

# Culture Here



---

Since the dawn of the term “creative economy” by John Howkins, years ago, researchers have attempted to understand the links between arts and cultural production and overall urban economies and quality of life. **Culture Here** seeks to better understand Nashville’s formal and informal arts and culture landscape and through data analysis, identifies opportunities for planning, investments and public policies that can fuel cultural life of Music City.

Specifically, the study:

- Documents both formal cultural hubs such as museums and performing venues and “informal” cultural locations such as coffee shops and libraries that drive neighborhood cultural life.
- Demonstrates correlation between formal cultural institutions and cultural “clusters” and high economic impact, tourism impact and private sector development investment.
- Codifies that artists, cultural producers are disproportionately “freelancers” and therefore deeply affected by the growing lack of affordable and available work, studio and light manufacturing spaces.
- Identifies the strong link between transit, street and parking access and infrastructure and the viability of cultural venues.
- Showcases that Nashvillians, regardless of income level, place high value on cultural participation and seek opportunities to do so through a variety of formal and informal means.

- The successful **cultural clustering** in the CBID and Music Row should be part of **corridor redevelopment strategies** and can extend to performing and visual arts, makers and artisan manufacturing.
- Cultural producers (artists, artisans, makers) must be considered as **key stakeholder** both of **transit and affordable housing** planning and policies in order to retain them as “knowledge producers” in the county.
- Metro **should reimagine city properties** such as schools and libraries as “cultural assets” and via private partnerships, planning and targeted capital spending that reinvigorates neighborhoods.
- Metro’s **economic development strategy** must evolve to specifically **include cultural producers, makers and freelancers** and should include new **tools that support** the capitalization, commercial ownership and product production of these producers within the county (eg. Film, fashion, maker spaces)

Nashville is by all accounts a world-class tourist destination and leading U.S. economy. Continued studies by leaders like Richard Florida and the more recent work by Arthur Nelson in *Economic Development Quarterly* shows the strong link between strong and diverse cultural offerings in a city and both neighborhood economies and the retention of knowledge workers. The **Culture Here** study serves as a jumping off point for Nashville as it broadens its cultural offerings, deepens its small business creative economy strategy and builds on its transportation, housing and workforce development policies. Overall, **Culture Here** demonstrates that cultural participation and access are city core values and a major contributors to economic success and overall quality of life for all in Music City.

Raw talent and high quality now at tipping point for coordination, clear leadership and strategy and intentional public and private investments to continue our documented momentum as an international cultural hub for tourists and a world class place to live for our residents.