

TWIN CITIES CULTURAL PLAN

SACO AND BIDDEFORD, MAINE



Prepared By

TWIN CITIES CULTURAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

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INTRODUCTION

The cities of Saco and Biddeford, Maine, have long been known as the Twin Cities of the Saco River. These two cities sit at the mouth of the 140-mile long Saco River, one of Northern New England's most important waterways, and their histories are intertwined with that of the river.

The geography of the Twin Cities long ago determined their destinies as major centers of manufacturing and industry. Their downtowns sit at the head of the tidal river, straddling mighty waterfalls. In the 18th Century, the village of Pepperellborough, which later became Saco, thrived as a center of shipbuilding, lumbering and agricultural trade.

In the 19th Century the waterfalls of the Saco River powered the transformation of Saco and Biddeford into a major textile mill center. Mills were built first on Factory Island in Saco and then on the Biddeford side of the river. At their peak, the textile mills employed more than 9,000 people.

The explosion of industry in Saco and Biddeford necessitated the recruitment of immigrant labor, the majority of which came from Quebec. Many other foreigners flocked to Biddeford as well, including: Greeks; Italians; Irish; Russian, Polish and Lithuanian Jews; and a small population of Albanian Muslims. In the early 1900s, these Albanians established what is thought to be the first mosque in the United States—in the mill complex's counting house.

By the mid-1900s, the mills of Saco and Biddeford had begun to decline, following the national trend of New England manufacturing jobs shifting to southern states and, later,

overseas. Today, only one textile milling operation remains in the historic mill area, employing about 300 persons.

Though the shipbuilding, lumbering and textile industries are all but gone from Saco and Biddeford, their legacies still influence the Twin Cities' arts and cultural activities. Elegant historic homes were built by lumber barons, sea captains and mill managers. The cities' respective City Halls and libraries are magnificent relics of their golden ages, as are the Saco Museum and the City Theater, the two leading cultural institutions in the area. The beautiful historic school buildings of both cities are also still actively part of local culture, as Saco's Thornton Academy continues as a high school and the old Biddeford High School is now a heavily-used community center. Millworkers trained in precision manufacturing and metalworking skills went on to other commercial and artistic endeavors.

The mill buildings themselves are part of the revitalization of the Twin Cities. Though many of them have been razed over time, owners of several of the surviving buildings have taken advantage of their ample spaces and historic character to fill them up with a new generation of manufacturers: woodworkers, sculptors and other artisans. A 2004 study found that more than 40 such individuals or businesses were using spaces in three of Biddeford's mill buildings.

For fairly small cities, Saco and Biddeford possess a wealth of cultural resources, many of which date from the textile boom era. Today, the cities are again growing, this time with their growth driven by the service economy and by their proximity to Portland, Portsmouth and Boston via Interstate 95. Though the Twin Cities' economy has changed, arts and culture remain integral aspects of the community's life.

ABOUT THE CULTURAL PLAN

As the cities of Saco and Biddeford move into the 21st Century, community leaders are again looking toward their cultural resources. In 2004, a consortium of local arts and civic entities led by the Dyer Library/Saco Museum obtained a Discovery Research grant from the Maine Arts Commission. The stated purpose of the grant was “to identify the cultural needs of the two cities and to plan how to provide for them.”

This planning effort began with a dialogue between the City of Saco and the Dyer Library/Saco Museum. From these discussions, both parties agreed that the city needed to better organize its arts and cultural resources. The Maine Arts Commission recommended to these organizations that a cultural planning effort encompassing both Saco and Biddeford would have greater impacts on the larger community. The Saco-based institutions then approached the City of Biddeford, the McArthur Library and City Theater Associates and gained their enthusiastic support for the effort.

A Discovery Research Steering Committee was formed in February 2004 and immediately began discussing and inventorying arts and cultural resources in Saco and Biddeford. The committee produced some arts and cultural inventory information and convened two public forums on cultural issues, one in Saco and one in Biddeford. The committee also secured the services of folklorist Kathleen Mundell to write histories and profiles of three of the area’s ethnic communities (French-Canadian, Greek and Jewish) as well a cultural history of farming and fishing in the area.

Due to staffing changes at both the City of Saco and the Dyer Library/Saco Museum, the Discovery Research effort slowed.

However, the effort was re-energized in August 2005 when the group was brought back as the Twin Cities Cultural Planning Committee. This committee oversaw the production of this plan. Its membership includes:

- Tammy Ackerman, North Forty Creative
- Lynn Bivens, Assistant Director, McArthur Library
- John Bubier, City Manager, City of Biddeford
- Priscille Gagnon, President, La Kermesse
- Pam Johnson, Artist
- Judith Kinsman, Artist
- Ann-Marie Mariner, Director, Saco Spirit
- Peter Morelli, Economic Development Director, City of Saco
- Diane Noble, Art Teacher, School Union #7
- David O’Connor, Manager of Government Relations, University of New England
- Renee O’Neil, Business Manager, Biddeford City Theatre
- Bonita Pothier, Branch Manager, KeyBank
- Don Sharland, Executive Director, Dyer Library/Saco Museum
- Nora Tryon, Art Teacher, Biddeford Public Schools
- Rachael Weyand, Director, Heart of Biddeford
- Diane Bowie-Zaitlin, Artist

Staff coordination was provided by Andrea Strassner, Director of the Saco Museum. David Versel, a Biddeford-based planning consultant and member of the original Discovery Research committee, was the primary author of the plan.

Special thanks to committee member Diane Bowie-Zaitlin for contributing her drawing of the mills to the Cultural Plan. This image is featured on the plan’s cover and has become the iconic image for the cultural planning effort as a whole.

CULTURAL ASSESSMENT

This section assesses existing conditions in Saco and Biddeford. Its purpose is to present a context for the community's arts and cultural activities. It includes information on demographics, the local economy, arts and cultural resources and other leisure activities. It also includes summaries of community outreach activities conducted during the course of the planning process.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population Growth

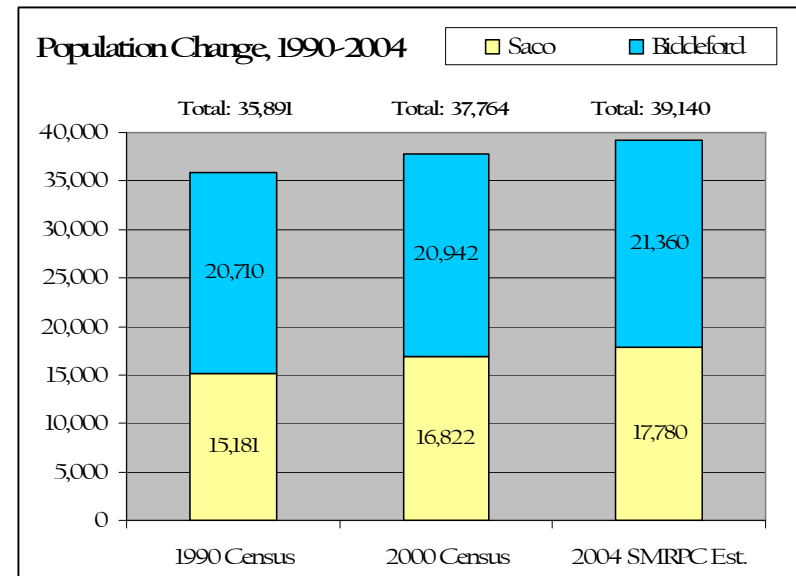
Figure 1 depicts population change from 1990 to 2004.

Since 1990, the cities have been growing. Overall, the population of the Twin Cities increased from 35,891 in 2000 (Census figure) to 39,140 (estimate by the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission). This represents an actual increase of 3,249 residents and a percent change of 9.1%

With their continued growth, the Twin Cities are now approaching Bangor-Brewer as the third largest urban center in Maine (Bangor and Brewer together had a population of 40,460 in 2000, down from 42,202 in 1990). By 2010, it is likely that only Portland and Lewiston-Auburn will be larger than the Twin Cities. Most of the growth in the area has been in Saco, which grew by 17.1% between 1990. Biddeford's growth rate was 3.1%.

In addition to the year-round population, a 2004 study by the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission reported that the cities' population increased by another 8,000 people at the peak of the summer season. This results in a peak population of about 47,000 people. This figure includes occupants of seasonal housing, hotels/motels, campgrounds and RVs.

Figure 1



Source: US Bureau of the Census

Age of the Population

Figure 2 displays the age profile of Saco and Biddeford from the 2000 Census.

The median age of the Twin Cities is about 37 years old, which is less than Maine’s median of 38.6 but higher than the national median of 35.3. About 20% of the cities’ residents are children under the age of 15 and about 15% are aged 65 or older. The largest age bracket is 25-44 (31% of the population).

Biddeford’s median age of 36.4 is slightly younger than Saco’s median of 37.2. However, Biddeford actually has a larger share of those aged 65 or more (15.5% to 13.9%) and Saco has a larger share of children under 15 (20.8% to 18.7%). The difference is made up in the young adult population. About 45% of Biddeford’s residents are between 15 and 44, compared with 43% of Saco’s residents.

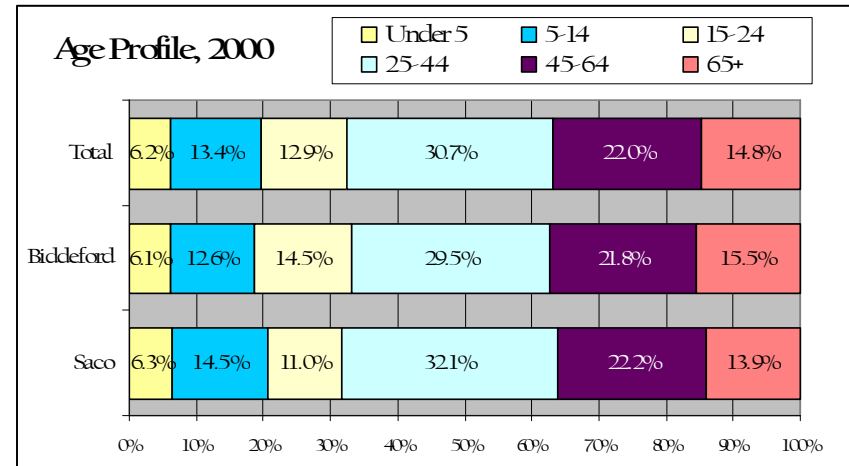
Household Income

Figure 3 displays the household income profile of Saco and Biddeford from the 2000 Census.

Overall, 62% of the Twin Cities’ households earned less than \$50,000 per year in 2000 and just 16% earned more than \$75,000 per year.

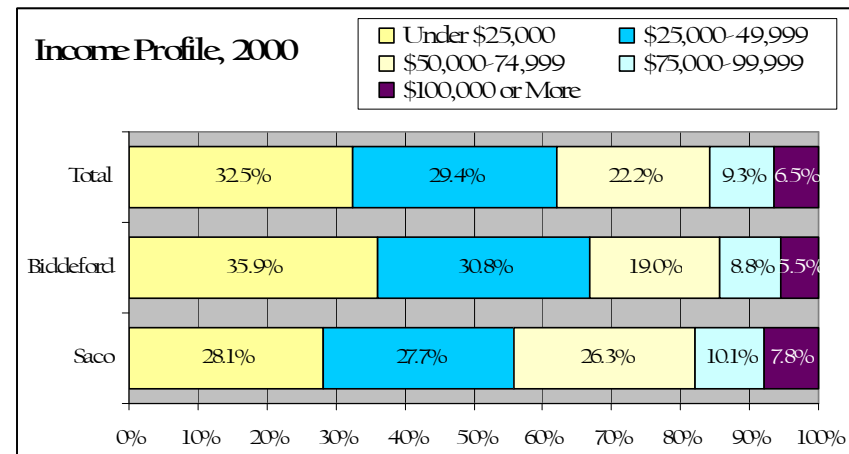
Saco has a higher median household income level (\$45,105) than does Biddeford (\$34,976). Saco has a slightly larger percentage of households earning more than \$75,000 per year (18%) than does Biddeford (14%).

Figure 2



Source: US Bureau of the Census

Figure 3



Source: US Bureau of the Census

Education and Educational Attainment

Figure 4 displays school enrollment among local residents in 2000.

In all, there were 9,565 students enrolled in school, representing about 25% of the total population of the cities. The majority of students (68%) were in K-12 schools, though there were 2,365 college students (about 25% of all students).

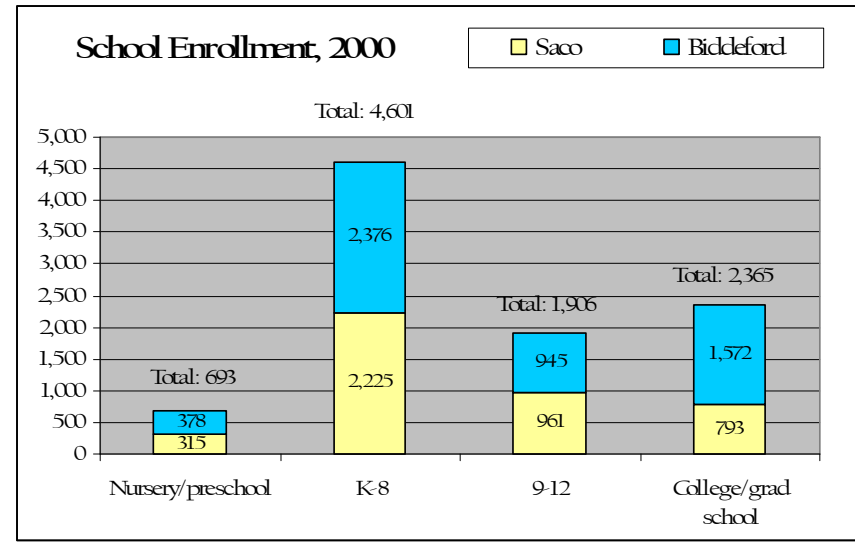
Most of the college student population can be accounted for by the the University of New England (UNE), which has about 2,000 students. UNE is a private institution that has campuses in both Biddeford and Portland. The local college student population also includes students commuting to nearby institutions like University of Southern Maine, York County Community College, Southern Maine Community College and Maine College of Art.

Figure 5 profiles the educational attainment of the cities' adult population (age 25 and up) in 2000.

Though 82% of local residents have at least a high school diploma, the high school graduation rate is far lower than that of Maine as a whole (92%). About 20% of local residents have four-year college degrees. The largest segment of the population (35%) is high school graduates with no college degree.

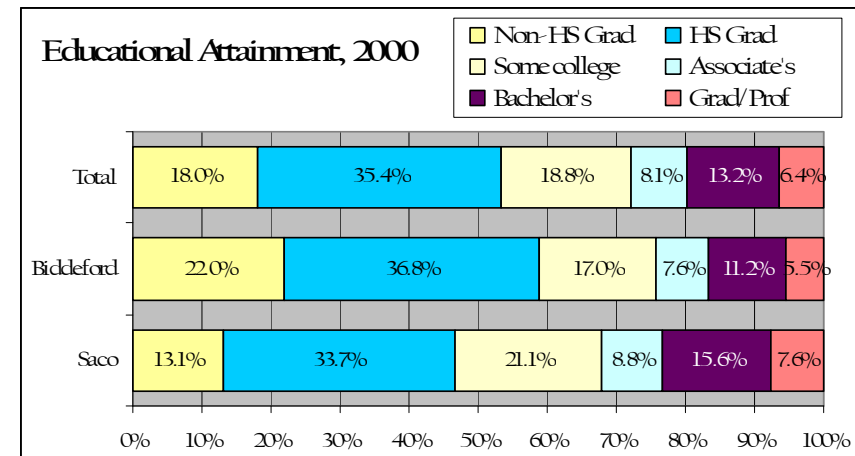
Educational attainment usually correlates with income, and the pattern holds here. Saco has both a higher percentage of college graduates (23% to 17%) and a lower percentage of non-high school graduates (13% to 22%) than does Biddeford.

Figure 4



Source: US Bureau of the Census

Figure 5



Source: US Bureau of the Census

Ethnicity Profile

Figure 6 shows ethnic origin data from 2000. The percentages are calculated against the total reported ethnicities and not the total number of people, as many people report multiple ethnicities.

Saco and Biddeford still retain a very large population of people of French or French Canadian origin—this ethnic group accounts for 40% of the total population. About 46% of Biddeford’s population is of French/French Canadian heritage, compared with 34% of Saco’s.

Other ethnic groups that comprise more than one percent of the cities’ population are: English/Scottish (15%), Irish/Scotch-Irish (15%), German (5%), Italian (4%), Polish (2%) and Greek (1%). Though there are many other smaller ethnic groups in Saco and Biddeford, each represents less than one percent of the total population.

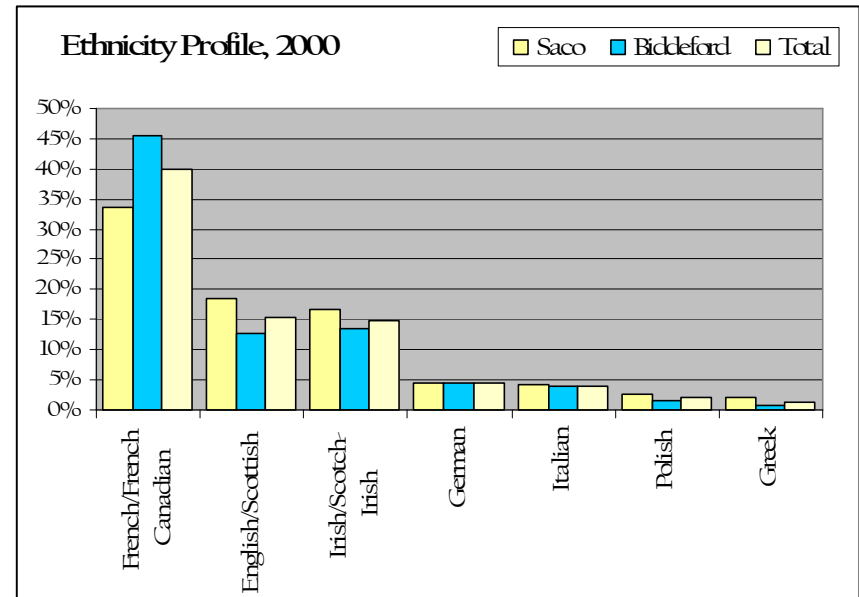
Mobility of Population

Figure 7 shows where Year 2000 residents of the Twin Cities lived in 1995.

In all, 52% of residents in 2000 lived in the same home as in 1995. Among those who lived elsewhere in 1995, 60% moved from within York County, 19% moved from other Maine counties and 21% came from out of state. So while there has been some in-migration from outside the area, more than 80% of residents have lived in York County for at least five years.

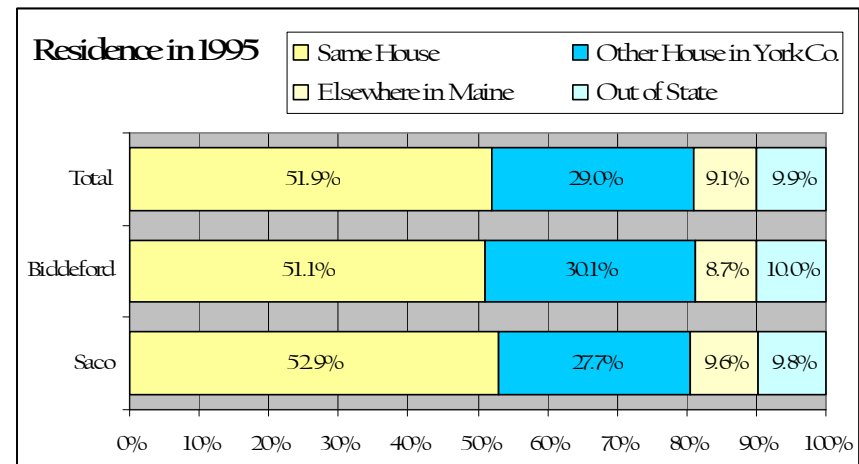
Mobility figures for both cities are roughly equal, though Biddeford has a slightly higher percentage of residents moving in from out of state.

Figure 6



Source: US Bureau of the Census

Figure 7



Source: US Bureau of the Census

LOCAL ECONOMY

Economic Profile

Biddeford and Saco together represent one of the largest employment centers in Maine, and together account for about 27% of all jobs in York County. As of 2004, the Maine Department of Labor reported that there were 18,366 people employed in the Twin Cities: 11,487 in Biddeford and 6,879 in Saco.

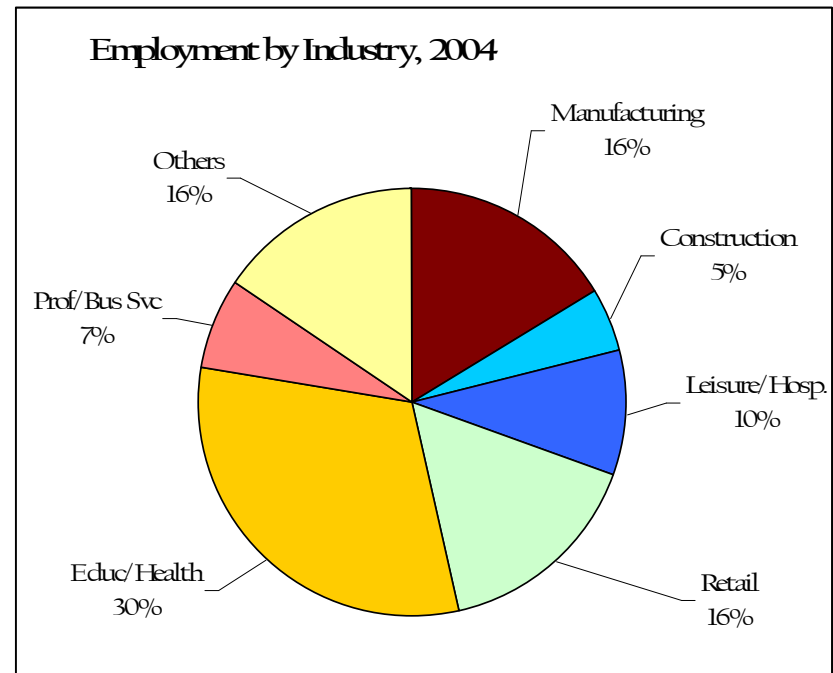
Figure 8 shows the 2004 Maine Department of Labor employment profile for the Twin Cities. The largest sector is Educational and Health Services, which accounts for 30% of all jobs in Biddeford and Saco. Manufacturing also remains a major economic presence in the Twin Cities, accounting for 16% of all jobs.

Retail trade currently accounts for 16% of jobs in the Twin Cities. This share is likely to increase in the coming years due to Biddeford Crossing, a 500,000 square foot retail development set to open in 2006.

Just 359 are employed in the Arts, Entertainment and Recreation Services category, representing two percent of all employment. However, these figures do not include seasonal residents, artists who hold full-time jobs in other fields or those in related creative professions (architects, graphic designers, etc.)

Agriculture and fishing are also very minor components of the local economy. Fewer than one percent of the local economy is in these industries.

Figure 8



Source: Maine Department of Labor

Major Employers

Figure 9 lists private employers in the Twin Cities with more than 100 employees.

By far, the largest employer in the area is Southern Maine Medical Center (SMMC), a major regional hospital that employs 1,000 people. SMMC is the successor to Webber Hospital, which was built in 1909.

The largest industrial employer in Biddeford and Saco is Interstate Bakeries, which had 658 employees as of mid-2005.

Some of the other large employers in the Twin Cities reflect the area's history and culture, these include:

- **University of New England** (450 employees) is a private university that used to be called Saint Francis College. It has been located in Biddeford for more than 150 years. UNE also has a campus in Portland.
- **West Point Stevens** (400 employees) is the last remaining textile milling operation in the downtown mill complex that used to employ 9,000 people.
- **Sweetser** (300 employees) is a statewide children's social service organization founded in 1828 by Cornelius Sweetser, a local industrialist and philanthropist.
- **Thornton Academy** (120 employees) is a secondary school with a history stretching back to 1811.

Figure 9

Major Private Employers in Saco and Biddeford

COMPANY	CITY	INDUSTRY	# EMP
Southern Maine Medical Center	Biddeford	Hospital	1,000
Interstate Bakeries (J.J.Nissen)	Biddeford	Commercial Bakery	658
Funtown/Splashtown USA	Saco	Amusement Park	462
University of New England	Biddeford	University	450
Wal-Mart	Biddeford	Retailer	400
West Point Stevens	Biddeford	Textile Mfgr.	400
Sweetser	Saco	Children Service	300
General Dynamics	Saco	Manufacturing	250
Home Health-Visiting Nurse Service	Saco	Health Care	230
Counseling Services, Inc.	Saco	Health Care	220
Hannaford	Biddeford	Grocer	220
Shaw's	Biddeford	Grocer	157
Hannaford Supermarket	Saco	Grocer	155
Home Depot	Biddeford	Retailer	150
Metso Paper USA	Biddeford	Metal Products	150
Kohl's Department Store	Biddeford	Retailer	150
Southridge Rehab & Living Ctr	Biddeford	Health Care Facility	150
St. Andre Health Care Facility	Biddeford	Health Care Facility	148
Fiber Materials, Inc.	Biddeford	Composites	130
Volk Packaging Corp.	Biddeford	Corrugated Paper Products	130
AVX Tantalum	Biddeford	Capacitors Mfgr.	121
Thornton Academy	Saco	Education	120
Wood Structures, Inc.	Biddeford	Wood Trusses	110
Sanweco	Saco	Food	100
NHIC/EDS	Biddeford	Medical Claims Processing	100

Source: Biddeford-Saco Chamber of Commerce & Industry

Labor Force

Biddeford and Saco are major employment centers in their own right, but the two cities are part of a larger regional economy, with many residents working outside of the cities.

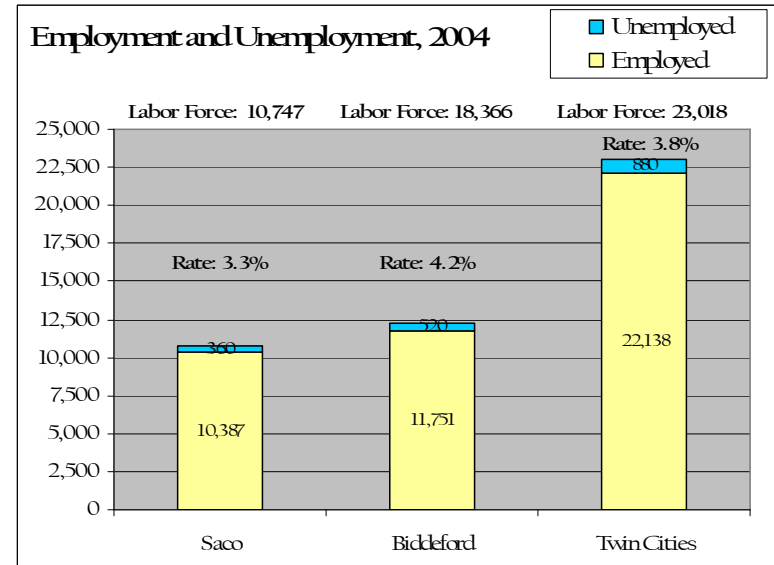
Figure 10 profiles the local labor force as of 2004. The resident labor force consists of 23,018 people, of whom 22,138 were employed. There were 800 unemployed persons actively seeking work, an unemployment rate of 3.8%. Biddeford's unemployment rate of 4.2% was considerably higher than Saco's rate of 3.3%.

The ratio of local jobs to total labor was 0.80. This jobs-to-labor ratio is considerably lower than Portland's, which is about 1.05. The ratio reflects of the fact that many Saco and Biddeford residents commute outside of the area to earn income.

Figure 11 displays commuting patterns information from the 2000 Census for the Twin Cities. Among local residents, 46% worked within the Twin Cities. This share was far higher among Biddeford residents (50%) than Saco residents (42%). Biddeford residents are more likely to work elsewhere in York County, as 20% do so compared to 14% of Saco residents.

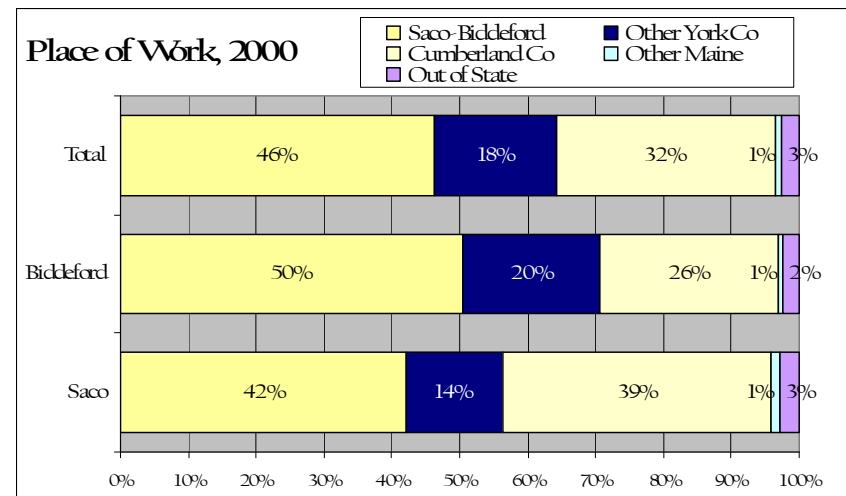
The share of Saco residents commuting to the Portland area (Cumberland County) is 39%, far higher than Biddeford's share of 26%. In fact, nearly as many Saco residents work in Greater Portland as work locally, while twice as many Biddeford residents work locally as those who commute to Cumberland County. Few local residents (about 4%) commute beyond York or Cumberland counties.

Figure 10



Source: Maine Department of Labor

Figure 11



Source: US Bureau of the Census

ARTS AND CULTURAL INVENTORY

This section profiles the existing base of arts and cultural resources in Saco and Biddeford. It includes profiles of artists, arts-related businesses, facilities for arts and cultural use, and arts and cultural programs. It also profiles other leisure activities in the region as a means of illustrating that arts and culture must compete for people's attention.

Artists and Arts-Related Businesses

Part of the planning process was to identify local artists, musicians, artisans and craftspeople. This "discovery research" produced a substantial inventory of individuals and businesses, an inventory that will be housed and updated at www.sacobiddefordculture.org.

This section summarizes the inventory of artists and arts-related businesses as collected by the Cultural Planning Committee. Artists and businesses were also surveyed about local arts and culture. The answers to these questions are discussed in the Community Outreach section .

The exact number of artists, craftspeople and creative businesses in the Twin Cities is not known, but there are thought to be at least 100 such people and businesses in the area. The Cultural Inventory and Survey successfully identified and profiled about 60 of these individuals.

There are a number of retail outlets in Saco and Biddeford that either sell art products or supplies for artists, musicians and artisans. These include:

- Art & Craft Center – Art supply store
- Biddeford Pool Fine Art – Fine art gallery

- Cellar Door Designs – Antiques, art gallery, craft shop
- The Clay Place – Make-your-own pottery shop
- The Field Mouse – Craft and gift store
- Midtown Music – Full-service music store
- Saco Frame Center – Picture framing
- Sam's Place – Arts and crafting supplies
- Stone Soup Artisans – Cooperative shop for local crafters
- Westview Framing – Picture framing

Arts and Cultural Facilities

There are a variety of facilities in the Twin Cities for arts and cultural programs and events. This section briefly summarizes those resources.

Dyer Library

Founded in 1881, the Dyer Library serves Saco residents and summer visitors. The library is housed in the historic Deering mansion on Main Street, next to the Saco Museum. The library houses the Maine History Collection, a repository of 100,000 documents related to regional history and genealogy. Dyer Library offers monthly art exhibits and a community meeting room that is heavily used by local organizations. The children's room offers a wide range of programming.

McArthur Library

McArthur Library has served as Biddeford's library since 1863. Since 1902, it has been housed in a former church building on Main Street in downtown Biddeford. A major addition, including meeting rooms, office space and access improvements, was constructed in 1996. McArthur Library has an extensive program calendar that includes children's storytime, art exhibits, concerts and lectures.

Saco Museum

Located next to the Dyer Library (and managed by the same non-profit entity), the Saco Museum showcases regional art and history and is the third-oldest museum in Maine. Founded in 1866 as the York Institute and renamed Saco Museum in 2001, it is housed in a John Calvin Stevens-designed building dating to 1926. With over 11,000 objects, the museum houses an outstanding collection of 18th and 19th Century paintings, furniture, decorative arts and natural history artifacts.

The Saco Museum's holdings include: a large collection of portraits by John Brewster, Jr., a deaf-mute who is considered one of the best early American folk art painters; and a 19th Century 800-foot moving panorama depicting the famous novel *Pilgrim's Progress*. The museum also offers exhibitions exploring a wide range of themes including decorative arts, regional history, contemporary art and community stories.

City Theater

The 500-seat City Theater has been a part of Biddeford since the 1880s. The last surviving grand opera house in York County, the theater has undergone hundreds of thousands of dollars of renovations in the past decade and is nearly fully restored to its historic grandeur. In addition to mounting its own theatrical production, City Theater also hosts a variety of concerts and other special events throughout the year.

J. Richard Martin Community Center

This facility houses many of Biddeford's Parks & Recreation programs for children, adults and seniors. It is housed in the former Biddeford High School building, which was built in the 1880s. This building contains classrooms, meeting rooms, offices for community organizations, a gymnasium and the local cable access television studio.

Saco Armory

This former military armory on Franklin Street was acquired by the City of Saco in 2004 to house its Parks & Recreation department and many of its programs. The facility has meeting and classroom, space, offices of local organizations and a gymnasium. The department also operates a much smaller community center facility on Common Street.

Garland Auditorium

This 500-seat facility is located on the campus of Thornton Academy in Saco. The facility is primarily used for school assemblies, concerts and theatrical productions. It is available for public use and does host occasional concerts and other community events.

Biddeford Middle School Auditorium

Set to open in 2006, this facility is part of an expansion of Biddeford Middle School. This 800-seat facility will be used by all schools in Biddeford and will also be available for public rental.

University of New England

University of New England (UNE) holds on-campus events in several different locations, though its largest assembly space only holds 300 people. UNE regularly hosts lectures and concerts that are open to the general public, though some of its events are only open to students, faculty and staff. UNE is actively raising funds for the \$11 million George and Barbara Bush Cultural Center, which will contain meeting space, an art gallery, a library of materials on loan from the Bush Presidential Library and a 500-seat performance hall. No timetable is set for this project.

Other School Facilities

Beyond the larger spaces listed above, many of the other public and private schools in the Twin Cities all have assembly, arts and performance spaces, but these are generally used for school programs and events only.

Private Performance Spaces

There are a variety of private facilities in the cities that host live music, arts events and cultural events. These include:

- Bebe's Burritos (Main Street, Biddeford) – small acoustic music concerts
- Cool Coffee (Main Street, Biddeford) – small acoustic music concerts
- First Parish Church (Main Street, Saco) – music and other performances
- Kerrymen Pub (Main Street, Saco) – live music
- Le Club Voltigeur (Elm Street, Biddeford) – live music and dances
- Lily's Coffee & Tea (Pepperell Square, Saco)– small acoustic music concerts
- McArthur Hall (Adams Street, Biddeford) – banquet hall, holds 300 for concerts
- Mulligan's (Lincoln Street, Biddeford) – banquet hall above restaurant, holds 200 for concerts and special events.
- Saco Coffeeshouse at the Unitarian Church (School Street, Saco) – Recurring series of well-known regional acoustic music shows

Arts and Cultural Programs

Parks & Recreation

Both Saco and Biddeford have active parks & recreation departments that offer many arts and cultural-related activities. Brief summaries of these programs follow.

- Saco Parks & Recreation offers mostly sports and athletic recreation programs, but does have some non-athletic offerings, including preschool reading and crafts, senior lunches, and after-school programs for youth and teens.
- The Biddeford Recreation Department has wide offerings of programs for residents of all ages, including arts & crafts classes, dance programs and cultural trips.

Adult Education/Senior Programs

Biddeford has its own Adult Education program and Saco shares a program with the Town of Old Orchard Beach. Both programs feature a variety of arts and cultural courses, including painting, drawing, music and crafts.

Crossroads Youth Center

Crossroads Youth Center is a private program aimed at providing activities for children after school hours. The center offers a variety of art programs and puts on concerts and theatrical productions several times each year. Crossroads also runs a summer camp with many arts activities.

City Theater

City Theater has its own production staff, with an in-house artistic director. The theater typically mounts two of its own performances each year, and also hosts a variety of both community and professional music, dance, comedy and variety shows. City Theater also hosts a summer children's theater workshop.

Schools

Schools in Biddeford and Saco have extensive arts and cultural programs at all grade levels. Programs include visual arts, music, video, local history and crafts.

Northern York County YMCA

The Northern York County YMCA in Biddeford offers a variety of arts and cultural programs for people of all ages. Programs include art, dance, and crafts.

Arts and Cultural Events

There are many special events held throughout the year in the Twin Cities that celebrate local arts and culture. These include:

- **La Kermesse Franco-Americain Festival** – Held in late June, La Kermesse is one of the largest French heritage festivals in New England, drawing more than 50,000 visitors per year. The four-day festival includes a street fair in downtown Biddeford and three days of French-themed entertainment, food and heritage at St. Louis Field in Biddeford.
- **Greek Heritage Festival** – This summertime event is held at St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in Saco and celebrates Greek music, dancing, food and heritage.
- **Saco Sidewalk Arts Festival** – Held the same weekend as La Kermesse, this event fills up Saco’s Main Street with displays by local and regional artists. It also features food and music. As of 2006, it is being run by Saco Spirit.
- **Summer Concerts** – Both cities’ Main Street programs (Saco Spirit and Heart of Biddeford) offer free outdoor summer concerts in downtown parks. Saco’s are held in the evening and Biddeford’s are held during lunchtime.
- **Saco Farmers Market** – Featuring locally grown produce, dairy, meats, flowers and plants, this open-air market is held on Wednesday and Saturday morning in the parking lot of Saco Valley Shopping Center from May to October.

- **Pumpkin Fest** – Saco Spirit lines Main Street with pumpkins carved by local schoolchildren and has a day-long festival to celebrate Halloween and the fall season.
- **Chalk on the Walk** – Heart of Biddeford sponsors this sidewalk art event in early autumn that brings out both professional and amateur artists.
- **Holiday Festivals** – There are several December events, including Santa Fests in both Saco and Biddeford, the Festival of Trees at the Saco Museum, and a variety of events held by community and church groups.

Leisure Activity Profile

Saco and Biddeford are located between the Maine Turnpike and the Atlantic Ocean. The cities are located within a short drive of most of the entertainment and leisure attractions that Southern Maine has to offer. In addition, the cities themselves have a great deal of things to see and do apart from local arts and culture.

These local and regional leisure activities are profiled below.

Local Leisure Activities

Saco and Biddeford offer many things to see and do both in the summer and throughout the entire year. These activities are listed by activity type below.

Amusements

- Aquaboggan Water Park (summer)
- Funtown/Splashtown USA (summer)
- Schooner Miniature Golf and Batting Cage (summer)
- Vacationland Bowling & Recreation Center

Movie Theaters

- Cinemagic (12 screens, stadium seating)
- Smitty's Cinema (8 screens, sit-down dining)
- Saco Drive-in (seasonal)

Outdoor Recreation

- Public Beaches (Bayview, Biddeford Pool, Camp Ellis, Hills Beach, Rotary Park)
- East Point Sanctuary
- Ferry Beach State Park
- Saco Heath

Indoor Recreation

- Biddeford Ice Arena
- Biddeford Parks and Recreation programs
- Howard Sports – indoor sports center
- Northern York County YMCA
- Planet Fitness – health club
- Saco Parks and Recreation programs
- Saco Sport and Fitness – health club

Regional Leisure Activities

There are many things to see and do throughout Southern Maine as well. Regional leisure activities are listed by community and driving time from the Twin Cities.

Old Orchard Beach/Ocean Park (10 minutes)

- OOB Pier/Palace Playland (summer only)
- Pirate's Cove Miniature Golf and Arcade
- The Temple (summer concerts, lectures, movies)

The Kennebunks and Arundel (15 minutes)

- Arundel Playhouse
- Brick Store Museum

- Dock Square shopping district
- Seashore Trolley Museum (seasonal)

Scarborough (15 minutes)

- Scarborough Downs
- Scarborough Marsh Nature Center

South Portland (20 minutes)

- Maine Mall shopping area

Cape Elizabeth (25 minutes)

- Crescent Beach State Park
- Fort Williams Park/Portland Head Light
- Two Lights State Park

Portland (25 minutes)

- Portland Museum of Art
- Old Port District
- Children's Museum of Maine
- Portland Pirates hockey (winter)
- Portland Sea Dogs baseball (summer)
- Portland Stage Company
- Portland Symphony Orchestra

Wells and Ogunquit (30 minutes)

- Ogunquit Playhouse
- Ogunquit Museum of American Art
- Wells Auto Museum
- Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve

York (40 minutes)

- Old York Historical Society museums
- York Beach
- York's Wild Kingdom

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Reaching out to those involved in arts and culture as well as the general public and community leaders was an essential component of this Cultural Plan. This section summarizes community outreach efforts.

Cultural Inventory and Survey

The starting point for the cultural plan was to speak directly with those involved in cultural pursuits. The Maine Arts Commission’s “Cultural Inventory and Survey” form was used as the basis for this effort. This form essentially profiles artists and cultural organizations and inquires as to their interest in being part of ongoing community activities. Additionally, the Committee added five survey-type questions:

1. What does culture in our community mean to you?
2. What are the key strengths of our community’s cultural activities?
3. What are the weaknesses?
4. What are the major issues relating to culture in our community (good and bad)?
5. Are there other community development issues (neighborhoods, special population needs, school system/educational) that could and/or should relate to the cultural plan?

The survey was distributed both in paper form and posted on www.sacobiddefordculture.org. In all, 60 surveys were completed. Respondents covered the spectrum of local arts and culture—15 different categories were represented, including painting, sculpture, fiber arts, photography, music, community organizations, design arts, media arts, furniture, arts education and theater.

Responses are summarized below.

Participation in Community Activities

Respondents were asked to comment on their willingness to be part of nine different types of ongoing community arts and cultural activities. The following bullets summarize feedback on this issue.

- All respondents were willing to be listed in the cultural directory that will be posted on the website.
- Two thirds of respondents were interested in being commissioned to do custom work. This suggests a need to communicate the availability of artists to the general public.
- About one quarter of respondents were willing to offer tours of their facilities or studios, indicating that open studio events could be successful.
- Nearly half of respondents were interested in offering instructional services, meaning that future arts and cultural education program should have a strong base of willing instructors.
- More than half of respondents require appointments to be seen, meaning that artists are not generally available to the public.
- Few respondents (less than 10 percent) were interested in having volunteers, offering internships, mentoring programs or doing performances.

Assessing Local Arts and Cultural Issues

About 30 of the 60 respondents to the Cultural Inventory and Survey also answered the five questions regarding local arts and cultural issues. Responses to each question follow, with responses to each question listed in their order of frequency.

Meaning of culture in our community

- Identity of the community
- Ability for people of all backgrounds to celebrate arts and heritage
- Financial and moral support by community leaders to provide arts to all
- Bring people together in new ways
- Making our area a regional destination

Key strengths

- Our people—traditions, volunteers, artists, etc.
- Museum, theater, libraries and other cultural institutions
- Energy being generated by cultural plan
- Availability of cheap space for artists
- Pride in the cities and their histories

Weaknesses

- Lack of venues for display and performance
- Lack of funding support by local government and businesses
- Perception that audience for arts and culture is small leads local people to look to Portland or beyond to display or perform
- Lack of parking, especially in downtown Biddeford

Cultural Issues

- Lack of exposure to residents of surrounding communities and tourists
- Cultural divide—working class often feels that cultural activities are not for them or cannot afford to access art and culture
- Pessimism—community needs to bolster its self image first
- Talented local artists are not known or appreciated by the community

- Lack of appreciation and respect for local history and cultural traditions, despite their richness

Community Development Issues

- Work to broaden arts programs for children, both in schools and after school
- Need to maintain affordable housing and studio space
- Use arts and cultural activity to revitalize historic buildings
- Cultural activity needs to be sold as an economic engine, not a luxury

General Public Surveys

In addition to the Cultural Inventory and Survey, the Committee also designed a survey aimed at the general population of the Twin Cities. This survey was also distributed in paper form and on the website.

Questions posed in this survey included:

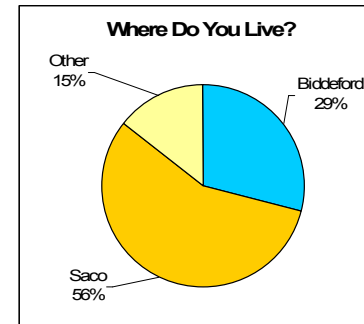
- Demographics (age, length of residence)
- What cultural events do you attend?
- Do you belong to any arts/cultural organizations?
- How do you hear about local arts/cultural programs?
- Is there a need for additional facilities or programs?
- How willing are you to put public tax dollars towards arts and culture?
- How likely would you be to use a comprehensive calendar of local arts and cultural events?

A total of 62 surveys were completed. Results are summarized on the following pages.

Where Do You Live?

The overwhelming majority of respondents to the survey live in the Twin Cities (85%). Respondents were about twice as likely to live in Saco (56%) than in Biddeford (29%). This disparity may reinforce the sentiment expressed by many people throughout the process that arts and culture are seen as being the domain of the “upper classes.” This perception must be addressed by future arts and cultural efforts.

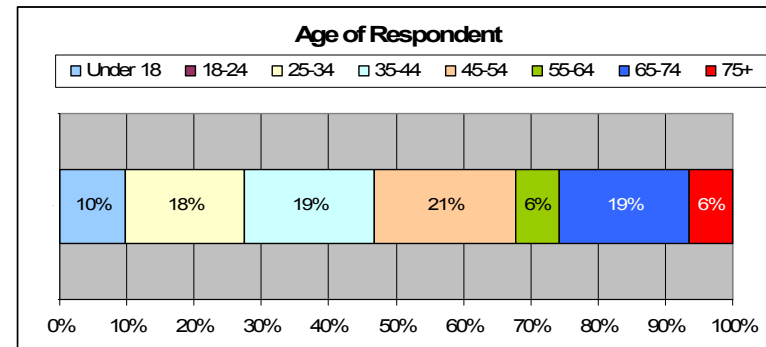
Figure 12



Age of Respondents

The audience for arts and culture tends to be older than the general population—72% of respondents were 35 or older and 25% were aged 65 or older. There was not a single respondent aged between 18 and 24, which reinforces the common perception that young people in the area tend to look outside of the Twin Cities for arts and cultural experiences. This perception clearly presents a strong challenge to future cultural planning endeavors.

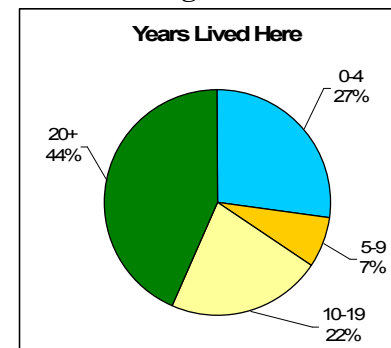
Figure 13



How Long Have You Lived Here?

Among respondents who live in the Twin Cities, they are most likely to either have lived locally for more than 20 years (44%) or for less than five years (27%). This is a good indication that the area’s audience is stable, but that newcomers are actively seeking to become involved with local arts and cultural offerings.

Figure 14



What Cultural Events Have You Attended in the Past Year?

Respondents were asked to indicate what local arts or cultural events they have attended in the past year. Figure 15 displays the results in order of popularity.

Two ongoing events, Saco Museum exhibits and the Saco Farmers' Market led the way, as more than 60% of respondents said they had been to each of the two. The third and fourth place events, the Saco Sidewalk Arts Festival (48%) and La Kermesse (44%) are both special events held the same weekend in late June.

The area's newest arts event, Chalk on the Walk, was only attended by 16% of respondents, but this share should increase in the future as the event builds more recognition.

Membership in Cultural Organizations

Though participation in cultural events was strong, 60% of respondents do not belong to any local arts or cultural organizations. This speaks to a need to grow organized arts and cultural efforts.

How Do You Hear About Events?

More than 80% of respondents hear about local arts and cultural events through word of mouth, making it by far the most common way that people learn about events. About two-thirds (66%) hear about events from newspaper articles, making that a more effective means of communication than newspaper advertisements (47%).

Direct communications are currently not strong at all, as just 37% of people hear about events via mail or email and just 13% hear about events through websites. These figures speak to a need to build a local communications network.

Figure 15

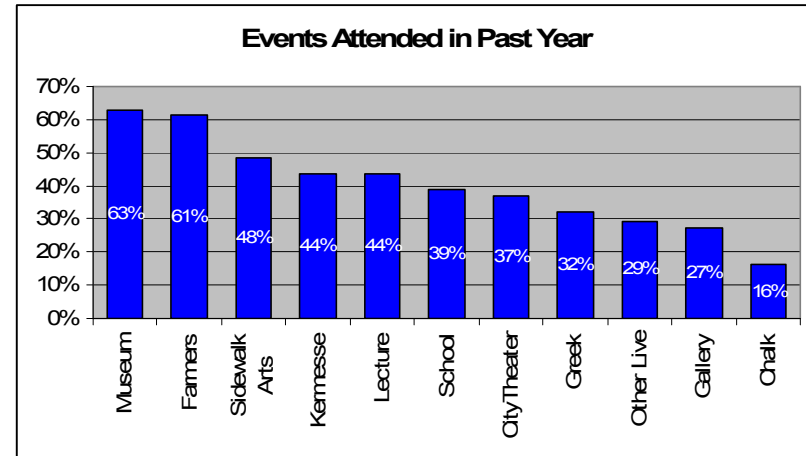
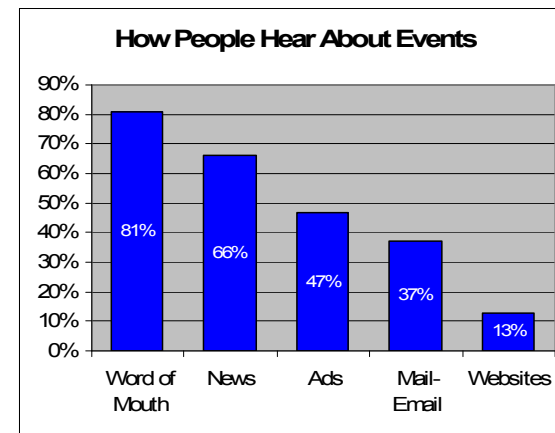


Figure 16



Do We Need Additional Venues or Events?

This question split exactly evenly—half of respondents said yes and half said no. Among saying that additional venues or events were needed, the most popular responses were, in order:

- Smaller performance venues for music, theater and dance
- Art galleries and venues for open studio events
- Cultural/historic exhibit spaces
- More art shows at all times of the year

Willingness to Support Culture With Tax Dollars

Respondents were overwhelmingly in favor of using public tax dollars to support local arts and culture: 98% were very or somewhat willing to do so. More than half (54%) were very willing.

It is important to note that this survey was not scientific, but it still demonstrates a strong base of support for public funding of cultural initiatives.

Likelihood to Use Cultural Website

Though few people hear about local cultural events via the Internet at the present time, there is strong support for using an online calendar in the future. About 90% of respondents are at least somewhat likely to use an online calendar of arts and cultural events, and 49% would definitely use it.

One caveat to this question is that an online calendar must be comprehensive and updated regularly. Otherwise, people would be far less willing to use it.

Figure 17

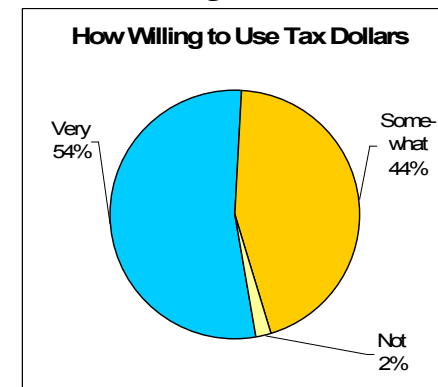
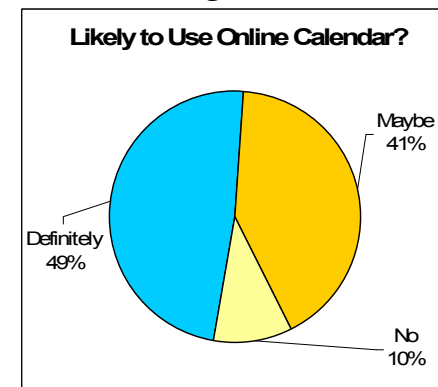


Figure 18



Focus Groups

In addition to the surveys of artists and the general public, the Cultural Planning Committee also sought to gather direct feedback from arts, cultural, civic and business leaders in the two cities. The Committee assembled a list of about 20 key arts and cultural leaders and 15 municipal and civic leaders.

During the week of November 7, 2005, three focus group sessions were held. Of the 35 invitees, 22 were able to attend one of the sessions. This section summarizes the key findings from the sessions. Complete notes from each session are included in Appendix A.

The sessions were structured around five basic questions regarding arts and culture in the Twin Cities:

1. What are our assets?
2. What are our liabilities?
3. What are your visions for building arts and culture?
4. How can we achieve these visions?
5. What other communities offer good models?

For each of these five questions, participants presented many different views. The points below offer brief synopses of the various answers to these questions.

What are our assets?

- Rich history and large inventory of historic architecture
- Our people and their ethnic/cultural traditions
- Many talented artists, artisans and craftspeople
- Excellent arts facilities and programs at local schools
- Strong cultural institutions—City Theater, Saco Museum, libraries, etc.

- Geographic advantages—near Portland, along turnpike, Saco River, proximity to ocean
- Mills and storefronts offer affordable space with excellent character
- University of New England offers many opportunities

What are our liabilities?

- Arts and culture are not very visible in the community
- Most art produced locally is sold outside the area
- Lack of organization and coordination within arts community
- Community has poor self-image and presents no positive, unified image to outsiders
- Lack of affordable housing and live-work space for artists and artisans
- Limited funding for arts and cultural pursuits
- Few opportunities for artists to network with each other or with non-arts businesses
- Lack of smaller performance spaces and independent troupes
- Weak connection between UNE and downtown areas

What are your visions for building arts & culture?

- Develop an image/brand for the cities as a cultural destination. Suggestions included:
 - “SoHo on the Saco”—start with arts, use it to build up restaurants, stores, vitality
 - Using mill history and building stock as the core identity—mill museum with living history, cultural preservation
 - Developing better pedestrian environment and attractive, uniform signage on both sides of the river
 - Identify iconic images of the community—steeple, clocktowers, personalities, art objects, ethnic groups

- Position community as “the future” for Portland, Portsmouth, Boston creatives—they can come here for affordable space, a budding scene and opportunities for business growth
- Forge strong collaboration between arts and business:
 - Offer business training for artists and artisans
 - Businesses fund arts endeavors to build local culture—in turn local culture becomes an asset for further business development
 - Have strong business representation on arts organizations
- Offer networking, educational and forum events for artists and businesses
- Mount a focused effort that produces immediate and visible results
 - Developing a local brand identity and supporting materials
 - High quality public art projects
 - Acquiring Main Street retail space and filling with a variety of co-op shops selling products made in the mills
 - Creating unified, annual themes used by theater, museum, schools
- Cities providing financial assistance for arts and culture activities
 - Subsidized or free space
 - Paying for needed public improvements in the area (parking, sidewalks, signage)
 - Tax breaks or grants for artists
 - Funding for management of potential arts group

How can we achieve these visions?

The central recommendation for pulling all of these visions together was to form some sort of organization. Though there was not agreement on the exact structure of such an organization, nearly all participants agreed that such a group did need to exist.

Participants were also in agreement that this organization needed to be far more than a traditional Arts Council that only serves as a consortium of arts organizations. The overwhelming sentiment was that the organization would need to pull together a myriad of arts, civic and businesses resources to build a strong, unified image of the Twin Cities as a cultural destination. More than an Arts Council, the entity is foreseen as a “Creative Council” that works to use arts and culture to build both community pride and economic opportunity.

This “Creative Council” could include the following functions:

- Image/brand development for the Twin Cities as singular destination
- Marketing and technical assistance to artists and businesses
- Sponsoring networking, educational and forum events
- Linking artists and artisans to the business community
- Representing the Twin Cities to arts and investment interests in other cities
- Developing outreach program for local institutions (UNE, SMMC, etc.)
- Advocating for high quality public art displays
- Helping artists and entrepreneurs acquire and maintain real estate
- Assisting individual entities with obtaining grant funding

What other communities offer good models?

Participants were asked to suggest other cities that have effectively used arts and culture as economic revitalization tools, in the hopes that Saco and Biddeford could draw from these examples. The following models were suggested:

- Portland, Maine
 - Efforts were led by arts institutions (Art Museum and College of Art)
 - Use historic buildings as asset—Old Port vacant storefronts were used to display local art until tenants came along
 - Housing on upper floors of buildings was essential element
- Lewiston-Auburn, Maine
 - Two cities working together on mutual goals
 - City of Lewiston acquired Bates Mill—public paid for improvements and keeps rents affordable
- Bangor, Maine
 - Citywide vision spurred by elected officials
 - Resulted in creation of arts district centered on three museums
- Lowell, Massachusetts
 - Mayor and business community combined on revitalization efforts
 - Buildings were selectively demolished, understanding that saving the best meant sacrificing some with less importance or in worse condition
- Rockland, Maine—Farnsworth Museum was centerpiece of transformation of downtown into an arts center
- Providence, Rhode Island
 - Effort led by Rhode Island School of Design and Brown University
 - City offered free rent to artists and tax breaks
- Woonsocket, Rhode Island—celebrates gritty industrial past with Museum of Work and Industry
- Portsmouth, New Hampshire
 - Revitalization began with food—upscale restaurants drew people in and other supporting businesses sprang up around them
 - Real estate speculation has led to influx of chain stores—original participants in renaissance have been crowded out
- Rollinsford, New Hampshire—Isolated mill complex took advantage of proximity to Portsmouth and has captured many artisans who have been priced out
- Williamstown, Massachusetts—local arts organization has done annual themes that museum, theater, schools all tie into
- Fort Point arts district, Boston
 - Hundreds of artisans in old industrial district
 - Have open studio day each year, draws thousands of visitors
- SoHo district, New York
 - Movement began with individual artists renting studio space
 - Led to massive storefront redevelopment
 - Chain stores took over and drove artists to other locations
- Stowe, Vermont
 - Affluent resort community with very active volunteer arts group
 - Organization pays its own way through sponsorship of special events (food, art, etc.)

These models provide insight into both what communities should and should not do. Key lessons from these examples include:

- Strong leadership is necessary, but the leadership can come from many different sources
- Collaboration among diverse interests must be present
- Visibility is key—the public needs to know what’s happening
- Real estate must be controlled by those who are not primarily motivated by profit—artists, nonprofits, government
- Arts efforts can pay for themselves if there are enough revenue-producing activities and volunteers to support them.

Public Forum Sessions

Early on in the process (summer of 2004), the Committee held two public forum events one in each city. These forums were attended by about 30 members of the public and resulted in the gathering of varied input from the public. Comments made at these forum events included:

- Focus on local industrial, ethnic and religious history
- Be inclusive of people of all backgrounds and socioeconomic levels
- Need to have better publicity and organization of arts events—community calendar and arts directory are needed
- Community needs an arts center/arts group to organize and publicize programs and events. This group should sponsor its own programs and networking events.
- Need more exposure for local artists—do studio tours, open studios, gallery shows, etc.
- Biddeford’s Main Street has great potential for art galleries, retail and entertainment uses.

Milling About

Towards the end of the planning process, the Committee decided to hold an arts and culture open house as part of the plan’s public outreach. The event, called **Milling About**, was held on January 20, 2006 at the North Dam Mill in Biddeford. Milling About offered the public a chance to step into a mill building that is being redeveloped for retail, commercial, arts and housing uses and to experience local culture in a new way.

Milling About included live music, local cuisine, art and furniture made by local craftspeople and a culture/history exhibit. The event was a major success, with an estimated 700 to 1,000 people from the community attending and overwhelmingly positive response from participating artists and the public alike. Milling About raised nearly \$4,000 in donations for the Cultural Plan.

At Milling About, members of the Committee spoke, clipboards in hand, with the public, to get feedback about the Cultural Plan in general and about the event in particular. The Committee was able to conduct interviews with 63 people during the course of the event. The following questions were asked:

- What is the best thing you have seen tonight?
- Where do you live and work?
- Have you ever been in one of the mills before?
- How did you hear about the event?
- What other local cultural events have you attended recently?
- Are there additional cultural events, programs or facilities you would like to see in the community?
- What challenges do we face in building arts and culture?

A summary of answers to each question are listed below:

Best Thing Seen

Answers were widely varied, with people’s opinions reflecting the diversity of the event and of those in attendance. Many responded very positively to the mill space itself and others remarked about the size and the energy of the crowd. Others focused more on specific installations—furniture, paintings, quilts and live performances. Many people also commented positively on the old photographs of local history.

Where You Live and Work

About 60 percent of those surveyed live in Biddeford or Saco. Many people live in surrounding towns like Old Orchard Beach, Kennebunk and Hollis, but there were attendees from the Portland area and New Hampshire. Work patterns were similar, with most people working in Biddeford or Saco, but others commuting to Portland, Kennebunk and even Massachusetts.

Ever Been in a Mill?

About 60 percent of those surveyed had been in a mill building before, but most of those answering “yes” to this question had been in the finished spaces on Saco Island, and not the still-evolving spaces being used by local artists and craftspeople.

Hearing about the Event

Attendees heard about the event in many different ways, with roughly equal numbers of people saying they had read a newspaper article, heard from a friend or seen a poster or flyer. Only one respondent came because of advertising. This event was clearly publicized through local efforts—local print and radio media reporting on it, people telling friends, colleagues and family, and the distribution of literature.

Other Events

More than half of respondents had been to each of the area’s four most prominent cultural facilities/events in the past year—the Saco Museum, the Saco Sidewalk Arts Festival, the City Theater and La Kermesse. Roughly one-third of attendees went to each of the following events: Greek Heritage Festival, a school play/concert, another play/concert, a gallery opening, an historic lecture and Chalk on the Walk. Interestingly, among those not living in Biddeford or Saco, most had been to the City Theater, but few went to other local events or facilities.

Additional Events, Programs or Facilities

Fifteen separate respondents (24 percent) answered this question with some variation of “More Milling About,” clearly showing that the community loves unique special events and wants to see more. Other popular answers to this question included: outdoor concerts, film festivals, more and better galleries, craft stores and performance spaces for music and theater.

Challenges in Building Arts & Culture

The two leading challenges identified by the audience to building arts and culture were money and a lack of community support. There seemed to be a general sense among respondents that most residents of Saco and Biddeford fail to recognize either the community’s many assets or its potential. Raising the profile of local arts and culture was seen as a necessity by many respondents, as was providing more ways for children to interact with arts and culture.

Visions for the Future

In addition to these specific questions a final question was asked: “Imagine that five years from now you are telling a friend about what this community has to offer—how would you describe it? What would you see walking down the street?”

The most common reply to this prompt was something like: “A diverse and vibrant downtown with an appealing street environment, a riverwalk trail, art galleries, ethnic restaurants and interesting shops.” Several people mentioned other locations as places to emulate, including: Portland’s Old Port; Portsmouth, NH; Lowell, MA; and Kennebunkport.

Other respondents’ visions were more about the general feel of the community than the physical environment. These insights included:

- Celebrating history and ethnic backgrounds
- Everything is done by the efforts of the whole community
- Saco, Biddeford and Old Orchard Beach are all rich in art and culture
- A thriving young population with more things for young people to see and do
- Creativity is accessible to all people
- One big community working together
- Community involvement lets people look back and say: “Look what we’ve done!”

Photos from Milling About
Courtesy of Bill Edmunds, Ocean Park Photography



Clockwise from top left:
1) Sign-in table; 2)
Fiber arts exhibit; 3)
Paintings in renovated
mill hallway; 4)
Members of the
Cultural Planning
Committee; 5)
Sculpture in Main
Gallery



CULTURAL ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

The Twin Cities of Saco and Biddeford together form a vibrant community with a wealth of cultural assets, but these assets are underappreciated and in need of greater exposure.

The area's population is growing, but stable. A challenge for arts and culture is to build greater appreciation for education and the economic opportunities that go along with it. Ethnic and cultural identities are very strong, particularly among the French community. About 40 percent of all residents of the Twin Cities claim French heritage.

The area's economy is strong and diverse, and there are several large and growing employers that sustain it, including Southern Maine Medical Center, University of New England, WestPoint Stevens and Sweetser.

Saco and Biddeford possess a variety of cultural and arts resources, many of which date from the area's "golden age," when its textile mills employed more than 9,000 people. Institutions like the City Theater, Saco Museum and Dyer and McArthur Libraries are remnants of this age, and all continue to serve the community well. The Twin Cities also possess a network of smaller public and private arts and cultural resources.

As the area grows, the characteristics of its population and economy are changing. New residents are increasingly oriented towards the larger region, as many work in the Portland area and have tenuous ties to the Saco-Biddeford area. Recent years have seen an influx of artists, woodworkers and craftspeople into historic mill space, and there is ample additional mill space available for further redevelopment.

Despite the area's assets, its arts and cultural prospects face some daunting challenges. These include:

- Portland, Maine's largest city and predominant cultural center, is just 25 minutes away, and many residents look to Portland for arts and cultural experiences. On the positive side, the proximity to Portland also creates opportunities to capture some of its energy.
- There are many competing attractions to be found in the surrounding region, particularly in the summertime.
- There has never been a sustained and organized effort to bring together arts and cultural resources for both cities.
- The local population lacks the financial resources to support high quality arts and cultural experiences.
- Housing in the area is increasingly hard to afford, and is driving many young families and artists to other locations.
- The visibility of arts and cultural groups and individual artists is very low.

The public outreach process conducted for this plan brought out many of these issues and identified a clear need for some sort of entity to advance local arts and culture to both build community pride and promote the creative economy.

This entity will have to fulfill several different functions:

- Marketing both cities as one creative destination
- Bringing together artists and professionals
- Developing cultural outreach programs
- Encouraging use of real estate for arts and culture
- Raising funds for arts and cultural programs and facilities
- Raising public awareness of arts and culture

The establishment and maintenance of such a "Creative Council" forms the heart of the Cultural Plan and is discussed in detail in the following sections.

VISION STATEMENT AND GOALS

This section presents a vision for future arts and cultural activities in the Twin Cities. It also includes goals that represent what the community hopes to achieve—goal statements are intended as factual statements about the community five or ten years in the future.

A VISION FOR ARTS AND CULTURE IN THE TWIN CITIES

The Twin Cities of Saco and Biddeford possess a wealth of artistic and cultural resources. Many of the cities' most prominent cultural resources, such as the City Theater, Saco Museum and McArthur Library, are remnants of the golden age of the textile mills from the late 19th Century through about 1950.

As the influence of the mills on the local economy has waned, so has the centralized support for local arts and culture. In the early 1990s Saco and Biddeford each attempted to mount separate efforts to promote arts and culture. However, neither of these efforts got off the ground. In 2004, the Twin Cities Cultural Plan therefore began with an understanding that it would need to transcend traditional borders.

In considering a new vision for arts and culture in both cities, the Cultural Planning Committee identified four focal points for its planning efforts:

- We are comprised of many diverse communities;
- We have a rich history that needs to be celebrated;
- Culture is about everyone, not just a select few; and
- Arts and culture need to be treated as economic engines, and must become part of economic development efforts

With these points in mind, the vision statement of the Twin Cities Cultural Plan is:

“Highlighting, enhancing and sustaining the region’s creative economy by promoting collaboration among the diverse communities of Biddeford and Saco.”



artwork by local artist Diane Bowie-Zaitlin

GOALS OF THE CULTURAL PLAN

The goals of the Cultural Plan were crafted with the Vision Statement in mind. Goals represent statements of fact about the Twin Cities five or ten years in the future.

The goals of the plan follow, along with explanations of how each goal can be achieved.

Goal #1 – Artists and businesses interact and support each other.

A current weakness of the arts and cultural community in the Twin Cities is a lack of communication both internally and with the business community. With this in mind, this goal has two different dimensions to it:

1. **Build a strong network within the arts community** – Artists, arts groups and cultural organizations have all expressed a desire to develop a network that allows them to know what others are doing, as well as to build creative and business partnerships.
2. **Help the arts community with technical issues** – Artists are the first to admit that they are, on the whole, much better at making art than at running businesses. At the same time, local artists and cultural providers have little involvement with the Chamber of Commerce and other business networks. More dialogue is needed between the arts world and the business world to ensure that artists are making use of professional services in the community: business management, marketing, web development, graphic design, etc.

Goal #2 – The larger community actively supports local arts and culture.

The plan inventory found that local arts and culture do not generally enjoy a high level of visibility, though there are exceptions, such as La Kermesse, the Saco Sidewalk Arts Festival and City Theater productions. To raise the profile of local arts and culture, the public needs to have more opportunities to experience local arts and culture. A strong sentiment expressed by attendees of Milling About was: “When will you be doing this again?” Clearly, there is an appetite for more and different arts and cultural events.

By demonstrating an appreciation of arts and culture, the general public will help produce an environment that, in turn, encourages the proliferation of more arts and culture. In this way, continued proof of community support is needed to ensure that local arts and culture grow stronger.

Goal #3 – The community understands and appreciates the history and contributions of local ethnic and cultural groups.

When most people think of culture and history in the Twin Cities, they immediately think of the area’s French Canadian population. Representing about 40 percent of the cities’ population, people of French descent certainly dominate the area’s ethnic makeup. However, there are many other cultural groups in the area that, while smaller in number, are also deeply ingrained in the community. This includes ethnic groups like Greeks, Jews, Irish and Italians, work communities like farmers, fishermen and lobstermen and, of course, the pre-European population of Native Americans. The histories and

contributions of these groups are not broadly known in the community and need to be celebrated.

Even within the Franco community, there is a sense that many of its rich cultural traditions are being lost. Many organizations have disbanded or seen memberships dwindle to fractions of their former strength. Aside from La Kermesse, there are few opportunities to celebrate local Franco culture. For this reason, La Kermesse has collaborated with other local groups to establish a small Franco-American cultural center, and there are plans to grow this center in the future.

Goal #4 – Children learn to celebrate arts and culture from young ages.

There are many opportunities for children in Saco and Biddeford to be involved with arts and culture: school art classes, private music or dance instruction, local special events and museum exhibits to name a few. But there is a lack of organization to local offerings and it can be difficult for children and their parents to fully understand what is available to them.

To build a greater understanding and appreciation for local arts and culture, each school year should bring a new cultural theme that is incorporated into all facets of the community. Each theme would include curriculum materials for different grade levels, school assemblies, field trips, music or theater performances and special events. Appropriate themes could include:

- Early mill days and immigration to the Twin Cities
- Ocean/river and the environment
- Farmers and fishermen
- Textile arts

- Furniture and woodworking
- Local Native American history

Goal #5 – Local leaders continually work to sustain the arts and culture communities.

Culture is, by nature, always changing. Each year brings new trends, customs and challenges. In the Twin Cities, where a wave of artists and craftspeople are now filling up mill space, the local scene has changed dramatically in the past few years and will continue to evolve over the next five to ten years. As the arts community grows, new challenges will emerge: affordability of space, sharing of resources and maintaining economic diversity to name a few.

In order to ensure that the community responds to change, local leaders need to implement a system for continually gathering feedback from artists, cultural groups, business leaders and the public at large. This feedback loop will ensure that the arts and cultural community can sustain itself well into the future.



Entrance gate to La Kermesse, 2004 (Photo by Kathleen Mundell)

ACTION PLAN

This section presents recommendations for actions to support the Vision Statement and Goals. All actions include time frames and estimated costs. In addition to recommending implementation steps, the Action Plan also lays out an Organizational Strategy and Funding Plan.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

To achieve the vision and goals of the Cultural Plan, 19 specific actions are recommended. These actions are organized in priority order and grouped into three time frames: Immediate (2006), Short-term (2007-2008) and Long-term (2009 and beyond).

Immediate Actions (2006)

These actions are recommended for the first year of the plan's implementation. Immediate actions include creating an organizational structure, building the visibility of arts and culture and building community networks.

Action #1 – Establish local Creative Council

The first step in the implementation of the Cultural Plan will be to form a “Creative Council” to manage future creative economy efforts for the Twin Cities. This entity will be charged with the responsibility of carrying out the remaining actions. An organizational strategy for the Creative Council is put forth beginning on Page 37.

Expenses: Organizing meetings, incorporation, legal fees and mailings
Est. Cost: \$3,000

Action #2 – Create a brand identity

Prior to undertaking any promotional activities, a brand identity will be needed. This brand identity needs to communicate strong senses of the Twin Cities' history, geography and vitality. A good example of a brand identity for a similar purpose is the creative economy effort in the Rockland/Camden area, which is called “Midcoast Magnet.” This name communicates both the location and that it seeks to attract and retain creative talent.

A brand identity will include several elements:

- Name and tagline
- Graphics and images
- Marketing plan
- Brand protection and maintenance strategies

This project will need to commence right away, but will likely take six to nine months to complete. Efforts that build on the brand identity therefore cannot occur immediately.

Expenses: Branding consultant, graphic design, legal assistance
Est. Cost: \$3,000-\$5,000

Action #3 – Establish regular networking events for the creative community

An early action of the plan will be to begin building a regional network for the artists, cultural groups and creative professionals. The backbone of this network will be quarterly events (which may become more frequent in future years) that are mixtures of social gatherings, educational sessions and arts openings. These events will be supported by email communications coordinated through the website.

Expenses: No direct expenses—all will be regained by proceeds
Est. Cost: NA

Action #4 – Hold biannual open studio/open mill events

The “Milling About” event held during the cultural planning process was a great success, as hundreds of people from all over the region came to a mill in Biddeford to experience local art, culture and music. While this event cannot be exactly replicated, the public has expressed the desire to be able to get inside studios and mill buildings to experience the creative renaissance of Saco and Biddeford.

Twice each year to start, the arts and cultural community will be showcased with a different public event. The Creative Council will plan and run these events, with different themes and activities each time. The frequency of these events may increase in the future if enough interest exists.

Expenses: No direct expenses—all will be regained by proceeds
Est. Cost: NA

Short-Term Actions (2007-2008)

Action #5 – Develop an improved website

The present website (www.sacobiddefordculture.org) provides a starting point for developing a website for the Creative Council. Once the branding strategy is completed (see Action #2), a new website using the brand name and images needs to be built and posted. This website will fulfill many functions as the implementation proceeds: marketing tool, community calendar, discussion board and technical assistance resource.

In the interim, the existing project website must be kept current and regularly updated with calendar and news items to maintain public awareness of this effort.

Expenses: Web designer, domain and email expenses
Est. Cost: \$2,000-\$5,000

Action #6 – Create a cultural map and brochure

A cultural map and brochure will disseminate information about individual artists, cultural groups and galleries. This map and brochure will use the information about local artists collected during the Discovery Research phase of the Cultural Plan and will include listings of artists with contact information and, for public spaces, their hours of operation.

In the short-term, this guide will be mainly designed for downloading from the Internet, as printing and distribution can be major expenses. Printing will be tied to the ability to raise funds.

Expenses: Graphic designer, editing
Est. Cost: \$4,000

Action #7 – Promote educational programs for residents of all ages

Though there are many opportunities for arts and cultural education in the Twin Cities, there is no central repository for inventorying and publicizing such programs. One of the critical roles of the Creative Council will be to bridge the gap between providers of educational programs and all types of populations in the community. Promotional efforts can include mailings, advertising, website listings and speaking engagements to community groups and schools.

Expenses: Printing, advertising, staff time
Est. Cost: \$2,000 per year, more if desired

Action #8 – Facilitate technical and funding assistance for local artists and cultural organizations

Artists and community groups are constantly in need of assistance with managing their enterprises and securing funding. A central role of the Creative Council will be to provide technical expertise in the following areas:

- Starting and managing businesses
- Developing business plans
- Marketing locally-made products
- Website development and maintenance

Technical assistance can be provided by Creative Council staff or by partners such as the Biddeford-Saco Area Economic Development Corporation (BSAEDC), the Maine Small Business Development Center or city governments.

On the funding side, individuals and small organizations often lack the skill or time to pursue/manage grants. The Creative Council needs to offer grant writing and management services

to artists and cultural groups in the community. The Council can also work with area banks and the BSAEDC to develop targeted loan programs for creative individuals and businesses.

Expenses: Some staff time but no direct expenses—can be funded by administrative fees from grants
Est. Cost: NA

Action #9 – Help individuals and businesses find sustainable housing and creative space

This task is aimed at avoiding one of the recurring problems faced in areas with successful creative economies: the gentrification of real estate. The recent success of the Twin Cities at attracting creative individuals and companies is due in no small part to the lack of affordable housing and studio or office space in Portland, Portsmouth and other larger cities. With this in mind, the Creative Council will need to work towards promoting the ownership of real estate by creative individuals and organizations.

This action will entail several sub-tasks:

- Creating and regularly updating an online database of retail, studio and live-work space available for rent or sale. This should include commercial buildings on the market that could be converted for live-work use.
- Working with owners/developers of mill buildings to develop cooperative ownership models for their spaces.
- Advocating for the creation of incubator space.
- Working with economic development agencies to create or promote assistance programs to help artists and creative professionals purchase real estate.

Expenses: Research and website work, staff time
Est. Cost: \$3,000 plus staff time

Action #10 – Conduct annual survey of the arts and cultural community

Arts and culture are moving targets. To ensure that the Creative Council continues to serve the community well, an annual survey of its membership should be conducted. The basic questions of the survey will remain the same each year:

- What are the best and worst things that have happened this year?
- What concerns do you have about the upcoming year?
- What else can the Council do to further its mission?

In addition to these general questions, more specific questions can be asked each year.

The survey will be distributed via the Creative Council’s email list, which will minimize expenses.

Expenses: Staff time, no direct expenses
Est. Cost: NA

Action #11 – Cultivate partnerships with businesses and community organizations

The Twin Cities already have many organizations and institutions that promote arts and culture. One of the central roles of the Creative Council will be to help all of these stakeholder groups set a common agenda for promoting arts and culture. Part of the Council’s role will be to maintain regular communication with such groups, including:

- Biddeford-Saco Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- University of New England
- Southern Maine Medical Center
- La Kermesse/Franco American Cultural Center
- Downtown groups (Heart of Biddeford & Saco Spirit)

- Arts organizations (Saco Museum, City Theater, Alumni Band, Saco Bay Artists, Society of Southern Maine Craftsmen, etc.)

Expenses: Staff time, no direct expenses
Est. Cost: NA

Action #12 – Provide marketing assistance to artists

A recurring theme during the Cultural Planning process was that local artists struggle to market their work locally. Many local artists and craftspeople must travel far and wide to shows in other states to sell their work. For this action, the Creative Council should pursue several different options:

- Marketing locally made products on the website
- Helping local artists and craftspeople sell their work to local galleries, designers and contractors
- Working towards establishing one or more cooperative galleries/showrooms in the downtown area.

On the final point, any co-op space developed or managed by the Creative Council must coordinate with existing storefronts such as the Saco Bay Artists’ gallery in Biddeford and Stone Soup Artisans in Saco. Co-op shops should not be competition for existing operations; they should instead help grow the area’s appeal as an arts destination.

Expenses: Staff time but no direct expenses. Development of Co-op Gallery/Showroom space would require separate fundraising effort.
Est. Cost: None at beginning, but could require capital campaign of \$50,000 or more.

Action #13 – Coordinate with local and regional economic development efforts

Both cities have active and successful economic development offices that promote industrial, commercial and downtown development. In addition, regional economic development is promoted by the Biddeford-Saco Area Economic Development Corporation and the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission and the University of New England is actively marketing the area nationally and internationally. UNE is particularly important, as universities are necessary components to successful creative economy efforts.

To date, local and regional economic development agencies have promoted the area’s “traditional” business assets such as transportation access, telecommunications infrastructure, skilled labor force, economic incentives and proximity to recreational amenities.

Competing in the creative economy requires more than these assets, however. The area’s arts community, historic downtown buildings and mill space, exciting cultural events and creative people represent strong draws to creative individuals and businesses. The Creative Council needs to work with local and regional development groups to highlight these points to develop new strategies for selling the Twin Cities as a creative economy destination.

Expenses: Staff time
Est. Cost: NA

Action #14 – Promote and sponsor innovative public art projects

Raising the visibility of art is a central theme of this plan. Feedback from the Cultural Planning Committee and the

public at large emphasized the need not just for public art, but for *innovative* public art. The Twin Cities have a number of unique settings that may be appropriate for public art projects:

- The Maine Cleaners billboard in Saco’s Pepperell Square is one of the last remaining billboards in a Maine downtown. This very visible location would be appropriate for changing murals.
- Blank walls on downtown buildings in both cities have been discussed for both permanent murals and changing outdoor pieces
- Plans for riverfront parks in both cities could incorporate outdoor sculptures.
- The Route 1 railroad bridge in Biddeford has been explored as a potential location for “snap-on” art.
- A recently-razed building at the corner of Main and Elm Streets in Biddeford is being planned as an arts-oriented gateway park by Heart of Biddeford.

Public art projects can be funded in a variety of ways, including competition entry fees, benefit events and state or nonprofit grants. Such projects should be able to be conducted without direct costs to the Creative Council.

Expenses: Artist recruitment, installation and maintenance of art, liability insurance
Est. Cost: NA—can be raised through donations, grants, recovered revenue

Action #15 – Advocate for local arts and culture with city, regional and state agencies

A present shortcoming for local arts and culture identified in the inventory process is that governments and other public agencies could be more supportive of arts and culture. Ensuring continued support from local, regional and state

agencies will require advocacy and lobbying by the Creative Council. This effort will combine research on the positive contributions of arts and culture with regular briefings and meetings with leaders of these agencies.

Another aspect to this action is to become active in statewide efforts. As of this writing, there are no representatives from York County on the Governor's Creative Economy Council, and the region is in need of a stronger voice in Augusta. Also, a statewide network of local arts councils and creative economy efforts called the Creative Communities Alliance of Maine (CCAM) is in the process of being formed. CCAM is being set up to exchange ideas and advocate for creative development throughout Maine, and the Creative Council should be active in this effort.

Expenses: Staff time
Est. Cost: NA

Long-Term Actions (2009 and Beyond)

Action #16 – Develop annual themes for local arts and culture

During the planning process, a lack of coordination in the Twin Cities' creative community was identified as a recurring weakness. To promote coordination and collaboration among diverse interest groups, the Creative Council should develop an annual theme for local arts and culture and work with its partners to build each year's theme into educational programs, performances, social events and public art projects.

As outlined under Goal #4, such themes could include:

- Early mill days and immigration to the Twin Cities

- Ocean/streams and the environment
- Farmers and fishermen
- Textile arts
- Furniture and woodworking
- Local Native American history

Building towards annual themes will require a great deal of pre-planning, including fundraising, recruitment of outside experts, curriculum development for schools and scheduling of events. For this reason, the annual theme will not be able to be fully established until 2009.

Expenses: Materials development, consulting services, event planning (some costs can be recovered by event proceeds) and marketing
Est. Cost: Varied, likely \$5,000-10,000 per year

Action #17 – Train the future creative workforce

Creative economy efforts can fall into the trap of emphasizing innovation and entrepreneurship but ignoring the greater labor market. Sustaining the area's creative economy will require a workforce that possesses the necessary knowledge and skills. With this in mind, the Creative Council needs to work with a variety of partners to ensure that the Twin Cities have the right workers for tomorrow's creative businesses.

This action will be an ongoing effort that will depend heavily on the types of businesses that locate in Saco and Biddeford over the next few years. As these businesses look to grow and change, they will need workers with specific and often specialized skills. Working with public schools, the Biddeford Regional Center of Technology, York County Community College, University of New England, the University of Maine system and specialized private institutions (Maine College of

Art, Heartwood College of Art, etc.), the Creative Council can act as a conduit for building the capacity of the local labor force.

Expenses: Staff time
Est. Cost: NA

Action #18 – Work to develop live/work space for creative individuals

During the surveying process, the need for affordable space was identified as a concern, but not an immediate problem. The experiences of other communities that have experienced both residential and commercial gentrification demonstrate a need to plan for the development of live/work space for artists, woodworkers, craftspeople and other creative individuals. Developing live/work space does not necessarily mean that the Cultural Council will act as building owner or developer, but it does mean that the Council will need to take an active role in such projects. The role of the Council, the scope of development projects and the type of space developed will depend on availability of land and buildings, timing and funding available.

Expenses: Unknown—depends on situation
Est. Cost: Unknown

Action #19 – Develop a community cultural center

The final action represents the most ambitious, time consuming and expensive effort recommended for the Creative Council—the development of a community cultural center. This center would ideally include:

- Gallery/exhibit/event space
- Theater/performance space
- Rehearsal spaces

- Artist studios
- Classrooms
- Office space
- Central “incubator” resources (woodshop, darkroom, etc.)

As with Action #18, the actual details about a community cultural center will depend greatly on the situation three to five years in the future. The recommended plan action is to undertake a detailed study for a cultural center in or around 2009.

Expenses: Consulting services for planning and design (plan will determine further costs)
Est. Cost: \$25,000 for plan, unknown for further costs



Biddeford's mills viewed from Saco Island (Photo by David Versel)

ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY

The organizational strategy for the Cultural Plan is aimed at building and maintaining an entity called the **Twin Cities Creative Council**. The Creative Council will be charged with implementing this Cultural Plan and with carrying forward the energy produced by the planning process. It will meet regularly four times a year, with additional meetings as needed.

Structure of the Creative Council

The Creative Council must become a self-sustaining entity that plugs into existing arts, cultural, civic and business organizations. To ensure its success, the Council must represent three disparate constituencies:

1. Arts and Cultural Organizations
2. Civic and Business Leaders
3. Artists and Arts Educators

Within each constituency, certain groups must be represented at all times, while others will rotate on and off. Membership on the Council is therefore split between permanent and changing members. The suggested size of the Creative Council is 21 people, assigned as follows:

Arts and Cultural Organizations (7 members)

All members of this group will be permanent members:

- City Theater Associates
- Dyer Library/Saco Museum
- Heart of Biddeford
- La Kermesse/Franco-American Cultural Center
- McArthur Library
- Saco Spirit
- Saco or Biddeford Historical Society (rotates)

Civic and Business Leaders (7 members)

Permanent Members

- Biddeford-Saco Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- City of Biddeford
- City of Saco
- University of New England

Rotating Members

- Community Nonprofit (Southern Maine Medical Center, Sweetser, YMCA, etc.)
- Bank or Financial Institution
- Major private sector employer

Artists and Arts Educators (6 members)

Members from this group will rotate, but there should always be at least one member from four specific categories:

- Public school arts/music educator
- Craftsperson/furniture builder
- Performance artist (actor, musician, director, etc.)
- Visual artist (painter, sculptor, etc.)

The remaining two members can be any type of artist or arts educator.

At-Large Representative (1 member)

The Council should include one additional representative. This may be an unrepresented individual or organization or a second individual from a similar group already represented.

Future Changes to Membership

The Creative Council is designed to serve Saco and Biddeford in the short term. However, interest in collaborating has already been strong in nearby communities, particularly Old Orchard Beach. As the Council evolves, its membership will

likely need to change to bring in representatives from other communities and constituencies.

Steering Committee

The Creative Council will elect from its membership a seven-person Steering Committee, which will take a more active role in the management of the full Council. The Steering Committee will meet monthly and will make recommendations to the full Council membership on all financial, management and staffing issues.

The committee will consist of a Chair and six Members. The Chair will preside over all meetings of both the Steering Committee and Creative Council. The Committee must include at least two representatives from each of the three constituent groups described above. The Chair will rotate each year among the three constituencies.

Transition Period

The Creative Council will be a spinoff of the Twin Cities Cultural Planning Committee, which oversaw the development of this plan. Engineering the transition from the present Committee to the future Council will require strong leadership and additional funding. The transition process is expected to take one or two years. In the intervening time, the Cultural Plan will remain the responsibility of the Cultural Planning Committee under the financial and organizational structure of the Dyer Library/Saco Museum.

Incorporation

One of the first decisions to be made by the Creative Council will be how it is incorporated. It may become a stand-alone

organization or part of an existing organization (one potential idea is to incorporate it as a joint standing committee of Heart of Biddeford and Saco Spirit). This issue will need to be immediately addressed by the Creative Council upon its formation.

Staffing

The Creative Council will need to have paid staff from the outset to ensure proper coordination of its activities and events. Based on available funding, short-term staffing will likely only include part-time Coordinator position. However, to fully realize the vision and goals of the Cultural Plan, the Council may need a full-time, salaried Executive Director and additional support staff. The Funding Plan (beginning on Page 39) discusses current financial capacity, future funding needs and opportunities to raise funds in the future.

Organizational Diagram

This diagram depicts the structure of the Creative Council.



FUNDING PLAN

The Funding Plan for the Twin Cities Creative Council addresses both funding needs and raising funds.

Funding Needs

Getting the Creative Council off the ground will require building a base of ongoing financial support. As with any arts or cultural fundraising effort, many funding sources will need to be tapped. The Council and its staff will need to work consistently and diligently to cultivate its funding sources.

As of March 2006 (the plan's date of publication) the Twin Cities Cultural Planning Committee has about \$10,000 in its coffers. (This funding base represents the remainder of its seed funding and local matching sources and funds raised by Milling About.) These funds will be sufficient to fund the establishment of the Creative Council and to secure part-time help for a few months. However, additional funding will be needed immediately to keep the effort moving forward.

The first need is to raise funds for the implementation of three immediate/short term plan actions:

- Branding: \$3,000 to \$5,000
- Website development: \$2,000 to \$5,000
- Cultural map & brochure: \$4,000

These three efforts will require between \$9,000 and \$14,000. Funding will need to be raised by early 2007.

Once the Council is formally established its fundraising efforts will shift towards securing resources for its ongoing operations, particularly staffing. In order to achieve the ultimate goal of having a fully operational organization,

additional staff resources may be needed. The table below illustrates the difference in an annual budget for an organization with just a part-time director and for one with a full-time Executive Director and support staff. The budget difference is substantial: \$50,000 vs. \$150,000 per year.

Estimated Annual Operating Budget		
	1 Part-time Staffer	2 Full-time Staffers
Salaries and Benefits:	\$30,000	\$120,000
Printing and Advertising:	\$5,000	\$10,000
Cultural Theme Development:	\$8,000	\$10,000
Website/Database Mgmt.:	\$2,000	\$5,000
Other Overhead	\$5,000	\$5,000
TOTAL	\$50,000	\$150,000

These budget figures are simply starting points. When actually developing an organizational budget, the Creative Council will need to study similar organizations in Maine and elsewhere to gain insight into the proper magnitude of the effort. Beyond this annual budget, there will also be long-term capital needs resulting from plan actions such as acquiring real estate, developing a co-op gallery and building a cultural center.

Raising Funds

There are many potential funding sources for the Council:

Event Revenue

The Cultural Planning Committee's first public event, Milling About, raised nearly \$4,000. While this was a significant windfall for the Committee, it only represented about \$4 in revenue per attendee (the only revenue source from Milling About was donations).

Future arts and cultural events present a variety of options for raising funds, including:

- Admission fees
- Food and beverage vending proceeds
- Booth fees from exhibitors
- Percentage of art/furniture/craft sales
- Raffles

While event revenue is important, it is also critical to price events, food and merchandise fairly. A central goal of this plan is to promote cultural for all people. The Council needs to remain mindful of this when setting prices.

Fees for Services

Many groups and individuals participating in the Creative Council will seek out the technical, marketing and funding assistance that it will provide. Some of these services could be offered on a fee-for-service basis, though fees should be reasonable and should take into account that the Council's purpose is to help all creative individuals, organizations and businesses prosper.

Grants

A core function of council staff will be to pursue grant funding from state, federal and nonprofit sources. This may include the Maine Arts Commission, Maine Humanities Council, National Endowment for the Arts, and a variety of regional and national community arts-oriented foundations. It may also include collaborations with city governments for economic development grants.

Government Appropriations

As the Creative Council will represent both Saco and Biddeford, it must encourage both city governments to invest

in arts and culture. The cities will benefit in a number of ways: raising their profiles, building civic pride, attracting tourism and, most of all, building their tax bases by filling commercial and residential spaces.

State appropriations must not be overlooked. Midcoast Magnet, a similar organization in the Rockland-Camden area, recently received a special state earmark to help build its capacity. Coordination with local legislators will be critical to these efforts. The Council also needs to join forces with other similar groups in the newly-formed Creative Communities Alliance of Maine to help pass legislation that advances the creative economy throughout the state.

Cooperative Gallery

The Cultural Plan calls for the establishment of a cooperative gallery/showroom space by 2008. This space will generate revenue for the Council, but will primarily exist to help local artists and artisans earn their livings in the Twin Cities. It should therefore be considered a supplementary revenue source for the Creative Council, and not its primary source.



Lobster Boats off of Camp Ellis (Photo by Kathleen Mundell)

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – FOCUS GROUP NOTES

APPENDIX B – SURVEY RESULTS

- Public Opinion Survey Form
- Cultural Inventory and Survey Form
- Milling About Audience Survey Form
- Survey Results

APPENDIX C – CULTURAL AND ETHNIC PROFILES

- Franco-American Community
- Greek-American Community
- Jewish Community