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***Global theory and local practice in the planning of a cultural district:
Social networks in the Seaport redevelopment in Halifax***

Abstract

A case study of a redevelopment project in Halifax, Nova Scotia, illustrates the way in which creative governance facilitated collaboration and innovation in a region with a history of poor inter-governmental relations and fierce urban-rural rivalries. Thick local social networks, influential civic entrepreneurs, and the pervasive aura of the “creative cities” discourse provided an opportunity to bring the resources of three levels of government together to support the planning and development of a “cultural district” on the Halifax waterfront.

Reforming the development agenda

In recent years Canadian cities have embraced an international discourse that sees cities as key sites for innovation and economic development (Bradford, 2004a; Savitch and Kantor, 2002; Scott, 2006). Richard Florida (2002, 2005) popularized and expanded on the work of earlier economists and urbanists (eg, Jacobs, 1969, 1984; Logan and Molotch, 1987) to draw increasing attention to the role of cities and city regions in an era where service industries and creative endeavours drive economic growth. The focus on cities as the dynamos of the new knowledge economy has given civic authorities in larger municipalities an opportunity to boost an urban agenda in ways not previously feasible (Donald, 2005; Wolfe, 2003). Higher levels of government are finally taking cities seriously and considering new approaches to economic development. Long treated as “creatures of the provinces” (Magnusson, 2005), cities are seeking renewed government investment and recognition (Andrew, 2001; Lorinc, 2006).

Halifax, Nova Scotia, the largest city on the Atlantic coast of Canada, has seen incremental changes in its economy over the last decade, but a dramatic shift in development philosophy. The legacy of economic development planning in Nova Scotia traditionally pitted urban against rural interests (Beck, 1973; Lang, 1972; Hodge and Robinson, 2001). Until the 1990s, industrialization and resource extraction strategies dominated development policies (Savoie, 1986). A conservative political culture that privileged the interests of rural regions (Brym, 1979; Evans, 2005) left Halifax to fend for itself in promoting development until the 1990s. The emergence of a post-industrial economy challenged many of the premises of economic development in Canada, and has led to reappraisal of the philosophy that informs practice.

By the 1990s, provincial governments had begun to see cities in a new light. In 1996, the province amalgamated the cities of Halifax and Dartmouth, the town of Bedford, and the rural county into the Halifax Regional Municipality, known locally as HRM. The Greater Halifax Partnership, a public-private agency created in 1996 to facilitate development in the municipality, branded Halifax as a “smart city” and actively pursued new opportunities in the creative and knowledge sectors (GHP, 2007). In 2004, the Partnership and the Halifax Downtown Business Corporation brought Richard Florida to Halifax to speak to a sold-out audience of more than 600 civic leaders and community members as the Partnership released a study it had commissioned using Florida’s creativity indicators (Gertler and Vinodrai, 2004; GHP, 2004). Florida’s appearance reflected the ascendancy of many of his ideas in the development philosophy of the city region.

Under the leadership of influential community and business representatives, HRM prepared and adopted *Strategies for Success*, an economic development strategy that presumes that the city is competing in a global economy where “interdependency and partnership is a central theme” in local success (HRM, 2005: 7). The “creative class” agenda has become the development credo, as the strategy notes:

“Growth today depends on access to knowledge and our ability to innovate and adapt. More specifically, successful growth is about smart communities attracting and retaining smart people. In a world economy centered on talented people, what’s important is being a place where the best and the brightest want to live.” (HRM 2005: 8)

The integrated planning and delivery of services required to stimulate growth in a creative economy necessitates improved inter-governmental collaboration. The economic strategy suggests that

“Retooling a city’s economy requires teamwork, not rigid bureaucracies and petty turf wars. Working together toward common goals allows all partners in our community, government agencies, non-profits, postsecondary institutions, and business to fully leverage their efforts. The end result: everyone works faster and more nimbly to get the biggest bang for their economic development dollars.” (HRM, 2005: 15)

In some ways *Strategies for Success* builds on the lessons derived from a collaborative redevelopment project underway in the city: some of the key innovators in the Seaport redevelopment project participated in the advisory committee HRM assembled. This paper briefly examines the social and professional networks engaged and theory applied to planning and developing a cultural district in Halifax, Nova Scotia. We argue that the globalizing theory of the creative city provided a framework within which “civic entrepreneurs” – that is, community leaders who catalyze innovation (Wolfe and Gertler, 2004: 1088) -- and their local social networks facilitated intergovernmental collaboration. Dynamic civic entrepreneurs ready to seize opportunities and thick social networks that streamlined communications and partnerships enabled new collaborative relationships that resulted in consensus around desirable options for development. Whether such creative governance becomes a new *modus operandi* remains to be seen, but it clearly

inspired local government in Halifax to try to influence the future rules of the economic development game.

We begin by describing our research method and then review development practices in Halifax. A case study of the Seaport redevelopment provides insight into the strategies used to facilitate collaboration between the federal and municipal governments through the agency of a cultural institution funded by the provincial government. The Seaport redevelopment stands as a model of the kind of creative governance mechanism local development authorities hope to see become commonplace in Halifax.

Development past and future

As part of a national study examining how the social dynamics of city regions shape innovative and creative capacity we conducted interviews with people involved in economic, social and cultural development in Halifax in the summer of 2006.¹ Questions focussed on the inter-relationships between and among government agencies, departments, and associations involved in development activities. The research sought to determine whether new mechanisms of associative governance may be developing in pursuit of economic objectives linked to the creative cities agenda.

For the Halifax case study we interviewed 14 representatives of associations involved with economic, social or cultural development, and 13 representatives of government departments at municipal, provincial and federal levels. Based on the results of those interviews, we selected a particular development project to identify individuals for a further four interviews, bringing the total to 31 respondents. Interviews followed a prepared set of questions, took approximately one hour each, and were recorded and transcribed for analysis. To complement the interviews we reviewed local plans, reports, and other documentary material related to the themes explored.

When asked, “To what extent, and how well, do the three levels of government work together in your local region or community”, most respondents thought things could be better. A provincial government representative suggested that relations with the federal government are not always productive, leading the province to look to the private sector and associations for collaboration:

[3-G-11] The feds aren't bad. There are tonnes of challenges when you deal with them. They're an Ottawa-based operation. They are annoying to deal with on most occasions, because they look down upon you and say, “well, you're just Nova Scotia, who cares”, or, “you're doing things nobody else in doing, like your partnership council, like what is that?” Right, we're saying *that* is the future. Um, you know, we, we try to relate to private, to the private world and to philanthropists and try to encourage them to stay at the table with us.

Responses from association representatives described a lack of communication and coordination between the three levels of government, and even a degree of competition.

¹ The research project ... [proper citation to come] The study is examining 15 cities of varying sizes across Canada.

[3-A-8] So, I think that is often a problem in trying to make things happen is that you're just dealing with three levels of government that all operate in very different ways -- that may or may not talk to each other, and may or may not even get along. We certainly have the sense that HRM has often been at odds with the provincial government, and so that kind of frosty relationship comes up.

[3-A-13] Q: *How do the three levels of government work together to promote innovation and development in the region?* Poorly, very poorly....The three by and large – in my own observation -- very much work in isolation of each other, and, more times than not, in competition with each other.

Those interviewed supported the growing consensus that economic development comes through enhancing creative industries and requires collaboration between a wide range of agencies and government departments. A government respondent revealed the challenge that understanding presents.

[3-G-5] There's a report that came out this week that talked about the importance of port cities. Halifax was one of nine hub cities. We talk about cities being key economic drivers -- it affects the rest of the province. Halifax has, frankly, been booming in the last couple of years. The HRM has about 40 to 50% of our provincial GDP, but that is an economic drawback. It is what it is. That doesn't always play itself out well from a political point of view. You know with 14 or 15 political seats in the HRM, if you are a political party, your constituency is from the HRM, that's all. That's just from a policy point of view.

In recent elections voters in the city of Halifax have elected New Democratic and Liberal members to the provincial legislature and to Ottawa. With both national and provincial minority governments led by Conservatives, urban interests in Halifax have limited influence. A strong legacy of clientelism and patronage politics in Nova Scotia (MacLeod, 2006; Simpson 1988) led respondents to see Halifax as wielding slim political power in a context where the federal and provincial governments play important roles in the local economy (Antoft and Novack, 1998; Wolfe, 2003) but offer limited formal mechanisms for engaging with local governments (Berdahl, 2004).

Regional politics may undermine opportunities for collaboration within Halifax. Several respondents described a rural-urban divide that rendered political leaders more interested in rural constituencies than in urban issues. A federal government representative expressed it well, beginning first by discussing the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (the federal economic development arm):

[3-G-4] The official mandate of ACOA is rural development. Sorry, I should rephrase that a little bit: it's *community* development, but that's always been interpreted as rural development. So its initiatives are rurally-based. The main community funding body-- the Innovative Communities Fund, ICF-- is limited to rural Nova Scotia. You can't use those funds in the City of Halifax, the thought of ACOA being that Halifax is doing very well on its own, it doesn't need federal money. The Province of Nova Scotia, the Office of Economic Development which is responsible for it, has exactly the same focus. And the political mandate is driven by a Premier and a cabinet who all come from rural Nova Scotia. The City of Halifax has almost no representation in the Provincial Government, so if there's a decision between developing Antigonish or Yarmouth and developing Halifax, you know which one they're going to pick.

Even within the municipality, rural councillors hold a majority on council. In recent years council took responsibility for approving planning projects in the downtown area away from Halifax peninsula councillors, ensuring that a regional perspective governs planning in the city centre (Grant, 2007). Establishing an urban agenda has proven contentious.

While most respondents suggested that insufficient inter-governmental collaboration presented a barrier to development in Halifax, several respondents pointed to two successful examples of cooperation to create innovative projects in the city. The projects cited reflect the importance of informal intergovernmental relations (Johns, O'Reilly and Inwood, 2007) and demonstrate the rising significance of private-public partnerships in development promotion in the region. A provincial government agency respondent described how the region secured a new operations centre for the technology company, Research in Motion.

[3-G-5] Let me give you an example: Research in Motion (RIM). We had identified them as a potential target. We spent about two months last fall working absolutely insane hours. We had a very aggressive timeline to make a decision on where the next big expansion was going to be. We really wanted the company because for one, who they are and two, the number of jobs that it would create, but also the spin-off and potential for growth. ... When you do these things, you really have to understand there's a whole look at behind the scenes: who to talk to, at what point and where you engage in with another organization, the feds, the province. So we put together an organization called Team Nova Scotia. We looked at 20 to 25 organizations and individuals who we felt were critical to be on board in order to make this deal happen. That included everything from the actual power and infrastructure point of view to Aliant (from a Teleco point of view) to an organization who understood real estate. The Premier was a big part. We put him on a charter plane, flew him to Waterloo where the CEO is. We had to send the message that this was absolutely critical to us. And there were many other organizations that we engaged in loosely to form Team Nova Scotia. What that did was send a very powerful message to RIM that, "geez, those guys and gals in Nova Scotia got their stuff together." Everybody is singing from the same song sheet.

Nova Scotia Business Inc, a private-sector-led provincial investment arm created to develop the province, led the deal to bring RIM to Nova Scotia (NSBI, 2007; Province of Nova Scotia, 2006). The RIM centre, with the potential for more than 1000 jobs, opened in Bedford in 2006. While the province describes the "Team Nova Scotia" approach as aligning business, government and academic interests (Province of Nova Scotia, 2007), it appears that other levels of government played a minor role in securing the project.

The second project cited by several respondents as an example of innovation involved three levels of government in some capacity, although not as equal partners. The Seaport Redevelopment² created a plan for the re-use of underutilized portions of the Halifax Port lands. The federal agency managing the Port hired consultants who led an initiative to plan for a "cultural district" and improved facilities for cruise ships. Richard Florida's ideas about creative cities figured explicitly in the project. In the midst of the discussions Florida gave a public lecture in Halifax. An association respondent involved in the arts described the context of the project:

² This project began as the "Seawall" redevelopment but the Port "rebranded" it in 2006.

[3-A-7] ...they've looked at models like the Harbourfront Centre in Toronto and Granville Island in Vancouver and said we think this will be a positive addition to Halifax and not only that, it will make us money. The [Port] isn't interested in charity; they're interested in doing things that are going to be an investment for them; that is going to be a good return for them. They're not personally going to be developing this area a lot of it, some of it they are, but they are looking for the right partners to come down and develop it. They have a certain venue for arts and culture. ... So you're going to have the museum down there which already existed but they're expanding, you're going to have a large convention centre, the Cunard Centre which was just built there, which is an open space. And word on the street is they are going the Nova Scotia Designer Craft Council, the market and winter markets down there.... Their whole focus is on [culture] and I think that in itself takes all of what all the other cities have recognized and creates an economic catalyst and sets up the position for it to happen.

To try to understand how inter-governmental collaboration worked in this case when most respondents felt frustrated by the barriers between governments, we conducted interviews with principals involved in the Seaport Redevelopment project and reviewed related documents. We learned that project planning began with the hiring of consultants and release of a redevelopment plan in 2003 (Zeidler et al, 2003). By 2006 an events centre opened and in 2007 a new educational campus operated on part of the site. In the next section we explore how the necessary partnerships and permissions came together to facilitate the rapid planning and development of a cultural district.

A creative collaboration

Since the 1980s, cities across the world have pursued waterfront redevelopment as former port lands have become economically redundant (Gordon, 1997). Once important sites of production, historic waterfronts increasingly serve as venues of consumption (Norcliffe, Bassett, Hoare, 1996).

Given the success of the Port in moving its project from concept to reality within a two-year period, it seems the federal agency responsible for managing land in the Port of Halifax learned many of the lessons of earlier developers. Gordon's (1997) analysis of four major waterfront projects indicated that major political battles meant that projects took five to 10 years to complete. Gordon argued that developers can be more successful by managing the start up process, building consensus, and understanding local dynamics. He identified establishing good relationships with local governments, creating public benefits through the project (eg, parks, access), and being ready to change the program of the physical plan to adapt to new priorities as harbingers of success. These features characterized planning for the Port cultural district project.

Sheds 20-23 on the Halifax harbour are part of a 7.5 hectare site that the Port identified as underutilized and targeted for a waterfront destination project to "bookend" the southern portion of the Halifax waterfront. The site already housed a national immigration museum, low-cost studios for artists and artisans, and facilities for disembarking cruise ship passengers. The Port hired a local project architect who partnered with a Toronto architect to prepare a concept plan that envisioned a "creativity zone" that might make "a breeding place for Halifax's new creative workforce" (Zeidler et al, 2003: 10). The plan

suggested relocating the provincial natural history museum and a not-for-profit science museum to the site to create a museum precinct. To implement the plan, the Port needed support from the province to relocate the museum, but respondents indicated that negotiations with the province moved slowly. To build support for the redevelopment the consultants launched a public consultation process in late 2003: through that, new partnerships took root and the redevelopment moved rapidly to fruition.

The Port had a new president³ appointed out of the private sector and ready to instruct staff to try new methods of achieving the Port's aims. Several respondents identified the Port president as a key source of innovation in enabling the project. Clearly, though, the consultants hired played a major role in promoting the creative cities agenda.

A local project architect put together a multi-disciplinary team for the proposal. The team included local landscape architects who regularly work with the project architect, and new partners from Toronto selected for their expertise. As the project architect noted,

[3-X-3] The Port put out a request for proposals for the redevelopment plan almost four years ago. They were looking for people who had a similar experience, companies who have had a similar experience, not just planning but with a development plan. That was important to them because they had centered it around the idea of adaptive re-use of what had been freight sheds into new uses. So it had to make economic sense too. We sought out the [Toronto architect] because they have been involved in waterfront redevelopment projects all over the world. They are an international firm: very reputable, lots of depth of experience in this kind of work. We formed a collaboration: essentially a 50 / 50 collaboration to do the Master Plan. It took us about a year to develop this. They were the ones that first introduced us to Richard Florida and to similar projects that they had been involved in in Toronto.

While the redevelopment plan does not mention Richard Florida, creative cities ideas permeated the development of the project. The project architect described the connections.

[3-x-3] [The Toronto architect] had been a big follower of Florida for some years and they crossed paths. I don't know if it was in Pittsburgh or Baltimore or somewhere around there; they had crossed paths on earlier work. So [the Toronto architect] was a big fan and a proponent and he also got the idea of cultural development of being right for the Port and that's recognized and developed in the plan, in terms of where it could be heading and creative zone development. He saw it already working in Toronto and other places. So he was the one who said, "This could really work in Halifax." I think he's right on and even [the cultural institution] just kind of followed.

The Toronto architect brought in a consultant developer to help to implement the project. To make the project happen the Port needed other levels of governments for anchor tenants and for transportation improvements to the downtown core. The consultant developer became a key enabler.

[3-X-3] The fellow who was key to the development as time went on is still here... [the consultant developer] who [the Toronto architect] brought in. He was an individual who had worked on a number of projects with [the Toronto architect] in the past, again all over the world. He was the vice president of [a major developer] and he's a developer's

³ We have changed some job titles and institutional names to try to obscure the identity of key individuals in the networks.

developer. He has done similar projects from a developer's perspective. So he continues to be the advisor to the Port on implementing the development plan.

The consultant developer recognized the need to develop local consensus around the project:

[3-X-4] ... in Halifax, one of the things that is really important for us about that project is that first of all I think you need to understand the context. Federal agencies like the [Port] have no obligation to seek municipal approval with what to do with their lands. However, and I will credit the enlightenment of the [president] of the [Port], we decided that we would seek input from the public and we did that in two ways. One was to actually identify stakeholders: I mean, I consider everyone a stakeholder, but to identify individuals or organizations that had an active stake in the place, either by virtue of being users of the space or being the kinds of occupiers of space that we wanted in the long term. Service organizations, community groups, you name it. Anybody that we felt represented a vested interest, we interviewed. I think, it's been a few years, but I think we did about 150 interviews and then we went to the public.

At one of those public consultation meetings the president of a cultural education institution attended. The institution was looking for space to expand and frustrated with the slow pace of negotiations with the Waterfront Development Corporation for another site. The president, seen as an innovator by several respondents interviewed from the cultural sector, stopped to chat with the consultant developer about the prospects for collaboration. A respondent from the cultural education institution described what happened.

[3-X-2] We established that was a desirable location for [the cultural institution]. The space was 70,000 square feet. At that time, they were just developing the Master Plan and coming up with the idea of developing that area and calling the Seaport a cultural district. So they saw [us] as a very important tenant in order to make that district work, to make it cook, to have the right complement of people and activity going on. [The consultant developer] was the first person to see us as the first stepping-stone ... [and] wrote a report that got us into the first level of discussion.

The province had already guaranteed the cultural institution funding for a new waterfront campus. The project now had the key tenant it needed to proceed, bringing the province in "by the back door". The cultural institution, tied closely to the municipal council through the president's involvement with the Cultural Advisory Committee, urged that the Port work with the municipality to secure planning permissions for the project. To make a campus work in this location, students would need access to improved public transit (provided by the municipality): improved transportation links would enhance the overall viability of the cultural district project. Once invited by the Port, the HRM planning department and transportation planning department both became involved in the planning for the project.

The role of the network

Competing interests regarding waterfront redevelopment require unique compromises (Gordon, 1997; Hoyle, 2000). In the Halifax context, that required that consultants accepted local desires to maintain a historic working port (Hoyle, 1999; HRM, 2000), and that the project retain studio space for artists (Halifax Seaport, 2007). As the consultant

developer brought in to facilitate the project noted, the Port recognized earlier problems the provincial Waterfront Development Corporation had experienced in developing its holdings in Halifax.

[3-X-4] The other thing that we did that was really interesting was we actually went through the process of getting a development agreement for the first phase of the project. We actually went through the process voluntarily with the regional municipality. And part of the reason that we did that was that we saw that there had been...the Waterfront Development had tried to do what, we should say, didn't move as easily as it might. There was never a meeting of the minds between the Waterfront Development and the HRM. And we felt that we would be much better served if we had HRM on our side. I think that was a really important thing to do because the support we've from the HRM on our side for our initiatives has been huge. It's starting to pay off in areas like public transportation. Because we have worked with them on the whole concept plan and we went through the whole process of a development application for [the cultural institution] and the changes we were making in that building. We did a full transportation study for them. That level of cooperation manifested itself, that spirit of working together, that transportation study: it's not a commitment, but it's an undertaking on their part.

As a federal agency, “a government business enterprise” (Port of Halifax, 2005: online), the Port had the power to pursue its project without participation from other governments, but it understood that collaboration would better serve its ends. Municipal staff supported the project, and urged revising the municipal plan for the area to accommodate the new uses. Because the cultural institution needed speedy approval to get into its new campus, however, the Port decided not to wait for a new local plan. Collaboration engendered goodwill that the Port expects to return lasting benefits.

The consultant developer suggested that collaboration drove innovation by avoiding the compromises that can undermine project viability. When asked what role collaboration played in the project, he replied:

[3-X-4] Huge, huge -- because if the public was against what we were doing or if the HRM was against what we were doing, we would be running into roadblocks. What I think has happened because we really did put the underpinning in place was to get people on board right away. We've had no resistance. The worst thing a developer can have is resistance...from the public or different levels of government because that can slow you down and especially if you've already started to spend money. You know what makes the economics of development work is that once you start to spend money you start to get revenue quickly. So once you start to spend you want to make sure that all of your permits are in place because that is the last thing you want to slow you down. For that reason, we have been able to move swiftly.

Through an open competition, the cultural institution retained an architect to design its Port campus. The campus architect selected had previously designed a house for a president of the institution; the architect's child attended school with the institution's project liaison, who explained:

[3-X-2] That turned out to be a very pleasant association. But it didn't taint it.

The project architect, who had also bid on the campus design with another Toronto architecture firm, was sanguine about the influence of social networks in design commissions.

[3-X-3] We were after the [campus] job and didn't get it because [the campus architect] had a previous relationship with the president of [the cultural institution] and he was the favoured son. You know, it's as simple as that.

Innovations associated with making the Seaport Redevelopment possible reveal a thick web of mutually reinforcing social and professional associations operating both within the Halifax local context and within and across the professional design field. As the consultant developer explained, professionals coming into the local context “from away” rely on their connections to respected local designers to smooth their way in the community.

[3-X-4] I think development has to do so much with what happens locally: I mean the public and what the public think, how they trust people. Government is local. You would always as a developer, develop a way to partner with someone locally. So that's what happens a lot with firms. [The Toronto architect], for example, would be going into somewhere like Halifax and would always have a local partner. Somebody who knows the way things work. But the local partner may not have the broadest of experience. So what you're trying to do is combine that kind of big thinking with local knowledge, credibility: the ability to make people feel comfortable. I mean anytime I sit up on a stage at a public meeting, I always have [the local project architect] beside me because I'm the guy “from away” with all these grand, wild ideas, but with [the project architect] beside me they trust him because he's from there or he's done it before. He's not going to let it get out of hand. That's the best balance.

Previous social and professional collaborations enhanced confidence and trust, and linked personal relationships with professional networks. Figure 1 illustrates the key players our interviews identified in the social network that facilitated the Seaport Redevelopment. In a relatively small community like Halifax key innovators or civic entrepreneurs like the leaders of the institutions who participated in the project can create opportunities to bring other government partners into a collaborative process. Enablers -- like the consultant developer and the staff persons tasked with making the project happen -- took the ideas and ran with implementation.

[Figure 1 goes about here]

The role of theory

In development, timing is everything. In the Seaport project, a theorist who never sat at the table influenced the direction and pace of the redevelopment. By the time project planning began, Richard Florida's theories about the creative class and creative cities were influencing the urban agenda in Halifax. In Wolfe and Gertler's (2004) terms, “local buzz” was reinforcing “global pipelines” transferring development philosophies to the region. HRM's economic development plan and its cultural plan were headed towards identifying creative cluster opportunities (HRM, 2005, 2006).

One government respondent suggested that many people were “grabbing onto the Richard Florida concept” [3-G-10]. Another said:

[3-G-11] So, I think in a way, like culture is on everybody's agenda now. It's not some frivolous little side-bar in society. It's become a cornerstone to growth. You know, some

people say well, “the four pillars of society”. You know, there were three, now there’s four: education, health, social security, well guess what, culture. Culture has become important. ... and we’re seeing within Nova Scotia, we’re saying “culture’s good”, and people are saying “yes it is”, and they’re rising up through it. That’s why what he’s saying –what Richard Florida is saying -- is so important.

The Greater Halifax Partnership saw in Richard Florida the means to influence public opinion about economic development. It commissioned a study to apply Florida’s ideas to Halifax and invited Florida to Halifax to give a presentation in January 2004 (GHP, 2004; Gertler and Vinodrai, 2004). A rapt audience found Florida inspirational. As the project architect for the Port explained,

[3-X-3] And it was [the Toronto architect] who first mentioned Richard Florida to the Port and to us. He said, “You’ve got to see this guy,” and just by coincidence, a couple of months after he said that Florida was in town...so yeah, terrific timing. And Florida really opened all of our eyes up to the potential.

The staff project liaison for the cultural institution felt that Richard Florida really helped to sell the idea of a cultural district to the government partners.

[3-X-2] We just found this whole arts and culture idea to be so in a way very foreign to them. It’s not part of the business of a port, an arts and cultural district. It was a very odd idea; it kind of didn’t really fit with their institutional personality at all. So it’s really amazing that they took it on. They deserve a lot of kudos for taking that on. ... Also this seems to have happened at a time in Halifax where the timing is right because of this city’s interest in developing a cultural environment and Richard Florida just visited the city two years ago, the timing seemed right. If it had been five years ago, people would have not been interested. It would have never been in the people at the Port’s frame of reference. But this is a fairly well documented idea, the idea about harnessing creative spaces, a generator of activity, all those things that make a neighbourhood grow.

Although Tummers (2006) argues that Halifax should not rely on Richard Florida’s ideas for growth, the genie is already out of the bottle. The Port advertises its “planned new cluster of cultural industries, special events and institutions” (Port of Halifax, 2005). The Greater Halifax Partnership is actively promoting the HRM economic plan and assiduously selling Halifax as a “smart city” (GHP, 2007).

Planning for innovation

In planning for innovation, those concerned with substantive policy and outcomes ask, do intergovernmental relations impede or enhance the achievement of policy objectives (Cameron and Simeon, 2002)? Savitch and Kantor (2002: 38) argue that “Political systems that allow for vertical integration among cities, regions, provinces, and national government will enhance opportunities for achieving policy objectives”. Creative governance mechanisms may facilitate collaboration where conventional strategies have failed (Healey, 1997). Innovative outcomes may require new relationships between government agencies of the kind seen in the Seaport project.

By working outside usual procedures the Port ensured that an initiative with widespread support in the cultural development community moved forward in a timely way. Required by its mandate to generate revenues, the Port side-stepped the usual inter-

governmental protocols and innovated in establishing creative governance mechanisms to enable its project to get off the ground. Achieving such collaboration would have been harder for a line department that might not willingly sacrifice its superior position in the governmental hierarchy by offering to share decision-making.

The Port's efforts to bring the province to the table around relocating the museum proved unproductive; perhaps the province viewed the Port's project as a competitor to its own Waterfront Development Corporation interests. Divergent agendas within provincial departments, however, created a "back door" for provincial participation. Through the agency of a cultural broker (the president of the cultural institution) the province's resources became a lynchpin of the project. The same individual employed personal and professional contacts with municipal councillors to bring the municipality in as an enabler. The president of the Port and the president of the cultural institution served together on the Economic Strategy Advisory Committee for HRM, helping to frame the municipal economic development plan (HRM, 2005). Thus we can see some of the ways that influential civic entrepreneurs, their social networks and philosophical dispositions advanced the agenda of creative urban development in Halifax through innovative projects and planning activities. Whether the Seaport collaboration was an opportunistic outlier or whether it offers a glimpse of future directions for redevelopment in Halifax remains a question of continuing debate.

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Figure 1: Links in the Seaport Redevelopment Network

