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Mapping Culture in the Waterloo Region: Exploring Dispersed Cultural Communities and Clustered Cultural Scenes in a Medium-sized City Region

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Article abstract

Currently undergoing rapid growth due primarily to a thriving tech sector, the Waterloo Region is increasingly concerned with the attraction and retention of key labour talent. Aspects of the creative economy, such as vibrant cultural scenes, nightlife, public spaces, and leisure amenities have been specifically identified by key stakeholders as vital to the continued growth and success of the region. While creative people certainly live and work in the Waterloo Region, labour shortages linked to challenges of worker attraction and retention indicate that the current talent base is not sufficient to meet regional economic needs. In this article, we engage critically with creative economy typologies which have been taken up in local cultural planning and explore some of the gaps and oversights that such 'one-size-fits-all' creative city models have in medium-sized post-industrial urban centres. Analyzed through the lens of cultural mapping methodologies, the region offers a valuable case study as it works to rebrand itself, altering its cultural fortunes through concerted city-building efforts.

Mapping Culture in the Waterloo Region:
Exploring Dispersed Cultural Communities and Clustered Cultural Scenes in a Medium-sized City Region

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Abstract: Currently undergoing rapid growth due primarily to a thriving tech sector, the Waterloo Region is increasingly concerned with the attraction and retention of key labour talent. Aspects of the creative economy, such as vibrant cultural scenes, nightlife, public spaces, and leisure amenities have been specifically identified by key stakeholders as vital to the continued growth and success of the region. While creative people certainly live and work in the Waterloo Region, labour shortages linked to challenges of worker attraction and retention indicate that the current talent base is not sufficient to meet regional economic needs. In this article, we engage critically with creative economy typologies which have been taken up in local cultural planning and explore some of the gaps and oversights that such 'one-size-fits-all' creative city models have in medium-sized post-industrial urban centres. Analyzed through the lens of cultural mapping methodologies, the region offers a valuable case study as it works to rebrand itself, altering its cultural fortunes through concerted city-building efforts.

Keywords: cultural mapping, scenes, liveability, urban planning, vibrancy

Résumé : La région de Waterloo est préoccupée et ce, de manière croissante, par l'attraction et la rétention d'une main-d'œuvre qualifiée en raison notamment de son prolifique secteur des technologies. Les aspects culturels de l'économie créative tels une vie culturelle riche, la vie nocturne, les espaces publics et les équipements de loisirs ont été identifiés comme des éléments essentiels par les parties-prenantes de la région comme des éléments essentiels au succès de la région. Alors que des acteurs de l'économie créative résident effectivement dans la région de Waterloo, la pénurie de main-d'œuvre associée aux défis de l'attractivité et à la rétention du talent laissent entendre que les efforts actuels sont insuffisants pour rencontrer les besoins de la région. Dans cet article, les typologies de l'économie créative d'usage dans la planification culturelle locale seront abordées afin de mettre en relief les failles et lacunes de certains modèles peu adaptés aux espaces urbains de taille moyenne et aux centres urbains de type post-industriel. En se basant sur la méthodologie de la cartographie culturelle, cette étude

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de cas de la région offre plusieurs constats utiles à la compréhension des stratégies de production d'image de marque au niveau régional.

Mots clé : cartographie culturelle, scènes culturelles, habitabilité, planification urbaine, dynamisme

Introduction

The Regional Municipality of Waterloo is located in Southern Ontario, Canada approximately 100 kilometres west of Toronto. It consists of the cities of Kitchener, Cambridge, and Waterloo, and the townships of Wellesley, Woolwich, Wilmot, and North Dumfries. The region's governing body is the 16-member Waterloo Regional Council composed of the Regional Chair, eight directly elected Regional Councillors, and the mayors of the municipalities. The Council is responsible for the overall planning of the Region including development strategy, management of regional sewage and water, regional roads, transportation, and emergency management. As well, the Council has co-ordination oversight for fire services, health, and welfare services. Each municipality claims a unique a culture and maintains authority over its own affairs including setting priorities for local business growth, talent attraction and retention, tourism, and marketing. This creates tensions between the municipalities and the regional council in the realm of economic development and growth strategy (Nelles 2012).
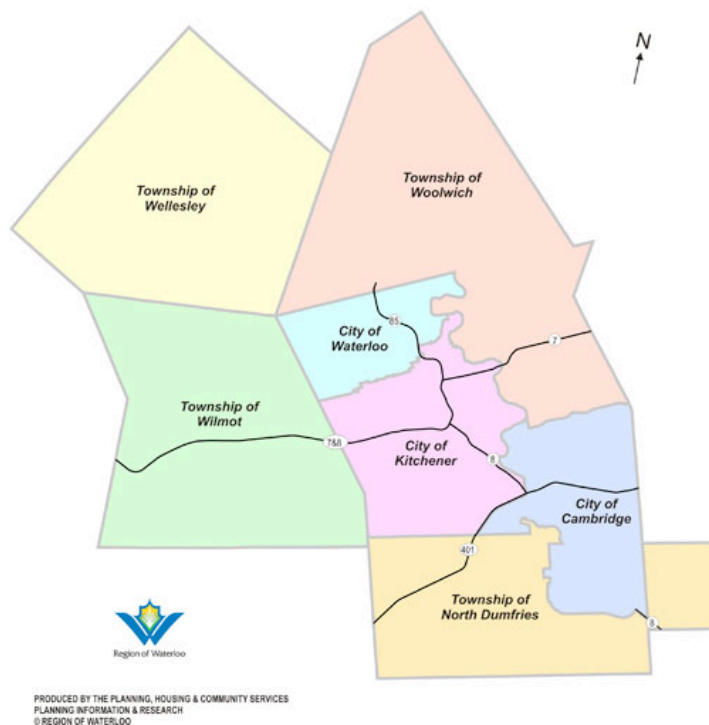
Figure 1. Map of Waterloo Region (Region of Waterloo – Planning, Housing and Community Services Department, n.d.)

Historically, the region was primarily agricultural with a large number of German Mennonite immigrants, and a strong German heritage tradition that continues today as reflected in the Kitchener Waterloo Oktoberfest. Held annually, it is the largest Oktoberfest in the world after Munich. In recent years, the corridor between Toronto and Waterloo has also developed a strong reputation for being the 'silicon valley' of Canada with more high tech companies and new technology startups than any other region in Canada, and the University of Waterloo is often referred to as the 'MIT of Canada'. An estimated one-third of Waterloo's graduating software engineers receive job offers from U.S. companies, and executives from Silicon Valley firms such as Google regularly hold networking and recruiting events on the campus (Winter 2013). Toronto, which is seen as being much more cosmopolitan and culturally exciting, also lures graduates away from the region. This competition for talent poses a significant challenge to the region's economic development.

In March 2011, the Waterloo Region commissioned a study of barriers to attracting and retaining smart talent – that is, workers who could contribute to the development of the burgeoning technology sector as well as other complementary and related industry fields. The impetus for this comprehensive analysis was a consistent and chronic shortage of skilled high-tech sector workers in the region. The resulting report, *Waterloo Region Creative Talent Strategy* (Canada's Technology Triangle 2011), offered a list of regional assets deemed important to key talent attraction, as well as a gap analysis informed by a series of "Talent Attraction Labs" that had brought participants from target industries into small groups in order to elaborate on their personal experiences of the liveability of the Waterloo region. In particular, the report argued that the region lacked what we call 'stickiness', a concept used to describe and measure the ability of a city or region to not only attract, but also retain, key labour force talent. Some areas deemed essential to 'stickiness' were diversity, nightlife, art, entertainment, transit, and street planning. The areas identified in the study overlap well with received knowledge about the role of cultural vibrancy in the economic growth of urban areas. These vibrancy indicators do more than offer an indication of specific cultural events and spaces, but also a larger picture of the kinds of logistical requirements of liveable cities, such as public spaces, transportation infrastructure, leisure amenities, and clubs, bars, and restaurants.

Cultural development in the Waterloo region has historically been uneven, and has tended to favour heritage and traditional cultural institutions over more popular and diverse cultural scenes. Having identified this as a barrier to long-term economic growth, the Region and its largest municipalities (Waterloo, Kitchener, Cambridge) have invested aggressively in city-scaping, re-zoning, public transit infrastructure, bike lanes, parks, trails, festivals, cultural events, and collaborative work spaces. These investments have occurred in direct response to the identification of some very real social and cultural challenges to continued growth (Canada's Technology Triangle 2011). While creative people certainly live and work in the Waterloo Region, labour shortages linked to the problem of worker attraction and retention indicate that the current talent base is not sufficient to meet regional economic needs. Furthermore, in creative workforce surveys conducted by government and industry stakeholders in the region, a perceived lack of art, culture, and leisure amenities has been specifically articulated as barriers to labour recruitment. Many highly skilled workers continue to commute from the GTA where they feel that their families' cultural needs are better met (Canada's Technology Triangle 2011). In attempting to ameliorate

this, policymakers and industry stakeholders are not simply drawing blindly on creative city ideologies, but are more pragmatically engaging with an explicitly stated barrier to regional growth.

Emphases on the establishment of quantitative measures for the economic value of the arts and culture are part of a shift towards analysing this sector as an *industry cluster* (Hall & Donald 2012). It coincides with the increased use of the concept *creative economy*, a category that combines traditional arts practices and occupations with the cultural industries and other types of so-called creative occupations (Bain & McLean 2013; Flew 2012). However, mapping does not necessarily reinforce this quantitative, culture *as resource,* perspective. When used to plan, it can produce a more complex picture of arts and culture than economic statistics allow for. It is also conducive to participative planning, wherein community members are engaged in the identification and classification of local cultural spaces, activities, and resources.

Mapping is now routinely used for city planning and regional planning; for example, the Waterloo Region uses GIS software regularly as part of its monitoring and planning processes. Cultural assets are included in these kinds of mapping, often as they relate to economic development (Stewart 2007; Evans & Foord 2008; Kovacs 2011). Mapping is also used as part of the place marketing strategies of cities and regions. According to Nancy Duxbury (2012), as communities increasingly compete for skilled workers, "there is a growing importance of a sense of place, community attractiveness, and quality of life" (p. 161). In this context, mapping is not only a useful planning method, but also enables cities to communicate their cultural identity to current and future residents through strategic data visualization (Rowe 2012). Finally, mapping has also been taken up as a method for evaluating tangible and intangible heritage assets for the purposes of cultural preservation (Nemani 2012; Poole 2003).

In analyzing art and culture in the Waterloo Region using a cultural mapping methodology, we have found that cultural spaces fall into two very clear categories: dispersed and clustered. This means that some types of spaces follow a dispersed, community-based positioning, whereas other types of spaces cluster in the urban cores of the three cities (Uptown in Waterloo, Downtown in Kitchener, and the villages of Preston, Hespeler, and Galt in Cambridge[1]). This contrast between dispersed and clustered cultural consumption and production represents divergent approaches to cultural development, both of which contribute to a sense of place and inhabitants' feelings of belonging and vibrancy. In the instances where cultural infrastructure is dispersed, we see an investment in the cultures of neighbourhoods. Libraries, community centres, cultural clubs, and Legion halls[2] represent the types of community spaces that exist where people live. Clustered

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[1] Cambridge is an amalgamated city. As such it has three 'downtown' cores, Hespeler, Preston, and Galt, which were the former cities' commercial centres. Preston falls on King Street and as such is in line with downtown Kitchener and uptown Waterloo. Hespeler and Galt run roughly perpendicular across the bottom of King Street, with Hespeler on the northern edge of Cambridge and Galt on the southern end of the three cities. Cambridge is also the least integrated into the region as it is separated from Kitchener by a major highway and a river (unlike Kitchener and Waterloo which are separated only by residential streets). In this sense, Cambridge itself serves as an example of the difficulty of thinking in terms of 'regions' or even 'municipalities'.

[2] The Royal Canadian Legion is a non-profit, Veteran support and community organization. It is organized into local branches, of which the Waterloo Region has seven.

cultural locations, such as bars, nightclubs, and art galleries, are concentrated in the urban cores of the Region and can be understood as belonging to cultural scenes.

In popular discourses about art and culture scenes, all cultural uses of space are conflated and treated as undifferentiated aspects of cultural identity, with 'vibrant cultural scenes' used as shorthand to describe publicly visible and/or economically significant cultural infrastructure or production. In a letter to new constituents, Peter Braid, Conservative MP for Kitchener-Waterloo invoked 'scenes' as part of a discussion of vibrancy in the community,

> I know you will find this to be a friendly and vibrant community. Kitchener-Waterloo is at the forefront of the new knowledge economy, with world-class university and research institutions and innovative hi-tech companies. At the same time, our thriving arts and culture scene combined with our tradition of collaboration make this a great place to call home. (Braid, personal communication, January 2015)

This is the most common use of the invocation of 'scenes' and 'cultural vibrancy' as rhetorical shorthand to promote place-making. It is based, in part, on the pervasive acceptance of the economic value of arts and culture. However, this use of vibrant cultural scenes as shorthand for liveability and desirability of place can overshadow some of the financial challenges faced by artists and arts organizations. While political decision-makers and industry stakeholders are now quick to acknowledge the value of art and culture, this acknowledgement is often not followed with increased investment. Furthermore, the existence of a 'scene' can be difficult to substantiate. Cultural scenes can be generally defined as "overproductive signifying communities" in which cultural consumption is strongly linked to a specific social space and a linked common identity (Shank 1994, p. 122; Straw 2004, p. 412). So, we often speak of music scenes where particular cities (or usually neighbourhoods or even venues within cities) come to represent a particular musical community and moment of notable innovation. Scenes are not part of the ongoing infrastructure of provision of cultural spaces, but clusters of vibrant creative communities, which may fluctuate over time. They are frequently youth-dominated and involve crossovers between creative sectors (for example, in Toronto's Parkdale neighbourhood, there is a visual art, a music, and a hipster bar scene, which result in a noticeably vibrant nightlife).

Informing our analysis is the belief that people want to live in culturally interesting communities. This is part of a shift in urban planning towards models of the 'creative city' which position art and culture as significant components of the urban economy. According to Charles Landry (2008), the *creative city* concept is meant to offer an holistic approach to cultural development:

> It means overcoming deeply entrenched obstacles, many of which are in the mind and mindset, including thinking and operating within silos and operating hierarchically in departmental ghettos, or preferring to think in reductionist ways that break opportunities and problems into fragments rather than seeing the holistic and more interconnected picture. This is a precondition for good city-making. (p. xlix-xlx)

Landry's theory of the creative city, for which he also acts as a paid consultant, has come to define much of the place-making rhetoric of large cities. Importantly, however, with a total population of approximately half a million, the Waterloo Region cannot necessarily be understood according to creative city theories which have been developed with much larger urban centres in mind. Often, this approach is dependent upon the instrumentalization of art and culture as an aspect of economic development. However, policymakers (not to mention scholars) are also increasingly cynical about some of the place-making rhetoric of 'creative city' approaches developed by Landry and popularized in North America by Richard Florida, even as these approaches have risen to the top of many municipal and regional cultural planning agendas (Florida 2002, 2008; for a critique, see Kratke 2011). Indeed, as policymakers in small cities and mid-sized regions are increasingly aware, Florida's 'creative class' theory is not generalizable to all places everywhere, and the development of creative knowledge economies often requires community-specific approaches.

If we consider cultural scenes, any cultural scene, the main characteristic of the 'scene' is that the participants experience it as somehow 'authentic', as having emerged naturally through creative social interaction. Even though we know, intellectually or logically, that the conditions for many cultural scenes are actually put in place by policies, shifts in economies, or actual strategies of gentrification, there remains a nostalgic desire for art and culture to be something other than actively produced in a strategic or managerial way. This is a tension in regional cultural development that still merits further exploration. The region offers a valuable case study as it works to rebrand itself, altering its cultural fortunes through concerted city-building efforts.

A context for cultural mapping in the Waterloo Region

In 2008, the Region of Waterloo received a Department of Canadian Heritage grant with a mandate to engage in cultural mapping in order to establish a cultural information database for the purposes of ongoing cultural planning. Regional authorities contracted TCI Management Consultants to complete an in-depth mapping of the region including the cities of Cambridge, Kitchener, and Waterloo, as well as the Townships of North Dumfries, Wellesley, Wilmot, and Woolich. The final report for this study, *Waterloo Region Cultural Mapping* (TCI Management Consultants 2009), was optimistic about the continued relevance of cultural mapping as a policy tool and that the initial work mapping art and culture in the region would continue to be updated and expanded upon. The report references the *Cultural Mapping Toolkit* produced by the Creative City Network of Canada (Stewart 2007), as well as UNESCO's definition of cultural mapping. The project is therefore very much grounded in contemporary perspectives that promote mapping methodologies as vital to cultural understanding, preservation, and development.

The final report of the Region of Waterloo mapping project obtained data for four cultural asset groupings: 1) Places/Facilities; 2) Individuals/Small Groups; 3) Public Organizations; and 4) Private Businesses. The report focuses on formal arts (visual, performing, literary) and institutions (museums, galleries, theatres). Much of this data was available from the Waterloo Region Arts Council (WRAC), which had developed a Cultural Directory. Additional data was held by the regional and municipal governments, especially that related to heritage institutions and publicly owned facilities. Maps that were produced and publicly disseminated include: Cemeteries; Visual Artists; Musicians; Producing Organizations; and Theatres, Performing Arts Venues and Rehearsal

Spaces. The raw data was turned over to the Region of Waterloo, which regularly uses mapping software (ArcGIS) for planning purposes.

While this previous study had many challenges, and has to date not been well utilized as a framework for the continued and regular monitoring of art and culture in the Waterloo Region, there are still some important cursory conclusions that can be drawn from the data. One such finding is the distribution of visual artists and musicians in the region. This is in contrast to creative city theories where we would expect these groups to cluster in culturally vibrant neighbourhoods. In the Waterloo Region, these artists are actually evenly distributed, with concentrations roughly corresponding with population density. That is, in the Waterloo Region, in terms of where creative people are living, we do not see any particular area foci; creative people are dispersed throughout the Region, appearing in neighbourhoods in numbers appropriate to the area's population density (see Figure 2).
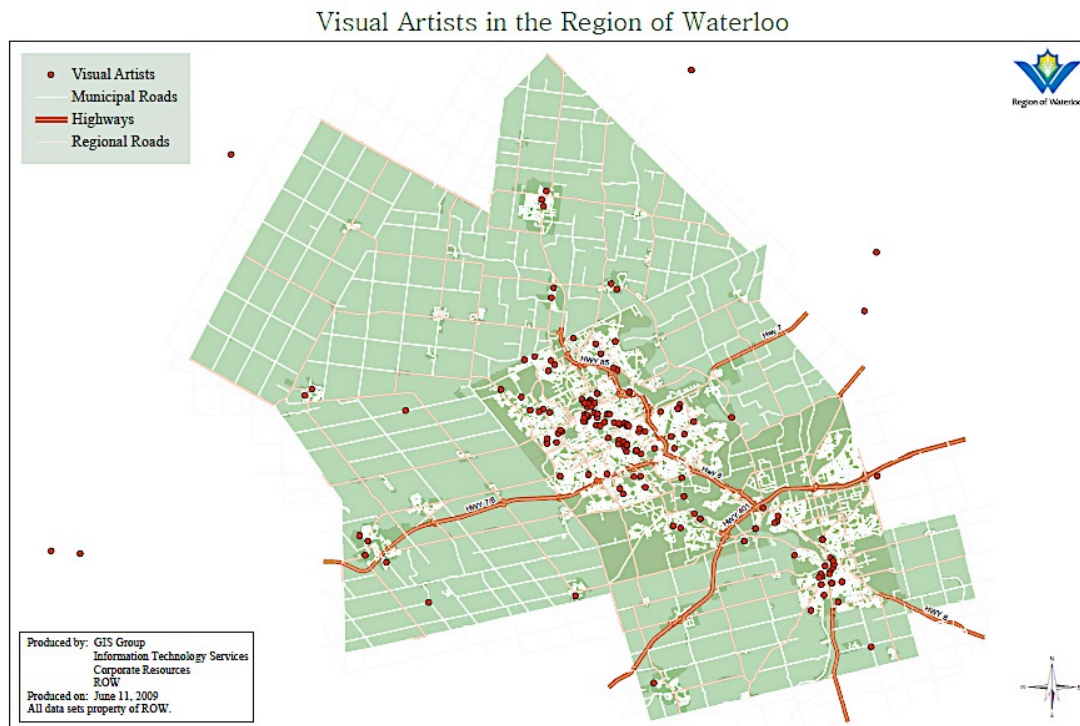

Figure 2. Visual Artists in the Waterloo Region (TCI Management Consultants 2009)

One possible reason for this distribution is property value, and offers an indication of some of the challenges faced by policymakers who attempt to apply creative city theories and cultural mapping methodologies to smaller urban contexts. As Myran Margulies Breitbart (2013) describes,

> The story has been retold in several versions. The most common scenario begins with a
> neighbourhood that may contain everything from less populated warehouse districts to
> low income and working class residential areas, but has seen better days. For a variety

of reasons, including a long period of disinvestment, the neighbourhood starts to attract
the quintessential starving artist in search of cheap living and working space. (p. 1)

Breitbart notes that, despite clear understandings of how mid-sized cities differ from large cities in terms of their abilities to support these types of arts- and culture-driven economic developments, medium-sized and even small cities are increasingly pursuing the creative economy as a solution to their economic growth woes. In large cities, creative clusters are often related to processes of gentrification whereby artists gravitate towards areas of the city with cheap work and living space, such as disused industrial areas. In the Waterloo Region, property remains relatively affordable, with 70% of inhabitants owning rather than renting their homes (Regional Municipality of Waterloo 2013). Another explanation may be that while young artists certainly tend to cluster into cultural scenes (such as Queen Street West in Toronto), it is increasingly acknowledged that creative workers live in many communities, including suburbs (Bain 2013). While the points of cultural production may tend to concentrate into scenes, large numbers of creative workers live outside of these spaces. The relationship between dispersion and clustering of spaces of cultural consumption will be discussed further in this article, as we have found these differentiations to be very noticeable in the case of cultural amenities in the Waterloo Region.

In the five years since the mapping study was completed, much of the data has remained dormant. Certain data sets, such as those related to Heritage, have been selected and updated on an as-needed basis. Others, such as the individual artist listings, have not. WRAC has since been disbanded and replaced with the Creative Enterprise Initiative (CEI), which has been gradually working to re-establish a digital, publicly available artist directory through its social media project Grand Social (www.grandsocial.ca). To date, this directory has succeeded in tracking many venues and public spaces, but still has not replicated the WRAC's individual artist directory that relates more to where people are living than where they are producing and consuming culture. CEI was created with the explicit mandate to develop and support art and culture in the region, specifically with the idea that such development is important for the region's 'liveability'. This engages very directly with the issue of regional talent attraction and retention. Culture is identified as a major asset or, in places where it is absent, a major barrier to the growth of the region. Through Grand Social, CEI has been crowd-sourcing the mapping of arts and culture in the region, promoting the website as a repository for information about individuals, events, and organizations. Users (both individual and organizational) have been encouraged to create accounts and place themselves onto the map of art and culture in the Region.

This digital mapping project, while it has succeeded in producing backend demographic data for CEI, has been primarily focused on creating usable information for end-users. That is, it is primarily a resource for consumers of culture – residents and visitors seeking event listings and related cultural services. The map itself has some technologically determined limitations. It does not offer the end-user any iconographic differentiations (places are marked by pinpoints which are currently all red) and data cannot be layered or otherwise manipulated for more advanced data visualization. These are the kinds of technological utilities that planners require when using mapped data. These limitations do not necessarily render the data significantly less useable for consumers, who often only require a data pinpoint, but when going to the 'Places' tab in Grand Social, the

initial spread of red pinpoints can be overwhelming for visitors to the site (see Figure 3). CEI and Grand Social are in the midst of a strategic mandate review and are in the process of consulting with stakeholders; an overhaul of the Grand Social website based upon the results of this consultation is very likely in the coming year.
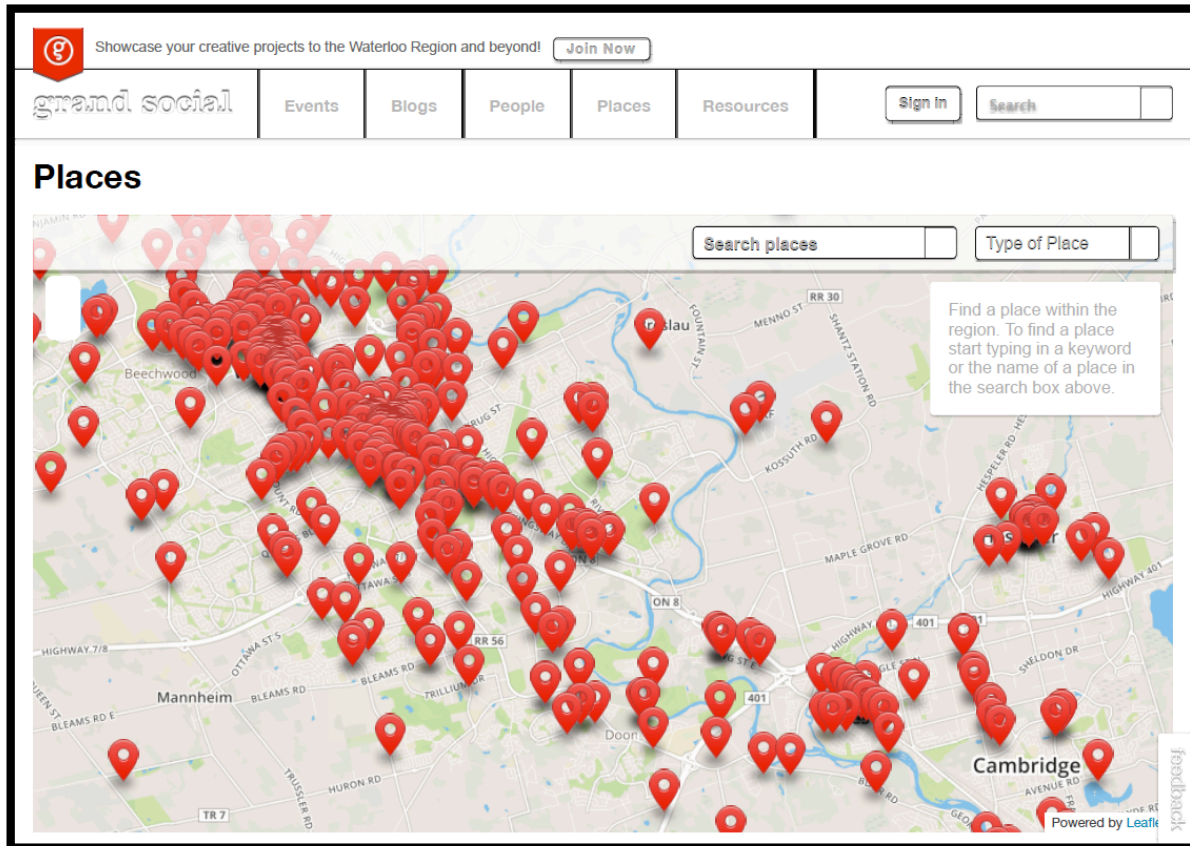

Figure 3. Grand Social Culture Map, 2014

One significant challenge for policymakers who had hoped to leverage the information acquired through Grand Social is that the data cannot be electronically linked with municipal and regional databases. It therefore does not automatically update. In order to share data, the information from the Grand Social map must be exported into a spreadsheet and then manually uploaded into the ArcGIS database. No department has a mandate to undertake this process, especially due to the fact that the crowd-sourced data is sometime inaccurate and must therefore undergo a process of careful curation. So while the grant obtained by CEI to produce the map was premised on a partnership with the region and municipalities who also wanted cultural mapping to be completed alongside new culture plans, the data has not been as accessible as originally envisioned. The initial idea was that the Grand Social map could be used by everyone; however, in practice it has been difficult for policymakers to take advantage of this crowd-sourced data. As part of our research partnership, the authors engaged in some curation and translation of this mapped data, removing extraneous entries, re-categorizing venues into specific types, adding venues and organizations that were excluded from the initial data (for example, cultural organizations that were

conspicuously absent), and, most importantly, transferring these data points into ArcGIS, which the region and the cities use for integrating planning between departments.

In addition to Grand Social's data on individuals, events, and organizations, we are also using regional data holdings related to heritage, restaurants, leisure, and cultural spaces to build our regional map. The ongoing collection of this information is dependent upon cooperation across multiple levels of government and a variety of other types of organizations, such as universities and colleges, non-profit arts institutions, and festivals. One of the great challenges we face in creating a regional snapshot of art and culture is the varying degrees of cohesiveness across the region. Each of the cities collects different kinds of data and they use different software to organize and analyze it. They also set their own cultural priorities and approach funding and monitoring differently. These factors make many of the regional data sets disparate. Amongst the general population, inter-regional tensions tend to be very pronounced, with the cities having very distinctive cultural identities and at times acting in competition with one another. This can result is resistance to anything that is framed as 'regional'.

Table 1. Waterloo Region Cultural Mapping Data Summary (2014)

Category	Number Mapped	Clustered or Dispersed	Definition
Bookstores	13	clustered	New and used bookstores. Example: Old Goat Books
Cafes	18	clustered *	Cafés with an additional cultural focus such as exhibiting local art or making space available for community meetings or events. Large chains (Tim Horton's; Starbucks) were excluded due to lack of cultural activity, although we acknowledge that these are also often important community spaces. Example: Café Pyrus
Clubs, Halls, and Legions	39	dispersed	Non-profit spaces with memberships. Often organized around a shared culture. Example: German-Canadian Schwaben Club
Community Centres	28	dispersed	Municipally funded and operated spaces for recreational and related community activities. Example: Breithaupt Community Centre
Community Gardens	55	dispersed	Land allotments available for growing food (and sometimes flowers) in the city. Example: The Good Earth Garden
Community Organizations	47	dispersed	Advocacy and support organizations, usually framed around a specific cultural or religious affiliation. Example: KW Multicultural Centre
Galleries	31	clustered	Spaces where the primary function is to exhibit art. Open to the public. Example: Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery
Heritage Sites	11	dispersed *	Historical building, site, or environment. Example: Doon Village

Category	Number Mapped	Clustered or Dispersed	Definition
Libraries	24	dispersed	Municipally funded and operated community spaces; often host community events and educational programmes. Example: Waterloo Public Library – McCormick Branch
Live Music Venues	49	clustered	Bars and clubs that regularly feature live music and/or live DJs. Example: Imbibe Food and Drink
Markets	9	dispersed *	Farmer's markets or multi-vendor marketplaces (seasonal; temporary). Example: St. Jacobs' Farmer's Market
Museums	11	clustered *	Exhibits objects of historical or cultural significance. Example: THEMUSEUM
Parks & Squares	23	clustered	Outdoor spaces which also feature community and cultural events such as festivals or other public gatherings. Community parks without this additional function were excluded in this mapping. Example: Victoria Park
Public Art	57	both	Municipally or Regionally funded and maintained artworks; either outside or in community buildings (libraries, government offices, community centres). Example: Veterans Memorial
Religious Buildings	90	dispersed	Churches, Temples, Mosques, Synagogues, or other buildings with a primarily religious service function. Example: Steinmann Mennonite Church
Studios	25	clustered	Spaces of art production. Example: The Button Factory
Theatres	23	both *	Performance or cinema venues (excludes large chains such as Cineplex). Example: KW Little Theatre

* too few mapped venues to fully assess

To date, we have mapped 553 spaces, sites, and organizations. To a certain extent, our categories (17 in total) were constrained by pre-existing categories within the data, but we also subdivided certain groups where we thought funding or use demanded such a differentiation. For example, Community Organizations (such as the Hispanic Cultural Society or the Golden Triangle Sikh Association) have been separated out from Clubs, Halls, and Legions, which also often have cultural community aspects to them (such as the various German clubs in the region) but have venue functions much more like live music venues and bars. However, these venues differ from Live Music Venues in that they often have a community, rather than commercial/profit, orientation. We excluded any bars from our sample that did not have a clear live music component to them (we included DJs in our definition of live music) and likewise attempted to exclude cafés that did not have a clear community or art orientation. These distinctions are admittedly muddy, and the resulting data does not offer a complete mapping (not all venues in all categories have been accounted for); rather, we deem our sample to be representative of the types of cultural spaces (and their locations) that can be found in our community. Some categories are more complete than others, and some space designations are incomplete, as we mapped multi-use venues according to what we deemed to be their primary cultural functions (for example, a gallery might also be a

studio, but is mapped as a gallery; and a community centre might also be a gallery or theatre, but is mapped as a community centre). As much of the data was originally crowd-sourced, then curated and expanded by the researchers, some venues of cultural importance will no doubt have been missed. However, even with this first pass at a mapping data set, very clear trends have emerged.

In particular, visual analysis of the maps shows patterns of clustering and dispersion by venue type (see Table 1). Across all venues, clustering occurred in civic centres and major commercial locations, often represented by a BIA. In other words, a 'clustered' venue type is one that occurs almost exclusively within commercial centres, usually demarcated by the boundaries of a BIA. Importantly, clustered does not indicate clustering within a venue type, but rather in a particular location in relation to other clustered amenities. So, bookstores are clustered not because they are all in one location, but because they are only in commercial centres, co-located with other venue types such as cafés and live music venues. In Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge, this clustering occurs through the centre of the tri-cities, along King Street in Kitchener and Waterloo, and along King Street in Cambridge (Preston), which intersects a branch of clusters along the river in Hespeler Village and Galt Village. These areas are each represented by a BIA. We also found that clustered venues were present in the commercial centres of smaller communities in the Townships.

Dispersed venue types were those that were equally likely to be located in a suburban neighbourhood as they were to be located in a commercial core. While clustered amenities were always co-located with a variety of other clustered amenity types, dispersed amenities did not necessarily correlate with other venues, but could simply be located within any neighbourhood (as was often the case for cultural clubs and halls). We found that these distinctions corresponded very clearly with a distinction between neighbourhoods (dispersed; community-based) and scenes (clustered; consumption-based). Importantly, the dispersed sites were geographically dispersed and did not occur in higher concentrations along the densely populated King corridor (this is in contrast to the Artists map from 2009, shown above, which did show increased concentrations related to population density).

Certain sites, such as Heritage, Markets, and Museums implied either dispersion (Heritage; Markets) or clustering (Museums), but we did not have enough mapped data to make an absolute claim. Theatres were also unclear as to their dispersion or clustering. This may be because performance venues and some independent cinemas were included together (but large cinemas like Cineplex were excluded). Although numbers are relatively low, it appears that there is some clustering of performance venues and some repertory theatres, with outliers that include both independent cinemas and community theatres. Public Art (see Figure 8) exhibited both significant clustering in the commercial cores, while also featuring degrees of community dispersion.

Clubs, Halls, and Legions (see Figure 4), Community Centres, Community Gardens, Community Organizations, Libraries (see Figure 7), Markets, and Religious Buildings were found to be dispersed throughout the region. These venues are primarily intended to serve the local communities in which they are situated and are constituency, rather than market, driven. Several categories are municipally operated. Those that are not tend to be specific types of cultural spaces such as the German clubs found throughout Kitchener. While our project found that squares and parks as well as live music venues were clustered, these dispersed communities also have parks and pubs or bars which may serve periodically as enhanced cultural or community event spaces.

However the primary users of these spaces generally remain those who live in the neighbourhood. The dispersed spaces that we mapped all contribute to the liveability of the Region and are especially important for families and newcomers as they contribute to community support and integration. These communities are formed around commonalities such as a shared cultural heritage or neighbourhood. These commonalities are often not primarily cultural consumption based, but are more likely to be related to recreational or educational services.

Cafés, Bookstores (see Figure 6), Galleries, Heritage Sites, Live Music Venues (see Figure 5), Parks and Squares, and Studios were all significantly clustered within the commercial cores of the Region. Many of these spaces are generally more market-driven, drawing on population density and acting as destinations for consumers of art and culture. Some of these spaces, like live music venues, are dependent upon an urban 'scene', in this instance, a live music scene. These kinds of spaces contribute to feelings of urban vibrancy and are usually the kinds of things that public discourses about cultural vibrancy and 'scenes' are invoking. Mapping offers the possibility of quantifying scenes that heretofore needed to be experienced to be known. We know scenes when we see them or participate in them. We experience cultural vibrancy in certain corners of our cities and know that exciting cultural work is taking place. Mapping offers us ways to quantify concentrations of cultural activities within these spaces. However, as a methodology it is imperfect. Not all activities 'show up' as official spaces, and not all business concentrations indicate vibrancy, as people need to also inhabit and use these spaces to add this. For example, Thursday and Friday nights in downtown Kitchener tend to be busy, while Saturday nights are very quiet. But the picture of the 'map' does not accommodate this variation as the actual number of bars does not change from night to night, just the vibrancy of the scene that can be found within them. This is an experience we might all be familiar with while traveling. Having come across a visually appealing street with cafés and artisan shops, we might believe a creative scene to exist. Only upon further inspection might we perceive that the shops all close up early, that the evening streets are devoid of people, and that the bars and patios have very few local patrons. In these instances, there might be the appearance of a 'scene', but the scene itself is definitively absent. The types of spaces and amenities that people want do not replace the need for another kind of vibrancy dependent upon people inhabiting these spaces; this requires population density and a variety of cultural activities such as live music, festivals, and art shows. For such a scene to exist, some (or many) of its participants must be local rather than tourists.
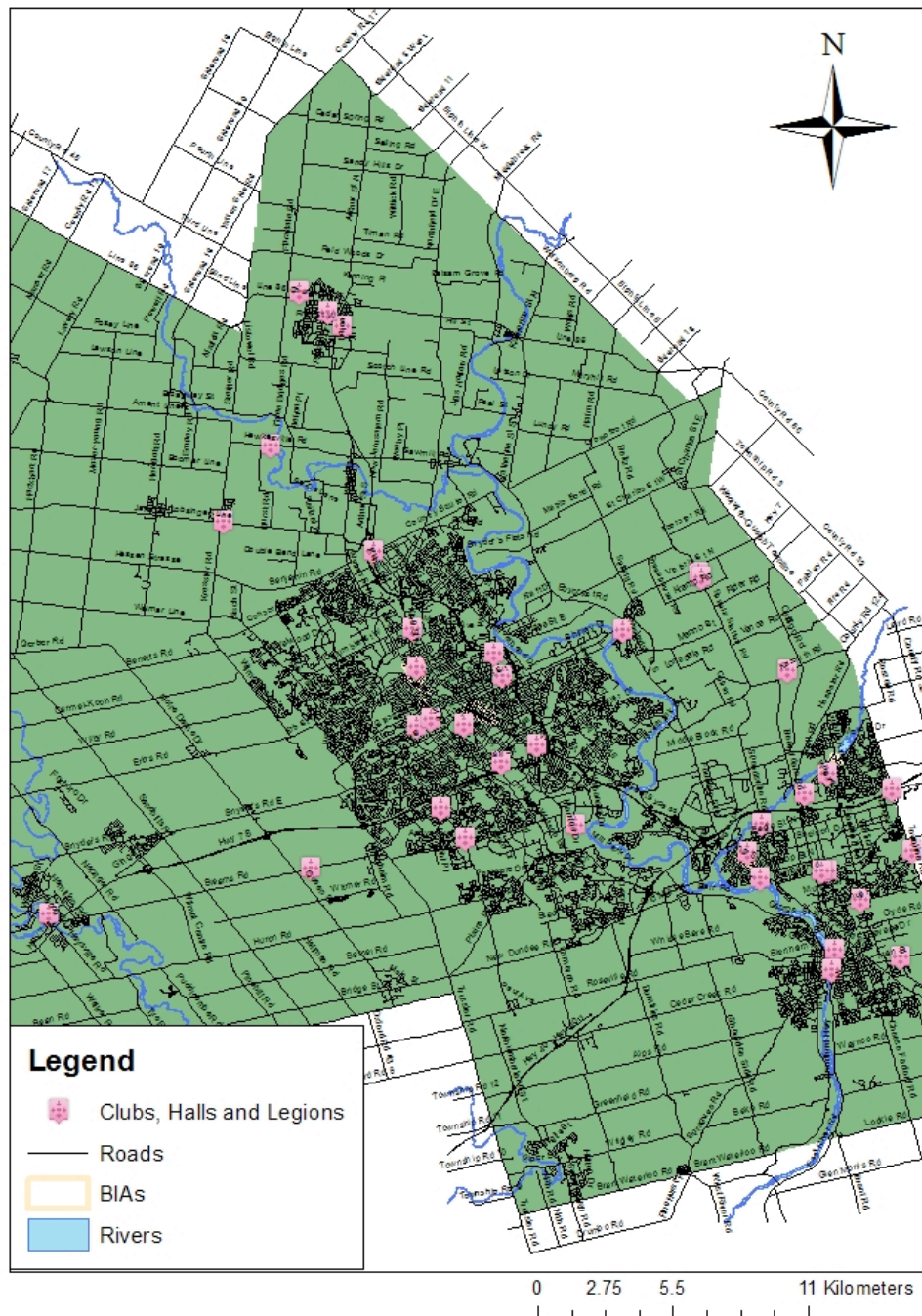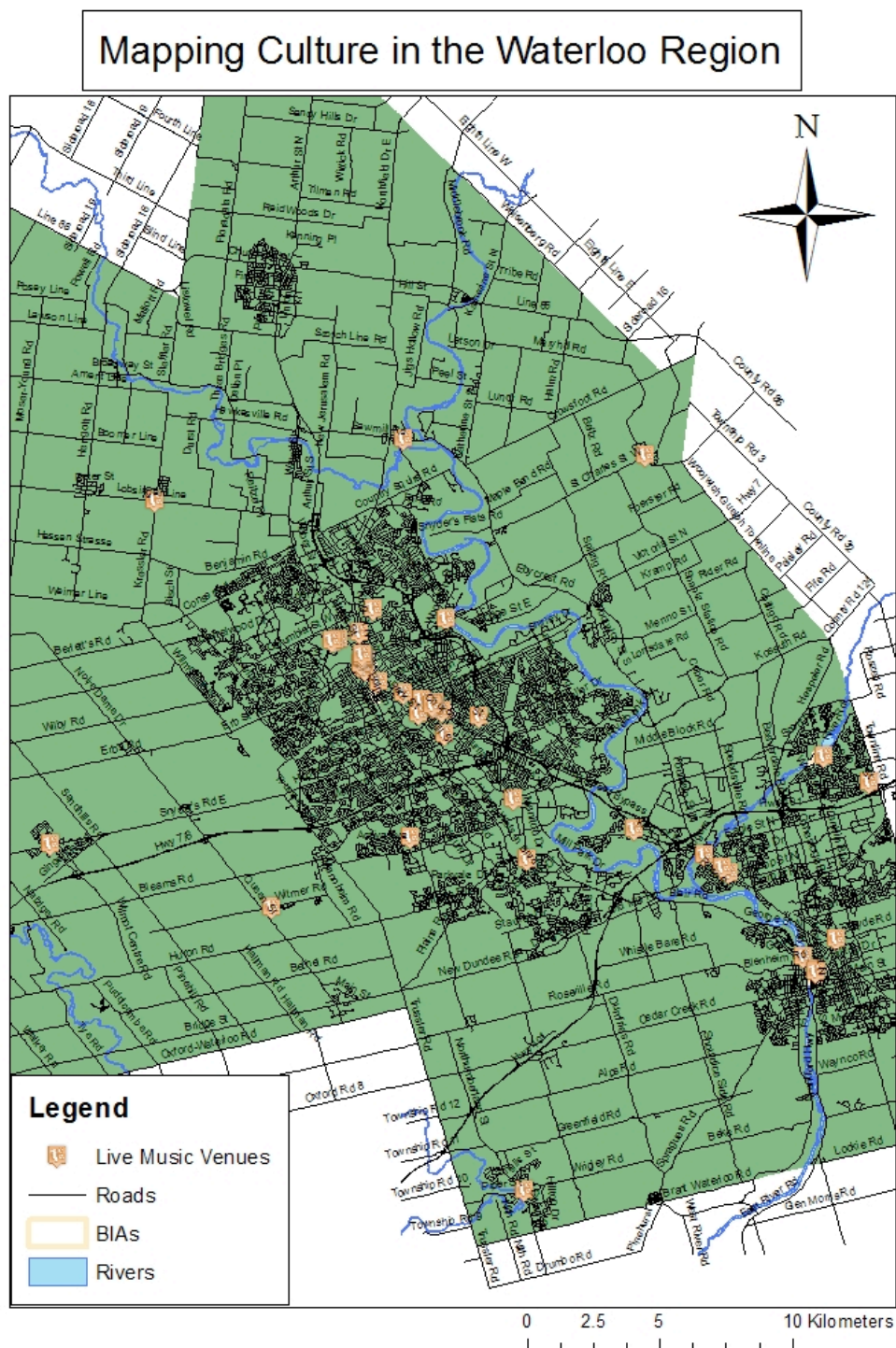
Figure 4. Clubs, Halls, and Legions, 2014

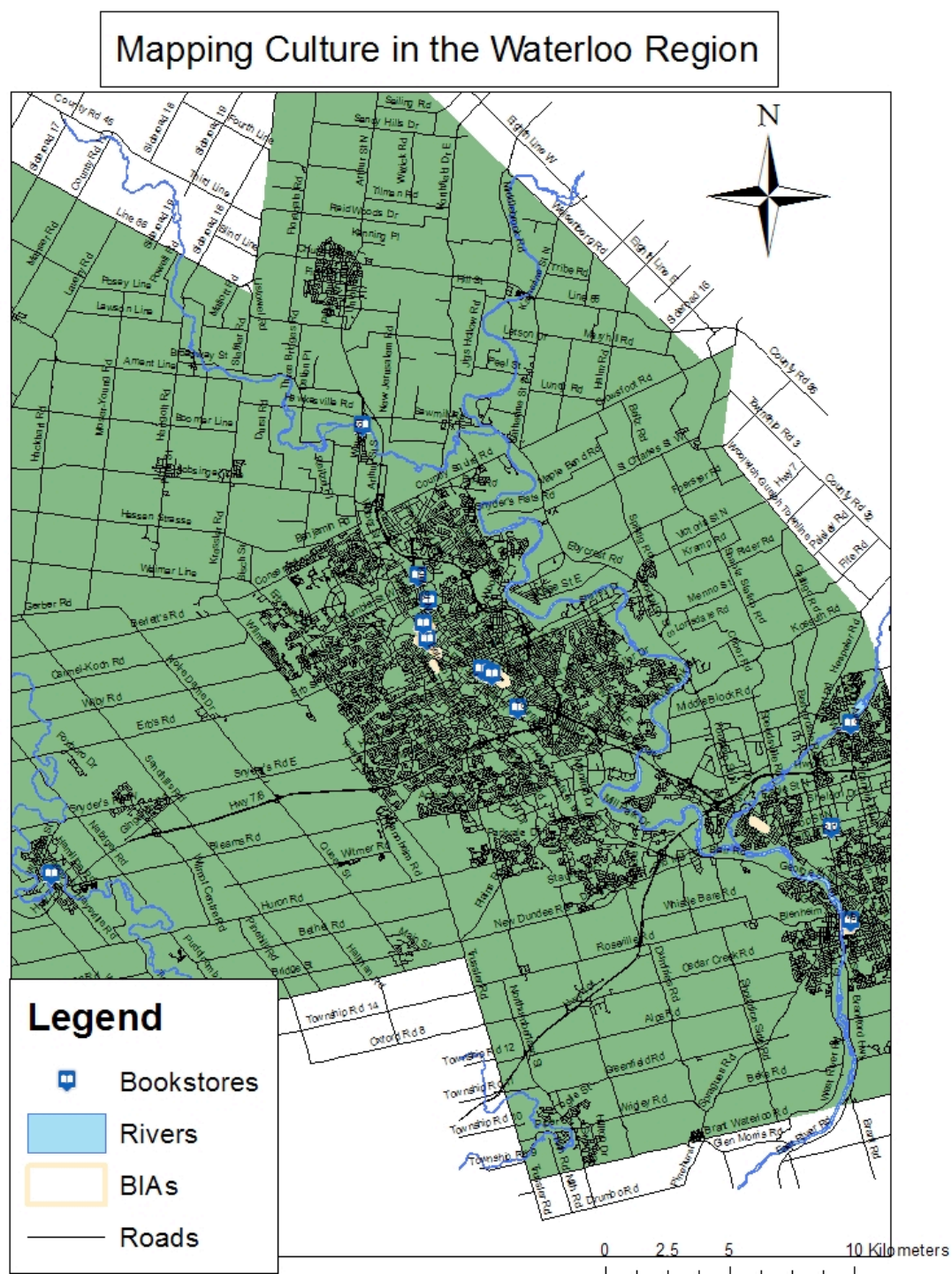**Figure 5.** Live Music Venues, 2014
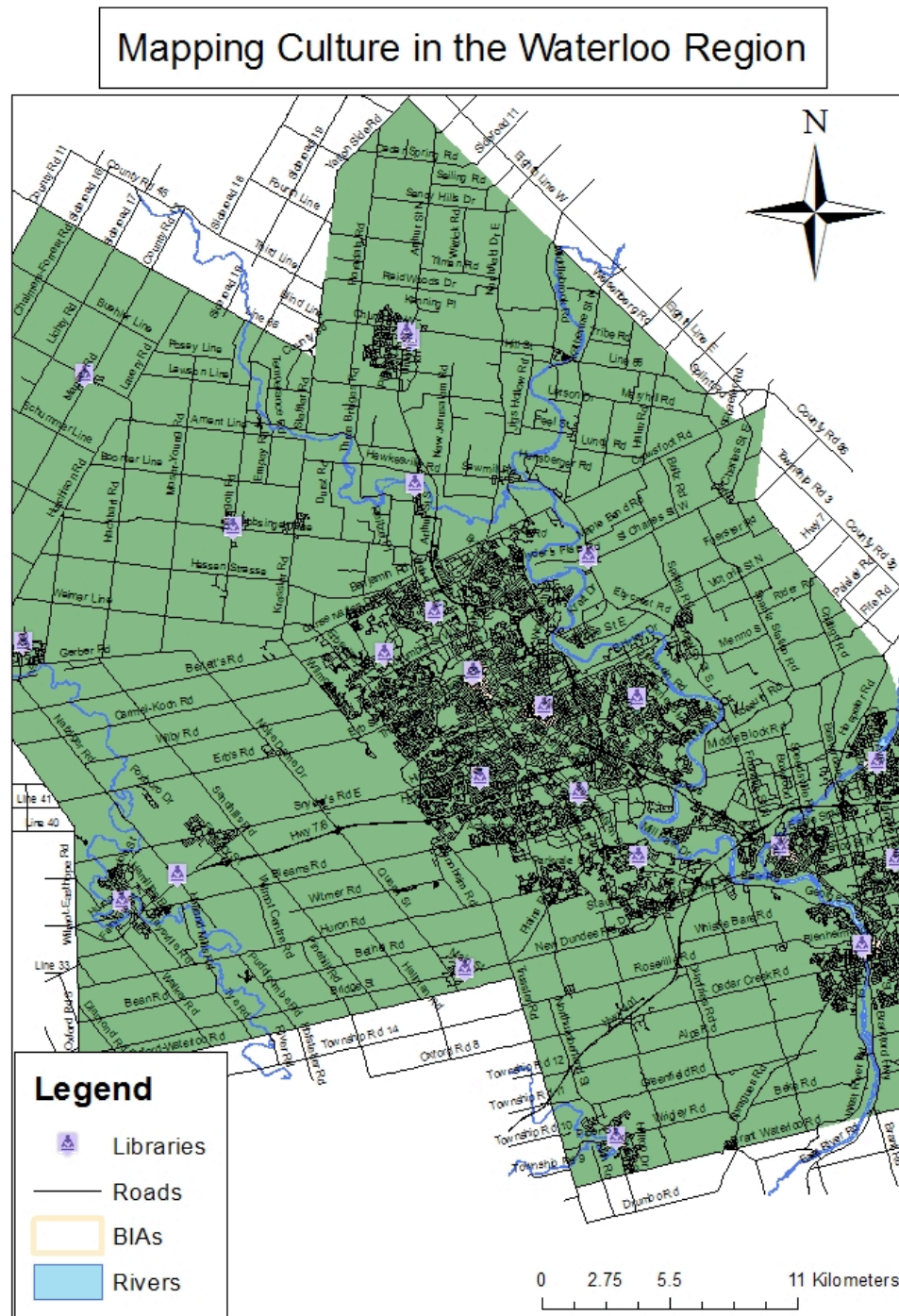
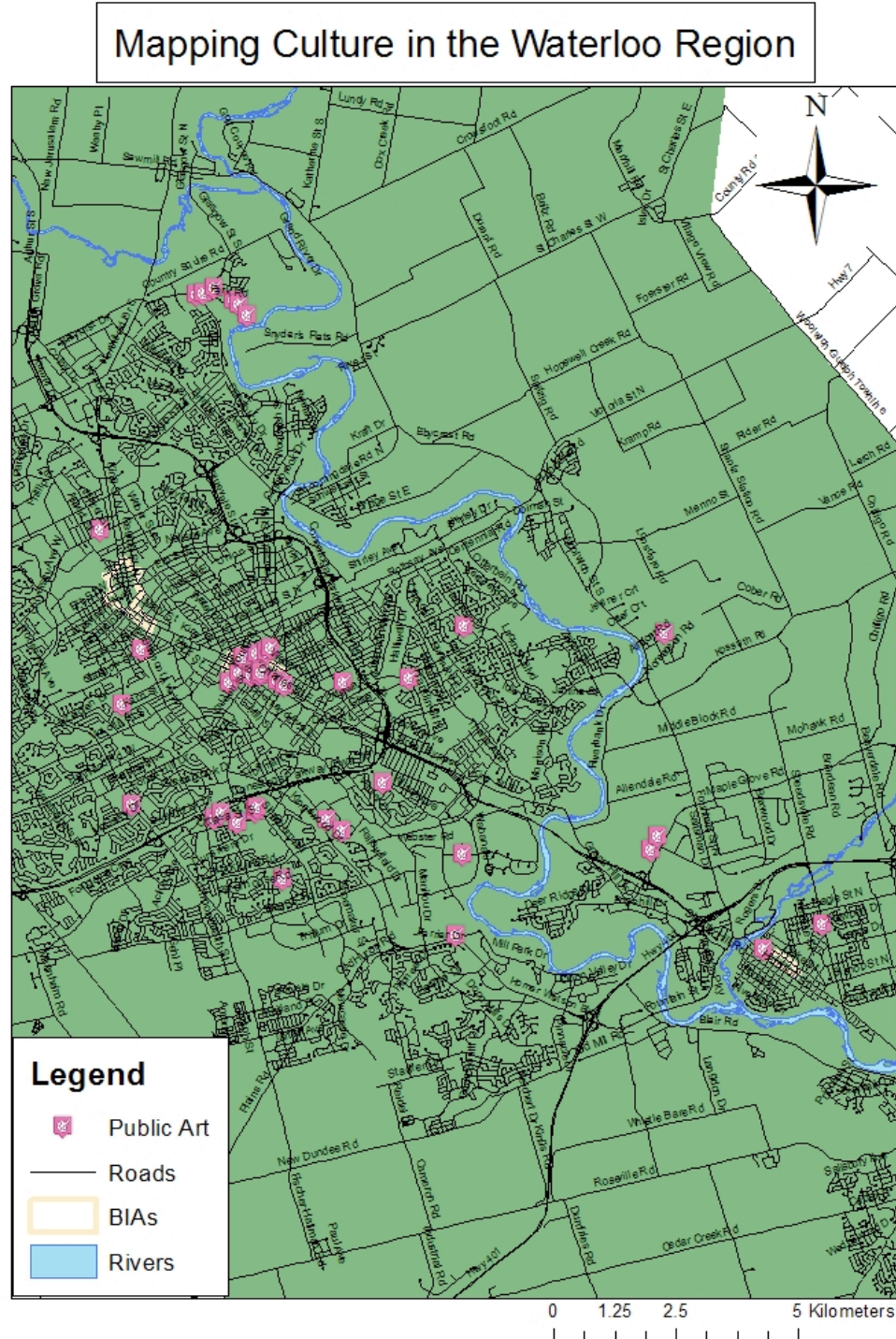**Figure 6.** Bookstores, 2014

Figure 7. Libraries, 2014

Figure 8. Public Art, 2014

Conclusions: Mapping art and culture in a medium-sized city region

What is clear so far is that a medium-sized region such as Waterloo cannot emulate the cultural research methodologies of larger urban areas. For example, as Brennan-Horley (2012) has found, there is often insufficient data (such as employment data) to make clear quantitative claims about the cultural economy in small cities. These quantitative measures are "only as reliable as the data available, with census statistics of creative industry employment prone to classification issues and underestimation" (Brennan-Horley 2012, p. 45). The economic impact of the arts goes beyond mere quantitative direct contributions to the economy. In the case of the Waterloo Region, a survey of the labour force found that workers in key growth sectors expected to live in interesting, culturally vibrant places. They wanted to *feel* the vibrancy and coolness of their communities. These are intangible qualities. Mapping in this instance becomes not simply a tool of the quantification of economic impact, but a visual data analysis method that allows for the identification of strengths and gaps in our creative communities.

Dispersed, community-based cultural spaces are frequently excluded from creative city approaches to branding, which emphasise visible scenes and are usually focused on downtown cores. This exclusion puts suburban or community-based cultural production at a disadvantage; as Alison Bain (2013) argues, urban "branding initiatives remain too reliant upon a limited palette of economic growth-oriented, mainstream creative activities that do little to reconfigure cultural hierarchies within city-regions" (p. 7). With a long-time emphasis on heritage (particularly German heritage) and craft cultures (especially rural, Mennonite handicrafts), arguably the cultural emphasis of the Region has focused more on community-based cultural production than developing vibrant urban scenes. Moreover, there has been a focus on the use of cultural heritage as a draw for temporary visitors to the region (tourists) rather than an ongoing part of the urban scene. As the region continues to grow and technology sector employees and innovators increasingly seek out cultural scenes, this aspect of cultural development will need to catch up.

The Waterloo Region is caught between being a small and a large city. With a total population nearing 500,000, the Region will soon be counted as a large urban centre. In some instances, such as in the artistic population, the Region already competes at this level (Hill 2015). However, many aspects of the creative economy remain underdeveloped, particularly those which rely on population density to produce 'cultural scenes', both scenes of consumption (in the case of nightlife, live music, art exhibits) and production (media production, studios, etc.). This may be because each individual municipality still operates as a small to medium-sized city, with Kitchener being the largest with a population of approximately 220,000. It is clear from the distribution of community spaces such as libraries and community centres that municipal planners and policymakers have been successful at fostering and contributing to building liveable communities. However, the regional brand continues to be disadvantaged by perceptions of a lack of vibrancy in the urban cores, in part due to relatively low concentrations of cultural workers and creative industries (Hill 2015). This brand, as mentioned earlier, is further hampered by inter-community tensions and a notable resistance towards amalgamation or region-wide infrastructure projects.[3]

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[3] For example, in recent debates around the development of an LRT system to support the Region's growing population, tensions between residents in Kitchener, Waterloo, and Cambridge were visible, with many citizens being opposed to an increase in region-wide mass transit infrastructure (Ipsos 2011).

As with all methodologies, mapping also has limitations. Maps require categorizations, which may produce oversimplified definitions of complex activities, events, and spaces. In classifying restaurants, for example, how do we differentiate between restaurants with cultural offerings, such as unique cuisines and event, performance, and/or exhibition spaces? Where are the lines drawn? The definitions required of mapping may not always be representative. In smaller cities and regions, maps may misrepresent cultural vitality by providing the appearance that such resources are absent (due to low population concentrations). Not all cultural activities are conducive to mapping. Creative methods for the incorporation of these activities (such as festivals or events that move regularly, or organizations whose work is primarily virtual) must be developed. One of the most significant limitations of mapping relates to its role in centralized cultural planning. In many ways, the kind of organized intervention into cultural development that planning allows for contradicts some of the assumptions that we make about vibrant cultural scenes, particularly that they emerge naturally out of communities and should be participant (as opposed to government) driven.

In part, the example of the Waterloo Region provides a critical intervention into the dominance of the 'scene' narrative for understanding cultural vibrancy. With a strong tradition of craft cultures and dispersed access to cultural institutions, the citizens in Waterloo Region have access to art and culture in their own communities. This contributes to liveability and is a more democratic approach to the provision of cultural infrastructure than often occurs in emergent scenes. The Region's dispersed urban cores (five within Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge) also render measures of vibrancy challenging as clusters occur within a corridor rather than a singular downtown radius. As population density continues to grow within this corridor, cultural scenes will continue to emerge as suited to market demands; and support for arts institutions and artists within these potentially gentrifying urban spaces will become a greater issue, as art and culture can be priced out of desirable urban spaces. At the same time, given the tendency of scenes to cluster, investment in community-oriented cultural spaces will continue to be vital to the promotion of liveability in the suburban neighbourhoods where most people actually live.

Acknowledgements

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