

Needham Arts & Culture Action Plan

Prepared for:

Town of Needham
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www.needhamma.org

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Executive Summary

Overview

Needham is a town with an abundance of creativity, arts and culture. Needham values arts and culture as a part of everyday life for all community members, reflected in its plentiful arts and cultural programming and events. As a community experiencing increasing cultural diversity, cultural events and activities play a critical role in nurturing a sense of belonging and connecting community members in new ways. In response to its growing diversity over the past twenty years, Needham has expanded local community events that reflect many different cultures. As an established suburban community outside of Boston, Needham is home to many young families, and its schools provide arts programming focused on youth. Over 25% of the town's population is under 18, according to the 2020 census estimates. However, Needham's population over 65 still makes up nearly 20% of the town's population, which accounts for many active participants in Needham's arts and cultural efforts. Arts and cultural activities provide opportunities for creative expression at every age and opportunities for intergenerational dialogue. Community volunteers have recently advocated for investments in cultural facilities and the arts. In response to a growing awareness of the town's arts and cultural assets and their positive contributions to community life, the Town of Needham commissioned this plan to ensure Needham is a place where the arts and its diverse cultural communities thrive. Needham is committed to ensuring its arts and culture programming serves the needs of all its residents. This plan provides a snapshot of Needham's arts and cultural assets and builds on the foundational efforts led by volunteers and local arts and culture leaders. The Needham Arts & Culture Action Plan articulates a vision for arts and culture in Needham and actions the town can take to achieve its goals.

Needham's Vision for Arts and Culture

Needham is a town that integrates arts and culture into everyday life, welcomes opportunities for connection and collaboration, and reflects the community's cultural diversity. The Town is committed to ensuring that cultural leadership is representative of the cultural identities found in Needham. It will support an active, creative ecosystem with dynamic, accessible programming and nurture a sense of belonging for all residents and visitors alike.

Core Values

The Needham Arts & Culture Action Plan is guided by four core values including:

- **EQUITY:** Advance social equity and social cohesion such that arts and culture reflect the people who live, work, study and participate in the Needham community.
- **CONNECTION:** Arts and culture are used to connect people in Needham and support understanding of the cultural nuance, references and histories that reflect the community and its growing cultural diversity.
- **ACCESSIBILITY:** Needham is responsive to the different needs in the community and provides abundant opportunities to participate in the arts and cultural life in a variety of ways, reducing barriers to access.
- **COLLABORATION:** Needham fosters a culture of collaboration among arts and culture stakeholders and develops systems of coordination to steward shared arts and cultural resources to support plan implementation across all sectors.

Public Process

The Needham Arts & Culture Action Plan began when the Town of Needham and the Needham Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC) were awarded a technical assistance grant from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) - the regional planning agency for metro Boston. Through this grant, MAPC led the cultural planning process in partnership with the Needham Arts & Culture Planning Working Group, which comprised members of Needham's arts and cultural community including artists, arts organization leaders and representatives from

multiple committees, commissions and organizations supporting arts and culture. MAPC worked closely with the Working Group on research and engagement to identify, inventory and map arts and cultural stakeholders and assets, document the needs and interests of the community, and define core opportunities to support arts and culture in Needham.

Over 350 Needham community members shaped this plan by responding to the town-wide survey, engaging in four focus groups, participating in three pop-up engagement events, and attending the public forum held on October 11, 2023. Based on the input provided throughout this public process, MAPC developed goals to guide the future of arts and culture in Needham. Strategies and actions for achieving each goal reflect the findings from stakeholder interviews, the existing conditions analysis, and public input. Together, the goals, strategies and actions serve as the core components of the Needham Arts & Culture Action Plan.

Action Plan Goals

Public engagement informed four overarching goals that anchor the Needham Arts & Culture Action Plan. An overview and description of the four goals is provided below. Each goal is supported by strategies and action steps outlined in the final section of the plan. Appendix A includes an Action Plan Matrix which identifies the implementation strategies and partners needed to achieve each goal.

- GOAL 1

CENTRALIZE NEEDHAM'S ARTS & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Needham is home to numerous arts and cultural resources including cultural facilities, public artwork including murals, sculptures, painted electric boxes, cultural events and organizations. The Town of Needham will support efforts to centralize Needham's arts and cultural resources through active collaboration and coordination among existing organizations, increasing awareness of these resources through consistent promotion and communication, and formalizing a process for initiating public arts and culture programming.
- GOAL 2

STRENGTHEN NEEDHAM'S ARTS & CULTURAL CAPACITY & INFRASTRUCTURE

Needham recognizes the value arts and culture bring to the community. The Town seeks to strengthen its capacity to support arts and culture by designating a staff position to implement the actions recommended in this plan and by identifying opportunities to increase funding for arts and culture in Needham. Needham will improve access to existing cultural facilities, explore renovation and modernization of existing facilities, and evaluate the need for new and accessible performance venues to meet the needs of community activities and support diverse arts and cultural activities.
- GOAL 3

SUPPORT NEEDHAM'S CULTURAL EQUITY INITIATIVES

As Needham becomes a more diverse community, arts and culture play an important role in connecting community members and celebrating Needham's cultural identities, particularly in its schools, town history and public events. Needham will prioritize cultural equity as a critical component of arts and cultural investments, foster inclusion and belonging through arts and cultural activities, support diverse programming and events, revisit the town's history and strengthen school initiatives that seed dialogue and celebrate Needham's multicultural community.
- GOAL 4

IMPROVE NEEDHAM'S QUALITY OF LIFE THROUGH ARTS & CULTURE

Needham's quality of life is directly shaped by the vibrancy of arts and culture within the community. The Town will integrate arts and culture into efforts to support the town's quality of life including initiatives to improve safety, health and wellbeing, and economic vitality in tandem with other planning efforts.

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Introduction

This plan provides an assessment of Needham's arts and cultural landscape, including an inventory of cultural assets, documentation of needs within the community, and plan of action that is anchored by goals, supportive strategies and implementation partners. The vision for this action plan emerged from the community in conversations to imagine the future of arts and culture in Needham and is supported by public engagement data. It includes recommendations informed by the regional context. The Town of Needham is committed to stewarding this vision and working with community partnerships to implement the plan's strategies over the next 1 to 5 years. Together with local stakeholders, the Town will shape a future that celebrates and sustains creativity, arts and culture.

Needham has a strong legacy of arts programming and investing in cultural assets, and a growing community of cultural leaders. Needham's cultural community includes longstanding institutions like the Needham Art Association, which formed in 1949, and the Needham Community Theatre established in 1956. These organizations continue to play active roles in Needham's cultural life. Meanwhile, there are cultural organizations like the Chinese Friends of Needham (CFN) and the Indian Community of Needham (ICON) that formed in the past decade, lead cultural programming throughout town and contribute to larger efforts for multicultural celebration. These organizations are generally volunteer-run and depend on donations from local organizations and sponsorships.

The Town of Needham currently staffs two volunteer committees serving Needham's arts and cultural community through direct investments in public arts, cultural events and programs. The Needham Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC) is composed of members appointed by the Select Board to disburse public funding allocated annually by the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC). NCAC provides financial support to artists, musicians, teachers, performers, and other individuals and groups that enhance the community's cultural life and takes an active role in leading public art initiatives. The Needham Revitalization Trust Fund (NCRTF) formed in 1999 to revitalize Needham's public common with public art and improvements to public spaces. Using donated private funds, the NCRTF has led various projects in town including the installation of the Circle of Peace sculpture on the Town Common.

Arts and culture happen throughout Needham, in a variety of public and private spaces. Community members have made deliberate efforts to create more space for arts and culture in both private and public facilities to meet the needs of local artists and provide quality programming for residents. Examples of this include the development of Gorse Mill Studio in 2009. This project was granted a special permit that enabled an artist-owned cooperative to develop artist-owned studio spaces in a redeveloped textile factory. In 2010, Citizens for the Preservation of Town Hall successfully restored Needham's Town Hall, including renovation of its concert venue, James Hugh Powers Hall. This venue annually hosts performances by local organizations, musicians and touring musicians. More recently, the Rosemary Recreation Complex, which also hosts intergenerational cultural events, was renovated in 2018 after efforts from the Community Center of Needham citizens group, now managed by Needham's Parks & Recreation Department. In 2023, Needham renovated the Town Common which serves as a central community space for gathering downtown and hosts outdoor community events.

Why Needham Needs an Arts & Culture Action Plan

As part of the long recovery from the impacts of the COVID pandemic, Needham found ways to support the local economy through arts and culture. In partnership with the Town Economic Development Manager, NCAC piloted innovative programs like Storefronts Needham, a revitalization program that infuses new energy into vacant storefronts throughout Needham's business districts through public-private partnerships. NCAC has led multiple public art projects throughout the pandemic, painting jersey barriers to protect outdoor dining areas at local restaurants and the Needham Heights Mural Project. Utilizing grant funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), NCAC commissioned a mural by artists economically impacted by the COVID-19 public health

crisis.

In addition to COVID-19 recovery efforts, the Town of Needham expanded public investment in arts and culture, and the Select Board named arts and culture as a priority among Town goals and initiatives. In addition to MCC's annual allocation to NCAC, the Town allocated an additional \$8,300 in the Operating Budget in FY2023 and FY2024. In FY2025, the Town increased the budget for arts and cultural initiatives to \$10,000 in the Operating Budget to support NCAC's community programs, bolstering its commitment to arts and culture.¹ In Needham's most recent FY2023-2024 Select Board Goal Statements and Initiatives, the first goal explicitly states that Needham values public art and supports cultural opportunities that foster connection and celebrate diversity. As the Town of Needham considers future investments, this plan builds on these investments to ensure that the resources allocated to Needham's arts and culture community are used efficiently and impactfully.

This plan was developed for the Town of Needham by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) Arts & Culture Department and funded through a technical assistance grant. The impetus for the plan is the Town's recognition, following the COVID-19 pandemic, that arts and culture serve as connective tissue within the community and the creative sector plays a crucial role in the local economy and recovery. Building on the efforts to advance arts and culture led by many community organizations as well as the Town, the Needham Arts & Culture Action Plan establishes a vision for the future of arts and culture in Needham and identifies opportunities to expand the impact of investment through coordination and collaboration.

What is an Arts & Culture Action Plan?

An Arts & Culture Action Plan is a form of cultural planning that seeks to define actionable goals to shape a community's arts and cultural landscape. Cultural planning is a place-based planning practice designed to strengthen and nurture arts and cultural assets within a community to enhance civic life, economic vitality, and livability. Arts and culture are essential elements of what makes places and communities healthy, connected, and vibrant. It strengthens the fabric of places – impacting planning priorities like public health, economic prosperity, open space, and social vitality.

In cultural planning, local engagement prompts residents, workers, and visitors to reflect on the conditions that shape arts and culture in a defined geographic place and to think strategically about the policy and programmatic supports that are necessary to foster conditions that allow arts and culture to flourish. Planning for arts and culture allows communities to invest in policies that shape the built environment and create conditions that help people and places thrive.

Community Context

Needham is a vibrant and diverse cultural community that hosts dynamic programming and unique cultural assets. Needham has long been shaped by many cultures, from the time when it was exclusively home to Native American peoples, through the arrival of traders, the period of colonial settlement and many waves of immigration, Needham has long been a place of intermingling of cultures. As it continues to experience demographic change, the town is revisiting its past to help make sense of its present context.

Revisiting Indigenous History

Needham takes pride in its awareness of the indigenous history of its land. However, in recent years, Needham has begun to reckon with depictions of indigenous and colonial narratives reflected in the Town Seal. In 2023,

the Town established a committee to reevaluate the historical accuracy of the depiction of the sale of land between Nehoiden and the settlers in 1711 on the Town Seal. This effort is responsive to growing awareness that local histories involving the transfer of Native American lands have contributed to a larger narrative that erases Native Americans from our current understanding of metro Boston, even though they continue to live here and maintain indigenous rights.²

Shifting Demographics

Similar to the larger region, Needham's racial and ethnic demographics have shifted to reflect greater diversity in the region. Since the 1850s, Needham's developing industry led to broader European immigration throughout the late 1800s, with many migrants seeking jobs in the textile industry.³ The town was a working-class community throughout the twentieth century. Like many other communities in the greater Boston area, Needham has become increasingly more affluent since the beginning of the 21st century.

Like its neighboring communities, Needham's racial and ethnic diversity has also increased over the past twenty years, as shown through the 2020 MAPC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Report.⁴ While Needham's racial composition remains predominantly white (82.6 percent), 8.9 percent of the population identifies as Asian, 3.2 percent as Hispanic or Latino, and 2.9 percent as Black. Around 13.89 percent of Needham residents are foreign-born, which is similar to the share of foreign-born population in neighboring suburban neighborhoods and lower than that of the nearby cities of Cambridge and Somerville. Within Needham's foreign-born population, 45 percent are from Asia. As of 2020, 16.6 percent of the population speaks a language other than English at home (7.2 percent Indo-European, 5.2 percent Asian/Pacific Islander languages, and 2.4 percent Spanish).

As Needham has grown more racially and ethnically diverse, more cultural organizations have organized public events, and parents have increasingly worked to organize multicultural events within schools. Town-wide efforts like The Lived Experiences Project in 2020 highlight stories and data from community members as a preliminary audit of inclusion, equity and belonging in Needham.⁵

Challenging Housing Landscape

Finally, like much of the region, Needham is facing heightened challenges related to its supply of affordable housing. The cost of housing in Needham increased across all census tracts, with the median home value increasing between 37.4 percent and 60.2 percent between 2000 and 2017. Increased housing prices make the barrier to entering the community even higher and limit opportunities and access in ways that shape the arts and cultural context.

Needham's housing stock primarily consists of owner-occupied single-family homes on lots with less than one

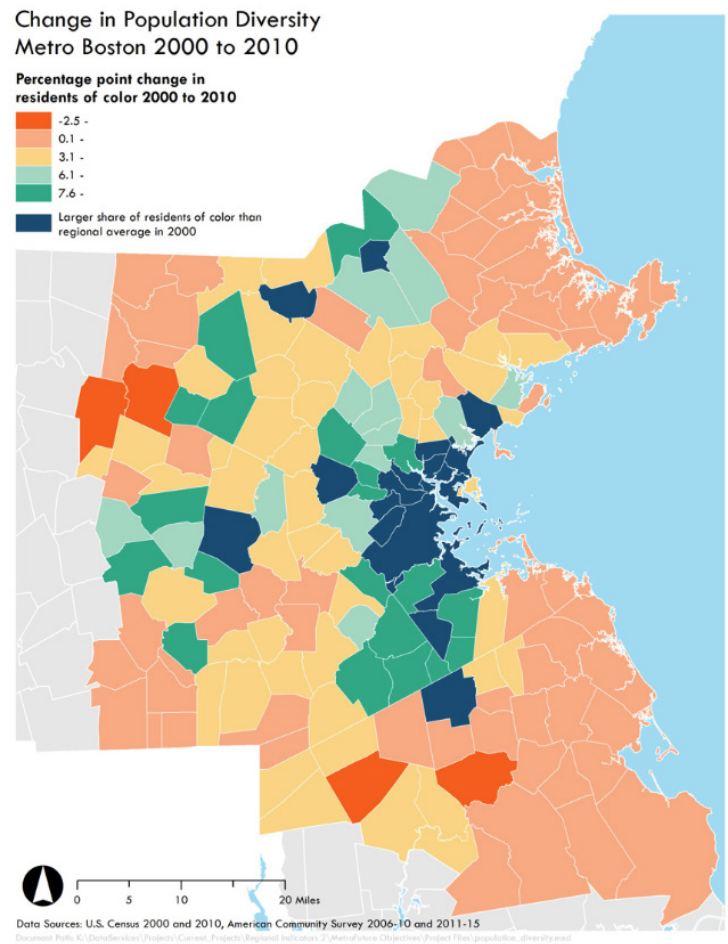


Figure 1: Increased Diversity from 2000 to 2010

acre. Parcels of vacant developable land are scattered such that new growth takes the form of infill and some redevelopment. According to the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (2016-2020), 84.5 percent of housing units are owner-occupied, with a median home value of \$900,200. For renters, the median gross rent was \$1,604 between 2016-2020.¹¹ Notably, the increase in housing costs presents challenges for ensuring affordable housing within the community particularly for populations on fixed incomes and renters.

The Town of Needham is making efforts to support affordable housing efforts through zoning. In 2023, the Town Select Board and Planning Board established a Housing Needham (HONE) Advisory Group to lead a community engagement process to create multi-family zoning that complies with the MBTA Communities Act (MGL c.40A Section 3A).⁶ In May 2023, the Town also amended its accessory dwelling unit (ADU) bylaw in its zoning to allow attached ADUs by right up to 900 square feet and granting owners the ability to rent out the space for minimum term of six months. These efforts are intended to relieve some pressure on Needham's housing market.

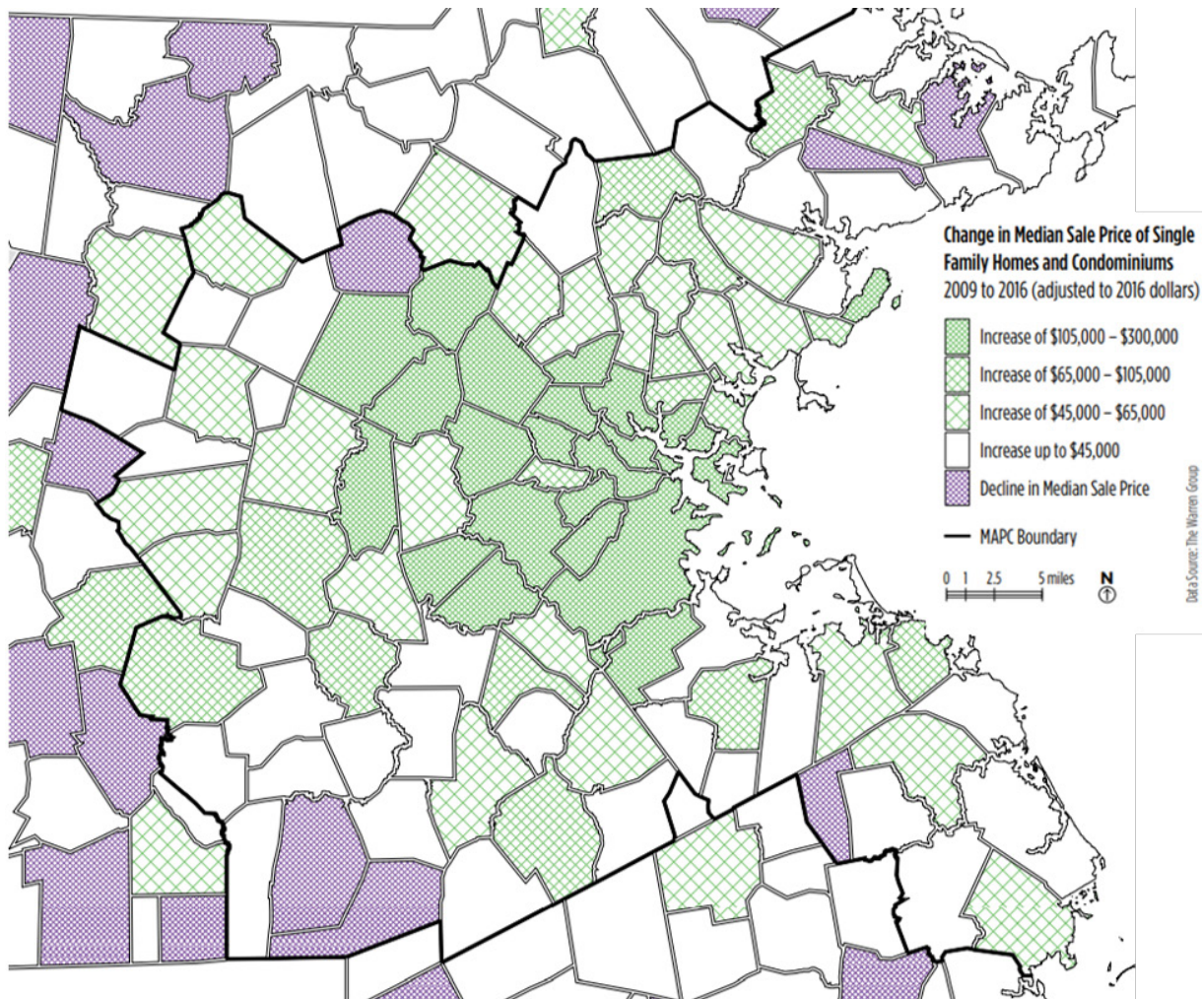


Figure 2: Changing cost of homeownership since the Great Recession.

Leadership, Vision, and Values

PROJECT TIMELINE

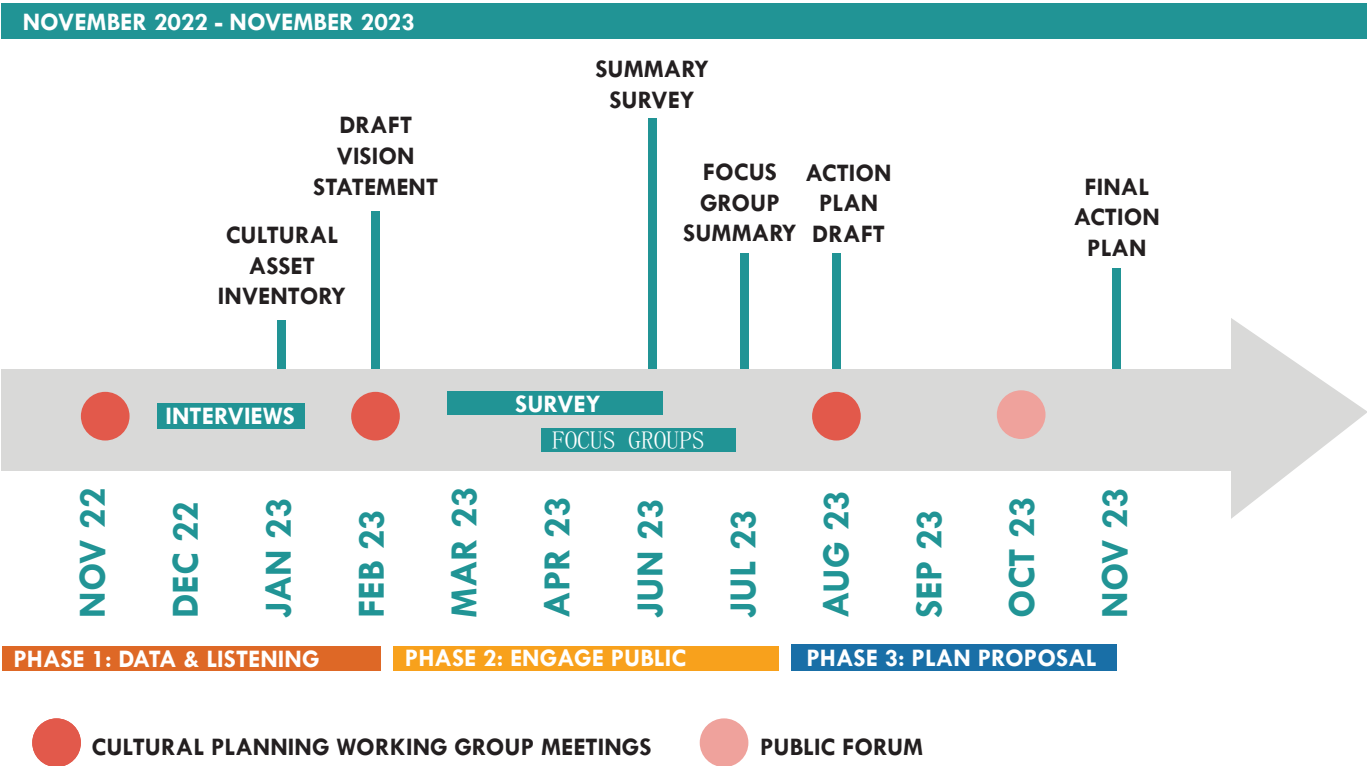


Figure 3: Timeline of the planning process for the Needham Arts and Culture Action Plan

Needham’s Arts & Culture Action Plan Working Group

The Needham Arts & Culture Action Plan Working Group was formed to represent arts and cultural stakeholders in Needham and guide the cultural planning process for Needham’s Arts & Culture Action Plan. The Working Group met three times as a group through the duration of the planning process, including a virtual kickoff meeting in December 2022, an in-person meeting to establish community engagement opportunities in February 2023, and another in-person meeting to review the drafted goals for the plan in August 2023. Outside of meetings, working group members provided guidance for public engagement, leading additional engagement opportunities with youth, and developing and refining the plan recommendations.

Needham’s Vision for Arts and Culture

Needham’s Arts & Culture Action Plan emerges from the robust arts and culture communities in Needham and reflects their commitment to shaping a more equitable, collaborative and creative town. The first task of the Needham Arts & Culture Action Plan Working Group was to establish a community vision for the future of arts and culture in Needham. This vision reflects the priorities of the Working Group members and provides a guide for the plan’s implementation.

Vision

Needham is a town that integrates arts and culture into everyday life, welcomes opportunities for connection and collaboration, and reflects the community's cultural diversity. The Town is committed to ensuring that cultural leadership is representative of the cultural identities found in Needham. It will support an active, creative ecosystem with dynamic, accessible programming and nurture a sense of belonging for all residents and visitors alike.

Values



Equity:

Advance social equity and social cohesion such that arts and culture reflect the people who live, work, study and participate in the Needham community.



Connection:

Arts and culture are used to connect people in Needham and support understanding of the cultural nuance, diversity, and histories that reflect the community and its growing cultural diversity.



Accessibility:

Needham is responsive to the different needs in the community and provides abundant opportunities to participate in the arts and cultural life in a variety of ways, reducing barriers to access.



Collaboration:

Needham fosters a culture of collaboration among arts and culture stakeholders and develops systems of coordination to steward shared arts and cultural resources to support plan implementation across all sectors.

This plan invites Needham to shape its future by integrating arts and culture into its civic life. The implementation of this plan depends on the Town, community members, businesses, and cultural organizations collaborating on the proposed strategies and working together towards a shared vision for arts and culture in Needham.

Community Engagement Process



TOWN-WIDE MEETING

APRIL - MAY 2023

- 273 Unique responses
- 249 Residents of Needham
- 108 Artists
- Not knowing programs were happening - cited as #1 barrier to arts & culture



FOCUS GROUPS

APRIL - JUNE 2023

- Needham Business Alliance (4/27)
- Creative Conversation (6/6)
- North Hill Retirement Community (6/6)
- Needham Council of Economic Advisors (6/15)



POP-UP ENGAGEMENTS

- Multicultural Festival (3/19)
- Pansy Festival (4/22)
- Gorse Mill Site Visit (4/22)
- Needham Community Theater
- Needham Parks and Rec Kids Off Broadway
- Needham Community Revitalization Trust Fund
- Needham Council for Arts and Culture

Community Engagement Approach

Prior to initiating engagement, MAPC grounded the approach in initial research about Needham's demographics, existing community organizations, and relevant policies and priorities outlined by the Town Select Board. MAPC staff conducted multiple site visits to Needham to meet with municipal partners, including touring Needham Center, Needham Heights, Gorse Mill Studio, and Rosemary Recreation Center. MAPC staff also attended committee meetings for the Needham Council for Arts and Culture and Needham Community Revitalization Trust Fund, the primary committees providing funding for arts and culture in Needham.

The Needham Arts & Culture Action Plan Working Group, the Town of Needham's Economic Development Director, and MAPC worked together to lead the community engagement. Needham Council for Arts and Culture and members of the Working Group assisted with engagement by notetaking during focus groups and facilitation at the public forum, as well as supporting communication and hosting community events. Working Group members also led youth engagement through ongoing arts-based programs and classes. Through these efforts over 350 Needham community members shaped this plan.

Interviews

Following the kickoff meeting, each member of the Working Group was interviewed by MAPC staff about their vision for the Needham Arts & Culture Action Plan. Working Group members were asked about the primary challenges, strengths and opportunities for Needham's greater arts & cultural community. During these interviews, additional individuals and organizations were identified for follow up into the next stage of engagement and incorporated into the cultural asset inventory. To supplement the feedback, additional interviews were conducted with local artists and community members.

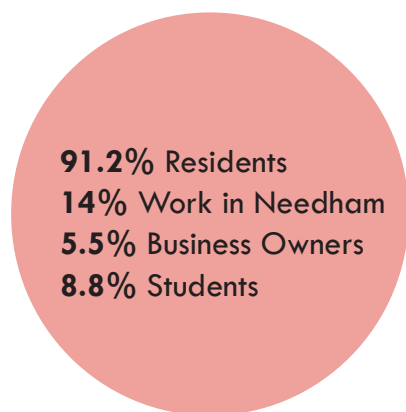


Figure 4: Survey Participants Highlights

Survey

An online survey was developed in partnership with the Working Group and launched at the Multicultural Festival in March 2023 and closed May 31, 2023. 272 people completed the town-wide survey including 250 residents in Needham and 107 self-identified local artists. The survey included 35 questions and asked respondents to identify cultural assets, share about their own creative activities, and provide recommendations for Needham's arts and culture landscape. Artists and creative workers were asked an additional set of six questions about their workspaces and challenges. Most survey respondents were residents of Needham, and the responses included a cross-section of business owners, students, and people who work in town.

Focus Groups

Focus groups were designed to reach specific segments of Needham's communities and ultimately provided critical guidance for the plan's policy recommendations. Four focus groups took place between April and June 2023, taking place both online and in-person, engaging 47 stakeholders. Multiple focus groups were scheduled as part of existing meetings and events, led by MAPC and the Working Group. Participants included youth, senior citizens, business community representatives, arts and cultural leaders, and artists. A more detailed outline of focus groups can be found in Appendix B.

Pop-Up Engagement at Community Events

Needham hosted multiple community events where Working Group Members, the Needham Council for Arts and Culture Volunteers, and MAPC connected with community members about the Needham Arts & Culture Action Plan. These pop-up community events included the inaugural Needham Multicultural Festival on March 19, 2023, at Powers Hall, and the Pansy Festival where a mural sponsored by the NCAC, Blossoms by artist, Ryan "Arcy" Christensen, was unveiled on April 22, 2023, in Needham Heights. In addition to formal focus groups, there were multiple pop-up engagements led in partnership with Working Group members, including multiple discussions within Needham Public Schools. Working Group members led these discussions and shared findings.



Figure 5: Needham Multicultural Festival

Public Forum

On October 11, 2023, the Town of Needham hosted a Public Forum to review the proposed goals, strategies and actions included in the plan. This draft was posted on the Town website for further review and comment. Engagement at the Public Forum supported prioritizing the drafted goals, strategies and actions and inviting participants to picture the future of arts and culture in Needham.

Arts & Cultural Assets and Needs

Background

Arts and culture action plans begin with an assessment of existing strengths and resources, as well as documenting pressing needs and challenges. Initial engagement focused on identifying Needham's arts and culture assets and naming specific needs within the broader community. This process was informed by cultural asset mapping, collecting information about stakeholders' satisfaction with existing cultural assets, and identifying future priorities for arts and culture in the town. The themes that emerged from the engagement directly informed the development of goals, strategies and specific actions recommended in this plan.

Arts and Cultural Asset Mapping

To kick off engagement, community members were asked to help identify Needham's arts and culture assets. Through the town-wide survey, community members shared where arts and culture are happening in Needham by identifying assets on a map of the town. Assets included both physical places that support arts and culture, as well as annual events and organizations that support arts and cultural activity. This data was combined with data collected by the Needham Council for Arts and Culture and MAPC and compiled into a cultural asset inventory.

In total, the cultural asset inventory identified over 184 assets, including arts and cultural businesses, studio and performance spaces, arts organizations and events, and a growing number of permanent public art installations throughout the town.

Two maps were created to capture Needham's arts and cultural assets, one highlighting Needham's Creative Economy and the other documenting Arts and Culture Ecosystem in Needham. The Creative Economy map includes arts and cultural assets that are embedded within Needham's local creative economy, including small businesses, entrepreneurs and establishments that are directly linked with the creative sector. The Arts and Culture Ecosystem map shows assets where people might go for arts and cultural experiences, classes, or where artists go to produce, practice or perform.



Figure 6: Cultural Asset Mapping Activity

Arts and Cultural Asset Categories

- **Arts and Culture Organizations and Businesses:** Non-profit cultural organizations, associations and fraternal societies, non-profit arts organizations, and creative enterprises including businesses that provide opportunities to learn creative activities such as music, dance, foreign languages, and crafts.
- **Eating and Drinking Places:** Restaurants and bars that offer diverse cultural cuisine, host or sponsor arts and culture activities and events, or function as cultural gathering places.
- **Public Art or Arts & Cultural Events:** Temporary and permanent public art and recurring arts and cultural events in town.
- **Public Facilities and Open Space:** Public buildings and open spaces that contribute to the art and cultural life of Needham.
- **Historic Landmarks and Attractions:** Historic assets identified as contributing directly to the arts and

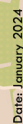
cultural experience and identity of Needham.

- **Religious Institutions:** Historic churches and religious institutions in town that provide space for arts and cultural organizations and activities within their facilities.
- **Arts Exhibition Spaces:** Businesses and organizations that provide space for artists to exhibit their work, including galleries and theaters.
- **Artist Work Spaces:** Enterprises that primarily provide artists with studio space. Gorse Mill Studio provides studio space for over 50 artists who practice a variety of visual and performing arts.

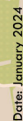
Table 1: Needham Arts and Cultural Asset Summary Table

Arts and Cultural Asset Category	Number of Assets	Percent of Total
Arts and Cultural Organizations and Businesses	108	58.7%
Eating and Drinking Places	12	6.5%
Public Art or Event	22	12%
Public Facilities and Open Space	29	15.8%
Historic Landmarks and Attractions	2	1.1%
Religious Institutions	6	3.3%
Arts Exhibition Spaces	4	2.2%
Artist Work Spaces	1	0.5%

Cultural Assets: Arts and Culture Ecosystem



Cultural Assets: Arts and Culture Economy



Needham's Arts & Cultural Assets

As demonstrated through the cultural asset maps, Needham hosts many cultural assets both in terms of facilities, local organizations that support arts and culture activities, and events that enrich Needham's arts and cultural life. There are multiple clusters of arts and cultural assets within Needham's Town Center, a walkable area rich with small businesses, restaurants, and cultural institutions, and the Needham Heights commercial center. Needham's town hall also boasts an incredible James Hugh Powers Hall facility, which has a professional class sound system that hosts international touring acts as part of the locally run Great Hall Concert Series and other community events.

Needham's historic and cultural resources include the Needham Free Public Library, established in 1888, and the Needham History Center and Museum, established in 1915. Both institutions celebrate the history of Needham and the accomplishments of its residents through exhibits, programs, publications, and outreach to schools and community groups. Needham's natural landscape also includes Cutler Park Reservation, which is a site for recreation that includes a 6.3-mile loop trail around Kendrick Pond. In addition, the Reservation is home to 1.7 miles of the Needham Rail Trail, which is part of the Bay Colony Trail connecting Needham, Dover, Medfield, and Newton. Needham's parks, trails and public facilities provide important places of gathering and serve as sites for public art installations in recent years.

Another notable historic and cultural asset is Gorse Mill Studio and the Potter's Shop and School, utilized by artists throughout the region. Gorse Mill Studios is a unique case study of redeveloping a historic mill building into artist-owned studios and is important cultural asset located in Needham.⁷

Needham's Artists

Needham is home to many artists and arts organizations that are active participants in cultural life, events, and activities within the town. In interviews and focus groups, artists and cultural sector workers have both common and distinct needs within Needham. In the town-wide survey, 165 (60.7%) survey respondents identified as artists or creative workers. Artists and creative workers were asked an additional set of questions related to their creative practices, where they conduct their work, and were asked to share the primary challenges they face living and working in Needham.

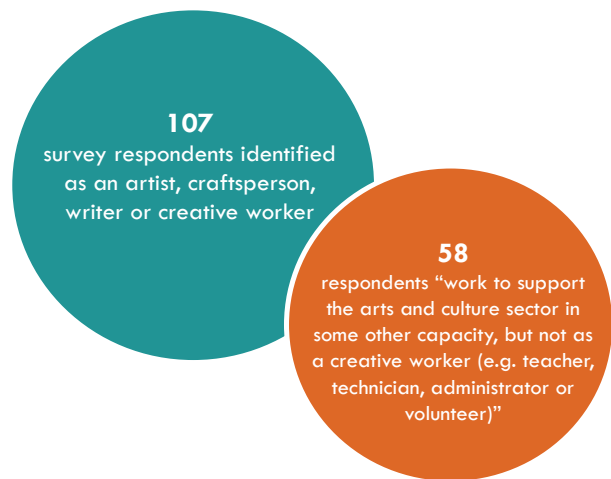


Figure 7: Artist and creative worker responses to the survey

Artists Creative Activities & Earned Income

Among survey respondents who self-identified as artists, painting or drawing was the most common creative activity category (55 responses), closely followed by photography (40 responses) and live theater (39 responses). Many artists engage in multiple creative activities.

Of the artists who took the survey, 41.1% of artists reported that they earn a portion of their income from their art or creative practice. Of the artists earning some portion of their income from their artwork was most common for artists in the "Other" category of creative activities – earned income included ceramics, felted fiber art, arts and crafts classes for children and adults in a studio, music, public art, singing, and storytelling.

Of the artists surveyed, who earn a portion of their income from their art:

- 29.5% exclusively work at home

- 43.2% work at a combination of at home and elsewhere
- 27.3% exclusively outside their home
- Over 70% of Needham's artists who earn income from their work rely on housing to support their creative practices.

Needham's Arts and Cultural Organizations

Needham boasts multiple arts and cultural organizations including performing arts, visual arts and cultural organizations that actively program community events. Respondents frequently referenced performing arts organizations like the Great Hall Performance Foundation and Needham Concert Society, noting concerts at the Great Hall and summer bandstand, and the musical events and performances hosted by Needham Community Theater and the Arlekin Players Theatre. Multiple respondents noted their participation in the Plugged In Band Program. This program, which has a youth leadership board, offers music lessons and performance opportunities for youth and adults to learn to play instruments together. Many community members also noted the importance of Needham's established arts organizations, including Needham Open Studios, Needham Art Association, Gorse Mill Studio, and Potter's School and Shop. Needham's visual arts community hosts annual events and exhibits through Needham Open Studios and the Needham Art Association. Needham is also home to active cultural groups like Indian Community of Needham (ICON) and Chinese Friends of Needham that host community programs, celebrations and performances.

Needham's Arts and Cultural Activities

Through interviews, focus groups and the survey, community members shared information about their participation in arts and culture activities. Throughout the year, Needham annually hosts several events that are critical to Needham's arts and cultural life. Members of the Working Group developed a list of Needham's arts and cultural events throughout the year, which was supplemented by survey responses, and shared in FIGURE 9.

In the past year, survey respondents shared which arts and culture activities they attended most frequently. As shown in the table below, the largest number of respondents attended an arts/culture, ethnic, or heritage event in Needham at least once in the past year. Many respondents also indicated repeated attendance at live performances of music, dance or theater in Needham. The highest repeated attendance (6 or more times in the past year) for respondents was for school-based activities, including performances and arts and culture events. The least well-attended event type was a film or documentary screening in Needham.

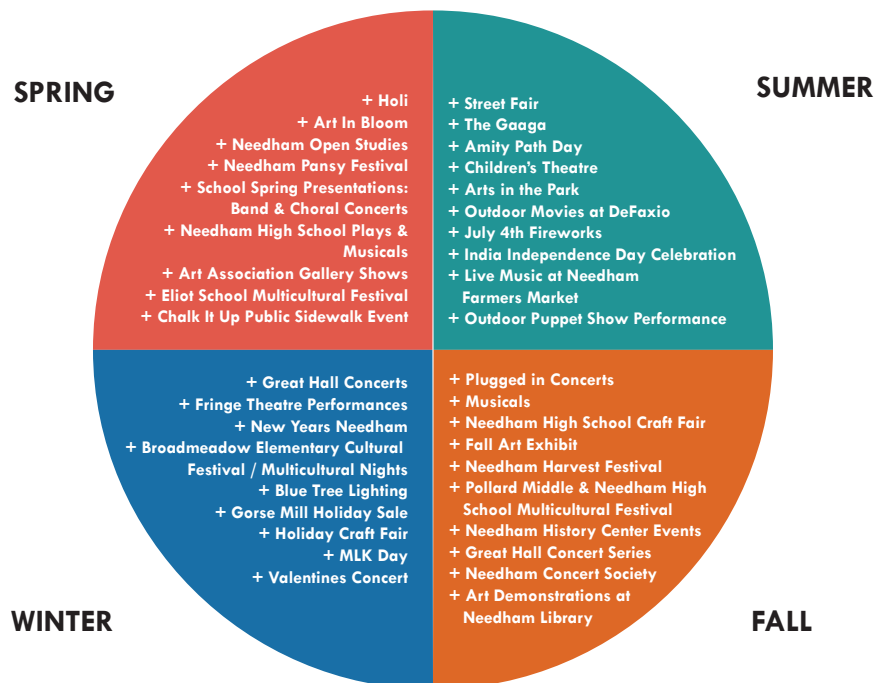


Figure 8: Seasonal calendar of Arts and Culture activities in Needham

GORSE MILL STUDIO CASE STUDY



Figure 9: Artist work featured at Gorse Mill Studio

Gorse Mill Studio is an artist co-op home to many artists in Needham in a renovated textile mill that was originally built in 1893 on Thorpe Road. The building operated as a textile mill throughout most of the twentieth century before it went vacant in the 1970s and was purchased by a lock and security company. In 1989, Steven Branfman rented the third floor of the building for a pottery studio after requesting a special permit. In 2007, Steven and the building owner, Lewis Cohen, approached the town to seek a special permit to convert the building into artist studios. Gorse Mill Studios opened in 2009 with 33 studio spaces owned by local artists and 8 studios managed by a rental company.

Not only is the model unique in Needham, it also is the only model in the country that includes all three characteristics:

- Artist workspaces, which are owned by artists as condominiums;
- Condominiums designated as work-only spaces; and
- Deed restrictions that preserve artist studios for future use based on special permitting

Operationally, the building is managed and governed by a board of trustees who serve three-year terms. The studios are owned by artists who pay property taxes for their spaces as well as a small percentage for the common space. There are no restrictions on what owners can sell or sublease the spaces for, though notably, the studios have maintained their value for the past 14 years. Studio space prices range from \$75,000 to \$100,000. Many artists were able to use a home equity loan to buy the unit, and Needham Bank set up a mortgage with a simple interest rate and low downpayment to support artists who want to buy into the space.

Today over 50 artists work out of Gorse Mill Studios. The majority are visual artists, and the Studio also hosts gallery shows, including Needham Open Studios, and other arts education programs. Gorse Mill Studios is also home to the

Gorse Mill Gallery in memory of Jared Michael Branfman, a space that was recently renovated in honor of its 15-year anniversary and that hosts monthly art exhibits from local and visiting artists. In the basement of the building, Steve Branfman opened The Potter's Shop and School, which is a pottery studio accessible 24 hours a day to members of the school who have keys to access the space. The Potter's Shop and School also hosts adult classes and hosts fall and spring exhibitions. There is also an outdoor garden area where puppet shows, and other art workshops have been hosted.



Figure 10: The Potter's Shop and School

Arts & Cultural Needs Assessment

In addition to identifying Needham’s arts and cultural assets, community members were also asked to identify needs and challenges for the town’s arts and culture life. In interviews, the town-wide survey, focus groups and public forum, engagement surfaced common themes among artists, cultural organizations, and participants in arts and culture. These needs primarily focused on spaces and facilities, communication and coordination of existing resources, and the desire to see additional local investment in arts and culture.

Challenges for Needham Artists

Common challenges for artists in Needham appeared throughout survey results, focus group discussions and interviews. Artists across disciplines noted that it is difficult to access spaces that support their creatives practices.

59% of artists in Needham own their workspace.

Artists struggle to find appropriate and affordable workspaces, opportunities for exhibiting and selling their work, and places for collaborating with other artists. Accessing funding for the arts in Needham and working with public institutions were also named as challenges. Finally, the circumstances following the pandemic and the housing market have also affected artists’ ability to work and live in Needham.

Need for Artist Space

Access to affordable artist workspaces was the most frequent challenge for artists in Needham. While Gorse Mill Studio provides some opportunities for artists to own or rent studio spaces, there is a greater need for spaces to make and create their art. Needham artists’ primary challenges are the availability of appropriate and affordable space to more fully pursue their creative practices. Of the artists surveyed, 33% face challenges finding appropriate space to fulfill their creative practice and 20% of artists named affordable space as a core challenge. Notably, nearly 60% of artists own their workspace, which could be attributed to the fact that many artists work at home and the unique model of local artist studio, Gorse Mill.

Professional visual artists also noted that there are few opportunities to exhibit and sell their work in Needham in places with foot traffic and are open to the public, and limited access to displaying works in the Needham Library. Several visual artists reflected in interviews that despite the town hosting multiple visual arts organizations, there are few networking opportunities for artists within Needham or collaboration across organizations.

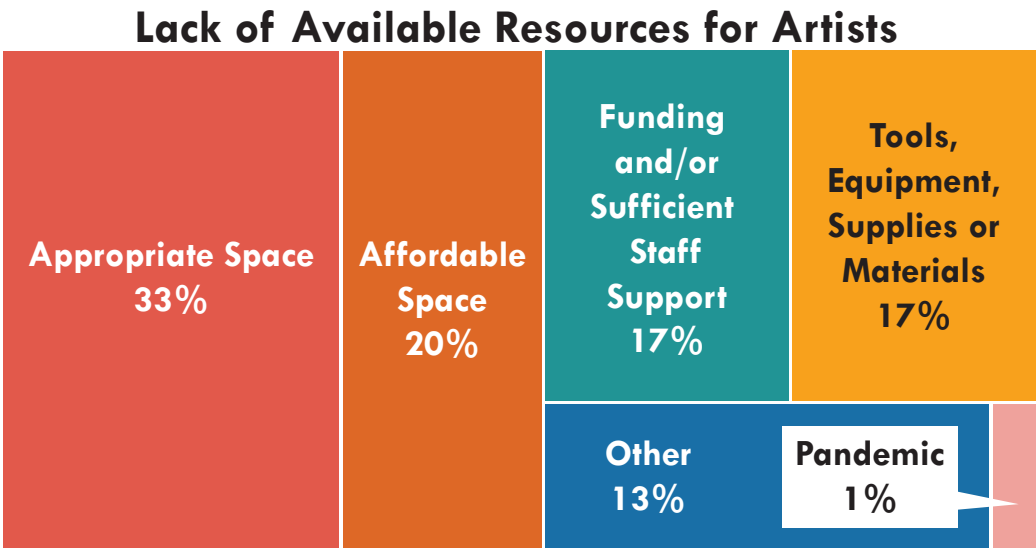


Figure 11: Needham artists most commonly struggle to find appropriate and affordable space

Table 2: Needham artists have struggled following the pandemic

In the past 12 months, artists' creative activities have been delayed or stopped due to...					
COVID Safety Concern	Challenges to Display or Market Work	Lack of Programs or Space	Lack of Funding Staff Support	Other Challenges	Total Responses
24	17	13	10	7	71
33.8%	23.9%	18.3%	14.1%	9.9%	

In the past 12 months, over 1/3 of artists noted that creative activities have been delayed or stopped due to the COVID-19 pandemic and health and safety has limited creative activities. Challenges to display or market work affected nearly a quarter of all respondents, and nearly a fifth of respondents noted the lack of programming or space were recent challenges. Artists would like to see stronger communications and marketing efforts to the broader Needham community to support participation in art class offerings and events, as well as establishing more opportunities to sell and display artwork.

Transparency in Funding and Public Process

Artists also named funding arts projects as a challenge throughout focus groups, interviews, and the survey. Participants in the Creative Conversation focus group shared a strong desire to see greater coordination by the Town to invest in public art. In the past 5 years, multiple arts groups have led overlapping public art efforts for electric box painting, murals, and other efforts to support public artwork. Focus group findings highlighted the need for transparent information about which organizations fund public art in Needham, clarify those organizational funding sources and establish an artist application process. Artists that have attempted to work with different municipal groups or with the public schools noted that these systems are challenging to navigate without support.

Affordable Housing in Needham

Throughout all engagement, finding an affordable place to live was named as a pervasive challenge for the community at large. In both focus groups and survey responses, professional artists shared that it is difficult to make a living as an artist in Needham because the local housing market is increasingly unaffordable. Other local housing policies, like the accessory dwelling unit bylaw and adoption of the multi-family zoning in compliance with the MBTA Communities Act, could provide more housing options for artists, along with developing live/workspace. Ultimately, housing is a determining factor shaping who can live, work and create in Needham.

Challenges for Arts and Cultural Organizations

As documented in Needham's cultural assets, there is a dynamic and active group of arts and cultural organizations programming events in town. Across all engagement methods, responses highlighted challenges faced among this group. Key challenges identified include their struggle to coordinate across organizations, maintain consistent communication and combat lack of awareness about events in town. Furthermore, much like Needham's artists, local arts and cultural organizations shared similar struggles with accessing appropriate space for arts and cultural activities.

Volunteer Led Efforts

Needham is home to many creative people, cultural communities, and arts organizations. One challenge is that

efforts to coordinate community-wide events and organizations depend on volunteers. Many participants on the Working Group represent organizations that are entirely run by volunteer committees. In recent years, arts and culture organizations have struggled to maintain volunteers to manage and run local events. This challenge is exacerbated when arts and cultural organizations have overlapping programming efforts with a small pool of volunteers.

While there is broad community participation and interest in Needham's cultural life, existing organizations and organizers face specific challenges utilizing and coordinating Needham's arts and cultural resources. In focus groups, arts and cultural organizations also shared a desire for greater clarity about which organizations are sponsoring and producing events or activities. For instance, it would be helpful to consistently brand events and activities funded through grants administered by Needham Council for Arts and Culture, to increase awareness of local funding for arts and culture and highlight the impact of Town funds used to invest in the arts. Arts and culture program organizers shared the desire to meet regularly to coordinate their activities so that there is a clear understanding of which stakeholders are leading specific projects and initiatives, and where there are opportunities to support community projects.

Centralized Communications Efforts

Arts and cultural organizations had increased opportunities for interaction throughout the planning process and collectively expressed a strong desire to see more coordinated communications efforts in town. With volunteer-run organizations and no centralized contact for arts and culture in Needham, community members struggle to coordinate communications and marketing for events. This leads to siloed communication efforts and limited collaboration among arts organizations. Furthermore, the loss of a local newspaper has compounded the need for a central hub with a schedule of local arts and culture events. While there is digital distribution through Needham Observer and the News You Need(ham) circulated by the Town, arts and cultural organizations emphasized the need for a centralized calendar to market arts and culture events.

Focus group members gave examples of successful community calendars in town offered by the library, senior center and schools. Other community members noted the lack of signage or a centralized place to share upcoming events also contributes to the lack of awareness about activities. In focus groups, artists also expressed a need for assistance with marketing events and coordinating efforts through the Town. Examples of calendars from neighboring towns and regional resources included the Newton Arts Calendar run by the City of Newton's Cultural Development Office and the ArtsBoston Calendar. Survey respondents reported that the most common ways of learning about arts and culture programming in town were through word of mouth and social media.

Clarity, Branding and Awareness

Related to communications, lack of awareness in the community was a core challenge identified through the survey results. Lack of awareness about arts and culture programs was far and away the most common obstacle to attending arts and culture events in Needham in the survey, as shown in FIGURE 11. While lack of awareness is certainly tied to communications strategies, it also reflects the need for this plan to coordinate efforts across sectors to share local resources.

Other obstacles to attending arts and cultural events noted in survey included lack of time, lack of activities of interest, and concerns around COVID or health risk. While the second most common response indicated that no obstacles prevented attendance at arts and culture programs and events, focus groups indicated that lack of transportation to events and programs is a specific challenge for seniors in the community.

Access to Cultural Facilities

Artists, arts and cultural organizations alike shared that access to public facilities to support arts and culture is a pervasive challenge in Needham. While Needham boasts unique cultural facilities, like Powers Hall and the

Needham Public Library, community members have experienced hurdles to utilizing these facilities for arts and cultural events. Examples of barriers include both the process and expense of booking spaces. Furthermore, lack of adequate spaces available for arts and culture uses, particularly for performing arts to serve the schools and cultural organizations was one of the most discussed topics across all engagement efforts.

In the survey, respondents shared dissatisfaction with Needham’s existing spaces and their ability to meet the need for a variety of arts and culture programs and activities. Needham Public Schools also struggle to find space for their productions, which was brought up by youth in multiple pop-up engagements. Needham High School’s auditorium cannot accommodate productions, leaving Newman Elementary School’s auditorium as the only space equipped to host most performances offered in town. Needham High School Friends of Music Members of the Board has initiated calls to renovate Pollard Elementary’s auditorium and improve spaces in the high school.

Many stakeholders noted throughout the engagement they feel like they need to leave Needham to find the cultural programming they are looking for. Multiple cultural organizations have had to move their celebrations to neighboring communities due to lack of access or available indoor spaces in town. Artists noted that there are few spaces where artists can display their work locally and few places to sell their artwork. In interviews and focus groups, performing arts and community theater groups also identified a lack of appropriate performance space as a challenge in Needham compared with the facilities available in neighboring communities. While there are many regional arts and culture resources available, community members expressed a desire to see arts and culture have a stronger presence in daily life.

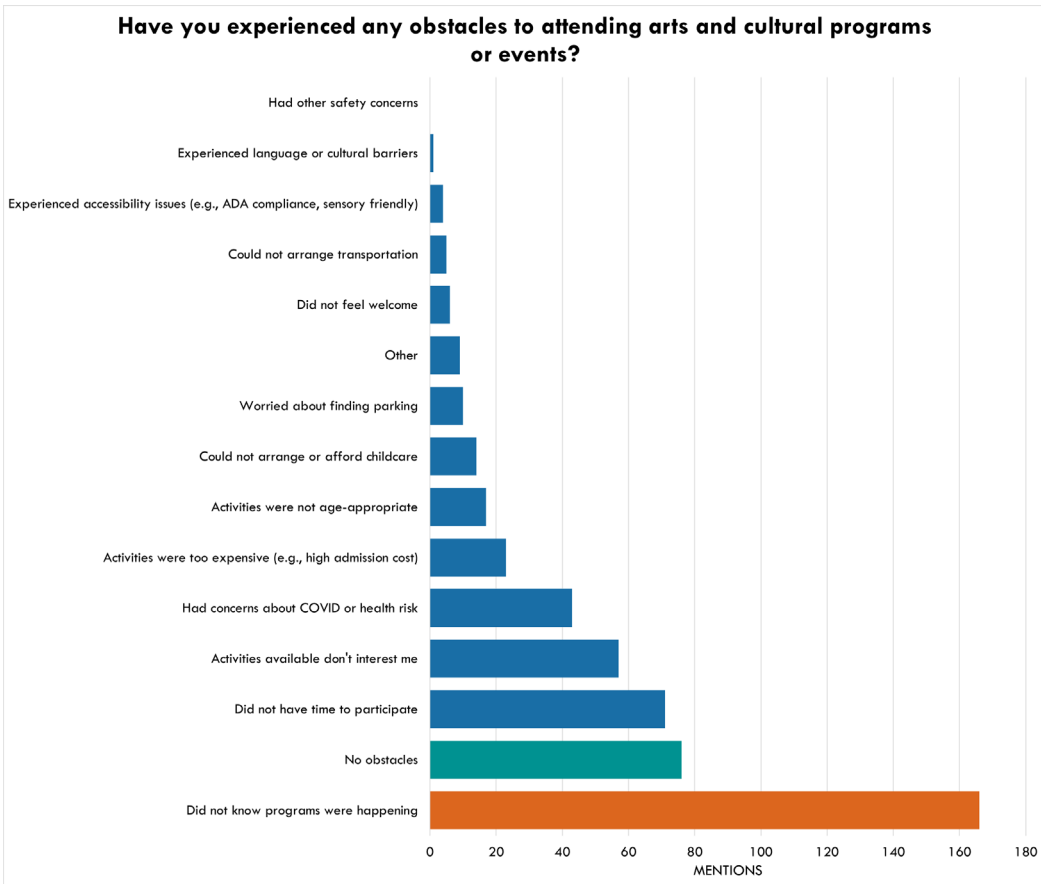


Figure 12: Respondents’ greatest barrier to attending events was not knowing that they were happening

Opportunities for Arts and Culture in Needham

Across engagement activities, community members expressed a desire to be a part of a community that encourages all residents to engage actively in arts and culture and that supports creative lives. While the survey showed that Needham's creative community engages in a wide variety of arts and cultural practices, with the highest participation in photography, live theatre, painting and writing. Community members are looking for more opportunities to participate in creative activities, specific examples include wanting to see a local choral society, a Needham Porchfest, a stronger literary arts scene, more opportunities to dance, perform and attend improv shows or open mic nights. Survey results suggest that Needham could host more festivals, art fairs, film screenings, and performance opportunities at town forums.

In addition to participating in arts programming, community members support more public art in Needham. Needham has seen investments in public art in recent years with noted appreciation for the painted electric boxes, murals along the Needham Rail Trail, and the Needham Heights mural sponsored by NCAC. Public art was named one of the top five most valued arts and culture assets in the survey, shown in FIGURE 14. Needham High School students presented a report proposing more public art installations in town, and which was echoed by youth in focus groups. In the public forum, multiple community members shared the desire to see more interactive community art, an opening of an outdoor art gallery, and use of asphalt art throughout the town. The Blossoms mural unveiled at the Pansy Festival in spring 2023 was named as a positive example of community artwork. Additional investments in public art also present opportunities to feature and support local artists.

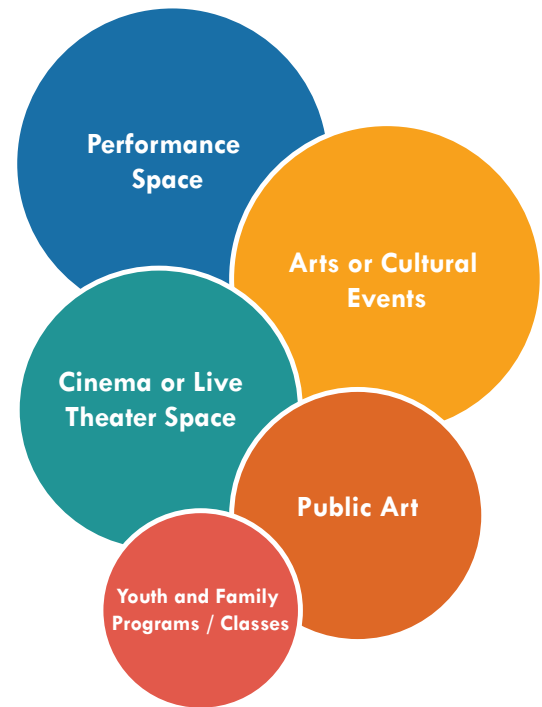


Figure 13: Needham's most valued cultural assets

Coordination of Existing Events & Capacity

As noted throughout engagement, Needham hosts many events, and stakeholders value arts and culture events as part of town life. Coordination for Town-sponsored events and committees requires substantial time and effort, and frequently falls to volunteer groups to administer. Given current challenges and needs, multiple interviews and focus group participants recommended establishing a position within the Town to coordinate arts and culture efforts. Regionally, there are more municipalities that have established arts and culture roles within municipal government since MAPC's Municipal Arts and Culture Staffing Study in 2020, including Watertown and Franklin.

A position to support arts and cultural capacity could address challenges related to coordinating activities. This position could establish a central point of contact for coordinating events in public facilities, administering committees serving arts and culture community, and working to strengthen the local creative economy. Local artists articulated a desire to connect with other artists in Needham and remove barriers for collaboration across silos based on affiliate organizations, artist disciplines or studio location. A municipal position could provide support to implement the recommendations set forth in this plan.

Support for Multicultural Programming

Participants noted that Needham needs to make a greater effort to engage and embrace the cultural diversity

present in Needham. Multiple participants shared the sentiment that arts and culture play a key role in supporting a community that is more welcoming and representative of Needham's diversity. Greater support for ongoing efforts and organizations working on areas of diversity, equity and inclusion should be integral in any arts and culture effort.

Local organizations such as the organizers of the Needham Multicultural Festival and Needham Unite Against Racism Initiative, are leading efforts to ensure that the Town is working toward a vision of racial equality and that leadership is reflective of the diversity within the town. Cultural organizations provide an important link for community members with local government and leadership roles in the community. Parents have organized multicultural festivals at local elementary schools, and engagement through interviews noted that similar efforts are needed at the middle school and high school levels. With Needham's shifting demographics, there is greater need for cultural competence and support for Needham's youth in response to bullying.



Figure 14: Needham's inaugural multicultural festival, March 2023

Improve Livability through Arts and Culture

Stakeholders highlighted the impact that arts and culture have in making a community livable. Arts and culture programming and events were understood to result in greater connection among community members. Stakeholders identified opportunities to integrate arts and culture into everyday life in Needham to improve pedestrian safety, mental health and wellbeing, quality of life and the local economy. Integrating arts and culture into other planning efforts can strengthen community participation and awareness. A specific example suggested by multiple community members was using arts to increase pedestrian safety. There is a desire for painted asphalt art close to schools and town center as a traffic calming technique. Communities throughout the region have utilized similar strategies including towns like Dedham, Newton, Acton and Somerville.

Another community benefit of arts and culture identified by stakeholders include fortifying mental health and wellbeing, particularly for youth. In recent years, Needham Youth and Family Services has incorporated artmaking in their youth programs with mural projects along the Bay Colony Rail Trail in partnership with local artists.⁹ Multiple artists working within the Needham community are trained arts therapists and utilize art within their therapy. Beyond youth engagement, arts and cultural programming seeds relationships and strengthens bonds among community members, serving as both a conduit for creative expression and social connection. The top three reasons respondents noted for attending arts and culture events were for entertainment (79%), for happiness and wellbeing (73%), and to support local artists and artisans. Most respondents also noted that participating in arts and culture activities helped them feel connected to their community, to learn and grow, and to spend time with friends and family.

Creative Sector in Local Economy

Additionally, artists and community members spoke about the need to connect the local economy with arts and cultural activities and more fully realize the creative sector's role within Needham. Multiple stakeholders spoke to the desire for arts and culture programming to connect with the local restaurants and small businesses. Artists and arts organizations also spoke to the need to support artists to thrive as entrepreneurs through opportunities such as networking and professional development. Stakeholders want to activate the Town Common with cultural events and enhance the town's vibrancy through collaborations among local businesses and local artists. Programs like the Storefront projects, painted jersey barriers, and local business sponsorship of cultural events were identified as successes to build on.

Arts & Culture Action Plan

Based on the synthesis of the engagement the following goals were developed and reviewed by Working Group and community members. Four overarching goals guide the plan that emerged from the cultural asset mapping and needs analysis. Each goal includes supportive strategies to guide a series of actions. The strategies and actions are listed in the order of prioritization, based on feedback from the Public Forum and guidance from the Working Group. The proposed actions depend on collaboration among municipal and community actors to implement the proposed strategies, which are described in detail in Appendix B.



**COORDINATE NEEDHAM'S ARTS
AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**



**STRENGTHEN NEEDHAM'S ARTS
AND CULTURAL CAPACITY AND
INFRASTRUCTURE**



**SUPPORT NEEDHAM'S CULTURAL
EQUITY INITIATIVES**



**IMPROVE NEEDHAM'S QUALITY OF
LIFE THROUGH ART AND CULTURE**

1

COORDINATE NEEDHAM'S ARTS AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

1.1 Bolster the Town's administration & coordination of arts and cultural resources.

- 1.1.A Coordinate and organize the efforts of the councils, committees, and commissions that support and fund arts and culture in Needham.
- Establish a regular (bi-annual or annual) gathering for arts and cultural organizations to give updates on their programming to support networking and collaboration, develop a town-wide calendar of events, and support communication and coordination between organizations.
 - Administer an annual evaluation of the greatest needs facing arts and cultural organizations through either a survey or town hall meeting with representatives of arts and cultural organizations.
 - Strengthen the Town's grant process for arts and culture to ensure accessibility, transparency, and consistency.
- 1.1.B Maintain an arts and culture assets inventory as documented in the Action Plan with a consistent schedule for updating the list of cultural assets.
- 1.1.C Work with the Town's Economic Development Officer to collect data on the impacts of arts and culture programs and activities on the local economy, including festivals and events.

1.2 Broaden awareness of Needham's existing arts and cultural resources through consistent promotion & communication.

- 1.2.A Highlight and promote Needham's existing cultural events and assets through coordinated efforts with Town Communications, Needham Council for Arts and Culture, and Needham Public Schools.
- 1.2.B Establish a centralized calendar of arts and culture programs and activities as a community resource for community events. Potential options include sharing events on an embedded calendar on the Town website (e.g., time.ly) and distributed through the Town newsletter and other local media outlets.
- 1.2.C Explore opportunities for permanent signage, rotating banners, or kiosks to increase the visibility of town events.
- 1.2.D Create a listserv for arts and cultural organizations to share resources, information, and grant opportunities.
- 1.2.E Amplify local press and media outlets as they promote stories related to Needham's arts and cultural life.

1.3 Formalize town-wide efforts for public arts and cultural programming.

- 1.3.A Complete a public art strategy to identify the goals and vision for a public art program, and opportunities for community feedback to guide public arts opportunities, including temporary and permanent public art installations. Identify priority locations for public art installations with local business and property owners and appropriate Town committees, such as the Design Review Board.
- 1.3.B Establish clear guidelines for public arts proposals for the Town of Needham, including an outline of the existing process for approval from the appropriate committees to develop a consistent public arts program to serve the Needham community.
- Clarify and communicate the Town's current community programming and responsibilities related to arts and culture across the Community Programs offered by the Town of Needham.
- 1.3.C

2

STRENGTHEN NEEDHAM'S ARTS AND CULTURAL CAPACITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

2.1 Establish a staff position to support the implementation of the Arts & Culture Action Plan

- 2.1.A Draft a job description for an arts and cultural administrator to coordinate facility rentals, lead grant writing, convene cultural organizations, staff cultural committees, manage and develop a cultural organization directory, promote and support Town events, and maintain a cultural events calendar.
- 2.1.B Establish a singular point of contact for navigating the rental of public facilities and permitting events on Town property.
- 2.1.C Outline the departments that would benefit from establishing this position, including a cost-benefit analysis.

2.2 Increase funding for arts and culture to support staffing and programming.

- 2.2.A Identify public and private funding sources to support arts and culture in Needham. Potential funding sources include existing tax revenue, state and federal grants, or earned income from programming or events.
- 2.2.B Explore funding opportunities for a cultural administrator position, including event fees, grants, or direct allocation from the Town's Annual Budget.
- 2.2.C Engage local businesses in mutually beneficial sponsorship opportunities for arts and cultural events and programming.

2.3 Improve accessibility to arts and cultural facilities for all community members and organizations.

- 2.3.A Convene a committee to explore the need for new performing arts facilities and updating and maintaining existing facilities in town that might serve Needham Public Schools and other community groups.
- 2.3.B Develop a formal partnership with higher educational institutions to access performing arts facilities for public events.
- 2.3.C Streamline the process for securing permission and permits for renting public facilities and holding events on Town property.
- 2.3.D Develop a database of existing public facilities available for cultural uses and clear instructions on what is needed to use, reserve, and access these spaces.



SUPPORT NEEDHAM'S CULTURAL EQUITY INITIATIVES

3.1 Foster inclusion and belonging throughout the broader arts and cultural community.

- 3.1.A Pursue funding opportunities to ensure all public facilities and cultural facilities are made ADA accessible.
- 3.1.B Develop guidelines for hosting events and meetings that account for different abilities and sensitivities in partnership with the Commission on Disabilities.
- 3.1.C Circulate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) resources and training opportunities for local arts and culture organizations to improve cultural competency.

3.2 Curate programming and events that reflect the diversity of communities in Needham.

- 3.2.A Support community initiatives focused on multicultural learning and celebration of diversity within Needham, including but not limited to the Needham Diversity Initiative, Multicultural Festival, Juneteenth Celebration Planning Committee, and the Human Rights Committee.
- 3.2.B Facilitate intergenerational community events to support life-long learning and engagement around cultural appreciation and understanding in partnership with the Council on Aging and the Center at the Heights (CATH) and the Needham Youth Commission.

3.3 Identify opportunities to further cultural equity in Needham's schools and town history.

- 3.3.A Collaborate with Needham Public Schools to develop opportunities to incorporate cultural equity initiatives within the district, particularly for middle and high school students.
- 3.3.B Partner with Needham History Center & Museum to uncover omitted histories and document Needham's current community and cultural life.

4

IMPROVE NEEDHAM'S QUALITY OF LIFE THROUGH ART AND CULTURE

4.1 Support local policies that allow the arts and culture sector to thrive.

- 4.1.A Invest in housing policies that allow artists and cultural workers to live in Needham, by expanding allowances for Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) bylaw to include detached ADUs and supporting affordable housing measures.

4.2 Facilitate arts and culture partnerships to strengthen local businesses, community health, and wellbeing.

- 4.2.A Strengthen Needham's arts and cultural sector by fostering collaboration with local businesses and the Charles River Chamber.
- Offer artists professional development opportunities through networking, workshops, grant assistance, and mentorship.
 - Connect local businesses with local artists for opportunities to host local artists for performances and exhibiting local artwork.
- 4.2.B Expand opportunities for youth to access expressive art therapy in coordination with Youth & Family Services.

4.3 Incorporate arts and cultural initiatives when planning for a safe and resilient community.

- 4.3.A Use street painting installations for traffic calming to promote pedestrian safety at crosswalks and other busy intersections as part of design and implementation, as consistent with local and state regulations.
- 4.3.B Incorporate arts and culture into climate and resilience planning efforts, allowing Needham residents to imagine a more resilient community through arts-based engagement.

Priority Actions

Goal 1 strategies focus on the administration and coordination of arts and culture resources, addressing awareness through promotion and communication, and formalizing process for public arts and culture programming.

Priority actions include:

- Organize the councils, committees and commissions related to arts and culture programming.
- Establish a centralized calendar for arts and culture programming activities.
- Develop a public arts strategy for a public art program.

Goal 2 strategies include establishing a position within the Town to implement this plan, increasing funding for arts and culture, and improving accessibility to cultural facilities.

Priority actions include:

- Draft a job description for an arts and culture administrator.
- Identify additional funding sources for arts and culture.
- Initiate conversations around new performing arts facilities.

Goal 3 strategies prioritize inclusion and belonging through arts and culture, support for diverse programming and events, and revisit town history and school programming related to cultural equity.

Priority actions include:

- Address accessibility to cultural facilities.
- Support multicultural learning initiatives.
- Identify the omitted histories in Needham and strengthen cultural equity initiatives in schools.

Goal 4 strategies prioritize policies that allow arts and culture to thrive, strengthening cultural partnerships, and incorporating arts into planning initiatives.

Priority actions include:

- Invest in housing policies that allow artists and cultural workers to live in Needham.
- Offer artists professional development opportunities through networking, workshops, grant assistance, and mentorship.
- Use street painting installations for traffic calming to promote pedestrian safety at crosswalks and other busy intersections as part of design and implementation, as consistent with local and state regulations.

Appendices

APPENDIX A: Action Plan Matrix & Implementation Partners

APPENDIX B: Community Engagement Highlights

APPENDIX C: Arts and Cultural Asset List

APPENDIX D: List of Tables and Figures

APPENDIX A: Action Plan Matrix & Implementation

Partners

Recommendations

The following matrix outlines goals and strategies that serve as a roadmap for the Town of Needham and partners to realize their arts and cultural vision over the next 6-8 years. The categories of action are organized around four overarching goals: centralizing arts and cultural resources, strengthening arts and cultural capacity and infrastructure, support cultural equity initiatives, and improve quality of life through arts and culture. Beneath each overarching goal, there are three primary strategies to a framework for the actions, and the matrix presents strategy recommendations for achieving those goals, recommends a set of partners responsible for implementing each strategy, and estimates each strategy's implementation timeframe (1-2 years, 3-5 years, 6-8 years).

Action Plan Matrix Implementation Partners Abbreviations

ARAWG - Active Recreation Assets Working Group

DPCD - Department of Planning & Community Development

AHTF - Affordable Housing Trust Fund

DCCE - Director of Communications & Community Engagement

BoA - Board of Assessors

DVAC - Domestic Violence Action Committee

BoH - Board of Health

EDM - Economic Development Manager

BoR - Board of Registrars

FC - Finance Committee

BDCD - Building Design and Construction Department

GCAC - Golf Course Advisory Committee

CRCC - Charles River Chamber of Commerce

HC - Historical Commission

CAPC - Climate Action Plan Committee

HONE - Housing Needham Advisory Group

CoD - Commission on Disabilities

HPWG - Housing Plan Working Group

CoTF - Commissioners of Trust Funds

HRC - Human Rights Committee

CFMW - Community Foundation for MetroWest

JCPC - Juneteenth Celebration Planning Committee

CPC - Community Preservation Committee

MCC - Massachusetts Cultural Council

CC - Conservation Commission

MD - Massachusetts Development

CoEA - Council of Economic Advisors

MDI - Massachusetts Downtown Initiative

CoA - Council on Aging

MM - Mass MOCA's Assets for Artists

DRB - Design Review Board

MPCC - Mobility Planning and Coordination Committee

NAA - Needham Art Association

NBA - Needham Business Alliance

NACPWG - Needham Arts & Culture Planning Working Group

NCRTF - Needham Community Revitalization Trust Fund

NCAC - Needham Council for Arts & Culture

NCEA - Needham Council of Economic Advisors

NDI - Needham Diversity Initiative

NEF - Needham Education Foundation

NEFA - New England Foundation for the Arts

NFPL - Needham Free and Public Library

NHCM - Needham History Center & Museum

NHA - Needham Housing Authority

NPS - Needham Public Schools

NRN - Needham Resiliency Network

PRC - Park and Recreation Commission

PPBC - Permanent Public Building Committee

PeB - Personnel Board

PB - Planning Board

PFD - Public Facilities Department

RTAC - Rail Trail Advisory Committee

RB - Retirement Board

QZWG - Quiet Zone Working Group

SC - School Committee

SB - Select Board

SPHD - Single Parcel Historic District Study Committee

SWR - Solid Waste and Recycling Advisory Committee

TAC - Taxation Aid Committee

TAB - Technology Advisory Board

T-CHOC - Town-Financed Community Housing Oversight Committee

TM - Town Manger

TSC - Transportation Safety Committee

TMP - Trustees of Memorial Park

TNFPL - Trustees of Needham Free Public Library

WSRS - Water and Sewer Rate Structure

YC - Youth Commission

YFS - Needham Youth and Family Services

ZBA - Zoning Board of Appeals

Table A.1 Action Plan Matrix

		Near-Term (1 year)	Mid-Term (2-3 years)	Long-Term (3-4 years)	Primary Partners	Secondary Partners
GOAL #1: CENTRALIZE NEEDHAM'S ARTS AND CULTURAL RESOURCES						
<i>1.1 Bolster the Town's administration & coordination of arts and cultural resources.</i>						
1.1.A	Coordinate and organize the efforts of the councils, committees, and commissions that support and fund arts and culture in Needham.	X	X	X	NCAC	EDM, NACPWG
	Establish a regular (bi-annual or annual) gathering for arts and cultural organizations to give updates on their programming to support networking and collaboration, develop a town-wide calendar of events, and support communication and coordination between organizations.	X	X	X	NCAC	EDM, DCCE, NACPWG
	Administer an annual evaluation of the greatest needs facing arts and cultural organizations through either a survey or town hall meeting with representatives of arts and cultural organizations.	X	X	X	NCAC	EDM, DCCE, NAA, NACPWG
	Strengthen the Town's grant process for arts and culture to ensure accessibility, transparency, and consistency.		X	X	NCAC	EDM, DCCE, NCRTF, NAA, NACPWG
1.1.B	Maintain an arts and culture assets inventory as documented in the Action Plan with a consistent schedule for updating the list of cultural assets.	X	X	X	NCAC, EDM, DCCE	
1.1.C	Work with the Town's Economic Development Manager to collect data on the impacts of arts and culture programs and activities on the local economy, including festivals and events.		X	X	NCAC	EDM, DCCE, DPCD
<i>1.2 Broaden awareness of Needham's existing arts and cultural resources through consistent promotion & communication.</i>						
1.2.A	Establish a centralized calendar of arts and culture programs and activities as a community resource for community events. Potential options include sharing events on an embedded calendar on the Town website (e.g., time.ly) and distributed through the Town newsletter and other local media outlets.	X	X		NCAC	EDM, DCCE

		Near-Term (1 year)	Mid-Term (2-3 years)	Long-Term (3-4 years)	Primary Partners	Secondary Partners
1.2.B	Explore opportunities for permanent signage, rotating banners, or kiosks to increase the visibility of town events.		X	X	NCAC	EDM, DCCE, DPCD, DRB
1.2.C	Explore opportunities for permanent signage, rotating banners, or kiosks to increase the visibility of town events.	X	X	X	NCAC	EDM, DCCE
1.2.D	Amplify local press and media outlets as they promote stories related to Needham's arts and cultural life.		X	X	NCAC	EDM, DCCE
1.3 Formalize town-wide efforts for public arts and cultural programming.						
1.3.A	Complete a public art strategy to identify the goals and vision for a public art program, and opportunities for community feedback to guide public arts opportunities, including temporary and permanent public art installations. Identify priority locations for public art installations with local business and property owners and appropriate Town committees, such as the Design Review Board.		X	X	SB, NCAC	EDM, DCCE, DRB, DPCD, DPW
1.3.B	Establish clear guidelines for public arts proposals for the Town of Needham, including an outline of the existing process for approval from the appropriate committees to develop a consistent public arts program to serve the Needham community.		X	X	SB, NCAC, NAA	DCCE
1.3.C	Clarify and communicate the Town's current community programming and responsibilities related to arts and culture across the Community Programs offered by the Town of Needham.	X	X	X	EDM	DCCE
GOAL #2: STRENGTHEN NEEDHAM'S ARTS AND CULTURAL CAPACITY & INFRASTRUCTURE						
2.1 Establish a staff position to support the implementation of the Arts & Culture Action Plan.						
2.1.A	Draft a job description for an arts and cultural administrator to coordinate facility rentals, lead grant writing, convene cultural organizations, staff cultural committees, manage and develop a cultural organization directory, promote and support Town events, and maintain a cultural events calendar.	X			SB, NCAC	EDM, DCCE

		Near-Term (1 year)	Mid-Term (2-3 years)	Long-Term (3-4 years)	Primary Partners	Secondary Partners
2.1.B	Establish a singular point of contact for navigating the rental of public facilities and events on Town property.	X			SB, NCAC	EDM, DCCE
2.1.C	Outline the departments that would benefit from establishing this part-time position, including a cost-benefit analysis.	X			SB, NCAC	EDM, DCCE
2.2 Increase funding for arts and culture to support staffing and programming.						
2.2.A	Identify public and private funding sources to support arts and culture in Needham. Potential funding sources include existing tax revenue, state and federal grants, or earned income from programming or events.	X	X	X	SB, NCAC	EDM, DCCE, MCC, MD, MDI, CRCC, CFMW, NBA, NCEA
2.2.B	Explore funding opportunities for a cultural administrator position, including event fees, grants, or direct allocation from the Town's Annual Budget.	X			SB	EDM, DCCE
2.2.C	Engage local businesses in mutually beneficial sponsorship opportunities for arts and cultural events and programming.	X	X	X	NCAC	EDM, DCCE, NBA, NCEA
2.3 Improve accessibility to arts and cultural facilities for all community members and organizations.						
2.3.A	Facilitate conversations around new performing arts facilities in town that might serve Needham Public Schools and other community groups.	X	X		EDM, DCCE, BDCD, NPS	
2.3.B	Develop a formal partnership with higher educational institutions to access performing arts facilities for public events.	X	X		EDM, DCCE	
2.3.C	Streamline the process for securing permission and permits for renting public facilities and holding events on Town property.		X	X	TM, DCCE, DPF	
2.3.D	Streamline the process for securing permission and permits for renting public facilities and holding events on Town property.	X			DCCE, DPF	

		Near-Term (1 year)	Mid-Term (2-3 years)	Long-Term (3-4 years)	Primary Partners	Secondary Partners
GOAL #3: SUPPORT NEEDHAM'S CULTURAL EQUITY INITIATIVES						
<i>3.1 Foster inclusion and belonging throughout the broader arts and cultural community.</i>						
3.1.A	Pursue funding opportunities to ensure all public facilities and cultural facilities are made ADA accessible.		X	X	SB, TM, CoD, DRB, DPF	
3.1.B	Develop guidelines for hosting events and meetings that account for different abilities and sensitivities in partnership with the Commission on Disabilities.		X	X	DCCE	
3.1.C	Circulate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) resources and training opportunities for local arts and culture organizations to improve cultural competency.		X	X	NCAC	DCCE, NDI, NEF, NRN
<i>3.2 Curate programming and events that reflect the diversity of communities in Needham.</i>						
3.2.A	Support community initiatives focused on multicultural learning and celebration of diversity within Needham, including but not limited to the Needham Diversity Initiative, Multicultural Festival, Juneteenth Celebration Planning Committee, and the Human Rights Committee.	X	X	X	NCAC	EDM, DCCE, NPS, NDI, NRN
3.2.B	Facilitate intergenerational community events to support life-long learning and engagement around cultural appreciation and understanding in partnership with the Council on Aging and the Center at the Heights (CATH) and the Needham Youth Commission.	X	X	X	NCAC	EDM, DCCE
<i>3.3 Identify opportunities to further cultural equity in Needham's schools and town history.</i>						
3.3.A	Collaborate with Needham Public Schools to develop opportunities to incorporate cultural equity initiatives within the district, particularly for middle and high school students.	X	X	X	NCAC	DCCE, NEF, NDI
3.3.B	Partner with Needham History Center & Museum to uncover omitted histories and document Needham's current community and cultural life.	X	X	X	NCAC	DCCE, NEF, NDI

		Near-Term (1 year)	Mid-Term (2-3 years)	Long-Term (3-4 years)	Primary Partners	Secondary Partners
GOAL #4: IMPROVE NEEDHAM'S QUALITY OF LIFE THROUGH ART AND CULTURE						
4.1 Support local policies that allow the arts and culture sector to thrive.						
4.1.A	Invest in housing policies that allow artists and cultural workers to live in Needham, by considering permitted uses for within the Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) bylaw and supporting affordable housing measures.		X	X	SB, DPCD, ZBA	
4.2 Facilitate arts and culture partnerships to strengthen local businesses, community health, and wellbeing.						
4.2.A	Strengthen Needham's arts and cultural sector by fostering collaboration with local businesses and the Charles River Chamber of Commerce.		X	X	NCAC	EDM, DCCE
	Offer artists professional development opportunities through networking, workshops, grant assistance, and mentorship.	X	X	X	NCAC	DCCE, NEFA, MM
	Connect local businesses with local artists for opportunities to host local artists for performances and exhibiting local artwork.	X	X	X	NCAC	EDM, DCCE
	Convene monthly meetings with stakeholders (i.e. businesses, leaders from arts, culture and community groups that host events in Town Center) to support Needham's efforts to invest in a vibrant and thriving Town Center.	X	X		EDM, DCCE	
4.2.B	Expand opportunities for youth to access expressive art therapy in coordination with Youth & Family Services.	X	X		NCAC	DCCE, YFS, NFPL, TNFPL
4.3 Incorporate arts and cultural initiatives when planning for a safe and resilient community.						
4.3.A	Use street painting installations for traffic calming to promote pedestrian safety at crosswalks and other busy intersections as part of design and implementation, as consistent with local and state regulations.	X			NCAC	EDM, DCCE, TSC, DPW
4.3.B	Incorporate arts and culture into climate and resilience planning efforts, allowing Needham residents to imagine a more resilient community through arts-based engagement.		X	X	NCAC	EDM, DCCE, CAPC

APPENDIX B: Community Engagement Highlights

Survey

An online survey was developed in partnership with the Working Group and launched at the Multicultural Festival in March 2023 and closed May 31, 2023. **272 people completed the town-wide survey** including 250 residents in Needham and 107 self-identified local artists. The survey included 35 questions and asked respondents to identify cultural assets, share about their own creative activities, and provide recommendations for Needham’s arts and culture landscape. Artists and creative workers were asked an additional set of six questions about their workspaces and challenges.

Figure B.1: Performance spaces, Arts or Cultural Events, and Cinema or Live Theater Spaces cited as most important

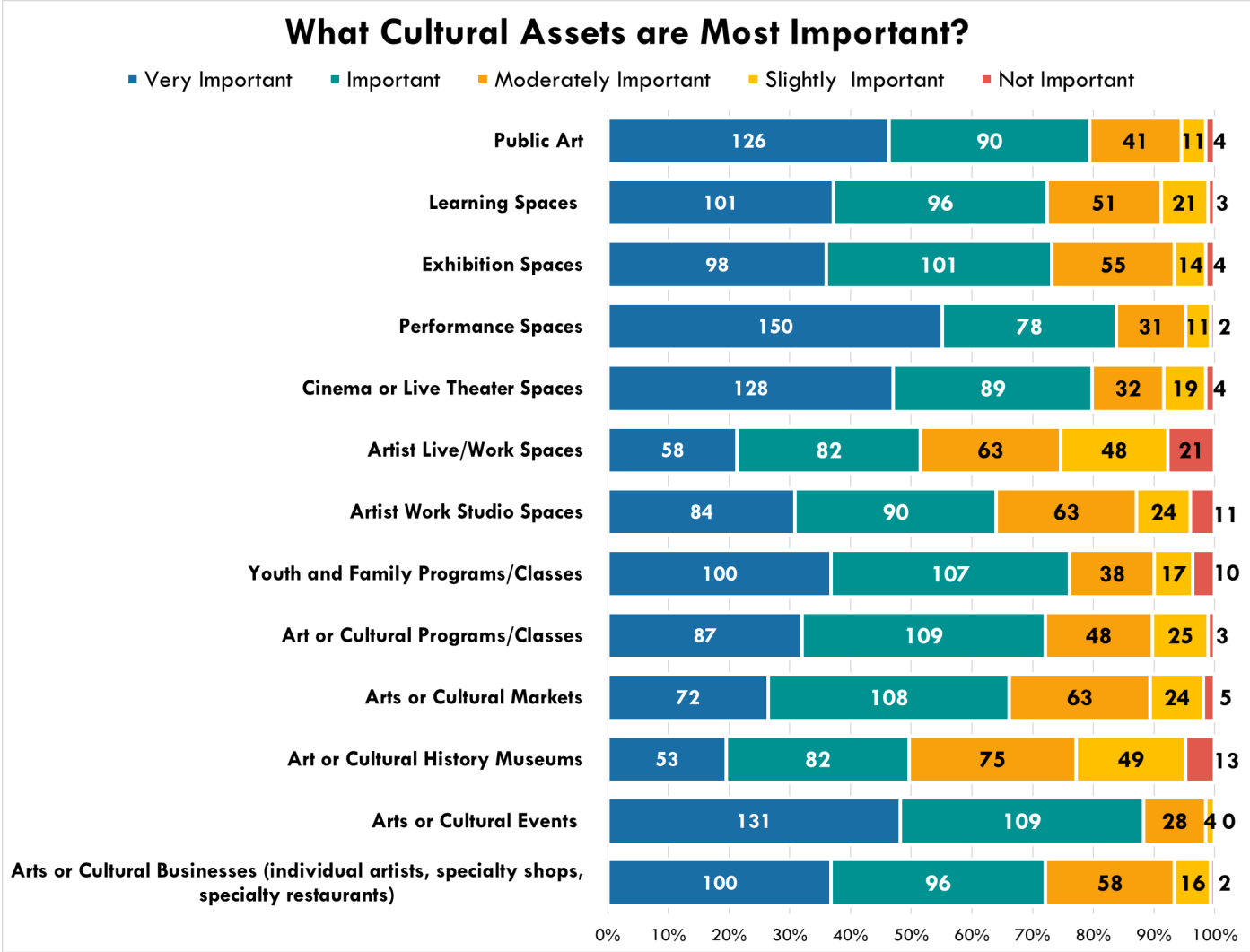


Figure B.2: Word of Mouth and Social Media are the most common ways respondents learn about programming

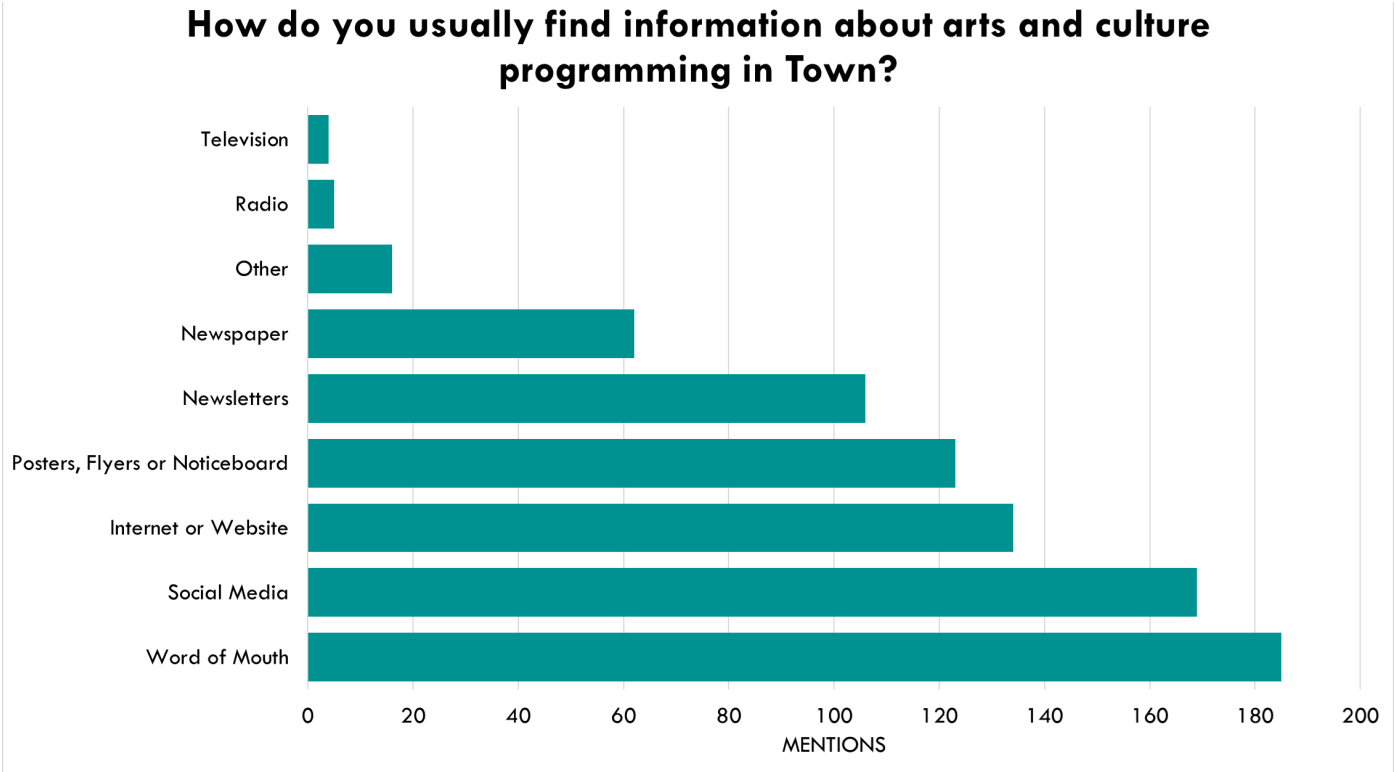


Figure B.3: Needham residents generally feel positive about the town’s arts and culture programming, but don’t necessarily agree that programming is diverse or has variety

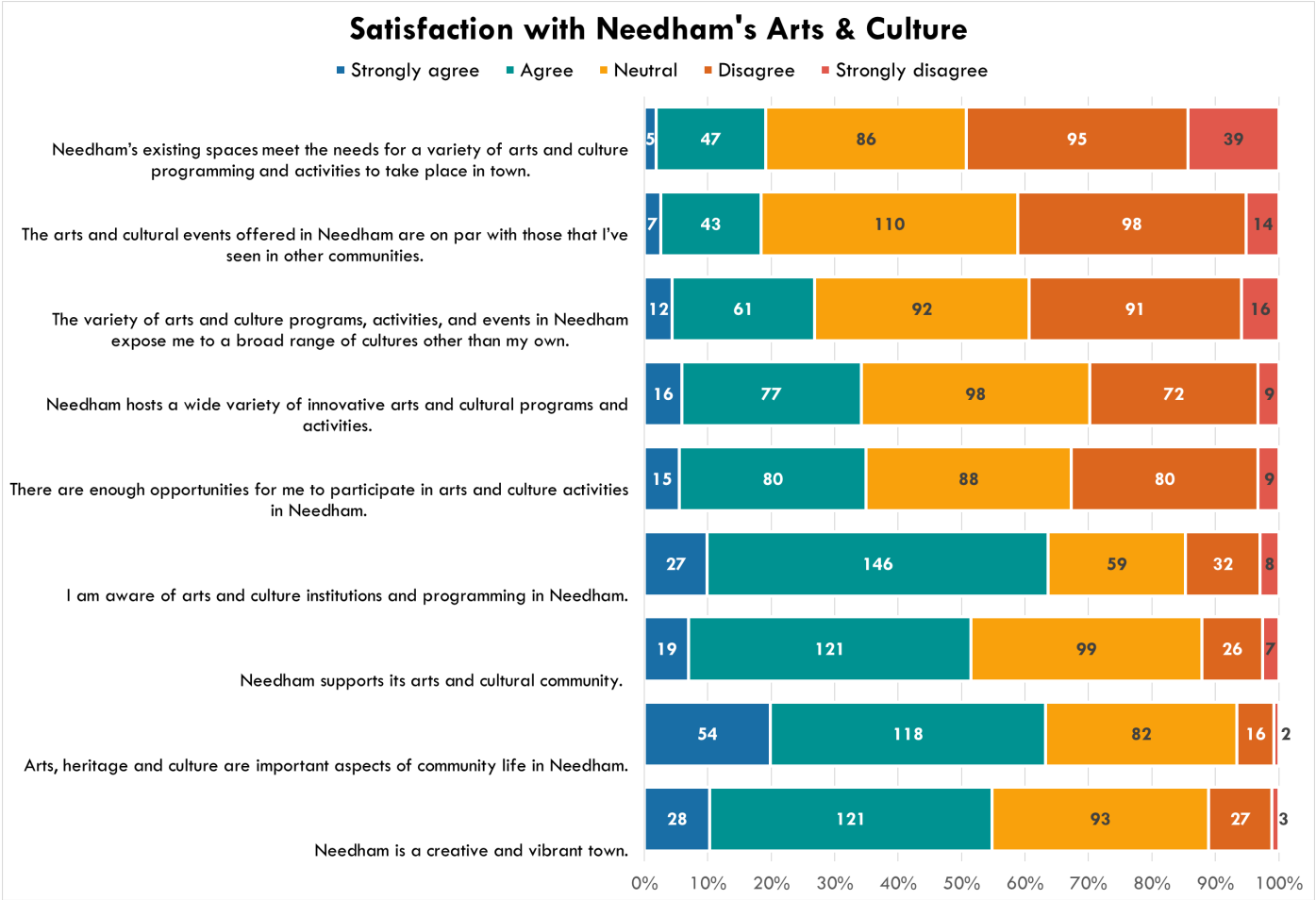


Figure B.4: The most common creative activities respondents engage with are Photography, Painting, and Live theater

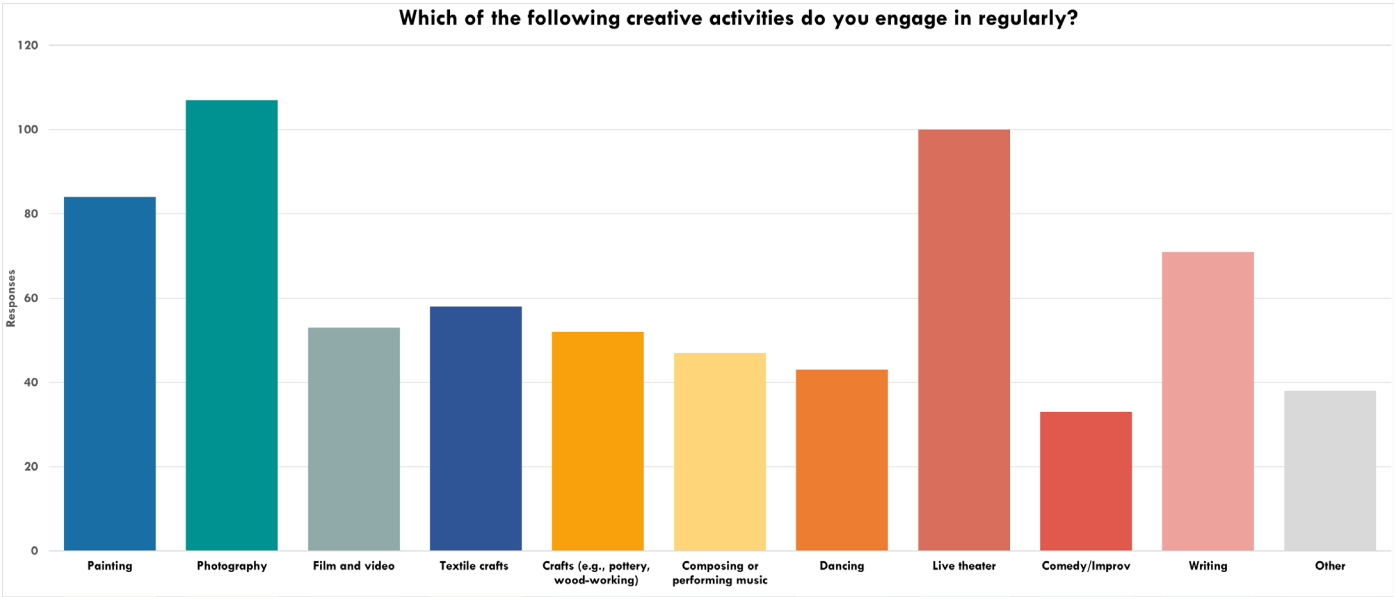
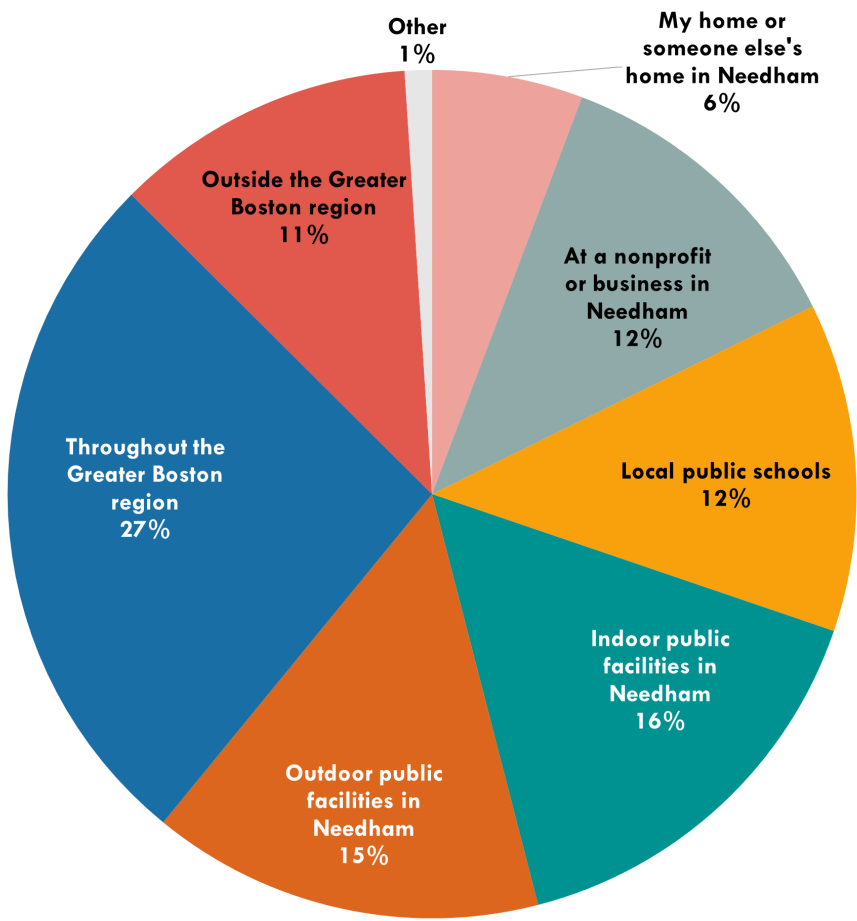


Figure B.5: A third of respondents go to venues throughout the Boston region to experience arts and culture events and activities



Where do you typically go to experience arts and cultural events and activities?

Figure B.6: Most respondents participate in arts and culture programming for entertainment, happiness and wellbeing, and to support local artists and artisans

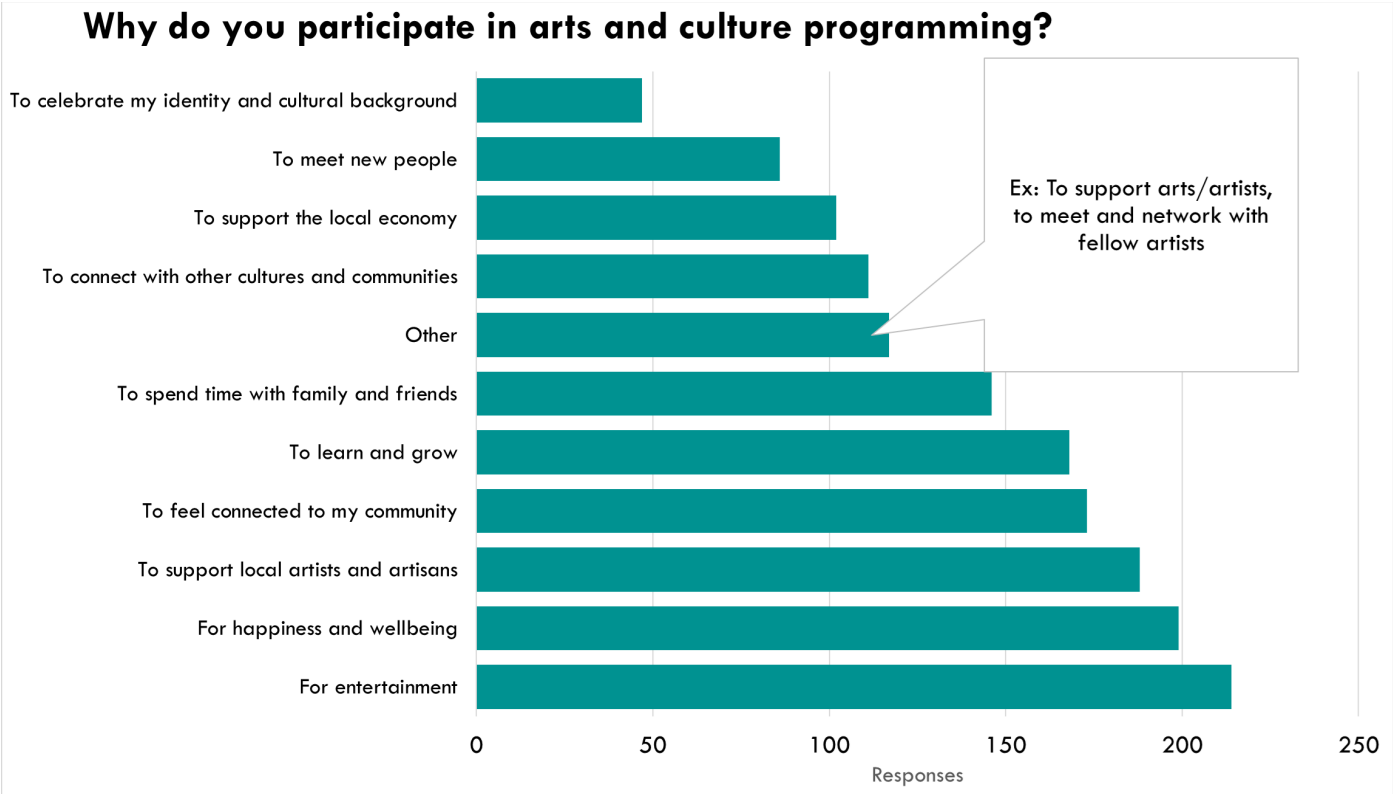


Figure B.7: Most Needham artists paint or draw as their primary creative activity

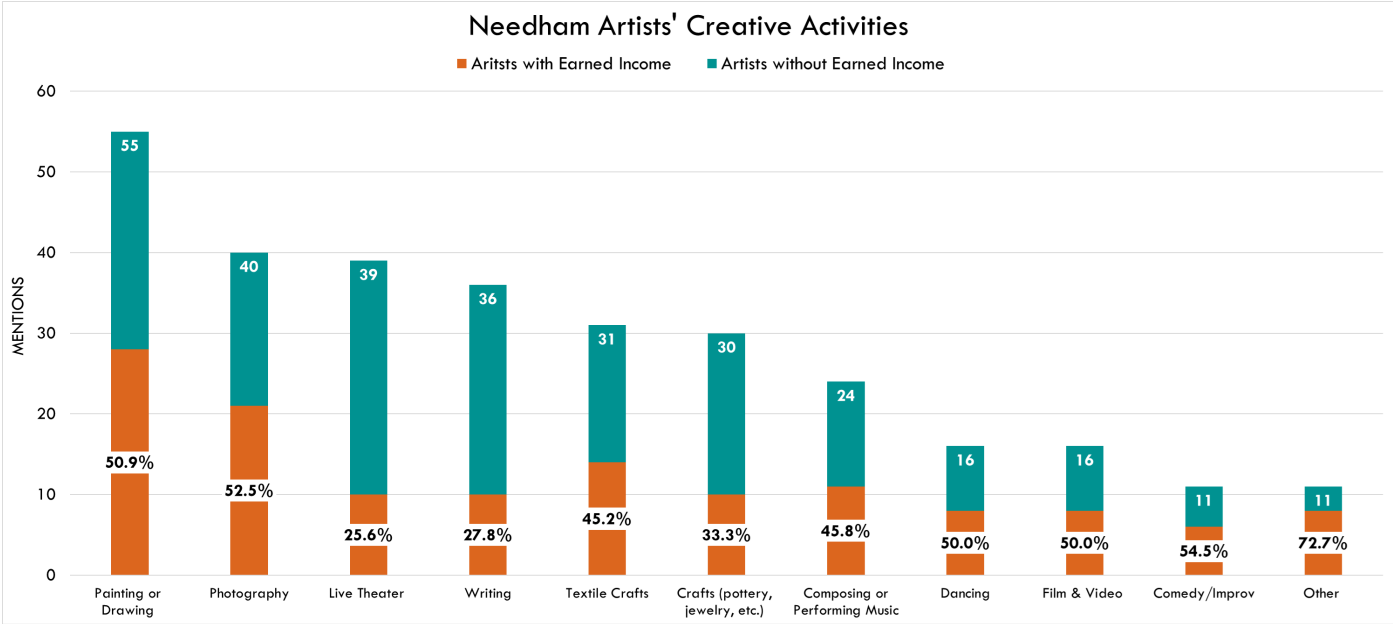
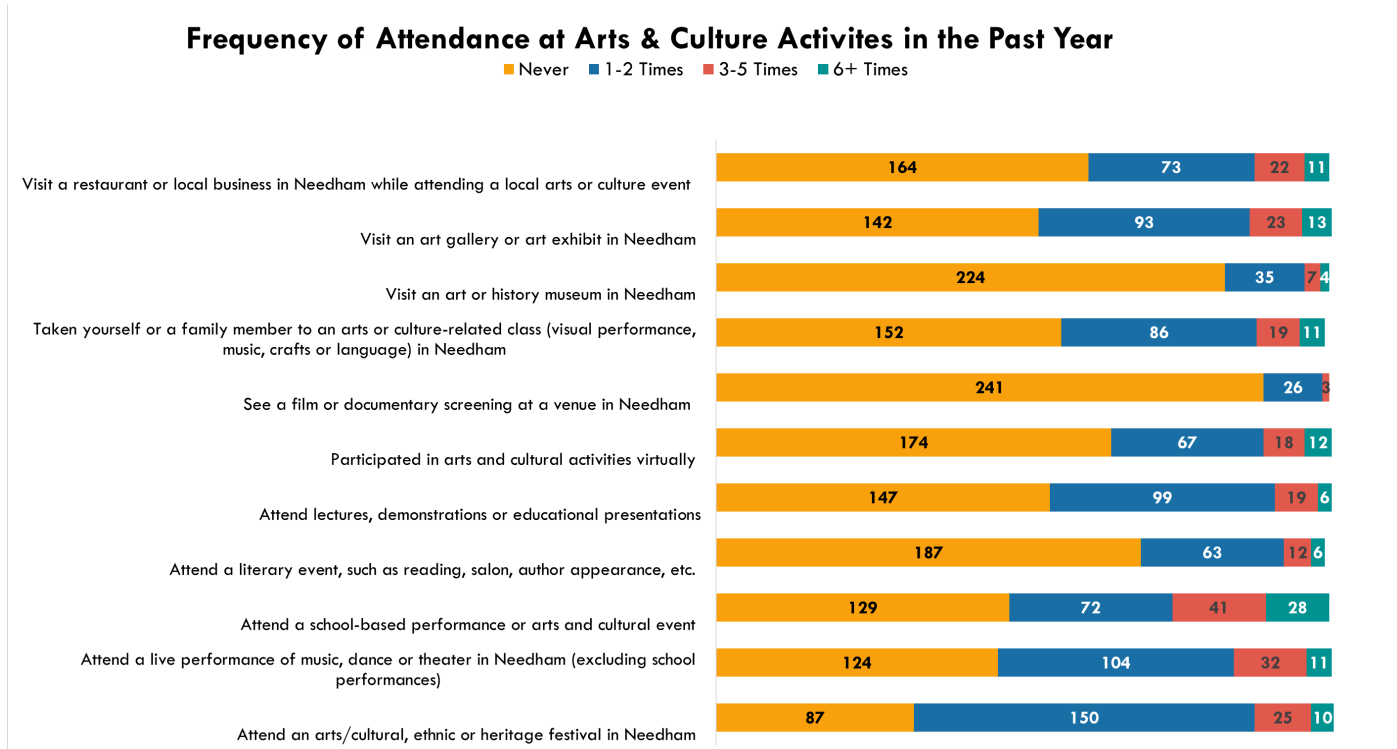


Figure B.8: Attending an arts/cultural, ethnic or heritage festival in Needham was most popular amongst respondents



Focus Groups

The Needham Arts & Culture Action Plan was informed by four formal focus groups with the following groups:

- Needham Business Alliance (NBA)
- Needham Council of Economic Advisors (NCEA)
- North Hill Retirement Community Art Class
- Creative Conversation hosted by Needham Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC)

A summary of key takeaways from each of the focus groups are included below.

Business Community Conversations Findings

As part of the focused engagement, multiple conversations were held with Needham’s business community engaging a total of 15 participants. On April 27, 2023, MAPC presented questions to six members of the Needham Business Alliance and on June 15, 2023, MAPC met with nine members of the Needham Council of Economic Advisors. Both groups spoke about the role of arts and culture within Needham’s local business community.

- Arts and culture contribute to the vibrancy of Needham, including promoting additional commercial activity, as an amenity for large businesses.
- Opportunities to highlight local artists and placemaking.
- Exposure to different cultures for young people in Needham.
- Local businesses often support artist and provide a space for showcasing and performances.
- Arts and culture are connected to quality of life and should be part of planning efforts to preserve arts uses.
- Needham adult education has woodworking facility on Hillside Ave next to Rosemary.
- It is nice to have options for kids who do not participate in sports to have a connection to the arts.
- Farmers market is an avenue for artists, artisans and musicians.

North Hill Retirement Community Arts Class Findings

On June 6, 2023, a focus group took place with nine participants in an art class at North Hill Retirement Community, noting the importance of arts and culture in bridging communities across generations and identities.

- Schools brought many people to Needham, to be closer to kids and grandkids
- Senior Center is a rich group that offers multicultural activities
- Open Studio was hosted at North Hill, desire to host more programming
- Desire for more intergenerational programs
- Would like a calendar that gives notice prior to events at least a month out
- Transportation continues to be an issue, it would be nice to have arts activities that traveled throughout the community, like an artmobile
- Activating the common with cultural events like concert

Creative Conversations Findings

On June 6, 2023, Needham Council for Arts and Culture hosted a Creative Conversation at North Hill Retirement Community. Thirty arts and culture stakeholders met to discuss the challenges and opportunities in Needham's cultural community.

- Town establish more structure to support arts and culture in Needham, including paid staff dedicated to support marketing, coordinating existing resources, and a clear direction.
- Volunteer base is tired.
- Opportunities for artists to sell their work.
- Partnerships between local businesses and artists for promotion, or revisit the storefronts program, the jersey barriers with outdoor dining.
- Build on existing events and assets within town, such as the farmers market, Needham Open Studios.
- Centralize communication for arts and culture events, to support marketing and highlight ways of two-way communication to individuals can share events as well, work with flyering and activating individuals' networks.
- Reduce cost of renting out spaces, particularly Town owned spaces.
- Centering opportunities for youth.

Pop-Up Engagement at Community Events

To broaden engagement and support participation in the town-wide survey and focus groups, MAPC participated in multiple community events for pop-up engagement. Additionally, Working Group members led additional engagement with youth in Needham through existing programs to ensure youth participation.

Multicultural Festival

On March 19, 2023, Needham hosted its inaugural Multicultural Festival in Powers Hall where the Needham Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC) members tabled with MAPC staff to promote the town-wide survey and inform community members about the town's cultural planning efforts.

Pansy Festival & Blossoms Mural Unveiling

On April 22, 2023, the Needham Council for Arts and Culture hosted the Pansy Festival in Needham's Height's Avery Square, across the street from a mural entitled, Blossoms commissioned by the NCAC. MAPC staff tabled at the event to support survey engagement and promote awareness around the Needham Arts & Culture Action Plan.

Additional Engagement

To support youth engagement, Working Group members utilized existing programming to facilitate

conversations with high school students in Needham Summer Theater (12 students) and a high school class focused on public art in Needham. An additional engagement was held as part of the Parks and Recreation Theater Camp, asking students in elementary and middle school what arts and culture they would like to see in Needham. Responses included more public art and murals, space for theater and performing arts.

If you could describe the arts in Needham with one word, what would it be?

- Inadequate
- Underappreciated
- Underfunded
- Potential
- Welcoming
- Passionate
- Talented
- Community
- Passionate
- Fun

A few other thoughts that were expressed by the students:

- More funding needed for the arts in the schools
- More publicity for events that are happening in town
- Better performing arts spaces in the schools and in the town in general
- More collaboration between schools and arts groups and town in general
- Arts facilities in Needham need to be upgraded
- The arts in Needham is community oriented
- The visual art/public art in Needham (murals etc.) is aesthetically pleasing
- Impressive talent in Needham
- Technically the shows can't compare to other schools in other towns.

Public Forum

On October 11, 2023 from 6PM - 8PM in Powers Hall, the Town hosted a Public Forum for community members to review the proposed goals, strategies and actions included for Needham Arts & Culture Action Plan. Participants were invited to prioritize these strategies and actions, write additional suggestions for actions, and picture the future of arts and culture in Needham by sharing pictures or drawing images.

APPENDIX C: Arts and Cultural Asset List

Figure C.1: Number of Assets by Creative Economy Type

Creative Economy	Number of Assets	Definition
Advertising & Publishing	3	Advertising agencies and publishing firms.
Architecture, Graphic & Interior Design	15	Designers inclusive of architecture firms, interior design firms, and graphic design companies.
Arts or Cultural Nonprofit/ Organization	15	Non-profit cultural organizations, associations and fraternal societies, non-profit arts organizations, and creative enterprises including businesses that provide opportunities to learn creative activities such as music, dance, foreign languages, and crafts.
Commercial Printing	5	Print shops for commercial printing, including one screen printing shop.
Creative Retail	10	Stores with art supplies, musical instruments, crafts, ceramics and creative businesses like florists and home décor shops.
Eating and Drinking Places	13	Restaurants and bars that offer diverse cultural cuisine, host or sponsor arts and culture activities and events, or function as cultural gathering places.
Educational Institution	12	Schools that serve the K-12 population and higher educational institutions.
Jewelry Making	5	Jewelry makers and jewelry-based retail and repair shops.
Media	11	Regional and local media outlets inclusive of radio, television broadcasting, and newspaper publishers.
Media Production	9	Production companies inclusive of motion picture and video production, music recording and promotion, lighting sounds, and animation.
Municipal Entity	6	Commissions and committees supported through the Town governance that support arts and cultural events, programs and projects throughout Needham.
Photography	7	Individual photography studios.

Figure C.2: Number of Assets by Arts and Culture Ecosystem Type

Arts and Culture Ecosystem	Number of Assets	Definition
Artist Group	3	Artist groups included specific arts related organizations and affiliations that provide active support for arts making and performing.
Artist Work Studio Space	3	Locations of artist studio spaces or enterprises for a variety of artforms. In Needham, this included a personal studio, as well as the location of multiple studios and a business that also hosts a woodworking studio.
Arts or Cultural Event	7	Recurring arts and cultural events in town.
Exhibition Space	6	Businesses and organizations that provide space for artists to exhibit their work.
Faith-Based Organization	3	Historic churches and religious institutions in town that provide space for arts and cultural organizations and activities within their facilities.
Historic Landmarks and Attractions	2	Historic assets identified as contributing directly to the arts and cultural experience and identity of Needham.
Arts & Cultural Learning Space	17	Organizations and businesses that support the development of arts and cultural learning, including studios, schools, enterprises that provide classes for various arts and cultural activities.
Museum	1	The Needham History Center and Museum currently serves as Needham's sole museum space.
Musical Groups	6	Music-based groups identified as musical artists based in Needham.
Public Facilities & Outdoor Public Space	7	Public buildings and open spaces that contribute to the art and cultural life.
Performance Space	7	Spaces that host arts and cultural performances within Needham's community.
Public Art Installation	7	Temporary and permanent public art installations.
Theater Company	5	Entities that support theatrical arts as independent entities.

Figure C.3: Table of Assets

ARTIST WORK SPACES	
	Gorse Mill Studios
ARTS AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS AND BUSINESSES	
	A Fine Dance Studio
	Albert Alphin Wind Instruments
	Arlekin Players Theatre
	Art Spirit Creative Studio
	Art4YourChild
	Axie Breen Graphic Design
	Barre3 Needham
	Bean Town Brass Quintet
	Bianco Marchilonis Design
	Bky Music
	Black Sheep Knitting
	Bluestar Media
	Brass Ring-WBNW-Am
	Capron Lighting & Sound
	Card My Yard Needham
	CBS Radio
	Charles River Ballet Academy
	Chilly Bears
	Chinese Friends of Needham, Inc
	Communication Design Associates Inc
	Crosby Jewelers Inc
	Distinctive Interiors
	Dover-Sherborn Press
	Elissa's Creative Warehouse
	Entravision Communications
	Extreme Reach Inc
	Forty Eight Photography
	Friends of The Needham Public Library
	Fringe Theatre Inc
	Gail Fischer Photography
	Genius Pool Graphics
	Goldsmith Associates Inc
	Great Plain Squares
	Hearthstone Home
	Hearts & Noses Hosp Clown Troupe
	Highland Glee Club
	Horizon Line Ceramics
	Howie Carr Show
	Hughes Photography Inc
	Igor Golyak Acting Studio
	Im Incentives
	Indian Community of Needham (ICON)
	JTC Printing
	Kaminsky Strategik Design Inc

Keene Vision Photography
Kent Duckham Architect Inc
Last Minute Productions Inc
Library Foundation of Needham
Local Color Jewelry
Loft New England Inc
Longwood Opera
Mahoney Publishing Publishing
Marketplacers
Marshall Ogletree Assoc
Maverick Productions
Melco Home Design LLC
Naomi Wilsey Art
Needham Art Association
Needham Community Revitalization Trust Fund
Needham Community Theatre Inc
Needham Concert Society
Needham Council for Arts & Culture
Needham Dance Theatre
Needham Euphonium Ensemble
Needham Florist
Needham Furniture Makers
Needham Interfaith Choir
Needham Martial Arts Center
Needham Music
Needham Open Studios
Needham Press
Newton Animations
Next Generation Theatre
Nunes Trabucco Architects
Pinnacle Print Group
Plugged In Band Program
Pop Entertainment LLC
Print Centre
Pura Vida Home Decor
Quinobequin Quilters Guild
Ralph Mercer Photography
Rehearsal for Life
Rick Bern Photography LLC
Ruth Fassler & Associates
Rw Interiors
Salvatore Associates
Salvatore Associates Inc
Sew Easy
Show & Tell Inc
Students Acting to Make a Difference
Sugar River Media LLC
Superstarts

The Glass Bar
 The Great Hall Performance Foundation
 The Lived Experience Project
 The Needham General Store
 Three Crown Jewelry
 Timothy E Lund Inc
 Tin Rabbit
 Total Eclipse Dance Studio
 Trabucco Architects
 Tuk Tak Studio
 Underground Productions
 VJ Associates of New England
 Volante Farm
 Whitney Veigas Architectural
 Zvi Jalfin Photography
 Beth Shalom Garden Club

ARTS EXHIBITION SPACES

Museum of Bad Art Inc
 Needham Free Public Library
 Solstice: A Magazine of Diverse Voices
 Webster Bank - Needham

EATING AND DRINKING PLACES

Bertucci's Brick Oven Pizzeria - Needham
 Dragon Chef Needham
 Fuji Steak House
 Gari Japanese Fusion Bistro - Needham
 Hearth Pizzeria
 Latina Kitchen & Bar
 Little Spoon Needham
 Mandarin Cuisine
 Masala Art
 Needham Center Fine Wines
 Needham Wine & Spirits
 Ray's New Garden

HISTORIC LANDMARKS AND ATTRACTIONS

NC Wyeth Reading Library
 Needham History Center & Museum

PUBLIC ART OR EVENT

Art in Bloom
 Circle of Peace by Gary Price
 Once Upon a Time by Dennis Smith
 Reach by John Judge
 Save The Bee's by Emma Curry
 Summer Days At Rosemary Pool by Anne McCaffrey
 Two Kids on a Bench by Max Turner
 Willet and Chadwick Wall
 New Year's Needham
 The Gaaga

Amity Path Day
 Arts in the Park
 July 4th Fireworks
 India Independence Day Celebration
 Outdoor Puppet Show Performance
 Needham Harvest Festival
 Blue Tree Lighting
 First Night Needham
 Chalk It Up Public Sidewalk Event
 Needham Pansy Festival
 Holi
 Blossoms by Ryan “Arcy” Christensen

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND OPEN SPACE

Amity Path at the Needham Reservoir
 Broadmeadow Elementary School
 Cutler Park Reservation
 Eliot Elementary School
 High Rock Middle School
 James Hugh Powers Hall
 Mitchell Elementary School
 Needham Golf Club
 Needham High School
 Needham Memorial Park
 Needham Public Library
 Needham Rosemary Recreation Complex
 Needham Town Common
 Needham Town Public Safety HQ
 Newman Elementary School
 Pollard Middle School
 Rebecca Perry Park
 Ridge Hill Reservation
 Sunita L. Williams Elementary School
 Avery Field
 Claxton Field
 DeFazio Park
 Dwight Field
 Greene’s Field
 Memorial Park
 Millis Field
 Perry Park
 Riverside Park
 Walker-Gordon

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

Congregational Church of Needham, UCC
 First Baptist Church in Needham
 Homegrown Coffeehouse- First Parish Universalist Unitarian
 St. Joseph Parish
 Temple Aliyah
 Temple Beth Shalom

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