Our Learning Objectives

- Understand creative economic development
- Identify your community's creative economic assets
- Learn creative economic planning methods
- Identify resources for more learning
- Your own expectations for learning

Downtown Niles Michigan, Courtesy the Mark Bussler Blog
Niles Michigan Case Study

Niles Michigan Cultural Economic Development Plan
September 2009

Attracting creative workers and heritage tourism
Niles’ Cultural Economic Plan identifies, strengthens, and strategically employs local and regional cultural assets for economic development.

What is the Creative Economy?
The economic sector that employs culture and creativity to create wealth and jobs through ideas, products, or services

Creative Economic Development

Community-based initiatives that identify, strengthen, and employ a community’s cultural assets for economic development
Asset-Based Community Development
Community building practice that identifies and mobilizes community strengths to leverage change and overcome limits
Build on assets, don’t focus on problems

Creative Workforce & Enterprises
Creative Workforce
– Occupations that directly produce cultural goods and services or work within an industry that makes cultural goods/services

Creative Enterprises
– Industries that produce or distribute cultural goods and services

Creative Economy

Creative Businesses
Creative workers
Nonprofit cultural organizations
Creative workers

Non-creative businesses with creative workers

Support systems
Funders
Services
Community partnerships

Courtesy: Mt. Auburn Associates
The Creative Industries

Creative Industry Cycle

Niles Cultural Economic Development

- 10 months’ planning
- Public meeting & interviews
- Residents’ Survey
- Economic research
- Asset inventory
- Visual assessment
- CED Steering Committee
  - Planning retreat
  - Oversight & approval
Niles Cultural & Creative Assets

- History, sites, & buildings
- Creative businesses
- Creative workers
- St. Joseph River
- Main Street
- Niles District Library
- Special events
- Orchards, vineyards
- Affordable real estate
- Central location

Niles Survey Findings

Residents have mostly positive attitudes about Niles.

They highly value festivals, natural areas, library, & film theaters.

They associate Niles with:
- Hometown
- St. Joseph River
- Small town
- Historic
- Friendly
- Community
- Family

Identify Your Community’s Creative Assets

- Define sector
- Mine existing data
  - Guidestar.com
  - Census.gov
  - Bureau of Labor Statistics
  - State & local arts and heritage agencies
  - Main Street, Chamber, DDA
- Interviews, focus groups, & surveys
- Visual audits

- Brainstorm your own community’s creative assets
Options to Share Assessment

- Asset inventory
- Images
- Economic impact
- Creative vitality index

Niles' Four Goals

Goal 1. Build a Creative Economic Environment

Conditions develop for creative individuals and businesses to thrive in Niles.
Creative Economy Strategies

- Demonstrate Niles’ attractiveness for creative businesses
- Develop spaces
- Recruit creative businesses
- Entrepreneurial assistance & capital
- Creative incubators
- Maximize special events’ impact

Results in Niles

The Entrepreneur and Culinary Incubator of Niles (TECI) Targeting Artists/Artisans, Creative Technology Business ventures such as Graphic Artists and Web Designers, and Specialty & Ethnic Food Businesses. Scheduled to open July 2011

Goal 2. Develop Niles Heritage

Niles becomes a heritage tourist destination.
Heritage Tourism Strategies

- Promote historic learning experience to visitors
- WMU research & interpretive center
- Guest accommodations
- IN/MI Trail system
- Teach Niles history & document oral histories
- Consider historic district ordinance & City historian

Results in Niles

Goal 3. Promote Niles

Niles becomes positioned as a cultural attraction for regional visitors, businesses, and new residents.
Niles Promotion Strategies

- Coordinate Internet marketing
- Market cultural attractions
- Cultural sector networking
- Create cultural district

Results in Niles

Goal 4. Organize for Cultural Economic Development

Niles develops sustained capacity to implement this plan and realize Cultural economic development.
Organizational Strategies

• City and Main Street/DDA appoint cultural economic development committee to oversee implementation
• City adopts this CED plan
• City integrates CED plan into Master Plan

Planning Steps

1. Organize for planning
   – Leadership team
   – Funding
2. Conduct assessment
   – Mine existing data
   – Collect new data
   – Synthesize & report
   – Identify key opportunities and challenges

Planning Steps

3. Develop creative economic development plan
   – Vision
   – Long-range goals
   – Overall strategies
   – Specific outcomes
   – Tasks, responsibilities & timing
   – Likely costs & funding
Implement Your Plan

4. Implement your plan
   • Integrate into Main Street operations & budgets
   • Seek formal approval
   • Seek funding

5. Monitor progress and observe results

Funding and Support

Michigan Main Street
Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA)
Michigan Main Street Center
Michigan Department of History, Arts, and Libraries (HAL)
State Historic Preservation Office
Michigan Office of Cultural Economic Development

Funding from MSHDA and National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior

Niles Main Street/DDA
Niles Cultural Economic Development Steering Committee