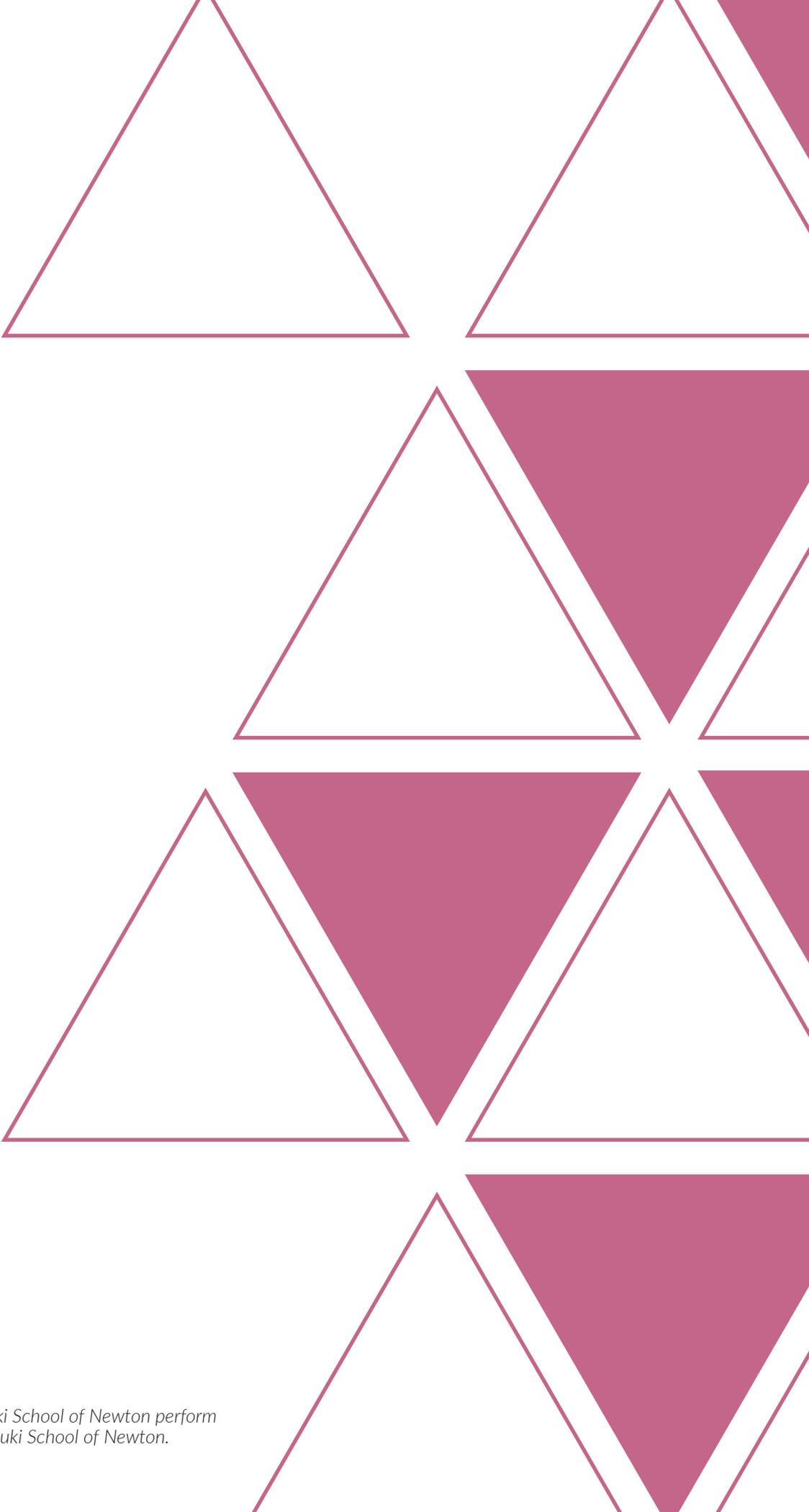


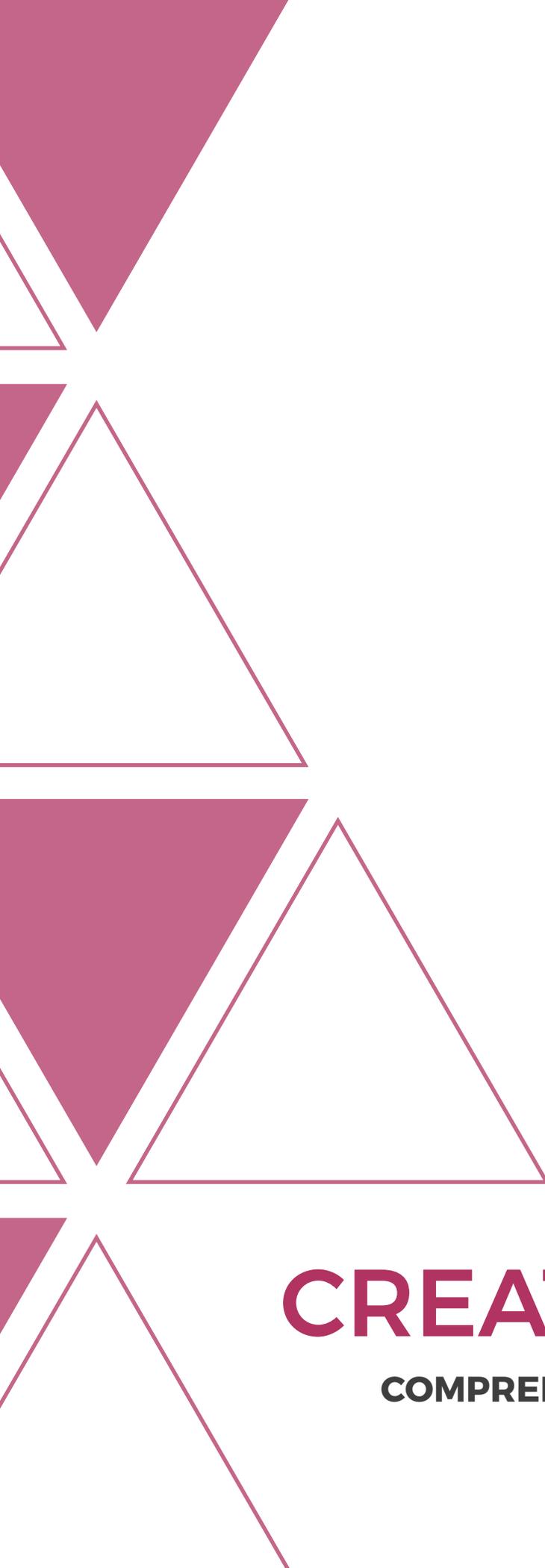
CREATE NEWTON

COMPREHENSIVE ARTS & CULTURE PLAN

DECEMBER 2019



Cover Image: Students from the Suzuki School of Newton perform at the 2018 Harvest Fair. Source: Suzuki School of Newton.



CREATE NEWTON

COMPREHENSIVE ARTS & CULTURE PLAN

DECEMBER 2019



An artful piano in Newton Highlands.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR OF THE COMMUNITY DESIGN FOR ARTS & CULTURE COMMITTEE (CDAC)

Art and culture are critical drivers for social and economic growth, vibrant village centers, and community building. Residents of Newton are fortunate to have a wealth of talent in our midst, an engaged cohort of arts and cultural organizations, and arts advocates committed to nurturing and growing arts, cultural, and civic programming in our city.

The last two years brought a series of events and opportunities that opened the door to enhance arts, culture, and civic programming in Newton. The advent of Mayor Ruthanne Fuller's administration brought a deeper commitment to arts and culture, including financial support for fully funded staff positions for cultural development personnel and the contribution of matching funds for the Massachusetts Cultural Council grants. In addition, the passing of Linda Plaut, the City of Newton's long-time Director of Cultural Affairs, was a deep loss of our leading arts, cultural, and civic programming advocate. As such, at the direction and request of Mayor Fuller, the Community Design for Arts & Culture Committee (CDAC) was formed to assess existing conditions and craft a vision for the future.

The CDAC Committee includes artists, administrators from leading nonprofit arts organizations, a city councilor, the Commissioner of Parks, Recreation and Culture and staff from the Mayor's office. Our goal was to write a strategic plan that would strengthen, expand, and sustain arts and culture as an integral part of our community. We took a deep dive into the arts and culture landscape in our city and evaluated current conditions and future possibilities. With the assistance of our consultant, CivicMoxie, we embarked on a journey to create a new vision for a cultural life in Newton that is collaborative, supportive, and transformative.

Through a public engagement process, over 1000 people participated in a community arts survey, focus group meetings, and personal interview sessions, which fill the plan with thoughtful ideas as well as concerns and challenges to tackle. Those contributions were deeply appreciated and an important element to this process – thank you!

It is our intent that city leaders and arts advocates use the Create Newton Comprehensive Arts & Cultural Plan as a living document; as its recommendations are rolled out, it is our hope to continue to add more partners to collaborate and support the needs of the arts community. The Plan addresses four key areas: 1) Growing Arts & Civic Collaboration & Advocacy, 2) Building Varied & Dynamic Cultural Spaces, 3) Promoting Arts & Activity in our Village Centers and 4) Enhancing a Creative Culture in City Hall. Within each of these areas, strategies that support arts, culture, and civic programming are articulated and an aspirational timeline for implementation is included.

On behalf of the CDAC Committee we look forward to assisting and providing Mayor Fuller and the arts community with a resource of support. In the meantime, we look forward to your review of the Create Newton Comprehensive Arts & Cultural Plan and we welcome your thoughts and invite you to find ways to engage and support a vibrant arts and cultural community by reaching out to us at artsculture@newtonma.gov.

Thank you.

Gloria M. Gavris
Chair, Community Design for Arts & Culture

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Community Design for Arts & Culture Committee would like to thank the following for their time and participation in this planning process. Their contributions were invaluable to the development of the *Create Newton Comprehensive Arts & Culture Plan*.

THANK YOU

Newton residents, artists, business owners, philanthropists, and nonprofit leaders who participated in the community arts & culture survey, focus group sessions, and individual interviews, providing input and thoughtful comments during the public engagement process that assisted in crafting this plan.

Community Design for Arts & Culture (CDAC) Committee Members

Gloria M. Gavis - Chair

Vicki Danberg - Newton City Councilor

Robert DeRubeis - Commissioner of Parks, Recreation & Culture, City of Newton

Paula Gannon - Director of Cultural Development, City of Newton

Dana Hanson - Director of Community Engagement & Inclusion, City of Newton

Adrienne Hartzell Knudsen - Managing Director, Newton Cultural Alliance

Sachiko Isihara - Executive Director, Suzuki School of Newton

Lindsay Pike - Ceramic Artist

Howard Sholkin - President, Newton Community Pride

Jonathan Yeo - Chief Operating Officer, City of Newton

Newton Cultural Council

Amelia LeClair, Co-chair

Christopher Pitts, Co-chair

City of Newton

Mayor Ruthanne Fuller

Devra G. Bailin - Director of Economic Development

Jennifer Caira - Deputy Director of Planning & Development

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Barney Heath - Director of Planning & Development

Gabriel Holbrow - Community Planner – Engagement Specialist

Zachery LeMel - Chief of Long Range Planning

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CivicMoxie, LLC, Consulting Team

Susan Silberberg, Principal

Lyndon DeSalvo, Project Manager

Thank you to the arts and cultural organizations and the City of Newton for providing the wonderful photographs illustrating this report, and to the photographers who took them.

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Afanasy Prokhorov and Adaira Reum perform in the "Afternoon Tea Party" at City Hall as part of the 2019 Festival of the Arts. Source: Irina Danilova.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



*Alumni Flashback at the New Art Center.
Source: John Murray.*

OVERVIEW

Mayor Ruthanne Fuller established the Community Design for Arts & Culture Committee (CDAC) in 2018 to facilitate a comprehensive arts and cultural plan for the City of Newton. CDAC is made up of ten arts, culture, and civic leaders from key organizations in addition to elected officials and City staff. Since that time, CDAC has been meeting to explore goals for an arts and cultural plan. In 2019, the Committee crafted a Request for Proposals and solicited submissions from arts and cultural planning firms. In the spring of 2019 CivicMoxie, LLC was selected to assist CDAC with creating a comprehensive arts and cultural plan for Newton.

The City has never had an arts and cultural master plan and the timing is right for this *Create Newton Comprehensive Arts & Cultural Plan*. Arts and cultural advocates have described an alignment of events and opportunities that have opened the door to a new vision for the cultural life of Newton that is collaborative and transformative. Some of the key factors supporting the timing of this plan include:

- The Mayor has made a deep commitment to arts and culture, including support for this planning process and matching funds for the Massachusetts Cultural Council grants the City receives.
- Changes in leadership in the former Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs have provided an opportunity to assess accomplishments and examine the best way to move forward.
- A reorganization of the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs to place it within the newly named Department of Parks, Recreation, and Culture with fully funded staff positions offers opportunities to assess collaborations and roles on events, programs, and overall City advocacy for arts, culture, and civic events.
- Increasing awareness and understanding by cultural organizations that new strategies are needed to grow the overall pool of resources available for arts and culture.
- Major real estate development and redevelopment in the city offers opportunities for embedding arts and culture in spaces, programs, and collaborations in new spaces throughout Newton.
- The City's rezoning effort provides an opportunity to ensure arts and culture are supported in public spaces, events, and businesses in a variety of ways in the zoning ordinance.

What this Plan Offers

This *Create Newton* Plan offers recommendations to meet the needs of artists, businesses, and arts patrons and advocates. Specifically, the plan:

- Identifies new ways to align efforts to support arts and culture in the city.
- Recommends aligning forces from the arts, cultural, civic, and business communities to streamline fundraising and advocacy and make them more transparent.
- Suggests ways the City of Newton can support arts and culture through policies, regulations, and advocacy.
- Recommends proactive strategies to fully utilize existing spaces in the city and investigate possibilities for new or adapted spaces for rehearsals, classrooms, exhibition, work studios, etc.
- Offers support to individual artists and creatives as well as nonprofits and creative businesses.
- Suggests ways to ensure that arts, cultural, and civic support is spread appropriately throughout the city, based on village characteristics, infrastructure, and need.

The Process

CDAC and CivicMoxie worked collaboratively, over the course of six months, along with assistance from City staff, to pursue and complete a scope of work that included:

- Development of an inventory of existing conditions of arts and culture.
- Solicitation of feedback from the community regarding goals, concerns, vision, and opportunities for arts and culture in Newton.
- Meetings with City staff and administration to understand relationships and initiatives and to solicit feedback.
- Research on best practices for plan focus areas.
- Creation of a set of goals and recommendations.
- Development of an implementation strategy for moving forward.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PLAN

Section 1 - Introduction

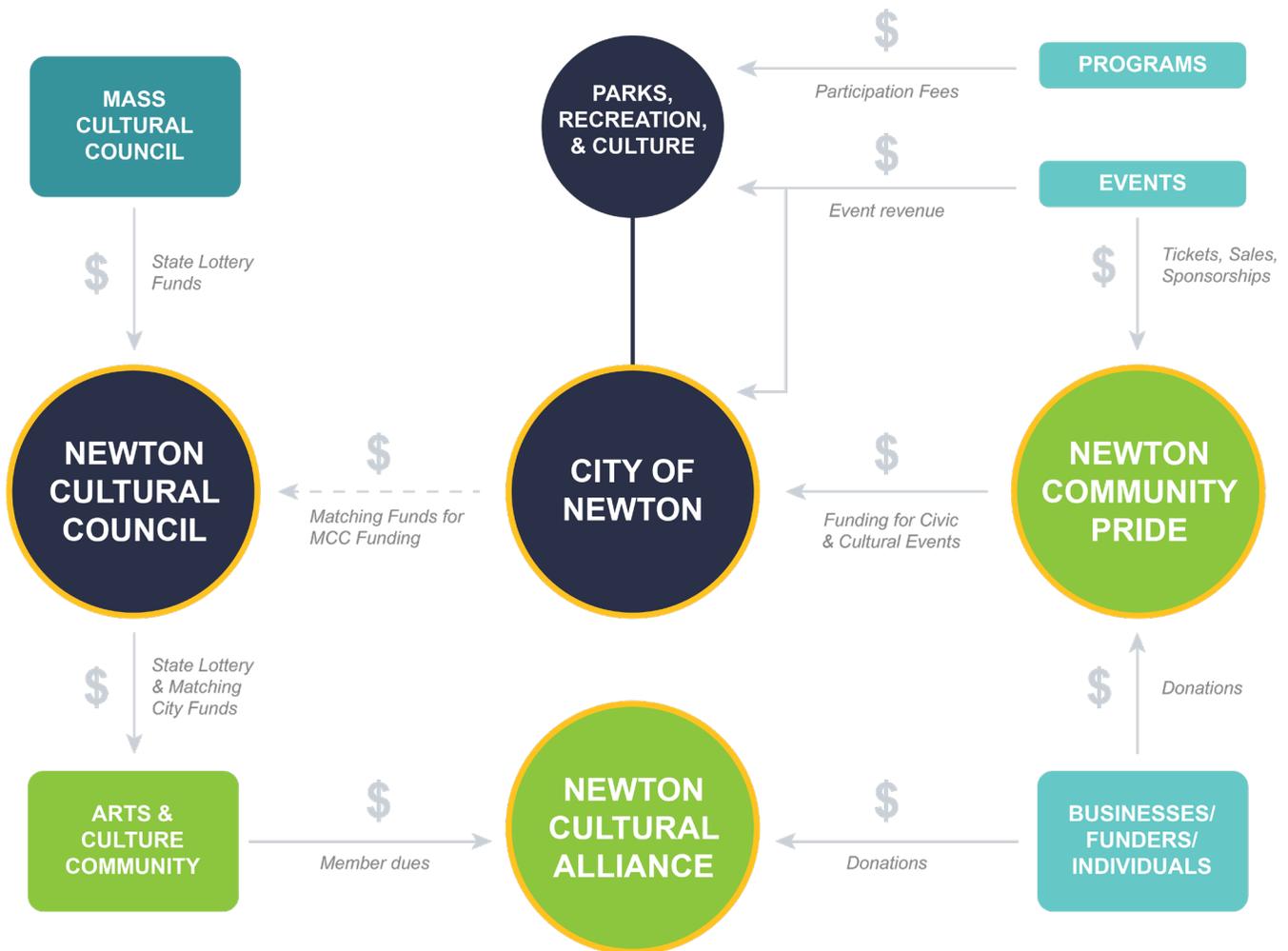
Section 1 gives a broad overview of existing conditions and major issues regarding arts and culture in Newton.

Overview of Major Organizations

There are four major entities that are concerned with arts and culture in Newton and a host of other nonprofits, groups, advocates, and initiatives. These entities are the City of Newton, the Newton Cultural Alliance (NCA), Newton Community Pride (NCP), and the Newton Cultural Council (NCC). The diagram below illustrates the relationships and funding flows of these entities.

Mapping Arts & Culture Assets

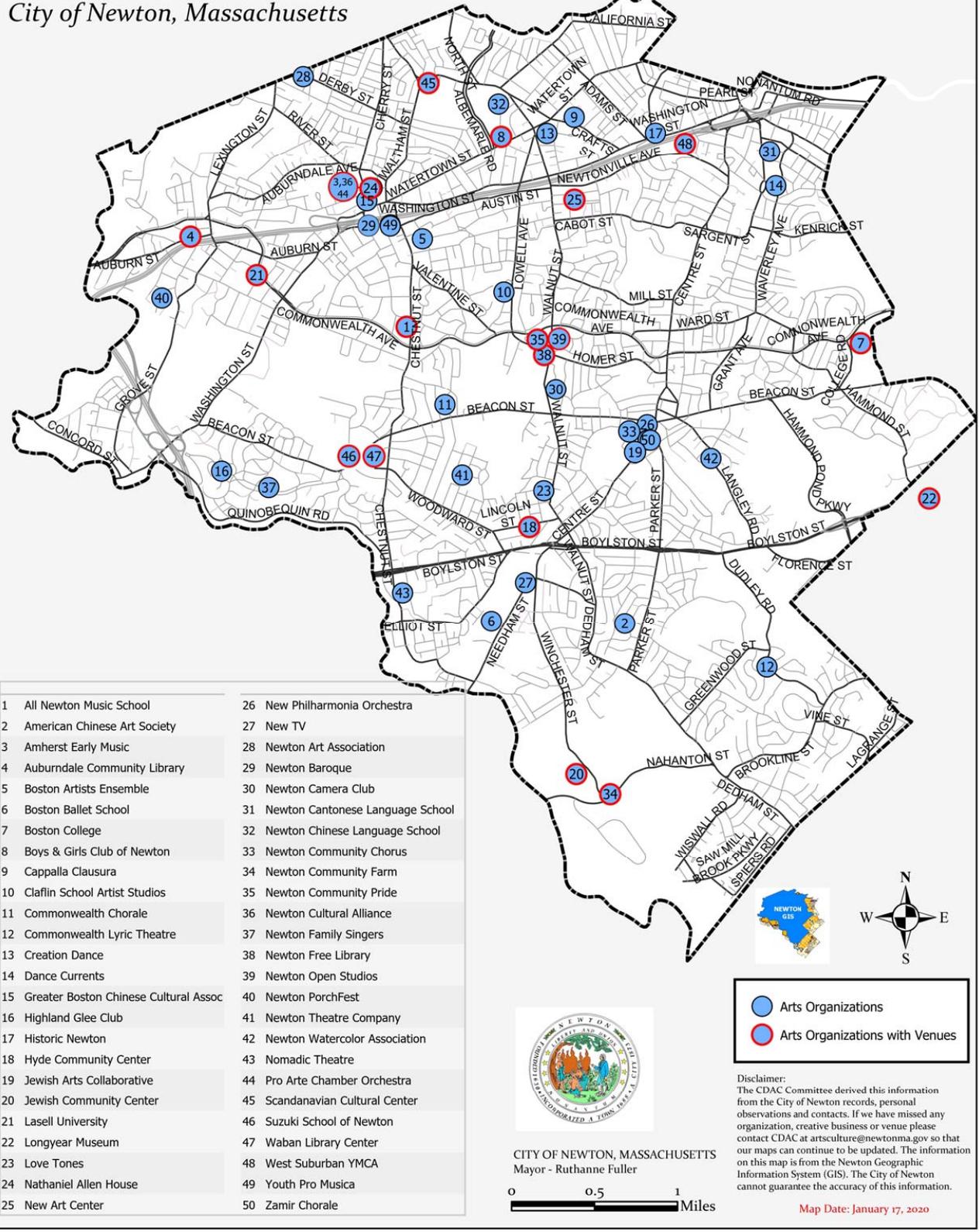
All arts and cultural organizations that were mapped in the fall of 2019 are shown on the map on the opposite page.



This diagram illustrates the four major entities (bound in yellow) that support arts and culture in the city, along with their relationships and funding sources.

Arts and Culture Organizations

City of Newton, Massachusetts



The map above compares the arts and cultural organizations with venues (space) and those without in the City of Newton as of the Fall of 2019. Source: City of Newton GIS with information compiled by CDAC.

Current City Funding and Support for Arts & Culture

The City has made a concerted effort recently to enhance its support for arts and culture, with Mayor Ruthanne Fuller making this a priority of her administration. While it can be difficult to fully understand all of the public funding directed towards “arts and culture,” this master planning process sought to establish a baseline to better understand how resources are currently used. Within this plan, Newton “arts and culture” funding only encompasses those City programs run out of the former Mayor’s Office of Cultural Affairs (now Cultural Development), and not other programs run by Parks, Recreation & Culture, Senior Services, Newton Free Library, Newton Community Education, and Historic Newton, all of which have arts and culture programming and financial support from the City.

The funds the City uses to support arts and culture are derived from the following sources:

- City revolving funds (ticket sales, class or workshop fees)
- Newton Community Pride (direct funding from this nonprofit to the City to support civic and cultural events and programs)
- City Operating budget (the Mayor has committed to supporting Cultural Development staff positions from the operating budget and not revolving funds as in prior years).

In addition to the direct arts and cultural funding and other department and program support listed above, the City receives yearly Mass Cultural Council (MCC) grants to be distributed to arts organizations and individual creatives. In the past two years this grant has been approximately \$15,000 annually. Mayor Fuller has committed to matching these State monies with \$15,000 from the City for a total fund of \$30,000 to be provided to Newton arts and cultural community annually through a formal grant application and selection process overseen by the NCC, the City’s designated Local Cultural Council.

What the Community Said

The Create Newton master planning process invited public input and stakeholder feedback through an online survey, focus groups, one-on-one interviews, and CDAC tabling at community events. The engagement process actively involved arts and cultural organizations, the creative sector and other businesses, individual artists and creatives, City staff, and a large number of Newton residents. Points shown in italics below are direct quotes from stakeholders.

Overall Arts and Culture Climate in the City

- Public art, outdoor music space, centralized arts and culture website and calendar, performing arts center, exhibition and gallery space are all important to residents.
- Many noted that Newton-based arts and cultural organizations compete with Boston-based ones for support (attendance and donations).
- *“There is a wide range of arts represented in Newton. Groups are active throughout the city and many offer free and affordable programs. There is a robust community of people who attend events and see each other out and about, which builds community.”*



Volunteers clean up around Newton Centre station for NewtonSERVES. Source: Newton Community Pride.

City Support for Arts and Culture

- General excitement regarding Mayor’s support for arts and culture and commitment to the Arts & Cultural Plan.
- This period of time is viewed as an opportunity to assess changes in leadership and roles and to adjust things to best meet current needs, organizations, and cultural climate.

Coordinated Approach and Marketing

- There is a strong desire for enhanced alignment between the key cultural nonprofits and City departments (namely Newton Community Pride, Newton Cultural Council, Cultural Development Department, Newton Cultural Alliance).
- Eliminate redundancy in organizational efforts and create a clear framework for collaboration with fundraising and coordinated calendars. *“Have one umbrella organization to help all the arts and culture nonprofits including a staff to help out.”*
- MANY survey respondents noted the need for a central repository of information about arts and cultural events, and overall better communication. *“Better notification of events. Would welcome a monthly e-mail with complete info on upcoming events.”*
- The biggest challenges for Newton nonprofit arts organizations are fundraising, space (performance, rehearsal, instructional), and promotion & advocacy.

Development and Zoning

- Various stakeholders noted that the substantial development occurring in Newton should be leveraged for additional arts and cultural spaces and public art funding.
- Desire to codify City of Newton support for arts in zoning changes and by supporting arts and culture in new development.
- There is interest in exploring a “percent for the arts program” (whereby a certain percentage of development costs are earmarked for arts and culture).
- Consider regulations and a program for vacant storefronts that would require displaying art in windows or leasing low-cost or utility-only cost spaces temporarily for arts and creative uses.
- Encourage developers to repurpose underutilized buildings and spaces for visual artist studio spaces and workshops wherever possible and practical.

- *“I would like to see more community murals/public art opportunities.”*
- *“Fewer hurdles to getting public art approved; a higher level of support (design aesthetic, branding) for arts and culture.”*

Arts & Cultural Facilities

- Many nonprofits have inadequate facilities for their needs, including a notable lack of visual art studio space, performance, and rehearsal space. Organizations would like to see additional spaces developed in addition to having better information and access about privately owned and publicly owned facilities.
- Some stakeholders want a large civic performance space that could house world-class concerts, theater, and dance.
- Organizations would like to see enhanced City coordination around maintenance and booking of City-owned spaces for use by nonprofits.
- In the survey, over 65% of board members and administrators at Newton not-for-profit arts organizations selected “A centralized city-wide arts & culture events calendar” and “An inventory of available performance space and exhibit space” as “Most important” or “Very important.”

Cultural and Civic Events

- Stakeholders expressed the importance of large-scale cultural and civic events towards building community and enhancing creativity in Newton. While these events were generally celebrated, there was also a desire to diversify from the current offerings to establish new arts and cultural activities and experiences.
- Survey respondents felt that certain events were important to foster community, especially the following: 4th of July Celebration, Halloween Window Painting Contest, NewtonSERVES, Heartbreak Hill Youth Road Race, Harvest Fair, Concerts in the Park, and the Holiday Lights Celebration.
- Respondents to the survey also felt that certain events were important to enhance arts and culture, especially the following: Newton Open Studios, Concerts in the Parks, Festival of the Arts, and the Holiday Craft Fair in City Hall.

Activity and Placemaking in the Villages

- Many stakeholders were interested in more opportunities for live music in parks and downtown areas and enlivening the city in the evening. There is a desire to see arts and cultural events and investments reflected equitably across all of Newton's villages.
- Many stakeholders noted the robust offerings for families and children in Newton and mentioned further opportunities to link the schools and arts and cultural initiatives in the city.
- "We would love if there was live music most evenings... at a coffee shop, restaurant, bar... There seems to be nowhere to go on a regular weekly basis here in Newton to listen to live performances."
- "Each village in Newton would have its own annual street celebration where the main street in the village would be shut off from traffic and there would be live music, booths displaying the work of local artists, booths for buying things from local vendors, and great food. These would be staggered throughout the summer and would try as much as possible to highlight the businesses and artists of that village."

New Org: An Explanation

Throughout this plan, the recommended new nonprofit organization for arts and culture is called the New Organization, or New Org. One of the first recommended steps in this Plan is that the main stakeholders come together to discuss the mission, composition, and structure of this new organization. The role of the new organization will bring together the mission of Newton Community Pride and the Newton Cultural Council with a strong governing structure, by-laws, Board of Directors, and staffing. The collaboration and participation of the Newton Cultural Alliance and other stakeholders will be instrumental to its success. Because it is not known what this organization will look like in its final form, the Plan uses this generic term, recognizing that the process of creating the organization will include a decision regarding the name.

Section 2 – Goals and Strategies

Vision for Arts and Culture in Newton

The Community Design for Arts & Culture Committee (CDAC) seeks to develop and recommend a viable plan for the City of Newton that will strengthen, expand and sustain arts and culture as an integral part of our community and have Newton be a vibrant center for artistic expression, performance and programming. The Committee's vision to invest in the arts will be viewed through the prism of our history and core values, embracing the vital contributions arts and culture make to a welcoming, culturally diverse, economically prosperous and multigenerational Newton.

Goals and Strategies to Achieve the Vision

1. Grow Arts/Civic Collaboration & Advocacy

Integrate and coordinate Newton's key arts and cultural organizations and the City's cultural development efforts to facilitate enhanced collaboration, advocacy, marketing, and fundraising for arts and cultural activities, as well as civic events.

Strategies:

- 1.1 Launch a new or revised nonprofit organization and/or merge and realign the roles of existing organizations to maximize support, collaboration, and growth for arts, culture, and civic life in Newton.
- 1.2 Identify new funding sources to support arts and culture, including collaborative grant opportunities across sectors.
- 1.3 Create an overall brand, website, and central calendar for arts, culture, and civic life in Newton.
- 1.4 Initiate an annual city-wide cultural summit.
- 1.5 Create and strengthen ties between the business and arts/cultural communities.
- 1.6 Consider commissioning an Economic Impact Study by Americans for the Arts.

2. Build Dynamic & Varied Cultural Spaces

Support the use and ongoing care of existing and new arts, culture, and civic spaces of all kinds throughout the city via zoning, an inventory of available spaces, technical assistance, and advocacy.

Strategies:

- 2.1 Explore with the City Council the idea of incorporating arts as part of development projects.
- 2.2 Support arts and creative uses in designated commercial areas through zoning.
- 2.3 Create and maintain an online clearinghouse of private and public spaces available for arts, cultural, and civic activities.
- 2.4 Simplify and/or clarify policies and booking procedures for use of public buildings.
- 2.5 Explore the potential for new collaborative art spaces including a large multi-use arts center in Newton.
- 2.6 Provide electrical, lighting, and data hookups in select public spaces and parks.

3. Promote Art & Activity in the Villages

Cultivate a distribution of arts, cultural, and civic opportunities across Newton geographies, interests, and communities by supporting and maintaining attractive, active, and accessible spaces that can host events, gatherings, activities, and public art of varied types.

Strategies:

- 3.1 Create a city-wide public art program that includes permanent and temporary public art (e.g. sidewalk poetry, sculptures, murals).
- 3.2 Consider funding towards arts and culture for all new public building and parks projects.
- 3.3 Investigate ways to encourage arts uses in vacant storefronts.
- 3.4 Clarify permitting for public events, temporary space use, and arts and cultural activities.

- 3.5 Raise a fund for small arts, culture, and placemaking “micro-grants” for neighborhoods, villages, and commercial corridors.
- 3.6 Include considerations for murals and public art in the updated Zoning Ordinance.
- 3.7 Explore permitting outdoor dining and music in commercial areas.
- 3.8 Designate selected corridors for public festivals and events throughout the year.
- 3.9 Consider applying for state MCC cultural district designation for select Newton commercial districts.

4. Enhance Creative Culture in City Hall

Embrace the infusion and influence of arts and culture in City Hall on cross-sector goals, projects, and initiatives wherever possible to move arts and culture “upstream” in planning and use resources effectively to benefit multiple departments.

Strategies:

- 4.1 Expand opportunities for City departments and staff to collaborate on arts and cultural projects and initiatives.
- 4.2 Embed low-cost, temporary art and culture installations and projects in the life of the city.
- 4.3 Consider creating a City Poet Laureate position.
- 4.4 Pilot a City-youth public art partnership.
- 4.5 Formalize roles of Cultural Development staff as arts and cultural liaisons to the public.
- 4.6 Raise money to fund and sponsor temporary public art installations in City Hall and the surrounding grounds.
- 4.7 Utilize City IT/technology to better disseminate information on Newton arts, culture, and history.

Section 3 – Implementation Actions

This Plan identifies four major goals in Section 2 for arts and culture in Newton, and a total of 28 strategy recommendations to achieve these goals in the coming years. It is clear that not everything can be accomplished at once and that some key elements of the plan must be in place before others can be carried out. This section provides a roadmap and priorities for translating ideas to action, ensuring that the *Create Newton* Plan is a useful guide for all stakeholders to unite and work toward enhanced support and visibility for arts and culture in the city. Each recommendation included in Section 2 is listed in Section 3 with suggested prioritization, the suggested lead role, and other details. Funding sources are also explained in greater detail and have been differentiated as occurring at the local, regional, or national level.

The first priority is clearly outlined as Recommendation 1.1 which involves the creation of a new organization that is a 501c3 charitable organization, or other type of nonprofit, that is separate from the City of Newton. Because this action involves many stakeholders, and because so many other recommendations are dependent on the formation and success of this new organization, more detailed implementation information on this recommendation is provided.

It is important to note that for this Plan to be implemented, continuing conversations and collaborations will be required. Various stakeholders throughout the city, as well as those listed in the following chart, will need to come to the table to move ideas to action.

Priority Action - Details on Recommendation 1.1

In order for the Create Newton Plan to be successful, a number of recommendations require a new type of organization to take the lead in implementation. Currently, there is no umbrella organization that is raising funds, and distributing grants across the city to support the initiatives of arts and cultural organizations of Newton. Many cities have arts and cultural councils that combine many roles to maximize resources and enhance collaboration and cooperation between entities. This Plan proposes that a new nonprofit be created that would ideally combine the unique arts, culture, and civic roles of the Newton Cultural Council, Newton Community Pride and possibly the Newton Cultural Alliance into one new organization (New Org).

The following are suggested key characteristics of a new organization:

1. A nonprofit organization separate from the City of Newton.
2. Cultivating a strong board of directors with 15-21 members to include leaders from the arts, cultural, civic and business community and City staff members.
3. The organization would receive support from the Mayor and the staff members of the Cultural Development office, including advocacy, marketing, coordination, and collaboration, and potentially targeted financial/in kind contributions for arts, culture, and civic initiatives.
4. The New Org would include the current functions of NCP and NCC with the following being considered:
 - The existing Newton Cultural Council would continue as the designated grant recipient of the Mass Cultural Council grants, pursuant to MGL, and serve as the grant making body for the New Org by facilitating the grant process and distributing monies from the MCC and other funding means.
 - Newton Community Pride's functions would eventually sunset and its fundraising and advocacy roles absorbed into the mission of the New Org. All NCP assets will be transferred as well in the same manner as restricted or unrestricted as current legal requirements mandate for the nonprofit.
 - Collaborative discussions will determine if, and how, the Newton Cultural Alliance wishes to participate and what the exact roles are for the new organization.

5. The New Org would have paid staff responsible for advocacy, fundraising, and marketing.
6. The New Org would seek funding from outside grants and donations and would focus on increasing available resources for arts and cultural organizations and activities in Newton.
7. Fundraising would be transparent with clear sponsorship and donor allocations to civic programming (such as the Fourth of July fireworks, NewtonSERVES, etc.) and to fund more arts and cultural grants, public art installations, and arts and cultural programming (such as Festival of the Arts, Open Studios, etc.).

The New Org would have the roles of fundraising; providing arts, cultural, and civic support; marketing and advocacy; public art programming and placemaking, grant distributions; and collaboration and community connections.

Next Steps

It is recommended that the very first implementation steps for the *Create Newton Comprehensive Arts & Cultural Plan* include a facilitated process to begin stakeholder discussions regarding the creation of the New Org. Next steps should include:

1. Create a working group of key stakeholders to explore future organizational approaches.
2. Explore the best organizational model that maximizes funding and support for arts, culture, and civic activities in Newton.



Flautists from the Suzuki School of Newton at the 2019 Playathon. Source: William Schuller.

This Master Plan recommends that a new organization be created through a collaborative and transparent process that brings Newton’s key arts, cultural, and civic organizations, City Hall, and business and philanthropic interests to the table to make key decisions about moving forward.



Ceramics and paintings on display at Prospect Avenue Gallery during Newton Open Studios. Source: Lindsay Pike.



Section 1: **PROJECT
OVERVIEW**

INTRODUCTION TO CREATE NEWTON

Newton has an abundance of top tier arts and cultural organizations and a large core of cultural advocates who are committed to nurturing entities, programs, and activities of all scales and types. At the same time, the arts and cultural community faces challenges from a seemingly stagnant donor pool, proximity and competition with neighboring Boston, and a scarcity of readily available and affordable spaces of all types and sizes for the performing arts, visual arts, music, and other creative uses.

Enter this *Create Newton* Plan. Cities undertake arts and cultural plans in order to understand their existing arts and cultural assets, identify opportunities and challenges, and to create a coordinated and collaborative plan for action that supports arts and culture and the organizations, businesses,

public agencies, and people who make things happen. A master plan for arts and culture prioritizes goals, outlines strategies to achieve success, and allows arts advocates to better pursue funding opportunities that enhance arts and culture, strengthen economic development, improve the physical environment, and promote overall quality of life.

The CDAC Committee approached arts and culture with a wide lens, understanding that “culture” can take many shapes and forms. The Plan considers both traditional cultural aspects such as orchestra performances, musical concerts, theatre, and curated art installations, as well as community building through Newton’s unique civic events such as NewtonSERVES, our village days, Fourth of July celebrations, KidsFest, and craft fairs.



The New Philharmonia Orchesraat the First Baptist Church. Source: Gloria Gavis.

The timing is right for this *Create Newton Comprehensive Arts & Cultural Plan*. Arts and cultural advocates have described an alignment of events and opportunities that have opened the door to a new vision for the cultural life of Newton that is collaborative and transformative. Some of the key factors supporting the timing of this plan include:

- The Mayor has made a deep commitment to arts and culture, including support for this planning process and matching funds for the Massachusetts Cultural Council grants the City receives.
- Changes in leadership in the former Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs have provided an opportunity to assess accomplishments and examine the best way to move forward.
- A reorganization of the Mayor's Office of Cultural Development to place it within the newly named Department of Parks, Recreation, and Culture offers opportunities to assess collaborations and roles on events, programs, and overall City advocacy for arts, culture, and civic events.
- Increasing awareness and understanding by cultural organizations that new strategies are needed to grow the overall pool of resources available for arts and culture.
- Major real estate development and redevelopment in the city offers opportunities for embedding arts and culture in spaces, programs, and collaborations in new spaces throughout Newton.
- The City's rezoning effort provides an opportunity to ensure arts and culture are supported in public spaces, events, and businesses in a variety of ways in the zoning ordinance.

These factors sit within a growing national and worldwide awareness of the role arts and culture play in supporting a high quality of life, contributing to economic development, and building community. Besides the strong argument of art for art's sake, there are multiple studies¹ that show the positive impact arts and culture have on numerous parts of our community and personal lives.

¹ In addition to the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies policy brief cited in this section, other studies have documented the positive impact of arts and culture including: "Social Impact of the Arts Study," The Arts Fund, 2018 <https://www.artsfund.org/social-impact-study-2018> ; "The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth: Findings from Four Longitudinal Studies," NEA, Catterall, James S, Dumais, Hampden-Thompson, 2012. <https://www.arts.gov/publications/arts-and-achievement-risk-youth-findings-four-longitudinal-studies> ; "Creativity and Aging," NEA funded, Center on Aging, Health & Humanities, at George Washington University, Washington DC, Cohen Gene. There are many other studies, many of which can be found at www.arts.gov.

The Benefits of Arts & Culture

The benefits from arts and cultural activities stretch to diverse members of the community and touch many goals and interests. In its 2010 policy brief, *Why should Government support the Arts*, the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies outlined the rationale for government support for the arts. The organization's overview captures benefits that positively effect residents, business owners, visitors, investors, and City Hall:

- Decades-long research shows that arts and culture are **economic drivers**. The arts create jobs, produce tax revenue, and stimulate business activity. Arts and culture also attract visitors, grow tourism revenue, and stabilize property values through their contribution to quality of life factors that make places desirable to live, work, and play.
- Arts and culture are **civic catalysts**. In addition to creating a desirable quality of life, the arts create a welcoming sense of place and provide cities and neighborhoods unique qualities that give them their "soul." Arts and culture create an environment for inclusivity and approachability for all residents at events and festivals encouraging community-building, arts activities, and venues for civic discourse.
- The **educational benefits** of arts and culture are celebrated for the critical thinking they foster in children. Arts and cultural education and activities build creative and innovation skills essential to a productive 21st-century work force.
- Arts and culture provide **cultural legacies**, unique cultural and ethnic heritage, and preserve and pass cultural character and traditions from one generation to the next.

- Adapted and summarized from:

<https://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/files/83/en/US-WhyGovSupport2010.pdf>

Nationwide, 82% of Americans believe arts and culture is important to quality of life, and 82% believe it's important to local business and the economy (*Americans for the Arts 2016 Survey*). In addition to ephemeral quality of life factors, arts and culture benefits include tangible positive economic outcomes that have been captured in an ongoing series of Economic Impact Studies by Americans for the Arts. Each year, the nonprofit arts industry supports millions of jobs and generates billions of dollars in revenue for communities around the country.

“Our city is full of talented, creative people who bring a lot of energy and enthusiasm to their public offerings whether visual or creative art. Likewise we have a population that enjoys participating in the arts. Many of our well-established programs such as Newton Open Studios, and galleries and events at the library, provide artists with opportunities to showcase and/or sell their work. I believe that Newton cares about art and culture and fosters it in the public-school system as well.”

- Create Newton survey respondent

What this Plan Offers

This *Create Newton* Plan offers recommendations to meet the needs of artists, businesses, and arts patrons and advocates. Specifically, the plan:

- Identifies new ways to align efforts to support arts and culture in the city.
- Recommends aligning forces from the arts, cultural, civic, and business communities to streamline fundraising and advocacy and make them more transparent.
- Suggests ways the City of Newton can support arts and culture through policies, regulations, and advocacy.
- Recommends proactive strategies to fully utilize existing spaces in the city and investigate possibilities for new or adapted spaces for rehearsals, classrooms, exhibition, work studios, etc.
- Offers support to individual artists and creatives as well as nonprofits and creative businesses.
- Suggests ways to ensure that arts, cultural, and civic support is spread appropriately throughout the city, based on village characteristics, infrastructure, and need.

It must be noted that the scope of this planning process did not include an assessment of arts education and involvement in Newton Public Schools (NPS). Stakeholder feedback during the planning process included concerns about levels of funding to the NPS arts curriculum and many expressed a desire for the Create Newton Plan to address budget and curriculum issues. Because the NPS budget is tied to much larger school planning and budgeting issues, addressing potential changes or making recommendations for new programs was not possible in the cultural planning process. In Section 2, the plan does address ways the City of Newton and other arts and cultural stakeholders can advocate and support strong youth/teen-arts connections and experiences in the city. It is hoped that all of the recommendations in this Plan increase the resources and capacity for collaborations and programs that enrich the cultural lives and experiences of youth and teens and inspire teachers to collaborate with arts organizations (with funding from new sources) to innovate in arts education.



The annual Halloween window painting competition invites Newton residents to paint the windows of businesses throughout the City. Source: Newton Community Pride.

BACKGROUND

For over 40 years, the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs (MoCA) oversaw major community events and arts and cultural programming in Newton under the supervision of its founder, long-time director, and visionary. This director, who passed away in February 2019, was a lead fundraiser and event organizer for community events and arts and cultural programming for the City of Newton. MoCA leadership worked closely with an administrator and the all-volunteer led nonprofit organization Newton Community Pride (NCP) to bring arts, cultural, and civic activities to the city. Over many years, MoCA and NCP worked to execute and build civic, arts, and cultural programming for Newton's residents, employees, and visitors. The Newton Festival of the Arts, the City's Fourth of July Celebration, Harvest Fair, NewtonSERVES, and other events were conceived, organized, and/or supported by NCP and MoCA.

In addition to NCP and MoCA, two other entities greatly support arts and culture in the city. The Newton Cultural Alliance (NCA) is a nonprofit alliance of 30 arts and cultural organizations in the city. The NCA has set the standard for arts and cultural advocacy in the city by advocating for its members, implementing collaborative programs between cultural organizations and businesses, and undertaking the important work of renovating and restoring the historic Allen House in West Newton for arts and cultural space. In addition, the City's Local Cultural Council, appointed by the Mayor, oversees the yearly distribution of Massachusetts Cultural Council grants, which are now matched by the Mayor. While both of these organizations are described in more detail in the Existing Conditions section of this report, it is important they are mentioned here as, taken with City Hall's efforts and NCP, these four entities/departments comprise the core of arts and cultural advocacy and funding in Newton.

CDAC Committee

The Mayor established the Community Design for Arts & Culture Committee (CDAC) in 2018 understanding that the time was right for evaluating the current system and collaborating on a future course. After four decades of civic, arts, and cultural support from MoCA and NCP, and with changing leadership, the CDAC committee is charged with overseeing and facilitating a comprehensive arts and cultural plan for Newton. CDAC is made up of arts, culture, and civic leaders from key organizations in addition to elected officials and City staff (see the list of CDAC members at the beginning of this report in Acknowledgements).

Since 2018, CDAC has been meeting to explore goals for an arts and cultural plan. In 2019, the Committee crafted a Request for Proposals and solicited submissions from arts and cultural planning firms. A shortlisted group of firms was interviewed in the spring of 2019 and CivicMoxie, LLC was



Children's Bike Parade at the July 4th Celebration

selected to assist CDAC with creating a comprehensive arts and cultural master plan for Newton.

CDAC and CivicMoxie worked collaboratively, along with assistance from City staff, to pursue and complete a scope of work that included:

- Developed an inventory of existing conditions (mapping existing organizations and available space for arts and culture).
- Solicited feedback, through an online survey, one-on-one interviews, and focus groups, of goals, concerns, vision, and opportunities for arts and culture in Newton.
- Met with City staff and administration to understand relationships and initiatives and to solicit feedback on how arts and culture can be embedded in appropriate initiatives and programs in the City, as well as how it can be integrated into the new zoning ordinance.
- Researched best practices for key areas of focus that developed from outreach and inventory work.
- Crafted a set of goals and recommendations reflective of stakeholder feedback and undertook additional feedback to get reactions and input prior to master plan finalization.
- Created an implementation strategy including recommendations for immediate next steps to move forward and capitalize on momentum created by the master plan.

ARTS & CULTURE IN NEWTON: EXISTING CONDITIONS

A deeper understanding of the arts and cultural landscape in Newton is necessary to put stakeholder feedback in context and to understand the foundation for the goals and strategies presented in this plan. Figure 1-1 below illustrates the relationships and funding flows of the major arts and cultural entities and advocates in the city.

There are many arts and cultural advocates and organizations in the city and these are illustrated on the map of assets presented later in this section. The major entities in arts and culture are described in detail here, with information adapted from the respective websites.

City of Newton, Cultural Development Office

In March 2019, Mayor Ruthanne Fuller expanded the role of the Parks & Recreation Commissioner to embrace “arts and culture” in the Department’s portfolio of programming, and renamed the department and the Commissioner’s title

to Parks, Recreation & Culture. At the time of this writing, a full time Director of Cultural Development now reports to the Commissioner, and a full-time Associate Director and part-time Office Assistant has been hired. All positions now are fully funded in the City’s operating budget rather than the City’s revolving fund. Newton Community Pride has made a small contribution to fund staff for providing administrative and event support. All arts and cultural work will now be consolidated within the Parks, Recreation & Culture Department.

The Cultural Development Office is responsible for the planning, organization, and execution of many civic and cultural events and programs as well as maintaining the reservation calendar for the War Memorial Auditorium and other City venues, booking and maintaining City Hall gallery space, and coordinating the online city-wide Arts Calendar submissions. These responsibilities will not change.

Figure 1-1. Relationships and Flow of Funding for Newton’s Major Arts and Cultural Entities



This diagram illustrates the four major entities (bound in yellow) that support arts and culture in the city, along with their relationships and funding sources.

Newton Community Pride

Newton Community Pride (NCP) is a 501c3 nonprofit incorporated in December 1986. On file with the Massachusetts Secretary of State's office, the corporate filings list the organization as Newton Pride Corporation with an address at City Hall of 1000 Commonwealth Ave, Newton MA. The organization's governing structure presently includes a five-person Board of Directors. NCP has no paid staff support; the Chair of the Board currently serves all the major functions of an executive director, although there is a plan to hire part-time help in the near future.

NCP provides the following services and support to the City's Office of Cultural Development:

- Website design, marketing/public relations, event registration
- Financial depository for fundraising sponsorships
- Administration of income and expenses for some City events
- Insurer of events produced in conjunction with the City
- Assistance in defraying staff costs for City
- Provision of volunteers for City events

The City's Office of Cultural Development organizes, manages, and executes in close partnership with NCP on the following events:

- Beautification of Newton Centre Gardens & elsewhere
- Spelling Bee
- Heart Break Hill Road Race
- NewtonSERVES
- Kids FunFest
- July 4th Fireworks
- Summer Concert Series
- Halloween Window Painting Contest
- Holiday Lighting & Sing A Long
- Mayor's Open House & Food Drive
- Festival of the Arts

The City's arts and cultural office and NCP have historically been a close, interwoven web of co-coordinated events and programming. NCP sees one of its roles as an "arts/cultural incubator" for ideas and event promotions. The organization provides support for event organizers by serving as a nonprofit financial depository, bill payer, and insurance provider for events hosted by informal groups and associations (including Newton Open Studios and PorchFEST, for example).

Newton Cultural Alliance

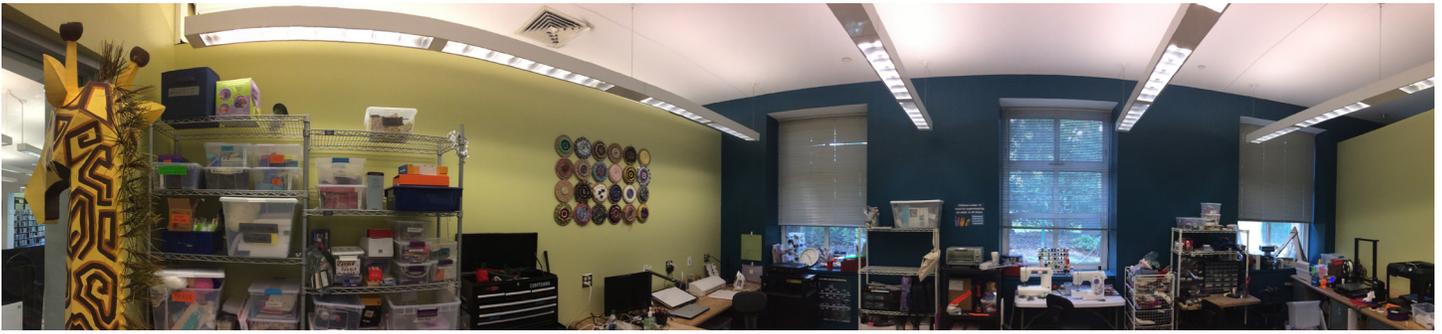
The Newton Cultural Alliance (NCA) is a local arts and culture 501c3 nonprofit incorporated in June 2009 to fill a much-needed role for arts advocacy and marketing for Newton's arts and cultural organizations. It is a member-based organization, with a mission to promote, sustain, and enhance art and culture in Newton. There are three prongs to NCA's goals:

- Advocacy and Awareness
- Economic Development
- Collaborative Facilities

The NCA is dedicated to improving the quality of life in Newton through programming and collaborative work promoting arts and culture in Newton. There are currently 30 nonprofit member organizations, an active 14-member Board of Directors, and a paid staff of three half-time personnel. The NCA is also in the process of restoring the historic Nathaniel Allen House in West Newton to include a black box theatre, exhibition space, offices, and community rooms, with estimated completion in June 2020.



The historic Nathaniel Allen House in West Newton is being restored by the Newton Cultural Alliance for use by arts and cultural organizations and the community. Source: Peter Vanderwarker.



Inside the Newton Free Library's maker space.

Newton Cultural Council

The Newton Cultural Council (NCC) is the state-designated local cultural council (LCC) for the City of Newton. The goal of the NCC is to contribute to the cultural vitality of Newton by funding excellence in creative, cultural, and humanistic projects of Newton cultural organizations, artists, and humanists that benefit and enrich our community. The NCC receives funding annually from the Mass Cultural Council with the Mayor providing matching funds since 2018.

Newton Free Library

The Newton Free Library opened its doors to the community in the fall of 1991 and has been providing Newton residents and guests from the surrounding area with a wide range of programs and resources for almost three decades. As one of the most heavily used libraries in the Commonwealth, the Newton Free Library brings the community together to enjoy, explore, create, and discover the world around them in a variety of ways. The Newton Free Library has evolved over time to service the traditional intellectual needs of Newton residents of all ages as well as to provide a community gathering space for arts and cultural activities with a wide variety of talks, art & gallery exhibits, musical concerts, and workshops.



*The 2019 Liquid Portraits Exhibition at the New Art Center.
Source: New Art Center.*

Newton Community Education

Newton Community Education (NCE) is a self-sustaining arm of the Newton Public Schools. NCE is dedicated to lifelong learning and offers programs for everyone eager to explore—from toddlers to seniors—from Newton and beyond. When the school day ends, NCE's classes begin, offering access to school facilities for community learning. The organization aims to inspire or nurture a passion for learning with quality programs provided at a reasonable cost.

Other Organizations

In addition to these major entities, there are other arts and cultural nonprofits and organizations in the city. Some additional large organizations identified on the assets map found further in this section, include:

New Art Center

The New Art Center is a nonprofit community art education organization located in Newton, focusing on educating and showcasing local artists of all ages who are interested in visual and performing arts. The center educates over 2,500 students annually, and hosts approximately 4,500 visitors a year in its exhibition space. There are two on-site galleries, though one has been temporarily converted into classroom space, as well as off-site "satellite galleries" at local banks and medical offices.

The vision for the New Art Center is to lower the barriers to participation in the arts while also integrating art into the life of the community. Its 2016 strategic plan identified ways the organization can grow while maintaining its core values. The plan also addressed the aging infrastructure of the building, with the ten-year renovation plan focused on making the building more welcoming and accessible to those of all abilities. The New Art Center is funded by both classes and events, as well as donors.

New Philharmonia Orchestra

The New Philharmonia Orchestra (New Phil) continued its mission to provide “music for all” in its celebratory 25th anniversary season for 2019-2020. The New Phil, as it is called, is a 75-member orchestra that performs classical music in the First Baptist Church in Newton. Though it is a non-professional orchestra, it does invite professional guests throughout the season. Important to the organization is educating the community about orchestras and the New Phil has a rich history of family concerts which present holiday programming, child soloists in the family concerts, and an instrument petting zoo where children can play with different instruments. The organization also offers the Pops in the Park program, which is held annually at The Street in Chestnut Hill.

Boston Ballet School

The world-renowned Boston Ballet School has had a studio located in Newton for over 30 years, and in 2017 it moved to its current location in a newly built, state-of-the-art, studio in Newton Highlands. The organization seeks to inspire, develop, and sustain a love of dance in generations of students. The new studio not only expanded its studio space to 26,000 feet, it also provides lounges and physical therapy rooms. The school teaches a wide range of dance methodologies beyond traditional ballet, while also offering members of the community access to programs for adults and those with disabilities.

All Newton Music School

The All Newton Music School (ANMS) is a 501(c)3 not for profit founded over a century ago in 1914 to provide high quality music instruction for the people of Newton. Located presently in West Newton, the ANMS is a community cultural resource serving Newton and Greater Boston with music lessons, classes, and concerts. The ANMS provides quality musical instruction on all musical instruments, summer camp, musical theatre, and classes in appreciation, education, and more for all ages.



The Spooky at Suzuki School of Newton annual event around Halloween. Source: Sanyi Lin.

Suzuki School of Newton

The Suzuki School of Newton is a nonprofit music school with a mission to instill a love of music in students of all ages, including preschool. The school provides a variety of classes using the Suzuki method, which incorporates music instruction, parent involvement, and community performances. The mission of the Suzuki School is to:

- Teach children to play instruments according to the teaching philosophy of Dr. Shinichi Suzuki and help them, through their development as musicians, build self-confidence and a capacity for self-discipline.
- Involve teachers, students, and parents in a learning triangle that fosters love of learning and builds music skills.
- Provide students with performance opportunities.
- Share the music of the school with the community through public concerts.
- Serve as a resource center for the Suzuki Method through workshops, teacher training, an innovative curriculum, and an informative library.

The school is actively engaged within the city, with performances throughout Newton at libraries, nursing homes, and community events. In September 2019, the school unveiled a new renovated facility on Beacon Street in Waban. The School hosts many events, from lessons to guest lecturers to student and faculty recitals to outdoor summer concerts.

Current City Funding and Support for Arts & Culture

The City has made a concerted effort recently to enhance its support for arts and culture, with Mayor Ruthanne Fuller making this a priority of her administration. While it can be difficult to fully understand all of the public funding directed towards “arts and culture,” this master planning process sought to establish a baseline to better understand how resources are currently used. In this case, Newton “arts and culture” funding only encompasses those City programs that are now overseen by the Cultural Development Director and that were formerly run out of the Mayor’s Office of Cultural Affairs and not other programs run by Parks, Recreation, & Culture, Senior Services, Newton Free Library, or Newton Community Education, and Historic Newton.



Mayor Fuller narrating Copland’s Lincoln Portrait at the New Philharmonia. Source: Benjamin Austin.

The funds the City uses to support arts and culture come from the following sources:

- City revolving funds (ticket sales, class or workshop fees)
 - » October Harvest Fair
 - » December Holiday Craft Show
 - » Time for Partners
 - » Newton Youth PlayersW
 - » Newton Summer Theatre Program
- Newton Community Pride (direct funding from this nonprofit to the City to support civic and cultural events and programs):
 - » NCP Commitment Contribution to City - \$10,000 for 2018-2019, which was paid to the Newton Parks & Recreation Department
 - » In 2018, NCP cultivated relationships with 70 sponsors including members of the business community (Village Bank, Cambridge Savings Bank, National Amusements, Wegmans, Honda Village, Johnny’s Diner, Aaronson Insurance, The Street / WS Development, etc. (from NCP website)
- City Operating budget (the Mayor has committed to supporting Cultural Development staff positions from the operating budget and not revolving funds as in prior years). A history of City support for arts and culture shows the following budget for MoCA (formerly) and Cultural Development within Parks, Recreation, and Culture Department (current):

2019	\$144,775
2018	\$135,112
2017	\$123,725

In addition to the direct arts and cultural funding and other department and program support listed above, the City receives Mass Cultural Council (MCC) Grants to be distributed to arts organizations and individual creatives in the amount of \$15,000 annually. Mayor Fuller has committed to matching these State monies with \$15,000 from the City for a total fund of \$30,000 to be provided to Newton arts and cultural community annually through a formal grant application and selection process overseen by the NCC, the City’s designated Local Cultural Council. The City also provides financial and programmatic support of arts and culture initiatives by offering fire, police, public works, public buildings, and IT departments to execute programming.

Mapping of Arts & Culture Assets

During the master planning process, the CDAC Committee worked to develop an inventory and maps of Newton's cultural assets, including arts and cultural organizations and groups, existing venues and other useful facilities, and key public spaces for events and cultural activities. These maps are intended as a resource in understanding Newton's many arts and cultural assets and should be updated as needed.

The maps were created over the summer of 2019 by collecting information from City of Newton records, personal observation and experience by committee members, and through a survey of property owners and managers. This information is fluid and it is the intention of CDAC that further development and additions to this database will be made over time, including the provision of this information online for public use (see Section 2 for more information on database goals).

The result will be a clearinghouse of information on available spaces for arts and culture in Newton with an interactive map (similar to [Fractured Atlas' SpaceFinder tool](#)) that better matches those looking for space with available facilities.

These maps are organized with the following information:

- Figure. 1-2. All Arts & Culture in Newton
- Figure. 1-3. Arts & Cultural Organizations (with/without venues)
- Figure. 1-4. Creative Businesses
- Figure. 1-5. Venues – Restaurants with Live Music
- Figure. 1-6. Venues – Performances and Galleries
- Figure. 1-7. Venues - City-owned

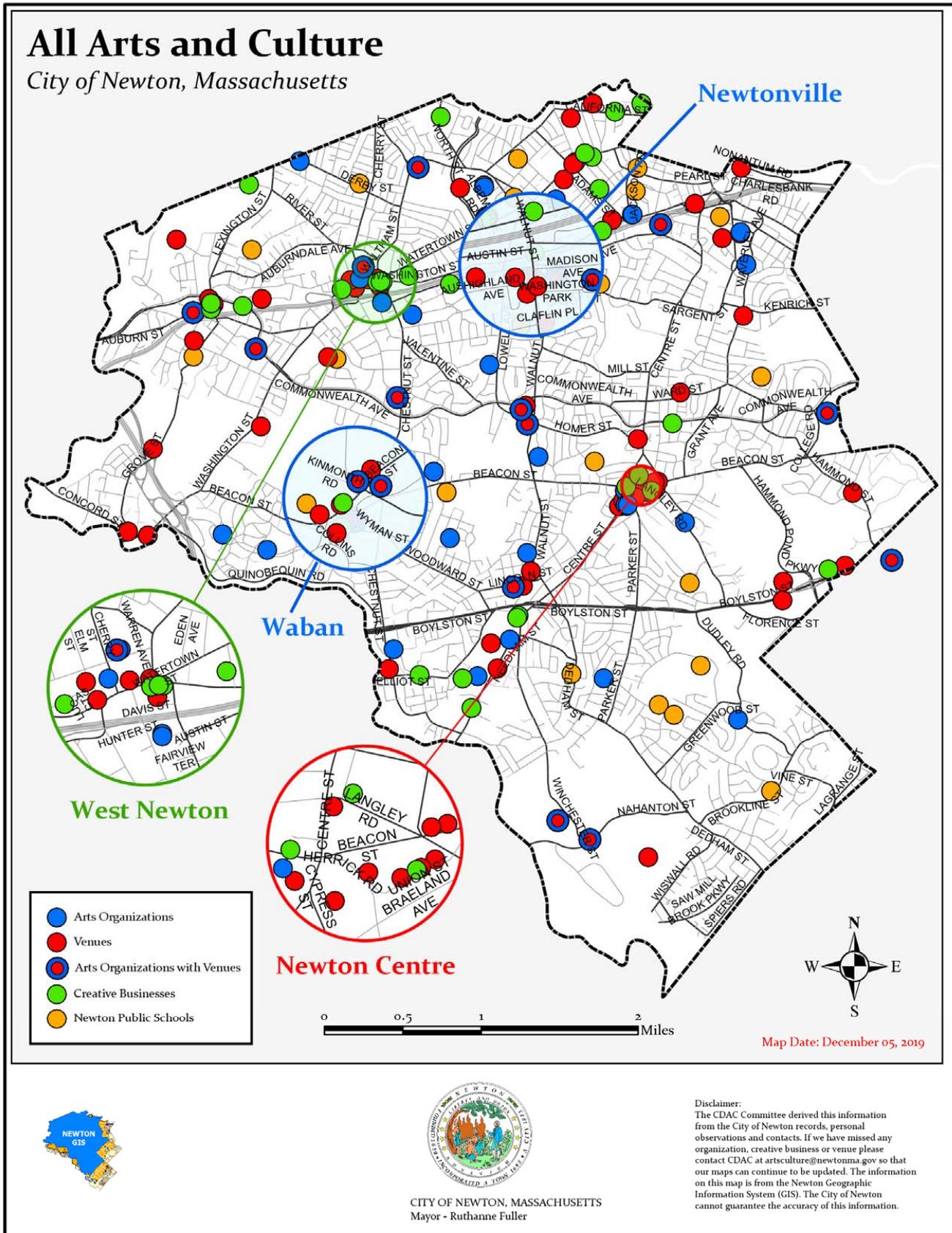
“There is a wide range of arts represented in Newton. Groups are active throughout the city and many offer free and affordable programs. There is a robust community of people who attend events and see each other out and about, which builds community.”

- Create Newton survey respondent



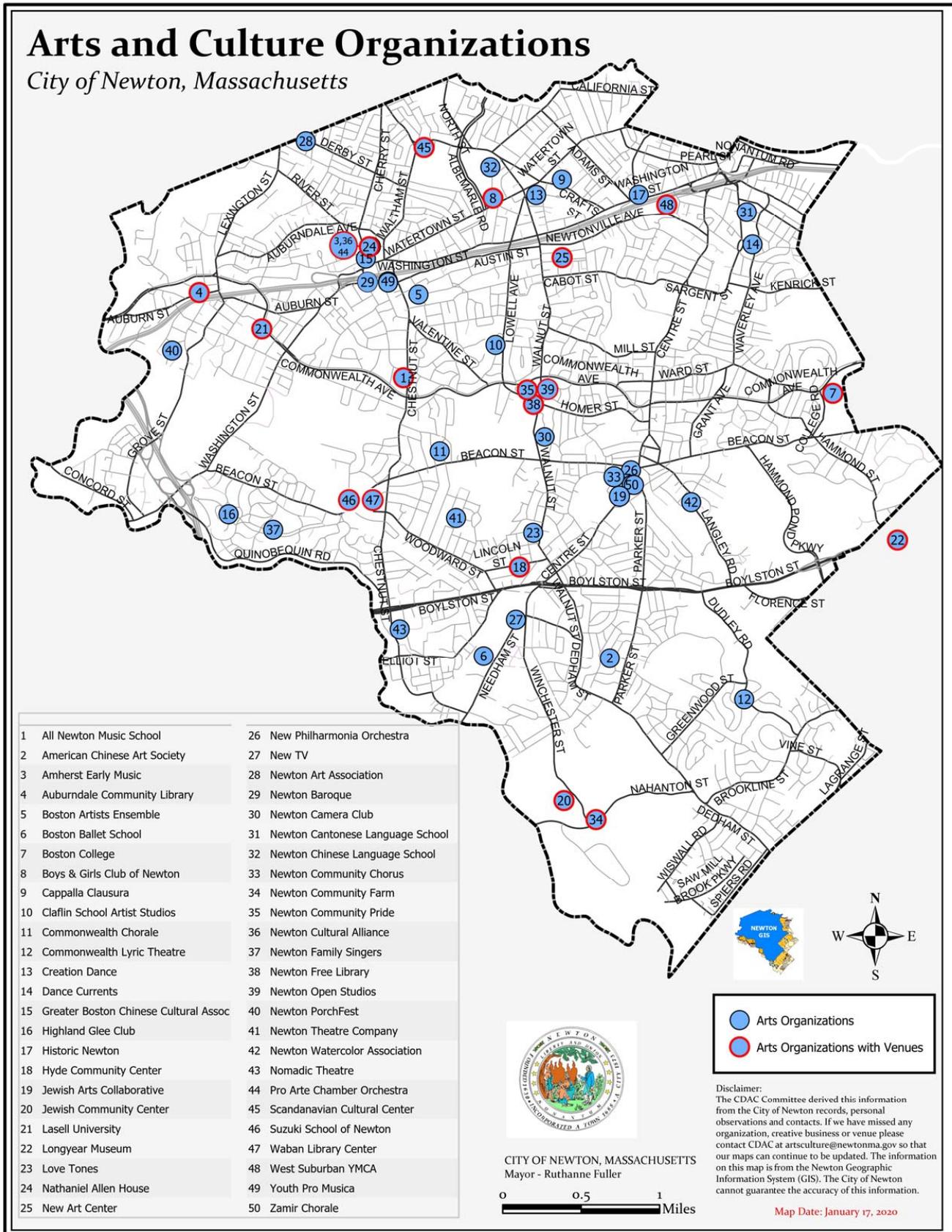
Audience waiting for Nomad Theatre's Story Slam to begin at Gregorian Rugs. Source: Jerry Reilly.

Figure. 1-2. All Arts & Culture in Newton



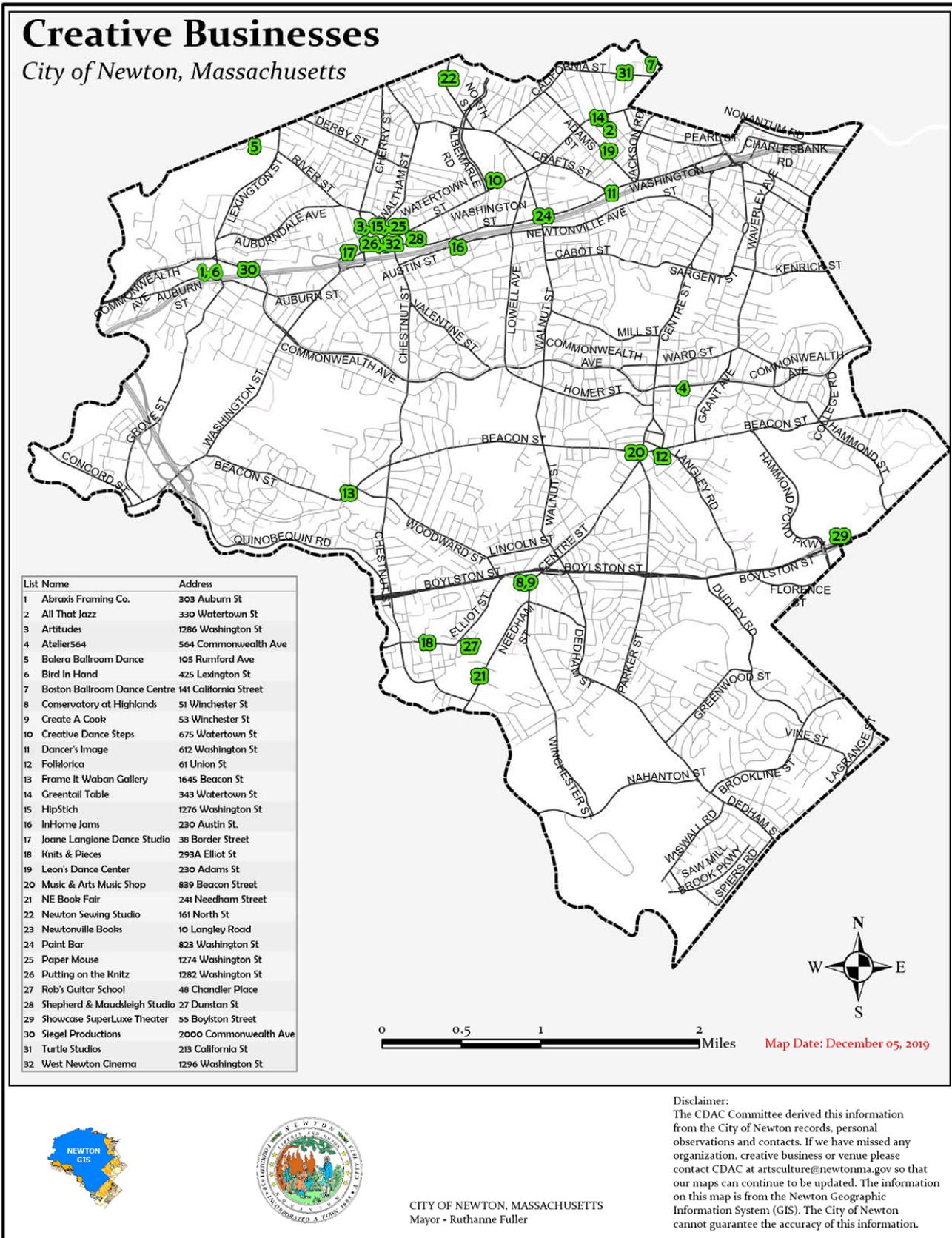
The map above illustrates an inventory of all arts organizations, venues, and creative businesses that was conducted by CDAC and informed by a venues survey administered by the City in the Fall of 2019. Source: City of Newton GIS with information compiled by CDAC.

Figure. 1-3. Arts and Culture Organizations with/without Venues



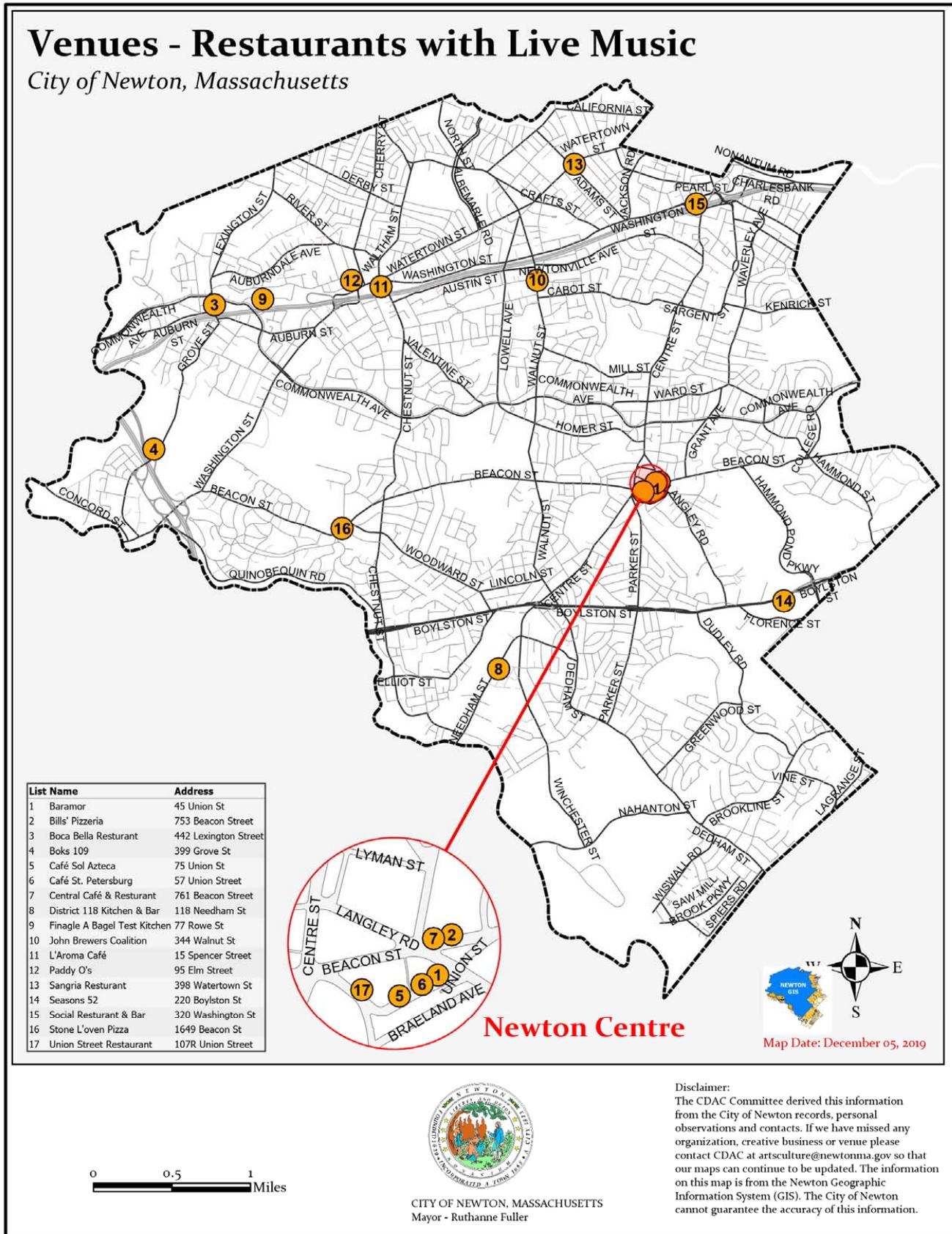
The map above compares the arts and cultural organizations with venues (space) and those without in the City of Newton as of the Fall of 2019. Source: City of Newton GIS with information compiled by CDAC.

Figure. 1-4. Creative Businesses



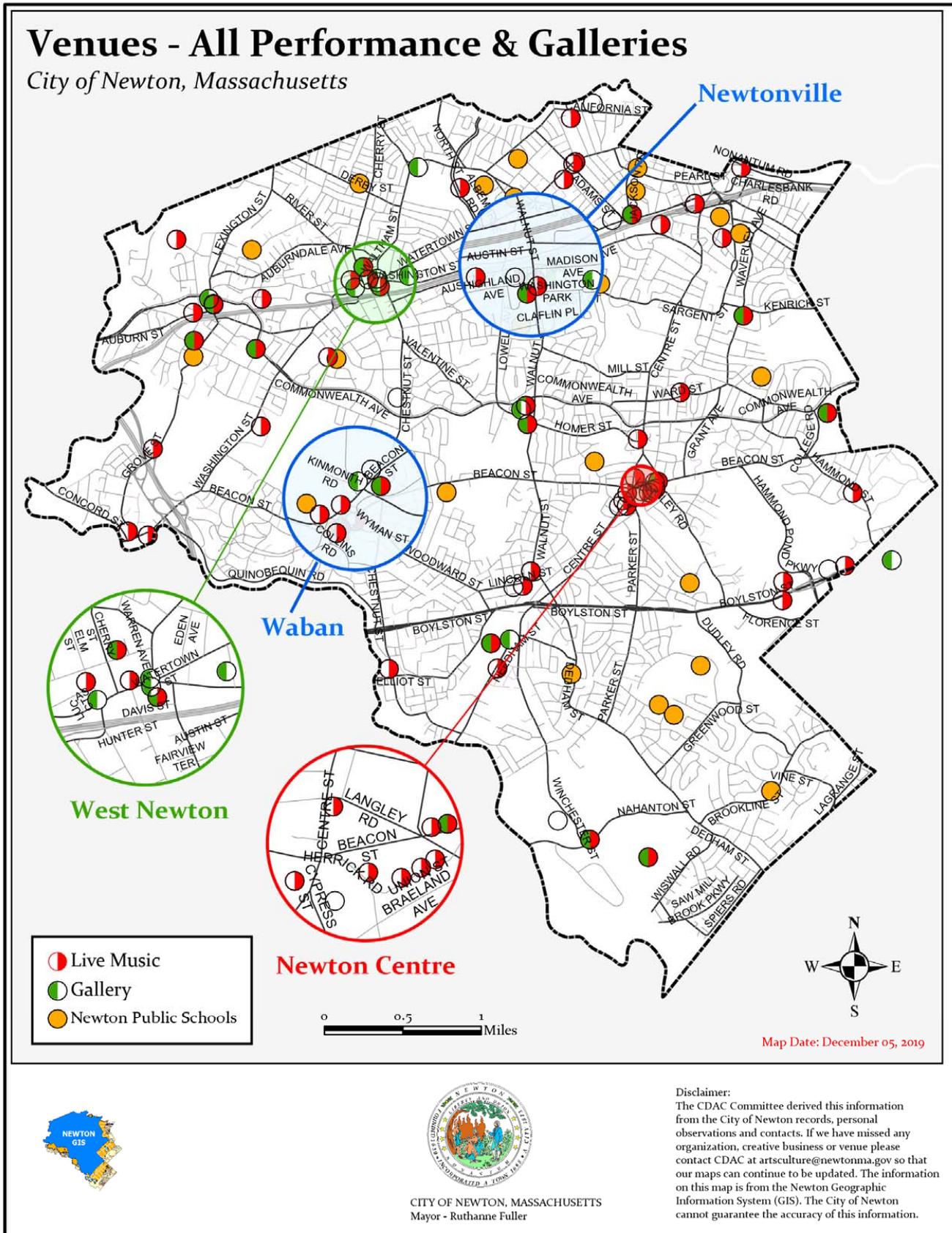
The map above shows creative businesses in Newton as of the Fall of 2019. Source: City of Newton GIS with information compiled by CDAC.

Figure. 1-5. Venues - Restaurants with Live Music



The map above shows restaurants in Newton that host live music as of the Fall of 2019. Source: City of Newton GIS with information compiled by CDAC.

Figure. 1-6. Venues - Performance and Galleries



The map above shows all venues that can host performances and spaces that serve as galleries in Newton as of the Fall of 2019. Source: City of Newton GIS with information compiled by CDAC.

List Name	Address
1 Albemarle Field	250 Albemarle Road
2 All Newton Music School	321 Chestnut St
3 American Legion Post 440	295 California St
4 Auburndale Community Library	375 Auburn Street
5 Baramor	45 Union St
6 Bills' Pizzeria	753 Beacon Street
7 Bishop MacKenzie Center	1337 Centre St
8 Boca Bella Restaurant	442 Lexington Street
9 Boks 109	399 Grove St
10 Boston College	140 Commonwealth Ave
11 Boys & Girls Club of Newton	675 Watertown St
12 Café Sol Azteca	75 Union St
13 Café St. Petersburg	57 Union Street
14 Cape Ryan Park	1321 Washington Street
15 Central Café & Restaurant	761 Beacon Street
16 Church of the Redeemer	379 Hammond Street
17 Coletti Magni Park	388 Watertown Street
18 District 118 Kitchen & Bar	118 Needham St
19 Durant Kendrick House	286 Waverley Street
20 Episcopal Parish of the Good Shepherd	1671 Beacon Street
21 Evangelical Baptist Church	23 Chapel Street
22 Finagle A Bagel Test Kitchen	77 Rowe St
23 First Baptist Church	848 Beacon Street
24 First Unitarian Universalist Society Newton	1326 Centre Street
25 Grace Episcopal Church	76 Eldredge St
26 Gregorian Rugs	2284 Washington St
27 Hyde Community Center	90 Lincoln St
28 Jackson Homestead & Museum	527 Washington St
29 Jewish Community Center	333 Nahanton St
30 John Brewers Coalition	344 Walnut St
31 Johnson's String Instruments	1029 Chestnut Street
32 Judith's Kitchen	1371 Washington St
33 Keyes Drug	2090 Commonwealth Ave
34 L'Aroma Café	15 Spencer Street
35 Lasell University	1844 Commonwealth Ave
36 Longyear Museum	1125 Boylston Street
37 Luckart Gallery	438 Lexington St
38 Lumiere	1293 Washington Street
39 Masonic Hall	460 Walnut Street
40 Nathaniel Allen House	35 Webster St
41 New Art Center	61 Washington Park
42 New TV	23 Needham St

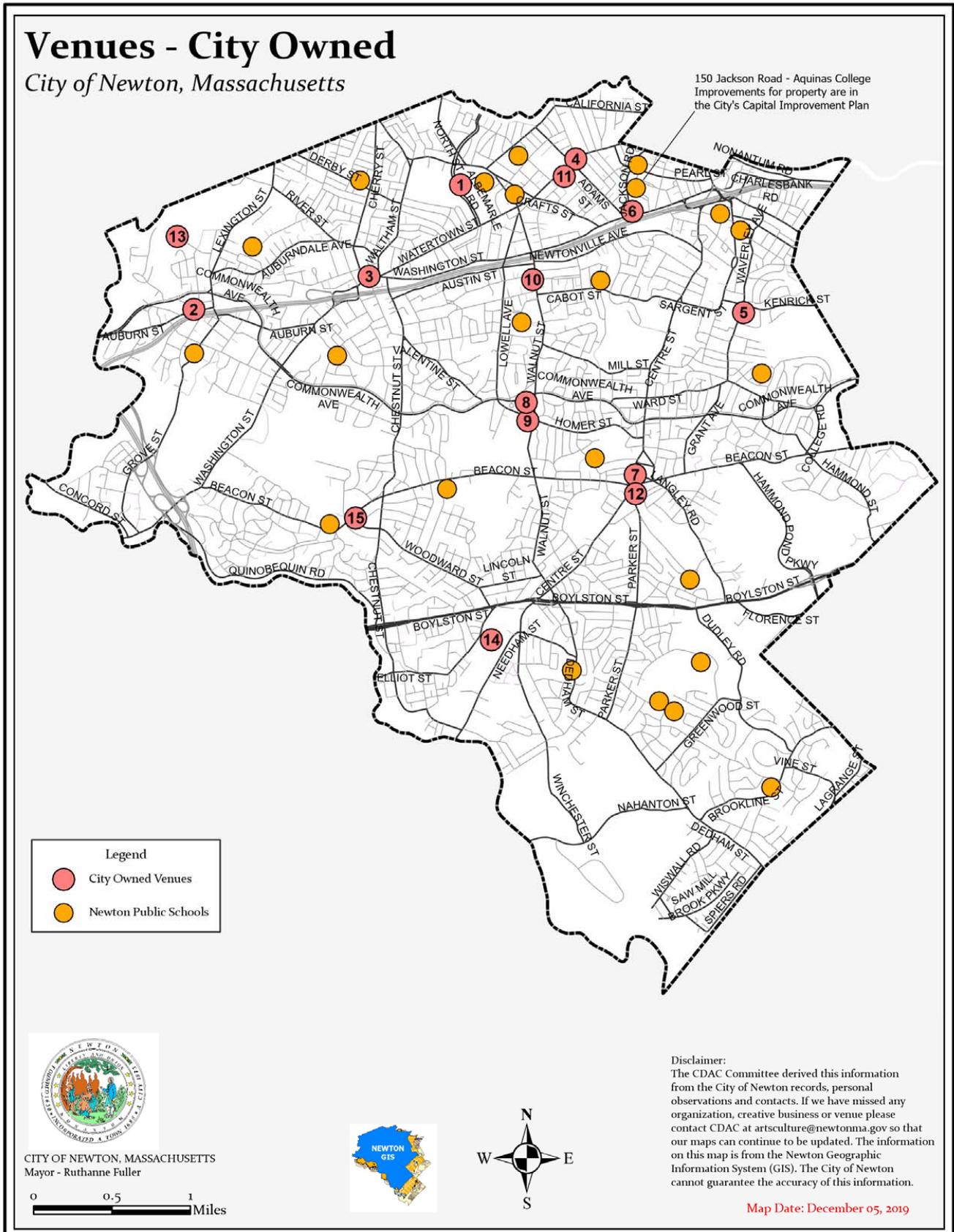
List Name	Address
43 Newton Centre Green	1210 Centre Street
44 Newton City Hall War Memorial	1000 Comm Ave
45 Newton Community Farm	303 Nahanton St
46 Newton Cultural Alliance	35 Webster St
47 Newton Free Library	330 Homer Street
48 Newton Highlands Congregational Church	54 Lincoln Street
49 Newton Open Studios	1000 Commonwealth Ave
50 Newton Senior Center	345 Walnut Street
51 Newtonville Parish House	11 Highland Ave
52 Our Lady's Church	575 Washington Street
53 Paddy O's	95 Elm Street
54 Pellegrini Park	11 Hawthorne St
55 Sacred Heart Parish	1317 Centre Street
56 Sangria Restaurant	398 Watertown St
57 Scandanavian Cultural Center	206 Waltham St
58 Seasons 52	220 Boylston St
59 Shops at Chestnut Hill	199 Boylston Street
60 Showcase SuperLuxe Theater	55 Boylston Street
61 Social Resturant & Bar	320 Washington St
62 St. Mary's Episcopal Church	258 Concord Street
63 St. Paul's Episcopal Church	1135 Walnut Street
64 Steinsieck Culture Studio	9 Russell Rd
65 Stone L'oven Pizza	1649 Beacon St
66 Suzuki School of Newton	1615 Beacon St
67 Swedenborgian Church	11 Highland Ave.
68 Temple Emmanuel	385 Ward Street
69 Temple Reyim	1860 Washington St
70 Temple Shalom	175 Temple Street
71 The Centre	1294 Centre St
72 The Cove	104 West Pine Street
73 The Street	33 Boylston Street
74 Trinity Episcopal Church	11 Homer Street
75 UMass Mt Ida Campus	777 Dedham St
76 Union Church	14 Collins Road
77 Union Street Restaurant	107R Union Street
78 United Parish of Auburndale church	64 Hancock Street
79 Upper Falls Greenway	15 Needham St
80 Waban Library Center	1608 Beacon Street
81 West Newton Cinema	1296 Washington St
82 West Suburban YMCA	276 Church St
83 Windsor Club	1601 Beacon St

Newton Public Schools

Name	Address
Angier School	1697 Beacon St
Bigelow Middle School	42 Vernon St
Bowen School	280 Cypress St
Brown Middle School	125 Meadowbrook Rd
Burr School	171 Pine St
Cabot School	229 Cabot St
Countryside School	191 Dedham St
Day Middle School	21 Minot Pl
Education Center	100 Walnut St
Franklin School	125 Derby St
Horace Mann School	687 Watertown St
Lincoln-Eliot School	191 Pearl St

Name	Address
Mason-Rice School	149 Pleasant St
Memorial-Spaulding School	250 Brookline St
Newton Early Childhood Program	15 WALNUT PK
Newton North High School	360 Lowell Ave
Newton South High School	140 Brandeis Rd
Oak Hill Middle School	130 Wheeler Rd
Peirce School	170 Temple St
Underwood School	101 Vernon St
Ward School	10 Dolphin Rd
Williams School	141 Grove St
Zervas School	30 Beethoven Ave

Figure. 1-7. Venues - City Owned



The map above shows City-owned venues that are spaces for arts and cultural events and activities as of the Fall of 2019. Source: City of Newton GIS with information compiled by CDAC.

City Venues

List	Name	Address
1	Albemarle Field	250 Albemarle Road
2	Auburndale Community Library	375 Auburn Street
3	Captain Ryan Park	1321 Washington Street
4	Coletti Magni Park	388 Watertown Street
5	Durant Kendrick House	286 Waverley Street
6	Jackson Homestead & Museum	527 Washington St
7	Newton Centre Green	1210 Centre Street
8	Newton City Hall War Memorial	1000 Comm Ave
9	Newton Free Library	330 Homer Street
10	Newton Senior Center	345 Walnut Street
11	Pellegrini Park	11 Hawthorne St
12	The Centre	1294 Centre St
13	The Cove	104 West Pine Street
14	Upper Falls Greenway	15 Needham St
15	Waban Library Center	1608 Beacon Street

Newton Public Schools

Name	Address	Name	Address
Angier School	1697 Beacon St	Mason-Rice School	149 Pleasant St
Bigelow Middle School	42 Vernon St	Memorial-Spaulding School	250 Brookline St
Bowen School	280 Cypress St	Newton Early Childhood Program	15 WALNUT PK
Brown Middle School	125 Meadowbrook Rd	Newton North High School	360 Lowell Ave
Burr School	171 Pine St	Newton South High School	140 Brandeis Rd
Cabot School	229 Cabot St	Oak Hill Middle School	130 Wheeler Rd
Countryside School	191 Dedham St	Peirce School	170 Temple St
Day Middle School	21 Minot Pl	Underwood School	101 Vernon St
Education Center	100 Walnut St	Ward School	10 Dolphin Rd
Franklin School	125 Derby St	Williams School	141 Grove St
Horace Mann School	687 Watertown St	Zervas School	30 Beethoven Ave
Lincoln-Eliot School	191 Pearl St		

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

The Create Newton master planning process invited public input and stakeholder feedback through an online survey, focus groups, one-on-one interviews, and CDAC tabling at community events. The engagement process actively involved arts and cultural organizations, the creative sector and other businesses, individual artists and creatives, City staff, and a large number of Newton residents. Key takeaways from engagement are highlighted here and provided crucial information and opinions that shaped the vision, goals, and strategies outlined in Section 2.

Key Takeaways

The following key takeaways are organized into loose categories and include quotes from online survey respondents. For a full survey summary, refer to Appendix A.

Overall Arts and Culture Climate in the City

There is a wealth of arts and culture in the city – larger nonprofits and formal organizations, and smaller, informal efforts, as well as businesses. These arts and cultural events, organizations, and institutions greatly contribute to Newton’s high quality of life as do individual artists, musicians, performers, and creatives.

- Survey respondents were remarkably split when ranking the importance of the following arts and cultural offerings: public art, outdoor music space, centralized arts and culture website and calendar, performing arts center, exhibition and gallery space.
- Many respondents noted that Newton-based arts and cultural organizations compete with Boston-based ones for support (attendance and donations).
- Over one-third of respondents self-identified as an “artist, dancer, musician, or similar.”
- *“There is a wide range of arts represented in Newton. Groups are active throughout the city and many offer free and affordable programs. There is a robust community of people who attend events and see each other out and about, which builds community.”*
- *“I believe we have the right mix, frequency and amount of activity. Love that there is a lot of organic, self-running activities.”*
- *“I feel strongly that Newton, with all of its resident artists and musicians, should be an arts hub, drawing arts appreciators from all around us.”*

Survey Response Snapshot

- Collecting responses from April – September 2019
- 828 total respondents
- 78% of respondents were 45 years or older
- Over 90% of respondents were Newton residents, with Newton Centre, Newtonville, and West Newton having the greatest representation
- Over one-third of respondents self-identified as an “artist, dancer, musician, or similar”
- 90 respondents were either a board member or administrator of a Newton not-for-profit arts and culture organization

City Support for Arts and Culture

General excitement regarding Mayor’s support for arts and culture and commitment to the Arts & Cultural Plan exists in the community. This period of time is viewed as an opportunity to assess changes in leadership and roles and to adjust things to best meet current needs, organizations, and cultural climate.

“I love the energy that’s now being directed to arts and culture in our city.”

“I would like to see city hall commission artists to update the walls and meeting rooms of city hall--which don’t look like they’ve been changed or reconsidered since the 1950’s. I’d like to see an artist in residence at City Hall--someone who can work hand in hand with other departments to look at how art can be incorporated (inexpensively) into public buildings, benches, sidewalks, lampposts and other street furnishings--in fact all city projects.”

Some though felt the focus should be elsewhere.

“I would rather have better paved roads and smoother sidewalks before we focus on art.”



Create Newton focus group. The general public was invited to sign up to participate in a focus group discussing the arts and cultural landscape in Newton and ideas for the future. This focus group in the War Memorial Auditorium at City Hall brought together a variety of small arts and cultural nonprofits, individual artists and creatives, and art advocates.

Coordinated Approach and Marketing

There is a strong desire for enhanced alignment between the key cultural nonprofits and City departments (namely Newton Community Pride, Newton Cultural Council, Cultural Development Department, Newton Cultural Alliance). Fragmented marketing and communications around arts and culture is confusing to the general public and detrimental to local nonprofits and the arts community.

- Eliminate redundancy in organizational efforts and create a clear framework for collaboration.
- Current fundraising efforts for arts and culture are scattered and lack coordination. Some nonprofits have had to cancel programs due to insufficient funding.
- Nearly two-thirds of survey respondents do not participate in Newton's arts and cultural events, programming, and opportunities as much as they would like (Q6), with "lack of time" (70%) and lack of information (43%) cited as the most common reasons (Q7).
- MANY survey respondents noted the need for a central repository of information about arts and cultural events, and overall better communication. (Q16)
- The biggest challenges for Newton nonprofit arts organizations are fundraising, space (performance, rehearsal, instructional), and promotion & advocacy.
- *"Better collaboration among arts organizations. Funding to New Art Center for capital improvements to the building, more use of public schools for arts performances."*
- *"Have one umbrella organization to help all the arts and culture nonprofits including a staff to help out."*
- *"Better notification of events. Would welcome a monthly e-mail with complete info on upcoming events."*

Development and Zoning

Various stakeholders noted that the substantial development occurring in Newton should be leveraged for additional arts and cultural spaces and public art funding.

- Codify City of Newton support for arts in zoning changes and by supporting arts and culture in new development.



Outdoor painting at the Newton Centre Green. Source: Newton Community Pride.

- There is interest in exploring a "percent for the arts program" (whereby a certain percentage of development costs are earmarked for arts and culture) given recent large-scale development projects, or for requiring arts and cultural spaces in new development, depending on location, as well as collaborations with arts and cultural organizations or businesses.
- Consider regulations and other mechanisms to support programs for vacant storefronts that would require displaying art in windows or leasing low-cost or utility-only cost spaces temporarily for arts and creative uses.
- Encourage developers to repurpose underutilized buildings and spaces for visual artist studio spaces and workshops wherever possible and practical.
- The housing costs in Newton mean that it is unaffordable for young artists. Most artists in Newton are well-established and later in their careers.
- *"I would like to see more community murals/public art opportunities. Especially with all the development happening, it would be great if developers funded an artist to facilitate art engagement that would result in public art that could be installed on the fencing for the duration of the construction."*



New Year's Eve at City Hall. Source: Newton Community Pride.

- “Fewer hurdles to getting public art approved; a higher level of support (design aesthetic, branding) for arts and culture.”

Arts & Cultural Facilities

Many nonprofits have inadequate facilities for their needs, including a notable lack of visual art studio space, performance, and rehearsal space. Organizations would like to see additional spaces developed in addition to having better information and access about privately owned and publicly owned facilities.

- The biggest challenges for Newton nonprofit arts organizations are fundraising, space (performance, rehearsal, studio, instructional), and promotion & advocacy. (Q13)
- Some stakeholders want a large civic performance space that could house world-class concerts, theater, and dance.
- Organizations would like to see enhanced City coordination around maintenance and booking of City-owned spaces for use by nonprofits.

- Over 65% of board members and administrators at Newton not-for-profit arts organizations selected “A centralized city-wide arts & culture events calendar” and “An inventory of available performance space and exhibit space” as “Most important” or “Very important.” (Q14)
- “We desperately need a Newton performance space. I have been to concerts in Melrose and Lexington at city auditoriums. Newton needs a similar space.”
- “Rental of school performance space is onerous and EXPENSIVE.”
- “More clear access to the War Memorial Auditorium.”

Cultural and Civic Events

Stakeholders expressed the importance of large-scale cultural and civic events towards building community and enhancing creativity in Newton. While these events were generally celebrated, there was also a desire to diversify from the current offerings to establish new arts and cultural activities and experiences.

- Respondents felt that certain events were important to foster community, especially the following: 4th of July Celebration, Halloween Window Painting Contest, NewtonSERVES, Heartbreak Hill Youth Road Race, Harvest Fair, Concerts in the Park, and the Holiday Lights Celebration. (Q2)
- Respondents felt that certain events were important to enhance arts and culture, especially the following: Newton Open Studios, Concerts in the Parks, Festival of the Arts, and the Holiday Craft Fair in City Hall. (Q2)
- “It’s pretty boring, same old events, nothing dynamic or new, not every event needs to be annual, could be 1 time. And frankly you don’t know what you don’t know, sometimes a black box.”
- “I think it’s just lovely the way it is! I’d actually not tinker with it too much - I’ve come to LOVE the regularity of (annual) events, like the Heartbreak Hill race, Spelling Bee etc. for my family and me. To me that’s really helpful because it greatly cuts down the time to figure out what’s happening when and where, how to sign up, etc. etc. I think that’s a big plus, actually, bigger than I first thought. The only thing we were missing this year was the bouncy house at the Heartbreak Hill race! :)”



Concert on the Green. Source: Newton Community Pride.

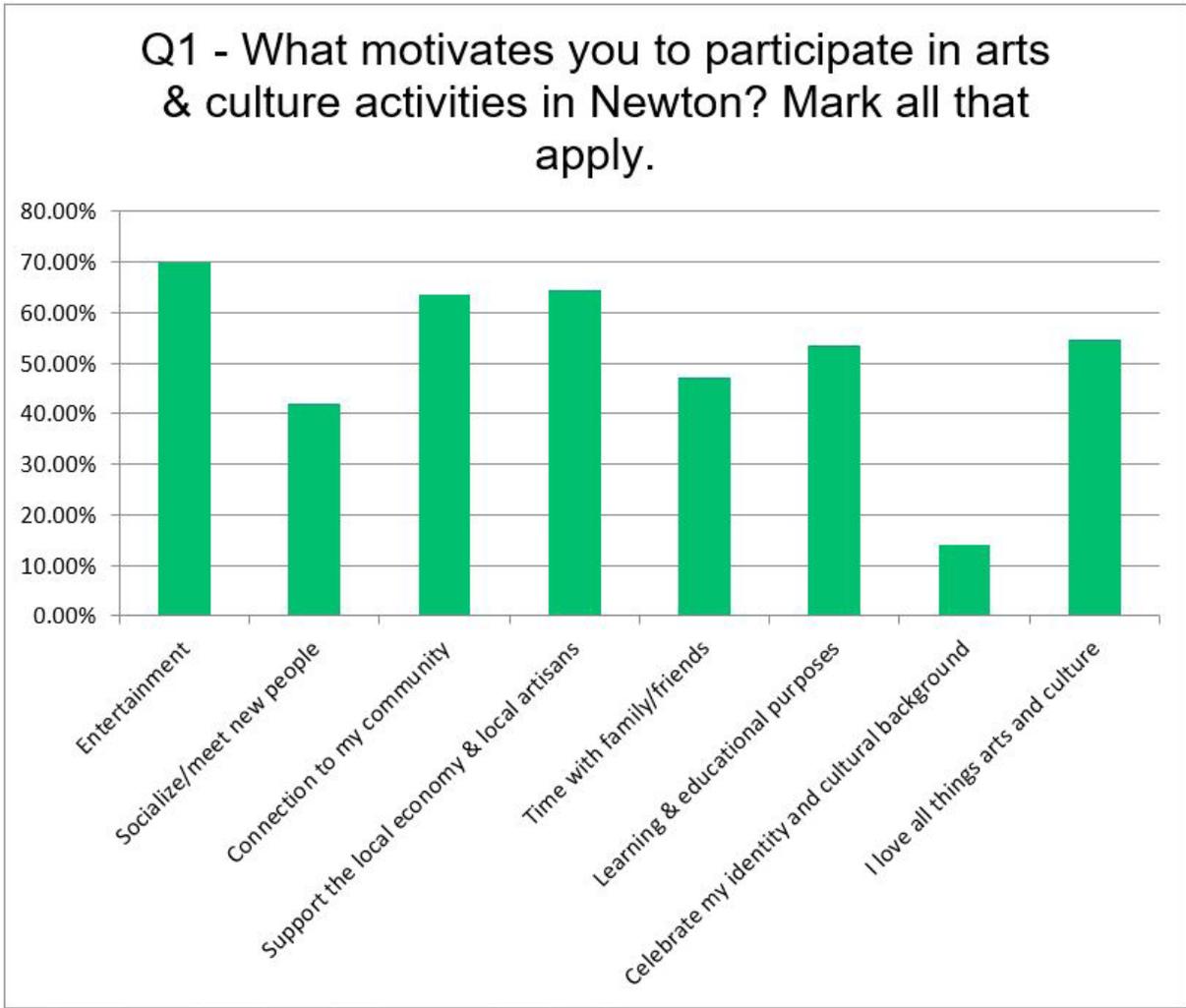
Activity and Placemaking in the Villages

Many stakeholders were interested in more opportunities for live music in parks and downtown areas and enlivening the city in the evening. There is a desire to see arts and cultural events and investments reflected equitably across all of Newton's villages.

- Many stakeholders noted the robust offerings for families and children in Newton and mentioned further opportunities to link the schools and arts and cultural initiatives in the city.

- “We would love if there was live music most evenings... at a coffee shop, restaurant, bar... There seems to be nowhere to go on a regular weekly basis here in Newton to listen to live performances.”
- “Each village in Newton would have its own annual street celebration where the main street in the village would be shut off from traffic and there would be live music, booths displaying the work of local artists, booths for buying things from local vendors, and great food. These would be staggered throughout the summer and would try as much as possible to highlight the businesses and artists of that village.”
- “Get Newton kids involved in more public art displayed around Newton.”

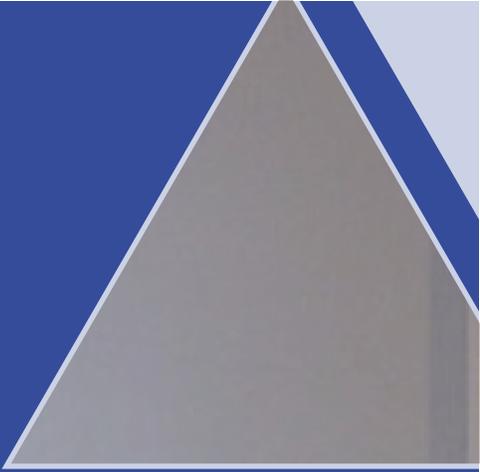
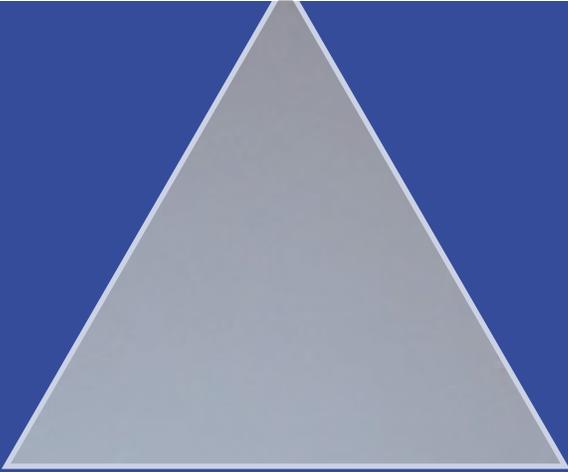
Figure. 1-8. Community Survey Question 1



Survey respondents are motivated to participate in arts and cultural activities in Newton primarily for entertainment, supporting the local economy & local artisans, and connecting to their community.

Conclusion

Key takeaways from stakeholder outreach, an assessment of existing arts and cultural assets, and an understanding of the history and current functions and funding sources of the major arts and cultural entities and advocates in the city shaped the goals for this plan. In Section 3, a vision for arts and culture in the city, as well as major goals and detailed strategies for moving forward are presented.



Contestants in the annual Newton Spelling Bee at City Hall.



Section 2: **GOALS + STRATEGIES**

VISION FOR ARTS & CULTURE IN NEWTON

The Community Design for Arts & Culture Committee (CDAC) seeks to develop and recommend a viable plan for the City of Newton that will strengthen, expand and sustain arts and culture as an integral part of our community and have Newton be a vibrant center for artistic expression, performance and programming. The Committee's vision to invest in the arts will be viewed through the prism of our history and core values, embracing the vital contributions arts and culture make to a welcoming, culturally diverse, economically prosperous and multigenerational Newton.

The vision for arts and culture in Newton will be achieved through the goals and strategies in this section which are organized into four overarching categories:

1. Grow Arts/Civic Collaboration & Advocacy
2. Build Dynamic & Varied Cultural Spaces
3. Promote Art & Activity in the Villages
4. Enhance Creative Culture in City Hall

Each category contains a goals statement and multiple strategies for achieving the goal. Section 3: Priority Actions contains detailed recommendations and information regarding implementation.



Wes Wirth and the Global Music Ensemble perform as part of the Newton Piano Summit at the United Parish of Auburndale. Source: Chris Pitts.

1. GROW ARTS/CIVIC COLLABORATION & ADVOCACY

Background

Newton's arts and cultural community has seen renewed and enhanced support from City Hall in recent years with the advent of Mayor Fuller's administration, changes in key leadership positions, and an increased understanding of possibilities. The cultural community in the City is eager to explore ways to support increased collaboration among organizations and arts advocates while also maximizing financial resources and capacity. Many stakeholders agreed that the relationship and roles by and between the Office of Cultural Development and Newton Community Pride is too often confusing to the arts and culture community and to those that support their events and programs. A restructured approach across the city could improve overall financial support, advocacy and marketing for arts and culture, and lead to increased art, activity, financial sustainability, and programming throughout Newton.

Strategies:

1.1 Launch a new or revised nonprofit organization and/or merge and realign the roles of existing organizations to maximize support, collaboration, and growth for arts, culture, and civic life in Newton.

Because this recommendation is connected to many of the goals in this plan, extended details and implementation suggestions can be found in Section 3: Priority Actions.

Currently, there are multiple organizations that have developed organically over time to support civic and cultural life in Newton. These organizations have overlapping missions in some cases, and compete for the same pool of donors and sponsors. A lack of clarity regarding fundraising purposes has led to confusion at times and also donor fatigue from multiple (seemingly similar) funding requests from different organizations. In addition, no organization or City staff position is currently focused on pursuing outside grants for the purpose of supporting and making grants to arts and cultural organizations in Newton.

The creation of a new organization (New Org) is recommended with widespread buy-in from Newton's key arts, cultural, and civic organizations [Newton Cultural Alliance (NCA), Newton Community Pride (NCP), and the Newton Cultural Council (NCC)]. This New Org can combine the robust mission, services, and benefits of a traditional full-service arts and cultural council with the funding and volunteer strengths of a civic foundation. This New Org would be a nonprofit separate from the City of Newton. While the exact nature and roles of this

Goal Statement:

Integrate and coordinate Newton's key arts and cultural organizations and the City's cultural development efforts to facilitate enhanced collaboration, advocacy, marketing, and fundraising for arts and cultural activities, as well as civic events.

new organization must be determined through a collaborative process with all stakeholders, outreach to the NCC, NCP, and the NCA during the planning process has included a discussion of the possibilities of combining the functions of two or all of these entities under one umbrella nonprofit.

Roles for the new organization would include:

- Fundraising
- Arts, Culture, and Civic Support
- Marketing and Advocacy
- Public Art Program and Placemaking in collaboration with City
- Community Collaboration and Connections
- Event Support (Festival of the Arts, Open Studios, Fence Art for example)

Possible funding sources to be explored:

- Donations (Corporate and Individual)
- Grants (Foundations and Public Entities)
- Membership Dues
- Event Sponsorships and Ticket Sales
- City of Newton targeted contributions to arts and cultural initiatives and support from the Mayor/ Cultural Development Office to include advocacy, marketing, coordination, and collaboration

New Org: An Explanation

Throughout this plan, the recommended new nonprofit organization for arts and culture is called the New Organization, or New Org. One of the first recommended steps in this Plan is that the main stakeholders come together to discuss the mission, composition, and structure of this new organization. The role of the new organization will bring together the mission of Newton Community Pride and the Newton Cultural Council with a strong governing structure, by-laws, Board of Directors, and staffing. The collaboration and participation of the Newton Cultural Alliance and other stakeholders will be instrumental to its success. Because it is not known what this organization will look like in its final form, the Plan uses this generic term, recognizing that the process of creating the organization will include a decision regarding the name.

1.2 Identify new funding sources to support arts and culture, including collaborative grant opportunities across sectors.

Current funding for arts, culture, and civic activities comes from a limited pool of donors and from Mass Cultural Council and, recently, matching grants from the City. By increasing visibility for arts and culture, making the case for the value of arts and culture for business and quality of life, and by identifying cross-sector project opportunities, new resources and funding can be identified.

1.3 Create an overall brand, website, and central calendar for arts, culture, and civic life in Newton.

Arts, culture, and civic organizations and initiatives can greatly benefit from an overall marketing campaign under the umbrella of an overarching brand, with a logo and tag line. Marketing would include:

- Maps showing all cultural assets (spaces, organizations, events).
- A unified calendar of arts and cultural events and programs.
- City-wide banners and marketing throughout the year.

It is anticipated that the New Org would lead the creation of this material.

1.4 Initiate an annual city-wide cultural summit.

An annual cultural gathering can bring together arts and cultural organizations, advocates, funders, and entrepreneurs, as well as businesses and the public sector to identify goals, evaluate progress, and set work plans for the coming year. The summit could potentially be tied to the Newton Festival of the Arts as a kick-off or closing event. An example of a cultural summit agenda from Portland, Maine can be found in Appendix B.

1.5 Create and strengthen ties between the business and arts/cultural communities.

Arts and cultural organizations have many shared goals and challenges with businesses. Various commercial districts are currently struggling and arts and cultural offerings provide the experience and authenticity that cannot be duplicated with online shopping. Programs that connect these sectors may provide robust benefits for all involved. In addition, arts and culture supports a high quality of life and community connections. Whether movies nights in the villages, public art, or street closings for arts and crafts fairs, these activities enhance neighborhood experiences and beautify village centers, all while supporting local businesses and vibrant public spaces.

1.6 Consider commissioning an Economic Impact Study by Americans for the Arts.

An economic impact study can strengthen the case for more collaboration between the arts and other sectors and provide further insights into the contributions of arts and cultural organizations and activities to the greater Newton economy. Americans for the Arts can prepare a customized study for the cost of \$5,500. The results can be used to forge partnerships, pursue grant money, and measure change over time. This could be funded by a joint partnership between the business community and the New Org.

For more information:

<https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/reports-and-data/research-studies-publications/arts-economic-prosperity-iv/customized-economic-impact-study-service>

2. BUILD DYNAMIC & VARIED CULTURAL SPACES

Background

Arts and cultural organizations, creative businesses, and individual artists seek spaces in Newton for offices, performances, rehearsals, meetings, classes, making art, and other activities. Arts organizations and creative businesses expressed challenges around the availability of adequate facility space in Newton. Land use regulations and other policies that are supportive of arts and culture can incentivize the creation of space in building projects and the public realm and ensure that residents throughout the city benefit from proximity to cultural amenities and opportunities.

Goal Statement:

Support the use and ongoing care of existing and new arts, culture, and civic spaces of all kinds throughout the city via zoning, an inventory of available spaces, technical assistance, and advocacy.

Strategies:

2.1 Explore with the City Council the idea of incorporating arts as part of development projects.

The idea of incorporating arts as part of the development review process should be explored with the Newton City Council. For example, private projects over a certain square footage could be required to make a one-time contribution towards public art and placemaking.

For mid-size private projects, the developer could be encouraged to meet with the City's arts, cultural, and civic organization (New Org) early in design as part of the Special Permit process. This meeting would cover the goals for arts and culture in Newton and suggest tangible ways that the developer could meet the voluntary public art program guidelines.

2.2 Support arts and creative uses in designated commercial areas through zoning.

The City of Newton can encourage changes that may bolster creative activity by allowing for more arts and creative enterprise uses by-right in its zoning ordinance. Specifically, the City could permit work-live creative studio uses, makerspaces and co-working, arts production, exhibition, and sales uses in designated commercial/fabrication areas.

Additionally, the City could explore adding an arts and cultural overlay district designation in the City Zoning Ordinance. This could require public spaces and building uses that support arts and cultural activities and organizations in key commercial areas. In addition, an overlay can encourage partnerships with Newton organizations that provide programs or that need space. Within these overlay zones, requirements would encourage arts and cultural uses and creative placemaking. Examples of possible requirements include:

- Arts and cultural uses in a percentage of ground floor commercial spaces, depending on the size of the development and building footprint.
- Event-ready public spaces that include electric, lighting, and data hookups.
- Developers to fund arts, cultural, or civic partners for event programming and placemaking.

Refer to public art contributions as detailed in Strategy 2.1.

Suwanee, GA Public Art Initiative & Ordinance

In 2008, the City of Suwanee passed an ordinance to establish the Public Arts Commission and to encourage developers to incorporate art into residential and commercial development projects. The City's Public Art Ordinance outlines opportunities for developers to contribute to the arts in Suwanee and requires a mandatory meeting with the Public Arts Commission as part of the formal planning and approval process.

For more information:

[Suwanee Public Art Ordinance Guide for Developers](#)



Gregorian Oriental Rugs is just one of the unconventional performance spaces in Newton. Source: Joni Lohr.

Boulder County Arts Alliance – Boulder, CO

The Boulder County Arts Alliance (BCAA) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization founded in 1966 that acts as a catalyst to incubate, stimulate, and sustain a thriving arts community in Boulder County, Colorado. The BCAA website has a section labelled “Arts Spaces” that includes a listing of 284 spaces within the county linked to an interactive map. The listings have useful information, including: space details (dimensions, square footage, ceiling height, occupancy, accessibility, parking, lighting, flooring, etc.), creative disciplines, contact information, rental terms, amenities, and more. Users can enter new spaces into the database by creating an account and submitting information.

For more information:

<https://www.bouldercountyarts.org/art-spaces>

2.3 Create and maintain an online clearinghouse of private and public spaces available for arts, cultural, and civic activities.

An initial facilities survey was conducted as part of the Create Newton planning process and the maps shown in Section 1 reflect existing information about spaces and organizations related to arts and culture. This map should be expanded and linked to a searchable database online with relevant information regarding spaces, available for arts and cultural uses (similar to [Fractured Atlas' SpaceFinder tool](#)). This database should be actively managed by a designated organization and should include the following for each listing:

- Physical address
- Contact information for owner or manager
- Rental availability and guidelines
- Suitability of space for: Rehearsals; Music; Performance and/or dance; Making, exhibiting & selling art; Meetings; Exhibits of two-dimensional and/or three-dimensional artwork
- Size and capacity of space
- Hours/days available for use
- Associated amenities: Kitchen; Changing rooms; Gathering spaces; Restroom facilities
- ADA accessibility and limitations
- Cost for rental/use
- Other pertinent information

Throughout the city, there are parks, public spaces, and privately-owned spaces used by the public that comprise a network of existing and potential cultural and civic spaces. Currently, there is no streamlined system for understanding what spaces are available, the costs for use, how to reserve, and what is ADA compliant. A comprehensive map of these spaces, with a linked database, can provide information that can better facilitate the use and programming of these spaces. Information can also include indications of what events or uses are the subjects of streamlined permitting processes with the City, according to location (see Strategy 3.4). Such a clearinghouse can help arts, cultural, and civic advocates and the City activate spaces with events, music, placemaking, temporary art, food trucks, festivals, movie nights, parklets, and more.

2.4 Simplify and/or clarify policies and booking procedures for use of public buildings.

Public buildings, including the schools, have spaces that can be used for arts and cultural events, rehearsals, and performances. Currently, there is no streamlined system for understanding what space is available and how to reserve it. In particular, each public school has a separate calendar which is not available on line. A search for available space involves multiple requests to school custodians/staff across the city to determine availability and costs. While different entities control various spaces in the City, efforts to work with these various facilities managers to clarify the availability and costs for using space would allow more Newton organizations to find performance and rehearsal space within the city.

2.5 Explore the potential for new collaborative art spaces including a large multi-use arts center in Newton.

The ongoing requests for various types of cultural facilities, and the presence of world-class organizations within the city presents a potential opportunity for a central cultural venue in Newton. Many organizations and arts and cultural advocates have expressed a desire for a city-wide cultural center. Next steps may include a feasibility study conducted by a mission-driven developer or the New Org to understand potential arts and cultural uses, among other possibilities. This work should include a formal regional market study of space needs as well as an exploration of other complementary uses that might be included to enhance financial feasibility (artist live/work space, housing, innovation space, coworking, community space, etc.).

2.6 Provide electrical, lighting, and data hookups in select public spaces and parks.

The use of public spaces for civic and cultural events and activities can be more cost effective and feasible if these spaces have electrical, data, and audiovisual availability. In addition, lighting can extend the useful hours of spaces. The City of Newton has done this in some locations but could expand the number of spaces to ensure events and activities can be located more easily throughout the city. This is particularly important for outdoor concerts and theatre productions that rely on sound and lighting for success.



Amelia LeClair conducts *Capella Clausura*, a vocal ensemble that performs throughout Newton and greater Boston. Source: Sam Brewer.

Assisting private property owners with management and advocacy of arts/cultural spaces

Newton has an abundance of spaces and buildings that are undergoing changes of use and must respond to shifting trends and demographics. Religious buildings in particular can have underutilized space, with congregations seeking assistance in understanding the steps and knowledge needed to adaptively reuse these spaces. An organization in the City can provide active management and technical assistance to private property owners and assist with space renovation advice, as well as rental and programming for arts and cultural use. The result can be a network of well-managed and maintained arts, cultural, and civic spaces spread throughout the City, offering local and regional organizations, individuals, and creative businesses multiple options for space, increasing cultural equity and access to spaces, programs, and opportunities.

Active management would include assistance with booking and programming, leasing and liability requirements, pricing, and accessibility requirements.

3. PROMOTE ART & ACTIVITY IN THE VILLAGES

Background

Newton has 13 villages, each with unique characteristics and communities. There are many civic, arts, and cultural initiatives spread throughout the city such as the Newton Festival of the Arts, Open Studios, village days, summer concerts, movie nights, the Artful Piano Project, and Porchfest, to name a few. An important goal of this Plan is to ensure a continued assorted distribution of events and initiatives, as well as funding for programs throughout the city that enhance and continue a diverse choice of approachable and accessible arts and civic opportunities across Newton's geographic expanse.

Strategies:

3.1 Create a city-wide public art program that includes permanent and temporary public art (e.g. sidewalk poetry, sculptures, murals).

A public art program can provide a wealth of benefits for the City of Newton and should include the following elements:

- Mission and Advisory Group
- Goals for public as well as temporary art installations
- Public art policies and themes
- Designated areas for public art in the city
- Goals for public art in private developments and spaces, including guidelines
- Collaborative frameworks and partnerships with City departments, including Public Works, Planning, Parks, Recreation, and Culture, and others
- Agreements and policies regarding installation and maintenance
- Funding sources and fundraising

Oversight of the public art program should be determined after other elements of this plan have been implemented and a new or revised organization is in place.

Goal Statement:

Cultivate a distribution of arts, cultural, and civic opportunities across Newton geographies, interests, and communities by supporting and maintaining attractive, active, and accessible spaces that can host events, gatherings, activities, and public art of varied types.



Hickory, North Carolina: Art on the Bench

Hickory, North Carolina started its public park bench art program, "Art on the Bench", in 2008. The project calls on local artists to submit design ideas for park benches, and if accepted the city provides a \$500 stipend to the artist and they get to paint one steel bench. Since the program's inception, artists have painted 67 benches, which are located at bus stops, parks, and other locations throughout the city. The program also gives local organizations the opportunity to promote causes important to them. The city also organizes events around the installations, like a scavenger hunt in the summer, for residents to get out and enjoy the beauty of the public art.

For more information:

<https://activerain.com/blogsviw/656293/-art-on-the-bench---local-artists-bring-color-to-hickory-nc---part-1>

3.2 Consider funding towards arts and culture for all new public building and parks projects.

The City of Newton can support arts and culture by including public art and cultural amenities in new public facilities and parks. Elements in public projects can include:

- Public art
- Functional art (streetscape, sidewalks, etc.)
- Landscape and environmental art
- Arts and cultural spaces

Funds could be allocated for capital improvements where cultural spaces are provided or environmental/landscape art is included in the project design. In other cases, funding could be included in the annual budget for the appropriate department for the provision and maintenance of public art and functional art elements.

3.3 Investigate ways to encourage arts uses in vacant storefronts.

Vacant storefronts detract from the image of commercial areas and the overall vitality of public spaces and business districts. New City policies, such as a Commercial District Ordinance, could provide overall support, incentives, and technical assistance to property owners, managers, and arts, cultural, and creative uses and organizations by allowing temporary use of vacant spaces for pop-up retail, artists space, galleries, and other creative sector uses.



As part of the City of Cambridge's Small Business Challenge, businesses and neighborhood associations can seek funding for placemaking initiatives, including art in vacant storefronts. Source: City of Cambridge.

The ordinance could do one, some, or most of the following, according to determination of need by the City:

- Require landlords to register vacant ground floor space in designated districts in a central database and to consider "leasing" space at low cost, no cost, or utilities only to entities in the database as potential temporary tenants.
- Create temporary use permits for pop-up retail, event, gallery "spaces" and remove impediments to the temporary use of vacant spaces
- Require or encourage landlords to exhibit art in the windows of vacant ground floor space (curated and organized/installed by a designated cultural council or arts organization – funded by vacant space registration fees).
- Identify a nonprofit or business willing to include pop-up uses on its liability insurance agreements as an extension of its basic coverage.

Austin, Texas. Pop-Up Temporary Uses Ordinance/Permit

In 2011, the City of Austin Texas created an ordinance to allow temporary use certificates in both the Central Business district and the Downtown Mixed-Use district. According to the executive vice president of economic development, Molly Alexander, the goal is to make the locations as affordable and accessible to local artists so they can grow their businesses. One interesting aspect noticed in Austin is that even large national companies are finding the use of pop up shops as valuable in trendy cities like Austin. Interestingly, the original ordinance states no alcohol or food preparation consumed at pop-up locations, but as the scene becomes more popular it looks like this has changed and some events like Austin AF involves food and drinks to liven the experience.



Outdoor live music as part of the Newton Piano Summit.
Source: Ken Willinger.

3.4 Clarify permitting for public events, temporary space use, and arts and cultural activities.

Many cities have inspectional services and public health and safety departments that work together to clarify permitting for events and activities. This can reduce the barriers and costs to activating public spaces and enlivening neighborhoods and business districts. The City of Newton should seek to refine permitting for a number of specific activities. This can be linked to a map of suitable spaces (see **2.4**) with indications of which spaces are matched with simplified processes. Activities and uses might include:

- Music performance in a commercial district
- Food trucks (with a maximum number of permits issued for specific locations on designated days)
- Street fair/street closing
- Movie night/community night
- Festivals
- Music performances in private and nonprofit spaces

3.5 Raise a fund for small arts, culture, and placemaking “micro-grants” for neighborhoods, villages, and commercial corridors.

To ensure that arts, cultural, and civic opportunities are available and continue across all Newton villages, a New Org can raise and manage a small fund for placemaking and cultural events to provide support to neighborhood associations, area councils, and business districts to encourage participation in civic life and support local efforts to enliven the city. This fund could solicit proposals twice yearly for small events or initiatives and then distribute grants to support activities such as music in the park, arts workshops, family movie nights, and more. The funds could be distributed by the new arts, culture, and civic organization (New Org) and strategic goals could shape requirements for funded initiatives.

Cleveland, OH – Neighborhood Connections Micro-Grants

The nonprofit Neighborhood Connections in Cleveland awards biannual micro-grants between \$500-5,000 for placemaking initiatives. The organization teams with a local arts and culture organization to support arts and culture projects as well as an environmental group to support environmental projects. Grants are intended to spur small, grassroots community projects and proposers are encouraged to think in new ways about what will work in their communities and with whom they might partner.

For more information:

<http://neighborupcle.org/about-the-grants/>

3.6 Include considerations for murals and public art in the updated Zoning Ordinance.

The City's proposed zoning ordinance includes a mural designation to ensure that murals are not subject to the same regulations as signage. This change to zoning should be supported in order to simplify the permitting of murals. Public art should also be defined and possible regulations as to materials, size, scale, etc., should be included in the zoning ordinance, with significant thought as to who makes the final determination.

3.7 Explore permitting outdoor dining and music in commercial areas.

Explore permitting retail establishments in commercial areas to provide street furniture in front of their businesses on sidewalks for use by the public. Explore allowing outdoor music in commercial areas to create vibrancy and foot traffic. Look into creating a process for permitting outdoor seating and entertainment which is clearly delineated and preferably streamlined.

3.8 Designate selected corridors for public festivals and events throughout the year.

Throughout the City, there are streets that would make ideal locations for weekend walking and cycling events and street fairs. Events such as Streets Alive and Ciclovias encourage active and healthy living and help build community and civic connections. The New Org can work with the City to identify recommended areas for street closures in each of the villages.

Mass Cultural Council's Festivals Program provides \$500 grants that help programmers bring their vision to life by providing funding and festival resources for events in the realm of arts, humanities, and sciences. So far, the program has funded over 220 festivals across the state. and could be a resource.

3.9 Consider applying for state MCC cultural district designation for select Newton commercial districts.

The MCC Cultural District designation can offer a boost to a designated district in terms of visibility and marketing, tax credits, funding, and other operational support through state departments. This State program is currently paused as a reorganization takes place but it is expected that applications will open once again. The use of City arts and culture overlay districts (Strategy 2.2) could strengthen an application to the State.

For more information: <https://massculturalcouncil.org/communities/cultural-districts/>



Outdoor seating in Newton Highlands.



StreetsAlive: Fargo, ND and Moorhead, MN

StreetsAlive! is a free event that celebrates a healthy community through the use of public spaces for walking, cycling, and rollerblading. Each summer, a three-mile loop stretching from downtown Fargo, North Dakota across the Red River into Moorhead, Minnesota, is closed to car traffic. The route runs through a portion of Fargo's Central Business District and Civic Center, several parks, and two residential areas. StreetsAlive blends arts and cultural offerings with public health interests. The founders of the event applied for funding through Blue Cross of Minnesota, which earmarks significant funds for preventative health campaigns in physical activity, food access and tobacco prevention. They were awarded grants to get the program up and running. Blue Cross of MN and other health organizations continue to be sponsors.

For more information: fargomoorhead.org

4. ENHANCE CREATIVE CULTURE IN CITY HALL

Background

There is renewed commitment from the Mayor and City Hall to arts, cultural, and civic organizations and activities in Newton. The staffing, programs, and culture within City Hall can support efforts to increase funding and visibility for organizations and activities in the city. Many cities, towns, and regional planning associations are exploring ways to embed an arts and culture sensibility more deeply into governing and policy. Newton has the opportunity to support these cultural and civic efforts by demonstrating its willingness to pilot projects and collaborate with arts and cultural entities throughout the city.

Goal Statement:

Embrace the infusion and influence of arts and culture in City Hall on cross-sector goals, projects, and initiatives wherever possible to move arts and culture “upstream” in planning and use resources effectively to benefit multiple departments.

Strategies:

4.1 Expand opportunities for City departments and staff to collaborate on arts and cultural projects and initiatives.

City Cultural Development staff can act as liaisons between City Hall and the arts and cultural community and provide a framework for collaboration on projects and initiatives. A new arts, cultural, and civic organization (New Org) will be exploring ways to attract cross-sector funding such as healthy living/arts or senior quality of life/arts and culture, and ongoing brainstorming and inclusion of all City departments can encourage innovative ideas for achieving multiple benefits.

Some ideas that illustrate these kinds of cross-sector collaborations include:

- Highlight creative endeavors of staff with an “art behind the desk” exhibit in City Hall, the Library, and possibly other spaces.
- Ongoing exploration of other ways that the Department of Public Works can infuse arts and culture in its work such as the existing sidewalk poetry initiative.
- Explore ways artists can help with City information delivery and public service messages.

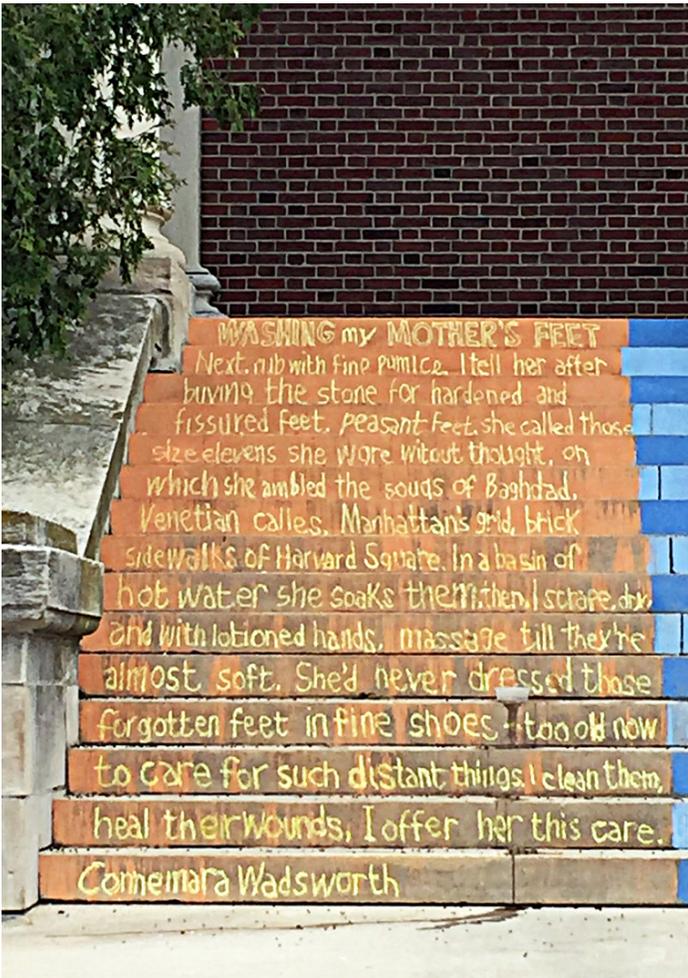


Cultural Development Director Paula Gannon performs as part of the Linda Plaut Newton Festival of the Arts. Source: Newton Community Pride.

4.2 Embed low-cost, temporary art and culture installations and projects in the life of the city.

Many arts and cultural projects and installations can be low-cost and temporary in nature. Adopting a “test before you invest” culture at City Hall can support an innovative environment whereby City staff are encouraged to collaborate with a new arts, cultural, and civic organization (New Org) and test new ideas for infusing arts and culture in the projects and programs of the city.

In addition, the City, with advocacy and collaboration from the New Org, can encourage and provide general assistance for residents and other stakeholders who may want to implement pop-up projects.



Poetry on Newton City Hall Steps in honor of Mother's Day 2016. Source: Poetry in Place.

4.3 Consider creating a City Poet Laureate position.

Many surrounding towns and cities have poet laureate positions including Boston, Brookline, Dedham, Somerville, Arlington, Worcester, and others. A poet laureate is appointed by the Mayor/City Council for a two to four-year term and receives an honorarium that can range from \$500 to \$2500 per year. Duties can include reading poems at major events, advocating for poetry and the spoken word in person and on social media, giving readings in schools and at workshops, visiting schools, etc. A Newton Poet Laureate could explore expanding the sidewalk poetry program and other ways to bring poetry into the public eye.

This information is adapted from an excellent resource on the poet laureates at: <https://poets.org/text/creating-poets-laureate-positions-states-cities-us-territories-and-tribal-nations>

4.4 Pilot a City-youth public art partnership.

A City-youth public art partnership could provide exciting ways for youth art to be featured in city spaces and other formats. From exhibitions of youth art at City Hall, to possible design of promotional materials for City events, partnerships and programs that involve youth can foster creativity and provide visibility for youth voices in Newton. This kind of program could even influence the look and design of public facilities and equipment, such as the two case studies here.



A participant in the annual Halloween Window Painting Contest.

CASE STUDIES: CITY-YOUTH PUBLIC ART PARTNERSHIPS



Miami City Bus with student poetry. Source: WRLN

Twelve Poems on a Bus, Miami

O, is a Miami organization that holds a poetry festival every year. In celebration of the 2017 festival, O, partnered with the Miami-Dade Department of Transportation and Public Works to cover an entire county bus with 12 poems written by children in two local schools. The 3rd and 4th graders were from the Sunroom Poetry program that was at only two local schools at the time, but has expanded to three. Not only has the poetry program grown, but so too have the places the poetry is featured like gas stations and local stores. Nonprofits and government agencies worked together to fund the program.

Design in Motion, Philadelphia

Design in Motion was a program that innovatively designed the city of Philadelphia's recycling trucks. The city was launching its new single-stream recycling program in 2009 and wanted the introduction to be presented with artistic pieces by local children. The city partnered with students, the city's Recycling Office, and the Design Center at Philadelphia University to design the recycling trucks. The recycling trucks were wrapped in the vinyl designs and paraded down the street on Earth day both in 2009 and 2010.



A Design in Motion truck by Desiree Bender. Source: Steve Weinik.

4.5 Formalize roles of Cultural Development staff as arts and cultural liaisons to the public.

The Cultural Development Director for the City of Newton should sit on the board of the New Org and should have an active role in brokering collaborations and incentivizing innovation in arts and culture across the city. The Director should attend department meetings and be involved in key initiatives in a way that lets that person identify potential roles and cross-sector funding opportunities for arts and cultural organizations and individuals and also City departments.

4.6 Raise money to fund and sponsor temporary public art installations in City Hall and the surrounding grounds.

City Hall can be an exciting venue for temporary art. From potential partnerships with the public schools to exhibitions of City staff creative work and more, the halls and exterior spaces of the building can host a rotating array of creative work. The New Org can collaborate with the City's Cultural Development Director to curate the work and the New Org can raise money to fund implementation. The Newton Free Library is an existing venue for arts and culture with a significant art collection and can be included in this effort as appropriate.

4.7 Utilize City IT/technology to better disseminate information on Newton arts, culture, and history.

The City of Newton website, emails, mailings, and information screens can all be vehicles to disseminate information about arts, culture, history, and civic opportunities in the city. In addition, offices such as the City Clerk are host to many residents each week and can be a venue for the distribution of flyers and the installation of information screens for visitors. Information screens in public schools and commercial districts can also provide details on cultural and civic events.

Conclusion

Priority action steps and details on possible structures for a new arts, cultural, and civic organization (New Org) in the city can be found in Section 3.



The Barracudas perform as part of the summer porch concert series. Source: Amanda Cook.



Section 3: **PRIORITY ACTIONS**

INTRODUCTION

This Plan identifies four major goals in Section 2 for arts and culture in Newton, and a total of 28 strategy recommendations to achieve these goals in the coming years. The process for developing this *Create Newton* Plan required a substantial and ongoing amount of time and commitment from a number of individuals and organizations, including Mayor Ruthanne Fuller, other elected officials, City staff, residents, nonprofits, businesses, artists, and more. Throughout the process, many stakeholders expressed their desire for transformative change for arts and culture in the city...to make the exceptional cultural community in Newton even better. Most excitingly, stakeholders are willing and eager to work together to ensure that the future is collaborative and that there is an ongoing and growing environment of trust and support throughout all arts, cultural, and civic endeavors in the city.

It is clear that not everything can be accomplished at once and that some key elements of the plan must be in place before others can be carried out. This section provides a roadmap and priorities for translating ideas to action, ensuring that the *Create Newton* Plan is a useful guide for all stakeholders to unite and work toward enhanced support and visibility for arts and culture in the city. Each recommendation included in Section 2 is listed here with suggested prioritization, the suggested lead role, and other details. Funding sources are also explained in greater detail and have been differentiated as occurring at the local, regional, or national level.

In the chart, the first priority is clearly outlined as Recommendation 1.1 which involves the creation of a new organization that is a 501c3 charitable organization, or other type of nonprofit, that is separate from the City of Newton. Because this action involves many stakeholders, and because so many other recommendations are dependent on the formation and success of this new organization, this section offers more detailed information on this recommendation which can be found following the implementation roadmap.

It is important to note that for this Plan to be implemented, continuing conversations and collaborations will be required. Various stakeholders throughout the city, as well as those listed in the following chart, will need to come to the table to move ideas to action. A prolific arts and cultural scene is best nurtured when arts and cultural organizations, as well as others in business, real estate development, dining, and other sectors, join together to create a web of exciting options and opportunities. Central to all of this is the new organization recommended in this Plan, which would be responsible for many of the action items listed herein.

Potential Funding Sources

The following list provides a list of key local, state, and federal funding opportunities for the arts. However, this is not an exhaustive list, as additional opportunities may be available through private foundations and other sources.



Grey Held from *Make Poetry Concrete* with the poem "Spring" by Nancy Genevieve.

Local Funding

- Arts & Business Council of Greater Boston
 - » Pro-bono legal, human resources, and advisory services
- Foundation for MetroWest
 - » Fund for Arts & Culture – grants from \$1,000-\$10,000
- Mass Humanities
 - » Project Grant: Up to \$10,000 for public humanities projects, must include collaboration with at least one humanities scholar.
 - » Discussion Grant: Up to \$3,000 for projects including conversations about humanities.
 - » Local History Grant: Up to \$3,500 to support small MA organizations with historical collections. Grants can be for organizing historical collections (\$2,000) or to support a scholar in residence (up to \$3,500).
 - » Reading Frederick Douglass Together Grant: Up to \$2,000 for public readings and discussions of Douglass's July 4th address.

State/Regional Funding

- Mass Cultural Council
 - » Local Cultural Council Program
 - » Cultural Districts
 - » Project Grants: One year grants for arts public programming.
 - » Festivals Grant: \$500 grants for festivals
 - » Gateway Grants: Two-year grants for public cultural programming
 - » Cultural Facilities Fund
- New England Foundation for the Arts
 - » Fund for the Arts grant: Supporting organizations partner with artists to create public art.
 - » New England States Touring Grant: \$400-\$5,000 for arts projects.
 - » Theater and dance grants: Amount and eligibility vary by project type.

Federal Funding

- National Endowment for the Arts
 - » Grants for Arts Projects: \$10,000-\$100,000. Grant amount must be equally matched.

- » Challenge America: \$10,000. Grant must be equally matched.
- » Our Town: For creative placemaking. Require partnership between local government and non-profit organization. Matching grants range from \$25,000-\$200,000.

General Metrics

- # and % increase in overall grant funding for arts and cultural organizations
- # of collaborations/partnerships between arts and cultural organizations and other sectors (public, business, etc.)
- Attendance at arts and cultural events/festivals/programs (year over year)
- # of grants received from outside sources (state, federal, nonprofit, business foundations, etc.)
- # of public art pieces funded and installed
- # of donors/members of the New Org and other arts and cultural organizations
- comparison of newton public investment in arts, culture, and civic to similar cities (% of annual budget, staffing, etc.)

Acronym Reference Guide

CDAC	Community Design for Arts & Culture Committee
PW	Public Works
Fire	Fire Department
HHS	Health & Human Services
IS	Inspectional Services
IT	Information Technology
Library	Newton Free Library
Mayor	Mayor's Office
NNCC	Newton-Needham Regional Chamber
New Org	New Organization
P&D	Planning & Development
PB	Public Buildings
Police	Police Department
PRC	Parks, Recreation, & Culture

IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

#	GOALS & STRATEGIES - SHORT-TERM 2020-2021	LEAD ROLE	SUPPORTING ROLES	FUNDING	METRICS
1.1	Launch a new or revised nonprofit organization and/or merge and realign the roles of existing organizations to maximize support, collaboration, and growth for arts, culture, and civic life in Newton. (PRIORITY ACTION)	Action Working Group (CDAC + new members -see Sec.3)		Fundraising; events; existing NCP funds; + City targeted initiatives.	Establishment of new organization within 2 years
1.2	Identify new funding sources to support arts and culture, including collaborative grant opportunities across sectors.	New Org	City	New Org paid staff time	Applications to (and recipients of) new sources of grant funding
1.3	Create an overall brand, website, and central calendar for arts, culture, and civic life in Newton.	New Org	City - PRC, IT	New Org paid staff time	New website and central calendar established
2.2	Support arts and creative uses in designated commercial areas through zoning.	City Council, City - P&D	City, Property Owners & Managers, Arts/ Cultural Orgs.	City - P&D staff time	# of live-work units; # of creative enterprises
2.3	Create and maintain an online clearinghouse of private and public spaces available for arts, cultural, and civic activities.	New Org	City - P&D, Fire, Police, DPW, IS	\$ towards administration	Development of database and map; # of properties listed on site
3.4	Clarify permitting for public events, temporary space use, and arts and cultural activities.	City - HHS		-	Average time of permit process; # of permits granted
3.6	Include considerations for murals and public art in the updated Zoning Ordinance.	City - P&D	City - P&D, Fire, Police, DPW, IS	-	Inclusion in zoning, # of murals and other public art installations
3.7	Explore permitting outdoor dining and music in commercial areas.	City - HHS	Neighborhood Orgs.	-	Average time of permit process; # of permits granted
3.8	Designate selected corridors for public festivals and events throughout the year.	City - P&D, Police, PRC	All City Depts	-	# of planned street closure events per year, # of participants
4.1	Expand opportunities for City departments and staff to collaborate on arts and cultural projects and initiatives.	City - Mayor	City - Historic Newton, Library	-	# cross-departmental initiatives
4.3	Consider creating a City Poet Laureate position.	City - Mayor		Small honorarium from PRC revolving fund?	Establishment of position; # literary initiatives
4.5	Formalize roles of Cultural Development staff as arts and cultural liaisons to the public.	City - PRC, Mayor	City - PRC, Library, Historic Newton, New Org	-	
4.7	Utilize City IT/technology to better disseminate information on Newton arts, culture, and history.	City - IT		-	#of venues for sharing information around Newton
2.6	Provide electrical, lighting, and data hookups in select public spaces and parks.	City - DPW, P&D, PB		Annual Budget, Developers	# of public spaces with utility access

#	GOALS & STRATEGIES - MID-TERM 2022 - 2024	LEAD ROLE	SUPPORTING ROLES	FUNDING	METRICS
1.4	Initiate an annual city-wide cultural summit.	New Org, City - PRC	Businesses, Arts Orgs, Artists & Creatives, NNRC	Business sponsorship	Occurrence of summit, with tangible goals
1.5	Strengthen ties between the business and arts/cultural communities.	New Org, NNRC	Businesses	New Org paid staff time; NNRC	Programs between culture/businesses
1.6	Consider commissioning an Economic Impact Study by Americans for the Arts.	New Org	City - PRC, P&D	NNRC and/or New Org (\$5500 needed)	Completion of study
2.1	Explore with the City Council the idea of incorporating art as part of development projects.	City Council, City - P&D	New Org	Developers would supply funding once instituted	\$ towards arts and culture in private development
2.4	Simplify and/or clarify policies and booking procedures for use of public buildings.	City - DPW, P&D, PRC, PB	New Org	-	# of events in public facilities
3.1	Create a city-wide public art program that includes permanent and temporary public art (e.g. sidewalk poetry, sculptures, murals).	New Org, City - PRC, DPW, P&D	Artists, Arts & cultural orgs.	Corporate sponsorship, philanthropy	# of public art installations in collection or displayed (temp)
3.2	Consider funding towards arts and culture for all new public building and parks projects.	City - Mayor, DPW, PB, PRC, P&D	New Org	City Annual Budget	\$ towards arts and culture in public projects
3.3	Investigate ways to encourage arts uses in vacant storefronts.	City Council, City - P&D		\$ from property owners/managers	Vacant properties registered, % participation in arts
3.5	Raise a fund for small arts, culture, and placemaking "micro-grants" for neighborhoods, villages, and commercial corridors.	New Org	Businesses, Arts Orgs., City- PRC	Private donations, grants, money raised by New Org from events	# of grants made, survey to solicit feedback
3.9	Consider applying for state MCC cultural district designation for select Newton commercial districts.	City - Historic Newton, P&D, PRC	New Org	-	Designation of cultural district(s)
4.2	Embed low-cost, temporary art and culture installations and projects in the life of the city.	City - P&D, DPW, PRC, Police	Artists, Arts Orgs, New Org	City funds	# of temporary projects and installations
4.4	Pilot a City-youth public art partnership.	City - PRC; Newton Public Schools	City - Library, DPW, P&D; Arts Orgs; New Org	DPW Annual Budget; New Org funding	# youth projects with City
4.6	Raise money to fund and sponsor temporary public art installations in City Hall and the surrounding grounds.	New Org	City - Mayor, PRC, Library	Private donations, grants	# art installations/ events in/around City Hall; % of citizens visit City Hall
#	GOALS & STRATEGIES - LONG-TERM 2025+	LEAD ROLE	SUPPORTING ROLES	FUNDING	METRICS
2.5	Explore the potential for new collaborative art spaces including a large multi-use arts center in Newton.	New Org	City; Mission-driven Developer	Various sources	Creation of new center

PRIORITY ACTION - DETAILS ON RECOMMENDATION 1.1

Launch a new or revised nonprofit organization and/or merge and realign the roles of existing organizations to maximize support, collaboration, and growth for arts, culture, and civic life in Newton.

This *Create Newton* Plan contains a number of recommendations that require a new type of organization to take the lead for implementation. Currently, there is no umbrella organization that is raising funds, and distributing grants across the city to support the initiatives of arts and cultural organizations of Newton. Newton Community pride (NCP) does fundraising from the city's business and donor community and these funds are used to support important city cultural and civic events and programs.

The Newton Cultural Council (NCC) distributes the Mass Cultural Council annual funding and matching City monies through a once-per-year grant process but does not raise other sources of funds. The Newton Cultural Alliance (NCA) has been very active in pursuing substantial grants and support for restoring the Nathaniel Allen House but does not function as an overall city-wide arts funding and marketing organization at this time. This fragmentation of some roles and overlapping fundraising activities leads to overall confusion and unnecessary competition for private donations.

Many cities have arts and cultural councils that combine many of these roles to maximize resources and enhance collaboration and cooperation between entities. This Plan proposes that a new organization be created in Newton to replace some of the existing efforts that exist now. This organization would be a 501c3 charitable organization, or other type of nonprofit, that is separate from the City of Newton and would ideally combine the unique arts, culture, and civic roles of the Newton Cultural Council, Newton Community Pride and possibly the Newton Cultural Alliance into one new organization (New Org).

We offer suggested models and a framework in this section but wish to stress that a top-down process for creating a new organization is not the recommendation here. Rather the roles, responsibilities, and governing structure of this New Org has to be a collaborative community effort to include arts and culture non-profits, civic and community leaders, as well as potential donors who all play a role in our arts, culture, and civic programing in the City.

With everyone's input, it is possible to create an organization unique to Newton's needs that combines the robust mission, services, and benefits of a traditional full-service arts and cultural council with the funding and volunteer strengths of a civic foundation. Because the new organization's roles would replicate some existing organizations' duties, it is recommended that serious consideration be given to transitioning from existing organizations, in particular, NCP and also the current size and role of the NCC, to the new organization over time.

The NCA has been an active and committed part of this cultural planning process and it is hoped that the leadership at NCA will continue to participate in these discussions to better determine the consequences and collaborative potential a New Org could have for their members and for the benefit of arts and culture in Newton. This collaboration of the City, NCA, NCP, and NCC, along with other stakeholders, can streamline arts and culture advocacy, fundraising, and grant writing to enhance the resources available for all.

The following is a suggested framework for a new nonprofit organization, offered as a starting point for facilitated conversations on moving forward. Examples of arts and cultural councils with similar roles structures, and funding as described below can be found at the end of this section.

This plan recommends that a new organization be created through a collaborative and transparent process that brings Newton's key arts, cultural, and civic organizations, City Hall, and business and philanthropic interests to the table to make key decisions about moving forward.

Key characteristics of the new organization would include:

1. A nonprofit organization separate from the City of Newton.
2. Cultivating a strong board of directors with 15-21 members to include leaders from the arts, cultural, civic and business community and City staff members.
3. The organization would receive support from the Mayor and the staff members of the Cultural Development office, including advocacy, marketing, coordination, and collaboration, and potentially targeted financial/in kind contributions for arts, culture, and civic initiatives.
4. The New Org would include the current functions of Newton Community Pride (with limited event/program management) and that of a full-service arts council, including marketing and advocacy, public art oversight, fundraising/grant making and event sponsorship of several art-oriented events such as the Festival of the Arts, Open Studios etc. The following should be considered:
 - The existing Newton Cultural Council (the City's designated Local Cultural Council, or LCC) would continue as the grant-making body for distributing Mass Cultural Council grants and serve as the Grants Committee for the New Org by distributing monies raised directly through grant applications and other means. The Mayor would work with the New Org leadership to appoint new members to the LCC as current terms expire that reflect a diverse representation of Newton's cultural community. Currently, the NCC can have 8-22 board members. In the New Org scenario, there would be 2 board positions available for NCC members as well as sub committee membership spots under the category of arts advocates. The transition period would ideally begin in July 2020.
 - Newton Community Pride's functions would be taken on by the new organization and NCP would eventually sunset, transferring its assets to the New Org in the same manner as restricted or unrestricted funds as current legal requirements mandate for the nonprofit. The leadership of NCP would serve as a board member of the New Org. NCP's fiscal year ends November 30th and this should be considered as the transition takes place.
 - Collaborative discussions will determine if, and how, the Newton Cultural Alliance wishes to participate and what the exact roles are for the new organization. It is not the intention that the New Org take over NCA's current roles, nor that the organization cannibalize funding sources, rather that the New Org grow the resources available for arts, culture, and civic activities, organizations, and programs in Newton.
5. The New Org would have paid staff responsible for advocacy, fundraising, and marketing.
6. The New Org would seek funding from outside grants and donations and would focus on increasing available resources for arts and cultural organizations and activities in Newton.
7. Fundraising would be transparent with clear sponsorship and donor allocations to civic programming (such as the Fourth of July fireworks, NewtonSERVES, etc.) and to fund more arts and cultural grants, public art installations, and arts and cultural programming (such as Festival of the Arts, Open Studios, etc.). A formula and guidelines would be developed for distribution of funds as part of the organization's strategic plan.
 - Support for the City's civic events will continue through a more formal funding process. The Department of Parks, Recreation, and Culture would make annual or semi-annual requests for civic program support from New Org, allowing the City and the organization to plan strategically and forecast funding needs and fundraising goals.
 - The New Org would oversee grant cycles each year wherein the Grant Committee would distribute grants based on the strategic plan and advertised goals of the organization.
 - It is assumed that current board/council members for any organization that rolls its mission into New Org would have opportunities to participate in any one of a number of roles including as a board member, working group, sub committee, or as member/subscribers, etc.

Roles for the new organization:

- Fundraising
 - » Maximize funding (including individual donors, corporate sponsors, as well as private, nonprofit, and public grant monies, as well as sponsorship and ticket revenue) for arts and culture in Newton.
 - » Clarify fundraising streams of cultural support and civic program support so that funding goals and uses are clear to donors.
 - » Raise funds for public art.
- Arts, Cultural, and Civic Support
 - » The new organization would be a grantmaking organization for Newton arts and cultural nonprofits, artists, and community groups.
 - » The ratio of support for civic and cultural endeavors is transparent to donors and part of a set of guidelines made clear during fundraising (this ratio may vary from year to year based on event and program support).
 - » Provide support for individual artists who live and/or work in the city (technical assistance – marketing, shipping, collaborative framework, web pages, etc.).
- Marketing & Advocacy
 - » Coordinate and streamline marketing for arts and culture.
 - » Create an engaged social media marketing platform.
 - » Identify cross-sector marketing and promotion opportunities.
 - » Collaborate and coordinate with Office of Cultural Development and nonprofits to create, fund, and maintain one city-wide Arts Calendar.
 - » Promote world-class art and show regional relevancy to funders and audience.
 - » Advocate for City of Newton support for arts in zoning changes and by supporting arts and culture in development.
- Public Art Program + Placemaking
 - » Create a plan for temporary and permanent public art in the city.
 - » Collaborate with City to coordinate the use of public and private spaces for art and events in Newton.
 - » Serve on an Advisory Group to create a transparent process for public art selection in collaboration with the City.
 - » Coordinate with the City regarding placement and maintenance of public art.
 - » Potentially coordinate art installations and placemaking in new development.
- Collaboration + Community Connections
 - » Ensure that arts, culture, and civic activities and support are enjoyed throughout Newton’s diverse communities (demographic, social, neighborhood, interest diversity).
 - » Identify cross-sector collaborations and funding/ grant opportunities (arts as it relates to business, public health, transportation, etc.).
 - » Create a clear framework for enhanced collaboration that eliminates previous redundancy in organizational effort.

Board and Leadership:

The board of directors of the new organization should reflect the views and contributions of diverse stakeholders in the city. At a minimum, the board should contain representation from this group of stakeholders. Some board members may play dual roles:

- City of Newton Cultural Development Director
- Newton City Department representatives – City Planning, DPW or other
- Newton Free Library
- New Art Center
- Suzuki School of Newton
- All Newton Music School
- Newton Cultural Alliance
- Newton Cultural Council Designee
- Former Newton Community Pride

- Major civic and cultural funders in Newton
- Newton-Needham Regional Chamber
- Community Leaders
- Representation from major businesses in Newton
- Individual artists/design professionals

Possible funding sources to be explored:

- Donations (Corporate and Individual)
- Grants (Foundations and Public Entities)
- Membership Dues
 - » Nonprofits/organizations
 - » Businesses
 - » Individuals/creatives
- Event Sponsorships and Ticket Sales
- City of Newton targeted contributions to arts and cultural initiatives and support from the Mayor/ Cultural Development Office to include advocacy, marketing, coordination, and collaboration

The organization would have a board chair, as well as paid executive director (full or part time TBD) with the intention of hiring an operations manager and additional positions over time if needed.

Details about the possible structure for the new organization are shown in Figure. 3-1.

Figure. 3-1. Possible Structure of New Org



The above diagram shows one possible way to structure the board of directors of a new organization to include broad representation from the community. The Grant Awards Committee would be a streamlined LCC which would distribute MCC/City grants as well as other grants with monies raised by the New Organization

NEXT STEPS

It is recommended that the very first implementation steps for this *Create Newton Comprehensive Arts & Cultural Plan* include a facilitated process to begin stakeholder discussions regarding the creation of the New Org.

As part of the planning process and prior to publication, CivicMoxie and CDAC reached out to the key organizations that would be involved and affected by the creation of a new organization to discuss the recommendation and a range of possibilities as well as concerns and benefits. The next step is to facilitate and continue these discussions with open conversations to determine the exact nature of the organization and how it can benefit all stakeholders. Next steps include:

1. Create a working group of key stakeholders to explore future organizational approaches.

The Community Design for Arts & Culture Committee (CDAC) should be expanded to become the working group for implementation and to reflect the views and contributions of additional stakeholders. It is recommended that this working group include current CDAC members as well as:

- Leadership from the Newton Cultural Council
- Leadership from the Newton Cultural Alliance
- Major civic and cultural funders in Newton
- Representation from Newton-Needham Regional Chamber
- Other Community Leaders

This larger group can set the overall principles and goals for a New Org. The major organizations that may be impacted by the formation of the New Org should form a smaller core group within this effort to discuss organizational structure and what their organizations need and can gain by participating in the New Org. It is important that these organizations have a major say in the details as they will be most affected by the creation of a New Org and will need to ensure their goals and missions are recognized. It is recommended that these discussions, both at the larger group level around framework and principles, and the core group level, around details and organizational impacts, be facilitated by an outside party.

2. Explore the best organizational model that maximizes funding and support for arts, culture, and civic activities in Newton.

This exploration and discussion of an organization model that enhances arts, culture, and civic funding and visibility should be conducted as a facilitated process with the working group and should start with individual interviews/meetings to discuss pros and cons, and concerns so that this information can be brought to the whole group for discussion. An inclusive and transparent process can support broad ownership of a strategy for moving forward.

RELEVANT CASE STUDIES: ARTS AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS



Source: Decatur Arts Alliance

Decatur Arts Alliance

The Decatur Arts Alliance is a nonprofit partnership of artists, business owners, and residents dedicated to supporting and enhancing the arts in the city of Decatur. The DAA sponsors the annual festivals as well as special art events for members only. It also provides a collaborative environment to coordinate the interests of artists, gallery owners, theater groups, dance groups and performance venues within Decatur and to develop the city as a strong arts community.

DAA works in partnership with the city to move arts-related initiatives forward, like the Decatur Arts Festival. In fact, the creation of the DAA was initiated by the Decatur Downtown Development Authority (DDA) in the late 1980s, recognizing the benefits of establishing a creative nonprofit dedicated to the arts operating in its downtown. The DAA recently worked with the City Commission to create a program that allows buskers to perform in the streets through a permit approval process. They also worked with local artists and the Downtown Development Authority to implement a citywide placemaking project involving the painting of traffic infrastructure (signal boxes).

Structure

The Decatur Arts Alliance (DAA) is a nonprofit partnership of artists, business owners, and residents who support arts in Decatur. The DAA has an executive director, project coordinator, and a 13-member board of directors drawing from arts organizations, the public sector, and businesses. The DAA also relies on project consultants for some of its larger events.

Funding & Support

- Memberships – Corporate/Business, Individual, Family, Student, Senior
- Donations
- Events – ticket sales
- City partnerships
- Volunteers and internships

Programs & Events

DAA sponsors annual festivals, including Decatur Arts Festival, the YEA! Event for young emerging artists, Oakhurst Porchfest, and the Decatur Wine Festival, in addition to special members-only art events.

- **The Decatur Arts Festival**, an annual art festival in downtown Decatur, includes artist markets, live music, performances, comedy shows, children's parade, literary events and more. This event attracts around 65,000 visitors each year, and is sponsored by DAA, the City of Decatur, Indie Catur, Agnes Scott College, Lampe Farley Marketing Communications, Three Taverns Craft Beer, Steady Hand Beer Co., and Arches Brewing. More sponsors can be found [here](#).
- **The Decatur Artway Sculpture Gallery** is an outdoor sculpture gallery that adds and rotates exhibits each year. Sculptures are loaned for two years to keep art in rotation. This project began in 2015, and will enter its fourth phase this year. The Gallery is presented in partnership with the Decatur Tourism Bureau and Decatur Downtown Development Authority.
- **YEA!** This annual, one-day event for young emerging artists (YEA), gives selected K-12 students the opportunity to showcase and sell their art in Harmony park.
- **Oakhurst Porchfest** is an annual grassroots music festival taking place on porches all over the Oakhurst neighborhood. It's considered to be the largest crowdsourced music festival in Georgia.

Website

<https://decaturartsalliance.org>

Additional

Excerpt from July-August 2019 edition of Decatur Focus Newsletter:

"The Decatur Downtown Development Authority (DDA) initiated the creation of the Decatur Arts Alliance by inviting members of the arts community to come together to organize and fund the first Decatur Arts Festival, which is still going strong more than 32 years later. The city wanted to be seen as creative and progressive and creating a nonprofit organization and a festival that focused on artists was the most effective way to promote that image.

The Decatur Business Association and the Decatur Arts Alliance have grown into successful organizations with independent boards and expanded programs. The city's economic development program continues to work closely with and support their activities along with supporting the Decatur Book Festival, the Decatur Tourism Bureau and the Decatur Education Foundation.

All of these groups are essential partners in the creation of a supportive network to build a strong sense of place and to encourage an engaged community that results in a place that is attractive to economic investment. They all play a role in the economic development of our city."

Northampton Arts Council

Founded in 1980, the Northampton Arts Council (NAC) supports and nurtures arts activities in the community, allocates arts lottery funds, stimulates public awareness and support for the arts, and works to maintain the diverse cultural heritage of Northampton. The Council awards grants twice each year to artists and arts groups from both state and locally-raised funds, and seeks to improve public awareness of the arts. NAC also supports arts enrichment programs in the public schools, initiates public art projects and advocates for the arts and artists in the city.

The Council is one of the only Massachusetts Local Cultural Councils that has two grant distribution rounds per year. The spring ArtsEZ grant round is funded solely by the Council's event-based fundraising efforts, namely Transperformance in August and the Silver Chord Bowl during the Four Sundays in February series of events.

Structure

The Northampton Arts Council is a city board and non-profit organization that aids local artists and arts enrichment in the public schools by distributing grants from federal and locally raised funds. The Arts Council (LCC) is a 13-member municipal board appointed by City Council with recommendations made by the Mayor. The City's Arts and Culture Department work with the Arts Council to perform tasks assigned to local cultural councils under MGL c.10, § 58, or successor statutes. The Council also has municipal staff consisting of a full-time executive director, a full-time arts events producer, one half-time production assistant, and two student arts interns from Smith College.

The municipal Arts Council has an affiliated 501(c)3 nonprofit arm, Northampton Arts Council, Inc. This tax-exempt corporation has a five-member board whose members are typically former LCC board members. Northampton Arts Council, Inc. oversees the fundraising events and receives administrative, clerical and technical support from the City's Arts and Culture Department.

Funding & Support

- Donations
- Events – ticket sales
- City staffing – 2.5 FTE positions
- Volunteers and internships



Source: Northampton Arts Council.

Programs & Events

The Northampton Arts Council oversees three major fundraising events, which funds the additional round of funding each spring. These are:

- **Transperformance** – an end-of-summer music festival at Look Park held every August
- **First Night Northampton** – Northampton's New Year's Eve festival of the performing arts
- **Silver Chord Bowl** – the legendary collegiate Acapella invitational

NAC also produces or helps produce many other events and projects in Northampton including but not limited to Four Sundays in February, YouthFilm, KidsBestFest, Ice Art Festival, Retrofaire Open Air Market, Cinema Northampton, Northampton Print and Book Fair, Western Massachusetts Biennial Exhibit at Hosmer Gallery-Forbes Library, Northampton Film Festival, Arts Night Out Northampton, Chalk Art Festival, administer the Paradise City Cultural District, appoint and fund Northampton's Poet Laureate, administer the BJ Goodwin Memorial Scholarship Fund, and administer the Northampton Music Instrument Fund.

Website

<http://www.northamptonartscouncil.org/>



Children's summer art class at the Newton Art Center

This Create Newton Cultural Master Plan represents the beginning of an exciting process of increasing support for arts and cultural organizations, activities, and initiatives in the City of Newton. The City recognizes the intrinsic value of arts and culture to everyday quality of life for residents, economic development, and community enrichment and joy. The goals and strategies laid out in this Plan offer a clear road map for moving forward and the next steps should be the facilitation of discussions regarding a new or re-imagined organization that serves as a full-service arts and cultural nonprofit supporting arts, culture, and civic activities and initiatives in the city. With this Plan as a framework, it is our hope major stakeholders come together to collaborate on the priority next steps. The goal is implementation. Using this planning process, the stakeholders and future partners, will come together to develop this plan and form the foundation for moving forward.

Let's Create Newton Together!

