4.1 Inventory Tourism and Cultural Assets

5 Points | 10 Points | 15 Points | 20 Points

Action Updates

This action was last updated in 2024. The previous version of this action is available for comparison. Edits are highlighted in yellow.

Objective

Create maps and resources and implement projects to promote your community's tourism and cultural assets, including places, institutions, programs, historical resources, and people.

What to Do

1. Create a Tourism and Cultural Asset Inventory

   The more you do, the more points you earn.

   a. Identify potential tourism and cultural assets, including institutions, locations, programs, and organizations in your community. You may work regionally to complete any or all of the tourism and cultural asset inventory. **(10 points)**

   Identify the following information for each potential tourism and cultural asset:

   - A general description of the asset;
   - Location of the asset and website;
   - For venues only: a detailed description of the venue, seating capacity, and availability; and
   - Type of asset: identify category.

   Using the identified assets, create public online resource that enables the community to search, learn and use the information generated on the assets (for example, an interactive and searchable map). You may use mapping, Excel, or any other database to compile tourism and cultural assets. We recommend that you sort the assets by category (tourism attraction, lodging, historic sites, museums, galleries, restaurants, shopping, events, etc.). You may opt to include the categories that are relevant and important to your town. You should determine how often the web resource will be updated (for instance, seasonally) and who will be responsible for doing so.

   Note: Please ensure that more than one type of cultural asset is accounted for in your inventory and public online resource. Potential tourism and cultural assets could include (but are not limited to) historically significant buildings; works of art; gardens, parks, or other tracts of the natural environment; historic landmarks; viewsheds; public spaces; and significant venues.

   Submit: A completed worksheet; a hyperlink and screenshot to the finished web-based resource. If the inventory and resource were created or updated more than three years ago, also include a brief description of how they are still relevant and used by the municipality.

   b. ***Note:*** Sub-action 4.1.1b requires the completion of sub-action 4.1.1a. Promote the public online resource through municipal communication channels. **(5 points)**

Submit: Evidence of promotion and dissemination of the resource in the last three years (via e-mail, an in-person convening, or other channels).

2. Update Your Profile on CTVisit **(5 points)**

   Update and maintain your municipal profile on the CTVisit website. On the CTVisit website, link relevant social media platforms for your city or town (like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube). ***Note:*** Your CTVisit site may not be utilized to satisfy your cultural asset map. Maintain the content, images, and functioning links periodically and provide the date that your CTVisit profile was most recently updated.

   Submit: A hyperlink and a screenshot of your municipal profile.

Engaging Partners

Sustainable CT encourages regional collaboration and other forms of partnership. For every action, please complete the "Partners" box in your submission, indicating the name(s) of any municipalities and/or organizations you partnered with (if any) and a brief description of your municipality's role. If you collaborate with other municipalities, each community will receive points. For additional information, please see the "Partners Guidance Document".

Potential Municipal and Community Collaborators

Staff from the following municipal departments could be helpful in implementing this action: planning and zoning, parks and recreation, library, and economic development.

In addition, the following committees, community groups or agencies could help implement this action: historic district commission, planning and zoning commission, cultural affairs commission, business improvement district, main street association, regional arts alliances, historical societies, house museums, museums, art galleries, artists/designers, historic/artistic movie theaters, restaurant association, merchants associations, etc. Broad and diverse representation from the community should be included on the tourism and cultural asset mapping exercise.

Funding

If available, below are potential funding sources specific to this Action. For a complete listing of potential funding opportunities to assist with implementing Sustainable CT Actions, please visit the Sustainable CT Grants Portal, which is searchable by Action. Please also visit the Support for Your Town page for opportunities for technical assistance and other supports.

- Urban Act Grant Program
- Sustainable CT Community Match Fund
- State Funding Readiness Project

Resources

Toolkits, Calculators, Guidance Documents, General Information

- D.I.Y. Creative Placemaking, "An Introduction to Cultural Asset Mapping"
- Metropolitan Area Planning Council, "Arts and Planning Toolkit"
- 2010 Legacies Now and Creative City Network of Canada, "Cultural Mapping Toolkit"
- Create your complimentary listing page on CTvisit.com

Organizations and Relevant Programs

- CTVisit
- CT Department of Economic and Community Development, Office of the Arts
- CT Department of Economic and Community Development, Office of Tourism
- CT Department of Economic and Community Development, State Historic Preservation Office
- AdvanceCT (formerly the Connecticut Economic Resource Center, CERC)
- Designated Regional Service Organizations

Benefits

Tourism and cultural asset mapping provides a collective inventory of the positive and valued aspects of a community, including places, institutions, programs, and people. Recognizing that resources constantly change, your tourism and cultural asset map will need to be regularly reviewed and updated.

By mapping tourism and cultural assets and making the map freely available to the public, your town will:

- Assist creatively inclined people in locating and identifying each other;
- Enhance its reputation as a culturally (and, if applicable) ethnically diverse community;
- Positively impact municipal planning by including community assets, such as employment centers and transportation, in the map, which provides insight into opportunities where arts, tourism, and culture investments can be strengthened and/or concentrated;
- Enable municipal planners, nonprofits, and developers to more easily integrate arts, tourism, and culture into economic development and housing projects, by revealing how your unique assets relate to larger data sets;
- Enhance the likelihood of foot traffic and tourism/visitation to the community;
- Mobilize your citizens to engage and celebrate the area's creative strengths;
- Increase community participation in outdoor and indoor spaces;
- Aid town organization, thus making it easier to collaborate, apply for grants, and evaluate public health and public safety projects and initiatives;
- Make organizations and individuals known to the public outside your community, which will:
    - Build connections nationally between regions, and/or
    - Promote interest in your municipality from outside communities.
- Promote a diverse array of partnerships and collaborations such as between: real estate/economic development, artistic/creative programming, asset-based marketing, and funder/capacity building partnerships.

According to the CT Department of Economic and Community Development's Office of the Arts, the arts are integral to building and unifying our communities, "63% believe the arts lift them up beyond everyday experiences; 73% believe the arts are a positive experience in a troubled world; 62% believe that the arts help them understand other cultures better; and 67% believe the arts unify their communities regardless of age, race, and ethnicity."

CT Success Stories

- Guilford - Oct 2022 Certification
- Stonington - Oct 2022 Certification
- Chester - Sep 2023 Certification
- Bristol - Sep 2023 Certification
- New Haven - Sep 2023 Certification
- Barkhamsted - May 2024 Certification
- Greenwich - Oct 2024 Certification
- Milford - Oct 2024 Certification
- West Hartford - Oct 2024 Certification
- Norwalk - May 2025 Certification