



CULTURAL/ ARTS

Best Practice Compendium

Cultural/Arts v1.0

June 01, 2021





Conduct Arts & Culture Needs Assessment






Provided by SME Consultant

Metropolitan Area Planning Council

Location

Various locations (Arlington, Beverly, Boston, Franklin MA)

Origin	MAPC - Arlington, Beverly, Boston, Franklin
Budget	 Low (Staff time)
Timeframe	 Short (0-5 years)
Risk	 Low
Key Performance Indicators	Greater artist engagement; reduced downtown vacancies; increased pedestrian activity; increased meals tax revenue; increased coordination among businesses, artists, and organizations; Increased revenue from meals and room taxes.
Partners & Resources	Municipal government planning staff, elected officials, licensing/permitting staff; local artists, cultural organizations, and creative businesses.

Diagnostic

The pandemic hit as municipalities in Massachusetts were investing in arts and culture as an important element of civic life and a thriving local economy. MCC-designated cultural districts have been growing across the state, and municipalities were beginning to invest in planning initiatives to document and support their arts and culture assets.

The pandemic's impact on arts and culture hit fast and hard and has lingered for over a year. By March 2021, non-profit and municipal cultural organizations across the state reported over \$588 million in losses; with individual artists and creatives reporting more than \$30 million in lost income. As reopening guidelines ease restrictions on arts and culture activities, municipalities are looking for strategies and tactics to revive arts and culture in their local communities.

Action Item

Strategies that support arts and culture in municipalities strengthen local government's responsiveness to constituents, establish critical partnerships for revitalization, and builds resilience of local businesses and cultural organizations. Providing multi-layered assessments of arts and culture can help improve support for artists, creative enterprise, and civic vitality.

Build Relationships and Collect Data on Arts & Culture

- Use surveys, interviews and creative evaluation strategies to document the presence of artists and creative businesses, assess needs and opportunities, and track impacts of arts and culture programming on community well-being and civic vitality.

Identify Barriers to Cultural Equity

- Where does cultural activity happen? Are opportunities for creative and cultural expression equally available for immigrant communities and communities of color?

Conduct Direct outreach to Artists and Creatives

- Artists are poorly represented in existing data sets. Municipal surveys of artists focused on identifying and responding to their needs generated robust survey response and expressions of gratitude for the outreach and consideration.

Foster Partnerships

- Strong partnership structures that bring together cultural organizations, creative businesses, property owners, municipal staff, and economic development entities have been instrumental in reviving arts and culture activities locally.

Process

Local government

- Survey artists, cultural organizations, creative businesses, and property owners through existing or new partnerships such as cultural districts, local cultural councils, business improvement districts, Main Streets districts, or other entities;
- Support relationship building with artists, schools, youth programs, libraries, historic societies, and other entities.
- Learn from successful projects and programs by interviewing cultural organizations that are leading safe and successful initiatives.
- Identify existing and potential outdoor venue locations, including parks, historic sites, vacant storefronts, and parking lots.
- Include consideration for artists in planning and approving local programs.
- Expand communications and facilitate awareness of and access to arts & culture programming through public schools, libraries, local newsletters, and other means

Arts & Culture Partners and Civic Leaders

- Build networks with artists and creative businesses.
- Support survey outreach and facilitating artist-municipal partnerships.
- Track participation and impact of arts & culture programming through event surveys, artist and organization surveys, pedestrian counts, and data on revenue and business activity.

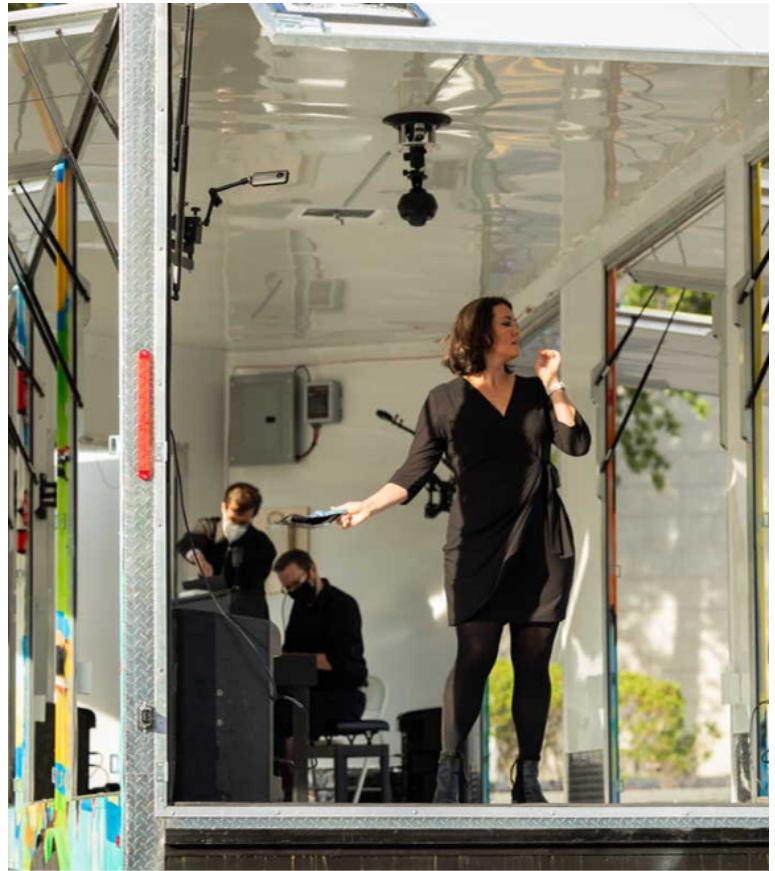


Photo: MAPC



Innovative Funding For Arts Districts



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Levine Planning Strategies, LLC

Location

Portland, ME

Origin	Creative Portland and the City of Portland [ME]
Budget	 Medium Budget – \$100K a year in direct funding allocated
Timeframe	 Short Timeframe – 18 months to 2 years for local and state approvals
Risk	 Medium Risk – Funding will depend on district growth
Key Performance Indicators	Change in economic activity downtown; number of downtown visitors; paid opportunities for local artists
Partners & Resources	Municipal finance, economic development & planning officials; local arts organizations; local Chamber of Commerce; and downtown organizations

Diagnostic

Many communities support the arts in their downtowns as part of a comprehensive economic development and placemaking strategy. While funding can come from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and local sources, there will be an increased need for funding for arts and cultural coming out of the pandemic. Attracting visitors and customers to downtowns, when they have become accustomed to ordering items on-line and even watching live music remotely, will require more than simply turning on the "OPEN" signs. Providing additional support for artistic endeavors that will attract people to downtowns will be an important part of COVID-19 recovery.

Unfortunately, funding sources for arts and culture are limited. Federal assistance will potentially help, but will be temporary. Local governments will be seeking to utilize general fund revenue for a variety of deferred needs. Finding alternative sources to fund arts activities in the next few years will be important for post-pandemic recovery.

Action Item

In 2008, two predecessor arts and culture organizations in Portland, Maine, merged to form a quasi-public non-profit called Creative Portland. Creative Portland's mission is "to support the creative economy through the arts by providing essential resources, by fostering partnerships, and by promoting Portland's artistic talents and cultural assets."

Creative Portland understands the link between economic development and the arts. According to their website, "[a]s the official nonprofit arts agency, we support economic development efforts by strengthening and stimulating our workforce, creative industries, and enterprises." Before COVID-19, Creative Portland focused on popular arts activities such as the First Friday Art Walk and the 2 Degrees networking program.

During the pandemic, Creative Portland responded by creating the [Portland Artist Relief Fund](#) to provide stipends to local artists to keep working while many of their usual outlets were closed. In May 2020, in the first round of awards, they funded 63 artists in the gig economy.

Creative Portland is funded in an unusual way. With limited local and state funding otherwise available, a dedicated portion of downtown property tax revenue funds \$100,000 of the organization's annual budget. Using Maine's equivalent of the District Increment Finance program, the City of Portland created a downtown district that uses growth in property tax revenue to fund the creative economy and other economic development activities.

This dedicated funding also serves as seed funding for the organization. Creative Portland is able to leverage that funding with private fundraising, other grants, and other revenue generation activities.

Process

Using District Increment Financing (DIF) to fund downtown arts & culture efforts requires several steps. A community must first designate a development district (such as downtown) and a development program for that district. That program will need to include an explanation of how funding arts & cultural activities will serve the goals of the DIF program. The program must outline infrastructure needs in the district, existing and proposed zoning changes, and a financial plan outlining uses for DIF funding. This final program must be approved by the municipal legislative body and the State Economic Assistance Coordinating Council.

If the DIF district is approved, DIF funding is "captured" from a portion of new property tax revenue created in the development district. Unlike in Maine, DIF funding in Massachusetts must generally be used for capital expenses, such as construction of an arts facility. However, in many cases, such an investment can help leverage other funding for arts & culture efforts, much like Creative Portland's ability to use their public funding to generate other revenue streams.

Other Financing Tools

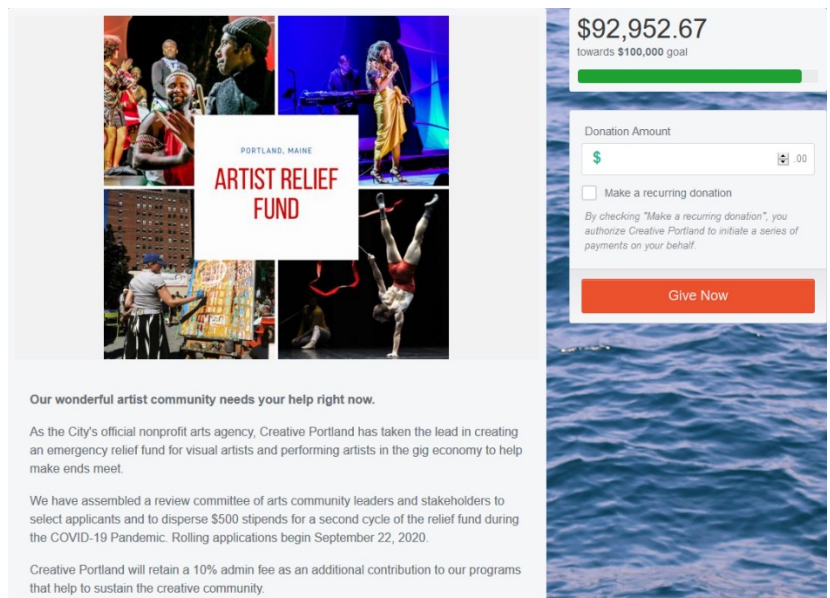
Given that DIF funding must be generally used for capital expenses, how can that help with the ongoing operational need of a local arts & culture organization? There are several ways that DIF funding of capital needs such as dedicated space for administration and performances, can help provide the economic benefits of arts programming:

- It allows private and grant funding efforts to be focused on programming and operating expenses, rather than capital needs;
- A bricks and mortar performance space downtown can be a convincing statement about the ability to draw people downtown. That pass-by traffic can be a powerful attractor to other retail and hospitality investors, such as restaurants, convenience stores, and even hotels;
- With the growth of crowd funding platforms such as EquityNet, Wefunder, or even, as Creative Portland does, a dedicated platform that ensures all the funding raised stays with the organization; and
- An arts & cultural organization with an established presence in a community can serve as a fiscal sponsor for other non-profits in the region. This relationship allows other organizations to seek additional grants, while raising some revenue for the arts organization as a service fee. As an example, Creative Portland is the fiscal sponsor for several Portland non-profits, including [Black Owned Maine](#), the [Maine Music Alliance](#), and [PechaKucha Portland](#). Creative Portland provides these organizations with fiscal infrastructure and collects a five percent service fee.

FIRST FRIDAY ART WALK

A CREATIVEPORTLAND^{ME} PROJECT

First Friday Art Walk, a popular Creative Portland Event, has been curtailed during the pandemic



\$92,952.67
towards \$100,000 goal

Donation Amount
\$ 0.00

☐ Make a recurring donation
By checking "Make a recurring donation", you authorize Creative Portland to initiate a series of payments on your behalf.

Give Now

Our wonderful artist community needs your help right now.

As the City's official nonprofit arts agency, Creative Portland has taken the lead in creating an emergency relief fund for visual artists and performing artists in the gig economy to help make ends meet.

We have assembled a review committee of arts community leaders and stakeholders to select applicants and to disperse \$500 stipends for a second cycle of the relief fund during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Rolling applications begin September 22, 2020.

Creative Portland will retain a 10% admin fee as an additional contribution to our programs that help to sustain the creative community.

Creative Portland used crowdfunding to raise almost \$100,000 towards an Artist Relief Fund



Contracting with Artists



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Metropolitan Area Planning Council

Location

Various locations (Lynn, MA; Natick, MA; Watertown, MA)

Origin	Marjorie Weinberger, Jenn Erickson, Annis Sengupta, MAPC; Lynn, Massachusetts; Natick, Massachusetts; Watertown, Massachusetts
Budget	 Medium (\$50 - \$200 K)
Timeframe	 Short (0-5 years)
Risk	 Medium - High
Key Performance Indicators	Engaging diverse residents in planning issues and processes; increasing pedestrian activity in underused public spaces; greater social cohesion and well-being.
Partners & Resources	<p>School art departments, libraries, public health departments, planners, property owners, departments of recreation, departments of public works, local cultural councils, public art commissions.</p> <p>Resource: Home :: Municipal Artist Partnerships (municipal-artist.org)</p>

Diagnostic

Bringing artists into municipal projects can build energy and draw new activity into downtown commercial areas. Contracting with artists using the 30B process has proven to be challenging and difficult. Working with the IG's office, MAPC has established guidelines for contracting with artists pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30B, section 2[1], which states that a city may, as a public procurement, enter into a Grant Agreement with an individual to "carry out a public purpose."

MAPC's process maintains transparency, accountability and fairness while creating a straightforward means of both (1) paying artists for time spent on concept development and (2) contracting with artists for work that exceeds \$10,000 in value.

Contracting with artists brings many benefits to local communities. A few benefits of this recovery strategy include:

- Creation of local jobs for artists from within and outside of the community through Calls for Artists that are tailored to addressing specific issues and opportunities, e.g., wayfinding in the Town Center
- Allocation of public resources towards the design, creation, and installation of works that create immediate changes in the built environment
- Testing new models of contracting with artists for a designated timeframe, e.g., through the launch of a municipal Artist-in-Residence program

[1] MGL c. 30B, §2 defines "Grant agreement", [as] "an agreement between a governmental body and an individual or nonprofit entity the purpose of which is to carry out a public purpose of support or stimulation instead of procuring supplies or services for the benefit or use of the governmental body."



Photo: MAPC

Action Item

Dedicated Artist Liaison

- Ensure that the artist has a contact within the municipality who can help navigate permitting processes, access to space and equipment, and help build relationships with other areas of municipal government such as schools and libraries.

Flexibility and Creative Problem Solving

- Artist-led projects bring innovation to local government and often require flexibility and creative problem-solving in order to implement new ideas within the constraints of local government.

Attention to Cultural Equity

- Building a welcoming and inclusive community renewal after the pandemic requires purposeful attention to what art forms, artist experience and values are reflected in calls for art and artist contracts. Who is making decisions about what is funded? Are opportunities available to people fluent in commonly-spoken languages other than English?

Respect Artists' Intellectual Property

- MAPC affirms artists' rights to maintain their intellectual property under contract with government entities. Government entities may reserve a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, and otherwise use, and authorize others to use any artworks/deliverables developed under grant agreements with attribution for both themselves and the artist.

Process

- Determine model for contracting with artist:
 - Residency
 - Artist facilitator
 - Art installation
 - Youth development
- Establish funding source to support artists' work
- Identify local priorities, partner organizations and individuals to guide artist selection process;
- Select artist using Call for Artists or Call for Art, including:
 - Overview and Purpose of Opportunity
 - Desired Outcomes
 - Award Details
 - Application Instructions
 - Key Dates
 - Selection Process and Criteria
- Engage partners and community through artistic programming and implementation
- Use interviews, observations, reflections and surveys to document and evaluate impacts



Iluminación Lawrence: Illuminating downtown Lawrence to create wonder and attraction





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Mark Favermann, Favermann Design

Location

Lawrence, MA

Origin	City of Lawrence and Mass Development TDI Fellow in collaboration with a light artist plus partners developed the concept to focus on Downtown Lawrence.
Budget	 High approximately \$225,000 + in-kind services. <i>Note:</i> budget increases as project elements are added to program.
Timeframe	 Medium– planning and implementation 10-12 months and ongoing
Risk	 Medium – Main risks included weather, and availability of technology and political will
Key Performance Indicators	Community and regional attention, number of participants at events
Partners & Resources	Light Artist John Powell, City of Lawrence, Lawrence Redevelopment Authority, Mass Development TDI, Essex Community Foundation (ECGF), Groundworks Lawrence, Lawrence Partnership and Lawrence DPW

Diagnostic

Early on, the bridge and the clock tower, were the first concepts developed. After a devastating gas-main explosion and utility collapse in a number of the City of Lawrence neighborhoods, it was felt that an extension of the project be made to include other structures to underscore Lawrence as a rich historic, architecturally and vital community

Therefore, it was determined that the architecture of the magnificent mill buildings in and around Downtown Lawrence should be "showcased" by artistic illumination to reinforce community pride and attract visitors and residents to Downtown Lawrence

Iluminación Lawrence was organized to create and develop a comprehensive program to allow Lawrence to be seen "in a different light"

Partner organizations and institutions were joined together to fund various projects. The budget was further developed with the assistance of Light Artist John Powell and the MassDevelopment TDI Fellow Jess Martinez to incorporate many Lawrence structures.

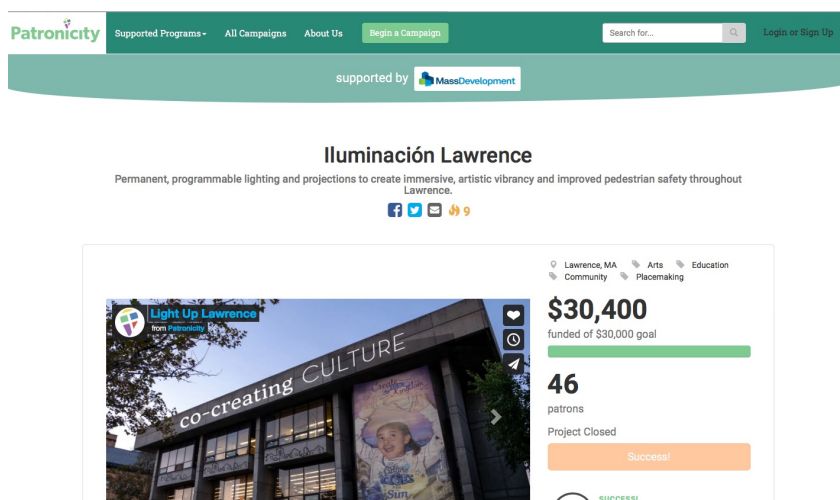
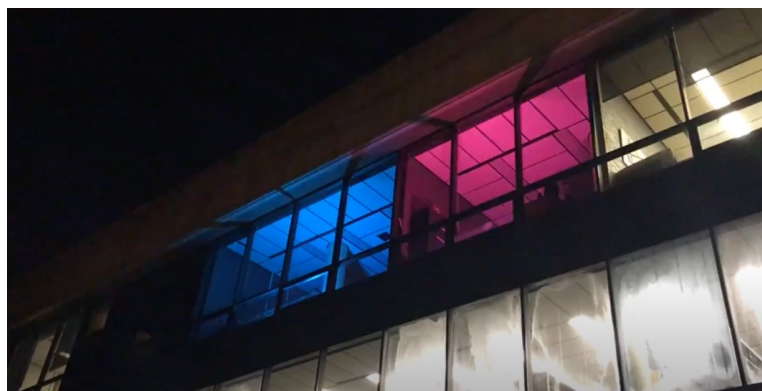
The Patronicity Funding amount was used as part of the overall funding.

Action Item

- To reinforce the program, an *Iluminación Lawrence* website was developed to communicate news of the project elements, schedule and related events
- A Patronicity funding project was developed to raise \$30,000 in matching money. The goal was met by raising \$30,400 which MassDevelopment matched to implement the project. Additionally, several other significant amounts were raised by other public and private sources.
- Local Press outlets, facebook and the City of Lawrence's official website as well as partners' websites were used to communicate the project to residents and businesses
- Phased tests and "soft openings" were created to reinforce community interest
- Music was part of the plan as well and was and is provided by
- In 2021, the Boston Architectural College will assist with rolling out other lighted structures in the Downtown



Iluminación website



Process

- The artistic and technical aspects of the project were initially worked out by Light Artist John Powell who had extensive experience lighting buildings, bridges and other structures nationally and internationally. The initial concept of the project focused only on the Casey Bridge and then later on the Ayer Mill Clock Tower.
- Mr. Powell convinced various members off the community leadership that this concept needed to be expanded to incorporate many structures throughout the Downtown
- Unfortunately, he passed away in early 2020 and replacement artists have now taken his creative and technical place
- Needed permissions and permitting were ascertained from public and private building owners
- LuminArtz developed approaches to direct lighting facade of City Hall
- Internal illumination took place at the Lawrence Public Library
- "Soft Openings" were used as testing for technology. These in turn became community events that added excitement and energy to the program
- Organizations, agencies and individuals collaborated on every aspect of the program
- Individual budgets have been created for each event and each activity area.
- Throughout the projects program, a detailed implementation plan with timeline of tasks, roles was created and followed
- Document has been extensive throughout the total program
- This has and will assist with future project components programming
- During each programmed event, community celebrations have taken place, leading to continued community pride and joy.
- Businesses and residents have all positively responded to the overall program.



Lighting was used to emphasize significant architectural features and to enliven the downtown experience. .



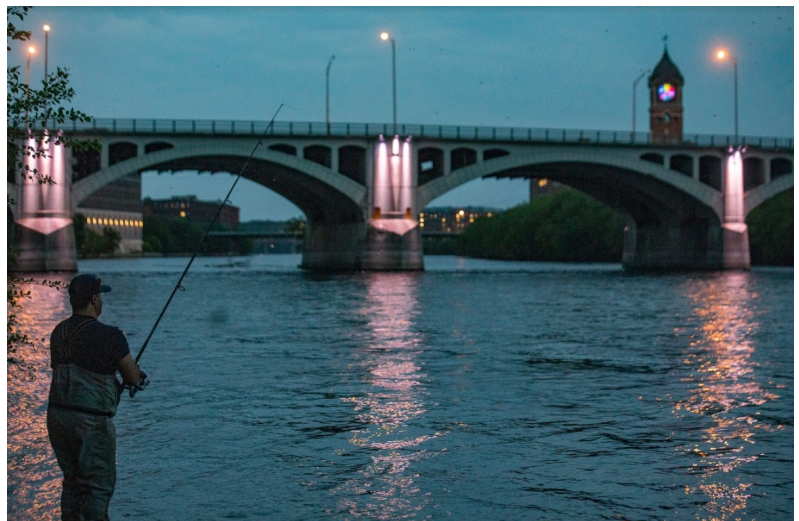
Internal view of Ayer Mill Clock Tower lighting..

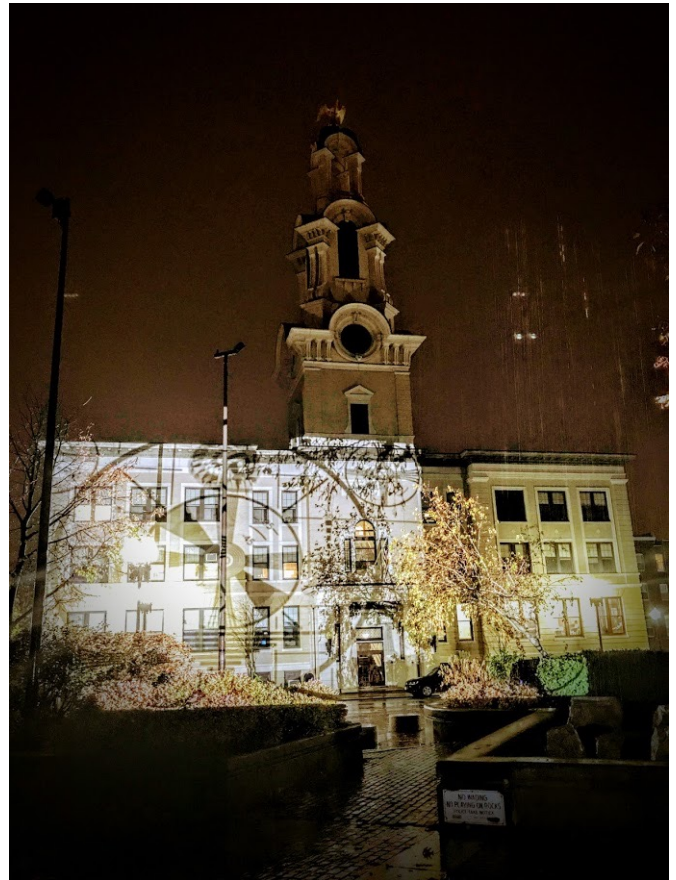
Process- Strategic Decisions

- The initial project considered, for what eventually became *Iluminación Lawrence*, was only to light the Casey Bridge located in Downtown Lawrence over the Merrimack River
- After the Ayer Clock Tower lighting was added, it was clear that a much more extensive plan be initiated throughout the Downtown
- Now the plan incorporates several significant structures that add to the visual enrichment of Lawrence while recognizing the history, people and events that have gone into its social and cultural legacy
- Significant aspects of its history include perhaps the best physical master plan for a textile mill city in the United States, impact on child-labor laws by Lewis Hind's documentation and writings based on Lawrence child workers and the revolutionary Bread and Roses Workers' Strike of 1912
- *Iluminación Lawrence* speaks to this grand legacy of the history and resiliency of the City of Lawrence.
- Each new lighting of a structure becomes a community celebration



Iconic Casey Bridge over the Merrimack River





Events such as Reverberation concerts support collaborations where many regional and local organizations and City departments work closely toward the common goals illuminating the Downtown. The partnerships and that are needed to plan an event are an important element of overall activation of business districts.



Source: Renew Newcastle

Connect artists, entrepreneurs, and makers/crafters with landlords to fill vacant storefronts and change Main Street image




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Provided by SME Consultant

Susan Silberberg, CivicMoxie

Location

Newcastle, Australia

Origin	Renew Newcastle was an effort started by an urbanist and arts and events organizer to fill vacant storefronts with new creative industries in a post-industrial city.
Budget	 Medium
Timeframe	 Medium
Risk	 Low
Key Performance Indicators	Number of vacant storefronts filled, number of tenants that went on to rent permanent space as viable businesses, stabilization and rise of property values, reduction in crime, economic benefit to the community
Partners & Resources	Organization that led creatives recruitment, landlord matching, and marketing, including events, City Planning Department (zoning), private funders to provide seed money for cleaning/maintenance of storefronts.

Diagnostic

Newcastle is a post-industrial city 100 miles north of Sydney, Australia. In 2008, there were a significant number of vacant buildings in the downtown and 150 vacant storefronts on the mile-long stretch of the city's main street. Challenges were numerous:

- What industries could take the place of the former coal, steel, and shipbuilding center of the country?
- How could low property values and crime be addressed by recruiting new 21st Century industries to the city?
- What uses could fill vacant storefronts to give vibrancy to the street?
- How might a solution be scaled to make a difference in the image of the city and significantly reduce ground floor vacancies?

The project identified new "industries" to replace long-defunct economic engines in the city.



Action Item

Through online searches, Marcus Westbury, the creator of Renew Newcastle, identified a significant number of creatives, artists, and makers living and working in and near Newcastle. By surveying those creatives about their space needs and interest in bricks and mortar locations downtown, he was able to identify a large need for space. After matching with landlords eager for even temporary tenants, the Renew Newcastle program slowly and steadily built momentum and a new image for the city...one of a destination for makers and creatives and their customers. The program focused new tenants in targeted areas and then staged events to draw attention to the businesses. The goals were to support creatives and help them transition to viable businesses and permanent space in the city.

Renew Newcastle set up 250 temporary projects in vacant properties and 1/3 of the projects become sustainable businesses. Of those, 81 of those enterprises became a viable business and permanently occupied their storefronts.

In 2008, there were 150 vacant storefronts on the mile-long strip of the city's main street.



Source: Renew Newcastle

Five years into the program, the main street of the city boasted a density of creative uses and entrepreneurs.

Process

- Set up a non-profit with a board of directors that come from a wide range of backgrounds including local business, arts, community representatives. An alternative is to work under the auspices of an existing organization such as the BID, Main Streets Program, or local Chamber of Commerce.
- Survey local restaurants, artisans, makers, creatives (look on Etsy), to see who would benefit for having a temporary brick and mortar location in downtown.
- Assess ownership of all the vacant storefronts in downtown.
- Meet with planning department to discuss opportunities for temporary uses that would not require changing zoning or getting variances (avoid applications and formal legislative process as much as possible).
- Approach owners of vacant properties and ask if spaces could be “borrowed” on a very short-term basis for creatives to sell products.
- Use a Rolling 30-day license agreement.
- The Nonprofit or other entity manages relationship with property owners and works with the City to create a short-term agreement that avoids changing zoning.
- Nonprofit also carries insurance for all of the temporary projects.
- With temporary leases secure, clean up/renovate store fronts.
- Help local small business/artisans move into the spaces.
- When there are several storefronts occupied in one location, host events to garner attention.



Source for all photos: www.edwinrichards.com Instagram: @edwinajillrichards

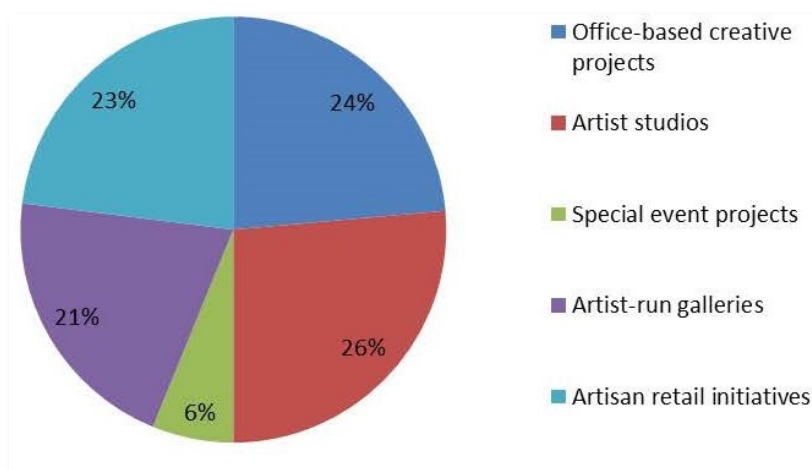
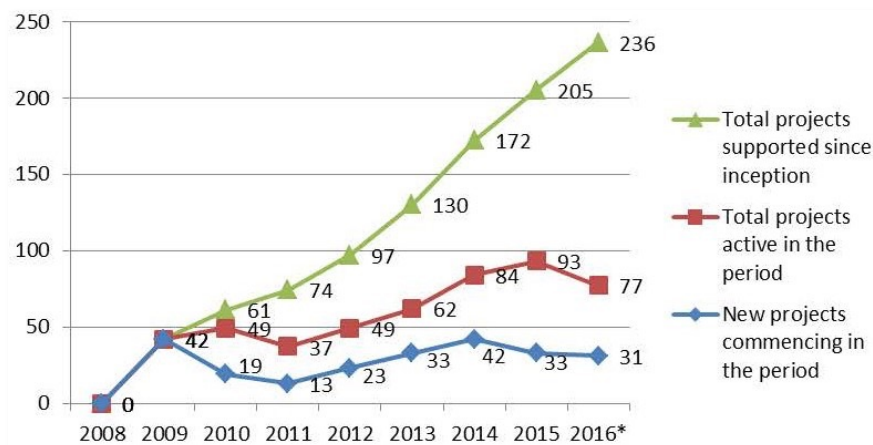
Many of the artisans and entrepreneurs went on to rent permanent space.

Economic Impact to the Community

An economic impact study conducted in 2015-16 looked at the value of the following impacts:

- Creation of jobs and skills developed
- Conversion to commercial leases
- Volunteer engagement
- Mitigation of blight
- Improved business and community confidence
- Improved regional brand

It was determined that for the annual budget of \$208,000 Australian Dollars for Renew Australia, economic impact across the above areas was valued at a little over \$3m Australian Dollars for a benefit-cost ratio of 14:1.



	Estimate
Total Costs	\$208,000
Benefits	
Creation of jobs and skills development	\$2,358,436
Conversion to commercial lease	\$191,828
Volunteer engagement	\$62,763
Mitigation of blight	\$100,698
Improved business and community confidence	\$55,183
Improved regional brand value	\$234,069
Total Benefits	\$3,002,977
PERFORMANCE MEASURES	
Net Benefit	\$2,794,977
Benefit Cost Ratio	14.4

Source: An Economic Evaluation of the Renew Newcastle Project, CofFEE, 2016

Etsy



Source for all photos: www.edwinrichards.com Instagram: [@edwinajillrichards](https://www.instagram.com/edwinajillrichards)



Interactive Storefronts: Engage Residents Through Artistic Installations in Storefronts



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Provided by SME Consultant

Civic Space Collaborative

Location

Creative Commons storefronts at 554 Main St, Worcester, MA

Origin	During the Downtown Worcester Placemaking Plan (2020), Interactive Storefronts was created by Claudia Paraschiv, Adrienne Schaeffer-Borego, and Michelle Moon (Civic Space Collaborative), with Evelyn Darling and Andrew McShane (Worcester BID) and Hank Van Hellio (Worcester PopUp at the JMAC), and Courtney Truex (Menkiti Group).
Budget	 <p>Low Budget (\$4,800): Full installation, including \$900 artist stipend and \$300 material budget for each artist/storefront</p>
Timeframe	 <p>Short Term (6-9 months)</p>
Risk	 <p>Low Risk</p>
Key Performance Indicators	Transformation of empty storefronts; Increased foot traffic; Ongoing implementation of the storefront program
Partners & Resources	Funding by Downtown Worcester BID and the storefront space's owner, the Menkiti Group, with instrumental support from Hank Van Hellion of Worcester PopUp at the JMAC. The Downtown Worcester BID oversaw the installation days and coordinated directly with the artists.
Diagnostic	<p>Interactive Storefronts were a direct response to the shifting COVID-19 landscape, where social distancing was a key factor to maintain public health, yet engaging the community in public processes remained an important goal.</p> <p>The Interactive Storefronts operated simultaneously with an online survey and the development of a Downtown Placemaking Plan. Interactive Storefronts enabled civic art for public engagement in a creative and safe manner according to current COVID-19 best practices for public safety. Staggered installation times and viewing art through a storefront was a COVID-friendly activity. The use of photography, social media, and QR codes were engaged. The project helped bring art to a diminished Downtown, support a local artist community, and engage residents in a planning process while maintaining public health.</p>
Action Item	<p>Interactive Storefronts enlisted local artists to engage residents in feedback for the Downtown Worcester Placemaking Plan and enliven downtown storefronts in anticipation of the Creative Commons at 554 Main Street. Residents and Downtown visitors were able to view the public process of the placemaking and beautification survey unfold in-person. Over several months the Interactive Storefronts traced the survey progress from survey questions, to community answers, and finally to proposed public space placemaking interventions.</p> <p>The goals of the project included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging residents to enjoy public art in Downtown Worcester. • Encouraging residents to provide input toward the Downtown Worcester Placemaking Plan in a real physical space, and to interact with the installations through photography and social media. • Motivating residents to access the full placemaking survey via QR codes. • Supporting the local artist community, especially emerging artists, while keeping opportunities for engagement alive during COVID-19. • Prototype Interactive Storefront Art for future iterations. • Creating public art while maintaining safety during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Action Item (Continued)

The storefronts featured temporary installations from August to December 2020 with a rotation of three phased installations:

Phase 1: Placemaking survey engagement to prompt people to take the online survey (with a QR code) and respond to a question on site through safe interaction.

Phase 2: Survey results to communicate primary survey results to the public.

Phase 3: Placemaking proposals to illustrate primary placemaking interventions coming to Downtown Worcester.

Artists creatively brought empty storefronts to life and engaged residents to participate in a placemaking survey with such novel artistic strategies as creating a “mirror” to show who Downtown Worcester is and encouraging viewers to take a photo for themselves and post on social media.



Interactive Storefront Installation Phase 1 (Survey Questions) by Joshua Croke

Process

Planning

In Worcester, the Interactive Storefronts served multiple purposes: engaging the community to participate in the Downtown Worcester Placemaking Plan, activating empty storefronts, supporting the local artists community, and keeping public health as a priority during Covid-19. The Interactive Storefront Committee emerged from these desired outcomes. Our Interactive Storefront Committee met weekly for several weeks and communicated by email to get from concept to implementation efficiently.

It is important to engage the community around a common issue: Identify a local policy, public realm / placemaking, or community / environmental issue that would benefit from creative community engagement. For Worcester Interactive Storefronts, the project engaged residents to participate in a survey for the Downtown Worcester Placemaking Plan.



Interactive Storefront Installation Phase 2 (Survey Answers) by Joshua Croke

Process (Continued)

Create an Interactive Storefront Committee:

Identify one to three local groups to help shepherd the project. In Worcester, the collaborative efforts between Civic Space Collaborative, the Downtown BID, the building owner, and local Worcester PopUp covered all the necessary needs for a successful project. Local groups should have expertise, connections, and missions around local placemaking, creative endeavors, community building, or particular issues as they relate to the policy issue to be addressed. For instance, if the goal is to inform residents about sea level rise, then a local nonprofit focused coastal clean-up may be a good partner.

Identify a Project Lead, clarify roles for the Committee members, and create a project implementation timeline, and clear budget.

The Project Lead is responsible for overseeing the Call for Art, shepherding the selection process, and aiding the implementation. The Lead can be a member from the Committee, or a hired local with an interest in civic and/or artistic engagement and can themselves be an artist. Civic Space Collaborative led the initial process including the Call for Art, and up until the artist selection, and then wrote the artist prompts for Phases 2 and 3 based on survey responses and selected projects. For implementation, the local Worcester team [Downtown BID and Worcester PopUp] took over to support on the project on the ground. This was a successful transition of leadership that strengthened the relationship between local institutions and individual artists and built local capacity to create similar projects in the future.

Identify location(s): Identify visible and accessible empty or underused storefronts for the art-work. Note that underused means that, while the space may have a tenant, the tenant might not have the ability or inclination to outfit their public facing storefront and may benefit from the artistic installation. In Worcester, the Interactive Storefronts served the plans of the building owner to create an artistic hub in the future, Creative Commons, as well as the goals of the rest of the Committee. Ideally, finding shared goals is important, but equally effective is using a storefront activation to serve multiple discrete goals.

Build and support the local artist community:

One of the goals of the project is to help build up the local artist community. To create a more supportive and inclusive process, the Call should clearly favor local artists, and it should be accessible to artists at different levels of their career, especially beginning, and of varying degrees of proficiency in English, technology, or other barriers to applying. The Committee Members should be comfortable acting as support to the artists. In Worcester, four artists participated over the course of seven months as they activated the storefronts and were involved in the civic process of the Downtown Worcester Placemaking Plan, the Covid-19 response of bringing art Downtown, and building community with each other.



Artist: John Vo, Phase 3 (Public Space Interventions)



Artist: Pamela Stolz, Phase 1 (Survey Questions)

Process (Continued)

Call for Art + Artist Selection

Issue a Call for Storefront Art: Gather all the partners and create a mutually beneficial plan outlined through a "Call for Storefront Art." Choose an agreed upon digital space such as Google Drive or email to collect the information. The Project Lead should keep all discussions, drafts, and ideas in one organized space. Translate the Call into different languages to reach immigrant communities. Determine a feasible schedule that keeps momentum but is do-able for artists and the Storefront Art Committee. Distribute important technical information to aid artists in their application regarding any restriction on materials or media (for example: specify only non-toxic, sustainable, recyclable materials), whether the installation would be on the exterior of the storefront (as a painted mural) or on the interior (as either a painted mural or a multi-media installation), availability of electricity, and dimensions of the storefront window and space for the installation.

Support artistic freedom in public art: Art is meant to hold up a mirror to society, to lead the viewers to question assumptions, and to provoke. Too often, art that is curated by a committee becomes a watered-down version of itself. Make a commitment to each other and to artists that they have artistic freedom and will be judged on excellence of vision and craft, rather than on an unspoken censorship of pleasing the least common denominator.

Distribute the Call for Art: Distribute the call through all available channels such as: email networks of partners, municipal networks, social media, e-newsletters, newspapers, targeted emails and phone calls to specific artists, and flyers at schools, libraries, coffee shops, and other hubs of foot traffic. Create an opportunity for an online information session where artists seeking to submit applications can go over the Call step by step and ask questions. In Worcester, the information session was well attended by over a dozen artists who asked clarifying questions about the Call for Art and better understood the requirements and the process. Even during times where in-person gathering is safe, an online information session is convenient and can be viewed on people's own schedules. Ensure the info session is recorded for those who cannot attend.

Select the artist(s): Determine a Selection Committee, review and selection process, and timeline to select the artist(s). A good process includes allowing each committee member to review the submissions before coming together to review and select. For Worcester, the Committee was able to efficiently and unanimously select artists over an online meeting. Immediately following the meeting, email every applicant whether they were selected based on clear selection criteria.



Detail of artist: Pamela Stolz, Phase 1 (Survey Questions)



Detail of artist: Eamon Gillen, Phase 1 (Survey Questions)

Process (Continued)

Installation + Removal

Preparing for Installation: The client and artist should sign contracts and be clear about expectations soon after selection that outlines the deliverables, time, and payment amount. In addition, discuss need and coverage of insurance. In the case of Worcester, the building owner provided insurance coverage for the artists during installation, as well as for the artwork.

Publicize and promote the installation: Distribute press releases, post in eNewsletters, and on social media about the installation. The Worcester BID and Civic Space Collaborative worked to develop the materials and publicize the project.

Installation day and events: Determine appropriate times and a timeline for installation. If social distancing is required, then stagger installations of multiple storefronts. If the installation is entirely from the interior, then public viewing on the installation day can still follow public health social distancing guidelines. If social distancing is no longer required, then installation day is a good opportunity to engage the local community by providing a local ambassador to speak with the public about the goals of the project. In the case of Worcester, we maintained social distancing as was necessary for public health. Each artist had a set time for the installation and a BID staff member met the artist on site. The installation is also a good opportunity to hire a local photographer to document the process and any events.

Help visitors view and understand the storefront art: Provide simple, legible information about the purpose of the installation and a bio of the artist(s) on site, and to translate the information as appropriate. A QR code is an effective way to connect interested viewers with more information. At the Worcester Storefronts their signs about the survey with QR code and website links posted for the Phase 1 installation.

Removal of installation: In few cases, the artist can save the installation for another purpose; however, in most cases, the installation will need to be removed and properly disposed. Recycle as much as possible, for instance in the case of fabric art installation, use textile recycling. In the case of paint on glass, use a bladed paint scraper to remove all paint without getting it into the storm drain system. If the paint is stubborn, spray the on the glass mural/paint with a mixture of warm water and acetone at a 1:1 ratio, soaking the scraper in the mixture prior to scraping. Keep a trash barrel close by to toss the paint chips and a broom and dust pan to sweep up and properly dispose of paint dust.

Following this Storefront Installation the BID installed a snowflake installation in winter 2020-2021 and is working on larger storefront installation in 2021.



Artist: Eamon Gillen, Phase 1 (Survey Questions)



Artist: Eamon Gillen, Phase 2 (Survey Answers)



Artist: Eamon Gillen, Phase 2 (Survey Answers)



Host a downtown cultural event to support businesses and show positive change






CULTURAL/
ARTS

Provided by SME Consultant

Susan Silberberg, CivicMoxie

Location

Fall River, MA

Origin	Collaborative effort growing out of MassDevelopment TDI project and including other FRACC members involved in Viva Fall River (the Arts, Culture and Creative Economy Master Planning effort for the city)	
Budget		Low – \$37,000 plus in-kind donations
Timeframe		Short – planning and implementation in 3-1/2 months
Risk		Low
Key Performance Indicators	Number of attendees, Number of partners working together successfully, Good press	
Partners & Resources	One SouthCoast Chamber of Commerce, Fall River Arts + Cultural Coalition (FRACC), MassDevelopment TDI, BayCoast Bank, We Love Fall River, Fall River Public Schools, City of Fall River – main partners	

Diagnostic

Fall River has many outstanding attributes but is lacking in a collaborative vision and image that can pull all the great things together. There are many different efforts and activities with no central organizing force to advocate, market, and lead the way in business support, tourism development, and arts and cultural coordination across the city.

Key challenges include high turnover and legal issues for City Hall leaders in recent years that have grabbed headlines and stolen the narrative of the good things happening in the city. In addition, there is a fragmented approach to solving problems and building momentum for positive change. The downtown has significant vacancies and the geographic spread of the city, as well as its hilly topography, make connections and focus a challenge. However, the diversity of the city, including its residents and cultural traditions, food and restaurant offerings, and presence of a small but strong “making” economy offer some unique opportunities. The city’s location on the water, proximity to Boston and Providence, and abundance of relatively affordable housing and workspaces, and a sizeable inventory of old mill buildings provide many opportunities.

Action Item

The Winterbridge cultural events (running Fridays and Saturdays for six weeks in the Winter of 2021) at Gromada Plaza downtown was planned to build on the MassDevelopment TDI work on South Main Street and to showcase the collaborative power of FRACC, a 40-member diverse group of arts and culture, business, community nonprofit, philanthropic, and public sector stakeholders. FRACC is charting new territory in the scope of its goals and Winterbridge was meant as a way to:

- Bring the community together and engender city pride (begin to take back the narrative of the city)
- Demonstrate the power of collaboration (put the power of FRACC to work)
- Provide community activities and spaces during winter under Covid-19 guidelines

Winterbridge included music, fire pits, evergreen trees, live painting, community partners providing grab n go services, dancing/Zumba sessions, live entertainers (costume characters, singers, and musicians), and a We Love Fall River window display competition.



Live painting was part of the event.



Source: for all photos: FRACC

There were over 36 businesses, nonprofits and individuals who came together to provide staff, funding, programming, marketing, and other needs for the events.

Process

The Winterbridge cultural events grew out of the desire for an early “win” and demonstration of the power of collaboration including the MassDevelopment TDI and FRACC. Planning goals focused on attracting people to downtown and exposing them to music, dance, live painting, and other cultural elements...showing what the future can look like. The steps to plan and execute this type of event include:

- Set goals such as: 1) desired audience; 2) how to help businesses attract customers downtown; 3) change image of downtown; 4) practice collaboration or implement a pilot project to see feasibility, etc.
- Gather parties with similar interests, complementary resources and expertise.
- Brainstorm ways to achieve the core goals. Develop criteria to select one strategy to move forward: 1) Is there someone who has done an event before? 2) Does someone have paid staff that can lend a hand? 3) Who has graphics and marketing expertise? Can this strategy tag onto another event or a milestone in the community?
- Answer these questions: 1) Who is the audience? 2) What message to convey? 3) How does this align with municipal and business district goals? 4) What does success look like? 5) What would cause everyone to smile the day after the event? Keep the answers to these questions in mind throughout planning
- Work back from the goals to identify people, organizations, agencies available to help: chart interests, capacity, resources, contacts.
- What location best supports the goals? Create a plan of the area.
- List and draw activity areas, block party elements
- Link program activities with partners/volunteers.
- Refine event: what happens, time, day, activities
- Create a budget sheet for overall event, each activity area.
- Think carefully about branding...what to call it? How does this fit with overall branding and marketing for the downtown or commercial district?



Volunteers helped build the “set” for the weekend activities.



Winterbridge was a success and led to increased “buzz” about what is possible downtown and also the power of collaboration and FRACC’s work.

Process (Continued)

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- Create a budget sheet for overall event, each activity area.
- Think carefully about branding...what to call it? How does this fit with overall branding and marketing for the downtown or commercial district?
- Create a detailed implementation plan with timeline of tasks, roles.
- Document what you do and think about how to make the effort sustainable in the long run. How can this event be a pilot project for ongoing programming?
- During the event, try to include ways to capture information the attendees (raffle that requires their zip code, ideas chalk wall that asks what people want to see in the district, etc.)
- Do a debrief immediately after the event to improve efforts for the future. Ask businesses for their input and reactions.



Volunteers helped build the “set” for the weekend activities.



Winterbridge was a success and led to increased “buzz” about what is possible downtown and also the power of collaboration and FRACC’s work.

The Fall River TDI District is creating an Arts & Culture Master Plan that supports the city's arts, cultural diversity and traditions, vibrant public spaces, and economic vitality. The goal is to understand how residents enjoy arts and culture in the city and region, identify what may be missing, and create a roadmap to move forward to support robust arts and culture in the city.



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To add important places, organizations, and art to the Fall River Map, go to: bit.ly/36Ao/6o



¿QUAL ESPACIO O LUGAR QUIERES MEJORAR?

A detailed street map of Fall River, Massachusetts, and its surrounding areas. The map shows the city's layout, including major roads like Route 1A, Route 1, and Route 28. Key landmarks and parks are labeled, such as Southport, Sewamock Neck, and various parks like Park View and Southport Park. The map also shows the Fall River and the surrounding water bodies. The map is oriented with North at the top.

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To add important places, organizations, and art to the Fall River Map, go to: bit.ly/36AoZ6q



@vivafallriver

CivicMoxie®

Fall River, MA



Beech Tree themed street furniture: community branding through functional public art






CULTURAL/
ARTS

Provided by SME Consultant

Mark Favermann, Favermann Design

Location

Chelmsford, MA

Origin	Town of Chelmsford's Community Development and Planning Department
Budget	 Medium (\$80,000 - \$100,000)
Timeframe	 Short – planning and implementation in 6 months
Risk	 Medium- DPW limited capacity to install and warehouse
Key Performance Indicators	Residential and visitor use of the furniture for comfort and function
Partners & Resources	Funded by Mass Legislative Earmark + Isupport from Bicycle Commission, Historic Commission and Economic Advisory Commission of Town of Chelmsford

Diagnostic

Previously uninspired and the deteriorating older streetscape for the Town of Chelmsford, MA Downtown Historic District was in great need of added vitality, visual quality and places for rest and contemplation. It was a hard landscape that needed softening. After thoughtful study, it was determined that a "family" of themed sculptured street furniture was needed that provided benches, bike racks, planters, kiosks, tree grates and tree guards.



Town of Chelmsford Beech Tree Leaf Metal Planter

Action Item

Working with the Town's administration including the Community Development Director, the Planning Board, the Historical Commission, the Bicycle Commission and the Department of Public Works. Due to the rapid turnaround because of the Legislative earmark funding source, planning, design, review and fabrication took place over a five (5) period.

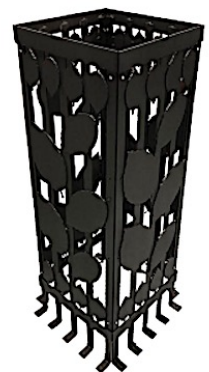
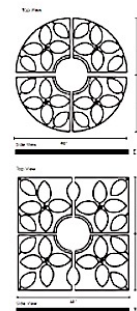
T-GT

TREE GRATE

STRUCTURE
Overall Dimensions: 48" x 48"
Material: Cast Iron or Aluminum
Powder coated: Black
Paint applied to all sides, must have 10 year guarantee

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

of Units: _____
Custom Artwork: _____
Material: _____
Frame Option: _____



Beech Tree Leaf Tree Grate and Tree Guard

Process

The confirmation of this project's funding was made in early February. This meant that everything had to be completed by June 30. Basing designs on very popular thematic wayfinding sign detail of a leaf pattern, our firm created a series of thematic street furniture elements. Considering the elements as functional public art pieces, they were shared at public meetings including the Town's Planning Board Economic Development Committee, the Bicycle Commission and the Historic Commission. Once reviewed and refined, the designs were developed into a specifications package that allowed for vendor review and cost proposals. The fabrication/installer vendors were asked to give costs in a 10 day period. After the contract was delivered by the Town, fabrication commenced. It was decided to save funds that the Chelmsford DPW would be the installers.



Themed benches being fabricated.



Part of the 20 themed bicycle racks that were blessed by the Bicycle commission.

Process – Strategic Decisions

- To use street furniture as a key Downtown Historic District Enhancement too.
- Decision to use Beech Tree Leaf as sculptural motif.
- To create a themed family of street furniture
- To apply sculptured street furniture elements throughout the Downtown Historical District
- To seek advice and review of the Historic Society
- To seek advice and review from the Bicycle Commission
- For the Town's DPW to be the project installer
- Appeared at a series of public meetings that included the planning board, the historical commission and the Select board
- Worked with an expedited schedule to meet very restricted time constraints
- Developed a set of specifications for bidding and fabricating by vendors
- Site visit to chosen vendor during fabrication



Inspiration for the brand came from a famous former beech tree on the Town Common. A granite marker commemorates the tree's long life and Town's admiration for it.



Town of Chelmsford's themed sculptural street furniture installations throughout the Downtown Historic District strategically added interest, visual and material texture and comfort to the previously rather barren, hard environment.