

# UMA Seattle Gathering: Localism as an Engine for Production Economies

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**URBAN MANUFACTURING ALLIANCE**  
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# Introduction

From espresso machine manufacturers to bike makers to chocolatiers, Seattle's manufacturing community is booming. They give the Emerald City a reputation for bright entrepreneurs with bright ideas, while creating jobs and strengthening neighborhood economies.

Groups like the local branding organization Seattle Made are working diligently to connect these makers and better showcase them to local consumers. With the "Seattle Made" logo on their product, manufacturers tap into the same local pride that drives buy-local successes like Seattle Made Week and the pop-up markets that pepper the city during the holiday season.

In October 2017, the Urban Manufacturing Alliance traveled to the Pacific Northwest to work with Seattle Made and showcase how these companies are integral to Seattle's manufacturing ecosystem. In the heart of Pioneer Square, our two organizations brought together more than 100 manufacturers and manufacturing practitioners to our 6th national Gathering.

Our trip happened at a historic but uncertain time. As the fastest-growing big city in the U.S., Seattle is striving to manage its tech-led economic boom while also preserving the communities that comprise its diverse, vibrant urban core. Some manufacturers and makers are struggling to stay in the city amid rising real estate costs. Others are thriving and looking for space to expand their operations.

From non-profit real estate developers in Seattle to economic development officials from New York, Gathering attendees descended upon the Emerald City to discuss and debate the ways manufacturing practitioners can help these companies achieve their dreams. They left with new relationships, new strategies, and a first-hand understanding of how promoting locally made goods can be a game changer for local manufacturers.





The UMA Seattle Gathering wouldn't have been possible without our event sponsors: Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses, the Port of Seattle, Bank of America Merrill Lynch, Square, City of Seattle Office of Economic Development, Boeing Employees Credit Union, Esri, and Filson.

We'd also like to give special thanks to the event emcee, Kristi Brown-Wokoma, founder of That Brown Girl Cooks!.



# Breakout Group

## Sessions:

Seattle Gathering attendees split up into groups to discuss three themes: workforce development, land use strategies, and local branding organizations.

### 1. Workforce Development

Participants looked at the types of training and pipeline challenges that manufacturers in a city like Seattle run into as they try to expand. One particular interest: tapping into communities that face higher unemployment rates than the rest of the city, like immigrants and people of color.



- To create more equity in the recruitment process, **breakout groups discussed building closer partnerships with the people on-the-ground who have direct access to these communities.** That means institutions like churches and social service providers, but also any current employees



who may have leads on job-seekers in their community. Overcoming this means not just telling communities that there are jobs and training opportunities available, but asking these communities what they need to land a successful job. Offering non-traditional work hours or connecting employees with childcare services, for example, could open businesses up to a wider array of candidates. Service providers could also connect underserved workers, or people new to the United States and without contacts, with local references that can verify their skills and help them fill out their résumés.

- Getting a broader slice of the population interested in local manufacturing can unfurl in a number of ways. **Participants suggested programs identify immigrant skill sets early on in their arrival, and connect them with the appropriate manufacturing communities as they assimilate to the city.** This could help culture an understanding of how vital manufacturing is to Seattle. Others suggested partnering with youth organizations and other community groups to schedule tours and manufacturing internships that can change local opinions on the craft. Surveying employers and following up on workforce retention issues was another way to identify where manufacturers are succeeding and not succeeding in maintaining committed employees.



## 2. Land Use Strategies

One of the more popular breakout sessions, the land use strategies group came to the table with a lot of questions. But they also came with unique approaches to some of the challenges they're facing back home, giving the session a grounded but optimistic tone.



- Attendees discussed ways to manage logistical needs, like transit opportunities for workers and traffic congestion in supply routes, while preserving industrial spaces as cities grow. Transit oriented development in industrial areas can sometimes worry industrial users, who equate rising property values with their own displacement. **But other attendees noted that having transit lines closer to industrial areas can mean more opportunity for workers to easily access industrial jobs.** Boston and San Francisco are home to two initiatives, the Fairmount/Indigo Corridor and San Francisco's Priority Development Areas, that could wed transit development and industrial jobs.
- Land use policy outcomes are often fixed to political will; incoming administrations can undo the land use legacy of outgoing administrations if their strategies differ.

**Incorporating multiple tenants into manufacturing buildings could help build a local constituency around protecting light industrial spaces with a unique manufacturing identity.** We are seeing this in St. Louis; DeSales Community Housing Corporation is working with St. Louis Makes to redevelop an 87,000-square-foot-manufacturing building to be used by multiple light manufacturing and maker tenants. Local manufacturers can also partner with neighborhood groups to push for artisan zoning designations, which allow for zoning protections in areas not traditionally called home by light manufacturers. Low-impact operations can fit in without disturbing nearby residential or commercial tenants.

- **Getting creative development models off the ground requires working with a range of partners outside of the industrial sphere.** Mission-driven real estate groups can partner with impact funders to fund redevelopment projects of multi-tenant buildings; Equinox in Seattle, for example, has sourced millions of dollars in loans and funding from groups like Craft3 and RSF Social Finance. There are also new players, like DeSales Community Housing Corporation, that have worked predominantly in affordable housing but are increasingly becoming allies in light industrial development projects. They're "sold" on these projects because of the local jobs they create, and the innovative spirit they can uplift in disadvantaged neighborhoods.



# 3. Local Branding Organizations

With representatives from successful models like Seattle Made and SFMade in the room, participants in the local branding organization group talked about what needs to happen to bring the “buy local” movement to the next level.



- **Coordinating a week devoted to showcasing locally made products can create a broader city relationship to local manufacturers. Seattle Made runs an event called Seattle Made Week, which SFMade is starting to replicate in San Francisco.** Each year, SFMade and Seattle Made run week-long events dedicated to showcasing local products, companies, and the people behind them.. Requesting makers and manufacturers to participate in “Made In” week can help local producers take time out from their day-to-day business strategy to revisit what got them started in the first place: the joy of making. These events give makers the spotlight because they’re not just about selling products—they’re about introducing the public to who makes these products,

and where. Inviting local service providers to host booths or attend network events tied to these events can help connect manufacturers with the practitioners that can help them grow.

- **Attendees suggested that local branding organizations can play an important role by creating a city-based roadmap of resources.** It can be time consuming for companies to find resources at each stage of production. Those working to lift up local makers and manufacturers can help by pooling their contacts and resources into an online database, which can be added to and expanded over time. UMA is currently working on resource roadmaps for Baltimore, Cincinnati, Detroit, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, and Portland, Ore. as part of the ***State of Urban Manufacturing*** research series. The intention is to offer these to city manufacturing practitioners so that those with a local knowledge of services can build out these roadmaps.
- **As companies like Amazon change the retail experience, local branding organizations are adjusting how they think about promoting locally-made products online.** Participants suggested that larger networks like UMA could partner with local branding organizations to seek out partnerships with online retailers. Through these partnerships, they can potentially identify ways for online shoppers to distinguish between locally made items and those that are imported.
- **Local branding organizations can also consider expanding beyond city limits to become regional branding organizations.** SFMade, for example, was able to secure new funding partnerships by broadening their focus to include additional Bay Area cities. SFMade isn't tackling both geographies at once, however. They've since created a separate project, called the Bay Area Urban Manufacturing Initiative, that manages their regional work.

# Keynote Speaker: Hans Maas, RDM Centre of Expertise



Coming from Rotterdam, the Netherlands, Maas brought insights on the industry-academia pipeline he oversees at the RDM Centre of Expertise, housed at the Port of Rotterdam. **The Centre, which is part of the Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences, thrives because it encourages researchers, professionals, and students to share space, blend ideas, and work out prototypes together.**

The Centre leases research space to local manufacturing entrepreneurs and companies. It also oversees a makerspace and a larger prototyping lab at the harbor, both of which are open to students and businesses.

Maas told the story of when art students from the Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences visited the makerspace, which is



located in the city, to try and design smart textiles. They knew how to work the base material. They got lost when it came to figuring out the right kinds of electronic technology.

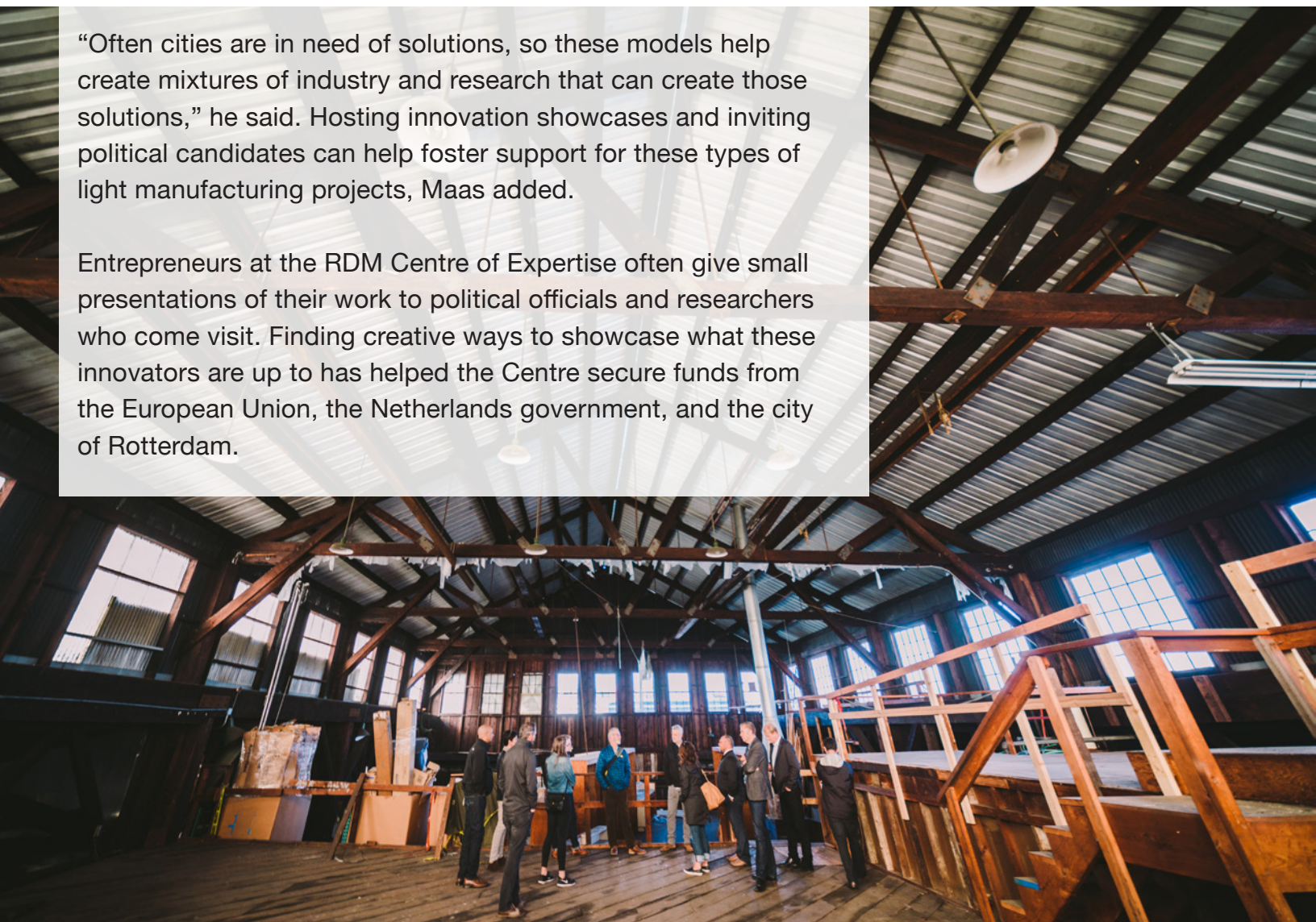
That's until IT professionals also using the makerspace approached them and told them they could lend a hand. "They normally wouldn't have met because they are completely different groups," said Maas. The Centre opens up its fabrication spaces to different research communities because breaking down these kinds of silos can spark innovation.

The day after the Gathering, Maas accompanied UMA and Port of Seattle staff for a tour of Seattle's port. Port officials are drawing up plans to turn an old harbor warehouse into a maritime incubator.

Maas noted that opening up the port to a greater array of research and development uses can be a win-win for both the city and local entrepreneurs.

"Often cities are in need of solutions, so these models help create mixtures of industry and research that can create those solutions," he said. Hosting innovation showcases and inviting political candidates can help foster support for these types of light manufacturing projects, Maas added.

Entrepreneurs at the RDM Centre of Expertise often give small presentations of their work to political officials and researchers who come visit. Finding creative ways to showcase what these innovators are up to has helped the Centre secure funds from the European Union, the Netherlands government, and the city of Rotterdam.





# Sewn Trades Community of Practice Kick-Off Meeting



Led by Seattle Muses and our partners at Seattle Made, the Seattle Sewn initiative is helping apparel manufacturing make a comeback in the city. The program has trained dozens of sewers from low-income communities, like refugees and immigrants, and runs a small-scale contract manufacturing service that employs Seattle Sewn trainees.

That initiative, plus Seattle's long history as an apparel manufacturer, is why UMA and our partners at The Makers Coalition decided to host a *Sewn Trades Community of Practice* meeting during the Gathering. This meeting brought together, for the first time, groups that are supporting the apparel manufacturing resurgence in their communities: Seattle Sewn, the Industrial Sewing and Innovation Center (ISAIC; Detroit), Rightfully Sewn (Kansas City, Missouri), the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (Massachusetts), Sew Lab USA

(Baltimore), Nashville Sewing Training Academy (Nashville), and more.

**Together, these groups are sparking the next wave of U.S.-based apparel and textile manufacturers.** The businesses they represent are embracing craft, technological innovation, and customization to bring high-quality products to market.

In the U.S., designers are interested in working with onshore textile producers because being closer means being able to produce designs at a faster rate. Consumers, driven by the buy-local phenomenon, are hungry for apparel that is made locally, and delivered by entrepreneurs who intimately know their products.

The timeliness for this initial *Sewn Trades Community of Practice* meeting is clear. Participants said they needed:

- More capacity-building programs that help them build a local-base of sewn trades employees
- Affordable manufacturing space
- Opportunities for deeper investments in technology
- A more tightly networked community of businesses

UMA is now working on-the-ground with our city partners to collect solution models for these challenges, and identify more organizations to build out the *Sewn Trades Community of Practice*. Meanwhile, our partners at The Makers Coalition are working with the ISAIC training program in Detroit to pilot a Department of Labor-certified sewn trades curriculum.

Stay tuned as we get ready to debut this new chapter of our work.





# Rapid Share Presentations

UMA's strength is in its ability to connect people and resources. That's why Rapid Share Presentations are a central part of our Gatherings. Retailers, city officials, non-profit real estate developers, and industrial sewing trainers from the Seattle area gave the Gathering attendance quick talks on the services they offer, and how they're keeping manufacturing local.

## ***Sam Farrazaino, Equinox Development Unlimited***

Farrazaino discussed his work developing light industrial real estate for Seattle's massive artisan and artist population. Equinox Studios, he says, is "100% tenant-owned, and 100% owned by tenants." Their goal is to maintain affordable rates for Equinox's more than 50 tenants even as Seattle real estate prices surge.



## ***Susanna Schultz, Central Co-op***

Schultz talked about Central Co-op's heavy emphasis on local procurement from Washington food manufacturers. In a recent study they conducted on consumer trends, Schultz says they found 20 percent of their sales are food products manufactured in Washington. At major grocery store chains, only four percent of sales are locally manufactured products. This captures, in her opinion, how co-ops can play a vital part in supporting local food manufacturers.



**Jamaal Green, Portland State University**

Green brought insights from his research into local branding organizations and how they're increasingly bringing equity into their work. He talked about the differences between oft-cited concepts like "equity" and "inclusion," and how local branding organizations should use their strength as networkers to create a more fair entrepreneurial ecosystem. UMA and Green will present their collaborative research on this topic in 2018.



**Roque Deherrera, City of Seattle Office of Economic Development**

Deherrera's presentation put Seattle's dependence on industrial into sharp relief. He said manufacturers and industrial tenants in Seattle provide more than 100,000 jobs to the city—"far more than Amazon or Starbucks." He discussed a major, three-story industrial project, called Prologis Georgetown, that will host a makerspace, light manufacturing space, a warehouse on the bottom floor, and office space once completed in 2018. It's less than five miles south of the city center.



**Deborah Vandermar, The Makers Coalition**

Vandermar leads The Makers Coalition, a strategic partner in UMA's new *Sewn Trades Community of Practice* initiative. She discussed her work piloting a Department of Labor-certified industrial sewing training program, and her work with Seattle Muses, where she helped train immigrants and underserved communities in sewn trades. Vandermar talked about the importance of getting sewn trades entrepreneurs in touch with resources, like workshops, that can help them better utilize talented sewn trades workers.



**Armando Moritz-Chapelliquen, Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development**

Real estate pressures are threatening manufacturing space throughout the country, and Moritz-Chapelliquen discussed how his organization is pushing back against this trend in New York City. The ANHD recently led a successful campaign to limit self-storage in core industrial areas. (Self-storage provides a fraction of the jobs and wages of traditional manufacturing and industrial careers.) The takeaway? Land use and zoning policies can decide how prosperity is shared in cities. “They really set the foundation for what gets to be built, where, and who gets to benefit from it,” said Moritz-Chapelliquen.



**John Turnbull, Pike Place Market**

Pike Place Market, which receives about 10 million visitors every year, is a Seattle tourism institution that is starting to play a bigger role in supporting local makers. They now host an event in partnership with Seattle Made, called Seattle Made Market Day, which adds even more local producers to Pike Place Market’s roster. Turnbull, who works for the Pike Place Market Preservation and Development Authority, talked about how they’re thinking of hosting micro-enterprise workshops at the market.





# Testimonials

**“The Urban Manufacturing Alliance has developed a close-knit network of creators and innovators that hold each other’s needs dear when considering national goals and local needs. That’s why this Gathering left me with a sense of belonging. These events have clearly born symbiotic relationships between cities as far apart as Brooklyn and Seattle, without underwriting any member in between, no matter how small.”**

Austin Helgeson, Urban Partnerships Community Development Corporation (Houston, Texas)

**“Historically, the Port [of Portland] has interacted with larger manufacturers, so hearing more about the evolving world of smaller scale manufacturers, makerspaces, and incubators was really fascinating. I took extensive notes and sent them around to my colleagues that work in our real estate, properties, and development teams as ideas for the Port to explore further in some capacity.”**

Brooke Berglund, former Business and Labor Outreach Manager at Port of Portland (Portland, Oregon)

**“Because of the Seattle Gathering I began to realize that urban manufacturing is really about equity, and developing the capacity for people to have living wage jobs. It is about sustainability, and redirecting the energy and focus of economic development back into local communities. I have learned that the narrative and branding for how we define and portray urban manufacturing is critical for its growth.”**

Nicholas Wiggins, Jobs for America’s Graduates, Kansas specialist

**“This is the first opportunity I know of for all of these cities and manufacturers to come together and share their experiences like this. Everyone here is saying, ‘Hey, we have commonalities,’ and they’re here to share their best practices and their challenges — it’s pretty empowering. The big thing I’m going to take away from this is new motivation and drive and energy.”**

Jeremiah Jones, SewLab USA (Baltimore, Maryland)

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