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PREPARED BY THE
NASHUA ARTS COMMISSION

Nashua Arts & Culture Plan

2022-2027

Nashua Arts & Culture Plan 2022–2027

Table of Contents

01

Introduction

02

Plan Background

03

Current Status

04

Vision & Top
Goals

05–07

Enhance
Economic Impact

08–09

Cultivate
Collaboration

10

Support Arts
Education

11

Increase
Awareness

12

About
the NAC

13

Appendix

Introduction

Why an Arts and Culture Plan?

A vibrant arts scene is crucial to every city: enhancing quality of life and ensuring a strong stimulus to the economy.

Studies show that people and companies want to locate in cities where arts and culture is grounded in a dynamic downtown. Access to arts and culture makes citizens more attached to their communities in both feeling and action. Arts and culture provide jobs and draw visitors and tourists. The creative economy added \$804 billion (4.3%) to the national GDP in 2018, greater than the agriculture, construction and transportation and warehousing. According to Americans for the Arts, government funding for the arts at the local level is viewed favorably and seen as high public value by 60% of all Americans.

"We in Nashua recognize what is understood in cities across the world – arts and culture enhance quality of life. People want to live and raise their children in a community that offers a vibrant arts and culture scene."

–Mayor Jim Donchess

Benefits to the Community

- The creative economy is a community asset that strengthens the local economy and draws visitors to Nashua
- Arts & Culture provides a common language that brings diverse populations together
- A vibrant arts community requires collaboration between artists, arts organizations, municipal government, and business organizations with a strong citizen volunteer base
- As a Welcoming City, inclusion and access to arts & culture should be available to all

Plan Background

Where We've Come From

As part of its mission, the Arts Commission created an initial five-year Arts and Culture Plan that was accepted by the Board of Aldermen in November, 2014. This is an update of that plan designed to provide a framework for developing annual priorities, securing human resources and funding, and developing annual work plans. Due to an interruption in the normal cycle, this version is intended to cover 2022 through 2027.

The Arts Commission held an initial input session for the revised plan in 2019 with the arts community and interested citizens, facilitated by Ginnie Lupi, the Director of the NH State Council on the Arts in addition to regular planning sessions during late 2020 and 2021. The Commission's Arts and Culture Plan workgroup worked to actively align the Arts & Culture Plan with *Imagine Nashua*, a long-range citywide strategic plan.

Where We're Going

This updated plan envisions possibilities for growth in the arts and culture sector and addresses internal challenges to achieve plan goals. This includes some redefining of the role of the Arts Commission, developing policy that fosters arts and culture development, long-term financial commitment to support the goals, and strategic inter-departmental collaboration by the City.

87%

...of Americans believe "the arts & culture are important to quality of life."

Source: Americans for the Arts' 2016 public opinion survey by Ipos Public Affairs

Vibrancy at Work

Nashua is HOME to...

- More public art than any city in NH
- The only City with an International Sculpture Symposium in the United States
- NH's only professional symphony orchestra and multiple award-winning community theater companies
- Southern New Hampshire's largest arts festival and oldest juried art show
- The Winter Holiday Stroll, bringing 30,000 people to downtown Nashua each year
- Active Public Library and SummerFun arts programs

For all these reasons and more, Nashua was selected by the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts as the state's Creative Community at the Governor's Awards in 2017.

Exciting Things To Come

The City is moving ahead with the construction of The Nashua Center for the Arts, a new 750 seat theater on Main Street as well as renovating our community arts facility at 14 Court Street with improvements to the main theater, new artist studios and reopening its small black box theater.

The Nashua Arts Commission will oversee the execution of this plan. Plan **actions** and related **recommendations** are introduced by **top goal** and according to anticipated year of completion. The Arts Commission reserves the right to extend **timeframes** to best serve the project once in motion.

Plan Reference

Timeframes

- Near-term: 2022-2024
- Mid-term: 2023-2025
- Long-term: 2025-2027

Our Vision

Nashua is a creative city where the arts energize life and enhance experiences for residents and visitors alike with ongoing Citywide support.

Top Goals

1 Enhance Economic Impact

Support arts related ideas, projects and infrastructure enhancements that promote positive, measurable economic growth

2 Cultivate Collaboration

Foster collaboration between arts organizations, the public sector, local businesses, and civic organizations to work together, share resources and leverage opportunities to enhance Nashua's arts community

3 Support Arts Education

Cultivate artistic endeavors through the development of arts enrichment programs that foster arts education for all ages

4 Increase Awareness

Expand the number of residents and potential visitors who know about, appreciate, and participate in Nashua's lively art scene

Enhance Economic Impact

Support arts related ideas, projects and infrastructure enhancements that promote positive, measurable economic growth

Action 1:

Create a foundation of reliable economic data to use as an evaluation tool for new art projects and investments

Recommendation A

Timeframe: Near-term

Present Americans for the Arts 2019 economic impact study of the Nashua area as baseline for measurement to arts organizations, Board of Aldermen, City Department heads Downtown Improvement Committee, Chamber of Commerce, and other civic organizations.

Recommendation B

Timeframe: Near-term

Sponsor and facilitate the 2022 and 2025 Americans for the Arts economic impact study with funding and support from the Economic Development department of the City.

“

The nonprofit arts and culture sector is a \$11.3 million industry in the Nashua Region—one that supports 361 full-time equivalent jobs and generates \$1.1 million in local and state government revenue.

”

AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY 2019

Enhance Economic Impact

Continued

Action 2:

Maintain affordable space for Nashua's artists and arts organizations

Recommendation A

Timeframe: Mid-term

Make necessary improvements to Greeley Park Bandshell such as upgrading sound system, using local artists to beautify existing structure

Recommendation B

Timeframe: Long-term

Complete repairs and renovations of 14 Court Street

Recommendation C

Timeframe: Long-term

Preserve the Keefe Center for the Arts for continued access and use by Nashua's nonprofit arts organizations and as a venue for fundraising

Enhance Economic Impact

Continued

Action 3:

Capitalize on new and existing resources that facilitate audience development

Recommendation A

Timeframe: Near-term

Support successful completion and operation of the Nashua Center for the Arts and integration into the community.

Recommendation B

Timeframe: Near-term

Continue support of measurable audience development of the arts organizations through the Commission's grant program.

Recommendation C

Timeframe: Mid-term

Add listings of artists by category that sell their work or provide private performances to ExperienceNashuaArts.org.

Recommendation D

Timeframe: Mid-term

Expand available funding for arts projects and programs by increasing City's arts grants, publishing a list of arts funding opportunities, and sharing any funding opportunities on the Art's Commission's Facebook page.

Recommendation E

Timeframe: Long-term

Investigate using Spectacle Live to book performances at Keefe and Holman Stadium to share profits to fund the arts.

Cultivate Collaboration

Foster collaboration between arts organizations, the public sector, local businesses, and civic organizations to work together, share resources and leverage opportunities to enhance Nashua's arts community.

Action 4:

Track information on projects, goals and missions of Nashua arts organizations and establish a method of pooling resources.

Recommendation A

Timeframe: Near-term

Continue annual Collaborate Arts meeting with both nonprofit and for-profit arts organizations and individuals to produce annual arts calendar and discuss missions and goals.

Recommendation B

Timeframe: Near-term

Provide a city intern or AmeriCorp member to facilitate this initiative.

Recommendation C

Timeframe: Mid-term

Create an accessible public or on-demand listing of resources that organizations are willing to share including practice spaces and arts job openings.

Cultivate Collaboration

Action 5:

Annually recognize collaborative work between arts organizations and supporting businesses.

Recommendation A

Timeframe: Near-term

Create a “Nashua Arts Commission” membership program with benefits for participating organizations.

Recommendation B

Timeframe: Mid-term

Recognize collaborative arts organizations and supportive businesses via social media, external signage, and other channels

Recommendation C

Timeframe: Long-term

Inspire arts groups to create large scale events by combining resources

Continued

Action 6:

Create multiple strong points of arts advocacy

Recommendation A

Timeframe: Near-term

Increase communication and involvement in the arts with the Greater Nashua Chamber of Commerce and other civic organizations

Recommendation B

Timeframe: Mid-term

Provide representation to the New Hampshire Creative Communities Network and join Arts4NH; cooperatively support their missions of arts advocacy.

Support Arts Education

Cultivate artistic endeavors through the development of arts enrichment programs that foster arts education for all ages.

Action 7:

Explore the process and funding measures used to establish arts-related programs for individuals and organizations

Recommendation A

Timeframe: Near-term

Support arts festivals already in place by expanding their range, reach, and educational components

Recommendation B

Timeframe: Long-term

Encourage accessible low-cost classes, mentorships, internships, and artists in resident programs

Action 8:

Collaborate with local arts organizations, schools, and colleges to identify opportunities for artistic growth

Recommendation A

Timeframe: Mid-term

List and maintain all local and area arts classes and arts summer camps on ExperienceNashuaArts.org

Recommendation B

Timeframe: Long-term

Encourage opportunities for adult education through traditional and nontraditional art forms

Increase Awareness

Expand the number of residents and potential visitors who know about, appreciate, and participate in Nashua's lively art scene.

Action 9:

Communicate the availability and value of local arts programs and projects

Recommendation A

Timeframe: Near-term

Fund and staff further development and maintenance of ExperienceNashuaArts.org as a stand-alone website with clear identity. programs

Recommendation B

Timeframe: Mid-term

Form public/private sector Steering Committee to develop and fund a citywide marketing plan to promote Nashua as a Destination for the Arts and Downtown Nashua as an Arts District by utilizing the resources of the NH Department of Tourism.

Action 10:

Public recognition of artistic excellence and support

Recommendation A

Timeframe: Near-term

Continue to honor and celebrate contribution to the arts and cultural life of the city at the Meri Goyette Arts Award Luncheon

Recommendation B

Timeframe: Long-term

Establish a Nashua Poet Laureate and Artist Laureate program with award and recognition at the annual gala for the Performing Arts Center.

The Nashua Arts Commission

The Nashua Arts Commission, formed by City Ordinance O-10-36 in November 2010, is a volunteer commission of the City of Nashua appointed by the Mayor. Its mission is to serve the community as Nashua's resource to facilitate, advocate, coordinate and educate on behalf of the art and cultural assets of the City of Nashua.

The Arts Commission is classified as a local arts agency by the National Endowment for the Arts and the NH State Council on the Arts. As is the nature of local arts agencies in the US, public support for the arts is more than the transactional function of grant-making. Local arts agencies have a developmental role, providing guidance and advice, and to serve as guardians of the public trust to procure and deliver equity and excellence in managing the City's arts and cultural resources. As an agency of the City government, that guardianship is charged with balancing social accountability to demonstrate civic and economic impact of allocating tax dollars to fund arts and culture projects.

What does the Arts Commission do?

- Acts as the key arts advisor to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen
- Makes recommendations and proposes policies that support the development and preservation of the arts in Nashua
- Leads the creation and execution of the City's Arts & Cultural Plan
- Facilitates Nashua's annual Arts Project Grant Cycle
- Hosts workshops and events that connect, educate, and support local arts organizations

Digital Appendix

Visit

Nashuanh.gov/346/Arts-Commission



Get Involved

Contact:

NashuaArtsCommission@NashuaNH.gov

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Acknowledgements

This plan was prepared by the Nashua Arts & Culture Plan Working Group, a subsect of the Nashua Arts Commission:

Jennifer Annand
Judith Carlson
Tina Cassidy
Sara Ceasar
Lindsay Rinaldi
Steve Ruddock

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Commission 3/8/22

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Board of Aldermen:
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