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Orange Arts and Economic Development: Identifying Non-Traditional Innovative Educational Opportunities for Economic Development in the Town of Orange, Massachusetts

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ORANGE ARTS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Identifying Non-Traditional Innovative Educational Opportunities for
Economic Development in the Town of Orange, Massachusetts



Orange Arts and Economic Development

Prepared for the
Town of Orange by:
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Acknowledgements

This report would not have been possible without the help of Kevin Kennedy, Community Development Director for Orange, Massachusetts and the Center for Economic Development at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

“The Friendly Town”

-Orange Nickname

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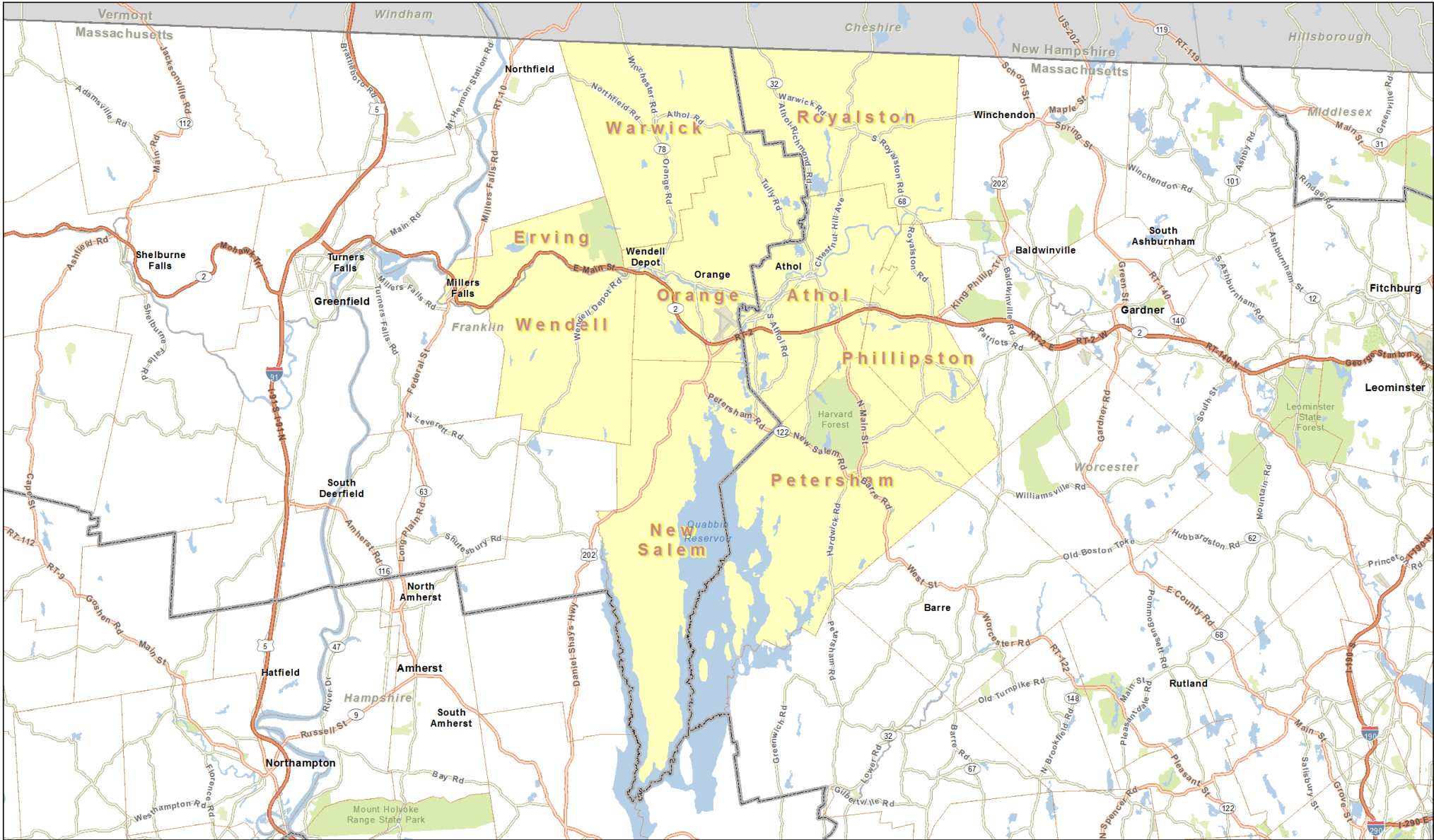
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Map of Orange and Surrounding Region



FIGURE 1: ORANGE LOCATION



Orange: North Quabbin Sub Region

Orange Revitalization through Education - Fall 2014

Introduction

The Town of Orange is a rural and picturesque mill town located in North Quabbin region of Central Massachusetts (See Figure 1, and 2). Along with neighboring Athol, Orange has been a major industrial and economic center for the region over the past two centuries, however in recent decades a majority of the river based industry has vanished taking jobs along with them. With an aging workforce and dwindling prospects pushing younger residents away, Orange must now face the challenge of trying to reinvent its economy to remain relevant and competitive.

Orange, like many other mill towns in Western Massachusetts, has been afflicted by the declines in the manufacturing industries and a shifting economic landscape. This shift has been characterized by a restructuring of industrial production offshore and the growth of a knowledge-intensive and a service-based economy in the United States. This shift has resulted in disinvestment and blight in former mill towns as service-based industries in the region have grown predominantly in urban areas and adjacent corridors along the Eastern Seaboard, bypassing rural communities such as Orange.

Service based industries benefit from clustering in closer proximity to one another and major financial institutions. They also benefit from outsourcing components of a traditional business to other companies. The old manufacturing model that characterizes the types of industry that formed towns like Orange and Athol, however, is arranged 'vertically', meaning all of the components of the business, from production to marketing to distribution, are located in one place. This type of business model is highly susceptible to the economic shocks of restructuring that have taken place over the past few decades. The decline in manufacturing has had further repercussions for the people of Orange with the loss of commuter rail service in Athol, low median wages, and higher levels of unemployment. Furthermore, due to Orange's close proximity to New Hampshire, local businesses are forced to compete with tax-free shopping across the border as well.

Orange and the surrounding region in general began to feel these shocks most acutely in the 1980's when industries began to relocate out of state and offshore. The closing of the Union Twist Drill Company in Athol in the late 1980's removed hundreds of jobs overnight and

exacerbated the economic strain and outmigration already afflicting the town. More recently, economic setbacks have resulted in the loss of a number of jobs from local manufacturing company Rodney Hunt along with the closure of the company's foundry. However, Orange has maintained a degree of stability through the latter part of the 20th century and into the present day thanks to strategic investments, political fortitude, and the tenacity of local entrepreneurs. Nevertheless, if the town of Orange is to regain the economic vibrancy it once had it needs to foster more diverse commercial and industrial sectors and create opportunities for residents. One such opportunity lies in the creation of a creative arts facility focusing on education which can tap into the strengths of the regional creative economy.

Purpose

This project began at the request of the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as a collaboration between Dr. John Mullin of the University of Massachusetts and former Second Franklin County State Representative Denise Andrews in the fall of 2014. The purpose of this collaboration is to develop creative, 'out of the box' solutions for a wide range of economic development issues in Franklin County, Massachusetts. One area of focus is in identifying innovative and educational opportunities that promote economic development strategies for the town of Orange, Massachusetts.

This report has been conducted on behalf of Dr. Mullin's graduate industrial practicum at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, in the department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning and builds upon the work of a previous study, "Toward a Revitalization Strategy: Orange as a Center for Education", conducted the semester beforehand in the fall of 2014 by UMass Regional Planning graduate students. This previous report focused on identifying educational opportunities as a catalyst for economic revitalization, reasoning that such a strategy will lead to the creation of quality jobs, attracting and retaining younger workers, and strengthening workforce development through job skills training in Orange.

The outcome of this previous report is the proposal for introducing a unique adult education center/school located within the downtown central business district and proposes three separate school models, to be sited at one of three specific locations, utilizing one of three

different construction techniques. The school models chosen focus on green building techniques and technology, brewing and beverage making, and outdoor adventure and recreation. Building upon these recommendations, this report aims to introduce arts based educational opportunities within the town of Orange with a specific emphasis on developing facilities for sculpture arts in connection with regional cultural and academic institutions. Based upon an inventory that highlights the condition of Orange's existing conditions and economic standing, this report proposes that the creation of such a facility be modeled upon case studies of similar successful developments that have taken place in towns that faced, and continue to face, similar conditions. Finally, this report will detail funding to achieve these goals as well as identify potential stakeholders for moving forward.

Goals and Objectives

Our primary task has been to develop a set of recommendations that policy makers, town officials, and the residents of Orange and beyond can use as a resource in advocating for and implementing creative arts endeavors which will serve as a catalyst for revitalization. The creation of an arts facility in connection with regional cultural and educational institutions is one strategy that can help better position Orange for success in the 21st century.

Goals

- Help to build upon the uniqueness, specialty, and cachet that characterizes Orange by attracting creative entrepreneurs to reinvest in downtown Orange;
- Create a model for arts education that is feasible, fits within the character of Orange, and provides opportunities for workforce development and personal enrichment for Orange residents and artists in the region;
- Work to establish a new reputation for Orange that connects the town with other arts endeavors and institutions in the regional creative economy which draws visitors to the town;
- Generating spillover effects for increased patronage at local businesses with increased tourism and foot traffic in Orange.

Objectives

- Identifying the optimal model for an arts facility in Orange;
- Evaluating successful case studies from regional arts facilities that an Orange facility should be modeled upon;
- Identifying the optimal location for an arts facility in Orange;
- Integrating the connections drawn from local assets and existing conditions to an arts facility in Orange;
- Identify potential funding sources for arts and creative economy related endeavors in Orange.

Next Steps

- Meeting with stakeholders, gathering residents' input, and generating their support to implement the creation of an arts facility in Orange;
- Creation of a plan to address major roadblocks to development;
- Identifying additional sources of funding by targeting investors and regional educational institutions.

Methodology

This study follows the UMass Amherst Center for Economic Development's (CED), three-pronged process: 1) Inventory, 2) Analysis, and 3) Recommendation.

Inventory

The inventory process consists of collecting data and information that pertains to the specific study area of Orange, the surrounding North Quabbin communities, and the overall region. This task has been accomplished through site visits to downtown Orange to document the physical and cultural landscape. Additionally, research has been conducted using data gathered from the U.S. Census Bureau. Case studies and additional research regarding the arts and the creative economy have been drawn from scholarly journals and reports from arts organizations that detail the economic impact of arts on the regional and national economy.

Analysis

The analysis process consists of taking the data that has been gathered from the inventory and applying it to the specifics of an arts education facility in Orange. This has included examining case studies and literature to best identify the needs, opportunities, and benefits they would present to orange based upon the existing conditions and target population. In general, case studies have been selected from rural mill town communities within the region that have faced similar conditions as those found in Orange. Local market data gathered from ESRI's Business Analyst software has been analyzed in connection with overall national trends in the creative arts economy.

Recommendation

The recommendation that is presented in the final component of this report is drawn from the conclusions presented by the analysis phase. The recommendation takes into consideration the regional context for an arts facility in Orange and provide an avenue for the next steps which need to take place in order to integrate an economically sustainable arts facility in Orange. While this report advocates for the creation of an arts facility that caters to sculpture arts and metalworking, the approach is flexible and can be tailored to a number of arts endeavors.

Historical Context

The area is unique in its history, ripe with invention and innovative practices. In 1877, Laroy Starrett changed the game of metal work, inventing the combination square and ultimately creating the Athol-based L.S. Starrett Co in 1880. They continue to produce quality precision measuring instruments and other machinist tools in Athol. In 1899, the Grout Brothers invented the steam-powered automobile and began a short-lived production in Orange. In 1888, Goodell-Pratt began production in Greenfield and in 1905 Union Twist Drill of Athol started manufacturing metal cutting equipment. Both Greenfield (Franklin County Seat) and the North Quabbin became known for their highly skilled machinist workforce and production of metal working tools and instruments.

The construction of the Quabbin Reservoir, completed in 1938, significantly altered Orange's geography and relation to surrounding townships. North Quabbin's New Salem and Petersham lost huge portions of their land area in the making of the Reservoir. Four towns of the Swift River Valley to the south, Greenwich, Enfield, Dana, and Prescott ceased to exist as of 1938, now underwater to provide drinking water to the Boston metropolitan area. The Reservoir and subsequent creation of the new Route 2 in the late 1950s alienated the downtowns of the North Quabbin

Existing Conditions

Overview

Orange is a small community of 7,756 residents located in eastern Franklin County¹. The town is a part of an area known as the North Quabbin of Massachusetts, a collection of nine towns, encompassing both Worcester and Franklin Counties.

Remoteness as well as a lack of effective 'boosterism' contributes to the region's low levels of outside investment. The town and North Quabbin region are in need of a brand name, one that adequately and justly embodies both the people and venues the area has to offer.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. *Quick Facts 2014*

However, this effort if to succeed, requires the nurturing of assets such as outdoor recreational services and educational arts and entertainment heavily grounded in small businesses entrepreneurship. Linkages to arts, recreational, and cultural institutions throughout the North Quabbin and greater Franklin County are necessary for effective clustering². Such a regional network ultimately requires increased collaboration among chambers of commerce, cultural and tourism councils, and local governments³.

Population Growth and Age Distribution

The population has been growing steadily since 1990 and experienced only minute decline from 2010-2013 at -1.1%⁴ This is significant considering many surrounding towns witnessed population trends of out migration since 1990⁵. The median age in Orange is 41, lower than the County’s average of 44.3 years and only slightly higher than the state at 38.1 years of age⁶.

Age	Percent
Under 18	24.3
18 to 24	5.4
25 to 44	24.4
45 to 64	30
65 and over	15.9

FIGURE 3: AGE DISTRIBUTION

² Mt. Auburn Associates Inc. *Northern Tier Strategic Investments Final Report*. October 2004

³ Mt. Auburn Associates Inc. *Northern Tier Strategic Investments Final Report*. October 2004

⁴ American Community Survey 2009-2013

⁵ FRCOG. *Greater Franklin County 2014 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) Annual Report*. 2014. P. 10

⁶ American Community Survey 2008-2012 5 Year Estimates

The low percentage of individuals 18-24 is roughly half the state's average of that same age group⁷. This data suggests a lack of social and economic opportunity for young adults and does present a challenge in attracting outside investment, as this is a vital segment of the workforce. However, according to the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts conducted in 2002, 46 was the national average age of art event and workshop attendees⁸. Considering Orange's high percentage of residents ages 25-64, they represent a potential interest group and large student pool for a well-integrated art school.

Employment and Income

In 2006, Orange and 28 other communities encompassing both Franklin and Worcester counties were designated an Economic Development District by the Economic Development Administration (EDA), heightening the area in priority for federal EDA grants. In order to receive funding from the EDA, the regional body channeling funds to associated municipalities must create a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Franklin Regional Council of Governments has maintained an annual CEDS report for the area since 2006.

An approved CEDS must meet an array of EDA guidelines and be an effective, temporal document, "that analyzes the regional economy and serve as a guide for establishing and implementing regional goals and objectives, and identifying investment priorities to meet these goals and objectives" . Equipped with planners and municipal officials from across the CEDS District (Franklin County plus Amherst, Phillipston, and Athol of Hampshire and Worcester counties), the CEDS Committee and Board draft development plans and appropriate EDA funds for the entire District. The CEDS Program operates in a cycle of every 5 years – updating and redrafting data, projects, and stakeholders. To receive appropriations from FRCOG, the town must craft its own Community Development Strategy as Orange has, last updated in 2010.

Since the 1990s, unemployment and low income have stymied development interest in Orange. Franklin County is continuously amongst lowest in income and wages of all counties in

⁷ ACS 2008-2012 5 Year Estimates

⁸ Nichols. *Demographic Characteristics of Arts Attendance*. 2002

Massachusetts⁹. The Town of Orange has also ranked within the lowest in income of all municipalities both in the Community Economic Development Strategy Region and the County¹⁰.

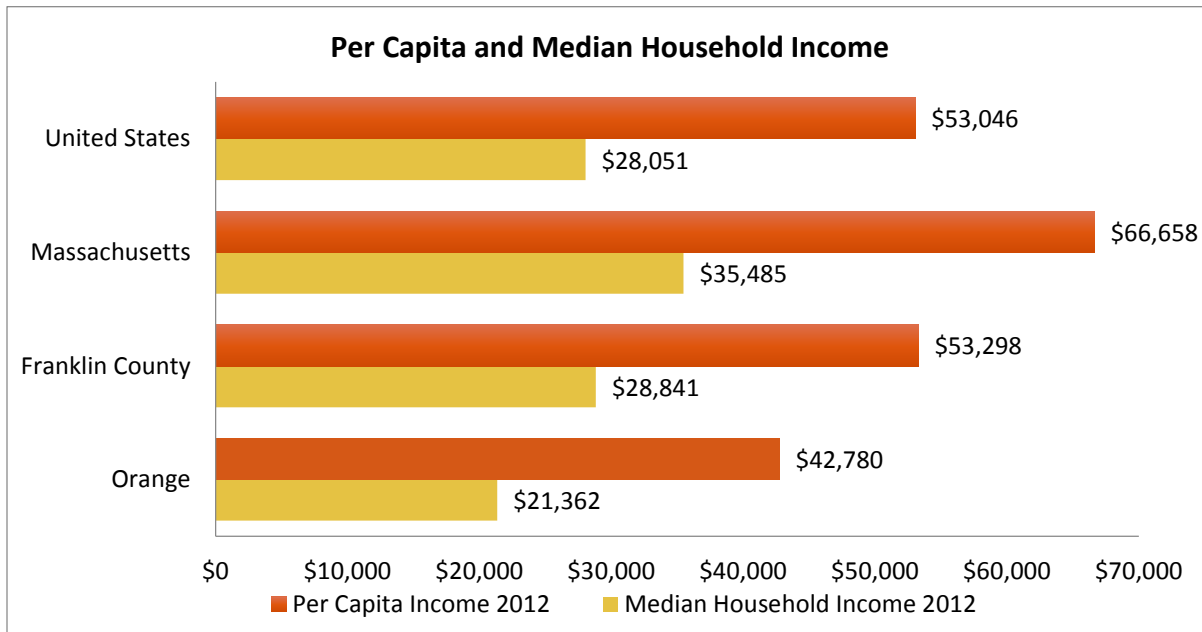


FIGURE 4: PER CAPITA AND MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

During the height of the Recession in 2009, Orange had an unemployment rate 10.7%¹¹. The country has slowly recovered and this number has dropped 3.7% to 7.0% in February 2015¹². However, the town’s proportion of unemployed workers remains higher than county, state, and national averages.

⁹ ACS 2008-2012 5 Year Estimates

¹⁰ ACS 2008-2012 5 Year Estimates

¹¹ Massachusetts Office of Labor and Workforce Development. *Municipal Employment Data: Orange. 2010-2013*

¹² Massachusetts Office of Labor and Workforce Development. *Municipal Employment Data: Orange. 2010-2013*

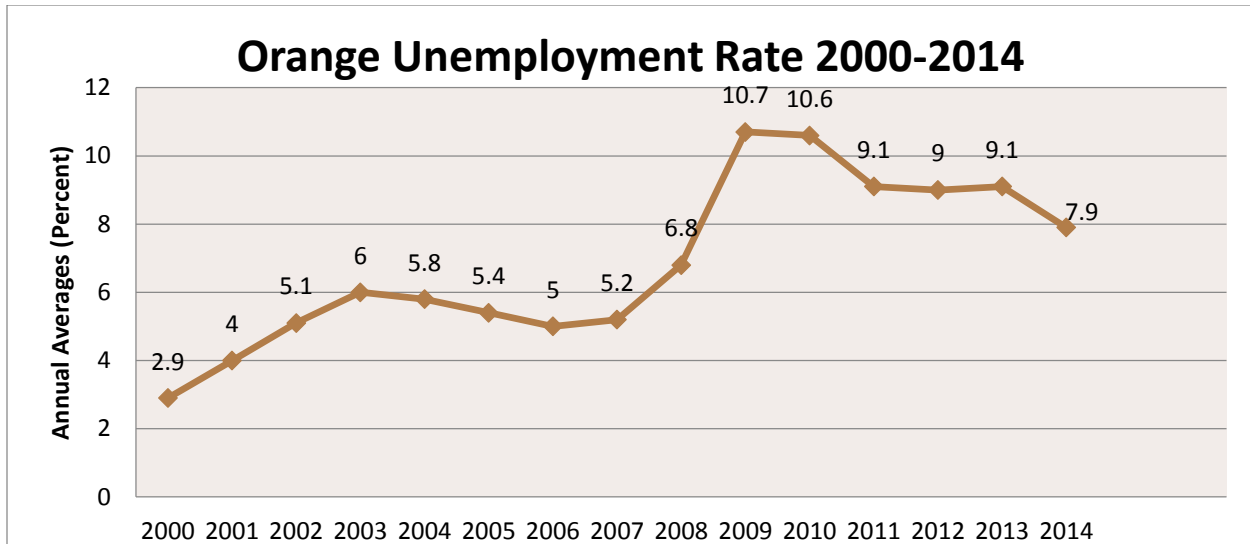


FIGURE 5: ORANGE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE 2000-2014

Orange’s high unemployment rate during the Recession was heavily impacted by layoffs and closures throughout the County, primarily occurring in the manufacturing sector. The loss of Thomas and Betts is one of the largest single employer layoffs in the CEDS region since 2000¹³. The “spike” in unemployment noticed from 2007-2010 is a representative of both direct effects of the closing of Thomas and Betts as well as the induced rippled effects on local businesses as total spendable income falls. It is important to recognize the influence of the weak housing industry on construction employment during 2008-2012 as well.¹⁴

¹³ FRCOG. *Greater Franklin County 2014 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Annual Report*. 2014. P. 32

Unemployment Rate 2008-2014

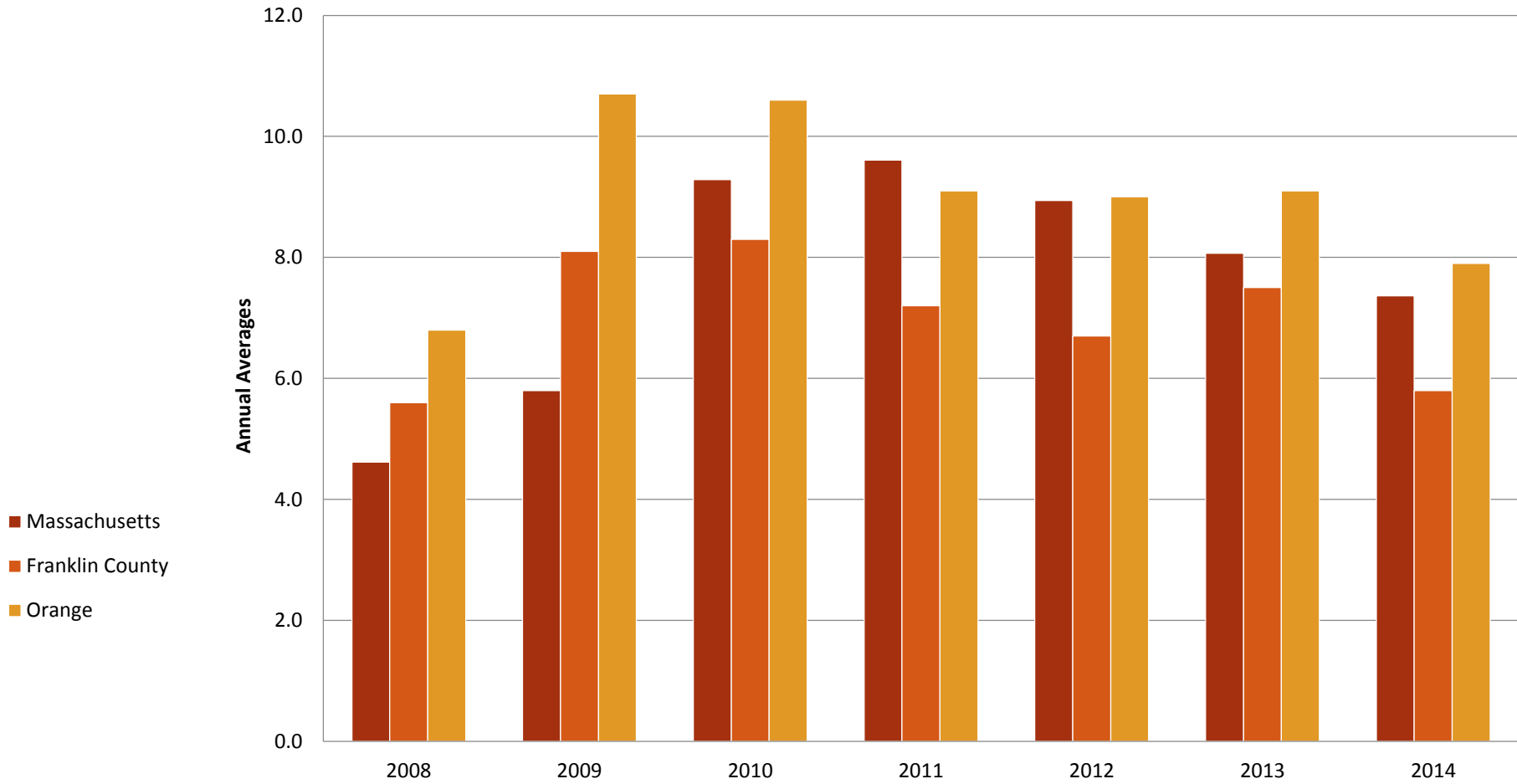


FIGURE 6: REGIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE COMPARISON

Note: Orange and county unemployment rates remain above state averages.

Employment By Industry 2013 Orange

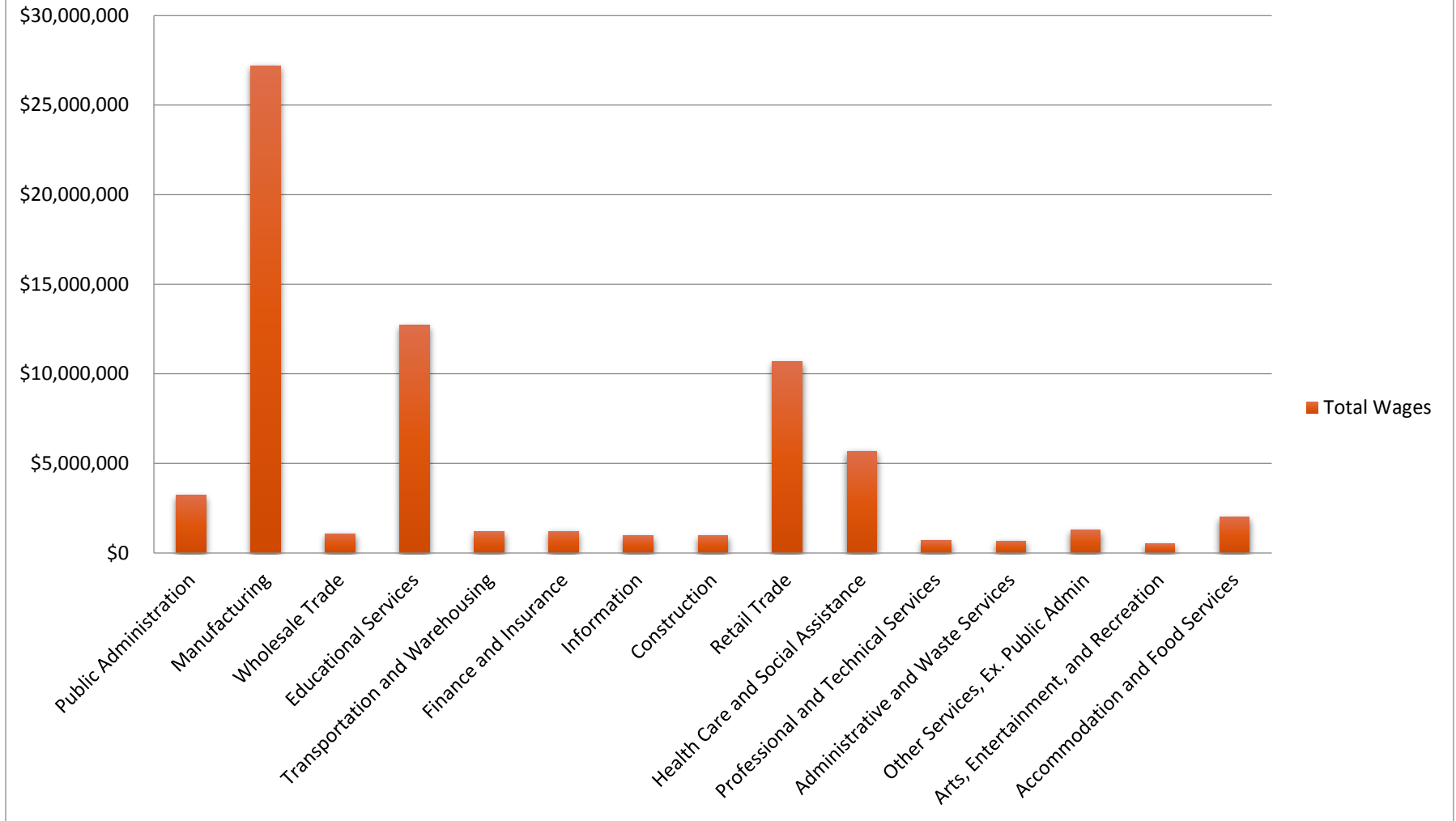


FIGURE 7: EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

The high wage job sector available to Orange residents has been deficient for some time and the decline of manufacturing in North Quabbin has contributed heavily to this trend. Industrial employment is being replaced by low-wage, low-skill service jobs. Retail, healthcare, and social services sectors have received the most growth proportionally in Franklin County and Orange since 2000. Within the town of Orange, the North Quabbin Community Healthcare Center opened in 2006 and Balance Staffing, an employment services company, is now housed in Randall Industrial Park. Manufacturing as well as health, education, and social services are top employment sectors for Orange and County residents, and they generate the most profit. Recent growth in education, health, and social service sectors is a promising direction.

Commercial Vacancy

Most retail and service sector development is occurring away from downtown closer to Route 2 exits and onramps in North Quabbin. Through examining center commercial vacancy rates, downtown home prices and rent averages, it is clear the center of town is in need of an attractive anchoring development. The Orange Downtown Market Assessment, a survey performed by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments in 2013, portrays residents' concerns for the future of downtown and a strong desire for more recreational venues¹⁵.

Much of the physical structures in downtown are in disrepair. The Signage and Façade Improvement Program, started 2010 has made small strides to improve appearances and the marketability of center commercial space. A lack of capital in the municipal budget and necessary infrastructure repairs, like sewer, limit this effort¹⁶. Many Orange residents are unsatisfied with the lack of diversity of venues and general environment the central business district provides¹⁷. If incomes do not increase and outside investment continues to lag behind municipalities in other counties, not only will Orange's quality of life continue to struggle to meet demands of the New Economy, marketability for an arts or related educational center will decline as well. The need

¹⁵ Franklin Regional Council of Governments. *Downtown Orange Market Assessment Report*. Orange MA Dec 2011

¹⁶ Community Development Town of Orange. *Community Economic Development Strategy*. Orange MA 2010

¹⁷ FRCOG. *Downtown Orange Market Assessment Report*. Orange MA Dec 2011

for a central attraction that brings outside visitors to downtown is increasingly important to the future of downtown Orange.



FIGURE 11: VACANT BUILDINGS ALONG WEST RIVER STREET. PHOTO COURTESY: MIKE GOULDING

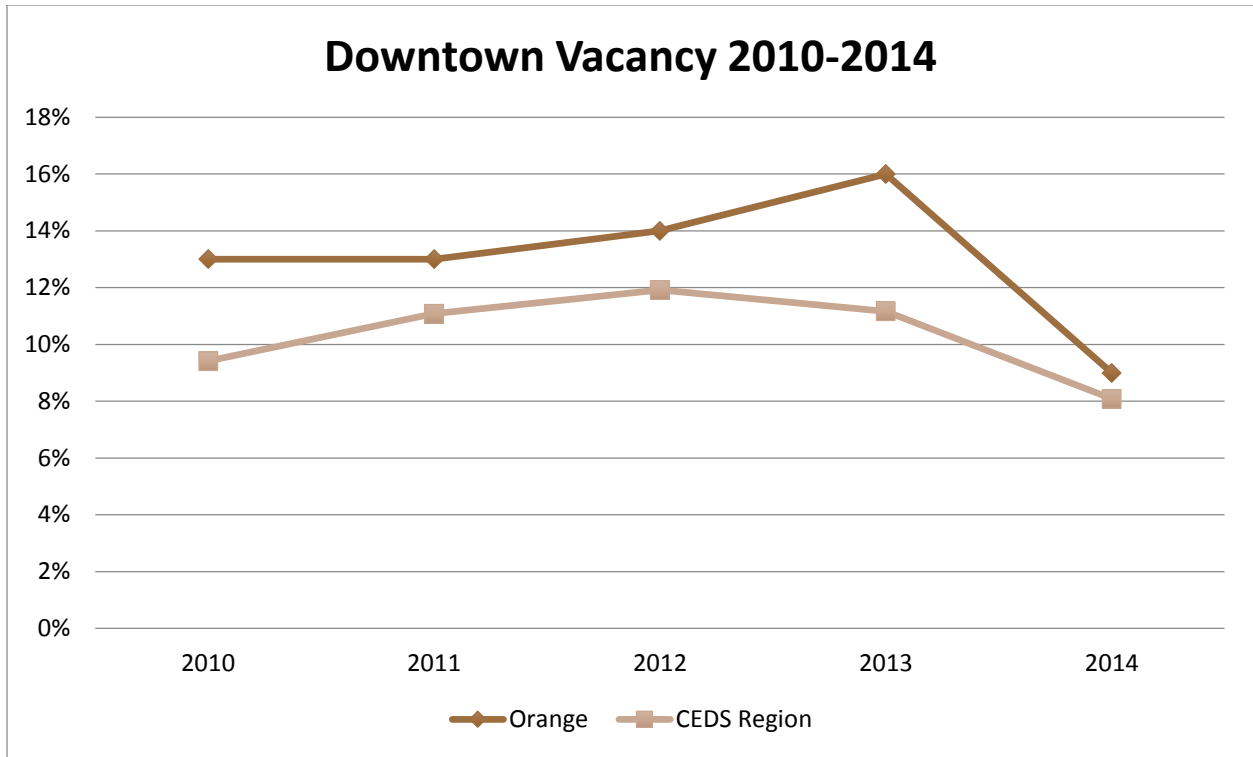


FIGURE 8: DOWNTOWN VACANCY 2010-2014

Downtown commercial vacancy rates are much higher than both the County and Community Economic Development Strategy region averages. However this percentage has decreased from a high of 16% in 2013 to 9% in 2014¹⁸. This recent decline is attributed, in part, to the establishment of two new local businesses, Trailhead Outdoor Shop and Quabbin Harvest, a community food co-op. The overall lack of pedestrian traffic and business activity heavily impacts residents' less than satisfactory views of downtown and decreases marketability of local business service and products to outside visitors.

¹⁸ FRCOG. *Greater Franklin County 2014 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Annual Report*. 2014.

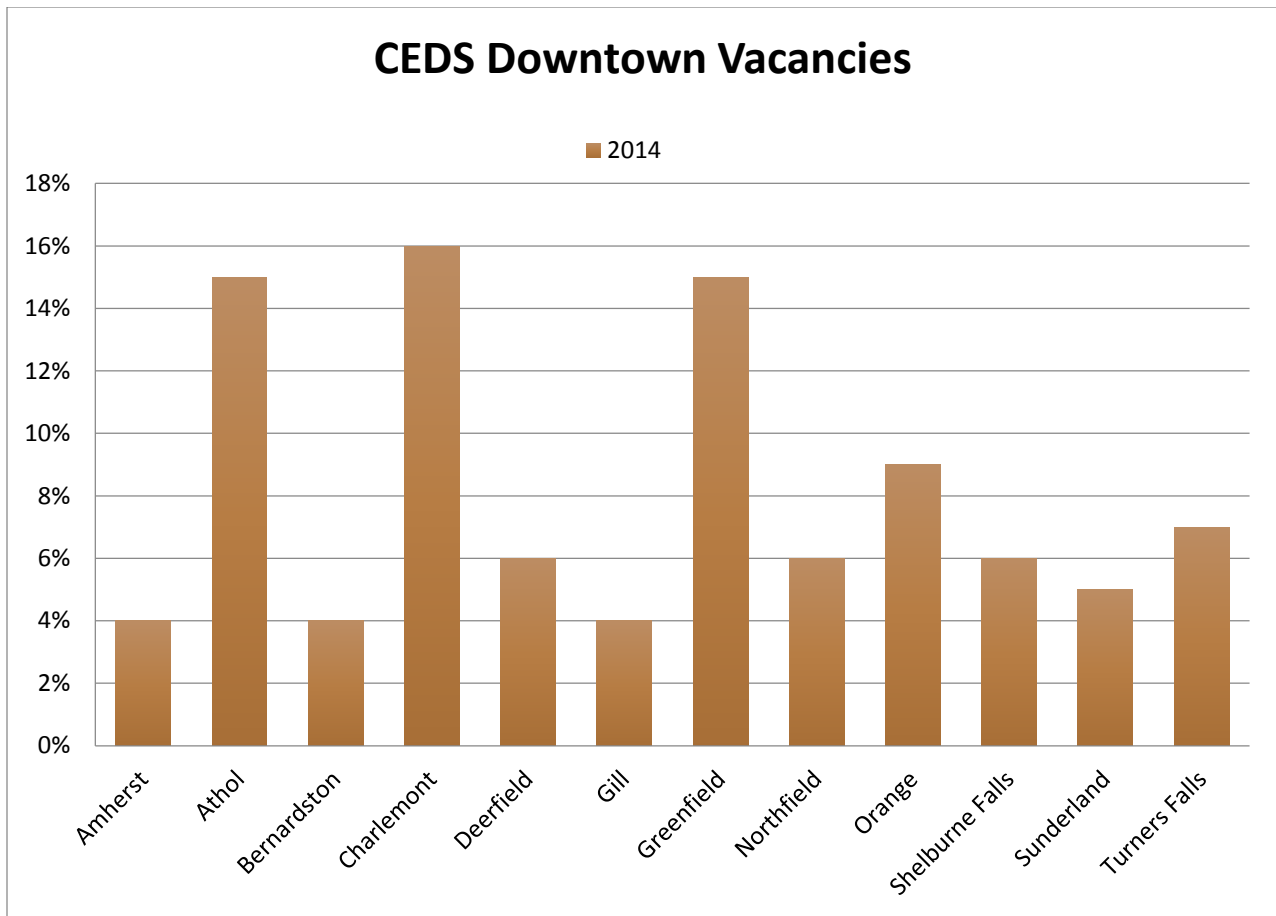


FIGURE 9: CEDS DOWNTOWN VACANCIES

According to a study conducted by K. Levitch and Associates, Orange ranked 4th in highest center vacancy rates in the CEDS municipalities' sample. At 9%, Orange's downtown vacancy rate is well above average frictional vacancy rates, which are usually under 5-6%¹⁹. Considering Orange's history of relatively volatile downtown vacancy rates (16% in 2013), a stabilizing element in the form of a central attraction is needed.

¹⁹ FRCOG. *Greater Franklin County 2014 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Annual Report*. 2014. P. 75

Education

A high school diploma represents the highest level of educational attainment for the majority of Orange residents²⁰. This is indicative of the lack of nearby educational opportunities and the costs of transportation. The number of individuals who have obtained a bachelor degree in Orange lags behind state rates and residents with graduate degrees within the town of Orange are extremely low (see Figure 12). An educational arts institution offering certificates and other training programs would be beneficial to the moderate educational attainment rates of Orange. This is due to the fact that arts related industries are growing in greater Franklin County, offering job and entrepreneurship opportunities to those with varying degrees of experience.

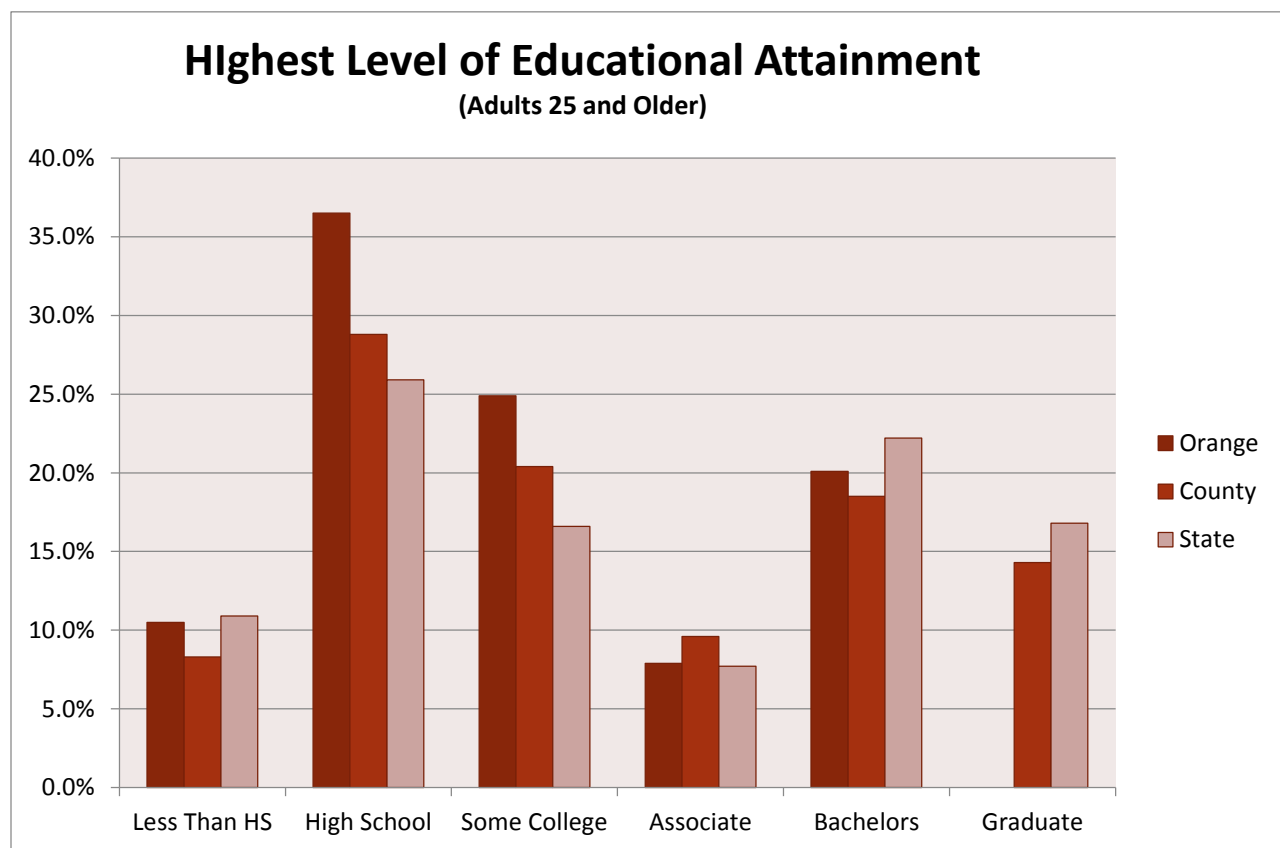


FIGURE 10: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (ADULTS 25 AND OVER)

²⁰ US Census ACS 2008-2012

Local Arts Industry

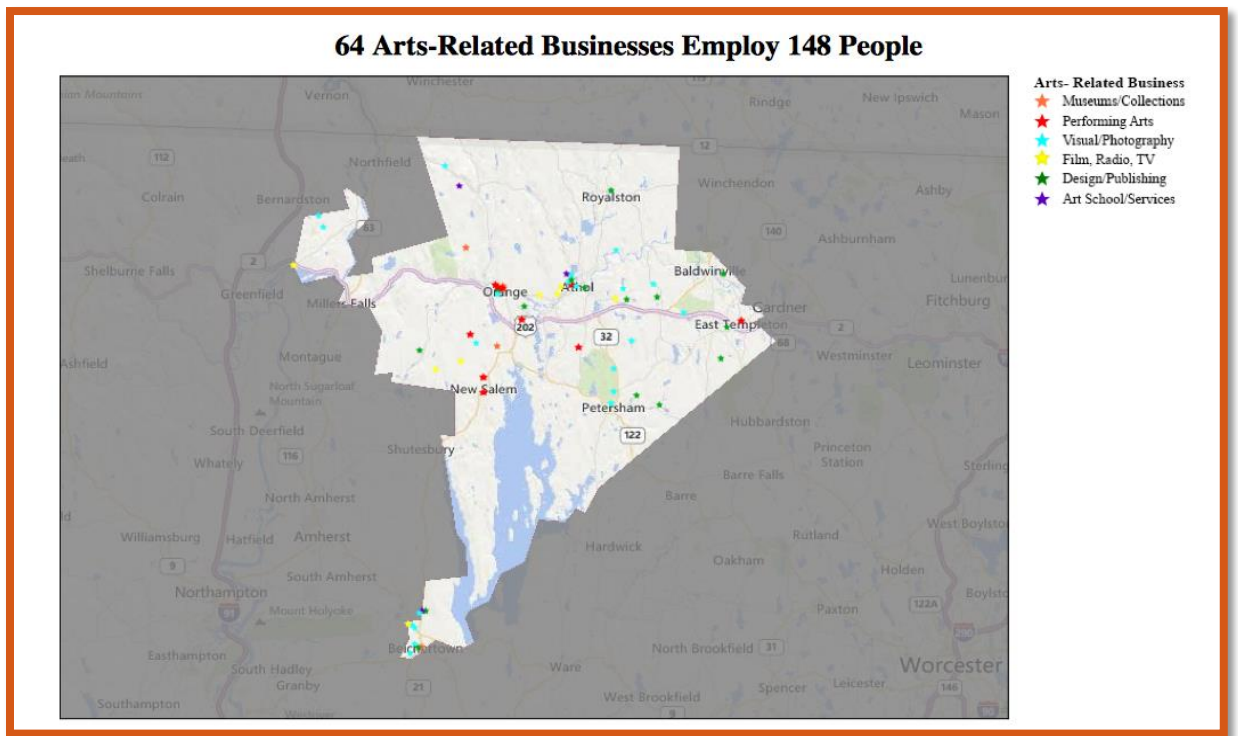


FIGURE 13: MAP OF ARTS-RELATED BUSINESSES – SECOND FRANKLIN CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

As of 2015, there are the 64 arts related businesses located in the 2nd Franklin District of Massachusetts, which comprises the 9 townships located in the North Quabbin as well as Gill, MA. Encompassing 3.6% of total businesses in the District, the arts and entertainment industry employ 146 people or 1.3% of the workforce²¹. The study conducted by Americans for the Arts, *Creative Industries: Business and Employment in the Arts* samples only those businesses registered with Dun and Bradstreet, a commercial data generator, and therefore estimates are conservative.

²¹ Americans for the Arts. *Creative Industries: Business & Employment in the Arts*. 2015

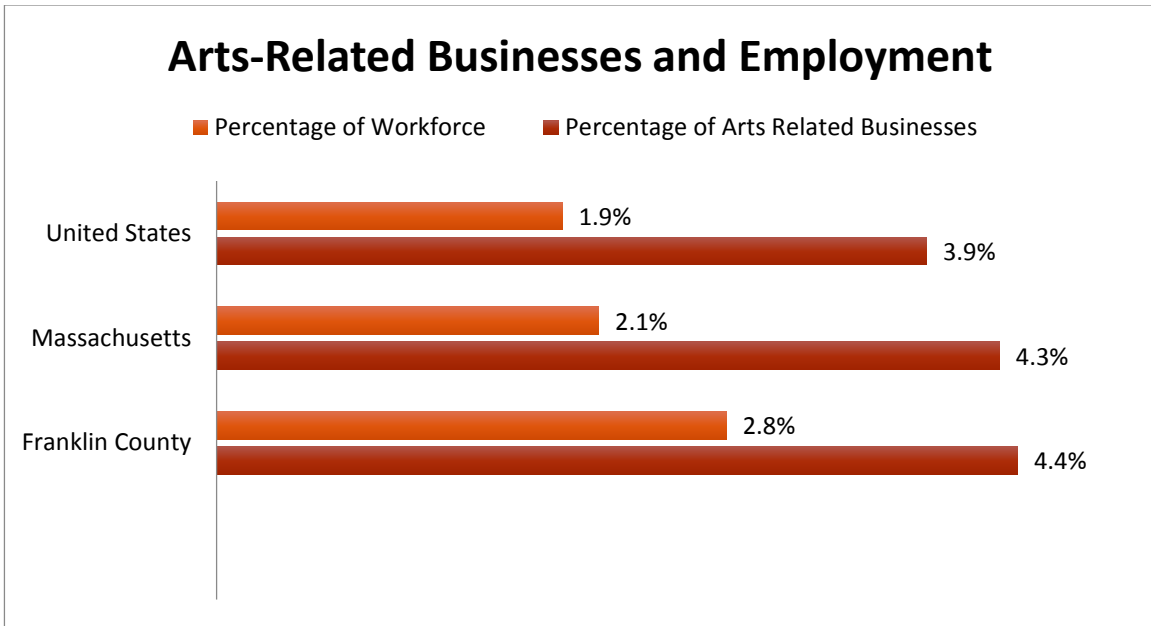


FIGURE 14: ARTS INDUSTRY DATA

Franklin County outcompetes state and national averages in number of arts-related businesses and percentage of employment. The city of Greenfield and Shelburne Falls have made tremendous strides in embracing creative assets and continue to be the art hubs of the County. In 2012, Shelburne Falls was designated a state sponsored Cultural District and received the Creative Community Award from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Greenfield’s Turners Falls has seen an upsurge in arts activity since 2000 with the renovations made to Colle Opera House and recent expansions of the Hallmark Institute of Photography located in the industrial park.

Art and creative spaces are flourishing in the Greenfield area. In 2009, ThresHold, an arts cooperative, purchased the vacant Railroad Salvage Annex in Turner Falls and hopes to competitively lease space to artists and light industry entrepreneurs. Other creative economy developments along Avenue A and 3rd Street provide linkages for creative spaces like ThreshHold. Loot and FunkShun strengthen local arts capacity, offering artists and makers with necessary crafts and supplies. Much like Orange, commercial space in Turners Falls remains relatively inexpensive and ripe for outside investment. Fairs like the Green River Festival in Turners Falls continue to be a vital facet of marketing the unique assets the area has to offer.

North Quabbin’s Garlic and Arts Festival has yet to be effectively integrated with the local craftspeople of Orange, thus diminishing its local impact.



FIGURE 15: FUNKSHUN. PHOTO COURTESY: WHISPERING PINES FARM



FIGURE 16: LOOT SUPPLIES. PHOTO COURTESY: MASS LIVE



CURRENT THRESHOLD SITE. PHOTO COURTESY: THRESHOLD COOPERATIVE

Context and Background

School Model

The model proposed is based on revitalization strategies and case studies from throughout New England. The intention is to make downtown Orange an educational arts destination, attracting locals and out of town visitors to support the central business district. Our model framework focuses on Orange's legacy of manufacturing, emphasizing metalwork and sculpture curriculums. Offering an array of classes and workshops, the school can expand into related arts studies, advanced certificates and job training. With an arts school as the catalyst, rentable space within the facility is to be offered to business startups and artists.

By connecting the school with artistic festivals such as the yearly Garlic and Arts festival held in Orange, the downtown commercial district will be able to market its growing arts assets to the region and beyond. A well-established educational arts institution in Orange forms linkages with surrounding related institutions, spurring business growth in tourism and arts-linked enterprises, ultimately becoming a part of a healthy arts cluster in greater Franklin County

Study Area

Downtown Orange is a classic representation of a New England mill town center. Victorian and Italianate architecture dominate the buildings of the central business district and scenic Connecticut River tributary, the Millers River flows west through the middle of downtown. The area is walkable and parking meets current demands. There are a variety of small shops in Orange center, including two pizza restaurants, a computer repair business, an outdoor recreation supply store, and food co-op, which was established in 2014. The recently renovated Riverfront Park and a local boathouse abut the Millers River, offering a plentitude of options for seasonal recreation.



FIGURE 11: DOWNTOWN ORANGE, STREET VIEW - EAST MAIN STREET



FIGURE 12: DOWNTOWN ORANGE, STREET VIEW - SOUTH MAIN STREET

Downtown is an official Community Area Revitalization District (CARD) for Slum and Blight and qualifies for a number of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). The federal CDBG Program is designed to help communities fund a variety of development needs, including affordable housing, job creation, and social services. Funds from the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) are apportioned directly to entitlement cities (central cities of Metropolitan Statistical Areas, cities with at least a population of 50,000, and urban counties of 200,000 people or more).

States allocate CDBG funds for non-entitlement communities like Orange. The program is highly competitive, though Orange has secured such funds in the past. Community need is based on a point system taken from a variety of demographic factors defined by HUD. Local Orange CDBG funded projects include recent signage and façade improvements, the creation of the boathouse, and sewer replacements.

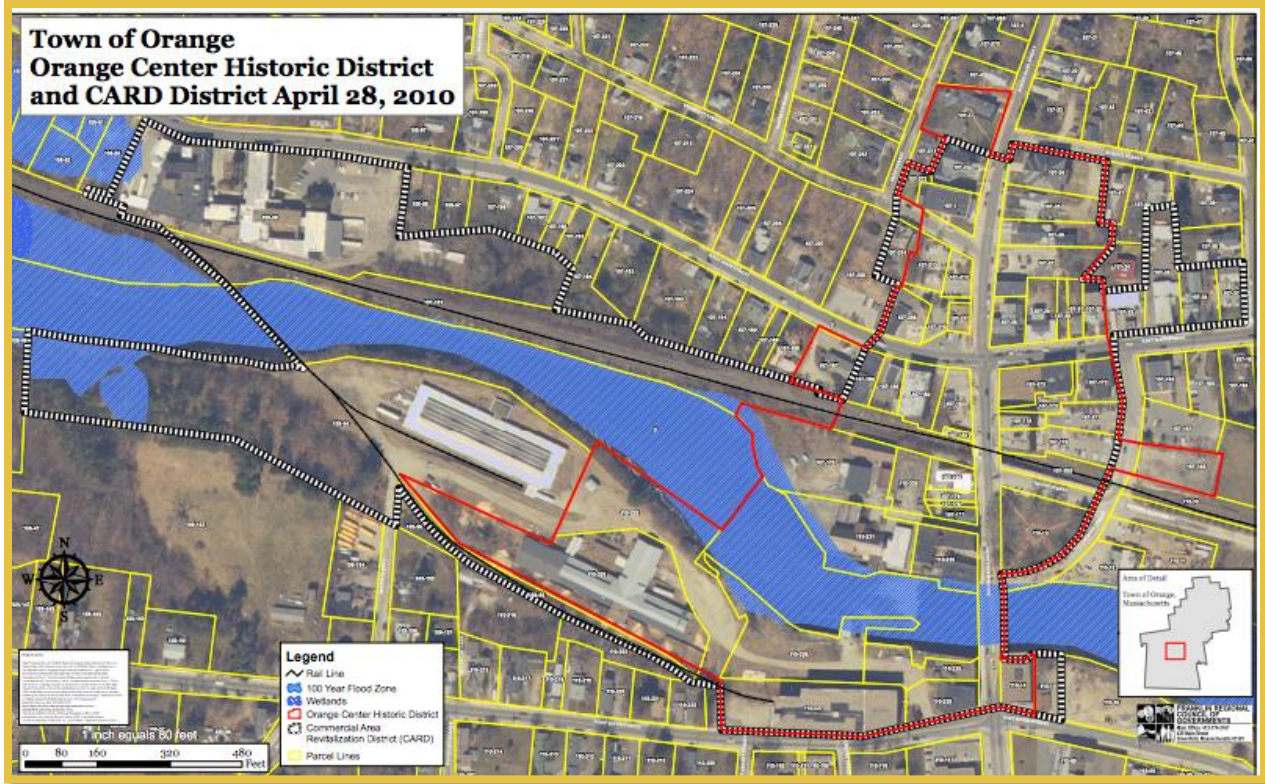


FIGURE 13: COMMUNITY AREA REVITALIZATION DISTRICT MAP

Geographic Context

Situated along Route 2, which leads from Boston to New York State, Orange is 76 miles from the Massachusetts capital. The entire North Quabbin region is quite remote, located roughly 24 miles from the five colleges of the Pioneer Valley and nearly 48 miles from Worcester. The center of Orange is less than 60 miles away from the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art in North Adams and within 19 miles of Greenfield and the thriving arts scene of Turners Falls.

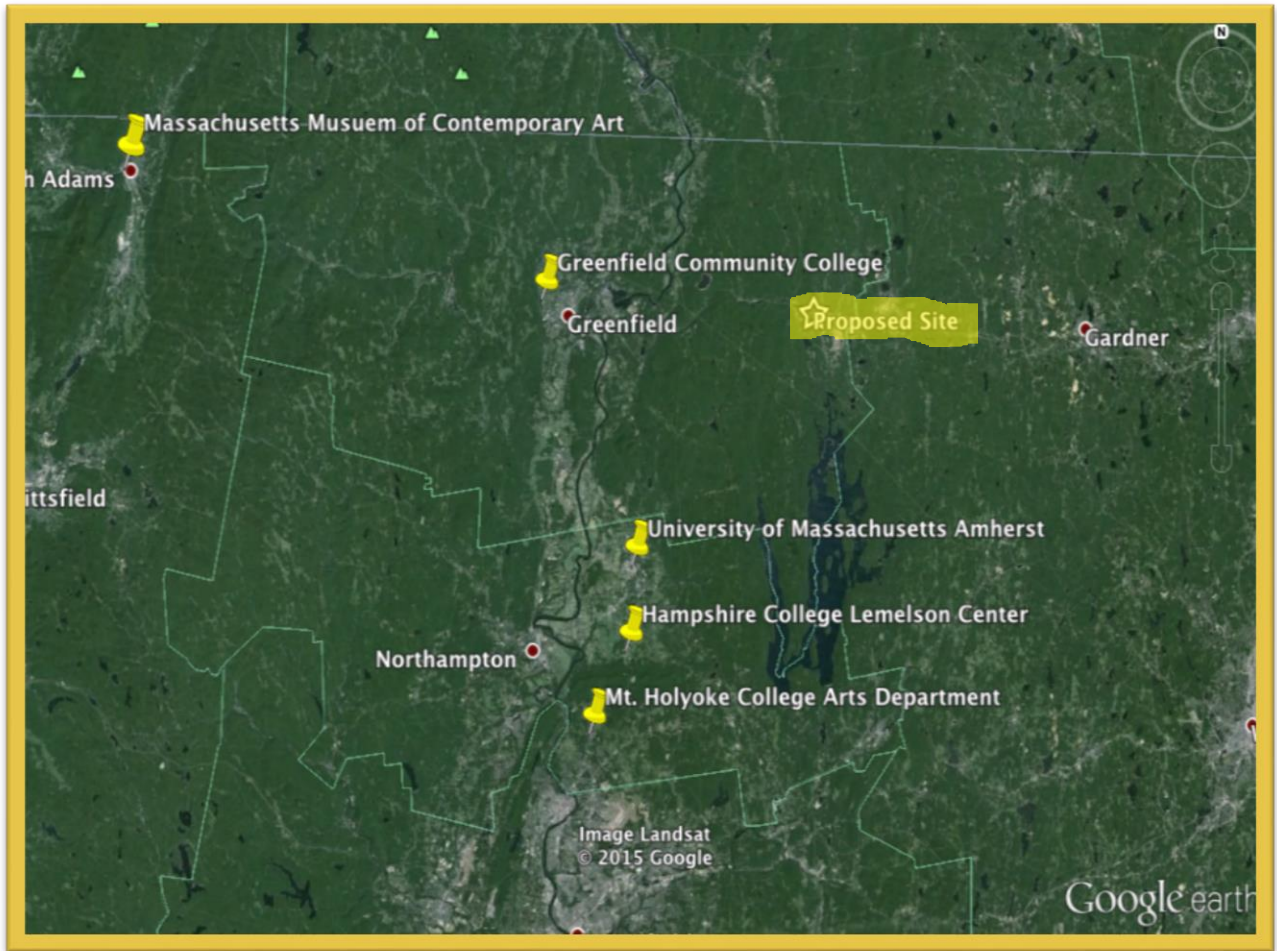


FIGURE 14: SCULPTURE PROGRAMS WITHIN 60 MILES

Based on our analysis of vacant and underutilized properties throughout the town of Orange, storage facilities owned by Erving Paper and Pete’s Tire Barns located along West River Street and Roche Avenue aligned most appropriately with our goals for a sculpture arts school in downtown Orange.

Proposed Site



FIGURE 15: POTENTIAL SITE



FIGURE 16: ILLUSTRATION OF PROPOSED SITE WITH DEVELOPMENTS

²² Illustration Credit: Kevin Kennedy, Town of Orange

The two properties abut one another and the Millers River and are a short walk from downtown businesses. The central business district encompasses them. They are 0.2 miles from a Route 2 onramp and less than 4 miles from Orange Municipal Airport.

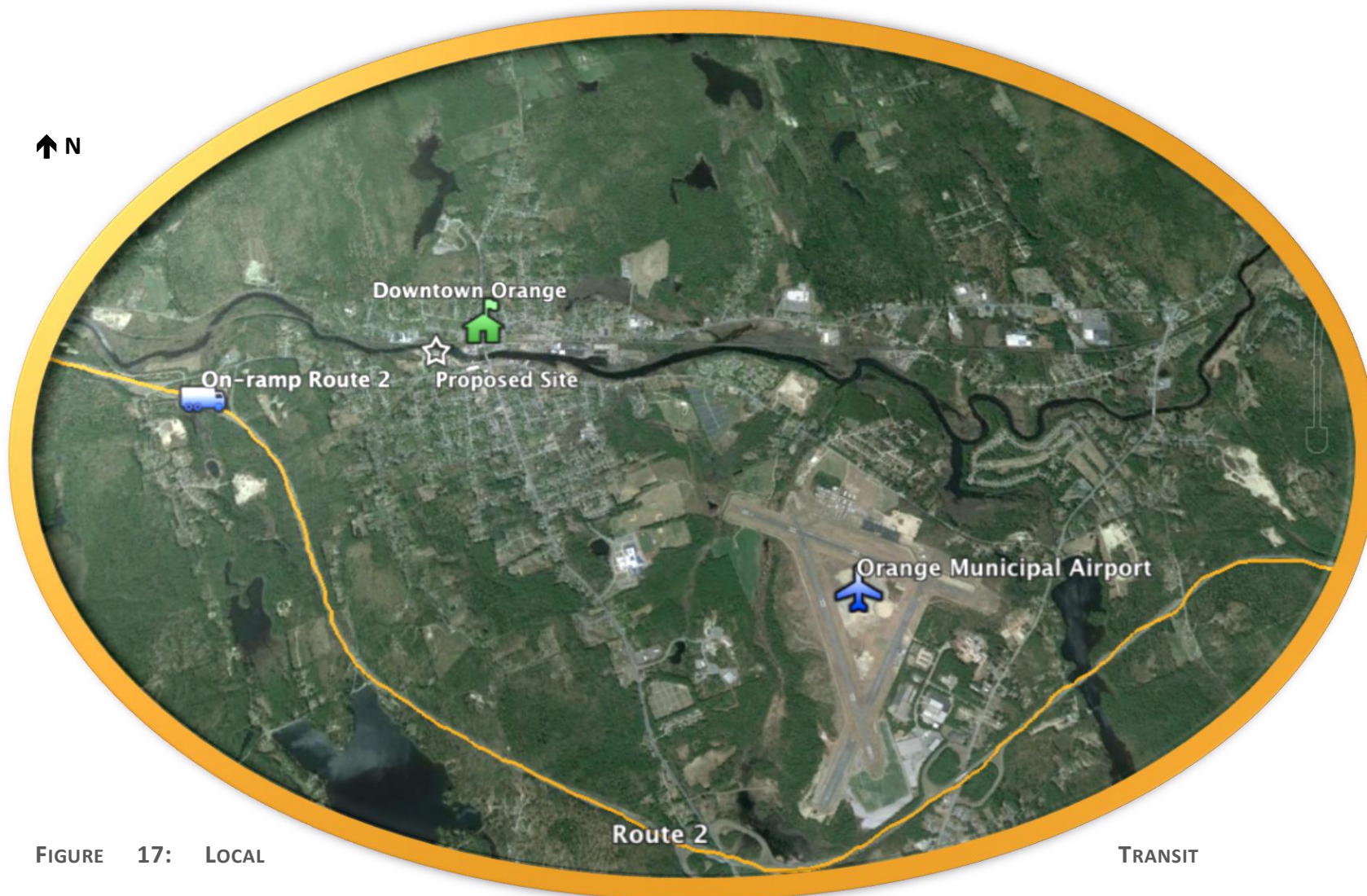


FIGURE 17: LOCAL

TRANSIT

Located at 60 Roche Avenue, this property is owned by Erving Paper, a locally owned paper and pulp products manufacturer, headquartered just to the west of Orange in Erving, MA. The total size of the property is roughly 2.2 acres. The physical building was constructed in 1918 and is considered in very poor condition. Today it functions primarily as a storage area for excess product of the Erving Paper Company. The site has running water, town sewer, and oil heating.

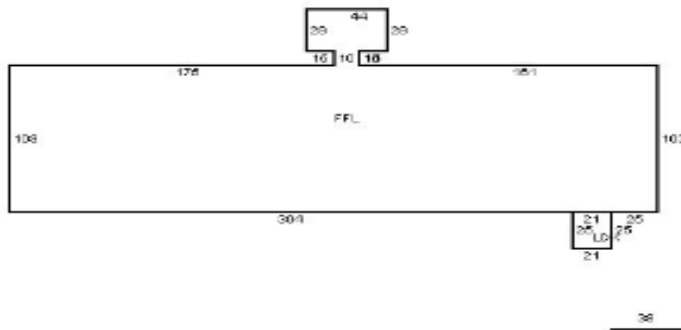


FIGURE 18: BUILDING SKETCH - ERVING PAPER

At 70 West River Street, Tire Barns Realty Trust, a subsidiary of Pete’s Tire Barns leases part of its facility to Rodney Hunt. The building was constructed in 1883 and is in significant disrepair. However it does have running water and town sewer. The property is comprised of 1.7 acres. The facility has a significant amount of vacant space and is highly underutilized.

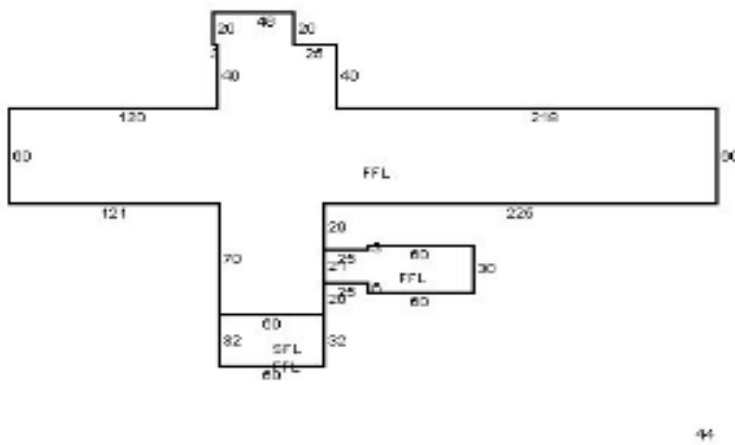


FIGURE 19: BUILDING SKETCH - TIRE BARNS REALTY TRUST

Bike Path

In 2000, Orange and Athol took preliminary steps in creating conceptual plans for a bike/walking path along the Millers River. In 2014, State Representative Denise Andrews was able to secure \$2 million in the Massachusetts Transportation Bond Bill for “the purchase, planning, design and construction of a scenic pedestrian river walk and bicycle pathway from South Main Street in the town of Athol to West River Street in the town of Orange”²³. The bike path is designed to terminate directly next the Proposed Sites of 70 West River Street and 60 Roche Avenue. This presents a major opportunity for collaboration between the redevelopment of these sites and the construction of the bike path. A Project Needs Form has been submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation and is likely to be reviewed by the end of 2015.



FIGURE 20: PROPOSED BIKE PATH AND CONTOUR MAP - 60 ROCHE AVE REDEVELOPMENT

²³ Franklin Regional Council of Governments. Livability: Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities. (Ch.10, p. 7)

Current Context: Moving Past the Factory

In March of 2012, Rodney Hunt-Fontaine, a subsidiary of Germany-based VAG: Valve and Gate Group entered into a tax agreement with the Town of Orange, Massachusetts. Rodney Hunt, a manufacturer of water control systems spanning from hydropower dams to irrigation valves, has called Orange home for over 172 years going back to its founding in 1872. Since 2012, the company has received millions in property tax breaks, expected to last until 2017²⁴. The



FIGURE 21: RODNEY HUNT WORKER.

Special Tax Agreement that Rodney Hunt and Orange agreed upon required that 6 million of the funds saved from the deal is reinvested in equipment and site improvements, as well as to create 60 new jobs at the factory²⁵. The company has reinvested a significant portion, 5 million, back into the Orange physical plant, but has failed to uphold the promise of creating new employment opportunities for the North Quabbin town.

In a meeting at the Massachusetts Office of Business Development in Boston, MA in November 2014, representatives of Rodney Hunt reported to Orange and Massachusetts business officials, that they

would be closing the foundry division of the Orange factory, slashing 50-60 jobs over a future 90 day period²⁶. This has come as a shock to employees and residents of the local area.

²⁴ Carrol, Tracey. "Rodney Hunt shedding jobs: Company told state in August that it closed foundry". *The Recorder*, November 2014.

²⁵ Franklin Regional Council of Governments, et al. *Greater Franklin 2014 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Annual Report*. (p.32). 2014

²⁶ Carrol, Tracey. "Rodney Hunt shedding jobs: Company told state in August that it closed foundry". *The Recorder*, November 2014.

Orange is still recovering from the recent loss of another long time employer: Thomas and Betts. In 2007, the manufacturer of industrial synthetic wire and cable closed its doors, moving operations south to a more business friendly Tennessee. This came at a cost of 150 jobs²⁷. Increasingly there are fewer and fewer manufacturers and related businesses that can utilize the unique skill sets of the area's aging laid off factory workers in Orange and greater Franklin County.

Besides Thomas and Betts and Rodney Hunt, a multitude of local manufacturing, healthcare, and educational services layoffs and closing have also occurred within the County since 2005. The Lake Grove at Maple Valley School in Wendell along with Northfield Mt Herman of Northfield closed from 2005-2009, a loss of 237 jobs together²⁸. Low wage, low skill retail is growing in the North Quabbin area. Walmart came to Orange along East Main Street in 2006, employing roughly 100 people. In 2015, the Market Basket complex was completed in Athol, and is expected to employ more than 150 people.

Target Population/Stakeholders

Target Population

The proposed arts school is expected to benefit the economic well being and aesthetics of downtown, improving marketability of local businesses to locals and visitors. Thus, Orange residents who use the shops and services downtown will gain from new creative businesses and a healthier recreational environment.

The average age of arts events attendees is 44. Orange residents aged 25-64 make up a majority of the population and are expected to be a potential student pool and consumer base

²⁷ Franklin Regional Council of Governments. *Greater Franklin County 2014 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Annual Report*. 2014

²⁸ FRCOG. *Greater Franklin County 2014 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Annual Report*. 2014

for arts related activities. Young, non-local artists and outside investors are also a key target of attraction to the school.

Stakeholders

Local schools and artisans have expressed interest and have offered technical assistance to our proposal and future implementation.

- Hampshire College Lemelson Center and Center for Design
- Hartford School of Art
- University of Massachusetts Arts Extension Service
- Kamil Peters - BRICK Arts Collaborative
- North Quabbin Chamber of Commerce
- Orange Innovation Center

Potential Stakeholders

- Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art
- Mt. Holyoke College Art Department
- ThreshHold Arts Collaborative
- Orange Garlic and Arts Festival
- Greenfield Fostering Arts and Culture Project
- Mount Grace Land Trust
- Franklin County Development Corporation
- Pete's Tire Barns
- Erving Paper

The Creative Arts Economy

An increase in local arts and culture production has been shown to have a positive impact on local economies. When arts and culture production takes place, there is an increase

in purchases, artists and those involved in supporting positions are paid, and that increased activity spurs reinvestment and growth in the local economy. The most immediate impact of arts production to the local economy is in the short-run, however there is a long-term impact resulting from investment in the arts, particularly in rural communities. Recently, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development prepared a report which describes a “new paradigm” that details the power of culture and creativity as a “powerful engine driving economic growth and promoting development in a globalizing world”²⁹. The writers of this report proclaim that culture is the main driver of economic growth.

There has been a great deal of interest in the topic generated over the past decades, in large part due to the influence of Richard Florida and his coauthors. Florida’s research focuses not so much on specific industries or economic sectors specific to arts and culture production as it does to specific occupational categories that he characterizes as being a part of the ‘creative class’. Florida’s work has been interpreted as largely supporting the notion that those communities which are culturally robust, active, and diverse, and that provide a good environment for artistic activity will be economically successful. Fortunately, Massachusetts, and the western portion of the state in particular are particularly robust in artistic endeavors. The following case studies demonstrate the power of the creative economy in Massachusetts.

Case Study 1: Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, North Adams, MA

Mission Statement

“MASS MoCA seeks to catalyze and support the creation of new art, expose our visitors to bold visual and performing art in all stages of production, and re-invigorate the life of a region in socioeconomic need.”

²⁹ UNCTAD, *Creative Economy Report 2008* (Geneva, Switzerland: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2008).

Introduction

The Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art is a non-profit arts and community development organization located in the heart of North Adams, MA. Though it is labelled a “museum”, Mass MoCA contrasts from traditional art gallery models in that it blends visual, performing, and educational arts with commercial development. The institution is now world renowned for its impressive events and a vast array of galleries. Offering over 10,000 square feet of lease space to tenants within and outside the arts industry, Mass MoCA is both a tourist destination and local economic engine. The Mass MoCA model presents a unique opportunity for rural communities to foster recreational choice, increase outside investment, and revitalize downtowns.

Overview

During the mid 1980s, North Adams unemployment rate fluctuated at 25 to 30 percent, the highest in the state³⁰. The town was also faced with a variety of social ills such as high teen pregnancy rates and low high school graduation rates³¹.

In 1986, Sprague Electric, major employer and manufacturer of synthetic capacitors for aerospace and other tech industries closed, laying off 581 workers³². The company had called North Adams home for 65 years, moving there from Quincy, MA in 1921³³. The 900,000 sq. ft. complex that had employed 4,000 workers during its heyday in the 1960s, was completely vacant by 1987. Located in the center of town along the Hoosac River, the loss of Sprague contributed heavily to decreasing property values and heightening vacancy rates.

³⁰ Oehler, Kay, et al. *Mill Town, Factory Town, Cultural Economic Engine: North Adams in Context*. 2006

³¹ Ibid

³² Ibid

³³ Ibid



FIGURE 18: SPRAGUE ELECTRIC. PHOTO COURTESY: NICHOLAS WHITMAN

Collaboration among North Adams mayor John Barrett, Williams College's Thomas Krens, site owner: Penn Central Corporation, and hefty support from Governor Dukakis lead to a feasibility study for an impressive arts institution within the Sprague complex. By 1988, the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art received a construction grant of \$35 million from the state in its enabling legislation: Ch. 8 of Acts and Resolves of 1988³⁴

After a massive demolition and hazardous materials cleanup process, new construction began in 1997. By 1999, Mass MoCA had opened and owners had used only 18.6 of 35 million dollar loan, leaving significant funds for future build out and subsequent additions of commercial space.³⁵ Renovations continue to date and as of 2006, Phase 1 and 2 of construction comprised of \$35 million in state funds, \$5.8 million in federal, and over \$15 million in private investment³⁶.

³⁴ Mass Museum of Contemporary Art. *Economic Impact Report*.

³⁵ Mass MoCA. *Economic Impact Report*.

³⁶ Oehler, Kay, et al. *Mill Town, Factory Town, Cultural Economic Engine: North Adams in Context*. 2006



FIGURE 19: MASS MoCA, PHOTO COURTESY OF: MASSACHUSETTS MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Local Impact

The impact of Mass MoCA is recognized as a major contribution to the downtown life of North Adams and the economic stability of the region. Direct net employment gained by most arts establishments is not major. However, it is the large array of induced and indirect economic and social effects on surrounding businesses and real estate that makes development models like Mass MoCA so effective in mill town revitalization.

According to the Center for Creative Development, Mass MoCA created \$14 million in local growth in 2002. Compiling IRS data from 2002, the direct, indirect, and induced effects of Mass MoCA operations and the related-influx of non-local visitors are representative in the \$14 million total. The Center for Creative Development estimates that 79% (based on IRS Form 990) of Mass MoCA visitors reside outside Berkshire County, contributing an extra 94,656 visitors to North Adams and the surrounding local area.



FIGURE 20: THE PORCHES INN: RIVER STREET, NORTH ADAMS, MA. PHOTO COURTESY: HISTORIC HOTELS

After Mass MoCA opened its doors in 1999, developers renovated vacant homes along River Street directly across the Hoosac River from the Museum, adapting the 19th century Victorian homes for a commercial hotel.

The establishment of Mass MoCA has led to an increase in property values surrounding the location. Prior to 1999, downtown property values were negatively impacted by the brownfield site of former Sprague Electric. From 1999 to 2004, properties within a 1,000 meter radius of Mass MoCA had an average increase of over \$11,000 in value (See Figure 21). This has raised rents to sustainable levels, allowing landlords to renovate structures more feasibly and has increased tax revenues for the city significantly³⁷. The average home price surrounding

³⁷ Sheppard, Stephen C. *Culture and Revitalization: The Economic Effects of MASS MoCA on its Community*. 2006.

downtown Orange is \$147,327, significantly lower than the state's average of \$519, 650. The ripple effects of an educational institution similar to Mass MoCa on the Orange real estate market could raise prices, property tax revenues, and improve facades.

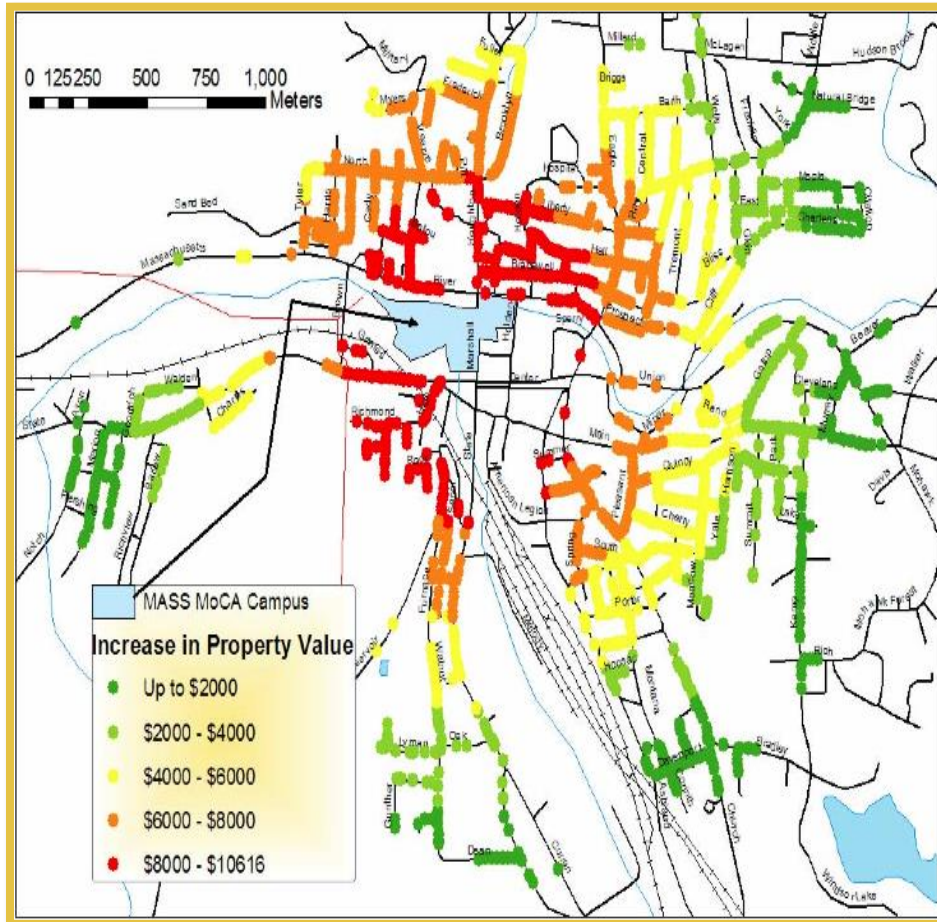


FIGURE 21: MASS MoCA SURROUNDING AREA PROPERTY VALUE INCREASES

Case Study Two: Montserrat College of Art, Beverly, MA: Towards a Cultural District



FIGURE 22: MONTSERRAT COLLEGE, BEVERLY, MA. PHOTO COURTESY: INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION SERVICES

Introduction

Montserrat College of Art is located in downtown Beverly, MA, offering nine studio concentrations to over 380 undergraduate students. The private college began in the late 1960s and continues to be one of the top visual arts schools in the nation.

In 2012, Montserrat College received an Our Town Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts as part of a partnership with the City of Beverly, and Beverly Main Streets, a volunteer business district marketing group. Having raised \$75,000 for a cultural district master plan, the National Endowment for the Arts matched those funds with the Our Town Grant. By September 2013, the master plan was completed: *Creating a Cultural District in Downtown Beverly*. Throughout the process, Montserrat maintained a leading role in the project's creation.

The partnership's application to become a certified cultural district was turned down by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, citing a need for "more information" in March of 2015.

However, the partnership and their continuing work, along with Montserrat’s firm commitment to the revitalization of downtown represent vital buildings blocks for communities like Orange, trying to build off nascent creative assets. The master plan is emblematic of the importance of a heavily invested anchor institution and collaboration in developing cultural capacity.

Background

Beverly is a city of 40, 664 residents located in Essex County on the North Shore of Massachusetts, just under 30 miles from Boston. The city is known its beautiful historic waterfront and downtown, a growing arts community around Montserrat, and summer arts festivals like Beverly Arts Fest. In recent years, the city has experienced moderate downtown vacancy, mostly along Cabot Street in the southern portion of the proposed district³⁸.



FIGURE 23: VACANT PROPERTY, CABOT STREET, BEVERLY, MA

³⁸ Community Partners Consultants. *Creating a Cultural District in Downtown Beverly*. September 2013

What is a Cultural District?

*A cultural district is a specific geographical area in a city or town that has a concentration of cultural facilities, activities, and assets. It is a **walkable**, compact area that is easily identifiable to visitors and residents and serves as a center of cultural, artistic, and economic activity. (Mass Cultural Council)*

In July of 2010, Governor Deval Patrick signed into law M.G.L. c.10 § 58A that directs the Massachusetts Cultural Council to identify growing arts locations as state sponsored Cultural Districts³⁹. According to the law, the Massachusetts Cultural Council is expected to help foster and develop a district in an interested eligible municipality according to its guidelines. Currently there are 27 designated cultural districts in the Commonwealth, including two destinations near greater Franklin County: Pittsfield's Upstreet and Shelburne Falls.

Cultural District Goals

Goals as defined by the statute:

1. Attract artists and cultural enterprises
2. Encourage business and job development
3. Establish the district as a tourist destination
4. Preserve and reuse historic buildings
5. Enhance property values
6. Foster local cultural development

³⁹ Commonwealth of Massachusetts. General Laws. M.G.L c. 10 Section 58A

Beverly Cultural District Master Plan Approach

1. Outreach to key stakeholders, partners and the community
2. Aligning activities of Montserrat College's campus master planning, Beverly Main Street's "Downtown 2020" initiative, and city of Beverly planning with goals of the cultural district.
3. Defining district boundaries and identifying opportunities for place-making such as gateways, wayfinding, public art, landscape design, pedestrian connections and streetscape elements.
4. Launching a national public art/design competition to result in conceptual plans for designs for the district.
5. Creating an inventory of cultural resources in the district and suggesting strategies to engage, connect and market them.
6. Identifying partnerships and opportunities for engagement with regional organizations to expand reach, attract tourists, and leverage cultural assets.
7. Recommending an implementation strategy for creation and management of the District.

(Information retrieved from Mass Cultural Council Website)

Strategies

Montserrat and its partner, Beverly Main Streets has undertaken multiple programs to help beautify and revitalize sections of downtown.

- Storefront Art Project – Montserrat students and community members bring awareness to vacant sites through public art. This effort also helps to better the aesthetics of the streetscape as well as help market vacant buildings.
- Façade and Sign Improvement Program – Beverly Main Streets provides small grants to local businesses to improve sidewalk facades and location entrances. The Town of Orange pursues this strategy, but the Town needs more partners like Beverly's Beverly Main Streets to deepen impact.
- Identified multiple areas for public art installations.

- Montserrat and Beverly Main Streets stage sculpture art competition to bring new works of art to Ellis Square.
 - Montserrat held national public arts competition to create the aesthetic vision for the Masterplan.
- The Town of Orange can seek to create such competitions on a local level as a part of outreach to local artists if it seeks to plan for an eventual Cultural District.

Recommendation - Institutional Catalyst and Arts Space

Reflecting on the above case studies, we recommend the Town of Orange to assemble a partnership to apply for funding (options include, Adams Arts Grant) in order to create a feasibility study on locating a sculpture arts school in the underutilized property currently owned by Pete’s Tire Barns along West River Street. Based on leading roles taken by arts educational institutions like Mass MoCA and Montserrat College of Art in the success of revitalization goals, it is clear these institutions act as catalysts for growth and nuanced planning techniques.

The potential sculpture arts school has great potential considering the growth of the arts industry in the surrounding area.

An Arts School in Orange: Potential

- Established arts institution offering an array of courses and certificates to both serious professionals and visiting tourists seeking recreational workshops.
- Potential for partnership between the arts school, Orange Innovation Center, and the Town of Orange. Artists who receive training at the school could acquire space from OIC or the Town of Orange’s vacant properties for entrepreneurship and studio work (See Case Study 1).
- Art produced by students could be staged publicly in Riverfront Park and throughout downtown to beautify the area (See Case Study 2).

- Student art produced at the school can be incorporated in the Signage and Improvement Program (See Case Study 2).
- The school and Town could partner to create long term Cultural District plans.
- The school and surrounding festival operators could integrate to locate more events in Orange to embrace its sculpture prowess.

Funding

The most applicable form of funding for this type of endeavor is through an Adams Art Grant. The Adams Art Program is an extension of the Massachusetts Cultural Council which has supported creative economy initiatives throughout Massachusetts for over a decade. The goal of the Adams Art Program is to, “support projects which revitalize communities, create jobs, grow creative industries, and increase engagement in cultural activities by Massachusetts residents and visitors”⁴⁰. Since its inception in 2005, the Adams Art Program has invested over \$9.4 million dollars into over 100 projects, many of them in Western Massachusetts. The Adams Art Program supports projects which demonstrate systemic economic development goals that are uniquely tailored to a particular community, and which are innovative. A sculpture arts school in Orange meets all of these requirements and will be a top contender to receiving funding.

Conclusion

Based upon the existing conditions in the Town of Orange and the success of the creative arts economy in neighboring communities in Western Massachusetts, it is clear that a sculpture arts school situated in the proposed site in downtown Orange will be an economic boon for years to come and has the potential to create economic spillover effects in the surrounding community. Moving forward, Orange must build a coalition amongst the various stakeholders outlined within

⁴⁰ <http://www.massculturalcouncil.org/programs/adamsarts.asp>

this report and begin implementing the steps provided herein. In order for Orange to successfully pivot from post-industrial economy characterized by stagnation towards a more robust, diverse, and sustainable economy, arts must be a part of the equation. Sculpture arts present a unique opportunity to brand the Town of Orange as a destination and build upon its other strong assets such as recreation and historical charm. Orange has great potential, uniqueness, specialty and cachet; however the future of Orange ultimately rests in its ability to leverage these assets through strong leadership in order to transform itself into a mecca for the arts.