



To Our Friends in El Paso,

When we first conceived of the Creative Communities Leadership Project, our goal was to create a process where a diverse group of community members could embrace and lead change in their cities and regions.

El Paso County's catalysts, sponsors, and partners have been tremendously invested and have transformed a concept into reality. You have educated, engaged, and catalyzed people throughout the community and inspired others by your efforts to increase quality of place in and around El Paso.

Your commitment and initiatives have better prepared your community for the challenges and opportunities of the Creative Age, and have changed the dialogue on economic growth and quality of place.

Our team is inspired by your energy and enthusiasm and we are proud of this first of its kind effort. We learned a great deal from you and hope you feel our contribution helped establish some transformative initiatives in the El Paso region.

As we look to the future we have no doubt that the enthusiasm, insights, and team building approach of your catalysts, sponsors, and partners will continue to positively influence the development of New Mexico.

Thank you again for joining our team in this important endeavor and for your unending passion for your community. We look forward to following El Paso's vibrant future and know that it holds many more creative successes.

Stay Creative,

Creative Class Group

Transformation

INTRODUCTION

The ability to compete and prosper in the global economy no longer depends on access to natural resources, raw materials, or flows of capital. It is the ability to create that fosters innovation and sustainable economic growth, and the power to create lies in the hands of individuals. Whether creating new ideas, new business models, new cultural forms, new technologies, or whole new industries, creative capital is driving the world economy.

But creative individuals cannot exist in a vacuum; there must be technology, institutions, and organizations for them to leverage in order to achieve their fullest potential.

In *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Richard Florida demonstrated that in today's global economy, growth and prosperity turn on the "3 Ts of Economic Development": Technology, Talent, and Tolerance.

Talent and technology have been recognized as fundamental bases for development but tolerance – a place's openness to new people and new ideas – is also critical in generating the underlying social and cultural conditions that form the "ecosystem characteristics" of a truly successful creative economy. These three elements are crucial to economic success in the Creative Economy. And it is the stock and flows of the 3 Ts that determines where creative and talented people choose to locate.

Countries and regions and their leaders and citizens, must therefore cultivate a diverse climate that nurtures and leverages creativity in all its forms. This is achieved by ensuring that technology, talent, and tolerance (inclusiveness) are all part of their economic outlook and strategies. Moreover, research has shown that creative workers prefer to be near one another and within localities that score high across the 3 T's of Economic Development. In order to attract and retain the flow of talented workers that now circulate regionally and globally, leaders must be aware of the 3 Ts.

This report and the material contained in it are intended to assist private and public leaders and citizens concerned with the future of the El Paso region within a creative economy dominated by regions and global mega-regions. The report will present El Paso's CCLP initiatives and place them in the context of the creative economy and the region's strategic positioning.

Initiatives

THE CATALYSTS GOALS & INITIATIVES

When the thirty catalysts departed the two-day event in El Paso they had the basic ideas and goals in mind for initiatives to increase the quality of place in and around El Paso. This would not only serve the current residents of El Paso and the surrounding region, but also make the El Paso region more attractive to the creative class. After much reading, analysis of data, discussion, and questioning, the catalysts brainstormed and then voted on a handful of initiatives.

The goal of the CCLP and the catalysts who volunteered their time and efforts for over a year were laid out by the catalysts themselves and their supporters during the early part of the project. The goals were influenced by the catalysts research, discussions, and interactions during the two day event:

- Empower members of the community to act as creative Change Agents so that positive initiatives may be implemented to make El Paso more sensitive and receptive to the latent creativity of its population;
- Create cross-cultural development through use of public spaces in the El Paso-Ciudad Juarez Border Region;
- Foster economic development and prosperity for residents on both sides of the Texas- Mexico border by focusing on the region's assets, which include its binational culture, creative talent, and unique diversity;
- Increase awareness of the need for binational and multidisciplinary solutions to improve the quality of life and strengthen our border city communities;
- Encourage cooperation and teamwork to enhance and expand cultural opportunities in the border region

Initiatives

EL PASO CIUDAD JUAREZ BINATIONAL DESIGN COMPETITION

This project creatively links the largest international border metroplex in North American through urban planning, architecture, public art, and public spaces.

The team put on the first ever El Paso Ciudad Juarez Binational Design Competition; attracted internationally renowned judges, and attracted entrants from schools such as UC Berkeley, the Chicago School of Art, and UTEP.

The binational nature of the initiative was crucial to helping achieve the goal of reframing the border and publicizing the positive economic and cultural impacts of the border metroplex. The initiative successfully increased the dialogue between the people of the tow cities and was able to assemble a great group of partners including governments, non-profits, universities, individuals, and corporations.

This initiative established, in a very firm way the importance of El Paso making use of its location strategically and using the metroplex as strength for improvements in quality of place and sustainable economic growth. Moreover, the competition and its entries leave physical representation and inspiration for others in the El Paso region as the creative economy continues to evolve.

EL PASO EX PATRIATE INITIATIVE (FORMERLY NEW TEXICO)

Perhaps nothing is more important than talent in the creative economy as it is human creativity that provides new ideas, cultural forms, scientific discoveries, new ventures, and policy breakthroughs that push progress and sustainable growth. The understanding that attracting and retaining talent is a battle that cities and regions engaged in led to the EL Paso Expatriate Initiative.

Many of the catalysts had left El Paso at some point in their lives and understood from the research that more were leaving than were staying.

Originally conceived of as an initiative to 'rebrand' El Paso to a global audience of creative class members, the team members came to realize that a more targeted initiative would be more sustainable and effective.

The goal of The El Paso Expatriate Initiative is to increase the ties between the El Paso region and those El Pasoans living elsewhere. This initiatives strength lies in its focus on expatriates in the battle for talent and making use of the extensive networks that connect current El Paso residents and expatriates.

Initiatives

The team is currently completing surveys of El Paso expatriates to further understand what creative class members are looking for and to better understand ways of connecting El Paso to creative class members throughout the region, the state, the country, and into Mexico.

DIGITAL EL PASO

Digital El Paso brings together the El Paso, Juarez, and Southern New Mexico tech communities to create a network of resources and regional technology assets. The initiative recognized that El Paso's unique geography gives it access to global companies with growing needs for a pipeline of technology professionals and resources.

Digital El Paso will provide enabling tools, training and infrastructure – including free wireless hotspots in downtown areas - to support the growth of technology based populations and industries in the region and will support and advocate area technology professionals and businesses.

It began with four groups joining together to enable the vision. The outcome is approximately a 1.5 square mile proof of concept area funded by the City of El Paso, El Paso County, El Paso Independent School District, and the Housing Authority of the City of El Paso. Wifi is live in downtown El Paso!

Digital El Paso is a much expanded collaborative core group comprised of state & local government, education and private sector partners and brings the commitment and support of each of their sponsoring organizations. They are focused using the proof of concept site to identify local needs and develop a solid business case for a citywide wireless to make the Digital El Paso vision a larger reality.

The collaborative group recognizes that the three building blocks for a successful Digital El Paso are affordable community-wide Internet access, access to computers, training programs in computer and financial literacy, and relevant local content. These elements have the potential to position our workforce to compete in the global economy. The group is collaboratively working on specific projects to support all of these objectives.

The initiative will continue to expand its partnerships, expand the reach of the wifi network, computers refurbishment and distribution programs.

The Digital El Paso initiative has achieved a great amount in a short period of time and makes a bold statement that El Paso and its leaders are pushing into the Creative Economy and making sure that the creativity of as many El Pasoans as possible, whether school children or small business owners, can be supported and strengthened.

Initiatives

T³ (T-CUBED) MENTORING

The T³ (affectionately known as T cubed) Mentoring Program represents training, tolerance, and talent. This multi-national mentoring/education program will be implemented throughout “New Texico” and will target schools, government, chambers of commerce, law enforcement, policymakers, and other organizations.

Age groups to be targeted include: elementary, middle, and high school; college; after college; those who never attended college and wanted to do so; those who attended college and never completed the curriculum.

This initiative has expanded beyond the initial group that attended to two-day event and has also done a great job in communicating with and partnering with groups such as the US Holocaust Memorial, DC; Paso del Norte Foundation; Fort Bliss; Chambers of Commerce; City Council; The University of Texas at El Paso; El Paso Community College; Border Patrol and other law enforcement agencies; local non-profit, healthcare, and business groups; the clergy.

The leadership of the initiative has done a great job in communicating the goals of the program and the economic and social benefits to having an open and tolerant El Paso region; from increased creativity (one of the core benefits of a tolerant and supportive environment) to an attractive climate for creatives residing elsewhere, the T3 team has built a structure and curriculum for transforming the EL Paso region into one of the most open in the region. This is crucial to a region that is bi-national and tri-state, not to mention home to many different ethnic communities, international organizations, architectural styles, members of the military, and students from across the world.

Tolerance and the benefits that come with it are by no means guaranteed by El Paso’s membership in a bi-national metroplex. The catalysts and the T3 initiative have recognized that.

BORDER WRAP

Perhaps no national political issue is as complex, misunderstood, and volatile as that of the border and immigration. Because of this, the El Paso region, its leaders, and citizens have a great chance to reframe the debate and bring a

Initiatives

dose of reality to those Americans and Mexicans who do not live on or near the border.

The team has locked into a cohesive vision for a feasible project that would introduce sculptures and other works of art along an easily accessible stretch of desert in between in the University of Texas at El Paso and I-10. This land currently has a stigma associated with it since it was donated to UTEP by ASARCO- a local lead smelting plant. Therefore, it has remained underutilized for years. The sculpture garden would transform this land into a regionally unique open space experience in that the design preserves the natural integrity of the rugged desert terrain while remaining in the center of El Paso. Additionally, the garden would incorporate the unique Bhutanese architecture that UTEP is already known for and contributions from each of the six colleges at the University. By involving university students, innovation and sustainability are better provided for than by a totally private initiative.

Next, a design scheme will be developed followed by a call for projects for the public art portion of the Border Canvas. Once a design scheme is agreed upon, funding sources will be approached for donations; meanwhile, other monetary sources will be identified such as grants and philanthropy groups.

Border Wrap is well on its way to becoming a reality and putting El Paso, its neighbors, and citizens in a position to strengthen the border region and take a leading role in highlighting the benefits on openness across borders and integrated peoples, businesses, and citizens. This model is congruent with the creative economy and sustainable economic growth.

4 Ts Talent

El Paso's Talent

The driving force behind any economic strategy is talent people. We live in a more mobile age than ever before with creative talent moving around a lot. A community's ability to attract and retain talent is the defining issue of the creative age.

Creative Human Capital: More than 64,000 Creative workers comprise 25.4% of El Paso's workforce – compared to approximately 30% nationally. El Paso's Creative workforce contributes \$3.2 billion dollars annually to regional economy. In the last five years, El Paso's Creative Workforce has decreased .38% annually, while El Paso's Creative Class salaries have increased 4.6%.

Skilled Workers: Approximately 17% of El Paso's workforce has at least a college degree (BA and Above), which is significantly below the national average (27.4%). An estimated 5.6% of Noosa's workforce has a graduate or advanced degree compared to 9.9% nationally

Brian Gain/ Drain: While El Paso's median age (30.9) is significantly younger than the national average (36.2), the region scores well below the U.S. average on the Brain Gain/ Drain Index. El Paso attracts and retains talent (0.43) at half the national rate (0.88)

University Presence: For every 1,000 residents, El Paso has approximately 48 post-secondary students (62 nationally) and 1.84 institutions per 100,000 residents (29.3 nationally).

4 Ts Tolerance

El Paso's Tolerance

Economic prosperity relies on cultural, entrepreneurial, civic, scientific, and artistic creativity. Creative workers with these talents need communities, organizations, and peers that are open to new ideas and different people. Places receptive to immigration, alternative lifestyles, and new views on social status and power structures will benefit significantly in the creative age.

% of Non-Black and Non White Community: Nineteen percent of El Paso residents are non-black and non-white, compared to 12.2% U.S. average.

Melting Pot Index: Approximately 27% of El Paso residents are foreign born – more than twice the national average (12%). El Paso has a significant Hispanic community; more than 82% of El Paso residents are Hispanic, compared to 14.2% nationally.

Gay and Lesbian Index: El Paso's Gay and Lesbian community is smaller than the U.S. national average. On the Gay and Lesbian index, El Paso scores 0.70, compared to the U.S. average of 0.92.

Bohemian Index: On a measure of creative, artistic professionals, El Paso scores .75 on the Bohemian Index, slightly below the U.S. average (0.79).

4 Ts Technology

El Paso's Technology

Technology and innovation are critical components of a community or organization's ability to drive economic growth. Successful communities and organizations must have avenues for transferring research, ideas and innovation into marketable and sustainable products. Universities are paramount to this and provide a key hub institution of the creative age.

Total Patents: El Paso filed for 711 patents in 2004, compared to the U.S. average of 1,652. Per capita (1,000 residents), El Paso had 0.07 patents (.64 patents nationally).

Positive Patent Growth: From 2000 to 2004, El Paso's patent growth increased 13.1% -- much higher the national average (1.4%).

Techpole Index: El Paso's technology industry is much smaller than the national average. On the Milken Index, El Paso scored 0.03, compared to the U.S. national average of 1.4.

4 Ts Territory Assets

El Paso's Territory Assets

Place matters more than ever before. Territory assets are the natural, built, and psychological setting of the community. It is the distinct “vibe” that makes communities unique from one other. People want to live in communities that are unique and inspiring to them.

Own to Rent Ratio: Nationwide, the rent-to-own ratio is 2.04. In El Paso, the ratio is much lower – 1.58.

Crime Per 1,000 Residents: For every 1,000 residents, El Paso had 35.9 total crimes (4.91 violent crimes) – compared to 40.9 nationally. El Paso's

Short Commute: El Paso's average commuting time is 21.1 minutes – approximately 3 minutes short than the average national commuting time.

Arts Present: El Paso has approximately 128 arts establishments (0.18 per 1,000 residents) with an estimated 1,972 arts workers (2.78 per 1,000 residents). In addition, El Paso has more than 500 parks and recreational workers, according to American's for the Arts.

Conclusion

El Paso's Overall Indicators

Our list of overall indicators is provides a traditional barometer of a community's economic performance with Creative economy measures.

Population Growth: In the last five years, El Paso's population has increased nearly 1% (0.83) annually – a little less than the national average (1.08%).

Steady Job Growth: In the past five years, El Paso's annual job growth (1.72%) has more than doubled the national average (0.69%).

Firm Growth: El Paso significantly trails the national average in firm growth. From 2000 to 2004, El Paso experience a 0.20% annual increase compared to 1.11% nationally.

Mean Household Income Growth: While the national mean household income decreased 0.29% annually from 2000 to 2004, El Paso's mean household income increased 6.41% each year.

Housing Values Growth: From 2000 to 2004, El Paso's housing values increased 1.42% annually (average) compared to 5.08% nationally.

Catalysts

Thank you to the catalysts who have committed their time, resources and passion to moving El Paso forward. Your energy and enthusiasm is stellar.

Dr. Stanley Ball
Dr. John Bretting
Amit Kumar Ghosh
Susie Byrd
Veronica Castro
Peter Cooper
Frédéric Dalbin
Elizabeth Leighton Dahl
Alix Nicole Duchouquette
Veronica Escobar
Carlos Gallinar
Michael Guerra
Sergio Guerrero
Enrique Valadez
Rene Hurtado
Steven Ingle
Betty Jaraba
Eileen Karlsruher
Edward McCormick
Marina Monsisvais
Manuel Pacillas
Pete Parraz
Morris Pittle
Gwendolyn Lizette Pulido
Carolyne Redic
Carol Roberts-Spence
Selena N. Solis
Dr. Michael Tomor
Barbara Walker
Dr. Julie Wong

Supporters

The Creative Cities Leadership Project is made possible through the generous sponsorship from the following organizations. Thank you for your support!

