

Executive Summary

Introduction

In 2005 Nathan Medeiros conducted a master's research thesis that studied how planning for creativity had been conducted in the Exchange District of Winnipeg MB. To conduct his thesis, he used Charles Landry's (2008) cycle of urban innovation to perform a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis. He was highly critical of the planning processes in the Exchange District, mainly the lack of a secondary plan or city wide cultural plan. However, he did praise the projects being undertaken by organizations like CentreVenture and ACI Manitoba that promoted the Exchange District, as well as the multi-level governmental cooperation and funding available for arts, culture and creativity projects. This research project revisits Medeiros' works twelve (12) years later, to see how the Exchange District has changed.

The connection between urban centres and innovation has been well documented, with recent emphasis being placed on the concept of creativity and knowledge-based economies. There have been many perspectives discussed on how to develop creative industries in cities, and what their roles are for the economy. The goal of this thesis is to better understand the role of planning in relation to creative industries. Winnipeg, MB. is a mid-sized prairie city, which presents an opportunity to expand the level of understanding of creative city policies and how they have affected mid-level cities.

Question and Objectives

Two related questions guided this thesis:

1. What policies and planning approaches have supported the development of creative industries in Winnipeg's Exchange District? and,
2. In particular, what policies and planning approaches support the creative entrepreneurs and workers that live there?

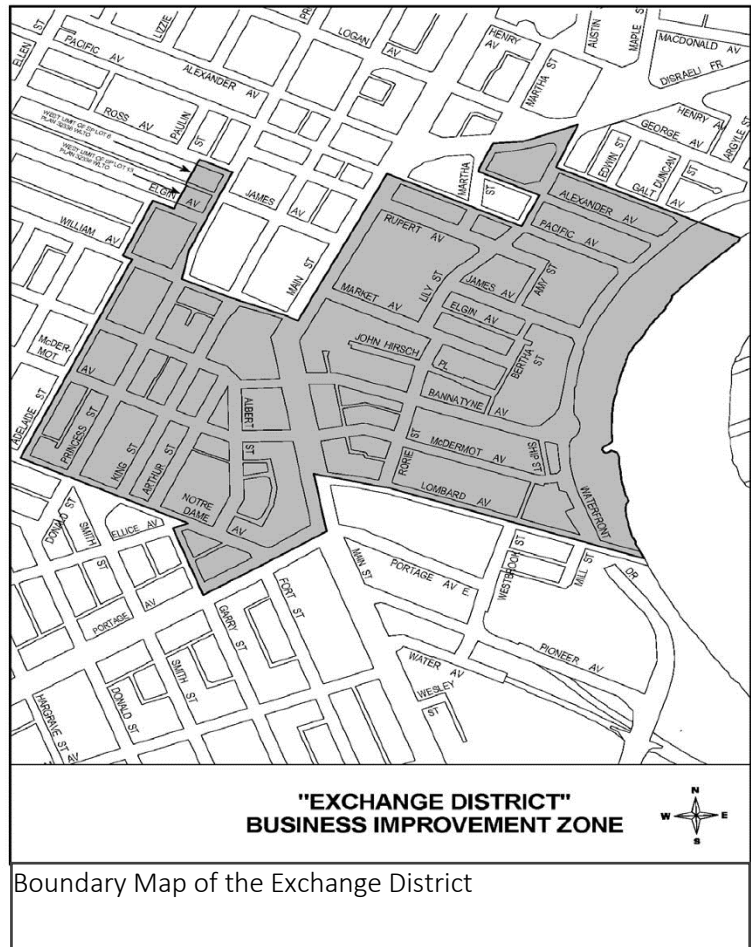
These questions translate into the following research objectives:

1. Draw on Nathan Medeiros' (2005) research thesis, Planning for Creativity: The Case of Winnipeg's Exchange District, to compare what has changed in the Exchange District since 2005, and assess what has been successful and what has not, focusing on planning processes, policies, and strategies that have been implemented since his study.
2. Make policy recommendations for the City of Winnipeg that will aid in the development of robust creative industries and support creative entrepreneurs and workers that live and work in the Exchange District.

Methodology

A literature review was completed to provide a theoretical as well as planning context for the study. The literature revealed that the definition of creative industries, as well as art, culture, and creativity, is not

universal, and that many perspectives exist. The United Nations Conference on Development and Trade's (UNCTAD) definition allows for a flexible approach to defining creative industries, while still maintaining useful categorizations, and the United Kingdom's Department for Culture, Media, and Sport offers a definition that allows for precise measurement of industries and their performance. The literature also discusses that despite the prescriptions offered by creative city advocates, the resulting policies have resulted in



negative outcomes, such as gentrification, and fails to consider an intersectional approach that includes the lived outcomes and experiences of marginalized groups, women, and people of colour in the analysis of outcomes of creative city outcomes.

A single embedded case study was chosen for this research, that used multiple units of analysis to study the Exchange District. Twelve interviews with industry advocates, city planners, architects, local arts and culture organizations, and provincial organizations were conducted, as well as participatory observations over June, July, and August of 2017, as well as a thorough document analysis of planning and policy documents pertaining to Winnipeg and the Exchange District. To create a comparable analysis to Medeiros' 2005 research a similar SWOT analysis was performed for Landry's (2008) cycle of urban creativity.

Observations and Analysis

The SWOT analysis revealed a number of changes since Medeiros published his research thesis in 2005. The most notable discoveries in the 2017 research are:

1. The Exchange District has a strong presence of support and advocacy organizations for arts and culture activities, however, they lack a unified direction.
2. The lack of a unified cultural plan for the city, and secondary plan for the Exchange District, has resulted in conflicting goals between policymakers and organizations working in the Exchange District. The inability of the City to implement such plans has resulted in a severe mistrust of the planning process, and of City Council's commitment to the Exchange District. This also has a negative impact on the planning professionals that work in the city. Despite this, there remains a strong dedicated core of individuals and organizations that want to anchor arts, culture, and creative industries in the Exchange District.
3. Gentrification that has resulted in low income artists being pushed out of the Exchange District is a significant problem in the Exchange District.

4. Previous multilateral government cooperation has dissolved significantly, and there is concern amongst support and advocacy organizations for the arts, culture, and creativity sector over the decreases in funding over the past years.
5. For creative industries and professionals to be successful, there needs to be connections between the “tastemakers” in industry hubs such as Toronto or New York.
6. There are two forms of creative pursuits in the urban setting: economic creativity, which pursues creativity for the sake of economic/financial gain, and personal (or vernacular) creativity, which focuses on personal or community benefit.

Recommendations

Five recommendations are made for the City of Winnipeg:

Recommendation 1: Develop and implement an affordable housing strategy for Winnipeg’s Downtown.

Recommendation 2: Incentivize heritage building redevelopment, and de-incentivize empty buildings and empty surface lots.

Recommendation 3: Recognize the uniqueness of the Exchange District in Our Winnipeg and Complete Communities.

Recommendation 4: Support opportunities for cross industry collaboration as well as outreach to other creative centres.

Recommendation 5: Create a Creative Spaces Strategy for the Exchange District.

Conclusion

To answer the research question put forth in this thesis Three elements have emerged as working to support the development of arts, culture, and creative industries in the Exchange District:

1. The first is networking and promoting both internally and externally (including marketing, connecting with people, and importing and exporting products/services). This networking is essential for the success of arts, culture, and creative industries.

2. The second is for the presence and support of organizations that provide funding and other supports (in the form of training, networking opportunities, administrative resources, advocacy, etc.) to the arts, culture, and creative industries and entrepreneurs.
3. The third is that public spaces are essential because they can facilitate public performances (preferably free), they can provide space for public art, and public space can also be used as a vehicle to promote a wide variety of (free) programming over the course of the year (including winter).

There are three additional elements that I have identified as important for fostering arts, culture, and creative industries, but are not present in the Exchange District:

1. The first is that multilateral civic collaboration with strong civic leadership is important because it can get community members, organizations, and city organizations involved from the outset of a project.
2. The second is that arts, culture, and creative districts need to be well connected to the rest of the city, with multiple modes of transportation available.
3. Third, and perhaps most importantly, mixed-income, and mixed-type housing and workspaces, are essential for the longevity and dynamism of an arts, culture, and the creativity district.

Future research with Indigenous peoples, newcomers, minorities, and women in the Exchange District (and creative cities more broadly) is important, and in fact essential to furthering the understanding of how creative city policies are impacting urban centres and people. There is an enormous potential to learn new stories, new creativities and counter-narratives that have been otherwise ignored. This will also help expand the understanding of the importance of the economic aspects of creativity to human life, but also the personal and communal aspects of art, culture and creativity.