CREATIVE ZONE SNAPSHOT

About the Zone
- Population: 84,183
- Towns: 40
- Creative sector jobs: 5,364 (0.06 per capita)
- Employment growth: 14% of all jobs (2010-2018)

Creative Sector
- Employment: 2,644 other workers in creative industries
- Creative workers: 1,427 in creative industries
- Largest segment of creative jobs: Design (26%)
- Strongest growth: Specialty Foods (36%), Film & Media (32%), Performing Arts (30%)

Creative Jobs
- Worker count: 84,183
- Sector jobs: 4,005
- Creative sector jobs: 5,364 (0.06 per capita)
- Creative employment growth: 10.8%
- Creative employment growth rate: 14%

Creative Segments
- Highest creative sector employment statewide, as % of all jobs
- Highest growth rate in creative employment statewide
- Zone with strongest growth in three segments (Specialty Foods—36%, Film & Media—32%, Performing Arts—30%)

CREATIVE ZONE IN DEPTH

Claims to Fame
- #1 creative jobs in region
- #1 creative job growth
- #1 growth in foods, film, & performing arts

Segment Size & Growth
- Design: 16% growth
- Visual Arts & Crafts: -5% growth
- Literary Arts: -2% growth
- Film & Media: 11% growth
- Performing Arts: 15% growth
- Culture & Heritage: 6% growth
- Specialty Foods: 17% growth

Employment Types
- Design: 49% employed, 17% self-employed, 34% extended proprietors
- Visual Arts & Crafts: 28% employed, 12% self-employed, 60% extended proprietors
- Literary Arts: 27% employed, 35% self-employed, 58% extended proprietors
- Film & Media: 50% employed, 9% self-employed, 32% extended proprietors
- Performing Arts: 27% employed, 35% self-employed, 57% extended proprietors
- Culture & Heritage: 90% employed, 9% self-employed, 9% extended proprietors
- Specialty Foods: 72% employed, 6% self-employed, 23% extended proprietors
- TOTAL: 48% employed, 12% self-employed, 40% extended proprietors
CREATIVE ZONE ASSESSMENT

Strengths
• Artisanal culture and enterprises, including high concentration of microbusinesses
• Strong knowledge economy and large number of higher education institutions, libraries, hospitals, and local media
• Strong sense of place, downtowns, authenticity, and small town character in towns and micro-regions
• Creative sector planning integrated with strong regional planning
• Highest concentration of Performing Arts jobs in any zone (2010-2018)
• Significant growth in Film & Media jobs (second only to Chittenden County)
• Accessible location and transportation networks, including proximity to NH
• Strong broadband development, schools, and social services
• Multiple designated Opportunity Zones
• Strong agricultural and industrial history
• Strong and collaborative local food and outdoor recreation sectors
• Strong performing and visual arts centers in several communities

Challenges
• Decline in Visual Arts & Fine Crafts and Literary Arts jobs (2010-2018)
• Many small towns with relatively low municipal capacity and high dependence on volunteers
• Rural and mountainous region makes travel within zone challenging and leaves communities isolated
• Large region, and lack of unified regional identity
• Upper Valley region crosses state lines, making planning and coordination challenging
• Aging population (older than much of state)
• Proximity to tax-free NH challenges retail competitiveness

Needs
• Developing a "creative identity" for the region
• Collaborative work/maker spaces (and repurposing vacant/existing buildings)
• Business development and marketing training
• Funding and collaborative systems to support small towns, venues and organizations (to reach economies of scale and reduce reliance on volunteers)
• Inter-state development of advanced manufacturing
• More networking events and activities

Plans, Programs & Studies
• Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Analysis (2020)
• Artists, Artisans, and Entrepreneurs: Creative Economy of the East Central Vermont Region (2016)
• East Central Vermont Economic Development District (ECVEDD) 2020-2025 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
• Randolph Area Creative Communities Program (2007)
• Creative Communities Programs Final Report and Action Plan, Windsor, VT (2006)

CREATIVE ZONE FUTURE

Key Support Organizations
• Center for Cartoon Studies
• Dartmouth College (NH)
• Green Mountain Economic Development Corporation
• Mount Ascutney Regional Commission
• Springfield Regional Development Corporation
• Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission
• Vermont Law School

Key Support Organizations (cont.)
• Vermont Technical College
• Vital Communities

Current Priorities (From 3CVT Work Plan)
• Regional marketing plan
• Business development trainings and workshops
• Zoom networking events
• Coordination with other sectors (farm/food, health/wellness, education)

Key Activities
Communication channels: website, Listserv and Facebook group

Events: 2017-2019 "Mashup" networking events

Programs: 2021 Creative Sector Recovery Program (US Economic Development Admin. grant)