



***SMART CITY / COOL CITY:
ATTRACTING AND RETAINING
TALENTED AND CREATIVE WORKERS IN HALIFAX***

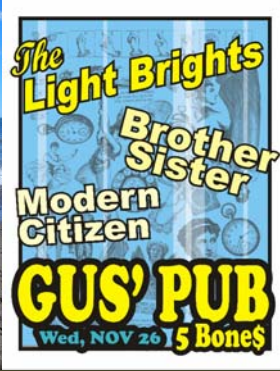
JILL L GRANT and KARIN KRONSTAL

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF PLANNING

30 April 2009

ISRN 11th Annual Meeting, Halifax NS

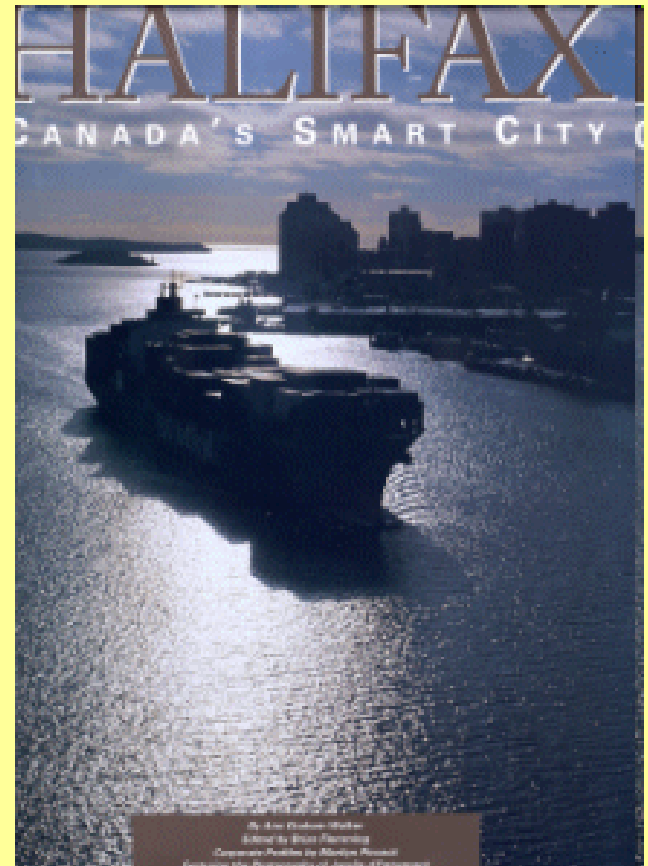


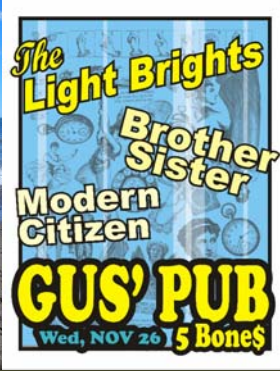
Background:

Halifax Regional Municipality created in 1996: area the size of Prince Edward Island; population 372,000

Economy driven by government, military, health care, education, port activities, tourism

Six universities: attracting students from across Canada





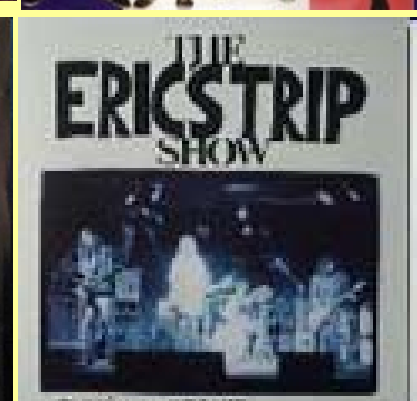
From disadvantaged to “interesting”:

In the 1990s Halifax’s economy and reputation changed

Unemployment declined, tourism increased, university enrolments climbed

Government investment in waterfront and other improvements

Halifax seen as a “cool city”; indie music scene





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Census information indicates that Halifax has a higher proportion of creative workers in its workforce than Canada as a whole

	2001	2006
Halifax	37.4%	38.0%
Canada	29.2%	33.2%

People migrate to Halifax from other provinces [middle band in graphs]. The rate of in-migration of creative workers as a proportion of total workers is decreasing.

Figure 6.3 - In-migration of creative workers between 1996 & 2001

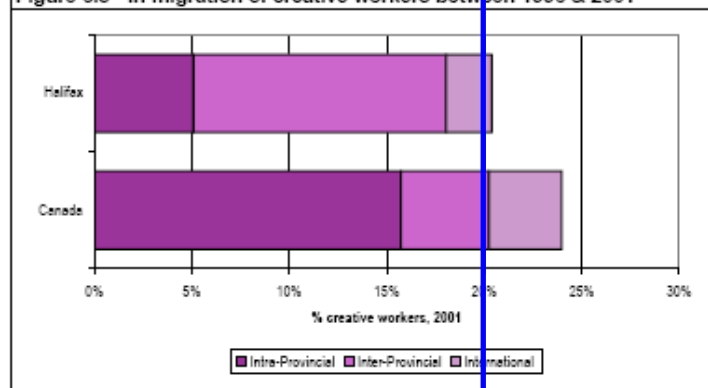


Figure 6.3 - In-migration of creative workers between 2001 & 2006



20%



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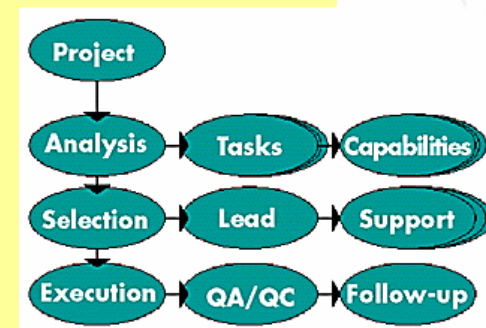


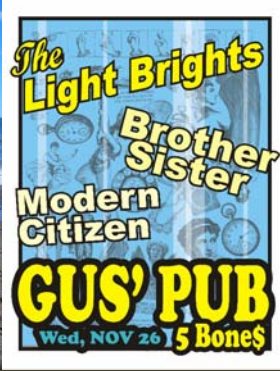
What factors affect the ability of Halifax to attract and retain talented and creative workers?

We profiled three sectors: health research, music, and built environment consulting

In 2008 we conducted 26 interviews with 28 individuals:

- 16 male, 12 female
- 13 creative workers, 7 employer/supervisors, 8 intermediary organisation reps





Common factors across sectors:

Beautiful natural setting, access to nature

Quality of life in the city:
affordability, ease of commuting

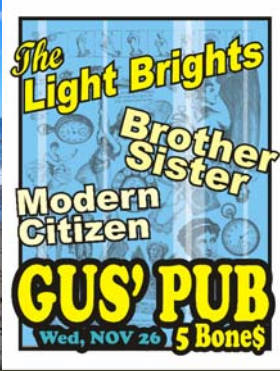
Size of the city: "just right"

Vibrant arts and culture; night life
and music scene

Good international connections

Cluster of universities





Social factors attracting people to Halifax:

Attachment to place

Friendly, welcoming city

Good place to raise a family

“Small pond”; opportunity to be known and appreciated





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Social factors common to research sector and music sector:

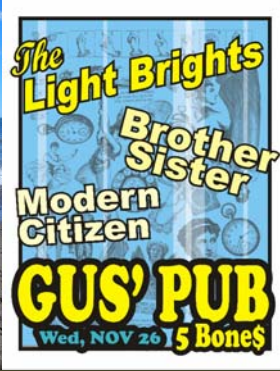
Collegial, collaborative, and supportive work environment within sector

Making do with limited resources: “can do” attitude

Small community enables serendipitous encounters



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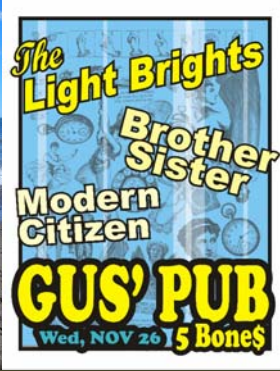
Barriers or challenges to attracting and retaining talent:

Conservative place; politics and bureaucracy

Need to go away for success within profession

Limited size of local market





Issues highlighted by development intermediaries:

Initiatives to encourage immigrants and business to come

Inclusionary hiring practices for police and fire departments

Creating a social network group for young professionals

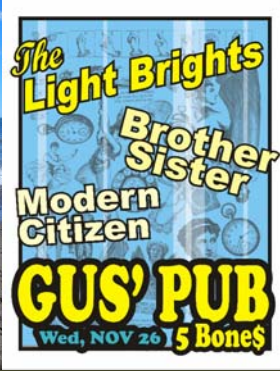
Good regional infrastructure

Problems: taxes, low salaries



"Sgt. Atwell says she has experienced racism and sexism since she was hired as a constable in 1993."

http://robynatwell.com/officer_alleges_police_racism_co.htm



Issues particular to the health research sector:

Doing leading edge work

“Punching above our weight”

Collegial work environment

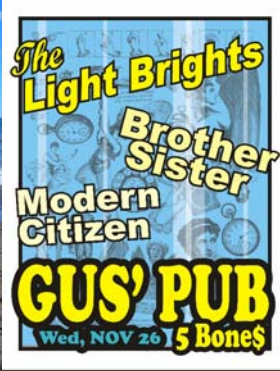
Affordable housing

Attractive city and environs

Problems: Hard to keep “high flyers”; local grads need to go away for experience

Halifax is small enough that you tend to know most people who are doing work like you're doing. ...my boss would say it's because we're under-resourced in this region, that ... we're able to do a lot with very little. And we're able to pool our skills and pool our ideas and resources. There is that willingness to work together and to collaborate. And that's maybe just the Nova Scotia way. I mean you may not see that in other big cities, but we're small and we can do it, and there's a willingness to do it, so we do.

[Health research worker]



Issues particular to the music sector:

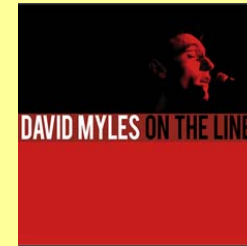
Supportive, welcoming, and creative music community

Artistic community: NSCAD University, North End scene

University students for audiences;
Venues for live music

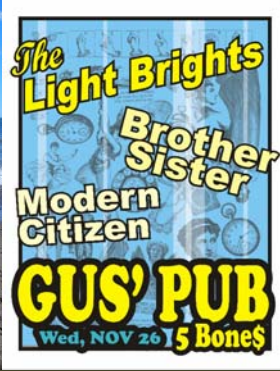
Affordable housing and rehearsal space; provincial government funding

Problems: lack of music industry professionals; size of market



[David Myles] was recording at the Sonic Temple, and the engineer kept saying, “I need someone to come in and do some slide guitar on this”. He was like, “Oh that sounds cool”. The next day a guy shows up: it’s Joel Plaskett! Joel plays slide guitar, for no money... Then all of a sudden, this whole parade: Jill Barber’s coming in, Matt Mays is coming in, and all these great players are coming in. They’re all doing it for nothing. We’re doing it because the art is what matters.

[Music intermediary]



Issues particular to the built environment consulting sector:

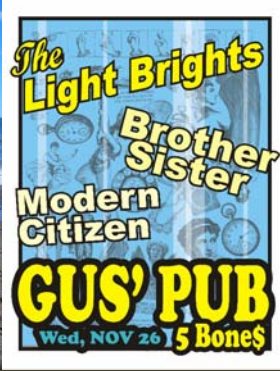
Natural and built environment attractive

Able to attract people to “come back to Nova Scotia”

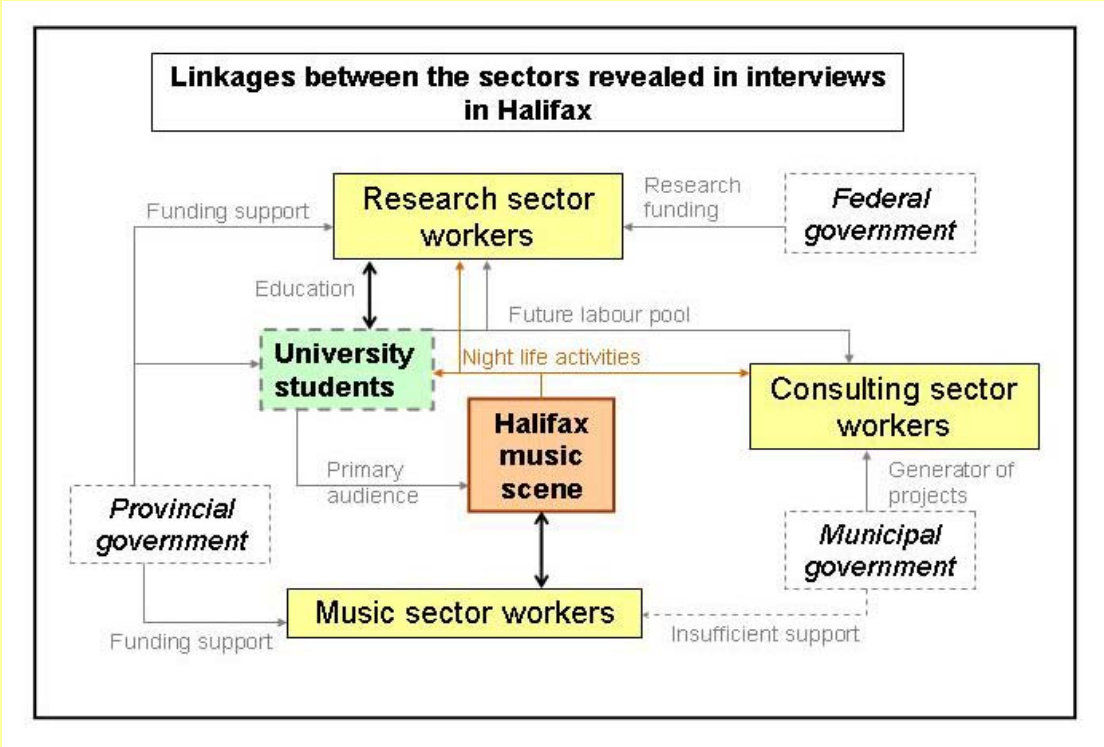
Problems: some skills in short supply, limited opportunities for creative work, salaries not competitive

Most people want to stay here, unless they're a young graduate who needed to go away for the experience and wants to come back. And it still seems quite prevalent that you're considered a much more important contribution if you've gone away and come back. In planning or in lots of other fields, Ontario has the most money, the most jobs. Go to Ontario; get your feet wet; see what you see there; come back. And you bring a lot of added value with you. That happens quite a bit.

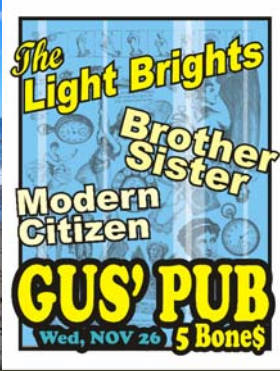
[Consultant employer]



Smart City/ Cool City: Halifax is an important centre of innovation and creativity for music and for research. The success of the sectors is linked.



The vitality of the Halifax music scene attracts university students and young workers to Halifax. The university students provide reliable audiences for the music scene and a talent pool for the research and consulting sectors.



Tolerance and diversity did not emerge as an important theme for respondents in Halifax. The city is seen as having limited diversity and some lingering racism, but respondents categorized their own sectors as tolerant and the city as welcoming.

The need for greater job opportunities for those graduating from local universities and for the spouses or partners of new hires did arise as a concern.

Sat. July 19, 2003

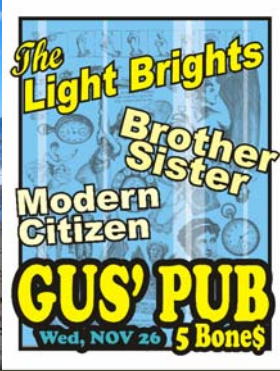
Grand Marshalls:
Nicky & Sue Perkins,
Kevin Bourassa
& Joe Varnell



HALIFAX
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SHOW YOUR COLORS

1:30 p.m.





Questions or comments?

The authors are grateful to Jeff Haggett, Jesse Morton, Aaron Pettman, and Rebecca Butler for their assistance with data collection.

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Dr David Wolfe is Principal Investigator of the project "Social Dynamics of Economic Innovation"



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