**How to Engage the Community in a Cultural Planning Process**



Presented by Dinah Minot, Executive Director

**CULTURAL PLANNING TIPS**

# Before you begin the cultural planning process, ask:

*WHY are we doing this? WHAT is the need? HOW can we begin?*

1. **DO THE HOMEWORK -** Research government grant opportunities for funding the process. Research and gather materials of past plans and/or creative economy reports.
2. **TAKE THE TEMPERATURE - WHO IS INTERESTED? -** Suss things out with community leaders. One-on-one coffees and telephone calls make all the difference in establishing buy-in. Don’t rely on email communication only.
3. **TARGET LIST -** Create a list of stakeholders and community leaders. One by one, reach out to them. This initial outreach process is key to establishing need and buy-in.
4. **STEERING COMMITTEE -** Consider inclusivity. Be mindful of engaging constituents with diverse interests and representation. Who is the leader? Establish roles.
5. **SCALE & SCOPE -** What is the purpose & mission? Goals & timeline? Depending on the size of your municipality, create an appropriate budget.
6. **CONSULTANT FOR HIRE -** Do you need a neutral facilitator and/or can you access local leaders to implement the planning process?
7. **BUDGET -** Once the timeline and goals for each phase of the process are considered, the steering committee can agree on a budget.
8. **ROLES & OBJECTIVES -** Create a checklist outlining the roles and objectives of the planning process. Distribute widely by email & social media, and then host a follow-up forum for discussion.
9. **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT -** Personal attention, small meetings, telephone conversations, invitations to community arts events, building relationships, and hosting open house coffees & meetups will enhance the process, foster partnerships, and invite participation.
10. **ONGOING COMMUNICATION -** Keep an open dialogue. Keep the conversation going. Think of creative ways to invite community engagement. Spread the news. As you assemble community teams of volunteers for art exhibitions, create local concerts, and/or professional development workshops, the community will start to feel a synergy and energy of inclusiveness. Everybody will begin to share willingly. Everybody’s voice matters.

**PORTLAND’S CULTURAL PLANNING TIMELINE**

# A breakdown of timeline, framework, process & engagement

## PHASE 1: LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

* Spring 2016 - Applied for cultural plan funding from Maine Arts Commission & City of Portland
* Fall 2016 - Raised funds from grants: Maine Arts Commission, City of Portland, and private sector
* Winter 2017 - Contracted out-of-state planning consultant, CivicMoxie, to begin a review of past cultural plans, as well as a review of Portland’s major arts organizations’ strategic plans, the city’s comprehensive plan, and other relevant documents & creative economy reports
* Winter-Spring 2017 - Interviewed and convened focus groups with community leaders and stakeholders
* Summer 2017 - Phase 1 report submitted: established goal of plan update, listed five possible strategies, culled together information and shared with community stakeholders

## PHASE 2: GETTING DOWN TO ACTION

* Summer 2017-Spring 2018 - Workgroup meetings reduced five possible strategies to three community-driven priority initiatives (4-5 meetings each)
* May 2018 - Arts & Culture Summit: convened leaders to present feedback on what was learned and shared during the planning process to date, voted on desire for annual summit
* Summer 2018 - Creative Portland adopted a new mission statement and strategic direction as shaped by community input in the planning process

## PHASE 3: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

* Fall 2018-Winter 2019 - Writing of final report including action plan with strategic priorities and recommendations for implementation
* February 2019 - Adoption of the Cultural Plan Update of 2018 by City Council as an official city adopted plan

Creative Portland | 84 Free Street, Portland ME 04101 | (207) 370-4784 [info@creativeportland.com](mailto:info@creativeportland.com) | [www.creativeportland.com](http://www.creativeportland.com/)