

Brattleboro CoreArts Project

Welcome



Track Two Findings
November 2014

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NEA Our Town

From the NEA grant guidelines:

Our Town prioritizes partnerships between arts organizations and government ... to achieve livability goals for communities.



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To reiterate

What the grant IS. What the grant is NOT.

Its intention is:

- 1. To explore the relationship between arts sector/town government**

Its intention is NOT:

- 1. To mandate specific actions from either the arts sector or the Town**

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To reiterate

What the grant IS. What the grant is NOT.

Its intention is:

2. To pose questions

Its intention is NOT:

2. To answer pre-determined questions

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To reiterate

What the grant IS. What the grant is NOT.

Its intention is:

3. **To increase the community's collective capacity**

Its intention is NOT:

3. **To primarily benefit single individuals or organizations**

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To reiterate

What the grant IS. What the grant is NOT.

Its intention is:

4. To discern political will

Its intention is NOT:

4. To prescribe political direction

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To reiterate

What the grant IS. What the grant is NOT.

Its intention is:

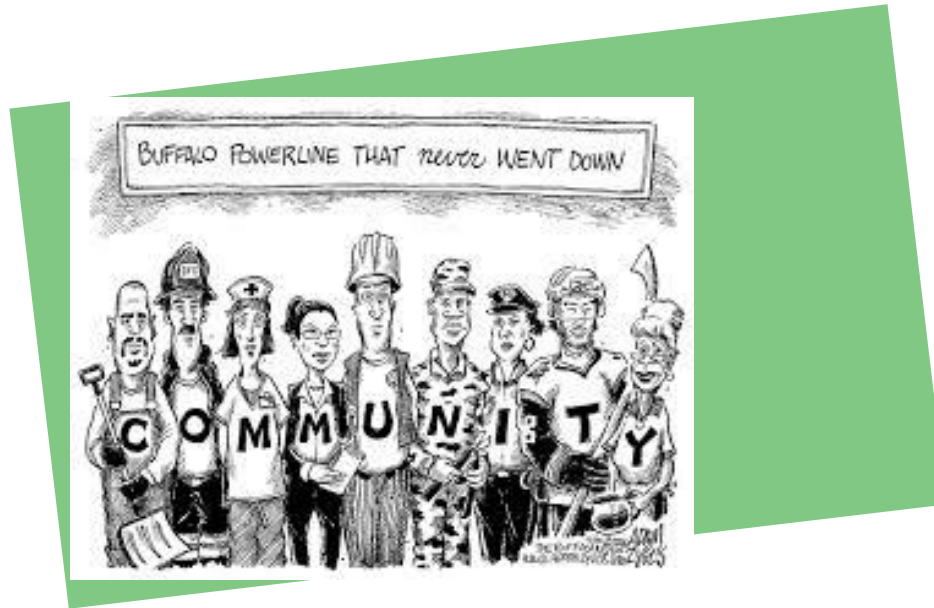
- 5. To complete a project, as outlined**

Its intention is NOT:

- 5. To regrant funds, to fund pre-existing projects**

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Community building



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Track One

The intention of Track One WAS

1. To view Brattleboro through more than one lens
2. To engage community members to reveal networks

The Intention of Track One WASN'T

1. To create a telephone book of existing community assets
2. To reiterate known regions of power



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Track Two

**The intention of Track Two
HAS BEEN**

- 1. To explore questions of place and community**
- 2. To engage in a collective learning process**
- 3. To learn from national and regional experts**
- 4. To be responsive to energies and movement potential**

**The Intention of Track Two
HAS NOT BEEN**

- 1. To learn about that which exists**
- 1. To collect a list of individual desires and needs**
- 2. To focus only on Brattleboro**
- 1. To primarily inform**



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Track Three

**The intention of Track Three
WILL BE**

- 1. To engage the community in a collective process**
- 2. To build infrastructure for community benefit**
- 3. To increase attractiveness**

**The Intention of Track Three
WILL NOT BE**

- 1. To facilitate a single person or idea**
- 2. To add to the silo culture of the community**
- 3. To create insignificance**



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Best Practices

What did we learn from the community panel process?

Historical / contextual backdrop

1. Vermont's tradition of collectivism (vs. the individual) offers a context for consideration
2. Cultural districts can be a tool to invigorate a community from a certifiable low point. Many examples exist

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Best Practices

What did we learn from the community panel process?

The arts sector has a role:

1. Discerning community will (community strategic plan) is not rocket science
2. Yet, building effective community is murderous hard, requires long hours of commitment
3. The work of infusing the arts into community planning and thinking requires patience and persistence
4. Whether the arts function that way or not, they are a team. Learning HOW to work as a team might create benefit



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Best Practices

What did we learn from the community panel process?

Government has a role

1. With smart policy development, a municipal government can provide incentive to cultural development
2. Locate, identify, move with the community's will

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Best Practices

What did we learn from the community panel process?

Silver lining

1. There are plenty of examples (nearby) in which arts advocates banned together for common purpose
2. The work can be inspiring

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More effective communities

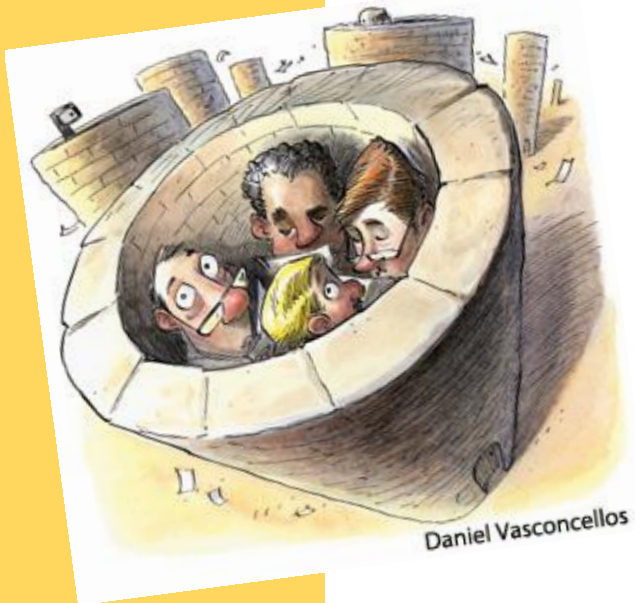
1. **Vision:** multiple partners/players work together to create collective plans, strategies
1. **Framework:** infrastructure, reflects community intention
1. **Communication** is regular, intentional, respectful



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Less effective communities

1. **Silos:** community voices (strong and otherwise) may not connect
2. **Unclear roles:** leadership, function, expectation
1. **Communication** is opportunistic, arm's length, occasional



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Cultural district?

Cultural districts are one tool communities employ to develop its assets. Broadly speaking, we see three general types of alliance/brand building tools:

- **Cultural district: On the ground, geography based**
- **Network: Among a network, relationship based**
- **Virtual: In the cloud, web based**

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Best practices

What learning resources are out there?

- **Community successes and failures**
 - Why / How / What
- **Current models for addressing complex issues**
 - Collective impact models
 - Results Based Accounting
- **The ecosystem of the arts tends to be viewed through three lenses**
 - Organizations
 - Individuals
 - Education

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Best practices

What do we see when we look into other communities?
What practices are borrowable/scalable?

•Government is engaged with the arts and culture sector along a continuum:

- virtually no engagement to
- government-operated arts and culture programs (govt agencies, commissions, committees, designated organizations).
- Where one finds government engagement, one generally finds some degree of control/accountability/expectation.

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Findings: one

- The arts sector does (in intention) play a role that expresses the place of Brattleboro, advances its sense of being
- Brattleboro's dominant arts mode is entrepreneurial, individual
- The arts sector, though vibrant, is not collected, clear
- Rather than a sense of community will, the dominant culture is 'what's in it for me?'

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Findings: two

- **Town history has created a Rube Goldberg arrangement re: the relationship between the arts sector and the Town**
 - The 'quiet' relationship (physical and \$\$) with BMAC has not engendered a sense of community pride
 - Currently, the Town makes very few demands in return for arts/culture support/services
- **TAC does not yet speak for the community**

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Recommendations

for furthering the conversation

- **Address the plumbing issues: relations could be clarified, channels could be opened wider**
- **Learn skills/outlooks from other best-practice communities. (The arts sector deserves to gain more skill/more expertise.)**
- **Agree to move. Together. Learn how to agree together. This may be more important than agreeing on how to move or what to affect**
- **Because resources are limited, think strategy**
- **Commit to coaching, consultation**

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Questions // Discussion

