

Merrimack College

Merrimack ScholarWorks

Community Engagement Student Work

Education Student Work

Spring 2022

Creating Capital: A Case for Municipal Arts Support in Lawrence, MA

Felisa Kerr

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.merrimack.edu/soe_student_ce



Part of the [Civic and Community Engagement Commons](#)

Creating Capital: A Case for Municipal Arts Support in Lawrence, MA

Felisa Kerr

Winston School of Education and Social Policy, Merrimack College

2022

MERRIMACK COLLEGE

CAPSTONE PAPER SIGNATURE PAGE

CAPSTONE SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

MASTER OF EDUCATION

IN

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

CAPSTONE TITLE: Creating Capital: A Case for Municipal Arts Support in Lawrence, MA

AUTHOR: Felisa Kerr

THE CAPSTONE PAPER HAS BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
PROGRAM IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF EDUCATION IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.

Audrey Falk, Ed.D.
DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT

Audrey Falk
SIGNATURE

April 25, 2022
DATE

Melissa Nemon, Ph.D.
INSTRUCTOR, CAPSTONE
COURSE

Melissa Nemon
SIGNATURE

April 25, 2022
DATE

Acknowledgements

I owe a debt of gratitude to the many people who supported my work and educational journey over the past year.

Thank you to my College Unbound family, without whom I would not have even dreamed of this possibility.

Thank you to my CE classmates and cohort; through your examples you gave me new lessons in dedication, wisdom, compassion, and hilarity.

Thank you, Professor Zayas, for your kindness, support and encouragement.

Thank you, Dr. Nemon, for showing us how to walk the walk. Your classroom is the place where wisdom and justice and magic intersect.

Thank you to the talented partners and artists of the Lawrence Arts Collective. I am grateful for your warm welcome and creative collaborations.

Thank you to my incredible network of friends, who showed up to keep me going and keep my family afloat in ways I never expected. Everyone should have their own team of Avengers.

Thank you to my mom and dad. You were my first teachers in what it means to be engaged with one's community in a meaningful way. I love you both very much.

My deepest and most profound thanks to my husband Jeff, and my children, Caellum and Emma.

Your strength and support inspire me to go out into the world each day, and your love and kindness make me so grateful to come home each night. I am the luckiest.

Abstract

Lawrence, Massachusetts is home to a vibrant creative community. The work of artists and art-based organizations has a positive impact within the city. Municipal support in the form of a City Arts Planner or Arts and Culture Department can deepen the reach and impact of the work of these creatives, establish sustainable systems of support, and yield both social and economic benefits. This project is a case for municipal support of the arts in Lawrence. The case for municipal support was presented as a proof of concept to three interviewees, all of whom have ties to Lawrence, and experience with public art initiatives and community development. Their feedback included support for the initiative, positive responses to the use of examples and case studies, acknowledgement of the importance of the impact of a creative economy, a desire to make the research more Lawrence-specific, and an appreciation for the broad reach, depth, and work of the creative community in Lawrence. Future development of this project may include strengthening the examples used and engaging the broader nonprofit and small business community as partners.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements 3

Abstract..... 4

Literature Review 9

Project Plan 18

 Assessment Plan..... 18

 Key Assessment Questions..... 19

 Define Your Assessment Goals 19

 Target Audience..... 19

 Data Sources and Information Available for Assessment 20

 Responsibilities Chart..... 20

 Implementation Timeline..... 21

 Program Logical Framework 21

Methodology 22

 Participants..... 22

 Materials 22

 Procedure 23

Results 24

Discussion..... 30

 Limitations of Study 34

Implications For Further Study 35

Appendix A: Agenda..... 40

Appendix B: Presentation 43

Appendix C: Interview Protocol..... 53

Creating Capital: A Case for Municipal Arts Support in Lawrence, MA

In an examination of the allure of public art, British journalist Jonathan Jones once wrote, “Art is language and public art is public speech” (Jones, 2008, para. 17). Public art has long been a way for cities to express their identities, voice public opinion, and showcase and enhance the beauty found in distinct neighborhoods. Art has the ability to connect individuals, prompt conversation, spark discourse. We may identify iconic monuments such as the St. Louis Arch and the Statue of Liberty with the places and people they represent. However, public art serves not only as a geographic symbol, but as a nimble expression of a multitude of viewpoints told through many mediums and methods of installation. Public art-based art transcends documentation and expression, and provides tools through which can define identity, build community, and celebrate culture.

Beyond that, art serves as a tool for advocacy and change. Through creative place-making - the community-informed design of public spaces (Project for Public Spaces, 2007) - neighbors have the opportunity to reckon with the past, bring oppressive histories to light, and envision equitable futures. They may democratize and utilize communal space in ways previously unheard of or prohibited. Through their work, artists have the ability to spark imaginations and initiate innovation.

Today, public and community-based art finds itself at the intersection of expression and expansion. Art, particularly public art, contributes to social and cultural capital. This creative capital often serves as a driver for economic development. Economic development can be a mixed blessing, especially in communities where such development may lead to the displacement of more vulnerable populations. Additionally, when a community is engaged through art, artists find themselves engaged as organizers, activists, and civic leaders. This level

of engagement, combined with navigation of the municipal requirements for public artmaking and programming, makes for a complex and formidable process for creatives. This is the space in which municipal-based arts coordinators and arts and culture departments can intervene and support the creative community in their efforts.

It takes many layers of support to develop a sustainable creative community. Government funding – federal, state, and local – shifts based on political priorities. Philanthropic support may be geographically or culturally disproportionate. Bringing art from traditional fixed spaces and norms into innovative public forums presents logistical challenges to artists and organizations (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010). Civic engagement may vary depending on community and cultural norms (National Endowment for the Arts, 2015). In the face of these needs, municipal support may be the link connecting arts and culture-based initiatives with the mechanisms for capacity-building and consistent, foundational support.

This purpose of this project is to develop a proof of concept, articulating the case for municipal arts support within the city of Lawrence, Massachusetts. This framework will include an exploration of the community-wide impact of public art initiatives, assessing the efficacy of municipally led projects, and an assessment of the work of collective arts programming with the Lawrence Arts Collective. We will explore the impact of public art on community engagement and examine the benefits of partnerships between artists, community-based organizations and businesses, and local governments. If, in fact, “public art is public speech”, this framework will demonstrate how Lawrence can ensure the collective voice of the public is being witnessed, amplified, and preserved.

Literature Review

Public and Community Art

The Tate Museum in London defines public art as art which is “commissioned specifically for the site in which it is situated. Monuments, memorials, and civic statues and sculptures are the most established forms of public art, but public art can also be transitory, in the form of performances, dance, theatre, poetry, graffiti, posters and installations” (The Tate Museum, n.d., para. 1).

Historically, many projects categorized as public art, such as statues and monuments, do not reflect the experiences, history, or culture of all sectors of the public (Lacy, 1995). The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines culture as “the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group that encompasses, not only art and literature, but lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs” (UNESCO, 2009, p.18). In the context of community arts, author James Bau Graves (2005) writes, “Culture is broadly inclusive. It reflects all of the component parts in our lives that define who we are; it provides the building blocks of our identity as social beings” (p.15).

A more modern concept of public art emerged with the establishment in 1967 of the Arts in Public Places by the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) (National Endowment for the Arts, 2018). With government support came the promise of a more democratic ideal of art, work by and for the public. This “new genre public art” (Lacy, 1995, p.19) was centered in engagement. When community members are engaged in the design or creation of a work of public art, it provides a greater opportunity for interaction, transcending to community art (Lowe, 2000). Citing Flood (1982), Lowe (2000) writes:

It is the neighborhood or community participatory spirit that is unique to community arts. The role of the... artist is to engage the individual or group in the process of art, and to stir something within the individual about his individual and/or collective being (p.364).

Creating Community

Through collaborative art, community members have the opportunity to engage and forge relationships with others, which deepens a sense of connection and belonging (Speer & Hughey, 1995). Additionally, collaborative or community art provides the opportunity for community members to express ideas, values, goals, and beliefs within the group, adding to a sense of closeness (Hall & Robertson, 2001). As Murray (2012) notes, “The involvement of community members in the process of artmaking can be a means of collective story-making and the discovery of new strengths and abilities. It can promote a sense of shared identity and a way of developing a shared history” (p.7). Beyond the enjoyment of participation, research demonstrates the efficacy of arts education in cognitive development for young people, positive economic impacts, contributions to health and wellbeing, and capacity to foster strong community bonds (Arts Midwest & Metropolitan Group, 2015).

McMillan and Chavez (1986) identified four qualities which contribute to a sense of community. These four key components are membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection. Membership brings with it a sense of belonging, safety, identity, common symbols, vernacular, and norms, as well as personal investment. Influence implies the bidirectional concepts of both a person’s need to feel influential within their community and the community’s influence on the individual. Integration and fulfillment of needs refers to the role that community plays in reinforcing one’s belief systems, values, or

goals. Finally, shared emotional connection weaves threads from the first three components together to create a sense of shared history and connection (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

When we are in community together, we expand our social capital. Defined by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1986), social capital is, “the aggregate of actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintances and recognition – or, in other words, to membership in a group” (p.22). Communities provide opportunities to expand one’s social capital, to broaden their circle of resources, knowledge, and wealth. The larger our circle of connections, the more wide-ranging our capital. The expansion of social capital includes an accumulation of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

Bourdieu expands upon his theories by dividing cultural capital into three forms. The embodied form of cultural capital is the internalized state, that which exists in the mind and body. The objectified form is “cultural goods” (Bourdieu, 1986. p.17) such as books, artwork, music. Finally, the institutionalized form of cultural capital is the commonly understood markers of achievements such as educational degrees (Bourdieu, 1986).

The need for connection to community is one of the primary motivators in arts participation and attendance (NEA, 2015). When we gather, either as participants or observers, for arts-based experiences, we expand and strengthen both our social and cultural capital and expanding and deepening our sense of community.

Engagement with the Arts

In researching participation in the arts for the year 2017, the NEA (2019) reports that Americans over the age of 18 engaged in the arts in one or more of the following ways: through use of electronic media; reading not required for school or work; artistic, cultural, or creative

event attendance; creation or participation in an art-based activity; or by learning an art form informally, or through formal classes or lesson. The study also found that 62% of adults who participate in the performing arts did so to spend time with family and friends (National Endowment for the Arts, 2019)

However, more than a third of the participants surveyed did not agree that “There are plenty of opportunities for me to take part in arts and cultural activities in my neighborhood or community” (National Endowment for the Arts, 2018. p. 3).

In examining barriers to participation in the arts, the NEA (2015) notes that hurdles differ depending on demographics. While lack of time, cost, and difficulty getting to the venue were the most commonly cited barriers, “Mexican-Americans, non-Hispanic Blacks and African Americans more often said not having someone to go with prevented their attendance” (p. 2). Setting, socioeconomics and demographics, and funding opportunities, may also be a determinant of participation in the arts. Many hold the perception that arts are a luxury, rather than an essential tool for social good: a “nicety rather than a necessity” (Arts Midwest & Metropolitan Group, 2015, p. 4). Self-identified class distinction was a predictor of arts participation; with 74% of people identifying as upper class reported as arts attendees, in contrast to just 35% of those identifying as lower class (National Endowment for the Arts, 2015). Programming venues, too, may affect engagement. While traditional spaces, such as galleries, theaters, and museums, are central to many artistic endeavors, non-traditional spaces must be considered as well. Outdoor venues, such as parks or public plazas, bring more racially and ethnically diverse audiences (National Endowment for the Arts, 2015).

Relationships Critical to Community Arts

The long-term health of a thriving arts community is reliant upon relationships and shared resources between arts organizations and surrounding communities (Novak-Leonard et al., 2014). Kreidler and Trounstein (2005) developed a model to map cultural ecosystems within a community. Their configuration centers around professional creation and consumption of the arts. Beyond that, exists a broader level of cultural participation, indicating arts and culture engagement in non-professional settings. The outermost layer of their model is “cultural proficiency”, defined as “fluency in traditions, aesthetics, manners, customs, language and the arts, and the ability to apply critical thinking and creativity to these elements” (p.6).

In the model of cultural ecosystems, we see echoes of psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory (1979). Bronfenbrenner’s model moved from a microsystem to the mesosystem, then to the exosystem, and finally the macrosystem. The microsystem centers on direct personal relationships, building out to encompass secondary relationships, then to laws, policies, rules, and social structures that affect our experiences, and finishes with the outer layer which reflects cultural views and societal norms. The core relationship, at the center and within the microsystem, is the most direct and influential relationship. Core relationships work in conjunction with systems moving outward, from adjacent or institutional relationships, out to cultural norms and expectations that affect our experiences. Gaps in one system may create deficits or greater reliance upon another (Vest Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017).

When audiences have access to the arts, it increases the likelihood that they will participate themselves. According to a National Endowment for the Arts report on attendance to a variety of arts-based events, those who attended an arts-based event were two to three times

more likely to create art themselves (National Endowment for the Arts et al., 2011). People who engage in the arts are more likely to be civically engaged as well. Novak-Leonard and Brown (2011) note that rates of civic engagement are higher among people who reported attendance or participation in the arts. Those who engaged in arts-based activities, either as creators or consumers, were six times more likely to volunteer or do charity-based work, as compared to people who reported little to no engagement with the arts (National Endowment for the Arts et al., 2011). A study of the Mural Arts Porch Light program by Yale Medical School identified a phenomenon called “collective efficacy” (p.5), revealing that after participating in collaborative public art projects, participants expressed a readiness to attempt more change (National Endowment for the Arts, 2018). Participatory art promotes resilience and self-reliance, and fosters community pride (Bublitz et al., 2019).

When these individual elements - artmaking, setting, relationships, community - intentionally coalesce, it creates an opportunity for creative placemaking. Placemaking is the invitation to reimagine public spaces as the heart of a community, increasing connections between people and shared spaces (Project for Public Spaces, 2007). The Project for Public Spaces (2007) emphasizes that community input and involvement are crucial elements to successful placemaking. “With community-based participation at its center, an effective placemaking process capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, and it results in the creation of quality public spaces that contribute to people's health, happiness, and wellbeing” (para. 2). These intentional social interactions around a shared theme or common interest, contribute directly to a higher quality of life (Borup, 2009).

Municipal Support

To engage members of such a community in active resistance requires long-term, consistent collaboration (Murray, 2012). “By involving people together in the process of art-making it can provide a means of personal and collective reassessment and the development of a new narrative of possibility” (Murray, 2012, p.7).

As an older, post-industrial city with high unemployment and poverty rates, Providence, Rhode Island, has faced challenges in placemaking; once being referred to as “the armpit of New England” (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010, p. 54). However, over the past 30 years, a series of mayors and city officials have worked to keep arts and culture at the forefront of the city’s development initiatives. Most famously is the installation of “Waterfire”, a series of bonfires along the Providence River. What began as a one-time New Year’s Eve event has evolved into an ongoing series, attracting over one million visitors to the downtown area every year. Providence also prioritizes infrastructure that supports local and individual arts, providing tax incentives, working with developers to create work/live spaces for artists, and establishing the city’s Department of Arts, Culture, and Tourism. Now in its 18th year, this department facilitates public and community arts programming, assists artists with capacity building and navigating municipal bureaucracy, and partners with other agencies within the city to utilize underused spaces within the city (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010).

With a population of 26,000, Paducah, Kentucky, is relatively small in comparison to Providence. But much like Providence, it has transformed into a creative hub for artists. The city’s Artist Relocation program began in 1999 with the vision of one artist, Mark Barone, who saw the potential in Lowertown, an area of town in deep disrepair. He believed the buildings there would be ideal for work/live setups for artists. By engaging with the city and getting the

mayor on board with his plan, Barone was able to market this area to artists around the country. The city stepped in to designate areas in Lowertown as historic districts, change zoning regulations, enforced codes to discourage predatory landlord practices, and offered subsidies to artists relocating to Paducah. From these collaborations grew an arts district that attracted \$30 million in private investments and became home to over 70 artists. Eighty properties were rehabilitated, and 20 new buildings were constructed (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010).

In each of these cases, art was the catalyst for innovative thinking and design. However, it was the relationships between artists, civic organizations, and municipalities that provided the foundational support needed for success (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010). Breaking out of traditional performance spaces and galleries, developing innovative, community-centric programming, incorporating artistic aesthetics into non-traditional projects, can present complex challenges for artists (National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, 2017). As Bronfenbrenner (1979) illustrates the interdependence of relationships moving outward in his ecological systems, the arts rely upon connections, civic support, municipal backing, and cultural norms that support a creative climate (National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, 2017). When one piece goes missing, reliance shifts and makes for a less-sustainable model.

When fully sustained and working in concert with a municipality, the arts are a valuable tool to address many community issues such as civic engagement, racial justice, and food insecurity. This symbiotic relationship not only benefits creative professionals, but provides community leaders with a vast resource of creative approaches to problem-solving (Korza, 2018)

Lawrence, MA

Once home to a robust textile and manufacturing industry, Lawrence has faced its share of challenges in the 20th and 21st centuries. Corrupt government, high crime rates,

unemployment, pollution, and a school system in receivership earned Lawrence the moniker “The city of the damned” (Atkinson, 2012). However, in the past decade, Lawrence has made significant strides towards revitalization in the past decade led, in large part, by community groups. Lane Glenn, president of Northern Essex Community College, cites collaborative leadership and co-working as the secret to success (Porter, 2020) In its continued evolution, the arts may play a role in Lawrence’s recovery. As Murray (2012) writes:

The involvement of community members in the process of art-making can be a means of collective story-making and the discovery of new strengths and abilities. It can promote a sense of shared identity and a way of developing a shared history. This is especially the case for communities who have been broken up for various reasons through, for example, forced migration or urban redevelopment (p.7).

Collective story making, the discovery of new strengths and abilities, and a sense of shared identity are at the heart of the work of many arts organizations within Lawrence. One such example took place in the summer of 2021, when Essex Art Center (EAC) celebrated a post-COVID re-opening. EAC welcomed hundreds of community members with a block party that featured art activities, local vendors, and live music (LaBella, 2021). As EAC Executive Director, Monica Manoski, stated at the time, “Lawrence and the people who live and work here have an inspiring, collaborative spirit. As the community's art center, we want to make sure we're welcoming everyone who lives and works here, that we're engaging them with our programming, and adding value to their lives and their neighborhood” (LaBella, 2021, para. 4).

Current Project

The purpose of this project is to assemble evidence demonstrating how municipal intervention, in the form of an arts coordinator position or municipal department, could assist in

facilitating arts and culture projects, benefitting artists, community members, and the city of Lawrence itself.

Project Plan

Assessment Plan

My capstone project is the development of a deliverable proof of concept to the City of Lawrence, demonstrating the necessity for a municipal-supported public arts coordinator. Included in that case will be documentation assessing the work of the Lawrence Arts Collective in its pilot year.

Foundational support of art in a community opens the possibilities for re-imagined equitable public spaces and creative place-making. Art provides opportunities for the shaping and expression of identity through the documentation of history and personal stories. A thriving arts community provides a multitude of opportunities for community members to engage, reflect, and deepen connections to one another.

Describe the Program

The Lawrence Arts Collective (LAC) is a partnership of artists, arts-based organizations, and small businesses created to support creative culture in Lawrence, Massachusetts. In its pilot year, the LAC intends to identify the community benefits of public and community-based arts initiatives, assess the needs of the artistic community in Lawrence, identify and pool existing resources, and strengthen connections between artists and arts and cultural organizations through collaborative practices. Through this work, the LAC hopes to amplify and support the work of artists and organizations who normally do not have the capacity to do more collaborative work and strengthen the arts network in Lawrence. Efforts to create consistent and impactful means of municipal support for artists leads to a richer, broader, more creative culture.

Key Assessment Questions

- What are the community benefits of public and community-based arts initiatives?
- What are the needs of the artistic community in Lawrence?
- How can a collective of artists and organizations assist in meeting those needs through shared resources?
- How does participation in a collective expand the practices of the artists and organizations involved?
- How does the work of the collective impact the public's engagement within the arts in Lawrence?
- How can a municipal arts coordinator impact the work of artists, arts-based and cultural organizations in Lawrence?

Define Your Assessment Goals

- Goal 1: Demonstrate need for greater municipal support for the artistic community in Lawrence
- Goal 2: Assess the feasibility of implementing a permanent position in the city focused on community arts and engagement
- Goal 3: Evaluate the potential impacts to the city by investing more in the community arts (i.e., economic capital, social capital, creative capital, etc.)

Target Audience

- **Municipalities** (in particular, the city of Lawrence): To demonstrate the community-wide impact of municipal/collective support in the arts, including social and economic benefits.

- **Artists:** To engage in conversations about the methods and benefits of shared resources, collaborative processes, and municipal support
- **Funders:** To demonstrate success of the LAC for further support

Data Sources and Information Available for Assessment

I will be utilizing studies from other cities to support the case for a municipal position. I will also be gathering assessment data from this year – goals, indicators, anecdotal and qualitative information.

| DATA SOURCE | WHEN WAS IT COLLECTED | METHOD | INDICATORS / MEASURES |
|---|------------------------------|--|---|
| Existing studies on municipal investment in community-based art initiatives | 2021 | Secondary data pulled through academic search engines. | What information does this data source contain? |
| Assessment data from Lawrence | Year | Survey, Focus Group, Interviews, etc. | What information does this data source contain? |
| Lawrence Strategic Plan | Year | Survey, Focus Group, Interviews, etc. | What information does this data source contain? |

Responsibilities Chart

| NAME | ORGANIZATION OR AFFILIATION | RESPONSIBILITIES | CONTACT INFORMATION |
|-------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Lisa Kerr | Merrimack College | Project Lead | kerrf@merrimack.edu |

Implementation Timeline

| | |
|---------------|--|
| December 2021 | Workshop with artists to develop project plans/timeline for spring (12/7) First public event – 12/11 |
| January 2022 | Interview/research other municipalities Identify community stakeholders Implement and document first community artist meetup |
| February 2022 | Interview community stakeholders Implement and document second community artist meetup Support and document artist public art collaborative project implementation |
| March 2022 | Compile data and begin to structure proof of concept report Implement and document third community artist meetup Support and document artist public art/collaborative project implementation |
| April 2022 | 4/6: Full capstone draft due 4/27: Submit final capstone paper for publication |

Program Logical Framework

This capstone project is part of a larger initiative to engage Lawrence, MA in support of the arts.

| Inputs | Outputs | | Outcomes -- Impact | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|
| | Activities | Who | Short | Medium | Long |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TDI Grant ○ Funding ○ Staff Time ○ Graduate ○ Fellowship ○ Partner Site ○ Support ○ Artist input and influence | Monthly Artist Meetups Needs assessment for community artists Skill building workshops for artists Collaborative public art projects by artists in residence Proof of concept for municipal arts coordinator position Arts "summit" | Artists-in Residence Arts coordinator Guest Artists Partner Site Representatives Audiences/Public [placeholder for other municipalities/professionals] | Through meetups and dialogue, artist lead cohort in designing meetups, projects, and programming for the year Artists and partner site representatives engage with local organizations and artisans Artists expand skills set through professional development Artists lead needs assessment for artistic community Artists explore underutilized public spaces for creative place-making End of year summit showcases work of 2021-2022 cohort members | Artists within the community of Lawrence deepen connections to one another, expand social and professional circles Artists and organizations have access to resources and support Wider community has more opportunities to engage with the arts in the city of Lawrence Partner sites and local organizations benefit from the attention brought to a newly formed "arts district" Increased public awareness of the many ways the arts impact the community | City of Lawrence creates an arts-coordinator position Artists are recognized for their contributions towards creative capital and economic development and are compensated at a fair market rate. Artists are able to leverage collective creative capital. The sharing of art in re-imagined equitable public spaces provides community members opportunities to engage, reflect, deepen connections to community |

Assumptions
 Artists will complete their residencies and complete project work. The broader artistic community is interested in engaging with a collective. Community members will seek out arts-based programming, if offered, downtown.

External Factors
 Lack of municipal support, lack of engagement from broader artistic community, public perceptions about arts-based programming, negative impact of economic development (displacement) for artists, community members

Methodology

For this project, interviews with community engagement professionals were conducted to review and refine the *Case for Creativity: Municipal Support of the Arts in Lawrence, MA* assessment report and presentation. Data from the interviews was collected qualitatively and assessed using thematic coding.

Participants

The project included evaluative interviews with three community engagement professionals. Interviewees were selected based on the following criteria: experience or knowledge regarding community-based arts and culture initiatives; understanding around civic and municipal partnerships or engagement; and familiarity with the city of Lawrence. The first interviewee has worked for a governmental agency at the state level for about five years, focusing primarily on community development. The second interviewee is engaged in public artmaking and community-based arts programming in the Merrimack Valley area and has experience in municipally led arts initiatives. The third has extensive experience with municipally led arts and culture initiatives and has served as a municipal department head for 20 years. All interviewees have engaged in some previous discussions about the importance of a formal municipal arts initiative or program for the city of Lawrence.

Materials

Interviews were conducted online on Zoom. Zoom is a videotelephony software program that allows for video conferencing, screen sharing, and commenting. This was used to engage the interviewees in one place.

The presentation consisted of a PowerPoint slide deck (see Appendix B). PowerPoint is a Microsoft Office product that creates presentations using a slide format. It contains not only content-based capabilities but also graphics which can enhance presentations.

A scripted interview protocol was utilized for the post-presentation interview. The protocol contained an introduction script that explained the nature of the presentation along with an opportunity for participants to ask any clarifying questions. The interview protocol contained a total of six primary questions and several follow-up and prompting questions (see Appendix C). The first question focused on initial reactions and responses to the presentation. The second question centered on any historical knowledge or precedents regarding community arts in Lawrence. The third and fourth questions examined the benefits and rationale for a Municipal Arts Coordinator position at the City of Lawrence. Question five explored ways to make the argument for community arts to be formally present in a municipal department. The final question was an opportunity for interviewees to provide a summative reflection or offer additional advice. Lastly, the interview protocol contained a closing statement and a request to follow-up later with questions if needed.

Data was collected and transcribed into Microsoft Excel for coding and thematic analysis. Microsoft Excel is another Office product that is primarily used for its computation capabilities.

Procedure

Once potential evaluators were identified utilizing specific criteria, I sent an email requesting their participation. Upon agreement, we set a date and time for our meeting. Prior to the meeting, I sent evaluators an email reminder that also included an overview of the project, link to my capstone Google site, and a PDF of the PowerPoint presentation.

On the date of each meeting, I opened the Zoom room ahead of the appointed time and admitted the interviewees upon arrival. After a brief greeting from the interview protocol, I confirmed permission to record the presentation and began recording the meeting.

I then gave a brief overview and history of the project and then shared my screen to give my presentation, utilizing the PowerPoint. Upon completion of my presentation, I used my scripted protocol to ask a series of six questions related to the presentation. Responses were recorded on Zoom and then uploaded to a video file. I also recorded notes on paper as points of reference during the conversation. At the completion of the interview, I requested the ability to reach out if I had follow-up questions and invited evaluators to reach out if they thought of any additional feedback. I sent the evaluators a follow-up email thanking them for their time.

Responses were recorded on Zoom and then uploaded to a video file. Written notes were also documented during the interview. After the meeting, I transcribed the notes from the question-and-answer portion of the interview into a Word document. Written notes that were also documented during the interview also went into the Word file on the interviewer's computer. These were both later transferred to an Excel spreadsheet for analysis. First, all content by each question were broken into categories to better synthesize the responses. Key themes across each of the questions started to emerge which were then assessed for frequency, description, and patterns.

Results

Initial Thoughts and Reactions

All three interviewees expressed support for the concept of municipal arts. One interviewee appreciated the data related to dollar amounts contributed to the economy through arts-based organizations. They also suggested an expansion in use of language describing artists

and the creative economy, citing “creative entrepreneurs are a small business and should be seen as such. And the same thing with - because they’re so they’re so focused on language a lot of times - that maybe to use creative workforce instead of artist.” Another interviewee appreciated the inclusion of private businesses, such as production and design companies, that are “creative to their core” but aren’t always included in conversations about the creative economy. That interviewee continued by emphasizing the importance of fostering networks among these entities. They also suggested that the case could benefit from more emphasis on the benefit of coordinated marketing through the work of a municipal point person.

One interviewee expressed that they felt the national and regional data regarding creative economies was too broad; they wanted to see more local data from Lawrence and neighboring communities. They also wanted to see more of a direct correlation from creative economies to organizations to positive community benefits.

One interviewee appreciated the inclusion of civic engagement in the argument for municipal support, highlight the direct and “non-coincidental” link between the creative realm and civic engagement initiatives such as voter turnout. Another interviewee appreciated the inclusion of historic sites and cultural events. They noted the importance not only the importance of dollars earned or attendance at festivals or culture-specific events, but the positive impact that exposure has on attendees. Finally, one interviewee noted in particular the efficacy of including an example of a municipal arts structure such as New Bedford because it “paints a picture of how an organization or an entity can live within an economic development and municipal office yet be that trusted resource for the community.”

Prior Arts Initiatives in Lawrence

Two of the three interviewees replied that they were familiar with past arts initiatives in Lawrence. One interviewee noted that one major takeaway from prior initiatives was the importance place-based identity and fostering spaces within Lawrence as cultural hubs. They also identified the importance of community-led initiatives in their ability to identify needs from “many different sides.” Another interviewee reflected on “home-grown cultural groups” and the importance of recognizing places such as the “Claddaugh, which is like this old school Irish pub as a cultural space, but they absolutely are, because they act as a third place for the Hibernians association, they host fundraisers in the summer, they are willing partners for the shamrock 5k run in Lawrence, and that’s what brings people in, and it’s not just about coming for a beer and a Guinness this time of year, those are cultural spaces and spaces that are held”.

They continued by expanding on examples of local nonprofits leveraging cultural events and heritage festivals to bring awareness to community parks and public spaces “where, innately, you learn about the space, and you learn about what’s going on and you connect with community and it builds that sense of pride.” Building off of these examples, this interviewee notes that they would, in addition to non-traditional, non-institutional, and nonprofit partners, see the city move into more than just a supportive role in the arts, but to embed that person and funding into “administrative power.” New Bedford was again brought up as a good case study, showing a systemic process through which that can happen.

Compelling Reasons for Municipal Arts Support

One interviewee named creative solutions to community problems as the most compelling argument for municipal arts support, using COVID-19 and the creative community’s rapid ability to produce thousands of masks when there was a global shortage as an example of

resourceful, creative problem-solving. Another interviewee stated the importance of having differing perspectives at the municipal level, saying, “the difference is that we all in our variety of different roles that we play we compartmentalize. The idea is to see that you can accomplish one with the aid of the other, and that is what the point is behind the arts coordinator, to have this become of a part of how we go forward with things.” They supported this statement with the example of the Jazz wall in the New Bedford case study, noting, “If I were a city planner, would I just sit there and think that? No, I’d need to have my artist department coordinate with me on an initiative that centers on community development.”

In response to this question, the third interviewee spoke to historic interest in having arts support at a municipal level but recognized that individual community members and organizations may not have time and resources to step back and research and document something like a proof of concept. The importance of that work, they continued, is because there is still a need for education, stating, “there are these big things that you [the community] want - housing, to be paid, to have space, to connect” and I know that I see that and I see that and I respect that but we need to get to a place where we have municipal coordination to help you to that point. Because people come and go and energy from nonprofits ebbs and flows, and we need this municipal coordination so help us help you.”

Creating an Engaging Proof of Concept

One interviewee spoke to the importance of the inclusion of stories and numbers, noting both were included in this case, but also emphasized the importance of ensuring that the data is relatable to people in Lawrence. This interviewee also spoke at length about the importance of giving examples of how the inclusion of arts initiatives could be a “low lift” for a municipality. They pointed to arts offices or positions that run out of Economic Development departments or

are the result of Community Development Block Grants, as examples of ways to include municipal arts offices using existing resources. Another interviewee suggested more elaboration on community benefits to support an engaging case, noting “it’s to facilitate intentional collaboration, and that kind of speaks to all of the things underneath it, for economic development, for healthier lifestyle choices, fill in the blank, whatever the broader city initiatives are, it’s to help facilitate, taking what we are trying to do as a community, and coordinating with people that don’t think like a city planner.” They also suggested looking more deeply into what community members look for in the place they live, and how those needs intersect with community and public art.

A third interviewee focused specifically on the economic development aspect of the case, citing that this might likely be the most compelling aspect for a municipality. The creative use of public space, and a strong creative economy are parallel to economic growth within a city. They note that the argument around economic development goes deeper than simply appearing attractive to developers. They state,

“We are in an era where people choose to live in a space based on the lifestyle they are trying to achieve and if we want to see more diversity and I don’t just mean racial diversity, if we want to see more diversity across the boards in our downtowns, we need to have beautiful public spaces, we need to have more presence of our creative economy, we need to have entertainment we need to have options of entertainment for different types of income levels and interests.”

To make that case, the interviewee suggests including more examples of cities similar to Lawrence who have leveraged their creative economies for tourism and a more creative public realm.

Making the Case

All interviewees agree that this case should be made to the Mayor, the city council, and other key municipal offices, including economic development, and the department of conservation and recreation. All three also cited the importance of engaging with other community partners, including non-profits, arts-based organizations, creative-based business, and artists. One interviewee related the importance of having trusted organizations on board that both have the capacity to help implement and support creative initiatives, and are known to the municipality. Another interviewee discussed the significance of “buy in” from the creative community, and the need to keep the community up to date on potential municipal plans.

Final Thoughts

As a last suggestion, one interviewee suggested beginning the case with a “high level opening and history” of the arts community in the past decade in Lawrence, to highlight the work and steps that led to a case for municipal support. Another interviewee reiterated the need for more examples of the creative ways art is used as a tool for engagement, using more of a “show don’t tell” model. Finally, a third interviewee emphasized again the use of case models, and their ability to serve as a road map for municipalities that may be hesitant to try something new, but can see where it’s working in other places. They also noted that in their experience it is helpful to highlight how easy and attainable first steps can be, identifying, “what works best for the city and for this community but not doing anything that’s going to put anybody out or be an extraordinary lift or you know take up a ton of money. It’s about figuring out what works best that we can all benefit from him within our capacity.”

Discussion

The goal of this project was to assemble evidence demonstrating how municipal intervention and support can assist in facilitating arts and culture projects in Lawrence, MA, and assess the potential benefits for artists, community members, and the city itself. The documentation for this work was gathered through case studies, published data regarding creative economies, interviews, and an assessment of the key findings in the pilot year of the Lawrence Arts Collective (LAC), a program focused on collaborative partnerships between community organizations and artists-in-residence, with the support of an arts coordinator. This proof of concept was then presented to three community engagement professionals for review, all of whom have experience in community arts initiatives and municipal work, as well as a familiarity with Lawrence. All three interviewees voiced strong support for the need for formalized municipal support for the arts, in the form of an arts coordinator or arts-centered municipal department. Their feedback on the importance of this work and efficacy of a proof of concept centered around several main themes, including more intentional focus on Lawrence, engagement with community partners, the benefits of creative solutions to community problems, creative economies, and the instrumental role of case studies in the argument for support.

While the project was constructed with Lawrence in mind, interviewees had recommendations on how to deepen the emphasis on this work's unique relevance to Lawrence. It was suggested the proof of concept begin with a brief but detailed history of the efforts of the arts community for the past ten years in Lawrence, demonstrating that coordination is not a new idea, but rather a logical next step in a progression of a growing network of creatives and nonprofits working together to integrate art into public and community life. Utilizing more specific examples from LAC partners such as Elevated Thought, art-based youth mentoring

program whose work exists at the intersection of creativity and activism, would highlight both social and economic benefits of public and community-centric art projects within Lawrence. This would be an opportunity to incorporate a more “show and not tell” approach, as also suggested in the feedback. Essex Art Center, and Izizwe Dance Studio also provide excellent examples to draw from.

Fostering partnerships and including organizations not commonly associated with arts-based work is part of the broader theme of defining the creative community. Cultural hubs such as social clubs, designers, media professionals, educational institutions, museums and historic societies all arose in conversation as potential collaborators within creative community. Interviewees also cited the work of non-profits that may not, on their surface, appear to be arts-centric in their missions, but utilize art as a means of education, community engagement, and advocacy. Groundwork Lawrence and the Merrimack River Watershed Council were included in the project as examples of organizations in Lawrence utilizing art and creativity to forward their missions. Their models illustrate that art can serve as a necessary tool for social good, and is not simply a “nicety” (Arts Midwest & Metropolitan Group, 2015, p. 4) available to only some. Additionally, interviewees noted that more detailed descriptions of these initiatives and their impact strengthens the case for municipal support by reminding city officials that beyond arts organizations, there are existing, well-known entities in Lawrence that have the demonstrated capacity to be partners in arts-based community work.

Looking to non-traditional uses of art also highlights the benefits of creative problem solving, a point which all of the interviews cited as a key benefit of municipal arts engagement. Citing Covid-19 as an example, one interviewee credited the creative community for their work when there was a national mask shortage. As one interviewee stated, “we [creative professionals]

know how resourceful and creative we can be and if you want to do something different and have it be sustainable and trusted...then seek the creative solution.”

It was recommended that, prior to presenting the proof of concept to any municipal representatives in a formal capacity, it be shared more broadly with members of the creative community. Networking would broaden the perspectives represented in the proof of concept and solidify support from the creative community at large. As noted in the literature review, community engagement in artmaking prompts the realization of new perspectives, and the discovery of shared strength (Murray, 2012). So, too, can the collaborative community process of advocacy for municipal arts support. This networking could be something as simple as a series of casual meetups, or more organized community meetings. In its work this year, the LAC has hosted several meetups for artists-in-residence and creative partners. The project planning, identification of shared resources, and mutual support that have manifested from those meetings can serve as good demonstration of the efficacy of collective planning and intentional coordination. As one interviewee noted, it can be difficult for individual artists or administrators to see or connect with the bigger community picture while also focusing on their own work. A benefit of municipal support is a coordinator’s ability to see the community as a whole, as well as distinct individual components.

All interviewees appreciated the inclusion of data regarding creative economies, some citing the necessary inclusion of such facts when appealing to a municipality for support. National and regional numbers relay the significant impact that creative-based organizations, businesses, and individuals have within the economy. However, this is an area that one interviewee again cited the need for more local information. As a clearer definition of the creative community of Lawrence evolves, so will a more detailed picture of its economic impact.

Deeper exploration and stronger ties to the evolving development of Lawrence was also encouraged. While it was noted that some areas of this topic, particularly housing, should be addressed thoughtfully and with thorough contextual research, there are many ways that arts influence the quality of life and the economic growth of a city. The National Endowment of the Arts (2018) notes that one barrier to arts participation is a sense that there are no opportunities to engage in one's community. Intentional and creative use of public space may increase the awareness of the many ways community members can interact with the arts. Greenspaces, public parks, use of commercial space, public transit, food and entertainment options, social and cultural gathering spaces and events; these are all factors that influence how one sees the place where they live, and they all intersect with the arts.

Utilizing the example of New Bedford was helpful in demonstrating some of these concepts and emphasizing where work of a municipality and the arts intersect. Incorporating specific projects into the proof of concept underscores the importance of examples and case studies, a point identified by all three interviewees. The work of New Bedford Creative was cited numerous times throughout in the feedback. In addition to the specific projects discussed, interviewees noted the importance of identifying how a municipality can fund an arts department, how that department can co-exist within economic development, and the significance of endowing that department with authority and agency. One interviewee challenged, "Can we make sure that we're embedding that person and funding into administrative power, can we make clear that this person works not under or as a sideline thought, but with DPW, with economic development, with police, with housing and community development?"

All interviewees discussed that, in their experiences, advocating for new projects within a municipality presents challenges, including hesitancy about unknown outcomes, concerns about capacity, and skepticism about investment versus benefits. Examples provide a road map that others can follow, demonstrate successful outcomes, and provide valuable lessons. It was noted that the use of New Bedford Creative as an example could be made more effective by creating a stronger connective thread between Lawrence and New Bedford, and perhaps examples from other regional areas such as Lowell could be included as well.

A robust creative community has numerous social, cultural, and economic benefits, and municipal support of the arts can play a critical role in sustaining and growing that community. This proof of concept provides a foundation on which to build that case. With increased use of case studies, stronger connections to Lawrence, and more community consensus build around it, interviewees agreed that is an effective tool to establish the many benefits of a municipal arts coordinator or department in Lawrence.

Limitations of Study

The original scope of this project was to have included more formal assessments from the pilot year of the Lawrence Arts Collective. However, several changes in leadership structure, plus a longer than expected start up period did not allow for that, and evaluations were more anecdotal.

Each of the three interviewees who provided feedback have differing perspectives, based on their relationship with the arts, community engagement, and municipal work. While this is natural, a larger interviewee group would have provided both a wider range of responses, but also reinforced themes that emerged in the data.

Implications For Further Study

This project is a framework to be built upon. Additions may include expanding research to be more specific to the city of Lawrence, providing additional and more detailed examples of art-based projects within Lawrence, and identifying key community partners. It is recommended that any proof of concept be shared with the creative community for feedback and expansion.

References

- Arts Midwest & Metropolitan Group. (2015, April). Creating connection: Research findings and proposed message framework to build public will for arts and culture. *Arts Midwest*.
<https://www.artsmidwest.org/tools-and-resources/publications>
- Atkinson, J. (2012, February 28). Lawrence, MA: City of the damned. *Boston Magazine*.
<https://www.bostonmagazine.com/news/2012/02/28/city-of-the-damned-lawrence-massachusetts/>
- Bau Graves, J. (2005). *Cultural democracy: The arts, community, and the public purpose*. University of Illinois Press.
- Borup, T. (2009, January 1). 5 Ways Arts Projects Can Improve Struggling Communities. *Project for Public Spaces*. <https://www.pps.org/article/artsprojects>
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241–258). Greenwood.
<https://www.socialcapitalgateway.org/content/paper/bourdieu-p-1986-forms-capital-richardson-j-handbook-theory-and-research-sociology-educ>
- Bublitz, M. G., Rank-Christman, T., Cian, L., Cortada, X., Madzharov, A., Patrick, V. M., Peracchio, L. A., Scott, M. L., Sundar, A., To, N. & Townsend, C. (2019). Collaborative art: A transformational force within communities. *Journal of the Association for Consumer Research*, 4(4), 313-331.
https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/full/10.1086/705023#1st_rf103R
- Glenn, L. (2021, January 30). Lawrence no longer a ‘city of the damned’. *CommonWealth Magazine*. <https://commonwealthmagazine.org/opinion/lawrence-no-longer-a-city-of-the-damned/>

- Hall, T., & Robertson, I. (2001). Public art and urban regeneration: Advocacy, claims and critical debates. *Landscape Research*, 26(1), 5-26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01426390120024457>
- Jones, J. (2008, February 18). The new embraceable Britain. *The Guardian*.
<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2008/feb/18/art>
- Korza, P. (2018, December 3). Inside artist-municipal partnerships. *ARTS Blog*.
<https://blog.americansforthearts.org/2019/05/15/inside-artist-municipal-partnerships>
- Kreidler, J., & Trounstein, P. J. (2005). Creative community index: Measuring progress toward a vibrant Silicon Valley. *National Archive of Data on Arts and Culture*.
<https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR35580.v1>
- LaBella, M. (2021, August 23). Hundreds flock to Essex Art Center reopening and block party. *The Eagle-Tribune*. https://www.eagletribune.com/news/merrimack_valley/hundreds-flock-to-essex-art-center-reopening-and-block-party/article_8de41dee-42f3-51c5-882e-a73ed9d82336.html
- Lacy, S. (Ed.). (1995). *Mapping the terrain: New genre public art*. Bay Press.
<https://archive.org/details/mappingterrain00suza>
- Lowe, S. S. (2000). Creating community: Art for community development. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 29(3), 357-386.
<http://douri.sh/classes/ics235aw05/readings/Lowe-CreatingCommunity-JCE.pdf>
- Markusen, A., & Gadwa, A. (2010). Creative placemaking. *National Endowment for the Arts*.
<https://www.arts.gov/about/publications/creative-placemaking>
- McMillan, D. W., & Chavis, D. M. (1986). Sense of community: A definition and theory. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 14, 6-23. [https://doi.org/10.1002/1520-6629\(198601\)14:1<6::AID-JCOP2290140103>3.0.CO;2-I](https://doi.org/10.1002/1520-6629(198601)14:1<6::AID-JCOP2290140103>3.0.CO;2-I)

- Murray, M. (2012). Art, social action and social change. In C. Walker, K. Johnson, & L. Cunningham, (Eds.), *Community psychology and the economics of mental health: Global perspectives* (pp. 253-266). Palgrave MacMillian.
- National Assembly of State Arts Agencies. (2017). Why should government support the arts? *National Assembly of State Arts Agencies*. <https://nasaa-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/WhyGovSupport.pdf>
- National Endowment for the Arts. (2015, January). When going gets tough: Barriers and motivations affecting arts attendance. *National Endowment for the Arts*. <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/when-going-gets-tough-revised2.pdf>
- National Endowment for the Arts. (2018, November). Community art: A look at public art in America. In *NEA Arts* (2nd ed.). https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/nea_arts/NEA%20Arts%20No%20%202018.pdf
- National Endowment for the Arts. (2019). *U.S. patterns of arts participation: A full report from the 2017 survey of public participation in the arts*. <https://www.arts.gov/impact/research/publications/us-patterns-arts-participation-full-report-2017-survey-public-participation-arts>
- Nick, S. (2012, November). Public space, public art and public pedagogy. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 13(7), 675-682. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2012.728007>
- Novak-Leonard, J., Baach, P. E., Schultz, A., Farrell, B., & Anderson, W. (2014). The changing landscape of arts participation: A synthesis of literature and expert interviews. *Knowledge @ UChicago*. <https://knowledge.uchicago.edu/record/1262>

Novak-Leonard, J. L., & Brown, A. S. (2011, February). Beyond attendance: A multi-modal understanding of arts participation. *National Endowment for the Arts*.

<https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/2008-SPPA-BeyondAttendance.pdf>

Project for Public Spaces. (2007). *What is placemaking?* <https://www.pps.org/article/what-is-placemaking>

Speer, P. W., & Hughey, J. (1995). Community organizing: An ecological route to empowerment and power. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 23(5), 729-748.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02506989>

Porter, E. (2020, March 24). One city's road to recovery offers lessons, and hope. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/24/business/economy/small-cities-economy.html>

The Tate Museum. (n.d.). Art term: Public art. <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/p/public-art>

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. (2009). The 2009 UNESCO framework for cultural statistics. *United Nations Statistic Division*.

<https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/doc10/BG-FCS-E.pdf>

Vest Ettekal, A., & Mahoney, J. (2017). Ecological systems theory. In *The SAGE encyclopedia of out-of-school learning* (pp. 239-241). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Appendix A: Agenda

A CASE FOR CREATIVITY: MUNICIPAL SUPPORT OF THE ARTS IN LAWRENCE, MA

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Introduction Message</p> <p><i>Lawrence is home to a vibrant creative community. The work of artists and art-based organizations in Lawrence has a positive impact within the community. Municipal support in the form of a City Arts Planner or Arts and Culture Department can deepen the reach and impact of the work of these arts, create sustainable systems of support, and yield both social and economic benefits for the city of Lawrence.</i></p> | |
| <p>Component A: Overview of Benefits of Community Arts</p> <p><i>This section is designed to illustrate the benefits of public and community arts. The arts are not only for entertainment and enrichment but serve as valuable tools that can be utilized in many areas of municipal work, from facilitating community-based dialogues, to engaging the public in social justice awareness and advocacy, to improving health and educational outcomes.</i></p> | <p>Materials List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community benefits of a healthy and supported arts community – examples from Americans for the Arts data sheets • Examples of benefits of arts integrated within the business community (https://www.partnershipmovement.org/tools-resources#case-making) |
| <p>Component B: Definition and examples of a creative economy</p> <p><i>This section highlights the role that the arts play in a thriving municipal economy. A “creative economy” is one that maximizes the benefits of industries and careers in the arts. Here we have examples of how investments in and support of the arts yields not only social, but economic benefits as well.</i></p> | <p>Materials List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview/Definition of Creative economy and international data/charts demonstrating economic influence from arts (https://www.thepolicycircle.org/minibrief/the-creative-economy/#section_3) • Data from Massachusetts Creative Economy State Profile, published by National Assembly of State Arts Agencies including graphics that illustrate industry trends https://nasaa-arts.org/nasaa_research/creative-economy-state-profiles/ • NEA/BEA data sheet tracking economic value added and employment derived through the arts https://www.arts.gov/impact/research/arts-data-profile-series/adp-27 • Economic data regarding the arts from Lowell (https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2017/by_program/reports_an) |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>d_data/aep5/map/MA_CityOfLowell_AEP5_OnePageSummary.pdf</p> |
| <p>Component C: Case study: New Bedford, MA</p> <p><i>Here we make the jump from general reasoning to support the arts, to specific examples of municipal intervention and support, using the specific examples of New Bedford and Lynn. Both cities, which share demographic characteristics with Lawrence, are still in the process of developing systems of support for artists and organizations in their communities. What does that look like? What are the specific benefits to the cities? To the artists? In what other ways are the arts impacting municipal work? What would that look like in Lawrence?</i></p> | <p>Materials List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparative demographic information between Lawrence and New Bedford (from cityhealthdashboard.com) • Examples of arts initiatives in New Bedford, including citations New Bedford strategic arts and culture plan (https://newbedfordcreative.org/arts-culture-plan/) • Interview with Margo Saulnier, Creative Strategist, New Bedford, and LaCrecia Thomson, Arts and Culture Planner for Lynn) |
| <p>Component D: Reflections on the ongoing pilot year of the Lawrence Arts Collective and other initiatives within Lawrence</p> <p><i>Through a MassDevelopment TDI grant, a group of artists, cultural institutions, and non-profits are engaged in a pilot program, exploring what collaborative work comes from collective support. How does this work celebrate what is unique and wonderful about Lawrence? Artists and organizers have shared ideas about what sustainable support can look like. What other lessons from this work support the argument for a municipal arts position?</i></p> | <p>Materials List:</p> <p>Overview of Lawrence Arts Collective goals and actions throughout the year</p> <p>New articles covering LAC event (https://www.eagletribune.com/downtown-winter-art-walk-to-highlight-area-artists/article_8ea27308-53b2-11ec-98a4-3b2cf99e8079.html)</p> <p>Insight and recommendations from 2016-2026 Lawrence Arts and Culture Master Plan(https://assets.lawrenceks.org/artsandculture/cultural_plan/Culture_Plan_Matrix.pdf)</p> <p>Anecdotal feedback from participants regarding artist and organizational needs within the community of Lawrence</p> |
| <p>Closing : Interview questions</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First, do you have any initial thoughts or reactions? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If they don't offer any positives, ask, "do you see any upsides or positives |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>to this project?” or “What do you think worked or could work here?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If they don’t offer any negatives, ask “do you see any downsides or negatives to this project?” or “what do you think didn’t work or won’t work here?” ● Are you aware of other coordinated arts initiatives in Lawrence in the past? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If yes, ask “Can you tell me more about those? What were some of the bright spots or successes of those initiatives?” ○ If no, “Do you think there’s a desire for coordinated arts initiatives in Lawrence?” ● One of the key elements I’m interested in are the community benefits of having a municipal arts coordinator. Any thoughts on that? ● What do you see as the most compelling reason for municipal arts support? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If they cite a specific reason, ask, “Do you see that that reflected in this document?” ○ If they can’t cite a specific reason, ask “what other reasons might we include?” ○ What might make this Proof of Concept or the information more engaging? ● Who needs to see this/receive this information? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Who within the community might help support this initiative? ● Do you have any final thoughts? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What information is missing? ○ Is there anything contained that you do not see as a necessary? |
|--|--|

Appendix B: Presentation



Overview

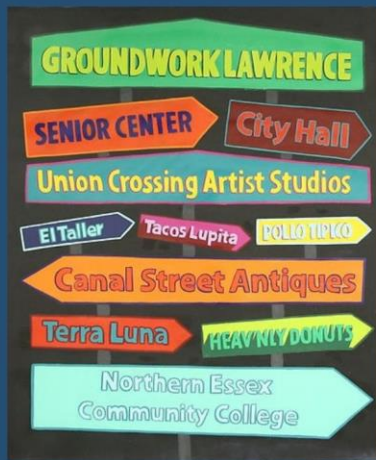
Lawrence, Massachusetts, is home to a vibrant creative community. The work of artists and art-based organizations in Lawrence has a positive impact within the community. Municipal support in the form of a City Arts Planner or Arts and Culture Department can deepen the reach and impact of the work of these artists, create sustainable systems of support, and yield both social and economic benefits for the city of Lawrence.

Contents

- ABOUT THIS PROJECT
- WHY MUNICIPAL SUPPORT?
- BENEFITS OF CREATIVE ECONOMY
- SOCIAL BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY BASED ARTS INITIATIVES
- CASE STUDY: NEW BEDFORD
- LAWRENCE ARTS COLLECTIVE
- TOOLKIT FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION



Ateneo Dominicano



ABOUT THIS PROJECT

This framework is an illustration of the potential impact of municipal support of arts and culture initiatives in Lawrence, MA. It was completed as a component of the Lawrence Arts Collective (LAC), a MassDevelopment-funded pilot program fostering collaborative arts experiences in Lawrence. It is also the capstone project of Lisa Kerr, a M.Ed. Candidate at Merrimack College and graduate fellow with the Lawrence Arts Collective. Upon completion, this framework will be provided to the LAC partners for possible expansion and future use.

Why is Municipal Support of the Arts a Valuable Investment?

- **Economic Driver**

Over 4.8 million people are employed in the arts and culture sector in the U.S.

- **Educational Asset**

Studies show that students who participate in arts education perform better in other academic areas

- **Health and Wellness**

The arts contribute to emotional and physical well-being

- **Civic Engagement**

Through the arts, citizens can engage in civic discourse, community organizing, deliberative decision-making and other community-centric processes

- **Cultural Preservation**

The arts provide a framework for preserving and passing along cultural traditions

National Association of State Arts Agencies. (2017). *Why should government support the arts?*
<https://nasa-art.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/WhyGovSupport.pdf>



Creative Economy

"The creative economy positions itself at the intersection of economics (contributing to GDP), innovation (fostering growth and competition in traditional activities), social value (stimulating knowledge and talent), and sustainability (relying on the unlimited input of creativity and intellectual capital)"

Dangarembga, T. (n.d.). *The Creative Economy*.
https://www.thepolicycircle.org/minibrief/the-creative-economy/#section_4



Designer Sherly Garcia

National Statistics

2020:

- Arts and culture added \$876 billion to the U.S. GDP, second only to retail
- 4.6 millions jobs in the arts and culture sector, representing 446 billion dollars in wages

State Statistics for Massachusetts

2020:

- Arts and culture added value to state economy \$23,749,350,000, or 4.1% of the gross state product
- 125,091 jobs

Regional Statistics (Lowell, MA)

2017:

- Total spending by Nonprofit arts and culture industry was \$12,294,327 (Organizations and audiences together)
- Equivalent of 500 full-time jobs supported

National Association of State Arts Agencies. (2020). *Creative Economy*. <https://nasaa-arts.org/research/creative-economy/#ecdev>

Creative Industries

Arts

- Visual (Painting, sculpture, photography, ceramics, etc)
- Performing (Music, theater, dance, opera, puppetry, storytelling, etc)
- Literary

Media

- Publishing (books, newspapers, other publications)
- Film/television/radio
- Digital content/software/gaming/animation



TOWER HILL FILMS



Creative Industries



Canal Street Antique Mall
& the 4th Floor Design Center

Heritage

- Historical Monuments/Sites
- Museums
- Libraries
- Archives
- Festivals/Cultural Celebrations

Service-Based

- Design (Interior, graphic, fashion, jewelry, etc)
- Creative services (architecture, advertising, creation R&D, cultural services, digital services)



Community-based and Participatory Art

"The involvement of community members in the process of art-making can be a means of collective story-making and the discovery of new strengths and abilities. It can promote a sense of shared identity and a way of developing a shared history. This is especially the case for communities who have been broken up for various reasons through, for example, forced migration or urban redevelopment. "

Murray, M. (2012). Art, social action and social change (C. Walker, K. Johnson, & L. Cunningham, Eds.). Palgrave. DOI: 10.13140/2.1.11291.1049



Social benefits of civic and community-based arts initiatives

- Promote interaction in and with public spaces through creative placemaking and keeping
- Increase civic engagement
- Promote historic/cultural preservation
- Promote engagement across identities and ideals
- Contribute to solutions for social or community problems

Borrup, T. (2009). *5 Ways arts projects can improve struggling communities*. Project for Public Spaces. <https://www.pps.org/article/artsprojects>

Using Art as a Tool for Engagement in Lawrence

These are just a few of the organizations in Lawrence utilizing art to engage with the community.



Case Study: New Bedford Creative

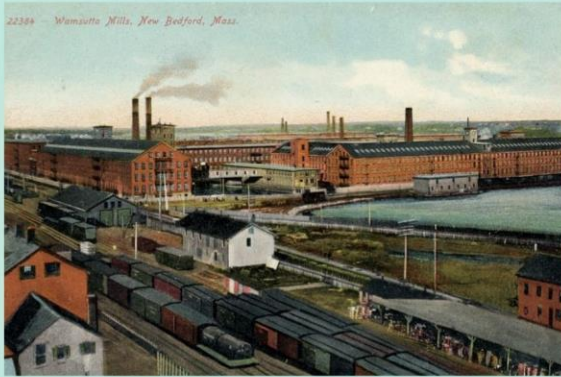


Photo courtesy of the New Bedford Whaling Museum

- New Bedford is a post-industrial city with a population of approximately 96,000 20% of city residents were born outside of the United States, and almost 40% of city residents have a native language other than English
- Critical perceptions exist about the city
- Established by Mayor in 2016, New Bedford Creative was signed into law in 2017 by the governor
- NB Creative exists as a component of the city's economic council, and utilizes a \$100,000 budget, funded from hotel tax
- Work in strong partnerships with Mayor's office, Parks and Rec Department, Office of Tourism, and Marketing

New Bedford, Massachusetts (MA) profile. (n.d.). City-Data.com. <https://www.city-data.com/city/New-Bedford-Massachusetts.html>

New Bedford, MA



"Jazz wall", New Bedford Artist: Kat Knutsen



- **Developed consortium of creatives throughout the city to coordinate efforts and events, and cross promote among organizations**
- **Expand and support public art projects as tools for placemaking through grant making, in-kind donations, and operational assistance**
- **Maintains a diversity, equity, belonging lens on projects within the city, advocating for representation and equitable opportunities**
- **Market New Bedford as a creative destination, driving attendance and tourism for events**

Information courtesy of Margo Saulnier,
Executive Director of New Bedford Creative

- Facilitate projects and events on behalf of the city, artists, businesses, general public - streamline processes such as planning and permitting
- Actively works with the Economic Development Council to advocate for affordable living and work spaces for artists and makers
- Develop and manage resources for creatives and nonprofits in New Bedford, including a creative directory and toolkits
- Developing formal cultural districts within New Bedford
- Secured over 700,000 in grant and charitable funding for projects

Information courtesy of Margo Saulnier,
Executive Director of New Bedford Creative

New Bedford, MA

Pocket Park lighting design project, collaborative effort between NB Creative and UMASS Dartmouth College of Visual Arts
Photos courtesy of UMASS Dartmouth

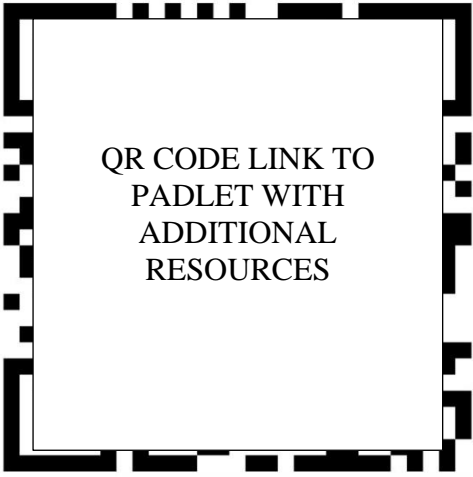
LAWRENCE ARTS COLLECTIVE TAKE-AWAYS



LAWRENCE ARTS COLLECTIVE TAKE-AWAYS

- Potential of arts and culture as a tool for engagement across many types of organizations: arts, youth programming, environmental nonprofit, cultural institutions, for-profit business, real-estate development
- Value of shared resources- expands capital of all organizations and artists involved
- Development of new relationships leading to collaborative projects
- Efficacy of cross-promotion
- Reimagined use of public space
- Importance of objective coordination, ensuring that organizations with less capacity are supported
- Call for needs assessment and greater support for individual artists and creatives living in Lawrence, MA
- Benefit of assisting the public in seeing downtown Lawrence as a creative destination

Toolkit
for
Further
Exploration

A square placeholder for a QR code, consisting of a thick black border with a pixelated, dashed appearance. The text is centered within the square.

QR CODE LINK TO
PADLET WITH
ADDITIONAL
RESOURCES

Thank you for listening!

Summer Mural Project, Lawrence MA



Creating Capital. A Case for Municipal Arts Support in Lawrence, MA

- Why Government Should Support the Arts / Por qué el gobierno debe apoyar las artes**
STATE POLICY BRIEFS
WHY SHOULD GOVERNMENT SUPPORT THE ARTS?
Public arts and organizations have shared with us that they are essential to the health and vitality of their communities. They are also a source of pride and joy for their residents. We believe that the arts are a vital part of our communities and that they should be supported by government at all levels. This brief, published by Americans for the Arts, outlines reasons for federal, state, and local government support of the arts, and addresses some of the most common questions posed by lawmakers, civic leaders, and artists.
El informe, publicado por Americans for the Arts, expone las razones por las que los gobiernos federales, estatales y locales apoyan las artes, y
- Agency/Arts Partnerships Asociaciones artisticas/agencias**
AGENCY ARTS PARTNERSHIPS
Published by the New York Department of Cultural Affairs, this guide identifies many point of entry for municipal/agency engagement with arts.
Publicada por el Departamento de Asuntos Culturales de Nueva York, esta guía identifica muchos puntos de entrada para el compromiso municipal/agencial con las artes.
- Massachusetts Creative Economy Profile / Perfil de la economía creativa de Massachusetts**
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT for the ARTS
Creative Economy State Profiles - NASAA
This study by the National Association of State Arts Agencies details the impact and influence of the creative economy in Massachusetts
Este estudio de la Asociación Nacional de Agencias Artísticas Estatales detalla el impacto y la influencia de la economía creativa en Massachusetts
- Gauging Readiness for Partnerships / Medir el grado de preparación para las asociaciones**
Gauging Readiness for Partnership
Produced by Municipal Artist Partnerships, this guide provides readiness questions for municipalities and artists considering partnerships.
Elaborada por Municipal Artist Partnerships, esta guía ofrece preguntas de preparación para los municipios y los artistas que están considerando la posibilidad de asociarse.

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Introduction: Thank you for taking the time to talk with me about the Proof of Concept I've created for the City of Lawrence in support of a municipal Arts Coordinator position. This work was created as a component of The Lawrence Arts Collective, a pilot program designed to explore and strengthen collaborations and support within the arts community in Lawrence. I've given you the longer written narrative and would like to recap some of the highlights in a quick presentation. After that, I'll have a few questions about your initial reactions, and any feedback you may have to offer.

Questions:

- First, do you have any initial thoughts or reactions?
 - If they don't offer any positives, ask, "do you see any upsides or positives to this project?" or "What do you think worked or could work here?"
 - If they don't offer any negatives, ask "do you see any downsides or negatives to this project?" or "what do you think didn't work or won't work here?"
- Are you aware of other coordinated arts initiatives in Lawrence in the past?
 - If yes, ask "Can you tell me more about those? What were some of the bright spots or successes of those initiatives?"
 - If no, "Do you think there's a desire for coordinated arts initiatives in Lawrence?"
- One of the key elements I'm interested in are the community benefits of having a municipal arts coordinator. Any thoughts on that?
- What do you see as the most compelling reason for municipal arts support?
 - If they cite a specific reason, ask, "Do you see that that reflected in this document?"

- If they can't cite a specific reason, ask "what other reasons might we include?"
- What might make this Proof of Concept or the information more engaging?
- Who needs to see this/receive this information?
 - Who within the community might help support this initiative?
- Do you have any final thoughts?
 - What information is missing?
 - Is there anything contained that you do not see as a necessary?

Conclusion: Is it possible to follow up with you if I have any further questions? Thank you so much for your time; I truly appreciate your input.