

Creative Placemaking: Towards an Evaluative Framework

Lena Freeman

University of Oregon

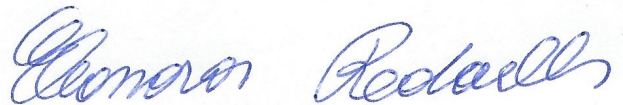
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Research Capstone

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Creative Placemaking: Towards an Evaluative Framework

Approved by Dr. Eleonora Redaelli



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Abstract

Creative placemaking has an important role in cultural community development. Collaborations and partnerships are intrinsic to the development of these initiatives that seek to engage their communities through the use of the arts. However, as creative placemaking gathers credence in their efforts in shaping community development, placemaking initiatives are burdened with the difficult task of evaluating their impact on their communities. The National Endowment for the Arts has expressed that creative placemaking projects should increase residents' attachment to community, increase the quality of life, stimulate arts and culture activity, and stimulate economic development. While these indicators are important in understanding the stability and vibrancy of a community, they are subject to other influences that are outside of the control of a creative placemaking project. Therefore, creative placemaking initiatives have often found difficulties in demonstrating their direct impact on their communities based on these indicators alone.

I argue that creative placemaking should not be evaluated solely on these indicators to determine success, but rather, to also incorporate the evaluation of the partnerships and collaboratives that are used within a creative placemaking's process. By doing so, this will allow policy makers, funders, and evaluators the opportunity to recognize that the impact that collaboratives have within creative placemaking, as well as present a more holistic approach to the overall evaluation of creative placemaking outcomes.

Keywords: Creative placemaking, evaluation, collaboration, community arts

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1: Introduction to Research

Creative placemaking has an important role in community development. Although considered a relatively new term coined within the 2010 report by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), creative placemaking has begun to gain recognition and credence within community and professional arts (Wilbur 2015, Markusen and Gadwa 2010). Markusen and Gadwa (2010) write that, “in creative placemaking, partners from public, private, non-profit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, city, or region around arts and cultural activities” (p. 3). These collaborative efforts help shape and define communities, offer elements of revitalization and beautification, and give the citizens a vested stake and interest in the economic health and development of their community.

However, while creative placemaking gains credence within community development and the professional arts, there is a great amount of pressure for creative placemakers to be able to define the success of their project’s efforts through the use of evaluations. According to the NEA, creative placemaking should strive to increase community attachment, improve the quality of life for citizens of the community, increase the arts and culture activity, and should also invigorate the local economy (Markusen & Gadwa, 2014). To many creative placemakers, these are highly subjective goals that have variable indicators that may or may not truly represent the impact that the creative placemaking initiatives strive to reach.

Although the NEA’s measures of success are clearly defined, to some, their indicators are not. Additionally, these indicators are highly subjective to outside forces that may be beyond the control of the creative placemaking project’s efforts towards

creating community and social impact. I argue that creative placemaking should not be evaluated solely on these indicators of success, but rather to also incorporate the evaluation of the partnerships and collaboratives that are used to define and shape the creative placemaking's process. By doing so, this will allow policy makers, funders, and evaluators the opportunity to recognize that the impact that collaboratives have within creative placemaking, and to present a more holistic approach to the overall evaluation of creative placemaking.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this capstone is to develop an evaluative approach to creative placemaking that encompasses the evaluation of the collaborative process, as well as the evaluation of the project's outcomes. This evaluative model will attempt to create a broader approach to defining success within creative placemaking by analyzing the collaborative process as being a key factor in the development of measurable outcomes.

Problem Statement

Many creative placemaking project leaders find difficulty in evaluating their programs in accordance with the NEA's indicators for success (Markusen, 2012). These indicators can be difficult to use in defining the measures of success of the creative placemaking initiative since many of the indicators can be heavily influenced by outside factors within their communities. Yet project evaluation is inherently important to the process of community projects. Evaluations allow for the demonstration of progress,

and can help demonstrate project accountability to a project's funders (Georgia Council for the Arts, 2007).

In addition, program evaluation helps projects identify areas of strengths and opportunities, and helps programs to stay on track towards their mission. However, the current evaluative indicators set forth by the NEA have a notable gap in the evaluative process that allows creative placemaking projects the opportunity to evaluate the strength of the partnerships formed that allow the creative placemaking project to flourish. Data collected to indicate the success of creative placemaking projects may not always be quantifiable. Therefore, by focusing on one area of measurable success of creative placemaking, projects may never be able to be clearly defined as successful. This limitation may hinder projects in their future efforts towards obtaining funds or to rally community support based on their definition of success.

Research Questions

The research questions that inspire and develop this capstone include the following:

- 1.) How is success defined in a creative placemaking project?
- 2.) What evaluative measures are being used to define the success of creative placemaking?

Sub-question:

- Are creative peacemaking projects that do not demonstrate significant community impact under the guidelines of the NEA's Arts & Livability indicators to be considered unsuccessful projects? If not, are there other models or

approaches to defining success that can be used to evaluate the impact that creative placemaking has within a community?

Role as the Researcher

My position as researcher is biased upon the idea that community arts have the ability to strengthen and bond citizens together through shared experiences, visions, and values. Therefore, my personal opinion is that creative placemaking, when given the tools to thrive, can allow for avenues for community development that enhance and enrich the lives of its citizens. Throughout my research, I will conduct my role from the standpoint of an analytical researcher. My research approach is grounded in a non-participatory standpoint through the use of analyzing literature and statistical data collected from documents from a variety of source material.

Conceptual Framework

In my attempts to investigate the evaluative measures used by the NEA within creative placemaking, I will attempt to develop a framework that encompasses a broader spectrum of evaluative measures that can be used to define the success of community-based creative placemaking projects. This strategy of inquiry and research efforts will be conducted through a qualitative approach, with an extensive literature review of information that relate to creative placemaking, as well as two identified capstone classes that may provide a deeper understanding of the issues surrounding creative placemaking. I will be using my knowledge and understanding from the courses

PPPM 548: Collaborative Planning Management, and AAD 510: Community Arts Management to develop and guide my research.

PPPM 548: Collaborative Planning Management has aided me in the shaping of my ideas and understanding of the process of collaboration, and to create an understanding of how it is inherently important to the outcome measures of any collaborative process. I will apply my understanding of collaboratives to create an evaluative model that will allow for a more encompassing evaluation process for creative placemaking projects. AAD 510: Community Arts Management will allow me to gain a more solid foundation in the understanding of the factors and issues that surround the development of creative placemaking and community arts initiatives. I will apply this knowledge to my research interests to investigate how communities can establish artistic endeavors through the use of community projects, and how those projects continue their stability.

These courses will allow me to develop a deeper understanding to the many facets of community arts and creative placemaking developments while analyzing the evaluative measures that are currently used to define their success. With the use of these two courses, as well as individual research centered on these topics, I will attempt to develop a deeper understanding of the measurements of success, while addressing my personal research questions.

Methodological Paradigm:

The analysis of the evaluative measures used to determine success of creative placemaking projects will serve to offer future evaluative plans a more encompassing

approach to determining the success of these community based projects. With the use of case study examples, I will attempt to show that not all creative placemaking projects can represent successful outcomes in accordance with the NEA's measures of success within creative placemaking, yet should still be determined as having a successful impact on their communities. Therefore, not all creative placemaking projects should be evaluated using the same measures to determine their success. Therefore, by including the evaluation of the collaborative process within creative placemaking projects to the evaluation process of project outcomes, we are able to have a more holistic idea that creative placemaking success can, and should be measured through both of these lenses.

By comparing current evaluative measures of success used by the NEA with Richard Margerum's model of measuring collaboration results will show that the collaborative process is vital to the success of a project's outcome measures. Therefore, both the NEA's measures of success and Margerum's measures of collaborative results will be evaluated through a critical approach to show that the NEA's current model lacks elements that would otherwise lead to a more comprehensive understanding of how success is determined. By analyzing both the NEA's measures of success through the Arts & Livability Indicators, and Margerum's measures of collaboration results, I will attempt to build a model that measures both outcome measures and progress indicators between the two methods that will help restructure the paradigm of how creative placemaking measures of success are determined.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations:

This capstone will have limitations of finding supporting research and literature that analyzes the collaborative results within specific case studies. Every creative placemaking project resides in a uniquely specific set of indexes that are individual to their respective communities, locations, and identities. Communities that incorporate creative placemaking projects will have their own individual pool of creative thinkers with different views, opinions, and visions for the future of their community's development.

Since community identity is individual, each area will have their own set of unique indexes, influenced by their own local economies and pools of creative talent. The economic geography of talent is influenced by an intersectionality of varying indexes (Florida, 2002). Florida (2012) argues that indexes that contribute to economic development of the Creative Class and creative places can be determined by the concentration of the 3T's: technology, talent, and tolerance. Therefore, the concentration of the Creative Class within a community is heavily influenced by the intersectionality of these indexes, which may also relate to the arts engagement opportunities within individual communities. As a result, each of the case studies observed within this capstone will arguably have attempted to create projects that are inspired by their individual community needs, issues, and visions. Influenced by these differences, their evaluative measures may differ based on the needs of their placemaking endeavors.

Another limitation includes the lack of academic and analytical research present for the creative placemaking project of Art Station, in Stone Mountain, Georgia. Creative placemaking projects take time to show results (such as their economic impact on the

community) that are measurable. In addition to a notable lack of time to develop long-term measurable outcomes, there is also a lack of critical research present for this particular case, presumably due to the nature of being recently recognized and funded by the NEA's Our Town Grant.

Additionally, the NEA's indicators for success may be difficult for all creative placemaking projects to use to demonstrate success as the indicators are not always clearly defined in their connection to creative placemaking projects. According to Markusen (2012), "it's important to learn from and improve our practices on this new and so promising terrain. But efforts based on fuzzy concepts and indicators designed to rely on data external to the funded projects are bound to disappoint." Therefore, indicators of success may not be the most reliable form of data to determine whether or not a creative placemaking project can be deemed successful. Even with the incorporation of the evaluation of collaboratives and their process, the external indicator model determined by the NEA may still leave a gap in the evaluation process for creative placemaking.

Delimitations:

My research for this capstone will focus specifically on the measures of success determined by the NEA by using the NEA's "Validating Arts and Livability Indicators (VALI) Study" (2014) and Richard Margerum's Measures of Collaboration Results from his book, "Beyond Consensus" (2011) to build a framework for the evaluative measures of success within creative placemaking that recognizes both the collaborative process

and outcome measures to determine its success. I will be analyzing three case studies that support each of these models.

2: Measuring Success of Creative Placemaking Projects

When attempting to measure the success of collaborative initiatives, focus is often geared towards evaluating projects based on their outcome measures and what impact a project has on its community. This evaluative method approach of using indicators that can be influenced by other outside factors may cause difficulties for placemakers in determining the progress of their project. The evaluation of creative placemaking is not an easy task, especially since each placemaking initiative is faced with individual opportunities and challenges. According to Markusen and Gadwa (2014), “public-sector and nonprofit funders find it difficult to define and monitor desired outcomes for creative placemaking” (p.38). Output measures can be difficult to analyze and quantify due to the fact that output measures rarely show instantaneous results. Factors that may indicate a project’s success take time to develop and have the potential to be influenced by external factors. Elements such as unforeseen economic downturns, organizational bankruptcy, or even natural disasters may affect the outcomes of placemaking initiatives.

Early within the development of its definition of creative placemaking, the NEA and its partner ArtPlace identified four goals that creative placemaking should strive to meet. *First*, the creative placemaking project should strengthen and improve the local community of artists and arts organizations. *Second*, they should increase community attachment. *Third*, they should improve the quality of life, and *fourth*, they should

invigorate local economies (Markusen & Gadwa, 2014). These goals were developed in the hopes that they would serve as benchmarks, identified by a multitude of performance indicators for project initiatives, and to develop a more inclusive understanding of the broader context that the projects attempt to serve (Ibid.).

In 2014, the “Validating Arts & Livability (VALI) Study” was published that listed indicators for the representation of these measures of success. In this study, conducted by the NEA, the Arts & Livability Indicators are defined by resident attachment to community, quality of life, arts and culture activity, and economic conditions. Each category has separate indicators that are influenced by various sets of factors. By evaluating each of these measures separately, the NEA has defined goals for community development that also serve as a working framework for measuring the success of creative placemaking projects.

Table 2.1 - The NEA's Candidate Indicators for the Arts & Livability

Indicators	
Resident Attachment to Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacity for homeownership (proportion of single-unit structures) - Length of residence (median length) - Proportion of housing units owner-occupied - Proportion of housing units occupied - Election turnout rate - Household outflow (tax returns leaving) - Civic engagement establishments per 1,000 population
Quality of Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Median commute time - Retail and service establishments per 1,000 population - Violent crime rate - Property crime rate - Percent of residential addresses not collecting mail - Net migration
Arts and Cultural Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Median earnings of residents employed in arts-and-entertainment-related establishments - Proportion of employees working in arts-and-entertainment-related establishments - Relative payroll of arts-and-entertainment-related establishments - Arts, culture, and humanities nonprofits per 1,000 population - Arts-and-entertainment-related establishments per 1,000 population
Economic Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Median home purchase loan amounts - Median household income - Active business addresses - Unemployment rate - Income diversity

Resident Attachment to Community

Creative placemaking has the ability to enrich communities by providing community members opportunities for arts engagement and community connectivity. Creative placemaking initiatives ideally would increase community attachment for the citizens of the community that it serves through programming and engagement. When done effectively, creative placemaking will give community members a sense of

stewardship and belonging within their communities by reflecting the individual cultures of neighborhoods, or addressing community needs. Environments that are active culturally, that also include opportunities for community members to share their cultures and stories, offers one of the greatest avenues for communities to develop their ability and desire to collaborate. In addition, these communities have the ability to build and strengthen social and civic connections (Putnum, 2003). When individuals and groups are able to solidify a place for themselves within the existing culture of their communities, they have a greater opportunity to develop a sense of pride and ownership to that community. Citizen contribution to a community helps define that community's image, which is a direct representation of that community's culture.

Creative placemaking can offer valuable assets to their community's individual identity. Through the development of shared visions for artistic and public engagement, creative placemaking projects can enrich the community as a whole and increase its overall sense of quality. Florida (2012) argues that:

Quality of place can be summed up as an interrelated set of experiences. Many of them, like the street-level scene, are dynamic and participatory. You can do more than be a passive spectator; you can be part of the scene (p. 281).

In most cases, creative placemaking offers elements of participatory engagement for their audience. Through the act of participation, audience members have the opportunity to be directly, and indirectly engaged with the project. Providing more opportunities for access to the arts can help to lessen perceived barriers to arts housed within institutions, such as classrooms, studios, and museums. When the arts and arts education opportunities are presented with fewer barriers to access, they can lead to

higher levels of participatory audience engagement. (Nichols, 2011). By creating art engagement opportunities for the community, residents may feel a greater sense of belonging, thus, instilling within them a greater sense of community attachment.

It is important to note that building the quality of place is not an instantaneous feat and takes time to develop (Florida, 2002). Place culture is influenced by malleable and immutable factors. While creative placemaking can alter the malleable elements such as the number of arts engagement opportunities and district revitalization efforts, the existing immutable factors will continue to exist. Community identity, values, and heritage are far less malleable than the physical attributes impressed upon the community such as the placement of public art, annual festivals, or accessible artist studios. However, the convergence of place identity and creative placemaking projects creates intersectionalities that can inherently strengthen the place culture. As a result, citizens may feel a greater attachment to communities that reflect their personal identities and values.

However, the inspiration of community attachment, while serving as an idealistic vision for cultural growth and community stewardship, may not inspire the same feelings of attachment for all of its citizens. Public and individual opinion is subjective, therefore the shared vision that creative placemaking projects attempt to achieve may not be valued in the same ways between all citizens. Florida (2002) states that “what looks like neighborhood revitalization from one perspective is gentrification from another” (p. 281). While placemaking initiatives generally attempt to create a sense of community, it is possible that this inclusive community approach will have the opposite effect on certain demographics within the community. As a result, the creation of this shared community,

in turn, becomes exclusionary based on differences in individual opinions, values, beliefs, and cultures. To minimize the risk of inadvertently creating a sense of exclusion, the early identification community stakeholders, and its constituents is key to the process of the creative placemaking initiative.

Communities that have created a greater sense of place quality and community attachment run a higher risk of gentrification. Revitalization efforts, while able to stimulate local economies are often attractive living opportunities for outsiders and non-residents. Florida (2012) states, “rising housing values often go hand in hand with the displacement of long-term residents, a serious problem that demands serious responses” (p. 281). Unfortunately, the gentrification of the community that the creative placemaking project was attempting to serve can be an unintended side effect of the project itself. Concerted efforts should be taken to avoid gentrification, yet there may be no clear cut answer to its avoidance.

Quality of Life

Another measure of success in creative placemaking is its ability to improve the quality of life for community residents. Markusen and Gadwa (2014) explain that within these evaluations, “respondents generally considered indicators such as violent crime rate, median commute time, and proportion of housing units occupied as good measures of quality of life and attachment to community” (p. 39). However, there are noted concerns with this approach.

Outside factors on the quality of life may skew collected data. For example, data trends may show an increase in the average housing costs, resulting in higher migratory

statistics of certain residents to communities that are more affordable, which in turn, may result in an average of higher commute times for some residents, thus decreasing an element of their quality of life. This situation may be a factor that is separate from a creative placemaking project, but may still be used to gauge the quality of life for the community. Therefore, respondents to this evaluative model “expressed strong concerns about the relevance of data at large geographies — county or ZIP code — as indicators for smaller areas” (Ibid.). This evaluative method may be difficult to use to evaluate placemaking initiatives due to the fact that quality of living may not always be quantifiable with data analyses in relation to the outcome measures of creative placemaking.

Arts and Culture Activity

Strengthening the community of artists and arts organizations should be a benchmark of success in the outcome of a creative placemaking project. Creative placemaking initiatives ideally would result in the increased number of employment opportunities for arts organizations and individual artists alike. This outcome would be provide local artists with more opportunities to engage with their community while also having professional work experiences through their participation within the project’s development and creation. Not only is the physical development of a creative placemaking initiative a desired outcome, the development and strengthening of the local artistic community should be one of the key strategies in creative placemaking projects that attempt to create.

By creating jobs and employment opportunities for artists and arts organizations, creative placemaking initiatives would in turn help stimulate the economic sector (Borrup, 2006). Borrup (2006) argues that, “the arts and culture sector — most often associated with nonprofit organizations large and small, and a wide range of individual practicing artists — has not generally been considered a major contributor to the U.S. economy” (p. 23). With the inclusion of strengthening the community of artists and arts organizations as one of the project’s outcomes, creative placemaking initiatives would allow for artists to shift this paradigm, by allowing artists and arts organizations to become a pivotal part of a community’s economic development.

This goal, instead of a measure of success, could also be used as an evaluative plan throughout the duration of the project. This evaluative model could gauge and measure the opportunities present within creative placemaking initiatives that allow artists and arts organizations opportunities for participation, creation, expression, as well as employment. Evaluation efforts could also take into consideration whether or not the creative placemaking project will allow the general community opportunities for individual artistic expressions through participation. Florida (2012) notes that, “creativity nourishes best in a unique kind of social environment: one that is stable enough to allow for continuity of effort, yet diverse and broad-minded enough to nourish creativity in all its subversive forms” (p.22). While this goal has been determined as an important element to the development of creative placemaking, evaluative plans should also determine how this goal should be analyzed and achieved.

Simply stated, the goal for creative placemaking of strengthening and improving the existing community of artists and arts organizations is a broadly defined benchmark

that could be measured in a number of ways. Quantitatively, the number of jobs available before, during and after an initiative may be analyzed to determine the success of a project. However, with this evaluation, our analysis of the project should also take into consideration the size, scale, and scope of the project and the community that it serves. A rural creative placemaking initiative may not have the same accessibility for its community residents, and therefore may have a smaller overall impact on its locale than in comparison to a large scale annual festival in an urban area. Therefore, to analyze this measure specifically on the number of jobs created for artists or arts organizations through the creative placemaking project may not give a true and accurate account of the impact that creative placemaking may have on a community.

This goal may be evaluated qualitatively, through the collection of individual, group and organizational statements, and would provide the evaluation process with the personal element to creative placemaking efforts. By integrating the analysis of the emotional aspect that creative placemaking possesses would offer a more holistic understanding to the impact that creative placemaking projects can have on a community. However, analyzing this evaluative measure strictly on a qualitative approach does not genuinely offer measurable outcomes of success. Personal opinion, while serving as an important element of value within a project, should not stand alone to measure of success or outcomes.

Since personal opinion is subjective, qualitative data alone may not prove as a useful benchmark for determining success. Ideally, the evaluative measures for whether or not a creative placemaking initiative strengthens and improves the existing community of artists and arts organizations would implement a mixed method approach.

This mixed-method approach would examine quantifiable data, including the numbers of jobs created by the creative placemaking project, as well as qualitative data on individual opinions surrounding the project. Qualitative data could be collected through artist statements, individual interviews, focus groups, organizational reviews and innumerable other methodologies for determining progress towards success indicators.

Economic Conditions

Arguably, the economic development and stabilization within a community is perhaps the most quantifiable indicator of the Arts & Livability Indicators. Factors that may indicate an upswing in economic development within a community that has initiated a creative placemaking project may include increases in actively operating businesses, decreases in unemployment rates (especially among artists), and a rise in median household income. However, these indicators are subject to various influences on micro and macro levels, such as nationwide economic recession, a statewide decrease in the housing market values, or an increase in local unemployment due to unforeseen business closures.

Ideally, creative placemaking projects would add to the overall quality of the area's place. In some cases, creative placemaking could provide opportunities for social interaction, thus leading to more vibrant communities. These opportunities for social interaction are desirable, and can additionally lead to a sense of belonging and connectivity amongst community members. As a result, this would have the ability to attract higher levels of creatives, as defined by Richard Florida's Creative Class distinctions. As a result, areas that possess higher levels of creative talent, or higher

concentrations of the Creative Class, are directly related to the shape and stability of its economic standing (Florida 2002, Florida 2012). Additionally, “this heightened awareness of the size and importance of creative industries and creative workers has caused cities, states, philanthropies, and businesses to assess and advocate strengthening this sector and its support systems” argues Borrup (2006, p. 8). Yet, creative placemaking cannot define these factors of economic stability solely upon their efforts within a creative placemaking initiative.

As aforementioned, the indicators used to determine the Arts & Livability of a community are subjective to outside forces. During the 2014 VALI Study, researchers noted that, “median household income and unemployment rate were widely regarded as appropriate indicators of economic conditions, but were less often viewed as appropriate indicators for outcomes from creative placemaking efforts because respondents doubted that their project could ‘move the needle’ on this dimension” (p. 19). Therefore, it can be determined that while these indicators are important to note in the understanding of a community’s economic health and vibrancy, using these indicators as measures of success puts creative placemaking projects at a vast disadvantage. Although projects may have the ability to stimulate parts of the community, they should not be held responsible for the economic growth or gain for their community as there are other factors that are at play that are beyond a creative placemaking project’s control.

Case Study: Penn Avenue Arts Initiative; Pittsburg, PA

The Penn Avenue Arts Initiative was developed in the mid-1990s in an attempt to revitalize the struggling development with the use of public art in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania's "East End." ("Penn Avenue: About," n.d.). This initiative sought to repurpose the numerous vacant store fronts along the Penn Avenue corridor to provide opportunities and places for the already established artistic community of the area (Borup, 2006). Prior to this development, Pittsburg and the surrounding areas had been in the midst of a devastating economic collapse, and economic diaspora due to the waning job market. As a result of the hardships that this area had encountered, the Penn Avenue corridor was rife with abandoned buildings and storefronts that served as sites for illicit activities (Borup, 2006).

Between 1998 to 2004, the Friendship Development Associates and the Bloomfield Garfield Corporation collaborated on a vision to revitalize the area surrounding Penn Avenue (Collier, 2011). Instead of the approaching this revitalization project from a traditional approach of creating new housing developments or another similar redevelopment venture, this collaboration sought to revitalize the area through the use of the arts. Collier (2011) explains that in the early phase of its development, PAAI purchased eighteen vacant properties "that were rehabilitated and sold at incredibly low prices to arts groups looking to develop or individual artists" ("A Transformed Penn Avenue," para. 6). This initiative proved to be a successful venture.

As a result, forty-nine artist relocated to the area, seventy-three new arts-related jobs were created in small and nonprofit organizations, five arts organizations started or relocated to the area, and forty-seven new studio spaces were created which were used

by 278 artist (Borrupt, 2006, p. 27). To this day, the Penn Arts Avenue District is a thriving part of Pittsburg (Collier, 2011, "Penn Avenue: About," n.d.). PAAI was able to create opportunities for fostering artistic development, improving the economic condition, increase quality of life, and increase resident attachment to the area. All of which are considered benchmarks in the overall evaluation of creative placemaking initiatives.

With PAAI's efforts, it can be accessed that their project initiative was able to show improvement based on the NEA's goals through strengthening and improving the community of artists and arts organizations, adding to the quality of life with the creation of new retail businesses, as well as adding to the economic development of the area. This project demonstrated measurable success in accordance to the Arts & Livability Indicators. However, not all creative placemaking initiatives can define their measures of success as clearly as PAAI can.

3: Measuring Results of Collaboration

Collaboration within creative placemaking plays a pivotal role in the overall success of a project or initiative. Creative placemaking is highly dependent upon partnerships between artists, neighborhoods, organizations, policy makers, city officials, funders and so on. Margerum (2011) explains that, "measuring collaboratives and their results is critical to a range of people. For those directly involved in the process, it is important conceptually in terms of the group's mission and goals" (p. 273). The evaluation of the collaborative process within creative placemaking is vital to the

organization of the project's efforts and process, whereas the efforts and process will have a direct impact on the outcome of the project itself.

By providing programs with indicators for the evaluation of their collaborations, projects may have a more thoughtful approach to how their collaborations are formed, as well as how their collaborations affect their process to achieving the mission of their project. In the creation of the creative placemaking initiative, measuring results within the collaborative process would be able to provide a more holistic evaluation on the project as a whole, instead of just providing an evaluation on its outcome measures. Margerum (2011) explains that there are six phases of evaluation for a collaboration: input evaluation, process evaluation, output evaluation, performance indicators, outcome measures, and program logic (p. 275). With the implementation of this logic model, creative placemaking projects would be able to internally evaluate the strength of their community partnerships and collaborations, which could be a helpful tool in determining where their success lies, and where their opportunities await.

Table 3.1 - Richard Margerum's Measuring Collaboration Results

Measuring Collaboration Results	Concept
Input Evaluation: Inputs into planning process	- Improving the information basis for decision making will improve the products and lead to better results
Process Evaluation: Quality of the process	- Improving the process of decision making will produce better products and results
Output Evaluation: Assesses plan or agreement quality	- Improving outputs will ensure more success in producing results
Performance Indicators: Measures of plans or policies	- Improve plans and policies through shorter feedback loop
Outcome Measures: Reports actual conditions	- Monitoring of actual results important for determining success of efforts
Program Logic: Evaluates outputs to outcome links	- Assessing the logic of outputs to outcomes will improve quality of collaborative implementation

Input Evaluation

An input evaluation may be used in the early stages of a placemaking collaborative. Within an input evaluation, the project resources are analyzed to determine whether or not the right resources, data, information, stakeholders, or partnerships have been considered within the creation of the project. The input evaluation will also allow for creative placemaking leaders to determine if the project is missing important key information from the discussion. In addition, the input process is a time for informational sharing between all participants (Margerum, 2011). This evaluation also seeks to “measure the quality of the information, data, and analysis that

goes into planning and management” (Margerum, 2011, p. 276). Without this evaluation, the project may suffer in either determining potential partnerships for their collaborative, or will lack in the information needed in creating a successful project. The evaluation of the project’s process would also be an important step in determining the success of creative placemaking initiatives.

Process Evaluation

Process indicators are used to evaluate the planning process of collaboratives (ibid.). This step in the evaluating the collaboratives would provide insight into the deliberation process between parties that may allow for stronger output and outcome measures. In this step, Margerum (2011) explains that:

Participants are more likely to share data, work together to assemble information sources, and contribute to the analysis and interpretation of the information. This does not mean just scientific interpretation but implications for management activities too (p. 278).

In creative placemaking initiatives, this evaluation could help determine whether or not the suggested plan, as well as identified stakeholders and current or potential partnerships would lead to the most beneficial outcome for the project. Furthermore, this step would also lead to a stronger sense of accountability for participants. Lubell et. al, notes that “effective processes build stakeholder trust, social capital and collective action beliefs” (as cited in Margerum, 2011, p.279). An early recognition of this phase would also allow for the manipulation of proposed ideas, and the formation of new ones. This phase would be helpful towards any improvements of the proposed plan. The

success of this step is also contingent on the development of the input evaluation. Information from all participants is needed in determining where there are areas for improvement, opportunities or potential challenges.

Although this step is a notably important step to understanding the collaboration efforts within a creative placemaking initiative, there are limitations that may restrict the effectiveness of this step. Process evaluation requires constant assessment. With the organic nature of creative placemaking partnerships, identified partnerships, individual participants and overall plans to the placemaking initiative are subject to change. Thus, this step may show strong partnerships trends and strong efforts towards achieving the mission one day, yet may see sharp declines in the overall effectiveness of the collaborative the next (Margerum, 2011). Furthermore, internal and external evaluations are subject to personal interpretation. Therefore, individual opinion may have a skewed impact on the evaluation of the process evaluation.

Output Evaluation

According to Margerum (2011), “outputs often refer to plans, programs, and policies produced by the collaborative” (p. 279). If a creative placemaking initiative has public programming in place, and evaluation of the community engagement may be called for to determine whether or not the programming is effectively executed for the creative placemaking initiative to meet their goals for community engagement. Additionally, and evaluation of the creative placemaking outputs could include the evaluation of the “products of the planning process” (Margerum, 2011, p. 276). Indicators may include the progress towards completion of the initiative, which would be

directly linked to the exerted efforts of participating individuals or organizations. This may prove to be an important step for certain placemaking projects in their ability to determine whether or not the appropriate participants are working towards the completion of the project at their best capacity. Margerum (2011) argues:

Researchers...have pointed out the importance of a plan that has clear objectives with measurable targets and a transparent delineation of responsibilities...The advantage of outputs is that they are readily measurable by researchers, participants and funding organizations (p. 280).

In the case of creative placemaking projects, these outputs may be quantifiably analyzed to determine whether or not the programming efforts have the impact that they are trying to achieve. These results are closely related to performance indicators, although are still considered a separate entity. If a creative placemaking initiative strives to create affordable community artist studio spaces, their outputs may take into consideration the accessibility of spaces, and number of studio spaces available to best serve their constituents.

Performance Indicators

In addition to the evaluation of output indicators, performance indicators can also provide insight into the functionality and success of the collaborative. Performance indicators can provide insightful perspective on the intermediate outcomes of the project. In the case of the creative placemaking initiatives creating studio spaces for community artists, a quantitative approach may be used in determining the whether or not the output measures are producing the desired community impact. The number of

artists that utilize studios and retention rates of the artists may come into play when determining whether or not the space is functioning at its highest capacity.

Data used for these evaluations may be also examined on a qualitative scale, with the collection of personal opinions on the effectiveness of the programming. These may include evaluating the community's initial response to the creative placemaking project. Additionally, this evaluation could also indicate the individual performance of each of the participants and partnerships, including the willingness between City councils and organizations to reach win-win solutions in the development of community based projects. Through this evaluation, one could also determine whether or not the project is on track to meeting its proposed mission, vision, and purpose. Adjustments from participants, planning, or project goals may be needed during this phase. The evaluation of the performance indicators could be used to determine short-term and medium-term outcomes.

Outcome Measures

Outcome measures are used to evaluate the longterm impact of collaborative efforts. As aforementioned, the NEA determines creative placemaking success on the four main areas for their outcome measures through the strengthening and improving the local community of artists and arts organizations, increasing community attachment, improving the quality of life, and stimulating local economies (Markusen & Gadwa, 2014). These outcome measures can take a considerable amount of time to determine whether or not a project has made a significant impact on its community. According to Margerum (2011), "measuring outcomes is sometimes the holy grail of monitoring and

evaluation because it is asking the basic question of whether collaborates are producing better environmental and social outcomes” (p. 282).

Ideally, collaboration involves a diverse group of stakeholders that work together to either come to an agreement, solve an identified issue or problem, or to work together towards a shared vision. However, the collaborative process takes time to show the bounty of their labors, and therefore, may not be able to tangibly show the breadth of their efforts.

Program Logic

Program logic is inherently important to the determination of whether or not a creative placemaking’s efforts have made strides in reaching their goals and shared visions, or if they are on a path that will allow them achieve their mission (Margerum, 2011). This step may provide insight into the assessment that the creative placemaking project has appropriately identified their mission, vision, objectives, and strategic plan to adequately allow the project to reach its intended outcomes. Ranger and Hurley note that “the targeting step entails a process of identifying conditions that exist within the mission scope of the collaborative, examining whether the condition can be changed, and exploring evidence about the likely success of proposed actions” (as cited in Margerum, 2011, p.284). This approach can allow for a qualitative assessment of the project’s intended goals.

Program logic evaluation has its advantages. It can provide useful feedback on short-term outcomes, which may allow projects to identify areas of opportunity and adjustment (ibid.). However, just as the case with process evaluation, program logic

evaluation is also subjective to individual opinion. Therefore, it may not provide a full and accurate account of the influencing factors of the project's entirety. Although it has the ability to provide a reference point for program assessments, the findings may be subjective to individual viewpoints. This may be problematic when not all parties agree upon a shared vision for the outcome of the creative placemaking initiative. Therefore, having a strong definition of the mission, vision, and objectives may lead to a stronger evaluation of the program logic later.

Case Study: City Repair Project; Portland, OR

The City Repair Project is a nonprofit community arts project that implements “a decentralized, collaborative, volunteer-based model” of its structure (Leis, et. al., 2006, p. 140). Their endeavors focus on the facilitation of the creation of public gathering places and events that invite people to connect with the people and places around them” (Ibid., p. 139). City Repair is well known for its Intersection Repair projects, which were first started in 1996. Leis, et. al. (2006) explains that in the Sellwood neighborhood of Portland, community members began hosting elaborate tea parties in the spring of 1996 in a temporary gathering space known as “T-Hows.” Ultimately, by the end of the summer that year, this gathering space was dismantled due to its noncompliance with City building codes.

Left with a sense of disconnection and despondence, this tightly knit neighborhood still felt the need for another suitable community space that allowed them to have a sense of ownership and stewardship of their neighborhood. In continuation with their efforts to reclaim their community space, a group of neighborhood residents

were inspired with the idea to paint a large mural in the neighborhood's street intersection. However, their proposal was denied by the Portland Office of Transportation (PDOT) under the reasoning of the streets were public property. The irony of the situation did not surpass the neighborhood. Their intention was to create a public space through beautification and creative placemaking, but were not allowed to do so since the streets fell within the jurisdiction of public property.

In September of 1996, the neighborhood went ahead with their personal Intersection Repair without approval from PDOT. The mural at the intersection of SE 9th & Sherrett Streets was created by painting the intersection with large, colorful, concentric circles, to symbolize that, "a crossroads is a gathering place where people come together," and was named the Share-It-Square by community members (*Share-It-Square*, n.d.). Neighborhood citizens volunteered their time and supplies together to create the mural, which was completed for a collective total of only \$65 (Ibid). In addition to the mural, the Share-It-Square also included "a community bulletin board and chalkboard, a food-sharing stand, a kids' playhouse, and a 24-hour tea station" (Ibid). Once completed, this space served as a community space, but to also send a message to the City that public space should be used for public purposes.

This activist creative placemaking project was influenced with the purpose to intervene on public policies surrounding the use of public space. According to Richardson (2010), "interventionist art both produces new communal relationships and draws attention to existing ones. However, these relationships in themselves do not create contingent communities, rather, they are produced by and coalesce around collaborative public contributions and responses to interventionist disruption" (p. 29).

This first collaborative Intersection Repair strengthened the existing community space, and gave neighborhood members a sense of ownership and a vested stake in their own neighborhood through a defiant act of reclaiming their community.

Almost immediately after its completion, “PDOT sent notification to remove the installation, and threatened to fine the folks involved. The neighborhood group then engaged PDOT and the City Council members in dialogue about the project, and set out to prove its value by surveying the neighborhood and observing behavior at the intersection” (Leis, et. al., 2006, p.20). Observations, studies, and surveys showed that the intersection mural had an interestingly positive impact on the neighborhood. There was a reported increase in communication amongst neighborhood members, and a notable decrease in crime and criminal activity.

After conducting their survey, the neighborhood presented their findings to the City Council. Their findings proved that the creation of this community space through its artistic endeavors lead to a more aware and inclusive community, lower levels of crime, higher amounts of communication and overall safety. The City officials recognized that benchmarks for decreased crime, increased safety and increased livability were being met through this creative placemaking endeavor, all without the use of spending any of the City’s tax dollars. As a result, the City Council began to issue permits for these creative spaces, and collaborated with the neighborhood to create a set of guidelines for other intersection repairs and community gathering spaces to take place.

As of 2015, the City Repair Project has helped facilitate 21 Intersection Repairs, 8 natural buildings, and 6 community gardens as neighborhood projects (*Hands-On Placemaking*, n.d.). The actions and efforts in Portland served to inspire other City

projects nationwide. Their framework model for community development and the use of public spaces has served as a guiding framework for other cities, and have been emulated by “at least a dozen cities nationwide” (Leis, et. al., 2006, p.20).

Creative placemaking projects, such the City Repair Project, often have difficulties in defining the success of their outcomes. Measuring goals for community based art projects is a moving target. What one community may strive for will be considered a nightmare for another, therefore, there has been a grassroots push to change how we determine what is considered a successful project (Markusen & Gadwa, 2014). In the case of City Repair, their accomplishments and success could be determined on a project by project basis, taking into consideration that neighborhood residents in the Share-It Circle had reported a having a greater sense of community, communication with neighbors, fewer incidents of reported crime, and a general feeling of overall safety.

While this evaluation does not demonstrate an increase in paid employment opportunities for artists and arts organizations, it does demonstrate an increase in community attachment, and an improvement in the quality of life. Economically speaking, the City Repair’s efforts may not have a direct and tangible effect on the community’s economic development since many of the intersection repairs happen within residential areas. However, this project has demonstrated other areas of success that have increased the quality of place, even though these factors are not always measurable within the NEA’s Arts and Livability Indicators.

Arguably speaking, City Repair has demonstrated long-term sustainability within its efforts for community development, City, neighborhood, and artist collaboration.

However, City Repair appears to fall short of the Arts & Livability Indicators, and may not show the same track record of success. Therefore, are we to assume that City Repair is not a successful creative placemaking project since it doesn't not show the same type of success that the NEA strives for? Or, can we evaluate City Repair on its collaborative efforts set forth by community residents, artists, and City officials to recognize its patterns of success?

4: Combining Evaluative Methods

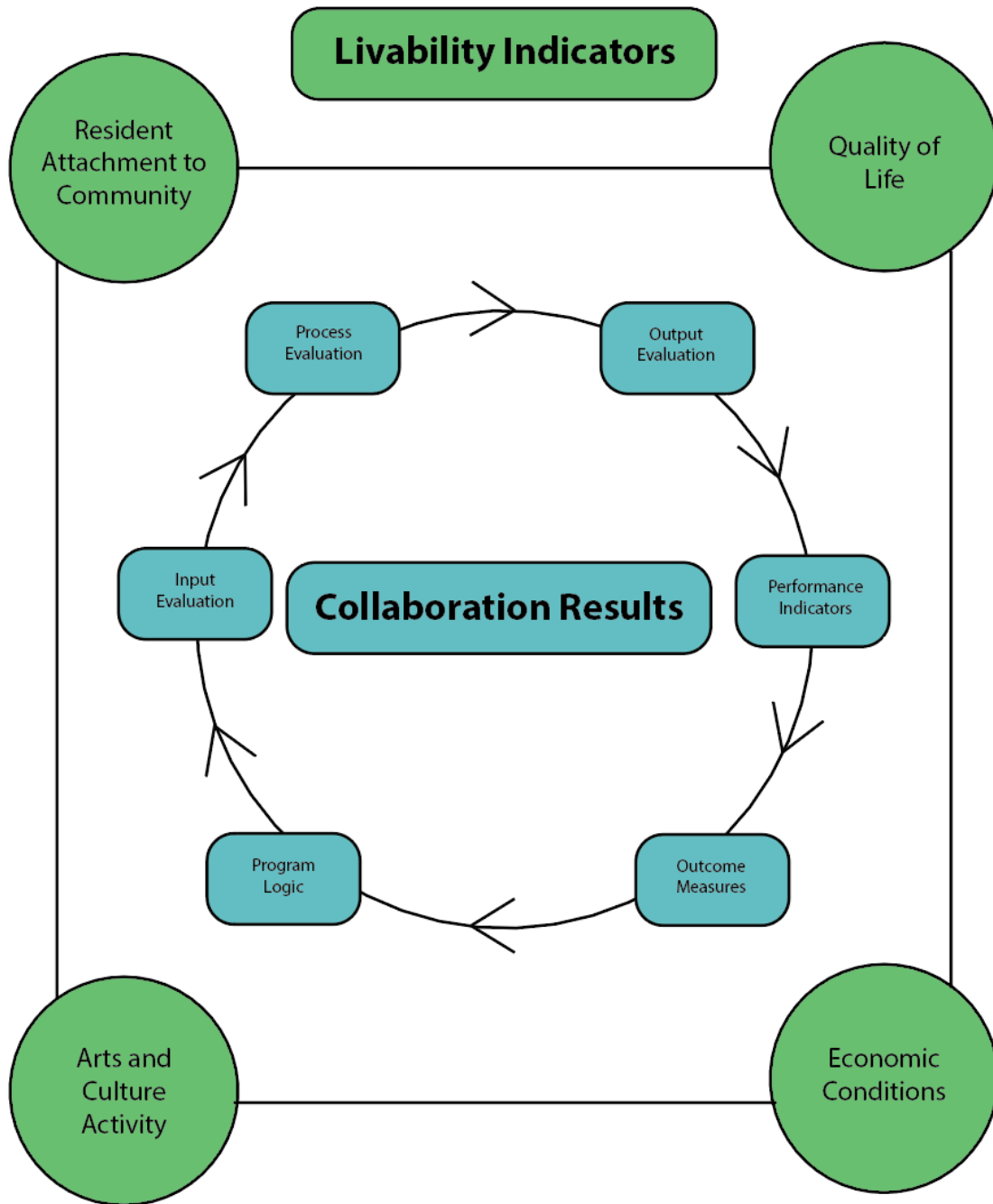
Although the Arts & Livability Indicators may prove to show a long-term pattern of influence and success within a community, the variables are subject to outside influence and other criteria that make be beyond the control of the creative placemaking's influence. By providing evaluators a framework that takes into consideration other factors that have an influence on creative placemaking outcomes, we may be able to determine a more holistic approach to the evaluation of creative placemaking projects.

By adding an evaluative framework of the measures of collaborative results through the use of logic model, evaluators have the ability to assess the process of the collaborations formed, and the success of their partnerships, which are crucial to the sustainability and long-term success of creative placemaking projects. Creative placemaking and community arts are thrive upon the involvement of their local citizens. Thus, recognizing the collaborations within creative placemaking could lead to more sustainable projects in the future.

In addition, by using both an internal evaluation of collaborative results, and the external evaluation of the Arts & Livability Indicators, creative placemaking projects

would no longer be confined to measuring their projects against the external indicators that are subject to a wide variety of influences. Furthermore, this addition to the evaluation process would also provide qualitative data in addition to quantitative data, allowing for a more complete, and holistic understanding of the creation process of creative placemaking projects.

Figure 4.1 - Creative Placemaking Evaluation: Livability Indicators and Collaboration Results



Analyzing this Combined Evaluative Method Through a Critical Lens

If a creative placemaking project is analyzed solely through the lens of the project's completion and the Arts & Livability Indicators, this can lead to difficult avenues for creative placemaking projects to provide an accurate evaluation of their project since the Arts & Livability Indicators are susceptible to external influences. Additionally, by only measuring outcome indicators, this may also lead to the assumption that the creative placemaking efforts only serve to produce a final product. This is generally not the case for many community based projects since the collaboration efforts needed to produce the creative placemaking initiative is an ongoing process, and have the ability to continue long after the initial projects are completed.

Evaluating creative placemaking through a terminal outcome lens may not offer a holistic insight into the actual success of a project. Instead of focusing our evaluations solely on their outcome measures, or by the completion of the physical project (for example: the completed installation of a public art exhibition, or the renovation of artist studio spaces), one factor that we should evaluate these initiatives on would include the process of the collaboration used to define the project.

Creative placemaking initiatives should be assessed on a multitude of levels to observe their performance analytics (Wilbur, 2015). To have a better understanding of the factors that influence creative placemaking, we should step away from the evaluation of a product-oriented conclusion. Instead, we should be evaluating the “temporarily contingent interactions of artists, community members and institutional agents...[and to recognize the] dimensions of both arts philanthropy and performance scholarship” (Wilbur, 2015, pp. 97-98). In following Wilbur's argument, in addition to the

continuation of the Arts & Livability Indicators, a project's collaboratives could be used to measure and define the project's results, successes and areas of opportunity. Both sides have powerful insight into the issues that surround individual creative placemaking projects, and should not be used as an either/or approach, but to use both simultaneously.

Case Study: Art Station; Stone Mountain, GA

Internal evaluation is an important component to the process of successful creative placemaking projects. By implementing a system for evaluation, creative placemaking projects are able to gauge the impact of their efforts within their community to ensure that they are on track with the mission of their initiative. One example of a creative placemaking project that has implemented an internal evaluation plan is Art Station, located in Stone Mountain, Georgia.

According to the NEA's OurTown report on the Art Station project (n.d.), Stone Mountain is a small community twelve miles east of Atlanta, Georgia. This suburb is composed of roughly 12,000 residents, with diverse demographics; approximately 70% African American, 25% white, and 5% Hispanic or Latino. Although a culturally diverse community, the area has been plagued by racial tensions, especially within its historical context during the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement. Furthermore, the community of Stone Mountain has also continuously faced a struggling local economy. Stone Mountain is considered a bedroom community, where a considerable portion of its citizens commute to Atlanta for work. Additionally, there are few arts engagement opportunities in Stone Mountain, as many of the cultural needs are fulfilled with

opportunities sought out in Atlanta. However, there has been an expressed need for art engagement opportunities for the citizens of Stone Mountain, without the need for commuting.

ART Station seeks to fill the arts engagement void for the residents of Stone Mountain by providing gallery and studio spaces for local artists. In response to their efforts, the Stone Mountain Arts Project (SMart, Inc.) was created to head the efforts of this collaborative project. SMart, Inc. is a collaboration between artists, the City of Stone Mountain, and the DeKalb County Department of Community Development. This initiative has been created by repurposing empty store fronts along Stone Mountain's Main Street corridor into artist studios and gallery spaces.

SMart, Inc.'s partnerships and efforts succeeded in renovating three buildings for their program, which include eight artist studios and five gallery spaces. At a cost of \$50 per month, artists can utilize studio spaces, and have access to galleries that provide a place for artists to sell their work. In return, artists pay a 30% commission back to the city for any artwork sold. This initiative not only provides affordable access to studio spaces for artists, but also has shown an effort to create sustainability for the program with commissions paid by artists back to the City.

To determine the effectiveness of their program, SMart, Inc. has incorporated an evaluative process that allows for multiple levels of evaluation to ensure that the project is able to function at its highest capacity. The NEA Our Town (n.d.) writes:

Project managers developed a system whereby the team evaluated the artists — but also the reverse, with artists evaluating the project itself. "Staff of ART Station developed several evaluation tools," the NEA grantee organization

reported. "The Artistic Director, the Gallery Manager, the Education Director formally evaluated each artist each month with an evaluation system that included quality of the work, sales, [ability to be a] team player, participation in educational activities, serving as an ambassador to the community, etc. We also asked that each artist evaluate the program itself quarterly."

This model of evaluation may also have the potential to incorporate the evaluation of the collaboratives present in this project. Since project managers are responsible for the evaluation of individual artists, and the artists are responsible for the evaluation of the project as a whole, the addition of the collaborative process could also be implemented within the evaluation efforts within SMart, Inc. The addition of the evaluation of collaboratives could be conducted on multiple levels. Participants could evaluate the process, whereas project leaders from each organization could evaluate their collaborative in each area of Margerum's model. This could provide another layer to the productivity of SMart, Inc., and the project's progress towards meeting or sustaining their goals and missions.

In following with Stone Mountain's example, continuous evaluation is possible on multiple levels. Evaluations may be conducted from a top-down approach, such as the case of the individual evaluations of artists, as well as from a bottom-up approach, as is the case with artists evaluating the project. Moreover, the addition of the evaluation of the collaborative partnerships within SMart, Inc. would allow for a better understanding of the connections between artists, City officials, and County officials. In this instance, opportunities for growth and development may be recognized earlier, and challenges may be addressed sooner.

5: Conclusions and Discussion

Summary:

The evaluative indicators set in place by the NEA to evaluate measures of impact and success include resident attachment to community, quality of life, arts and culture activity, and economic conditions. Although these indicators offer valuable insight into understanding a community's health and vibrancy, these indicators are often considered too broad for most creative placemaking projects to use as evaluative measures for their projects. Additionally, data used to determine progress within these indicators are highly subjective to other forces that are beyond the influence of creative placemaking initiatives.

The evaluation of collaborations can lead to a deeper understanding of the factors that influence partnerships. The health and sustainability of partnerships, as well as the recognition of stakeholders and constituents is vital to the success of community based projects. Each collaborative partnership should be evaluated on the measures of their inputs, process, outputs, performance indicators, outcome measures, and program logic. These categories have a direct relation to one another, therefore, by incorporating early evaluations of these partnerships would allow creative placemaking to identify areas of strengths and challenges sooner so that they may be addressed. This could allow creative placemaking projects to function at a higher capacity, and to be able to reach their desired outcomes with fewer obstacles to their completion.

Conclusions:

In conclusion, by offering a more holistic evaluation guide through the incorporation of evaluating collaboratives and partnerships for creative placemaking projects, as well as their evaluators, could have a more encompassing idea of how to measure the success indicators of their project's efforts. The NEA's Arts & Livability Indicators can serve as a set of guiding information to the evaluation of the community impact that creative placemaking initiative have. The proposed indicators can have the ability to offer powerful insight into the status of the community's overall health. However, these indicators can be influenced by a vast number of outside factors, and may not be able to provide an accurate account of the impact that creative placemaking initiative may have on their communities. Therefore, by introducing the measures of collaborative results, creative placemaking can have a broader definition of the success, as well as a refined process of recognizing the impact that they have within their community.

Since partnerships and collaborations are characteristically important to the value of creative placemaking, the evaluation of these efforts may provide a deeper understanding of the impact that placemaking has on a community. Partnerships are not created overnight; they are built overtime (Markusen & Gadwa, 2014). Therefore, by recognizing the important role that collaborations have within a creative placemaking project, evaluators can then assess the creative placemaking project as a whole, rather than just outcomes that are susceptible to external change and influence.

By adding the evaluation of the collaboratives and partnerships within creative placemaking projects, projects would have more tangible factors that they may evaluate

their projects upon. As a result, this would allow projects to be able to determine their impact and success on case-by-case scenarios. A one-size-fits-all approach through the use of NEA indicators for creative placemaking evaluations puts creative placemaking projects at a disadvantage to determining the success of their projects. With the addition of the Measures of Results within collaboratives, this could increase the toolset used to determine project success.

Implications for the Field of Arts Management

This capstone may serve as an evaluative framework for future creative placemaking projects. With the addition of measuring results within the collaboratives within creative placemaking in conjunction with the NEA's Arts & Livability Indicators, project leaders may be able to evaluate their projects on a larger spectrum to determine if the creative placemaking endeavor shows indicators for success. It is important to note that there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach to evaluating programs or projects. Each project will be faced with its own set of opportunities and challenges, and therefore, should not be compared to one set of guiding indicators to represent their success.

Furthermore, collaborations are a crucial element to the creative placemaking process. Therefore, with the addition of measuring the results of collaborations, creative placemaking can have the ability to show areas of success in other areas than their outcome measures within the Arts & Livability Indicators. Additionally, this framework may also influence cultural policy makers in developing their underlying standing of how

collaboration can have great and positive impacts on their communities, and to also recognize that collaboration is important to the health and sustainability of communities.

Suggestions for Further Research

In suggestions for further research, I would recommend that evaluation models for creative placemaking in the United States be compared to models, evaluative plans, and frameworks from other countries. Since US cultural policy differs than the cultural policy efforts in other countries, there may be opportunities to share information to develop new evaluative frameworks that could benefit the US and other countries. With comparing models that are being used by other countries, potentially, a framework that incorporates the most applicable indicators for success from other evaluative models could be developed for future creative placemaking projects.

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