Southern Vermont
Bennington and Windham Counties

CREATIVE ZONE SNAPSHOT

About the Zone

Creative Sector

Creative Jobs

Creative Segments

CREATIVE ZONE IN DEPTH

Claims to Fame

Segment Size & Growth

Employment Types

Highest percentage of independent creative workers (self-employed and extended proprietorships)—56%

Highest percentage of Visual Arts & Fine Crafts (24%), Literary Arts (11%), and Culture & Heritage (tie at 6%) jobs; only zone where Design is not the top segment

Second highest growth in Culture & Heritage (12%)

#1

#1

#2

Design
Visual Arts & Crafts
Literary Arts
Film & Media
Performing Arts
Culture & Heritage
Specialty Foods
TOTAL

% of Creative Sector Jobs

% Growth (2010-2018)

% Employed

% Self-Employed

% Extended Proprietors

#1

#1

#2

Brattleboro Farmers’ Market. Photo: VTrans, Flickr Creative Commons

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CREATIVE ZONE ASSESSMENT

Strengths
• Strong collaborative spaces, culture and environment
• Strong creative education, theater and music organizations
• Location and access to markets and travelers in NY, MA and CT
• Large number and size of well-established arts and culture businesses and institutions
• Strong creative community development and placemaking
• High concentration of performing arts venues, activities and jobs
• Strong community assets and institutions
• Culture and history of appreciation for the arts and creativity
• Strong tourist and outdoor recreation economies and festivals
• Major community development and revitalization initiatives in Brattleboro and Bennington
• Extensive and free MOOVER transportation network

Challenges
• Slowest rate of growth in the creative economy of all zones (2010-2018)
• Visual Arts & Fine Crafts segment lost about 10% of jobs and Literary Arts 16% of jobs
• Lower % of Design jobs than other zones (Design can be large economic /employment force)
• Region can feel isolated from the rest of Vermont
• Multiple recent college closures: Marlboro College, Green Mountain College, and Southern Vermont College
• Distinct regional identities (Windham County orients toward Connecticut River and NH; Bennington County orients toward NY and MA)
• More VCN zone participation in Windham County than Bennington County

Needs
• Access to funding, social media, business development and marketing assistance
• Affordable housing, living, health care and livable wages
• Creative economy data to share with legislators and local officials
• More local creative sector advocacy and planning (local arts teams or committees)
• More networking, sharing and collaboration opportunities and events
• Increased zone participation from Bennington County

Plans, Programs & Studies
• Bennington County Cultural Plan (2019)
• Creative Communities Programs Final Report and Action Plan, Manchester, VT (2007)

CREATIVE ZONE FUTURE

Key Support Organizations
• Arts Council of Windham County
• Bennington College
• Bennington County Industrial Corporation
• Bennington County Regional Commission
• Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation
• Community College of Vermont
• Landmark College
• Windham Regional Commission

Current Priorities
From CreateVT ZoneJam notes
• Regular Zoom networking and meeting opportunities (weekly or monthly)

Key Activities
Communication channels:
Email newsletter
Events: Town Hall Forums

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