy decisions, rather than to point them toward particular decisions. Last, this
study will be available to academics and practitioners through library databases, and it is possible that communities and scholars may use it to support decisions about or inform research on cultural plans. By resituating evaluation in the academy, thus severing it from the locales and responsibilities attached to individual programs, my work may help to eliminate or reduce program workers’ apprehensions about evaluating cultural programs proposed for their own communities.

This study will also contribute to a growing body of mixed methods evaluations. As demonstrated in the literature reviewed, using mixed methods is important to this subject area because of the other factors, such as overall economic trends and the hard and soft outcomes of the policy, that influence the perceived problem the policy is intended to address. Using a mixed methods approach will help to capture benefits not easily quantified in the statistical analysis, as well as to at least partly explain results that are captured in the analysis. Using mixed methods benefits my study in another important way, in that it allows me to present my research to different audiences. The fields of art education and public administration, the main two fields I work within, expect and privilege different types of research. By developing and realizing a mixed methods study, I adequately address both audiences.

Like Eisner (1976), who asserted that standard quantitative evaluation fails to capture educational outcomes fully, we can argue that an analysis of economic statistics alone fails to capture all the value of a cultural plan. Evaluators must delve more deeply into what they investigate to provide more explanation and, perhaps more important, to learn what leads to the results; in fact, causation may be more important than specific results. The evaluation technique Eisner developed is important here because
Stufflebeam (2001) and other scholars recognize it as an approach that will probably prove most useful in pushing the field of evaluation forward. Because cultural plans are relatively new, especially among government programs, it follows that a new form of evaluation is likely appropriate. A challenge to using this approach is that the evaluator must have expertise in the area being evaluated. In this case, my years of graduate-level coursework have prepared me well for such an undertaking.

The consumer-oriented approach, though different from Eisner’s, informs my study in significant ways, especially in terms of its credibility with the policy community. The consumer-oriented approach is relatively objective, and while that objectivity is less important to the arts education field, it is very meaningful to experts in policy. By combining these two approaches I am gathering data and making judgments based on my expertise, but presenting it to stakeholders who expect evaluation to address accountability issues. This allows me to confidently speak to both sides of the cultural policy coin.

My hope is that my method for evaluating cultural plans will be applied to other sites and that the results may provide compelling evidence for other cities to undertake cultural planning. However, not every cultural plan is the same, which makes transferability a challenge. Wilson’s (1997) landmark study on the Getty Institute’s DBAE programs provides an important precedent for tackling this challenge. The programs Wilson reviewed were not identical but had the same theoretical base. From this similarity he concluded that he and his team could extrapolate results from the art education programs he evaluated and thus develop theories to apply to future art programs. His study has influenced the field of art education tremendously, helping
researchers and cultural planners to recognize the common theoretical basis of cultural plans, despite their superficial similarities or dissimilarities. His work gives me the justification to make similar extrapolations from my own research on Austin to cultural plans in general.

Selection of Case

In the media attention related to the creative class, Austin is frequently exemplified as the ideal “new” American city: a thriving knowledge-based economy with many technology firms, a vibrant music scene and a growing population. Austin also has its struggles. Further investigation into who could be negatively impacted by this growth reveals Austin has increasing wealth disparities, a declining African-American population that some scholars speculate will decrease to virtually zero in the next 20 years, and compelling evidence that the popular music scene dwarfs many of the other arts in the city. Serious concerns also exist over whether Austin’s infrastructure can handle the population growth. The city has taken an active interest in cultural planning so as to preserve the value of its cultural environment in music and the other arts. This study’s evaluation of Austin’s cultural plan is important because it is a paragon for many other cities and scholars worldwide. For these reasons, it has appealed to other scholars (Long, 2009; Grodach, 2012) as a research subject. This allows me to further validate the results I find based on previous studies. Austin is an excellent place to apply the evaluation of cultural plans because many other city and cultural planners already look to it to inform their own plans. Determining what has succeeded and why in Austin could prove instructive to cultural planners in many other communities.
The natural environment in Austin has probably played a large role in its growth as a city. Austin lies in an ecologically diverse area in the central Texas Hill Country, exhibiting attributes of both the desert and the tropics. Average yearly temperatures float in the seventies due to hot summers and mild winters. The Colorado River, around which Austin is situated, supplies some of the city’s energy and serves as one of its greatest recreational spaces. Austin’s central location and natural amenities contribute to its place as the seat of government, leading to its founding as the capital of the Republic of Texas in 1839, then to its selection as the capital of the state of Texas in 1846 despite the wishes of more populous cities like Houston and Dallas. The population of Austin’s metropolitan statistical area was 1.7 million in the 2010 census, making it the 35th-largest MSA in the United States and the fourth-largest city in Texas.

As the seat of state, county and local government, as well as the home to the University of Texas’s flagship campus, Austin has attracted a large share of government industries. The region’s largest employers are in education, healthcare, government and technology. Several energy and healthcare companies are headquartered in the city as is the national specialty grocery retailer Whole Foods. Currently, Texas bests the national averages in cost-of-living, unemployment and tax burden, making it a favorable location to settle. Due in part to the large student population at UT, the median age in Austin is lower than the national average. For the past five years, Austin has been one of the most technologically advanced cities in the country, boasting the most WiFi hotspots per 1,000 population in 2006 (CEOs for Cities). Recently, Google Fiber, an experimental fiber-optic supernetwork, announced that Austin would host its next city project. Periodicals such as Forbes and US Weekly have touted Austin as one of the
most livable cities in the country due to many of these factors. Furthermore, in recent years Austin and other Texas cities have seen population growth and in-migration. (Austinites’ perception of this growth has been mixed. I recently observed t-shirts being sold in Austin with the slogan “Welcome to Austin. Please don’t move here. I hear Dallas is great.”)

Despite the dominance of the music scene, other arts and entertainment industries are also strong in Austin. Many movies, television shows and commercials are filmed there, including the popular high-school football drama *Friday Night Lights*. The city government has a dedicated film office to facilitate these ventures. Perhaps the best-known festival in town, the music, film, and interactive conference SXSW, has grown to enormous proportions since it started in 1987, even branching into a second conference in Las Vegas. Austin is also host to the Austin City Limits festival, a popular annual music festival that has grown to such high attendance numbers that in 2013 it will have two dates. Fun Fun Fun, an indie and metal music festival, is much smaller but is growing in popularity. In 2012, Austin held its first Grand Prix automobile race. There are many other smaller arts, music, food, and comedy festivals that take place in the city throughout the year. In fact, recent plans for the redevelopment of the former City of Austin Seaholm Power Plant into public space include a “festival street,” a section that can be used for festivals without disrupting downtown traffic. The city has an orchestra, an opera company, a ballet company, art museums large and small, galleries, theater spaces, and comedy clubs, in addition to its many commercial music venues. Though clearly skewed towards music, Austin has a lively and varied arts
sector, which makes its cultural planning process particularly diverse and worthy of study.

Instrument and Procedures

By culling strategies from the fields of public policy and art education and combining them, this study uses a mixed methods research design utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods. Because of the inconsistent results seen in previous studies I have discussed, it is clear that these studies do not fully capture the benefits (or detriments) of the plans. Relying only on narrative or on statistics might misrepresent or underrepresent the impacts, hence my choice of mixed methods research, which yields more robust, multifaceted results and should better evaluate cultural plans.

I begin the discussion of my specific methodology in the next section by first explaining the document analysis relating to my research question about Austin’s plans and their fulfillment, next explaining the quantitative methods of my study used to answer my research question about changes in the identified variables in Austin between 1998 and 2012, then turn to the qualitative methods I employed to answer the question about the impacts on the creative community in Austin identified in interviews. Once a deep understanding of the plan documents is established, a useful starting point for examining cultural plans is quantitative elements captured in tax forms, labor statistics and similar records. The challenge is to determine what statistics are important to examine and what can be ignored. Research of this type has recently been expanded. A notable example is the work done by the nonprofit ArtPlace, founded in
2010. ArtPlace, especially board member Rocco Landesman, former chairman of the NEA, has been a major force in bringing attention and resources to cultural environments, cultural planning and creative place-making. ArtPlace is primarily a grant-making agency. The founding members have represented some of the leading organizations in the philanthropic arts community such as the Ford, Rockefeller and Irvine foundations. Interestingly, ArtPlace has also been funded in large part by the banking industry. This particular point makes many cultural planning advocates and researchers suspicious of the possibility that the grants ArtPlace offers to the arts and cultural sector are really a ruse to stimulate and legitimate gentrification. Recently, ArtPlace released research on vibrancy indicators. This research seems promising and has had both support and criticism from the cultural community. The work of ArtPlace and the analysis it is sure to spur will probably be significant to cultural planning in the future, though right now it is too soon to tell.

Document Sources and Analysis

My first research question was: What plans have been developed to nurture the creative community in Austin and how have these plans been fulfilled? To answer this question, I located the major cultural plans, the Austin Comprehensive Arts Plan (1993), CreateAustin (2009) and Imagine Austin (2010), all available through the City of Austin’s website. The last is the city’s overall 30-year development plan, which has incorporated much of CreateAustin, making it relevant to the analysis though it is not a cultural plan. For each of these plans, I reviewed the major themes and recommendations in each and subjected them to my own critical analysis determining relationships between the
recommendations and their outcomes as they related to Austin. I created charts and tables, presented in Chapter 4, which illustrate these findings. I also analyzed these plans in relation to one and other along several dimensions such as look and feel, progress on completing recommendations, and feasibility of recommendations.

Quantitative Sources of Data

To answer the research question, What changes have occurred in the identified variables between 1998 and 2012, the period surrounding the 2009 implementation of CreateAustin? I needed quantitative data that was accessible and had some basis in the literature. For this data, I began with The Urban Institute seminal work on cultural vitality (Jackson et al., 2006). Cultural vitality is among the benefits that many cities strive to develop so as to attract knowledge workers. As promising as ArtPlace’s more recent work is, the Urban Institute’s work has been far more thoroughly vetted in the literature, and as a result I use it in this dissertation study. Researchers Jackson et al. (2006) produced a cultural vitality index that is recognized as an important starting point for measuring cultural impacts (Markusen and Gadwa, 2009). The authors identify three areas of cultural vitality as (a) the presence of opportunities for cultural participation, (b) cultural participation, and (c) support for cultural participation. These areas frame the variables examined in my study’s statistical analysis. The variables are (a) artists’ jobs as a percentage of total employment, (b) employment in arts establishments as a percentage of total employment, (c) number of nonprofit arts organizations, (d) number of arts establishments, (e) number of nonprofit event engagement organizations, (f) nonprofit art expenses per capita, and (g) nonprofit art
contributions per capita. Jackson et al. thoroughly review the makeup of the variables they chose, such as which jobs count as “artists jobs,” in their research and I further investigated them in my thesis (R. M. Smith, 2010), therefore I do not repeat that discussion here. These identified variables can help researchers to understand the cultural sector singly and in relation to the overall economy of a city. Many variables have been suggested over the years, but cultural planning researchers most often cite this particular set. I used these variables when examining Austin previously and have chosen to continue using them for this research, with some modifications as described below.

Quantitative Data Collection

Although Jackson et al. (2006) have said that the data for these variables is publicly available for most cities, I have discovered that not all of these variables are as accessible as the report suggested. To work around the inaccessibility of certain data, for this study I have eliminated or modified variables 5, 6 and 7. I eliminated Variable 5 (the number of nonprofit event-engagement organizations in the city, such as art fairs) by using the data I obtained for Variable 3 (the number of nonprofit arts organizations). The Internal Revenue Service’s National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE) codes prove useful here. The NTEE codes designate category “A,” for Arts and Culture, to include ethnic and cultural fairs, community arts and street fairs, and book fairs. The codes specify that a similar-sounding category, “N,” for Recreation and Sports, which is used for fairs in general, should not be used to indicate arts fairs, which belong in the A category. Other types of fairs such as science fairs, healthcare fairs, trade fairs and job
fairs are dispersed among other categories, but pinpointing them all is not necessary to analyze a cultural plan. Therefore, by capturing the number of nonprofits in category A, as I have done with Variable 3, arts fairs and events are already accounted for. A case could be made for why these events could be disaggregated from the group (for instance, their potential visibility or importance to the community); however, when using the publicly accessible data, this is not possible.

Variables 6 and 7 were troublesome, also due to access. One of the justifications for the variables presented by Jackson et al. was public accessibility, making it possible for any place to assess its cultural vitality. However, expenses and contributions to nonprofits are not readily available, especially broken down by nonprofit sector categories. Analyzing these variables would surely yield insightful information about a community, and luckily, other scholars present this information in some capacity by working more directly with organizations rather than relying on public data. Americans for the Arts has a research program on the arts and economic prosperity that for the last several years has been updated on national and local levels. Communities are invited to participate in developing these reports, and Austin has recently been included in that process. This report does capture this information to profile individual communities against national averages and their peer cities. I consider the information and assessments in that report in my overall analysis of Austin’s cultural plan, but for the purposes of my statistical analysis, I have modified Variables 6 and 7 to read “nonprofit art organizations’ revenues” and “nonprofit art organizations’ assets,” both of which statistics are more readily available in Austin.

My revised list of variables identified in this analysis is as follows:
1. Artists’ jobs as a percentage of total employment
2. Employment in arts establishments as a percentage of total employment
3. Number of nonprofit arts organizations
4. Number of arts establishments
5. Arts establishments as a percentage of total establishments
6. Nonprofit arts organizations’ revenue
7. Nonprofit arts organizations’ assets

The first part of the study will entail using the variables identified above to perform a statistical analysis to determine some of the impacts of Austin’s cultural plan. I gathered the data from several secondary sources. For Variable 1 (artists’ jobs as a percentage of total employment), I gathered data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the federal agency responsible for collecting and reporting employment statistics. I gathered the data for variables two (employment in arts establishments as a percentage of total employment) and four (number of arts establishments) from the Metro Statistical Area Business Patterns (MSABP), which is available through the CenStats database of the US Census Bureau. I collected the data for variables 3 (number of nonprofit arts organizations), 5 (arts establishments as a percentage of total establishments), 6 (nonprofit arts organizations’ revenues), and 7 (nonprofit arts organizations’ assets) from the National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS). NCCS works closely with the IRS and other government agencies to provide data on nonprofit and charitable organizations. It is a project of the Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy through the Urban Institute in Washington, DC, a private 501(c)(3) organization.
Quantitative Data Analysis

For the analysis, I examined the collected descriptive statistics and performed an independent sample t-test using STATA software. I compared the mean of the variables between the years 1998 and 2008, prior to the cultural plan, to the mean of the variables between the years 2009 and 2011 or 2012 (depending on the availability of the data), the years after it. First developed a century ago at the Guinness brewery in Dublin to test beer consistency, a t-test is a statistical analysis that compares the means of two samples to determine if they are statistically different based on a predetermined confidence interval (CI). In this case I have used a generally accepted CI of 95%. Since a CI denotes the reliability of an estimate, a CI of 95% indicates that there is a 5% chance that the results could have been obtained by chance. I performed my t-test on independent samples, that is, samples with no relation to each other. In this case, the samples have unequal variance, meaning that the data points are not spread out at predictable intervals. Because of the unequal variance, I used an adaptation of the t-test called Welch’s t-test to obtain more accurate estimates. Using Welch’s t-test will allow me to determine the difference in the described variables before and after Austin implemented its cultural plan. This analysis will help me to understand if any correlation exists between the implementation of the cultural plan and changes in the variables.

Qualitative Sources of Data

Clearly quantitative data is valuable, especially if a plan aims to improve values best measured in numerical terms, such as employment rates or property values. Because analysis of variables is insufficient to capture all impacts of a cultural plan, nor
can cultural implications always be reduced to quantitative measurements, to answer the question, What do the cultural planners who developed CreateAustin identify as the impacts on Austin’s creative community?, I have incorporated qualitative data in my study. Developing effective evaluative criteria has been the subject of several articles and one of the goals of this study. Many scholars advocate tailoring evaluative criteria to the individual city and use or recommend using mixed methods approaches that incorporate interviews, questionnaires and/or surveys along with their recommendations for quantitative data (ECOTEC, 2009; Jackson et al., 2006; Griffiths, 2006; Throsby, 2004; and Evans, 2005). Often the simplest way to find out if a program is effective is to ask managers and involved parties what they think (Bartik and Bingham, 1997).

Research on the European Capitals of Culture (ECOC) competition advocates using qualitative measurements to assess a plan’s impact on a European city (ECOTEC, 2009). The ECOC program, or some earlier iteration of it, has existed since 1985 (ECOTEC, 2009). Cities vie for the prestige of being designated a European Capital of Culture in a multinational competition and for a meager cash prize. More significant, the process of applying for and becoming an ECOC closely resembles the cultural planning process in the US. There is an extensive body of literature evaluating the program. The ECOTEC report on evaluating the 2007 and 2008 ECOC competition developed 55 mostly qualitative questions for stakeholders involved in executing the program. These questions centered on four areas: (a) relevance of the action to the ECOC goals; (b) efficiency of governance and of the ECOC mechanisms; (c) effectiveness of developing cultural activities; of achieving economic, urban development, and tourism impacts; and of promoting social development; and (d)
sustainability of these activities. This qualitative assessment is a natural fit with the measures of cultural vitality developed by Jackson et al. (2006). While many of the questions are specifically about the ECOC program, they were conceived within a framework that naturally extends to an evaluation of a US cultural plan. The combination and modification of the cultural vitality variables and the ECOC evaluation will produce a more complete picture of a cultural plan. The use of both sets of information more thoroughly gauges the success of a cultural plan based on the primary goal, a culturally rich environment, by yielding hard quantitative data on indicators vetted by the literature and qualitatively contextualizing the soft impacts a cultural plan has on parameters like perceived economic development and social cohesion.

The second part of my study consists of interviews with major actors in Austin’s cultural planning process guided by questions developed from the literature on qualitative evaluations. By conducting narrative interviews with the participants, I am able to gain a deeper understanding of these relationships. For the qualitative evaluation of cultural plans, I have drawn from the ECOC program evaluation to develop interview questions for cultural planners in Austin (R. M. Smith, 2010). From the list of 55 questions the ECOC program employed, I culled 14 questions and then adapted them to my study. For example, a question posed by the ECOC program like “How did the Capitals of Culture seek to make the European dimension visible?” (reflecting the ECOC goal to promote the winning city as both individual and reflective of European society) was adapted for my purposes to, “What aspects of your community unify all citizens?” The list of 14 adapted interview questions appears in the Appendix of this study.
Qualitative Data Collection

Following suggested qualitative research practice (Creswell, 2009), I selected a purposive sample of individuals to contact for this study, meaning that each participant had to have a relevant stake in the cultural plan. Since I am interested in the impacts identified by Austin’s cultural planners, to identify the sample, I used the cultural plan’s list of participants (City of Austin, 2009, pp 71-72). From the list, I investigated who remained in the Austin community by the time my research began in 2012 and randomly selected individuals from each of the planning committees to contact. I worked with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of North Texas to draft language to use when contacting potential participants. Of the 10 identified individuals, six responded and five scheduled interviews. I worked with IRB to draft consent statements and forms (see Appendix). This interview posed low risk to the participants, and commitments to maintain their confidentiality have been honored; I have changed their names and identifying details in my descriptions of their interviews. The individuals who responded ranged in position from city employees to nonprofit stakeholders to interested citizens. An additional two interviewees were added, based on other interviewees’ recommendations. Before I conducted interviews at the individuals’ places of business, I explained the study and procured the participants’ consent. The interviews ranged from 45 minutes to two hours in length. The interviews were digitally recorded, and I also took many notes during the sessions. After the interviews were complete, I stored the recordings and notes securely in my office. Copies of the
approved correspondence, consent forms and interview questions are located in the Appendix.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Following Creswell’s guidelines for analyzing qualitative data (2009, p. 186), I followed eight steps in analyzing the data. I first transcribed the interviews from the recordings I had made, considering the interview data as a whole. This process entailed me simply listening and typing the responses and comments from each of the participants. Knowing that I would be further analyzing the data from this point gave me the opportunity to consider it with some detachment, allowing broad threads and reflections to emerge from the total sum of the interviews. Once transcribed, I then examined each of the transcripts individually to get a stronger sense of each interview. In this step, I was delving deeply into each individual interview, to capture the essence and arcs of each participant separately. Next I analyzed all of the transcripts together for themes and areas of convergence and divergence, clustering together similar topics using my own coding to identify these areas. This step allowed me to cement the trends I felt were emerging when I first began transcribing the data as well as to recognize others. Reexamining the coded data allowed me to determine if other themes and trends emerged and to follow them using categories I made for the coded sections. Armed with this method for organizing and making sense of the data, I was able to thoroughly examine the relationships between them. At this point, I also made notes of specific quotations from my participants to use in my study. In listening to and transcribing the data, I had determined that there were occasions when I wanted to use
participants’ own words. In each interview, there were instances when they had communicated a salient message about the cultural plan or Austin so well that I wanted to convey their voices rather than filter the information through my own. I also reexamined the notes I had made during and after the interviews to inform my analysis and determine if recoding was necessary. The notes and reflections I made directly after the interviews, rather than several weeks later as I was applying my analysis, reminded me of the ways my perceptions had shifted as I completed the analysis.

In considering the analysis of my qualitative data, it is important to discuss the bias faced in my study. As I have discussed, I am approaching this research with the perspective that the arts are important to society and that I favor cultural plans for their ability to infuse arts and culture into civic life. To drill down and consider other ways this bias might affect my study, it is necessary to point out that I was the one conducting the interviews. As such, my phrasing, intonation, and nonverbal behaviors all could have influenced what the participants said or did not say. I decided to structure my study as one that would maintain confidentiality in the hopes of eliciting more honest responses. Many of those I contacted about the study still work closely with the arts or the city government and I wanted them to feel they could be candid in their interviews. I believe speaking to someone like myself, someone coming from an arts background rather than urban planning, may have helped the participants feel understood and trust me with their responses. In my coding and analysis of data, my personal bias could be present in those themes I recognized. The method of analysis I chose has some safeguards built in against this (Creswell, 2009), as did the technique I chose for coding. By using a visual style (color-coding), I was not only able to highlight areas where I felt there were
common themes, but see areas where there were gaps, giving me the opportunity to re-examine whether I was ignoring important aspects. Though I realize it is impossible to completely eliminate bias in any study, I have done my best to address possible areas of bias and reduce them.

Summary

The evaluation of cultural plans is very important in arts policy. Cultural plans have become a popular instrument in city planning due to the currency of Richard Florida’s creative class thesis and the idea that creative workers seek cultural amenities. Arts and culture advocates have also supported claims about the desires of the creative class in the interest of garnering attention and resources for the arts. For the effects and impacts of a program or policy to be understandable, the program or policy must be evaluated. The methodology for my study has three important elements: the mixed methods approach, the combination of techniques established in the literature, and evaluation of Austin, a city held up as an example of effective cultural planning. Previous efforts have focused on testing the creative class thesis or evaluating individual cultural plans or environments themselves, only to limit data collection to either qualitative or quantitative methods, but not both. As a result of these poles in data collection, these studies rarely agree about the outcomes of cultural planning. A mixed methods evaluation of Austin’s cultural plan will yield valuable insight into the results observed by the community. Austin is a good test case for this study, because its arts community has taken an active interest in cultural planning, because it is the type of city other cities try to emulate, and because it has been recognized and
studied by other scholars. This study therefore will add to a cumulative body of research that will allow for a stronger understanding of cultural plans than other studies have provided. This study is unique in its evaluative approach in that it uses recognized methods to evaluate hard and soft data and combines them to come to conclusions about Austin’s cultural plan.
CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Many cities and communities have, in the past 20 years, employed cultural plans as a tool to address various perceived problems. Presently, many communities are interested in cultural planning because they hope to capture economic benefits for their communities by offering interesting and lively cultural environments to their citizens, businesses and tourists. Arts advocates have supported these planning efforts because they are a means to a richer cultural sector. Cultural planning has gained a lot of momentum without much empirical research. The best way to improve the usage of cultural plans is to deepen the understanding of their outcomes and impacts through evaluation. Evaluating cultural plans is the first step in taking stock of what was proposed, what was actually done, and what were the outcomes of the action in the cultural sector for any city. The evaluation of a cultural plan using a mixed methods, case-study-based approach has not been attempted before. Austin is a good place to start with this type of analysis because it has a cultural planning history and a current plan in place, has been the subject of other research on the city’s cultural sector, and has been recognized by popular and academic sources as an exemplary American city. Using the method I developed after reviewing the literature, I now examine Austin’s cultural plan by reviewing the qualitative and quantitative data I collected from primary and secondary sources. To understand this data, I thoroughly analyze it using statistical and thematic analysis. This process will lead to greater understanding of Austin’s plan, but on a broader scale should provide insights into the cultural planning process in general.
My research is guided by pointed questions that aim at understanding the impacts of CreateAustin through quantitative and qualitative dimensions but first, the planning documents themselves have to be understood. To answer the question, What plans have been developed to nurture the creative atmosphere in Austin and how have these plans been fulfilled?, in this study, I examine the three documents that are crucial to understanding Austin’s cultural planning process. CreateAustin is most important to this study, as it is the city’s current in-place cultural plan. This plan was influenced by an earlier plan, the Austin Comprehensive Arts Plan, which I examine first. Finally, Imagine Austin, the city’s overall 30-year development plan, has incorporated much of CreateAustin, and I briefly examine it as well, despite its not being a cultural plan per se. Next, I present the metrics on the Austin community explained in Chapter 3: Methodology. Last, I present the stakeholder perspective on the environment in the form of interview data that I gathered in the winter of 2013, along with other contextual information.

Cultural Planning in Austin

Austin’s first official effort at a cultural plan was the 1993 Austin Comprehensive Arts Plan (ACAP) in 1993. ACAP was a comprehensive community arts and cultural plan with elements of an issue-specific cultural plan. The plan recommended that it be folded into other city development plans, but this action was never completed, as is often the case with cultural planning efforts. ACAP was developed at a time where there was a dearth of information about city cultural planning; Americans for the Arts did not publish Craig Dreeszen’s seminal Community Cultural Planning until 1993, the year
ACAP was rolled out. ACAP focuses on the central city of Austin and pays little attention to the outlying neighborhoods. The concentration on the central city is implicit in this plan, though the plan bills itself in its very title as “comprehensive.” This could be due in part to the limited understanding of cultural planning at the time, but it is also worth noting that the outlying Austin neighborhoods, perhaps with the exception of the South Congress area, were not nearly as developed in the early 1990s as they are now and thus seemed to merit little consideration.

ACAP was spearheaded by the Austin Arts Commission, a seven-member body whose purpose is to advise the city council on arts and culture matters. Each member is appointed by a city council member for a three-year term; the seven three-year terms are staggered among the members so that the entire commission does not come into or leave office simultaneously. The commission also works with staff in the city's Cultural Arts Division. The impetus for developing this plan was the city’s recognition of the vital role that the arts and culture played in economic development of the city. This plan was developed with the reasoning that the city should continue to nurture and strengthen the cultural sector as overall city growth continued. An interesting guiding principle of this plan was minority equity, which foreshadowed the rise of the current interest in using cultural planning to foster social cohesion. This aspect has largely been ignored by many other cultural planners and increased social polarization represents one of the documented negative externalities that can result from attempts to develop the creative economy. The Arts Commission did the research for ACAP and used several statistics on Austin’s ranking as a livable city, its concentration of artists, and the economic impact of city-owned cultural facilities to justify the importance of the cultural sector on the local
economy. The Arts Commission did not address evaluation when constructing ACAP. An impact assessment of the city’s cultural sector was called for, also something that has largely changed in contemporary cultural planning; impact assessment is usually done before the plan, not after.

ACAP’s stated goal was “to create an environment which enables artists and arts organizations to realize fully their potential as contributors to the economic and cultural prosperity of the City of Austin” (City of Austin, 1993, p. 1). The report identified nine principles guiding its vision for ACAP: (a) community-wide inclusion, (b) community involvement and consensus, (c) minority equity, (d) artistic diversity, (e) artistic quality, (f) access to the arts, (g) economic equity, (h) education, and (i) need. The vision statement for the plan reads, “the plan, therefore, should help empower artists of all disciplines as well as the richly diverse cultures of the city thereby positively affecting the quality of life and economic and cultural prosperity” (City of Austin, 1993, p. 5). The plan made recommendations in eight areas: (a) advocacy for the arts, (b) artists and arts organizations, (c) arts education and outreach, (d) economic development, (e) facilities and spaces, (f) funding, (g) minority equity, and (h) public relations/marketing. Within these areas, the plan made 34 individual recommendations. A few additional recommendations did not fall within the eight areas, specifically to assess the Cultural Arts Division’s placement within the Parks and Recreation Department and to establish infrastructure to manage the completed plan.

Several of ACAP’s recommendations merit some discussion. In the section on advocacy, the plan recommended establishing an advocacy coalition to raise community awareness and encourage volunteerism for the arts. In the arts and artists
section, ACAP recommended that the city establish an office for arts support and provide inventories, databases and assistance. Within the arts education and outreach section, the plan recommended partnerships and resources for educators and students. A recommendation for the facilities category was to further develop and assess the public art programs, to provide incentives for private development of cultural facilities, and to investigate city-developed cultural facilities. This specific recommendation, for city cultural facilities, was ACAP’s most ambitious, as it called for developing a new, large-scale, standout facility. The funding category encouraged the city to establish a grants writer and to develop new funding mechanisms. In the minority equity section, the plan recommended infrastructure and oversight to monitor and improve issues of concern to minority residents, like access to cultural events, as well as to provide minority-designated funding sources. Last, ACAP made recommendations to hold a major arts event, highlight the arts through the Sister Cities program, and develop greater infrastructure in the public relations and marketing section.

The report closed with a description of the fiscal impact of the recommendations, a description of who would be responsible for each recommendation, a proposed timeline for completing the recommendations, and the benefits of the recommendations. There is a marked contrast between this 1993 document and the cultural plan Austin would develop years later in 2009. As cultural plans have become more popular and have increasingly been used as advocacy and marketing tools, they have also become more visually stimulating, so that the final written product typically offers up lush images depicting the imaginary landscape that the cultural plan proposes to develop (see Figure 1 for a comparison). Perhaps due to its earliness, ACAP in contrast is fairly
basic, with tables laying out information but no pictures or illustrations. The plan is even light on visionary descriptions of what the city will look like if the plan is carried out. ACAP’s depiction of Austin shows it to be a city that had successfully attracted creatives but was concerned that it was not keeping pace with their needs in terms of infrastructure and resources. ACAP shows that the city was aware of and concerned with its creative class early on and made an effort to address their needs. However, due to a lack of resources and parties interested in initiating recommendations, the plan was largely abandoned after completion. After another city report also recommended moving CAD out of parks and recreation, this recommendation was the only one eventually realized.

The current cultural plan, *CreateAustin* (2009), which is the focus of this study, was begun in 2006. In the years between 1993 and 2006, Austin continued to experience growth, though somewhat more slowly because the bursting of the tech bubble greatly affected Austin as a tech-heavy city. The city and various other agencies completed several smaller plans and reports during this time, including specific sector economic impact reports and neighborhood development plans as areas outside the central city began to be developed. Comparing ACAP and CreateAustin will shed some light on the issues that Austin was able to address in the approximately 15 years between the plans and on the issues that continue to present a problem.
Figure 1. Comparison of visual style of ACAP and CreateAustin.
CreateAustin was a comprehensive community arts and cultural plan with issue-specific and district-specific elements, the main focus being on the downtown area. This plan was more clearly an advocacy and promotional tool than ACAP was, and was overtly designed to persuade policymakers and citizens alike that investment in the arts and culture would bring benefits to the city. Like ACAP, this plan existed outside Austin’s own development plans; however, much of CreateAustin’s content was later folded into Austin’s comprehensive 30-year development plan, Imagine Austin (2012). One of the major criticisms of ACAP was that it was ineffectual and that was part of the motivation behind the new planning effort that became CreateAustin (Faires, 2008). In the face of the failed 1993 plan and Austin’s continued but slower growth, the city decided there was a need to reassess the needs and impacts of the creative class and other cultural consumers in the city.

CreateAustin arose not only from the decision to reassess Austin’s relation with its creative class, but also in response to wider national interest in cultural planning. The effort was coordinated by the city’s Cultural Arts Division (CAD) and funded by two grants that the NEA had awarded CAD. The planning process included hiring a consultant and organizing community meetings and input channels including surveys. This plan was more substantial than ACAP and offered more contextualization, background information, justifications for its usefulness, and explication of the future vision. The plan has sections on purpose, values and vision, process, community context, strengths and weaknesses, and long- and short-term recommendations and briefly outlines immediate steps towards implementation. Like its predecessor plan,
CreateAustin offers 34 recommendations, to which the bulk of the document is devoted. This plan was intended to produce a ten-year vision for the city’s cultural landscape.

The city appointed the leadership council for the plan in 2006. The council totaled 71 members, comprised of individuals from the city government, the nonprofit arts sector and interested community members. It identified three values to guide the plan: inclusion, collaboration, and innovation. The plan identified six high-priority issues and six task forces to address them. They were: (a) support for individual creativity, (b) built environment, (c) creativity and learning, (d) communications and collaborative ventures, (e) financial resources, and (f) cultural infrastructure. These also became the categories for the recommendations of the plan. To guide the ten-year vision for the city, the leadership council enumerated nine ideals, including reinforcing Austin’s unique identity, providing a nurturing environment conducive to individual creativity, increasing the number and usage of physical structures, and increasing both public and private support and funding for culture.

The plan used economic impact and labor statistics to demonstrate the importance of the cultural sector. Led by the thriving music scene, the creative sector in Austin generated $2.2 billion in economic activity (CreateAustin Cultural Master Plan, 2009, pg. 17). The areas that the plan recognized as constituting the creative culture of Austin were architecture, art education, community arts and crafts, culinary arts, dance, design and graphic arts, gaming and digital media, fashion design, film and video, heritage, landscape architecture, literary arts, music, photography, performance art, recording, slam poetry, theater, and visual arts. Several unique aspects of the Austin environment were highlighted in the community context section of the plan, such as
absence of an ethnic majority in the city, the decreasing African-American population, and the combination of tech jobs, cultural amenities, and green spaces.

The report pointed out the challenges Austin faced, challenges that remain today. For example, its reputation as a livable city has spurred both growth and demand for housing that has increased housing prices. The live music in the city dominates the other art sectors, creating a lack of balance and equity in the creative sector. The music scene itself is threatened by the increasing real estate prices in the commercial and residential markets. Art education and community arts activities are underrepresented in the city, especially among minority populations. There are few professional development opportunities in the city for cultural workers and no advanced educational opportunities such as a master’s degree in arts management or administration; as a result, cultural workers are not professionalized. This particular problem likely stems from the realities of the philanthropic environment in the city, which the report stated is underdeveloped. In addition to the possibility that the cultural workers have inadequate fundraising skills, the city has a young, nonnative population in whom a private giving tradition has not been instilled. Overall the report presented Austin’s cultural infrastructure as stunted. For example, at the time the plan was developed, Austin had no cultural organization with a yearly budget over $5 million and only 22 with budgets over $250,000 (CreateAustin Cultural Master Plan, 2009, p. 18).

In its report the leadership council identified six high-priority topics and offered recommendations centered on them. The council discussed the background of and the observations leading to each recommendation, spelling out for each recommendation the likely lead implementers, partners, timelines, first steps, models, resources,
outcomes, and benefits or rationales. The first topic was city support for individual
creative, an acknowledgment that the city recognized individual creators as the
foundation of Austin’s creative environment. The goal of this set of recommendations
was to develop an environment where creative individuals could comfortably live, had
access to the tools they needed, and could concentrate on the production of work. The
second and longest recommendation in the report concerned the built environment.
The council’s concern for affordable physical structures as Austin continued to grow and
become more expensive was apparent in the report, especially when it demonstrated
awareness that the artists in the city were vulnerable to cost-of-living increases, a
financial squeeze that threatened the stability of Austin’s cultural sector. The discussion
of the third topic, creativity and learning, proposed recommendations that focused on
the sustainability of the creative class in Austin. The report indicated concern that
creative subjects were not taught in schools and that opportunities for continuous
creative development were not being offered. This lack of education foretold a day
when creative workers in Austin might age out of the creative economy. To prevent this
possibility, the report recommended expanding educational opportunities for children
and lifelong learners. The fourth set of recommendations, which concerned
communications and collaborative ventures, centered on improving Austin residents’
perception of the public value of the arts and continuing promotion of the city’s national
reputation to draw tourism. The fifth set focused on financing for the arts, specifically to
develop a financially sustainable philanthropic community in Austin. The sixth and final
section of recommendations concentrated on boosting the cultural infrastructure to
ensure the city would be able to manage its cultural resources effectively well into the future.

*CreateAustin*'s recommendations are numerous and interconnected (see Figure 2). The executive summary of the report identified ten recommendations as “big ideas,” the ones that most needed to be pursued. These ten recommendations for the planning process in Austin were as follows: (a) establishing the leadership task force as the first and most important step; (b) forming a community-based Creative Alliance, a recommendation important enough to show up in two sections, the individual creativity and the communication and collaboration sections; (c) creating a city department of arts and culture; (d) initiating a public service campaign to raise public value of the arts in the city; (e) developing an outreach program aimed to develop stronger relationships between the city and local schools and universities; (f) establishing a campaign to develop a private philanthropic community composed of individuals and corporations; (g) increasing business and technical services; (h) developing education opportunities so as to inculcate in the public a lifelong appreciation for the arts; (i) encouraging neighborhood-based cultural development so as to capitalize on self-organized cultural districts as well as to address concerns of the city’s minority populations; and (j) developing affordable cultural and living/working spaces again to help the artistic community to deal with the city’s changing socioeconomic demographics.
Figure 2. Actions recommended in *CreateAustin* (2009).

The report closed with a section called Next Steps, which outlined the four initial steps to be taken by CreateAustin’s stakeholders to start fulfilling the recommendations. The first was for the city and other related stakeholders to adopt the plan. The second was for the leadership council to reconvene to discuss and monitor the plan’s progress. The third was that the plan recommended two other leadership groups, one in the community and one in the government sector, to work on implementation. This recommendation included a new Arts and Culture office within the City of Austin as the government sector partner, building on a recommendation from the cultural
infrastructure section. The fourth recommendation was for the new leadership groups to embark on the marketing and goodwill campaigns the recommendations called for and to oversee the implementation of the plan using a designated framework. Austin’s city council endorsed the plan partially in the summer of 2010 by directing the city manager to form a group to oversee implementation, encourage interdepartmental cooperation on creative enterprise services, and request that creative enterprises were incorporated into *Imagine Austin.*

As noted above, much of CreateAustin was folded into the larger Austin comprehensive development plan, *Imagine Austin* (2010), which focused on the development of the entire city, not just its cultural arena. Beginning with community forums in 2009, the city of Austin worked towards building a vision for 2039, the city’s two-hundredth anniversary. Over the course of a year, the city facilitated several types of meetings, information sessions, forums, surveys and the like to develop a vision of what Austin should look like in the next 30 years. Though participation was skewed somewhat by white, educated, middle-aged citizens, the city was able to get wide participation in the planning process (Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan, 2010, p. A-7-8). To produce the final report, the city worked with a wide variety of people and entities; over 300 city employees, tens of thousands of citizens, and 13 consulting firms worked on the comprehensive plan. The result was a 300-plus-page document encompassing hundreds of large and small recommendations for issues ranging from the economy to the environment to healthcare in Austin. Because much of the content is outside the scope of my research project, I give a brief overview and focus only on the areas that are pertinent here.
Sustainability was the guiding principle for the plan, which identified three areas in which to enhance it: the natural environment, health and cultural vitality. The report named six areas as the key challenges in Austin: (a) preserving livability in the city as it expands; (b) expanding transportation choices, especially alternatives to cars; (c) tackling the ethnic divide, whereby Austin’s great diversity is jeopardized because people of color tend more than white citizens to live in poverty and to be clustered in poorer neighborhoods on the east side of town; (d) protecting natural resources, especially the water supply; (e) promoting prosperity for all by increasing overall wages in the city, training and educating people for good jobs, and providing affordable housing opportunities, especially for people of color; and (f) collaborating regionally with other local cities and communities.

These six key areas guided the seven major building blocks that made up the bulk of the recommendations of the plan. They were: (a) land use and transportation, (b) housing and neighborhoods, (c) the economy, (d) conservation and environment, (e) city facilities and services, (f) society, and (g) creativity. The plan suggested that four principles should be used to accomplish the goals and achieve the vision laid out in the plan. First, all citizens of Austin must work for the plan, including individuals, large businesses, small businesses, government and nonprofit organizations, and the work should be prioritized. Second, the whole community of Austin should be considered and improved, with special consideration going to the city’s less fortunate. Third, the growth-shaping strategies used by the city would have to be expanded including using innovative regulatory tools as well as zoning and incentives. Finally, the plan noted that
transparency and continuous learning should guide the city as it measured the plan’s progress and ensured that its provisions were adapted as needed.

Although *Imagine Austin* governs planning for all of Austin, the shift in the city’s thinking about the creative class is apparent. Not only is an entire section of the plan’s recommendations devoted to creativity, but also the words *creative and creativity* appear in the document 205 times and are interspersed throughout. The vision statement reads:

> As it approaches its 200th anniversary, Austin is a beacon of sustainability, social equity, and economic opportunity; where diversity and creativity are celebrated; where community needs and values are recognized; where leadership comes from its citizens, and where the necessities of life are affordable and accessible to all. Austin’s greatest asset is its people: passionate about our city, committed to its improvement, and determined to see this vision become a reality. (Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan, 2010, p. 82)

This statement demonstrates the city’s recognition of both creativity and human capital as major influences on the economic and social environments of place.

In the creativity section of *Imagine Austin*, the plan made 19 recommendations that were connected to 16 recommendations in other sections. Most of the connections occurred under the economic section but also in land use and transportation, housing and neighborhoods, city facilities and services, and society. I do not go into these recommendations at length as many are similar to the recommendations in *CreateAustin*. In fact, Janet Seibert, one of the main city staff liaisons to CreateAustin, also worked on this comprehensive plan, because she believed it was important to the cultural vitality of the area to make sure those recommendations were subsumed into the new plan (personal communication, 2013). It is sufficient to say that the recommendations of *Imagine Austin* centered on making sure artists and creatives have
educational opportunities starting at the primary level and continuing through professional development, that there are affordable living and working spaces, and that the city forges relationships with area schools and with businesses so as to continue to encourage creativity and cultural participation in Austin over the next 30 years.

The prominent position the report gives to creativity demonstrates the level of commitment and understanding present in Austin about the privileged position it gives to cultural vitality as key to the success of the city. City council endorsed the recommendations of this report in 2010 and adopted the full plan in 2012. Based on the city’s charter, with this adoption, the city must use the principles of the plan to guide its policies, including budgetary decisions.

Plan Analysis

To begin to understand the success of the cultural plan, the logical place to start is to determine whether it accomplished its stated goals. The plan had visions and overarching ideals to guide it but it also had more tangible, measurable goals to accomplish. CreateAustin included implementation steps for different actors in the community, the city government, and the private sector to complete. In Table 1 I have delineated the recommendations of the plan and indicated if they were completed by the city government, the community or the commercial sector. I have also indicated when a recommendation has been modified, when, for example, the exact recommendation may not have been completed but something has been undertaken in its place. As the plan has a 10-year horizon to 2017, I did not feel that it was meaningful to differentiate if
a recommendation is complete or ongoing; I indicate them both the same way in the table.

Table 1

*Recommendation Status*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Commercial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>form a creative alliance</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>showcase arts at city venues</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>technical and business development</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>affordable cultural spaces</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inventory public and private spaces</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expand use of spaces</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>policies to encourage private development</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>policies to encourage ownership of cultural &amp; creative spaces</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>affordable live/work spaces</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shared cultural facility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>encourage neighborhood cultural development</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>()</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>enhance art in public places</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transportation</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Development Plan</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>new facility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>improve arts education</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>youth, adult &amp; community art programs</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
**Recommendation Status (continued)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Commercial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>link creative education to workforce development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>develop master’s program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marketing &amp; audience development plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cultural tourism marketing</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reestablish business arts group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expand college &amp; university partnerships</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>educational tools &amp; networks for philanthropy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>increase corporate support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>increase fundraising training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>challenge grant pool</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diversify public funding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>increase public value</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>city department of arts, culture &amp; creativity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>integrate plan with other plans &amp; initiatives</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>create cultural vitality measurement system</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key:**

- ✓ Completed or ongoing
- () Modification
When I considered these three documents together, I determined that they reflected the movements of the overall trends in cultural planning. ACAP is a more generic report, that while somewhat reflective of the needs of the Austin community, is much more an idealized version of what an ideal American city’s cultural environment would look like. The lack of engagement with the actual Austin community could explain why the plan was not very successful. CreateAustin reflects more current conceptualization of cultural plans as strategies that incorporate the strengths and desires of the community while recommending ways to grow and expand it. While Imagine Austin reflects a contemporary idea in urban planning that favors creativity in general planning. With exploration of the foundational documents now in place, I now turn to examination of the quantitative and qualitative data I collected.

Statistical Analysis

Next I present my findings in regards to the research question: What changes have occurred in the following variables in Austin between 1998 and 2012?:

1. Artists’ jobs as a percentage of total employment
2. Employment in arts establishments as a percentage of total employment
3. Number of nonprofit arts organizations
4. Number of arts establishments
5. Arts establishments as a percentage of total establishments
6. Nonprofit arts organizations’ revenue
7. Nonprofit arts organizations’ assets
Data for variables one, three, six, and seven is available through 2012, while data for variables two, four, and five is available through 2011. *CreateAustin* was released in 2009, and based on my interviews with stakeholders, it seems that some implementation of the plan was begun right away despite the fact that it did not have city council’s backing for another year. I collected data on the variables starting in 1998, the earliest date available from many of the sources. Therefore, for the analysis, my samples are comprised of 11 data points prior to the implementation of the cultural plan and three or four after (depending on availability of data). Given the limited availability of recent data, I draw insights through consideration of the trends in the data points and by conducting an independent sample *t*-test.

The collected variables are presented in Table 2 below:

**Table 2**

*Trend Data*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Artists’ jobs as a percentage of total employment</th>
<th>Employment in arts establishments as a percentage of total employment</th>
<th>Number of nonprofit arts organizations</th>
<th>Number of arts establishments</th>
<th>Arts establishments as a percentage of total establishments</th>
<th>Nonprofit arts organizations’ revenue</th>
<th>Nonprofit arts organizations’ assets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>0.13%</td>
<td>0.87%</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>1.34%</td>
<td>$66,943,623</td>
<td>$80,805,851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>0.13%</td>
<td>0.85%</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>1.35%</td>
<td>$77,235,308</td>
<td>$104,959,793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>0.16%</td>
<td>0.81%</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>1.24%</td>
<td>$57,719,010</td>
<td>$105,691,018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>0.16%</td>
<td>0.80%</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>1.25%</td>
<td>$76,823,114</td>
<td>$131,092,816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>0.20%</td>
<td>0.85%</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>1.28%</td>
<td>$107,682,263</td>
<td>$165,754,907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>0.18%</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>1.28%</td>
<td>$78,118,757</td>
<td>$140,823,163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>0.19%</td>
<td>0.91%</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>1.26%</td>
<td>$72,920,070</td>
<td>$124,173,843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>0.25%</td>
<td>0.92%</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>1.25%</td>
<td>$101,766,513</td>
<td>$153,851,854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>0.27%</td>
<td>0.88%</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>1.29%</td>
<td>$103,321,218</td>
<td>$186,093,055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>0.30%</td>
<td>0.85%</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>1.25%</td>
<td>$104,457,361</td>
<td>$209,479,077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
<td>0.78%</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>1.21%</td>
<td>$121,230,841</td>
<td>$252,314,508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>0.36%</td>
<td>0.80%</td>
<td>557</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>1.18%</td>
<td>$124,590,125</td>
<td>$251,014,091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>0.33%</td>
<td>0.74%</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>1.08%</td>
<td>$113,129,713</td>
<td>$245,354,856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>0.34%</td>
<td>0.69%</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>1.04%</td>
<td>$125,977,969</td>
<td>$276,485,005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>0.29%</td>
<td></td>
<td>488</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$140,351,749</td>
<td>$283,691,079</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examination of this data illuminates several things. Variable 1, artists’ jobs as a percentage of total employment, aside from a dip this past year, has been growing slightly over the past 15 years. This variable shows that though artists make up a very small percentage of the total workforce in Austin, less than the national average, their employment has been steady despite the bursting of the tech bubble in the early 1990s and the economic downturn in 2008. Variable 2, employment in arts establishments as a percentage of total employment, is used to determine how arts establishments, meaning commercial and noncommercial arts businesses, are faring in comparison to overall employment. These two variables together capture both artists working in non-artistic establishments, for example a graphic designer working for a tech company, and the workforce that is supported by arts businesses, for example, the janitor at the art museum. Criticism over the creative class thesis often comes in the form of a too-widely defined creative class. Some of Richard Florida’s analyses, for example, measure doctors and lawyers, arguing that they use creativity and have knowledge-based jobs not easily automated. In this instance, it is essential to capture the economic impacts that artists and arts-related businesses have on both individual creatives and non-creatives employed by them. Variable 2 peaked in 2005 and has been falling steadily since.

Variable 3, the number of nonprofit arts establishments in Austin, grew between 1999 and 2010 and then fell in 2011 and 2012. This could be related to issues of reporting. The number of nonprofits in the US is not fully known due to the fact that nonprofits with revenues under $25,000 have not had to file Form 990s, the income tax
form nonprofits file with the IRS. In 2010, the IRS asked nonprofits to respond by postcard to attempt a more accurate count and eliminate records of inactive organizations. Nonprofits are also, of course, affected by the economic downturn and Austin already has a documented stunted philanthropic community. Variable 4, number of arts establishments, has been remarkably steady over the last 15 years. It peaked in 2007 and has fallen slightly since, but hovers around 450 establishments. Variable 5, arts establishments as a percentage of total establishments, assists in understanding how the number of arts-related businesses in the city compares to the total number of businesses. At the maximum, arts-related businesses made up 1.35% of the total business in Austin. This number has fallen to 1.04% in 2011. For Variables 6 and 7, which look at nonprofit arts organizations' revenue and assets, both have displayed fairly steady growth in the period examined. The largest limitation with this data is that it is not controlled for inflation. The changes in the data could also be attributed to a trend versus a treatment change responding to the cultural plan. While simply collecting and examining this data can yield some insight, a more sophisticated statistically analysis will also aid the evaluation.

A t-test determined whether there was any statistically significant difference in the means of the two samples, which were the years before CreateAustin was partially implemented (1998 to 2008) and the years after it was implemented (2009 to 2011 or 2012). Results of the t-test are displayed in Table 3 below.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Pre-plan mean (n=11)</th>
<th>Post-plan mean (n=3 or 4)</th>
<th>t-score</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artists’ jobs as a percentage of total employment</td>
<td>0.20%</td>
<td>0.33%</td>
<td>-5.22</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment in arts establishments as a percentage of total employment</td>
<td>0.09%</td>
<td>0.07%</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of nonprofit arts organizations</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>-3.5</td>
<td>0.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of arts establishments</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>-0.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts establishments as a percentage of total establishments</td>
<td>1.30%</td>
<td>1.10%</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonprofit arts organizations’ revenue</td>
<td>$88,019,825</td>
<td>$126,012,389</td>
<td>-4.59</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonprofit arts organizations’ assets</td>
<td>$150,458,171</td>
<td>$264,136,254</td>
<td>-6.36</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Five of the seven variables showed statistically significant results. For each of these results the t-score indicated a probability that there was less than a 5% chance that the results could have occurred by chance. For example, Variable 5, arts establishments as a percentage of total establishments, had a t-score of 3.97 and a p-value of .04 indicating a 4% probability that the difference in the means occurred by chance. For the remaining significant variables, the p-values indicated probabilities of less than 1%. The variables with statistically significant results were 1, 3, 5, 6, and 7. The fact that the means of the variables were different from each other between
1998-2008 and 2009-2011/12 indicates that an environmental factor may have been at work.

My analysis of the quantitative variables indicated that five of the seven had statistically significant differences in the means before and after the plan was in place. I discuss here each of the variables and its results. Variable 1, artists’ jobs as a percentage of total employment, grew between 1999 and 2012, some twists and turns aside. The mean before the plan was in place was about 0.2% and after about 0.3%, which represents a statistically significant difference. This is below the NEA’s reported average of 1.4% nationally (National Endowment for the Arts, 2008), though this information fits with other research about where artists cluster. Despite Austin’s reputation as a creative city, artists tend to cluster in larger metropolitan areas. An important finding from this variable indicates that artists were able to weather the economic recession in Austin. This could be attributed to artists being highly educated and highly skilled workers. Unfortunately, this is probably also somewhat reflective of the fact that artists are often paid less than other workers of similar skill and education. In other words, artistic workers were a good value during the economic downturn because they offer a high degree of skill and/or education at a low labor cost.

Variable 2, employment in arts establishments as a percentage of total employment, peaked in 2005 and has been steadily falling since. This aligns with my conclusion about Variable 1, that artists fared slightly better during the economic downturn; this variable indicates that arts-related businesses overall did experience some constriction and lost employees. The means in question for this variable did not represent a statistically significant difference, indicating relative stability through the
recession. Skipping ahead to Variable 4, number of arts establishments, which is related, it has slipped in the last two years after growing through 2009. It also did not show a statistically significant difference in means. Another related variable is Variable 5, arts establishments as a percentage of total establishments, which has also fallen. It has a higher concentration than the other two variables, comparing arts businesses as a percentage of total businesses in the city, but could indicate that other businesses are growing faster than arts-related businesses. This variable did show a statistically significant difference in the means but interestingly, the mean in the years following the cultural plan fell from 1.3% to 1.1%. These three variables seem to indicate that the plan did not have much positive impact on the commercial sector.

Variable 3, number of nonprofit arts organizations, steadily grew through 2010 and then fell in 2011 and again in 2012. The other variables regarding nonprofit organizations, Variables 6 and 7, revenue and assets respectively, had more unpredictable patterns. There could be several possible explanations. As analysis of the plan documents showed, one of the areas where Austin has continued to fall short is in the professionalization of its cultural workers. There are no master’s-level arts administration programs in the city, and interviewees reported donor fatigue and lack of a culture of giving. Coupling this with the economic climate, it makes sense that nonprofit organizations would close or merge with others in a difficult philanthropic environment. This would also be reflected in the assets and revenues of the nonprofit arts community. Additionally, as I mentioned, this could be an issue with reporting to the IRS, which collects this data. Another possible explanation for the large swings in assets and revenues could be that these organizations were undertaking capital
campaigns. For example, the new building of the Long Center was completed in 2008, a $77 million facility for which capital was raised over several years. Nevertheless, all of these variables’ means increased significantly after the plan was in place, indicating growth had occurred in the nonprofit arts sector that coincided with the plan.

Taken together, the findings of the statistical analysis are useful in assessing Austin’s cultural plan. These results also raise some questions about the difference between the impacts in the nonprofit arts and the commercial arts sectors. The number of variables with statistically significant results is encouraging; however, this in itself does not explain causality.

Synopsis of Quantitative Data

Before turning to the findings of the qualitative data, I briefly summarize the quantitative findings. The trend data reflect a healthy cultural sector as defined by the identified variables (Jackson et al., 2006). The sector has grown since 1998, though the most recent data do show some backsliding. The US economy has experienced some volatility over this same period but the cultural sector in Austin has remained relatively stable. It is important to keep in mind that Austin has continued to grow during this time and the slight growth in the cultural sector is somewhat diluted by the population growth. These data also show that the commercial aspects of Austin’s cultural sector have not been positively impacted by the cultural plan. The results of the $t$-test show that several variables had statistically significant results between the period before and after the cultural plan. In the examined periods, the variables dealing with labor and establishments in the the nonprofit cultural sector, had significant positive results. The
variables dealing with the commercial cultural sector had either no significant results or a significant negative result. The variables dealing with nonprofit assets and revenue also showed significant results, however those data points were much more volatile. The implications of these results are discussed further in Chapter 5. I turn now to the qualitative data and analysis of my study.

Interviews

In addition to analyzing quantitative variables for my case study on Austin’s cultural plan, to answer my final research question: What impacts on the creative community in Austin are identified by the cultural planners of CreateAustin?, I also completed qualitative data analysis in the form of five interviews with key stakeholders, who had a range of opinions about CreateAustin. I summarize each of the interviews briefly, and then compare them thematically afterward. Please refer to the Appendix for the questions that guided the interviews.

Alex

The first respondent, Alex,¹ became involved with the cultural plan as a member of the working group on development. He had a background in arts administration and worked in a related field at the time the process got underway. During the most active phase of the planning process, the working groups met weekly to draft each of their sections of the plan, which they then turned over to the consultant. Alex believed that the motivation for the creation of the plan was that the timing was right, a sentiment that

¹ Names have been changed.
resurfaced in many of the interviews, and that Austin needed its arts scene to stay ahead of the growth. The community working on the plan was motivated to ensure that CreateAustin was effective, because there was a widespread sense that ACAP had been a wasted effort. Alex said that as he worked on the plan as part of a task force, he had a clear sense that the plan was meant to belong to the community, and thus the community, and not just the city, would be responsible for implementing it.

Alex believed that he and his fellow workers on the task force had the autonomy and support they needed to work on their particular aspect of the plan. A staff liaison was available to answer any questions or provide information about what the other committees were doing. It was a small and focused group that allowed for concentrated effort. The data that was reviewed by this group included the surveys that were done by the lead consultant and various reports and articles that were available around that time. Once that work was completed, the group elected one person to write up their section so that it would have a unified voice and then the group gave that section to the consultant, who in turn was responsible for incorporating it into the plan. The task force had a final look at it before the plan was completed. Once the plan was rolled out to the community, Alex discontinued his involvement. He was asked to be on a new committee responsible for implementation and attended one meeting, but believed that the participants were treading the same ground that had been covered in the planning process due to the fact that many people involved in the implementation phase had not been involved in the planning.

Next, I asked Alex to talk about the plan and its impacts on the Austin community. He said some of the goals of CreateAustin had been accomplished, like creating the
Creative Alliance, a new nonprofit group whose establishment the plan recommended, but could not name any instances where the plan had exceeded expectations. Alex believed the most significant impacts of the plan were the connections that participants in the planning made with each other. In fact, during the process, Alex got a new job at a major Austin arts organization after being recommended by a fellow task force member on the board of that institution. When the plan was being created, Alex stated that participants were told to dream big and that some of the goals of the plan were definitely a reach, or what he termed “stretch goals.” Overall, Alex said that the plan was a good one and that it was still relevant to the community to this day. He also said the need to include the arts in any form of city planning as Austin grows is very important.

Alex attributed the shortcomings he identified in CreateAustin to several factors. In the few years since the plan’s implementation, there has been a lot of turnover in the leadership of the Austin arts community. The director position at the Blanton Museum at the University of Texas was staffed after a national search, but the selected applicant left after less than a year. He was replaced by a longtime Blanton development staffer. Similarly, Paramount Theatre, Long Center, Austin Museum of Art (AMOA), Arthouse, and Texas Performing Arts all had turnover in their leadership. AMOA and Arthouse decided to merge after AMOA failed to build the downtown museum it had been planning for about 20 years. Some local theaters also went from a nonprofit model to a commercial model and began touring, another significant change in the arts environment upon which the plan was based. Political battles emerged, particularly resistance to creating a city department of creativity that would combine all arts under
one umbrella. There were some tensions between representatives of the music scene and some of the other artistic disciplines that kept them from working well together. Alex also stated that there was no one in the community with enough time and influence to champion the cause of bringing the arts together as a whole in Austin. About the city’s support of the arts Alex said:

Other places have a lot more public art. We like to brag about how good our creative community is, but we still don’t invest in it the way other places do. It’s an afterthought or only on the minds of a few, a section of the population. It’s not yet a part of the culture here, it’s still just for a few, which is a shame. Whereas I think music is on everyone’s mind because it’s so prevalent. It’s about branding.

Alex said that the arts should be included in the planning processes for the city, not just as an afterthought. Overall he stated that the planning effort was worthwhile for the connections it made and that it was not a wasted investment, but he thought the plan could have been stronger with a better implementation strategy.

Beth

The second respondent, Beth, was involved in the planning process through the local consulting partner on the plan, Greenlights for Nonprofit Success. Greenlights was founded in Austin in the early 1990s to remedy what some Austin philanthropists perceived as a lack of much-needed support for nonprofits. Their role in CreateAustin as a sub-contractor was to help engage the local community and assist the lead consultant. Mainly Greenlights worked on the initial community engagement and fact-finding phases of the plan and were less involved as the consultant drafted the final version of the plan. Beth reported her possible ignorance about what motivations provided the impetus to create the cultural plan, but she thought that CreateAustin was
politically motivated, that certain actors thought it would be good to say it had been done. She said individual citizens participated because they wanted a chance to shape Austin’s cultural environment, but many people felt upset by the fact that nothing had come of ACAP. Beth said that many in the community felt it was a good time to work on a cultural plan because there was backing for it within the city government. In retrospect, however, Beth thought that the two-year delay between the end of the cultural planning process and getting the plan to the city council for approval showed that there was no high-level support for it. She pointed out that cultural improvements were being made in Austin by organizations like the Creative Alliance, without the involvement of city government.

Beth stated that she did not know whether the plan successfully attained its objectives. She said that it was a good value, as the city had paid only $90,000 to the consultant and the plan had documented some important points about Austin’s creative environment. From her organization’s viewpoint, she thought it was a valuable learning experience in city bureaucracy. She said she believed that those working on the plan had probably formed some new relationships among themselves. The planning process also built some consensus among the community that allowed for things like the Creative Alliance to be built. But she said she felt the plan “has not been a driving force for change within the city in terms of an ambitious vision about how to support creatives.” She said that if the city had put up some financial backing, more of the recommendations could have been achieved.

In speaking about the arts and music communities in Austin, Beth stated the city had made some inroads in helping people to understand Austin was more than just
music. She cited as an example the economic impact studies done by local economic firm TXP were now including more artistic forms in their reports. She stated that Austin’s political environment was very collaborative and that sometimes the city bends over backwards to make sure everyone is heard, but that camaraderie can have drawbacks in terms of a lack of consolidated power to push things through. More often what is seen in Austin are small changes around the edges. Beth thought the plan’s lack of success or perceived lack of success stemmed from the city’s failure to convince members of the community that they too had responsibilities to carry out as part of CreateAustin, with many residents insisting that responsibility for implementing the plan lay with the city alone.

Chloe

Though Chloe, the third respondent, did not have much involvement in the development of CreateAustin, she works in an Austin nonprofit that is very active in implementing the plan. From this work, she also has a solid understanding of the contents of the plan as well as some opinion on the formation of it. While Chloe has no formal education in arts administration, she has been active in the visual arts community, at times doing curatorial and entrepreneurial arts business ventures. She also has experience volunteering and serving on boards of arts organizations in Austin. Even though she was not directly involved in any of the task forces’ work for the plan, as a member of the visual arts community, she was aware of the meetings and events.

Chloe said that she believed the motivation for creating the plan was the city’s recognition of the economic impact of the creative community, its interest in learning
how big it was, and its desire to create partnerships that would allow the creative community to continue to grow. She stated that there was a broadening understanding of the relation between arts and creativity and a transition from talking about the arts to talking about creativity during the plan’s creation. In talking about how the infrastructure of the community influenced the plan, Chloe lightheartedly referred to a planning axiom, “It is a good plan if no one is happy with it.” She believed that different groups came together with different agendas but that CreateAustin had broad grassroots support and some support among high-level Austin officials who “get it.” Chloe also mentioned the cooperative city government, saying, “Respect, inclusion and collaboration are not just buzzwords here. They are a clear part of how we behave.” She thought that the plan was short on quantitative information about participation and impact, which might have made a stronger case to gain community-wide support.

When asked if the plan was successful at attaining its objectives, Chloe told me yes and no. The formation of the Creative Alliance was one of the plan’s top three objectives, and that was done. Since its formation, the Creative Alliance has been active in most aspects of the plan and more meaningful and relevant to the community than its predecessor organization had been previously. (The Austin Creative Alliance was formed from another community organization, Austin Circle of Theaters [ACOT], whose then-executive director was very active in CreateAustin. Once ACOT transitioned to the Creative Alliance, that ED retired.) Chloe also pointed to the fact that since the plan was rolled out, many things have changed. As an example she talked about a plan recommendation that might have been thought of at the time as a brick and mortar entity could now be an online community. She stated the need for the
creative community to continue to interpret what was in the plan as Austin evolves. She did not believe that there were instances where the plan had exceeded expectations.

Chloe did, however, identify instances where the plan did not meet expectations. The biggest problems she saw were what she described as binary goals, grounded in yes-or-no, black-and-white definitions of success. For example, creating a city department is a binary goal. She expanded on the idea of creating a city department:

The city department relates to the nature of art and the economics and community behind art. The Austin music community is essentially a bunch of entrepreneurs. The ballet or symphony is a collection of people who work for a nonprofit. Their funding models and business models are really different. The only way I see that collectivity happening is through connection to each other. People need make their own relationships across sectors. People have different agendas and can use the plan as a roadmap and still come to a different place.

Chloe said that the binary language used in some of the recommendations caused success or failure to be defined too narrowly.

She judged the recommendations put forth by the plan as reasonable and relevant to the community. While she said that efforts were made towards inclusiveness, some people were still excluded or did not participate enough in the plan. Chloe said that the plan did not focus enough on commercial business issues, music issues and minority issues. She pointed to the fact that around the time the plan was being made, the music community was working on a similar effort and consequently a new city music department was formed where the comprehensive city arts department was not. Chloe illuminated another side of Austin’s independent spirit: that locally owned businesses do not always feel the need to support the community philanthropically the way large corporations like 3M or Dell do. She stated these larger businesses tend to support the larger cultural institutions, making survival harder for the
smaller organizations in town. In terms of Austin’s cultural workers being underprofessionalized, Chloe stated that there were few people in development who were good at building new relationships and that there was a donor-fatigue problem in the arts. What’s more, Chloe thought the plan’s failure to focus on minority issues was particularly acute in the Latino community because of great access barriers like language gaps, access to food and cultural participation issues. She pointed out that many of the problems the minority community has are the same problems the creatives have and that a high percentage of artists in Austin are minorities. She said that funding to Latino arts groups has decreased disproportionately in the city and that her organization is working with the city to educate government workers about how the Latino community approaches resources and what it will take to include them in the city funding process.

Despite its limitations, Chloe thought that the plan was very important to Austin. In her current position, she uses the plan as a toolkit to affect public policy. She also mentioned the fact that when CreateAustin did get eventual partial city endorsement in 2010, that meant it had to be included in planning going forward, and it was, in *Imagine Austin*. She uses CreateAustin as a bridge to show other community organizations that they are working on the same issues, like affordable housing and healthcare, to build new coalitions. Chloe said:

> It has been my most powerful tool for advocating for the arts in Austin. I can argue for the support of creative sector using [the economic impact report] and then use [CreateAustin] to say this is how we are going to do it. Without it we would have a lot of people working hard to pay attention but they would not be organized and not have a unifying document that helps them start conversation amongst themselves.
Dan

At the time of my interview with Dan, the fourth respondent, had worked in the Economic Growth and Redevelopment Services Office (EGRSO) for over ten years. Dan was actively involved in the arts community since the early 1980s and had an important role working on CreateAustin. He was instrumental in securing the funds for the plan, which came from two grants from the National Endowment for the Arts. The interview I conducted with him was the longest and contained a lot of valuable information about the city’s role in the cultural planning process. Dan thought the city was motivated to undertake the cultural plan because there had been some upheaval in the arts community. The cultural funding program, which is a city program that uses the city’s hotel occupancy tax (HOT) funds, had just undergone a review. One of the recommendations of that review was for the city to move the arts program out of the parks and recreation department, where it had been housed. Around the same time, the city was looking into economic development and created three task forces, on traditional business development, small business development, and creative economy and cultural vitality. Dan attributed the city’s creation of the last one to the writings of Richard Florida. Based on this recommendation, Austin created EGRSO and moved the cultural funding program to that office. The plan was to use this task force and office to incubate a group of people who would eventually break off into an independent arts council, but this never happened. (Currently the Cultural Arts Division [CAD] still resides within EGRSO.) The workers in EGRSO thought they needed a blueprint of how they would address the creative sector and thus the cultural plan was developed.
Dan thought organizational infrastructure was a significant influence in developing the plan. The creation of EGRSO was the first time the city administered economic development programs. For Austin to locate the arts there was a powerful and innovative move. This move was influenced by the consultants’ review of the HOT funds program, they advised that housing the city’s arts administration in the parks and recreation office was an old-fashioned model. Members of the arts sector were concerned that the move to EGRSO would mean that the intrinsic value of the arts in developing community and cultural identity, and as the soul of the city, would be reduced to how much money the arts were bringing in. Dan stated that the city government was sensitive about having the community tell it how it should spend city dollars, thus the announcement that the plan was community-owned and would not be merely a checklist of things the city should do. There was a lot of interest in the planning process. Dan recounted that on the recommendation of the lead consultant, he sent out double the number of invitations that they wanted for the leadership council. They ended up with much more participation than they anticipated, and a leadership council of 71 members, well over their desired number.

When discussing who was invited to participate, Dan stated that he tried to cast as wide a net as possible. Austin has a diverse set of creatives and he wanted all of them to be involved. This included partners from UT, Austin Community College, Austin Independent School District, the nonprofit community, creative businesses, the chamber of commerce, gaming, and live music. Representatives from these groups assembled in facilitated meetings to identify issues and hone them down to the six topics the task forces were formed around. These task forces were then co-chaired by someone on
the leadership council and a community member who had knowledge on the issue. Where the leadership council was created to have some recognizable leaders from the community, such as the mayor, the task force co-chairs were members of the arts community. Anyone who was passionate about the issue was invited to participate because there was an awareness that it would be a difficult job and a major time commitment with no direct compensation offered. From the recommendations of the task forces, the lead consultant identified and refined the list into 10 principal recommendations to present in a way that resonated within the community.

Working in the city office, Dan was able to tell me that the consultant was paid $90,000 and funded through the NEA grants that the city received for the process. He stated this was a good value. Austin had so much cachet as a creative city that cultural consultants were eager to link their names with it, and the bids were very competitive. The city used some HOT funds and staff resources but no other city funds for the plan. As far as quantitative data on Austin’s cultural vitality, the city partners with Americans for the Arts on their Arts and Economic Prosperity studies and collects some of the data for that. The city of Austin also has an economist on retainer and they have completed a number of economic impact studies on live music, digital media, film, and the total cultural sector. Recently, the city has been working with the nonprofit development organization ArtSpace to assess the space needs of artists in the city. Dan stated that the city does not do any qualitative data collection as a matter of routine. Dan recounted that in his long career working for the city, he has noticed pendulum swings in trends. He believed that in times when the instrumental value of the arts gains too much attention, things swing back to a focus on their intrinsic value, and vice versa. In
his position, he draws a lot from the academic literature and he discussed studies that he had read about creative space development and its economic impact, organic cultural districts, and studies on the ease with which individual artists move between commercial and nonprofit sectors. Dan communicated that he believed it was job to make sure that the city considers a balance between intrinsic and instrumental uses of the arts.

Next, Dan and I spoke about the outcomes of the plan. I asked him if he thought the recommendations of the plan were sustainable. He told me that there was a more powerful way to think about the idea of sustainability, as regeneration. “Sustainable,” he pointed out, means to continue with what one has, while “regeneration” indicates setting things in motion, and those things will create other things. Dan’s hope was not that CreateAustin was sustainable, but that it was regenerative. CreateAustin had a 10-year horizon, to be implemented by 2017, but it got off to a late start. The plan was not completed until 2008, a year later than originally planned, and it was not endorsed or adopted by council until 2010. Around the time CreateAustin sought council endorsement, city council was also hearing from the live music community who had been working on its own initiative. Dan stated that they tried to include everyone they could in the planning effort but that there were factions that prevented good participation from the live music community. This same time, 2008, was when Austin’s economy really plummeted.

With both of the groups petitioning city council for action, the council reviewed the idea of a new comprehensive department but decided not to create it. They created a new division for music within EGRSO, but the program managers of the music office
and CAD do not report to the same person. In June 2010, the city council passed a resolution to adopt three directives on the plan that they had drafted with CAD. The directives were to create an accountability group to oversee implementation, to develop a creative enterprises team made up of representatives from other departments and divisions to work together and use resources better to support the creative community, and to integrate CreateAustin into Imagine Austin. The recommendation for the creative enterprises team was in lieu of the city department. City council set these directives in place rather than ordering the implementation of the plan.

The city department idea did not have enough support to become a reality, though Dan believed that having such a department would draw more attention to the issue of creativity. Not having a centralized department is a hindrance because there are people who deal with arts and culture in the History, Arts and Nature Division (formerly Parks and Recreation), and separate film and music offices. A centralized department would allow resources to be managed more efficiently and better serve the creative community. The creative enterprises team is making inroads, it is composed of people from many different departments such as music, CAD, international relations, economic development, small business development and others. The next step is for the team to make a strategic plan, but something of value has already come from this group. One of the things they have done is to make presentations about what their divisions do and projects they are working on, and as a result a lot of cross-department interaction happens now that did not happen before.

CreateAustin’s recommendations became integral to Imagine Austin, the comprehensive plan. Dan was assigned to be the staff person working with the
comprehensive planning team and another person, Cookie Ruiz, executive director of the ballet, was involved as a citizen. Ruiz had also been very active in the CreateAustin process. Dan said that during the process of adapting CreateAustin the working group realized they needed to expand the idea of arts and culture to make it more reflective of Austin and relevant to the community. They coined the term “culture of creativity” to encompass what they were talking about. There was some resistance from the other city planners about this transition from arts and culture to a broader idea of creativity. But this reflected thinking about a larger group of citizens and how important it was to bridge creativity across all of Austin, especially to provide children with the skills they needed to compete in the future economy.

In 2012, Imagine Austin was adopted by the city, which meant that by city charter, this comprehensive city plan had to be incorporated into all future city work plans. Dan pointed out that some progress was already occurring on that front. He said that in some ways, Imagine Austin was used to draft some next steps that would need to be taken to implement some of CreateAustin. At the same time the city manager gave planning department staff priority programs, one of which was the creative economy. Dan said, about CreateAustin and Imagine Austin, “We’re getting great support from city leadership to do this great work. We don’t have money! But we have the support. The idea of long-term sustainability, the power that we’ve had is integrating [CreateAustin] into the comprehensive plan.” Dan noted that arts and culture advocates tend to “siloh” themselves and thought that the cultural planning process has made progress towards breaking down those barriers. He said that it is crucial for people in gatekeeping roles, such as the department directors, to lead these efforts. If those gatekeepers supported
more collaborative efforts, others would follow. With the combination of CreateAustin and the creative enterprises team, the city has created a toolbox for other departments to use to incorporate creativity into their planning and projects. Because of the attention given to creativity in Imagine Austin many more people want to incorporate it into their own projects, Dan said.

Dan detailed a common strategy of planning projects, including grasping at low-hanging fruit, meaning items or projects that are already underway, so that success can be celebrated right away and how this was done with CreateAustin. CAD was already working on technical assistance and professional development programs that were included as recommendations of the plan. One particular program, Take It to the Next Level, includes classes, presentations, workshops, and conversations to help creatives to be better business people so that they can work with fewer financial worries. CAD’s public art program has experienced a lot of growth since the cultural plan and the cultural funding program has been tightened up. In the arts education milieu, the city has partnered with the arts and humanities department at Austin Community College to lead workshops for people working in community arts, a partnership that allows artists to network and nurture relationships. Another outcome of the plan Dan mentioned was the creation of the Creative Alliance. The Creative Alliance is an important partner in implementing the plan because it exists outside the city and is an organized nonprofit that responds to individuals’ needs. Dan did not believe the Creative Alliance had found its footing yet but said that it is on the right track and was still an important outcome from the plan.
Dan told me that a problem with ACAP was that it was about facilities and big organizations, but Austin is a city of entrepreneurs and many small organizations. He related that Austin does not have the multimillion-dollar cultural institutions that many of its peer cities do, but that Austin has been known as a creative place for a long time. One of the reasons the live music scene developed there as it did, he said, was that Austin was affordable and had all the pieces of the ecology for that to happen. A challenge faced by the community now, he believes, is to see if the other artistic disciplines can obtain the pieces of the ecology necessary for them to thrive similarly. Dan expressed that he viewed CreateAustin as helping to propel the community forward faster than it may have been able to on its own. But he stated that ecologies can only go so far before they climax and decline. He believes that it is necessary that some things will collapse, but hopes that something greater might grow up in its place. He stated, “By bringing all these people together for a comprehensive plan, sparks are happening, it’s natural that new things are going to come out of it. I’m not worried.”

Dan said that the greatest weakness in the plan was that city council did not get on board with it sooner, though he stated that in retrospect it did not matter because of the city’s incorporation of the cultural plan into the comprehensive plan shortly thereafter. He told me that, had I asked him a year ago in 2012, he would have been able to list many weaknesses about the plan, but he had been heartened by the Imagine Austin efforts. He also said that publicizing successes or how people can continue to be involved has not been very successful and hopes that this problem can be addressed by keeping people better informed about Imagine Austin and the ways it can help people to create things themselves. Overall Dan thought that the most
important outcome of CreateAustin was that it taught people how to work together
civically: “When you come together and think creatively together, your mind is open, and
you’re having a conversation with others, the solution just appears.”

Emily

The last respondent, Emily, has been active in the arts and theater scenes in
Austin since the early 1980s, writing professionally about the arts in the city. She was
invited to the initial cultural planning meetings in 2006 and decided to both participate
and write about the experience. After the planning effort ended, she was invited to join
the accountability task force overseeing the implementation of the plan. Referring to the
motivation for creating the plan, Emily noted that people were concerned with making
sure that CreateAustin did not end up a wasted effort as many thought ACAP had been.
She noted that much of the discussion centered on how the city was not the primary
implementer of the plan; rather, the community would be charged with thinking about
how to implement it. That was why it was important to have a community accountability
task force to continue monitoring the plan. That group meets quarterly and thus far has
discussed how to measure what has been implemented already. Emily said the plan
had both direct and indirect results, chief among them the creation of the Creative
Alliance. She thought that the Alliance was well on its way to being the type of
organization that the planners originally envisioned. Another group that Emily referred
to throughout our interview was MINDPOP, an organization that works with creative
education. She did not attribute this organization’s existence totally to CreateAustin but
thought that the founder took a recommendation and discussions from the process and
addressed them by creating the organization. At the time of the interview, in January 2013, she described two new developments for artists’ space happening in the city that she thought were also indirect benefits of the plan.

Emily discussed how the structure of this plan seemed different from previous efforts. She believed that there was more broad participation than had been garnered before. For CreateAustin there were more partnerships between larger organizations and the city, which allowed for information shared between those actors and the creative individuals who participated. She thought that because of the way cultural contracts were handled in the city, there was an “us versus them” attitude between the city and individual artists and that the cultural planning process did a lot to mend that divide. About the collaborative spirit of the effort she said:

It was a classic Venn diagram of people from different communities, and the overlap meant that we all had access to each other’s history and information and from that we could go, “Here’s where we want to be in 10 years and I think we can figure out how to get there.”

Due to this intermixing of people, Emily said that a lot of new information and ideas sprang from the process. She thought that the planning effort had been successful in large part because the creative community invested in its ideas and worked to further their own plans. She expressed that the plan was not a grandiose dream of the creative community, many of whose members did follow through with helping to implement it.

Emily reiterated that the Creative Alliance had been one of the great successes of the plan. The community had needed an organization like it to serve as a central clearinghouse of knowledge about what creatives in the different sectors did as well as to act as an agent that could transfer successful programs or strategies from one group to another. Emily was glad to see this kind of effort made in the community because
she believed it was more efficient than waiting for the government to do it. She was less sure about the economic impacts of the plan. To her, it did not seem that the plan or the Creative Alliance had done anything to magnify economic impacts beyond what individuals were already doing. She added that recommendations about improving the philanthropic community and the public relations campaign have gone largely unfulfilled.

The biggest failing of CreateAustin, Emily said, was one of its major recommendations, to create a city department of creativity. Emily believed that the timing of CreateAustin, coinciding as it did with the collapse of the economy, was a large part of its downfall. She explained that there was public grumbling, true or not, that the creative community was making entitled-sounding demands of the city without regard to what it would cost. That said, she did not think the call for a city department of creativity was baseless, and indeed thought a city department would be a boon to the creative community, but believed that asking for the new department came at an inopportune time. One positive outcome, she said, was that people have begun rethinking the way the city and community work together. The other disappointment, Emily noted, was that the people behind CreateAustin missed the best opportunity to get the community behind it when it did not showcase the completion of the plan with a rollout event. She wanted CreateAustin to be talked up within the community to ensure, or at least encourage, its success in the implementation phase. Emily also pointed out how familiar threats, such as the lack of affordable housing and healthcare, still threaten the arts community in the wake of CreateAustin.

I asked Emily to talk more about the resistance to creating a city department. She told me that there was a historical disconnect between the city’s willingness to
brand Austin as the Live Music Capital and play up its attributes as a creative capital and its desire to put any muscle behind making life better for the people working in those sectors. She noted a conflicting public belief that since the creative sector seemed to be doing so well on its own that other problems should be addressed first.

She also cited a turf-driven conflict among makers of music, film and fine arts:

The fact that there are people crossing those sectors doesn’t seem to have much traction among the bureaucrats and politicians. You have to work very hard to convince anyone we need this global attitude in city government. In my mind the department of creativity was the government counterpoint to the Creative Alliance. The city wasn’t interested in rethinking the way things had been done and they were protecting their turf. We were hearing from them, “How much is this going to cost?” and that was a signal to me that they were not going to do it.

For the city department idea to have any legs, she said that there needed to be a person within the community with enough stature like the musician Willie Nelson or the filmmaker Richard Linklater to rally a larger section of the community before the government would seriously consider it.

Had CreateAustin never been conceived, Emily thought Austin would still have high outputs of creative activity. What she thought would be missing is the conversation about how those within the creative community would work together. She does not think the Creative Alliance would have formed or that MINDPOP would have achieved the successes it has. The creative activity would be isolated. Emily communicated that CreateAustin reflected a collaborative zeitgeist that permeated the city. She also thought that, without the plan, people would not have an eye on the future of the cultural sector. She worried that without actively incorporating creativity into the community, it will die out. She used the warehouse district in Austin as an example of an area where cultural institutions were driven out by escalating property values as it was developed,
making it into a hospitality district rather than a mixed or cultural one. Emily mentioned that a challenging aspect to creating a long-range plan was the difficulty envisioning what the city will look like 10 years in the future. She pointed out that 20 years ago, she never would have imagined Austin to have its current skyline, with 50-story buildings downtown. But she says:

What’s been encouraging as the plan has been completed and we’ve gone through implementation and accountability is feeling like it’s a living document, which I hadn’t anticipated, feeling like it’s okay for there to be changes. That’s another way I feel CreateAustin has been successful. It’s responding to the Austin that it is, not just projecting itself into some imagined future.

In the course of interviewing the above actors in the cultural planning process, I spoke with other cultural workers in the city. These were colleagues of those interviewed above as well as people who currently work in Austin’s cultural section or who previously worked in it. These interviews were less formal, and rather than using the questions I had developed I allowed respondents to give me general impressions of the cultural plan and what it meant for them as creative workers or artists in the city. While some said many similar things to those detailed at length above, such as the general process of generating the plan, the difficulty in combining all groups into a single department, and the silos that exist in the community, there was one overall impression from these interviews that I wish to discuss here. In my purposive sample I choose those who were highly involved in the cultural planning process. Some of the informal interviews gave me a chance to speak with individuals who were less involved in the process. Even among those who work in the cultural sector in Austin, it seems there is little engagement with the plan except for those individuals who actually worked on it. From the conversations I had, it was clear that the individuals I spoke with did not
feel that this plan had a strong connection to their work, their art practice or their day-to-day lives. Some had more positive things to say about it than others, but no one communicated much faith in the plan. This was a meaningful and valuable insight that I gained during this extension of the data-gathering phase of my project.

Qualitative Analysis

The five long interviews I conducted suggest that CreateAustin had clear outcomes and clear shortcomings. First, the closer someone was to the plan, whether in their current position or based on their involvement during the process, the more likely he or she was to think that the plan was at least partially successful. Of my interviews, Dan and Emily who worked closely with the plan and continue to do so, judged the plan to be most successful. In comparison, Alex and Beth, both of whom have not continued to work with the planning process judged it least successful. Chloe, who was not involved with the plan’s creation but now works closely with it, was somewhere in between. Interviewees who had not been involved with the plan since it was rolled out and/or who did not have an intense role in its creation generally viewed the plan as not very successful. While none of these participants indicated that the plan was a complete failure, they generally had a more pessimistic view. Usually they expressed this view in the form of a feeling that the plan did not make much difference to the community, and they often pointed out the recommendations that had not been achieved in any measure. These participants also speculated more on how the plan could have been more successful.
One commonality among the respondents was that they all named the Creative Alliance again and again as the most significant outcome of the plan. The creation of a private nonprofit organization responsible for shepherding the cultural plan seemed to be a relief to those involved in the process. The Creative Alliance may not have had a lot of measurable success since its creation, but many people in the creative community, including these respondents, seem to have faith in its work and think it will have a positive impact on the community at large. This outcome reflects an important general mission of cultural planning, to assess the needs of the community and respond to them (Dreeszen, 1998). One of Austin’s major challenges is the siloing between the different facets of the arts community and addressing the needs of all its creatives. As Emily pointed out, prior to the cultural plan, there were no organizations, government, nonprofit or otherwise, that serviced the entire creative community. There were organizations geared towards musicians or performance artists or visual artists, but none for artists generally. The creation of the Creative Alliance addressed a gap that existed in the community, and it is working towards filling that gap for the betterment of the entire sector.

Based on my coding, I identify as the other most significant outcome of Austin’s cultural plan, its strengthening and building of relationships. The formation of relationships were mentioned in all of the interviews. In Alex’s case they had a significant impact because he secured new employment from them. Emily said that they were responsible for many of the impacts that lay outside the direct auspices of the plan. The cultural planning process gave those in the community with some commonality (interest in the creative sector) a shared purpose and goal to bond over.
These people all came together in different ways, in meetings, by responding to surveys, and by talking to other creatives, to shape the cultural sector of their community. The interviewees all stated that these relationships were responsible for many tangible and intangible impacts on Austin’s creative community. However, networks were also responsible for the major shortcoming of Austin’s plan, its failure to create a city department. The failure to meet this recommendation was a strong theme throughout all the interviews.

The idea of a unified city department of creativity has been kicked around in Austin since ACAP. It is clear to community members and outside consultants alike that the way Austin’s city government runs its cultural programs is inefficient. This is not to say that it is not successful, but it seems obvious to Beth, Dan and Emily that it could be more efficient by bringing all the outlying people and departments together under the auspices of one department. The participants in my study, especially Dan and Emily, identified the reasons this did not happen as politically motivated. Dan and Emily also pointed out that individual creatives do not see themselves as siloed as the city departments’ behaviors might imply. As opposed to Austin’s successful identification of a need and an appropriate response with the Creative Alliance, this recommendation showed a failure in the cultural plan to recognize the uniqueness of the community. The information and history about why this recommendation would not work in Austin was available, yet it was included in the plan anyway. The likely reason, as I have stated, was that the current system is inefficient and begs for a solution. However, the creative enterprise team discussed by Dan that was eventually assembled would have been a much better recommendation in the plan. A lot of the frustration interviewees identified
with the plan was the inability to make the city department happen. If a more easily
achievable recommendation, given the sometimes fractious culture of the city, had been
suggested, the plan would be judged to be more successful.

Some of the other large issues addressed in the cultural plan still persist in the
community, such as affordable housing, healthcare and minority equity. These
problems confront not only Austin’s cultural sector, but even more intractably the
community at large. Based on the interviews, I found that while participation in the plan
from the creative sector was good, broader participation was not. These problems are
appropriate to state in a cultural plan because they definitely affect creative atmosphere;
however, the creative sector is probably not equipped to handle these problems on its
own. City policies that target individual creatives in terms of housing and healthcare are
rare, as is addressing these problems in the business sector, because there is rarely
any profit to be made. Most commonly these issues are addressed within the nonprofit
sector, but Austin has very few institutions with the right kind of power. Austin
organizations that do have large budgets are presenting arts organizations, but they are
unlikely to participate in housing or healthcare policies for creatives.

Other areas that still seems to be lacking are professionalization of Austin’s
cultural workers and development of the philanthropic community, pointed out by Alex in
his interview. To date, there are no higher education programs to train arts
administrators. This education and professional growth gap is related to the difficulties
in the philanthropic community, because usually degrees of this type offer some kind of
development training. Not only has this recommendation not been realized, even if it
were it might not help current cultural workers in the city. If UT, for example, did create
a master’s program in arts administration, many workers might not want or be able to leave their jobs for a full-time graduate program. CAD offers many professional development opportunities for individual creatives, but also should develop workshops for cultural workers.

There is also the issue of looking at the impacts of the plan on the commercial and nonprofit sectors, also pointed out by Chloe in her interview. Arguments could be made as to why it is unnecessary for a cultural plan to address the commercial sector, for instance, on the grounds that the market should handle the commercial sector. In the theories of cultural planning that have been explored in this study, however, there are two main reasons why addressing the commercial section is appropriate. The first is that when a city undertakes cultural planning to develop a vital cultural sector, there is no difference between the commercial and nonprofit. People want live music and dance companies, they want museums and art galleries. Second, individual creatives also do not see these distinctions, as pointed out by Emily and Dan, and in the literature by Markusen et al. (2004), because they are likely to work in the commercial, community or government sectors, and mix work in all three to make a living. In terms of these results though, it is worth noting two things about the commercial sector in Austin. Chloe pointed out, their participation in the plan was not as high as the nonprofit sector’s was, and the plan offered fewer recommendations to improve singularly commercial aspects of the community. This explains the less significant impacts realized in the commercial sector seen in the quantitative data after the cultural plan went into force.

Overall Austin’s plan has many admirable goals and brings to light many significant issues that creatives have to deal with, and the community should be aware
of these issues if it wants to maintain or improve the cultural environment in Austin. In many ways, it feels as if CreateAustin missed a step in addressing some of these issues. Take, for example, the above mentioned professionalization issue. The plan recommendation was, “Develop a master’s program.” But the interview with Dan revealed that the higher education institution most involved in CreateAustin was Austin Community College, which does not offer master’s degrees. In this recommendation as well as others, when the cultural plan did not offer any suggestion as to how to bridge such gaps, the recommendation seemed to be dropped entirely.

Summary

I arrived at my methodology after a thorough review of the literature. Using previous studies and influences from other disciplines, I determined that an evaluation of Austin’s cultural plan using a mixed methods approach would be most insightful. Armed with this information, I collected data to evaluate Austin’s cultural plan. Here, I have summarized the pertinent cultural plans in Austin, ACAP, CreateAustin, and the relevant parts of the city comprehensive plan Imagine Austin. Next, analyzed the plan to determine the status of the recommendations. Then, I collected quantitative data on identified variables and analyzed them using a t-test. Following the presentation of the analysis, I presented my interviews conducted with major stakeholders and others in the planning process which were then thoroughly analyzed. The statistical and interview data reveal some useful information about CreateAustin and Austin’s creative community. With this information, in the next chapter, I offer some conclusions about the impacts of Austin’s cultural plan, speculate about how this case can inform the
evaluation of other cultural plans, and suggest directions for future research based on my findings.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

For my dissertation research, I set out to evaluate the cultural plan in Austin, Texas, guided by the questions: What plans have been developed to nurture the creative atmosphere in Austin and how have these plans been fulfilled?; Since the implementation of CreateAustin in 2009, what changes have occurred in the identified variables between 1998 and 2012?; and In interviews what impacts on the creative community do cultural planners identify? To do this I reviewed the pertinent documents, captured quantitative and qualitative data from primary and secondary sources including statistical and interview data, and analyzed it to draw conclusions. Approaching this research from an interdisciplinary perspective, art education and public administration, was useful for asking questions and uncovering results that just one discipline may have missed. I was interested in the quantitative impacts of the plan such as artists’ jobs and arts establishments, that one would expect to find in a public administration study of a cultural plan. I was also interested in how people felt about the plan, such as one might find in an art education study of the cultural plan. This perspective also allows me to confidently speak to more people about the results of Austin’s cultural plan, policymakers and art advocates alike.

As I look back on the project, it has yielded valuable information about Austin as well as lessons that can also be applied to other community cultural plans to make them more successful. But the answers I sought about Austin’s cultural plan are, of course, not simple. In analyzing the data, I also became aware of other areas that needed to be probed and explored. Greater understanding about some areas led to more questions
about others. Learning more about the plan and talking to the actors in the process also
led to a lot of speculation about how things could have been different, which is an
interesting exercise though not particularly fruitful. However, after this deep exploration,
I feel that I can present some valuable conclusions about CreateAustin, Austin’s cultural
plan.

In Austin, as is the case with many communities, the city government
spearheaded the cultural planning effort. It was responsible for organizing the efforts
and paying or raising the funds for a consultant. However, it did not complete the
process on its own. The city and the consultant it hired solicited input from the
community. In fact, some researchers indicate that the more community support and
involvement there is, the more successful the plan will be (Dreeszen, 1998; Jackson, et
al., 2003). For the cultural plan to be successful, organizations that might see
themselves as competitors have to navigate collaborations and use policy transfer,
networking and trust to accomplish their goals. This happened with the Austin cultural
plan to varying degrees. A new nonprofit organization was created, many participants
reported that they and others made new and stronger connections, and relationships
were built, but the silos between music and the other arts in the city could not be totally
overcome.

To sum up all of my analysis and take it on balance, the impact of Austin’s
cultural plan had a positive effect on the community. For the quantitative aspect of my
study, based on the analysis of the statistical data, many identified variables appear to
be impacted by the plan. The creative sector has grown since the plan was
implemented, especially in the nonprofit arena, despite economic constrictions. While it
is not possible to say definitively whether the cultural plan caused the changes in the variables (the changes could reflect trends in the data), when I considered them with the qualitative data I was able to make a well-informed assessment. Those involved with CreateAustin name numerous benefits that can be attributed to the plan. Therefore, Austin’s cultural plan was a success and had a positive effect on the cultural environment there.

My comprehensive judgment about Austin’s cultural plan is that it was a good investment of resources and has had an overall positive outcome despite not fulfilling all its stated recommendations. Perhaps more importantly, by completing and analyzing this case study, I believe I can offer some suggestions for other communities that are undertaking cultural plans and wish to make them more effective. To begin, cultural policymakers need to be articulate about the topics of public value, intrinsic and instrumental value, and social impacts. Because of the interconnectedness of the topics it is important to understand the definitions and applications of each. Being well versed in these topics can be an important policy tool to help policymakers anticipate overlap and effectively utilize each concept in formulating and implementing arts policy. I briefly consider these topics below.

Using These Results

I have cited literature and stated throughout my dissertation that one possible outcome of creative class developments is an increasingly polarized society. This effect is not well communicated in the popular literature on cultural planning and many cities undertake cultural plans with no idea that it could exacerbate social problems.
However, I believe there is a missed opportunity here. Art advocates could, with a relatively minor adjustment in the conceptualization and use of cultural plans, address this problem and bring public value of the arts into the focus of cultural planning. There is evidence that the arts can aid building social cohesion (Jeannotte, 2003). In fact, as I demonstrated with Austin, many communities report developing better networks, and more social cohesion during and after the cultural planning process (ECOTEC, 2009). In certain cases, cultural plans have been used to address preservation of the traditions of minority populations as well as economic issues. With the awareness of a possible negative externality caused by focusing on the creative class, cultural plans may be used to improve social cohesion and lessen tension or disjunctions between members of the community. This in turn is related to the public value of the arts and the concepts of social impact, and intrinsic and instrumental values.

Public Value Thinking

Public value is a concept that has fostered increasing interest in the fields of public administration and the arts. One way to think of public value is as the degree to which some group accepts and appreciates something. This concept is important to cultural planning because as it is generally undertaken by local government; demonstrating art’s public value is important to sustain resources and demonstrate accountability. The public value of cultural planning should be considered by policymakers wishing to use such actions in their communities. Therefore, one must understand how public value is demonstrated and how it relates to the arts and other fields.
Public value, like most theoretical frames, does not have one set definition. Public value thinking was developed by Mark H. Moore with the publication of his 1995 work, *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government*. It has been updated, questioned, challenged and refined in the academic literature and also by Moore and John Benington in *Public Value: Theory and Practice* in 2011. Moore has worked with numerous groups and universities on this concept, including Arts Midwest, specifically addressing public value to state arts agencies. *Creating Public Value* was a response to individualist thinking and reliance on market models in government. While acknowledging that the government was inefficient and that innovation and creativity should be utilized, it rejected the idea that policy could not help society improve and focused on the relationship between policymakers and public administrators. Moore developed a new framework to solve the problems facing government. Benington and Moore’s text seeks to continue to make public value thinking relevant today, a period of intense change in social, political and government climates. The revision also adds more theoretical weight to the concept, which Moore had originally addressed more practically.

Moore was concerned with rethinking three main issues: the role of government, the role of public managers, and the techniques used by public managers. In this text, he developed the strategic triangle that produces public value. The three points of this triangle are *public value outcomes*, *authorization*, and *operational capacity*. *Public value outcomes* rest on the idea that they must be defined and specified. Ideally, they are principles or standards accepted by the public, but this is not always the case, or those principles or standards may be upheld by only some of the public. These are the
desired outcomes for a specific situation. *Authorization* is the authority granted by the state. The authorization point of the triangle also includes other stakeholders made up of individuals or groups from the private and voluntary sectors. The authorizing environment must have a strong mandate from elected officials through legislation, policies, appointed roles or jobs. The authorizing environment has to have “just enough” support. The case with many public policies is that there are divergent opinions about whether they should exist or how they should be undertaken. The authorizing environment does not have to have total public support; it just has to have enough support to keep the policy afloat. The use of networks can be important to connect stakeholders within the authorizing environment. The third point, *operational capacity*, refers to the resources, physical, technological and human, needed to achieve the desired public value outcomes. These resources must be able to be operationalized to work toward the desired outcomes. All three points must be balanced to maintain public value of a given policy.

The use of authority is key to public value thinking. The government “has a monopoly on the legitimate use of force in a society” (Benington and Moore, 2011, p. 6). Government uses force through the direction of resources (money) and authority. Using force requires consideration of issues of equity, efficiency and effectiveness. The consideration of these issues is where the framework of public value thinking is of most use.
Public Value and the Arts

Now that I have explained public value thinking and the triangle, a more focused discussion of public value and issues related to the arts is necessary. Our understanding of public value when it comes to the arts is multilayered. Many arts organizations exist in the voluntary sector. Those organizations incorporated under IRS code 501(c)(3) have an educational mission. Arts organizations discharging this mission have an important role in society, filling gaps in the educational system and augmenting educational opportunities. The arts have other values outside of this educational one. The purpose of the arts is to benefit the population. While they most overtly provide entertainment, experience, and social interaction, they also offer the chance to develop empathy and an opportunity to consider society from a different perspective, among many, many other benefits. Studies have found that even people who do not participate in the arts or attend cultural institutions believe their presence benefits their communities (C. Scott, 2006).

Considering the public value of arts organizations is key to the issue of cultural planning, because the plans often focus on what the arts and culture can do for economic development. This is an important objective, to be sure, but it puts the arts in a dangerous place. Using the creative economy as a silver bullet to stimulate economic development is problematic, because when something else comes along that might perform better, the arts are cast aside in favor of the other strategy. If economic development is given as the only reason to support the cultural sector, then logically removing that justification leaves no other reasons to support the arts. In the twenty-first century, the cultural policymaker must prove the public value of the arts in multiple
dimensions. She must be able to convince taxpayers, city councils and other legislators that encouraging the cultural sector is necessary not only for a strong regional economy, but also because it enriches the lives of citizens in the community, that it will draw long-term residents not only because there are jobs to be had, but because their city is an interesting, engaging place to live and that culture has a vital role in the lives of citizens. The cultural policymaker cannot allow the arts to be reduced to their economic value alone. To make sure this does not happen, the intrinsic and instrumental values have to be understood and presented.

Increasing political pressures and the move toward a more accountable and transparent government have required arts advocates to justify public funding of the arts. Two of the most important themes that emerged from these arguments are: the arts should be funded because of their intrinsic benefits and/or the arts should be funded because of their instrumental value. A central issue in discussions of the benefits of the arts is the definition of the terms *intrinsic* and *instrumental*. A review of pertinent literature reveals that scholars often develop their own definition of these terms. Some use dictionary definitions of the words; intrinsic value signifies the inherent and essential nature and instrumental value is focused on outcomes (Orr, 2008). There is the popular “art for art’s sake” argument for the intrinsic benefits and pointing out the interaction with cultural identity (McCarthy et al., 2004). The instrumental justification is often defined with things like improvement of test scores or economic value of the arts. Some benefits are classified as those private benefits to the individual, and some are discussed as the public benefits that affect society. The terms *intrinsic* and *instrumental* when considered in relation to the value of the arts can also be thought of as a
continuum, rather than dichotomous terms with public and private benefits on the far ends of the spectrum (McCarthy et al., 2004).

Many in the fields of arts policy and arts education, such as my interview participant Dan, are concerned that the concentration on the instrumental benefits might crowd out intrinsic arguments, especially if policymakers are focused on them simply because it is difficult to quantify intrinsic benefits. To address this concern, some scholars advocate developing new vocabulary to discuss intrinsic benefits (McCarthy et al., 2008). The transactional and transformational construct of public value of the arts is similar to this argument. The transactional framework basically states that individuals and groups contribute to the arts or arts organizations in the form of monetary support and, from that transaction, an art product results (Farnbauch, Lakin-Hayes, and Yoshitom, 2004). An expansion of this framework is necessary to capture other benefits of the arts, and the resulting development is the transformational framework. The transformational framework is best suited to capturing intangibles like the social benefits of the arts and the individual satisfaction one feels from art experiences.

The conceptualization of public value raises many other issues in relationship to the arts. The instrumental and intrinsic values of the arts are specific aspects of public value. Instrumental value is the value that the arts bring to other issues such as increasing academic benefits for students or economic impacts in communities. That the arts may increase standardized test scores or that the arts bring in millions or billions in tourism revenues are instrumental values. More difficult to pin down, intrinsic value encompasses the idea that the arts are good for society, that by participating in or experiencing the arts, individuals benefit, and when individuals benefit, society as a
collective benefits, too. As different as they may seem, instrumental and intrinsic values are important to balance, because they rely on each other to exist.

Intertwined with the debate about the arts’ intrinsic and instrumental benefits is the concept of the arts’ social impact. Studies have been conducted on the interactions between art programs and healthcare, crime rates, prisoners, and at-risk youth, among others. Social impacts of the arts interact with community arts, in that most programs that generate positive impacts are conducted in a community setting. Community arts sometimes have difficulty earning legitimacy. Even some within the arts community might see these programs as purely avocational and therefore disregard them or fail to consider their larger social impacts. “Othering” of the artist and pigeonholing creativity as “special” and even “elite” are some reasons that the social impact of the arts might not be immediately visible (Phillips, 1997). The general population might not see art as something anyone can do or participate in.

When it comes to social impacts of the arts, the programs and outcomes may all look very different. For these and other reasons, it is difficult to set a definition of the term and make programmatic requirements around it. If policymakers and community organizers can learn to accept the programs without a preconceived notion of what will come out of them, a snowball effect might ensue. Successful programs tend to create goodwill and a higher public value of the arts in general, as well as whatever direct benefit the program produces. In turn, this will create better funding for arts programs. However, this is extremely difficult to do for government policies that usually require some kind of measurable outcome.
Participation in the arts translates to social impact. It can aid upward mobility and connectedness, increase understanding between classes, and spur social change and political change. Even if the individual is the primary recipient of a benefit, like a better education, these benefits can be extrapolated to the benefit of society. Social impacts can be both intrinsic and instrumental. These impacts and benefits are important to emphasize when discussing the public value of the arts. Social benefits, far from being amorphous and too resistant to measurement, should be a persuasive motivation for undertaking cultural plans.

Discussing the public value of the arts using information on instrumental, intrinsic and social benefits will help cultural planners develop plans that are more community-oriented, get better community engagement, are more actionable, and result in a better outcome for the community. If cultural planners consider these issues when drafting plans, I believe they will ameliorate the polarization and gentrification issues that have been shown to result from some cultural plans. This justification of cultural planning also puts the cultural aspect of the plan on equal footing with the more quantifiable economic aspects of the plan.

The Public Value of Austin’s Cultural Plan

As an example of how other communities can use these concepts and ways of thinking, I examine CreateAustin through the lens of Moore’s public value thinking framework. Moore and Moore (2005) state that the framework “is designed to help government managers position their organizations in complex environments not only to ensure the organization’s survival, but also to ensure that they are using the assets of
their organizations most efficiently and effectively to create public value” (2005, p. 15).

In terms of Moore’s strategic triangle, the first point is public value outcomes. Austin has determined the outcomes and goals, the three overarching recommendations and the 34 individual recommendations and connected them to social benefits. These recommendations have been developed as the solution to a particular problem, improving the cultural sector. This point is strong. The authorizing environment in Austin seems rich in advocates, but possibly less so in private support and high-level city government support. The cultural planning process demonstrated that there were many citizens from the creative community willing to participate. Important figures in the nonprofit sector took up the cultural planning mantle, and members of CAD were willing to champion the cause. However, it does not seem there is strong support at a higher level, such as among elected officials or through the enlistment of a national celebrity. This point of the triangle is a bit middling. The final point to consider is Austin’s operational capacity, which is weak, a condition that certainly throws off the balance of the public value triangle. As evidenced by the lack of large cultural institutions and professionalized cultural workers, Austin does not have the operational capacity it needs to realize the cultural sector it has defined. The inclusion of the proposed new organization in the cultural plan, what became the Creative Alliance, demonstrates some awareness of this lack of operational capacity. Another recommendation that would strengthen this point is to develop graduate-level programs and professional development opportunities that would be relevant to nonprofit cultural workers in the city. This would address the deficit in qualified human capital in the city.
Using Moore’s framework, Austin demonstrates public value for the arts, but the strategic triangle, a key indicator that communicates public value, needs to be strengthened for policy to be most effective. If the authorizing environment is out of line, the policymakers must be able to drum up additional support or change the components of the policy to make them more in line with the public value point of the triangle. Policymakers can do this by having discussions of the instrumental, intrinsic and social benefits of the arts. If the operational capacity is not available, as is the case with Austin, the infrastructure must be increased, or the policy’s intended benefits will not come to fruition. If the public value is not present for the policy, the policymakers must increase support in the authorizing environment, or change the policy.

This concept may be easier said than done. In the case of the cultural plan, it is easily imaginable that there may be an anemic public value triangle. There may be some supporters in the arts and culture communities, maybe even some in the larger communities. If this is the case, the operational capacity in the community is likely to be low and the public value then is probably not strong. Based on the interest in cultural planning and creative placemaking by groups like the National Governors Association and Americans for the Arts, strength is building in the authorizing environment. This is encouraging, but it also seems that these policies will reap more benefits if some efforts are made to increase the authorizing environment and operational capacity arms of this frame.
Lessons Learned from Austin’s Cultural Plan

The results of my study of Austin suggest that there are practices that might lead to building better cultural plans and that Austin offers useful information to shape the theories on cultural planning. I begin with a simplified list of the significant outcomes of Austin’s plan:

• Artists and the nonprofit arts sector experienced growth in terms of jobs, assets and revenues after the cultural plan was implemented.

• The Creative Alliance was created to continue implementing the plan and to serve the overall creative sector.

• New networks and relationships were built during the planning process.

Next I offer some suggestions for best practices in cultural planning based on the case study of Austin:

• Solicit input from representatives of all corners of the creative sector.

• Make sure to seek a larger circle of supporters in local government, the business community and the general population.

• Develop recommendations that reflect the community and can be implemented within the community’s culture.

• Develop ways to measure the outcomes of the plan recommendations using both qualitative and quantitative methods.

• Have an event or communication that celebrates the success of the plan.

In my research I also made some discoveries that I think will affect the foundational theories of cultural planning. First is this very idea of modeling. Austin has been cooperative with other cities who are trying to understand how the city fared so
well during the recession. But it is also important to consider one consequence of modeling Austin or other cities that seem to have successful plans. As I have demonstrated, a main motivation for cultural planning is to attract new population, whether it is businesses, workers, tourists, or some combination. More than any other time in the country’s history, America’s population is fluid and transient. Geographic proximity is no longer essential for people to maintain ties to the communities where they grew up. Technological innovations like the Internet and cell phones coupled with social media tools allow people to keep in touch no matter where they are. As a result, people are far more likely than they once were to move anywhere they think they can make a living. They might also move multiple times over the span of their lives. We are no longer operating in a society where it is the norm to settle as an adult within 100 miles of one’s birthplace and stay there. This is a relatively unarticulated challenge in cultural planning. A cultural plan will not, therefore, be a one-time effort to attract people and businesses. I suspect that in the future the speed of life cycles for cities or even neighborhoods can only accelerate. Cultural planners in Austin already seem aware of this, because in several of my interviews participants mentioned having to think of the plan as a living document whose meaning must continuously evolve. As more cities undertake cultural planning and presumably develop their own culturally rich environments, competition for citizens will only get fiercer. As people migrate to new places, they will probably also be more apathetic about their participation in that community, meaning that cultural planners and arts organizations will have to work harder to engage them.
This possibility suggests that cultural planning might be a zero-sum game. The tragedy of the commons is a familiar economic concept, but one I have yet to see linked with cultural planning. Yet the threats here are similar. The idea behind cultural planning is that it will result in a scene that is attractive to individuals and businesses because it is unique and entertaining. But as a city grows, a time may come when its uniqueness and entertainment value may be watered down to less-than-desirable concentrations. Such growth naturally attracts more chain businesses and manufactured cultural experiences, therefore diluting the reputation that drew people to the community in the first place. Wild growth can disenfranchise residents who feel powerless to control it and can cause divides between newer and older residents. This effect is already happening in Austin as demonstrated by bumper-sticker slogans like “Don’t Dallas my Austin” and “Welcome to Austin, please don’t move here.” Because the population is very fluid, people may simply move on to the next up-and-coming, buzzed-about city that is (at the moment) smaller, cheaper, and more unique, repeating the cycle. Cities either have to get on board with this boom-and-bust pattern or find ways to compel a population not to move on. This could be done through policy interventions that control growth and encourage ownership and small business development.

Many arts advocates take for granted that citizens’ claims on a survey that they value arts and art education, or the existence of a strong volunteer culture, translates into support for arts policy. I think the same argument could be applied to education. Few citizens or legislators would say public education has no value or that they do not support it. But claiming on a survey that one values it or that one would miss it if it were
gone is very different from sweeping supporting of governmental policies. With many policy issues people tend to change their minds when they are asked to contribute resources in the form of taxes. Advocates and professionals in the field have done a good job of developing arguments that the arts have public value, but what they are trying to do is get them publicly funded. Public liking for the arts is not the same as a public desire to fund them out-of-pocket.

Taking better advantage of other scholarly methodologies to produce stronger research to be used in advocacy would be one way to strengthen the arguments advocates try to make. It seems to me that there may be parallels in environmental policy to be capitalized on. The environment, like the arts, can be a controversial issue. As with the arts, supporting the environment accrues benefits to all of society, whether it is an individual’s personal priority or not. Another parallel with the arts is that in environmental policy, there is weak or contradictory literature on both sides of a given issue. From a public policy standpoint, there might be those that argue against various government interventions into environmental protection, but it seems unlikely that there are any who would argue that society does not need the environment. It might be helpful for arts advocates to employ these types of arguments when attempting to gain public support. Discussions of this type would be an important first step for most people to acknowledge that the arts are as necessary to society as clean water or clear air.

In the twenty-first century, cultural policymakers are challenged to find the answer to problems that have always been present, like securing funding sources, dealing with evolving problems like arts education, solving emerging problems like how to capitalize the creative economy, and conquering problems yet to be conceived. In order to be
successful in these endeavors, the cultural policymakers must get ahead of the business model and carve out positions of power where they can enact the changes they seek. Cultural policymakers have to understand how policies have been built in the past and recognize the strengths in the system, but also use innovation to develop new strategies. Research like this dissertation is an important steppingstone to gaining that insight. Armed with a better understanding of the all the outcomes of cultural planning, cultural planners can learn to develop better strategies and implement better plans.

Recommendations for Future Research

As I stated at the beginning of this chapter, completing this research revealed many other possible channels for future research. Specific to Austin, it may be helpful to determine the extent to which knowledge of the cultural plan is disseminated among other cities. As I found, people who were not very involved with the plan seemed to have little understanding or appreciation of it. This was validated by several participants in the interviews, who discussed missed opportunities in rolling out the plan to the public. It would be interesting to undertake some kind of general survey among the population of Austin to get an idea of how the average citizen felt about the plan. This might yield me insight for how best to communicate the results of the plan with the public and how to improve the public value of the arts for the community.

As one of the most cited outcomes of the plan, the Creative Alliance may also be an insightful topic of future research. There are several ways it could be examined. For instance, standard Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis
might help articulate what the organization has accomplished and future directions it should move in since several of my participants intimated that the Creative Alliance did not yet have clear direction. Similarly, an organizational impact evaluation might yield more insight into the impacts the organization has had on the creative community in Austin.

Imagine Austin is also ripe for further research. A comparison of the effects of CreateAustin as a freestanding cultural plan and Imagine Austin as a comprehensive city plan would surely help researchers and policymakers to understand the best ways to approach cultural planning, such as considering whether a plan should be integrated or made a standalone effort. This leads me to another challenge in studying cultural environments: interaction with other issues. Discussions of cultural planning and improving community vitality always raise myriad other issues. Among them gentrification is always the counterpoint that is given to cultural planning, which further raises issues of education, access to food and groceries, transportation, racial and poverty issues, just to name a few. It is easy to find research, op-eds and articles on the realities of gentrification, how it prices out artists or historic populations in favor of (usually white) upper classes. But it is nearly impossible to find research on desirable neighborhoods that are integrated by racial and socioeconomic demographics to use as research models, because they seem not to exist. People tend to cluster with people similar to them in race, income, lifestyle or other ways. Figuring out how to develop neighborhoods that are integrated and sustainable would certainly require researchers to embark upon advanced sociological understandings of other people and is an admirable goal.
Plan C: Evaluating the cultural plan of Austin, Texas
Rachel May Smith, MA

Introduction:
Thank you for your cooperation in completing my evaluation of Austin’s cultural plan. I would like to remind you that your answers are confidential and that your participation is totally voluntary, you may discontinue it at any time. For my study, I am interested in your perceptions and opinions of the planning process and I understand you might not have first-hand knowledge of every aspect of the process. Please let me know if you would prefer not to answer any questions or feel they do not apply to you. Do you have any questions or concerns before we get started?

• What was the main motivation behind creating a cultural plan?
• What role has organizational infrastructure or models played in developing the cultural plan?
• What was the process for securing financial resources?
• What was the total amount of resources used in the planning process?
• What proportion of resources was used for infrastructure?
• What quantitative indicators of the economic, social and tourism impacts have been gathered?
• To what extent has the plan been successful in attaining its objectives?
• What were the most significant economic outcomes of the plan?
• Are there any instances where the plan has exceeded initial expectations?
• Are there any expectations that have not been met?
• To what extent are the recommendations of the plan sustainable in the long term?
• What are the likely impacts of the plan on the long term cultural development of the city?
• What are the likely impacts of the plan on the long term social development of the city?
• What are the likely impacts of the plan on the long term urban development of the city?

Approved Correspondence

Recruitment Email

Dear [Perspective participant],

I am a doctoral student at the University of North Texas pursuing a degree in Art Education and Public Administration. I am writing to ask you for your assistance in completing my dissertation on the Austin Cultural Plan.
I would like to invite you to participate in my dissertation project. This study will be an evaluation of the plan using both statistical analyses and interview data. My interest is in developing a complete understanding of the impacts of Austin’s cultural plan. To do that I would like to interview key stakeholders such as yourself. The digitally-recorded interview will be about 60 to 90 minutes where I will ask you about your perspective on different dimensions of Austin’s cultural plan. Participation in the study is entirely voluntary and you may discontinue your participation at any time. Before the interview you will have a chance to ask any questions and to provide your informed consent. Your identity will be kept confidential. I anticipate that this study will benefit the field of arts policy by developing theories which will lead to stronger cultural plans and a stronger cultural sector. I will be in Austin over the next several months and am happy to arrange a time that fits your schedule.

I will follow up with you by phone to see if you would be willing to participate in my project. You may contact me via email or phone [PHONE NUMBER] with any questions.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Rachel May Smith

University of North Texas Institutional Review Board
Informed Consent Form

Before agreeing to participate in this research study, it is important that you read and understand the following explanation of the purpose, benefits and risks of the study and how it will be conducted.

**Title of Study:** Plan C: Evaluating the cultural plan of Austin, Texas  
**Student Investigator:** Rachel May Smith, University of North Texas (UNT) Department of Art Education.  
**Supervising Investigator:** Terry Barrett.

**Purpose of the Study:** You are being asked to participate in a research study which involves a multi-faceted evaluation of Austin’s cultural plan. The evaluation will include both statistical analyses as well as interviews with key stakeholders such as yourself. This study will be important in understanding the impacts of a cultural plan on a community.

**Study Procedures:** You will be asked to answer questions about your involvement and perception of the cultural planning process. The interview will take about 60 to 90 of your time. Your participation in the study is entirely voluntary and you may discontinue your participation at any time. Before the interview you will have a chance to provide your informed consent.
Foreseeable Risks: No foreseeable risks are involved in this study.

Benefits to the Subjects or Others: This study is not expected to be of any direct benefit to you, but we hope to learn more about how to effectively use cultural plans. This study may benefit the field of arts policy by developing theories which will lead to stronger cultural plans and a stronger cultural sector.

Compensation for Participants: I am happy to provide a light snack or coffee during the interview period but no other compensation will be offered.

Procedures for Maintaining Confidentiality of Research Records: The information provided during the interview will remain confidential and the transcripts and notes of the interview will be held in a secure location. The confidentiality of your individual information will be maintained in any publications or presentations regarding this study.

Questions about the Study: If you have any questions about the study, you may contact Rachel May Smith at rms0233@unt.edu or Terry Barrett at terry.barrett@unt.edu.

Review for the Protection of Participants: This research study has been reviewed and approved by the UNT Institutional Review Board (IRB). The UNT IRB can be contacted at (940) 565-3940 with any questions regarding the rights of research subjects.

Research Participants’ Rights: Your participation in the survey confirms that you have read all of the above and that you agree to all of the following:

• Rachel May Smith has explained the study to you and you have had an opportunity to contact her with any questions about the study. You have been informed of the possible benefits and the potential risks of the study.
• You understand that you do not have to take part in this study, and your refusal to participate or your decision to withdraw will involve no penalty or loss of rights or benefits. The study personnel may choose to stop your participation at any time.
• You understand why the study is being conducted and how it will be performed.
• You understand your rights as a research participant and you voluntarily consent to participate in this study.
• You understand you may print a copy of this form for your records.

______________________________
Printed Name of Participant
Signature of Participant

________________________
Date

For the Student Investigator or Designee:
I certify that I have reviewed the contents of this form with the subject signing above. I have explained the possible benefits and the potential risks and/or discomforts of the study. It is my opinion that the participant understood the explanation.

________________________
Signature of Student Investigator

________________________
Date

Office of Research Services
University of North Texas
Last Updated: July 11, 2011
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