

CITY OF REVERE

BEACHMONT FIRE STATION ARTS & CULTURE CONCEPT PLAN

2024



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I. Introduction

This Concept Plan provides guidance for the redevelopment of the Beachmont Fire Station at 931 Winthrop Avenue in Revere into a venue that provides arts and cultural uses for Revere's Beachmont neighborhood and wider communities.

The plan incorporates recommendations and priorities from a community Working Group, City staff, a city-wide survey, and targeted community focus groups. It also integrates findings and best practices from relevant case studies of municipally owned and/or operated arts and culture centers (**Appendix 2: Case Studies**). The Concept Plan aims to identify community priorities, sustainable uses of the building, and next steps to identify a suitable and successful building operator.

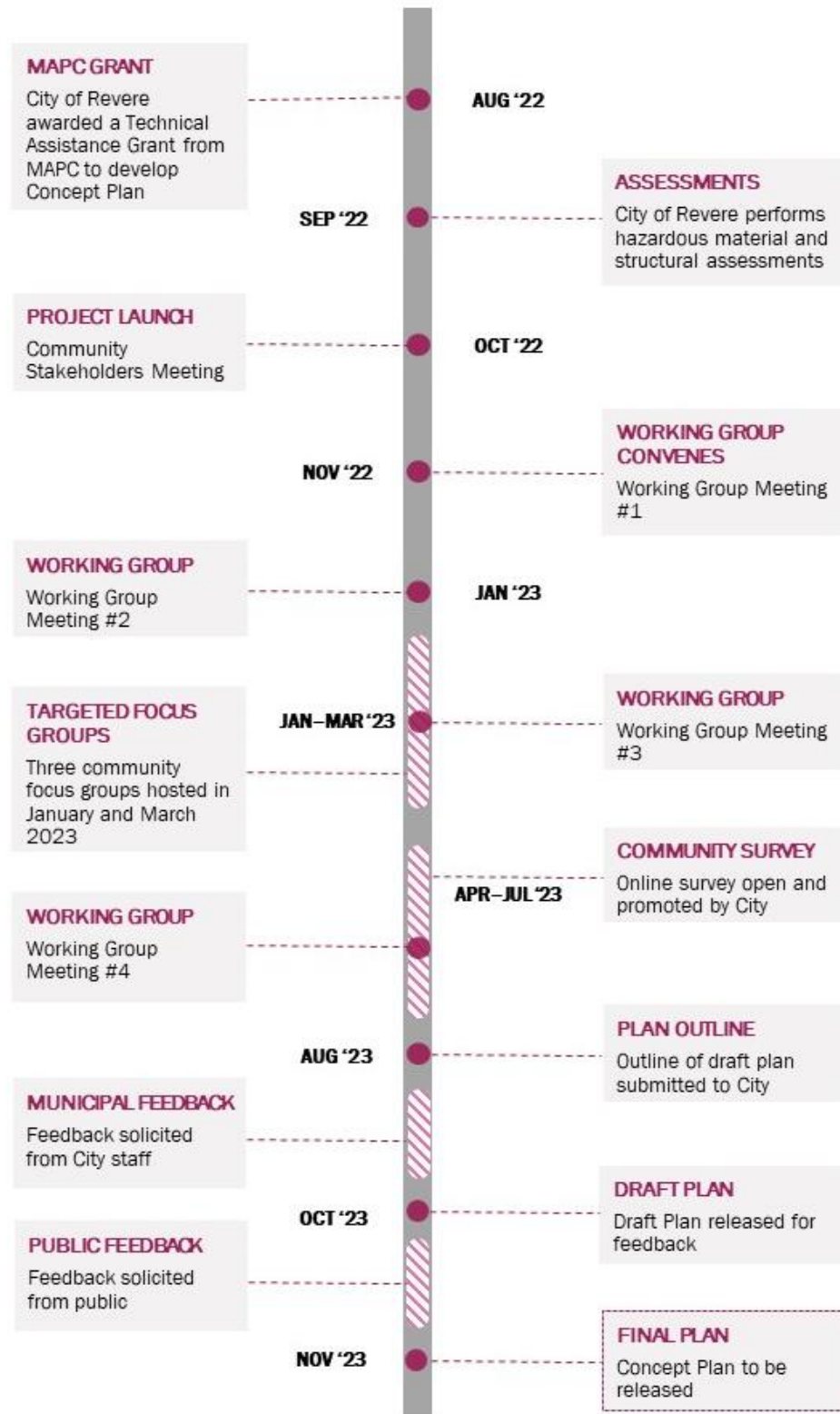
Project Context

The Beachmont Fire Station is nestled in the Beachmont neighborhood of Revere on a residential street at 931 Winthrop Avenue. The approximately 4,000 square foot building was built between 1901-1908, housing emergency response apparatuses and firefighters for the local area. Since being decommissioned in 2008, the building and its surrounding property has seen little use, and as a result is in need of physical repairs. Various Revere stakeholders, particularly those in the Beachmont neighborhood, have voiced concern over the building's current condition and the potential risk of losing a landmark in the community. Since 2019, City Councilors and staff have held renewed conversations about preserving the property, citing a potential for cultural use to support Revere's creative communities.

City-wide stakeholders including the Planning and Community Development Department, the Public Art Commission, the Beachmont Improvement Committee, and the Revere Fire Department have identified the building as a potential facility to be repurposed as a Community Art Center.

In summer 2022, the City of Revere applied for and received a Technical Assistance Grant from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to develop an Arts & Culture Concept Plan to offer guidance for redevelopment of the building that considers community priorities and sustainable best practices. MAPC and the City of Revere finalized the project scope in fall 2022, launched the engagement process with a Public Stakeholder Meeting in October 2022, and convened the first Working Group meeting in November 2022. Between January – July 2023, MAPC staff, the project Working Group, and City of Revere staff facilitated three Working Group meetings, three targeted focus groups, and distributed a city-wide survey to solicit community feedback for potential uses of the Fire Station. To supplement this engagement, MAPC conducted research on four relevant case studies, specifically investigating factors that support sustainable funding and operating models.

Project Timeline



II. Vision & Values

Vision for Arts & Culture in Revere

Based on conversations with the project Working Group and further input collected from focus groups, the project team synthesized this vision for what an arts and cultural center in Revere could look like:

What if Revere had an intergenerational gathering place where community and cultural groups could host meetings, residents could buy locally-made goods, artists could display and sell their work, and creatives could teach and practice their art forms?

While the Fire Station may not be suitable for all the uses imagined above, this statement helped guide the visioning process.

Project Values

This vision is grounded by a set of Project Values. These values were determined by the Working Group in fall 2022 by exploring the community's priorities for the space, regardless of the specific use(s) eventually applied to the building.

Self-Sufficiency

Use should support and meet the needs to operate the space

Clear Identity

Common thread of purpose should be identified and branded

Flexible, Multi-Purpose Use

Space should allow for flexible use for different functions

Preservation

Architectural character should be preserved

Inclusion

The planning process should include and amplify voices of diverse ages, cultures, and artistic practices

Meet Demand

Use should meet demonstrated needs in the community

Transit Plan

Uses should be paired with realistic and functional transit plan

III. Site Considerations

Building History and Significance

Architecture and Building Features

The Beachmont Fire Station sits on Winthrop Avenue just south of Webster Street. The English Revival style building consists of two stories, an attic, and a basement, with brick foundation, half brick, half timbering walls, and a gable roof with asphalt shingles. There is a newer addition attached to the main building, inferred from lower ceilings and newer materials connecting to a rear patio constructed of clay brick and concrete masonry.



Original Building Layout

The main floor is a 32' wide by 38' long apparatus bay and was used primarily to hold fire trucks alongside operational needs.

The second floor was originally used as sleeping quarters and an office, with approximately five bedrooms.

The attic, accessible from the second floor, is unoccupied and was assumed to be used for incidental light storage.

The basement was used as a utility room with boiler and hose drying racks.

Valued at \$825,600 as of April 28, 2022, building assets have been defined to include outdoor paved space in front of the building, basement storage space, a first floor kitchen, bathrooms on both levels, including showers on the upper level, and an open concept first floor. The first floor contains the original wood storage lockers used by fire department staff, which add to the building's historic charm.

Challenges identified in redeveloping the building include the lack of second floor accessibility, lack of parking, and proximity to residential abutters.

Neighborhood Significance

The building and its history have long been a point of conversation for the Revere community. Aside from being the first fire station in the city, notes from a 1975 Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS) report describe the station as a building which "very likely has no equal among public buildings."¹

¹ "Winthrop Avenue Fire Station," Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS), MACRIS ID "REV.4". <https://mhc-macris.net/details?mhcid=REV.4>

Even in disuse, community members have highlighted the building's cultural value and nostalgia from its prior operational period. Current State Representative and former City Councilor-at-Large Jessica Giannino details her personal history with the site: "When it was operational, my uncle worked out of that station... and used to put beautiful flowers out front and that team really kept up with it. So, I hope that we can restore it back to what it looked like."² With trends of gradual loss of historic sites in Revere, the potential restoration of this building offers an opportunity to spotlight and celebrate Revere's architecture and history.

Renovation of the Fire Station has also been discussed in media and municipal meetings, stewarded by Ward 1 Councilor Joanne McKenna. In 2021, Councilor McKenna introduced a motion to the Revere City Council "to paint the façade and clean the Beachmont fire station property" in an effort to give the building "a facelift."³

Physical Condition

Structural Analysis

The City of Revere retained Weston & Sampson in September 2022 to assess the physical condition of the building and evaluate its structural capacity. Findings from Weston & Sampson's report are included below.

The main floor of the building consists of cast-in-place concrete slab supported by encased steel beams, measured as wide flange W10 beam with 6-inch flanges. Columns supporting the steel beams were 6-inch diameter steel pipe columns. Column spacing is 11'-5" (+/-). The second-floor framing is covered by ceiling panels and floor tiles. Two floor beams supporting 2nd floor framing can be seen to cross the building longitudinally, though measurements could not be made without demolition of liminal space. Beams encased in ceiling beams span 32' from wall to wall and are assumed to be steel wide flange beams or cast-in-place concrete beams. The attic floor consists of 2x8 floor joists spaced at 20 inches on-center and wood deck. Roof insulation is filled between the attic wood deck and the second-floor ceiling. The building is finished with a gable roof built with 2x10 roof rafters spaced at 16 inches on-center. Each roof rafter is tied by a collar tie at midspan. The roof slope is approximately 12:12. The main building's exterior wall is stucco.

Both the main building and rear addition are in fair condition. Major areas for investment in structural renovation are the roof and back deck. Though the exterior façade is eroded by weather, it is still structurally sound. There were some holes found in the building roof with corresponding water damage in those areas. Steel pipe columns in the basement are corroded at their bases. The patio deck, however, is damaged beyond repair. Further investigation is needed for the basement floor as the supporting pocket of the main first floor beam at the back of the building in the basement was flagged as tenuous and the lower boiler room hosted indications of extensive water infiltration issues.

² Cary Shuman, "McKenna Wants a Clean-up of Beachmont Fire Station Property," *Revere Journal*, September 20, 2019, <https://reverejournal.com/2019/09/20/mckenna-wants-a-clean-up-of-beachmont-fire-station-property/>

³ Shuman, "McKenna Wants a Clean-up."

Asbestos and Lead Testing

In addition to the structural assessment, the City of Revere hired Atlas Technical Consultants (Atlas) to conduct testing for asbestos-containing materials in the building. Testing followed the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) criteria, as required by OSHA regulations as well as National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP), and Commonwealth of Massachusetts Dept of Environmental Protection (MADEP) standards and DLS Standards. Out of 54 samples that were collected, there were four main building areas where asbestos was found:

- White pipe insulation in the basement
- 9"x9" Tan w/ red Flecks Vinyl floor Tile on the 2nd Floor
- White Pipe Fitting insulation in the Basement
- Deteriorated Thermal System Insulation (TSI) (Pipe Wrappings and Insulation) is present throughout the basement and boiler room.

Additional asbestos containing materials included Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), firefighting hoses, and electrical wiring sleeve on abandoned knob and tube wiring system. A full precleaning by a licensed asbestos abatement contractor prior to the removal of storage or trash is recommended.

Atlas Technical Consultants (Atlas) was also retained by the Revere Department of Planning and Community Development to perform representative lead paint sampling on September 2, 2022. The sampling was performed following generally accepted industry standards for commercial buildings. Paint chip samples were submitted to ProScience Analytical Services Inc. for analysis, and all samples were found to contain a detectable level of lead above the reporting limit, indicating the need for lead abatement as part of the renovation process.

See **Appendix 5: Lead Analysis Findings** for the detailed lead analysis results.

Beachmont Neighborhood Considerations

Access

Detailed in the City's Master Plan *Next Stop Revere*⁴, arts and culture programming is often isolated in individual neighborhoods and communities within the city. The lack of social connectivity and transportation networks among neighborhoods create barriers of entry, especially as Revere Beach Parkway (MA Route 145) physically separates the Beachmont neighborhood from the rest of Revere. Limited mobility between community gathering places is a challenge as pedestrians east of Route 16 (including Beachmont) are mostly cut off from the cultural centers of Broadway.

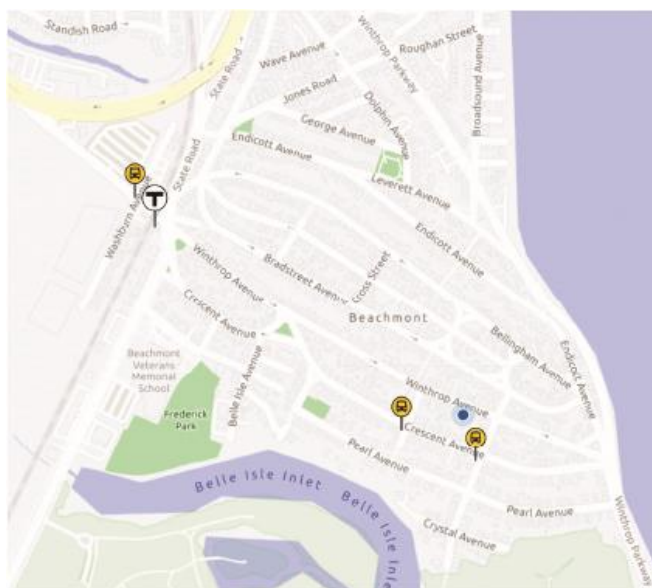
Parking continues to be a topic of major discussion in arts and culture programming and is a pressing concern at the Fire Station site. There are scarce public parking options for the building as the parcel currently allows for two spots; street parking is not ideal as resident parking passes are required to park on Winthrop Avenue. As the building is surrounded by residential properties, amending the current street parking policy would likely not be popular with Beachmont residents, many of whom do not have dedicated driveways and rely on street spaces as their primary parking option. If the back patio is removed, there is potential within the site perimeter for a total of 2-5 parking spaces, and the front of the parcel allows for drop-off/pick-up space.

Next Stop Revere, 2020


Excerpt, *Creative Economy*:

At the height of Revere's significance as a cultural destination, streetcars and trolleys connected the walkable downtown district to Revere Beach and its surrounding neighborhoods. Those connections have been steadily eroded with the closure of streetcar lines and by the expansion of highway infrastructure.

The limited mobility between cultural centers in the city is a challenge to rebuilding the city's cultural vitality. The lack of strong east-west transit connections and safe pedestrian routes creates barriers to the growth of cultural resources that serve the city as a whole.



Public transit serves as a much more accessible point of entry for the Beachmont Fire Station, as the MBTA Beachmont Blue Line stop is 0.5 miles away (approximately a ten-minute walk) and the MBTA 119 bus route has three stops within walking distance. See the transit map below with highlighted subway and bus stops in relation to site.

-  Subway Station
-  Bus Stop
-  Beachmont Fire Station

Beachmont Transit Map
Source: MBTA

⁴ *Next Stop Revere*, Creative Economy: Mobility and Social Connectivity, 2020, pg 41.

https://cdn.branchcms.com/GB7r14nbKy-1182/docs/NextStopRevere/012220-Final-Revere-Master-Plan_with-Appendix.pdf

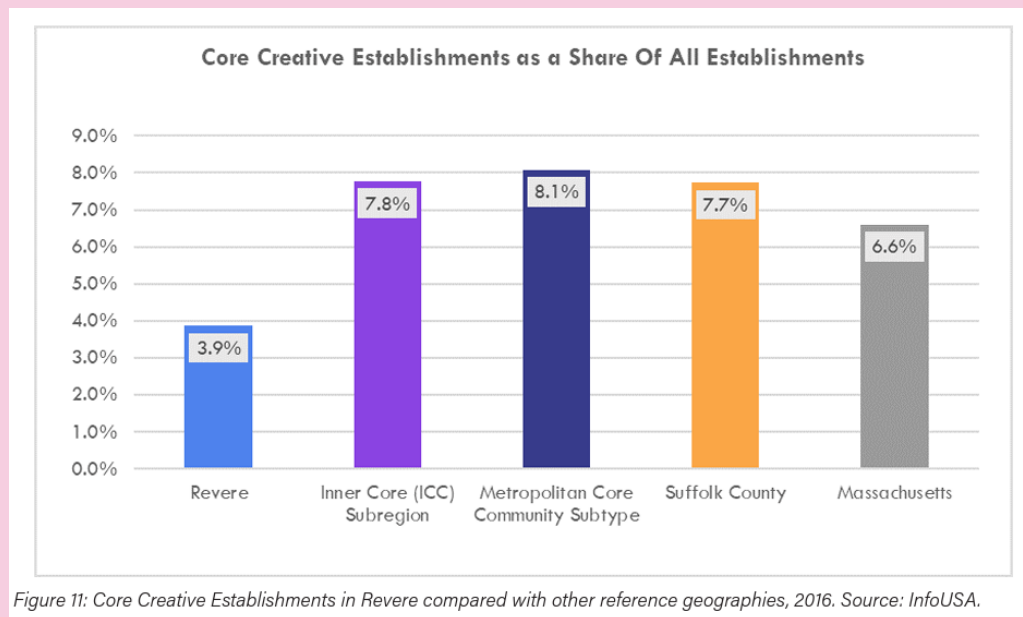
Local Cultural Assets

Based on feedback from the project Working Group and focus group participants, the City of Revere lacks gathering sites to experience or learn arts and culture. The majority of "cultural sites" referenced by community members are outdoor parks or beaches, which draw many residents and visitors for events like the annual Sand Sculpting and Moroccan Festivals, but are not suitable for year-round activity or a variety of cultural uses. The general lack of arts and cultural space in the city is detailed in *Next Stop Revere*⁵:

Next Stop Revere, 2020

Excerpt, *Creative Economy*:

Despite its historic importance as a destination for pop-culture music, dance, and entertainment, creative economy establishments are less prominent in Revere's economy than in the Inner Core Subregion or among other communities in its MAPC community subtype (communities similar to Revere). In fact, the share of creative economy establishments in Revere, at 3.9%, is about half that of similar communities, which range from 7.8% to 8.1%. Across the MAPC region, Revere is among the communities with the lowest share of creative establishments in their local economies, illustrated in Figure 11 below:



The figure below lists the sites noted by Beachmont residents as existing gathering spaces for community meetings or cultural programming. With one exception, all of the listed sites in Beachmont are outdoor parks or beaches, and thus not suitable for a wide array of year-round use. And as detailed above, access between Beachmont and sites in the rest of the city comes with notable barriers.

This lack of community space adds to a compelling case for redevelopment of existing city-owned properties to provide for year-round, indoor gathering space.

<i>INDOOR/OUTDOOR</i>	<i>COMMUNITY GATHERING SITE</i>	<i>BEACHMONT</i>
Outdoor	Edward T Bullard Square	
	Raymond Lawrence Square	
	Major Carl M Thomajian Square	
	Frederick Park / Repucci Park	✓
	James R. Kimmerle Park	✓
	Orchard & Pearl Street Kid's Park	✓
	Short Beach	✓
	Louis Pasteur Park/Playground	✓
	Leverett Ave. / Edward Leach Park	✓
	Beachmont Community Park at Douglas Cummings Square	✓
	Corey Abrams Community Garden	✓
Indoor	Beachmont VFW	✓
	Garfield School	
	Revere History Museum	
	Revere Police Department	
	Revere Senior Center	
	McKinley School	
	Holiday Inn Express	
	Revere Public Library	

⁵ *Next Stop Revere*, Creative Economy, 2020, pg 37.

IV. Programming Considerations

Community Programming Priorities and Needs

To engage the wider community, the project team designed two processes (in addition to Working Group engagement) to collect community perspectives on potential uses for the Beachmont Fire Station. First was a series of three focus groups in January and March of 2023: one with members of the city's Public Arts Commission; one with Beachmont residents and members of the Beachmont Improvement Committee; and one with Arabic-speaking Revere residents, facilitated in Arabic.

The second outreach tool was a digital survey, which received 317 responses, with 296 responding in English, 18 responding in Spanish, and 3 responding in Arabic.

The two primary topics investigated in the focus groups and survey were 1) potential programming and 2) access to the site.

From the feedback received, priority uses for the Beachmont Fire Station are as follows:

- Classes/workshops/art learning opportunities
- Makerspace/specialized equipment for use
- Music practice rooms
- Recording studio(s)
- Artist studio(s)
- Artist/artisan marketplace
- Community meeting space
- Cultural classes or activities (cultural music, artwork, calligraphy, etc.)
- Movie screenings

See **Appendix 3: Survey Questions and Response Report** for a full report of the survey's questions and responses.

The lack of dedicated spaces for performance, engagement, and learning opportunities is a priority for the communities engaged in this project. As noted in the section above, there is currently a distinct lack of cultural or arts programming outside of one-day events. Community residents are forced to leave town to go to other areas like Malden, Lynn, Chelsea, and Everett for arts and cultural events and classes. This is especially pronounced for youth in middle school and high school, whose families lack weekend and after-school programming within Revere.

Community members are also interested in arts education for all ages, citing a desired program that allows for a diverse and intergenerational audience, with specific times for both youth and adult programming. The Arabic language focus group, in particular, highlighted the need for arts education for children that focuses on cultural exposure to Arabic, Spanish, and other languages spoken in Beachmont through programming such as painting, calligraphy, and music.

In almost all the engagement channels throughout this project, the need for flexible space that could be used for both arts programming and more general gathering space like

birthday parties, tutoring, and community meetings was emphasized.

Site-Specific Suitability

The site in its current design provides unique challenges around access. ADA accessibility to the second floor was listed as a priority for participating interviewees and survey respondents, which would require significant investment. Similarly, parking was a sticking point brought up by both focus groups and survey respondents. Though Beachmont residents indicated a desire to walk to the site, the larger Revere community tends to drive, requiring parking for many uses. It is also important to note that noise regulation and timing of programming (e.g. a focus on daytime events) was brought up as the fire station is situated in close proximity to its abutters within a residential neighborhood.

Though all community needs cannot be addressed through the execution of this Concept Plan, it should be noted that there are other community assets that could address these priorities for the greater Revere community. See **Appendix 1** for how other City resources can be leveraged for community needs.

One of the gaps in arts and cultural resources identified during this planning process was the lack of viable local operators seeking physical space within Revere. There is a need for a complementary regional engagement process (included in **Section VI: Recommended Next Steps**) to better understand the current operator landscape in the communities surrounding Revere. Feedback from cultural organizations solicited in this type of engagement should also inform the suitability of future programming in the building.

MAPC recommends considering programming uses for **two scenarios** during redevelopment of the Fire Station. After making essential repairs and completing hazardous material mitigation, the open concept first floor space can be used for trial use; following an RFP process and operator selection, the space can be customized for long-term and program-specific occupancy.

Short-term Use

There are multiple opportunities for short-term uses that meet community priorities identified in this project. With a large open floor plan on the first floor and large street-facing doors, the Fire Station has the potential to serve as an exemplary space for:

- Community/cultural group meetings and events
- Pop-up artist/artisan markets
- Library book-mobile events
- Neighborhood movie screenings

One-off events in this location would prioritize immediate Beachmont community members' needs and would be accessible primarily through walking, biking or vehicle drop off/pick up.

This trial use of the first floor could be coordinated by 1) a City department, 2) an outside organization or contractor selected solely to execute ad hoc use, or 3) a potential long-term operator or operators.

Long-term Use

Following an RFP process and operator selection, the operator would coordinate and fund the build-out of both floors to suit its program needs. After renovation, the Fire Station's capacity to fill arts and culture gaps in Beachmont expands exponentially. Priority focus group responses for long-term use are:

- Art classes and workshops for all ages
- Makerspace
- Music practice rooms and instruction
- Recording studios
- Artist studio rentals

As a priority for long term renovation, the addition of an elevator would allow for ADA accessibility to both the basement and second floor and thus expand square footage for programming and storage. Access would still rely on public transit and vehicle drop-off/pick-up, but renovation has the potential to create a few more parking spaces (potentially for staff) after a build-out.

Follow Your Art Community Studios (Case Study

#3) occupies a two-story former residence in downtown Melrose, MA. Arts education programming takes place on the accessible first floor, while they make use of their non-ADA accessible upper floor as private, application-based artist studios.

The City of Revere should consider whether public accommodations, including ADA accessibility, are a requirement for the long-term use of the full building.

See **Section VI, Recommended Next Steps: Phased Approach** for detailed recommendations to create a successful version of the recommended operating model above.

V. Operations and Financial Considerations

Ownership and Operation

Three Models

Out of three potential owner/operator models, the first option outlined below is most likely to advance the project vision and values:

1. **City retains ownership of building and seeks a third-party operator as a long-term lessee**

*Relevant case study: **Bartol Library, Freeport, ME***

Considerations:

1. City retains authority to preserve the building and its historic character.
2. City and community retain influence to guide long-term use of site.
3. Future capital funding may include opportunities for both municipal and private fundraising.

2. **City retains ownership of building and serves as the operator**

Considerations:

- City retains control of all programming within building.
- City is responsible for funding all capital and programmatic expenses.
- Municipal staff to operate programming would need to be identified and funded.

3. **City sells building to a third-party owner and operator**

*Relevant case study: **Zumix, East Boston, MA***

Considerations:

- City loses authority to preserve the building and its historic character; or faces legal complexities to guarantee preservation.
- Deed restriction would be required to maintain influence over long-term use of site.
- City gains current monetary value of building (assessed as \$825,600 in 2022); if sold to a for-profit commercial entity, City gains future property taxes (not relevant to Zumix case study as the City of Boston sold to a nonprofit operator).

See **Section VI, Recommended Next Steps: Phased Approach** for detailed recommendations to create a successful version of the recommended operating model above.

Financial Sustainability

All stakeholders involved in this visioning plan, including City staff, City Council members, and community Working Group members, indicated a strong need for financial sustainability in an eventual arts or culture venue in Beachmont. The City should account for the following financial considerations as it moves forward to redevelop the Fire Station.

Hazard Abatement & Essential Deferred Maintenance

To protect the building from further damage and to successfully solicit interest from experienced potential operators, the City should expect to secure funding and perform essential abatement and maintenance to the Fire Station. This process should include:

- Asbestos and lead abatement, and
- Debris removal.

Dependent on further input from a structural engineering consultant, additional work may include the following if determined necessary to prevent further damage in the short-term:

- Roof repairs or replacement roof, and
- Brick repointing.

The goals of these initial repairs are to:

1. Prevent further structural damage to the building, and
2. Allow access to the first floor.

The City should not expect to recoup these costs from an eventual operator and should view them as a necessary investment to preserve a community landmark and to successfully attract a future operator. The City should investigate preservation grants and resources available in existing municipal budgets to fund these improvements.

Use-Specific Design and Build-Out

While multiple potential cultural uses have been identified by the community, the specific long-term programmatic uses of the building, and the associated physical build-out needed to support them, should be determined by the eventual operator of the site. The City should not invest in use-specific construction to the building but should instead focus on the repairs needed in any scenario, outlined above.

To bridge the current findings from community residents to the eventual RFP for a long-term operator, the project team recommends issuing a Request for Information (RFI) to arts and cultural organizations across the region, soliciting feedback that will help create a successful RFP.

Once an operator has been identified via the RFP, that entity should be expected to identify and fund the design and construction necessary to support their proposed programming. This expectation should be made clear throughout the search and identification of an operator/long-term lessee, and will accomplish the following:

1. Facilitate the tandem development of the building's design and program; and
2. Ensure the operator's investment in the long-term use of the property.

While the operator will lead fundraising efforts to renovate the building, the City should commit to remaining a strategic and, when possible and appropriate, funding partner in this process. Grant funding to support build-out may be available specifically to municipalities or to private/non-profit organizations; thus, remaining flexible as to who applies for and receives funding will yield the most resources.

Ongoing Operating Costs

In addition to capital construction costs, the City should consider the costs necessary to maintain and operate the building and acknowledge these when seeking and identifying an operator.

For instance, the City should determine if any ongoing municipal funds will be designated toward utility costs (electricity, heating, snow removal) or structural maintenance. If the operator is expected to be responsible for all utilities and building maintenance, those costs should be estimated by the City and included in an operator RFP with as much specificity as possible.

Operator Considerations

When seeking a long-term operator for the Fire Station, the City should include the following factors in an RFI and RFP.

Community Priorities

A successful operator should outline how they will **meet local demand** with their proposed use of the building. The RFP should include a list of suggested programmatic uses identified in this visioning process, such as:

- Arts education for all ages
- Makerspace operation
- Practice rooms and/or recording studios
- Artist studio management

A successful operator should also have existing connections to or knowledge of Revere's communities. In the case of an operator outside of Revere, they should be asked to outline past **community-building experience**.

The **Bartol Library (Case Study #1)**, a historic building owned by the Town of Freeport, Maine, was ultimately leased to the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA) to operate the Maine Organic Marketplace.

While MOFGA is based 75 miles away in Unity, Maine, they 1) operated a pop-up marketplace in another Freeport location to test their concept and build community relationships; and 2) met the identified community demand of selling locally-produced goods.

Regional Operator Feedback

Prior to writing an RFP for a long-term operator, the City should solicit feedback from regional potential operators via a Request for Information in order to gauge interest in the

Fire Station site, assess potential barriers to operator success, and gather programming ideas that reflect actual regional expertise and interest. This feedback should inform the availability for trial-use programming in the building and the eventual criteria in an operator RFP.

Operating Expertise

In addition to a compelling case for programming, a successful operator should have **demonstrated experience offering the programming** in their proposal (e.g. arts education, studio management, etc.). The RFP should also account for **past experience operating a physical venue or cultural facility**.

When responding to the City of Boston's RFP for an operator to acquire an East Boston fire station, **Zumix (Case Study #2)** partnered with the East Boston Community Development Corporation, which strengthened their proposal as a trusted community organization with deep experience acquiring and financing real estate in East Boston.

Financial Sustainability

Lastly, an RFP should weigh a potential operator's capability to manage a financially sustainable facility. Specifically, a successful operator should provide:

- Demonstrated experience with **successful fundraising campaigns** or an **identified funding partner** with experience securing capital funding;
- A proposed operating model that clearly accounts for **revenue streams to cover all programmatic and operating expenses***.

** When designing the RFP, the City should consider weighing how an operator would balance community access to the space with revenue-producing activity, such as ticket sales, space rentals, etc.*

VI. Recommended Next Steps

Recommended Operating Model

City retains ownership of building and seeks a third-party operator as a long-term lessee

Considerations:

- City retains authority to preserve the building and its historic character
- City and community retain influence to guide long-term use of site
- Future capital funding may include opportunities for both municipal and private fundraising

Phased Approach

Due to the current physical condition of the building, extensive construction (and associated funding) will be necessary to fully develop an arts and cultural venue. The project team recommends a phased approach to redeveloping the Fire Station for the following reasons:

- By funding initial required maintenance, the City will prevent further damage to the site and preserve the historic structure.
- When able to access a safe and empty space on the open concept first floor, the community and trial-use operators may be able to experience community programming in the building and imagine exciting long-term uses.
- A Request for Information (RFI) process will result in feedback on parameters for operator success, complementing the engagement with Revere residents completed for this Plan.
- Use-specific construction should be designed and funded by a confirmed operator to ensure efficient use of construction funds.

The **Bartol Library in Freeport, Maine (Case Study #1)** offers relevant

insight for a phased approach. The Town of Freeport released an initial RFP in 2019 but did not receive any viable proposals. However, after coordinating pop-up use of the empty Town-owned library building, including local art exhibitions and weekly farmers markets, the Town eventually secured the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA) as a tenant, who opened the Maine Organic Marketplace in summer 2021.

It is also worth noting that a competing retail proposal offering higher rent to the Town was not awarded the lease as MOFGA's proposal offered broader community benefit as identified by the Town as a priority in the original RFP.

► *Arts & Culture Concept Plan*

The completion of this Concept Plan concludes the first phase of the recommended approach. The community priorities, site suitability factors, and operator considerations summarized in this Plan should inform the subsequent phases to develop the Fire Station into an arts and cultural center.

► *Hazard Abatement and Essential Deferred Maintenance*

The next phase of development is funding and coordinating initial repairs and abatement efforts, with the goal of preventing further damage and making the Fire Station safe and accessible for first floor access. As noted in Section V, these improvements should include:

- Asbestos and lead abatement, and
- Debris removal.

Dependent on further input from a structural engineering consultant, additional work may include the following if determined necessary to prevent further damage in the short-term:

- Roof repairs or replacement roof, and
- Brick repointing.

NEXT STEPS

- ❑ Secure funding for initial repairs and abatement
 - Consider state and federal preservation grants.

► *Regional Operator Engagement*

The community's priorities for cultural uses in the Fire Station have been documented in this Concept Plan; this feedback should be complemented by feedback from potential operators. As the lack of clear viable and interested operators has been identified within the City of Revere, this engagement should be regional in focus.

To gain this feedback, the City should release a Request for Information (RFI) geared toward cultural operators in the region who are seeking a physical space or to grow into satellite space(s). The goals of this engagement are to:

1. Publicize the opportunity of redeveloping the Fire Station regionally;
2. Gauge level of interest from qualified operators, both for trial use and long-term operation;
3. Assess real and perceived barriers to redeveloping and programming the building.

The City should weigh the following considerations to create a successful RFI:

- Provide strategic incentive(s) for operator responses, e.g. prioritization in future RFP process, monetary incentive, free-of-charge trial use;
- Gauge interest in/offer opportunities for trial use of first floor;
- Highlight community priorities for the space;
- Provide clarity around planned next steps for the building.

NEXT STEPS

- ☐ Write and publicize a Request for Information.
- ☐ Coordinate with regional nonprofit coalitions, Economic Development departments, and arts leaders to promote interest in the RFI.

► *First Floor Trial Use*

Following initial abatement and maintenance, the Fire Station's first floor could potentially be accessed for tours and trial use. The City should consider whether and when it has the capacity to implement a trial use—the goals of which would be to:

- Gauge success of different types of programs;
- Continue to assess the needs of the Beachmont and broader Revere communities;
- Gain public buy-in and excitement in activating the building;
- Fill immediate neighborhood needs for space;
- Allow potential operators to test programming ideas.

Recommended programming ideas for this phase include community group meeting space, local artist or artisan markets, library book-mobile events, and neighborhood movie screenings. The time frame for this phase is flexible based on the community's response but is likely to span 12 to 18 months.

This trial use of the first floor could be coordinated by 1) a City department, 2) an outside organization or contractor selected solely to execute ad hoc use, or 3) a potential long-term operator or operators.

NEXT STEPS

- ☐ Assess City capacity to coordinate pop-up use.
- ☐ Contact RFI respondents to explore trial programming opportunities.
- ☐ Solicit community partners to host pop-up programming.
- ☐ Use engagement tools to assess successes, opportunities, and feedback on any trial use.

► *RFP and Operator Selection*

Following a trial period of pop-up programming, the City should release an RFP and select a long-term operator to program the space. Recommendations from this Concept Plan should inform the RFP's selection criteria, but it should also account for community feedback from any trial uses programmed in the space, as well as feedback from operators received during the RFI process.

To ensure continued community investment in the process, the City should convene a group of community stakeholders to assist in compiling and releasing the operator RFP. The City should take steps to prevent potential operators from assisting with this process, to avoid conflicts of interest in any proposals.

When writing the RFP, the City and stakeholders should include the following considerations:

- Project Values (See Section II)
- Community Programming Priorities (See Section IV)
- Operator Qualifications and Experience (See Section V)
- Financial Sustainability (See Section V)
- Prioritization of RFI respondents
- Compliance with MGL Chapter 30b procurement practices.

NEXT STEPS

- ❑ Convene a group of community stakeholders to advise the RFP process, avoiding conflicts of interest.
- ❑ Refer to Section V of this Concept Plan for selection criteria.
- ❑ Take feedback from trial programming period and from operator RFI into consideration.

► *Design and Construction*

Once an operator is selected and a lease is signed, the City should support the operator in the fundraising and design process. Construction plans should be based on specific planned uses to reduce future alterations as much as possible.

The City will likely be a key partner in identifying municipal grant funding opportunities to support the build-out of the venue.

NEXT STEPS

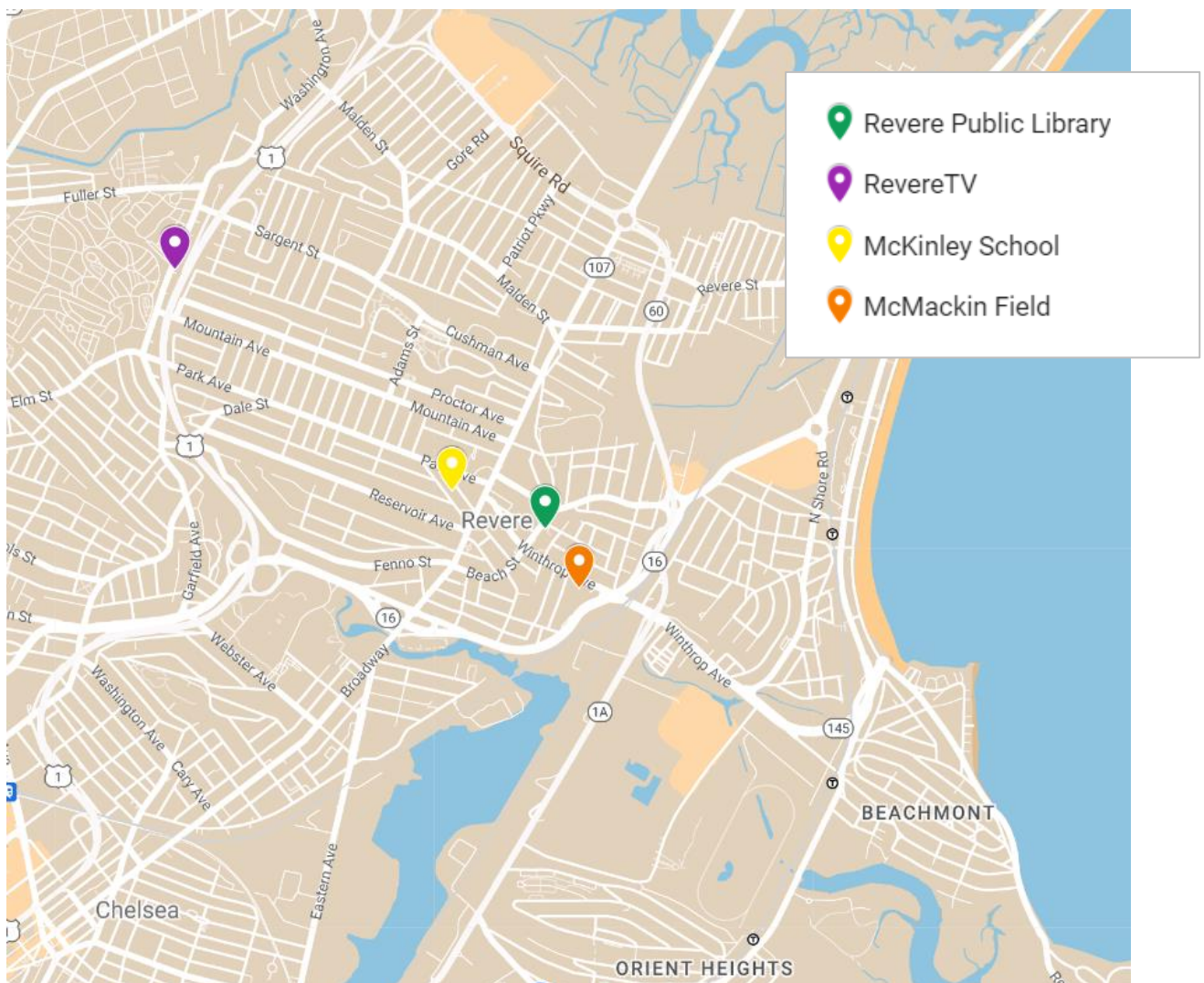
- ❑ Support the selected operator by identifying municipal funding opportunities as appropriate.

Appendix 1: Leveraging Other Resources

Over the course of the engagement for this Concept Plan, community members noted multiple Revere-based assets outside of the Fire Station that are either currently responding to arts and culture needs or are positioned to do so.

It is important to note that these resources are located outside of the Beachmont neighborhood; thus, the barriers to cross-neighborhood access outlined in Section III should be addressed when considering potential community uses within these sites. However, these locations and programs stood out as clear opportunities for investment when considering the lack of arts and cultural space observed across Revere. One or more of these sites could fulfill multiple community needs outlined in the engagement process for this Concept Plan.

Revere Resources



Revere Public Library

The Revere Public Library offers a plethora of resources for community members, including a Library of Things managed in coordination with the Revere Recreation Department. Centrally located at 179 Beach Street in the heart of downtown, the library serves as a powerful conduit to respond to community needs.

Currently hosting access to desktop computers for personal use, the library is in the process of expanding their catalog of technological and artistic resources to build out a Media Lab in the basement level. Planned features of this space include a makerspace with access to equipment like 3D printers, a recording studio, and rentals of guitars, electronic drum kits, and laptops for producing music. The library is also launching a Mobile Library program to bring resources and pop-up events to neighborhoods across Revere—a format conducive to potential short-term programming in the Fire Station's first floor.

The library has also recently hired an Adult Librarian whose responsibilities include adult arts and cultural programming. This staff member has hosted book clubs, paint nights, and crochet classes, and plans to offer more diverse courses, including language and citizenship classes.

The project team researched **Hatch Makerspace (Case Study #4)**, a makerspace that offers free access and instruction in textiles, laser cutting, wood working, 3D printing, and other specialized equipment, owned and operated by the Watertown Free Public Library. Hatch presents a successful example of a fully municipally-operated arts and culture satellite space that grew out of a few pieces of equipment inside the main library branch.

RevereTV

Local news and radio station RevereTV recently moved to 261 Washington Ave and renovated their studios, adding approximately 1,000 square feet of space and upgrading control room equipment. Executive Director Robert Dunbar has cited interest in increasing the scale of programming out of the new facility, making more space for arts programming¹. With new equipment and twice as much square footage, the new facility can serve as a resource for community members interested in recording, videography, podcasting, and broadcasting. Investing in arts and technical education in this facility would answer needs communicated by Revere residents interested in music, audio, and video production.

McKinley School

Another notable asset that can be leveraged for future arts and culture programming is the former McKinley School located on 65 Yeamans St, which is currently the subject of a revitalized planning process. In spring 2022, stakeholders conducted a two-month visioning process for the renovation of the school building, in disuse since 2014, through community meetings, workshops, and surveys. Findings from that effort identified three top programs of interest: community education space, early education spaces, and performing arts and gallery spaces².

The City of Revere is currently working with Studio Luz and MassDevelopment to restart the planning process for the McKinley School and advance community goals outlined in Next Stop Revere (2020). The school is an excellent site for resident-facing programming because of its ample parking, ADA accessibility, central location, and large footprint. Goals for that space expand beyond arts and cultural programming, but possible uses could include community meeting space, arts and music lessons, and practice rooms.

McMackin Field

Though currently in disrepair, McMackin Field, Revere, MA 02151, is another Revere site currently under consideration for redevelopment. The space is overgrown and functions as a stormwater runoff collection site, assisting with overflow from flooding. If and when the City determines that redevelopment of a recreation area is possible on this site, there is capacity for a creative and resilient green space that could be used for additional outdoor arts and culture programming, among other uses³.

Potential Areas of Investment

Opportunities for municipal investment exist to bolster the assets listed above and would help fill some of the needs outlined in community engagement from this project, advancing arts and culture programming in Revere as a whole, if not specifically in Beachmont. These opportunities include:

- Funding for additional arts equipment for the Revere Public Library, such as additional musical instruments, recording/producing software, and specialized equipment;
- Designated adult programming or hours for recording equipment or technology use for RevereTV;
- Program funding, via municipal staff or contractors, to offer educational funding around use of equipment and technology housed in Revere Public Library and RevereTV;
- Consideration of arts and culture uses as the McKinley School planning process continues.

When considering these opportunities, it is useful to return to this project's initial visioning question:

What if Revere had an intergenerational gathering place where community and cultural groups could host meetings, residents could buy locally-made goods, artists could display and sell their work, and creatives could teach and practice their art forms?

- ▶ How could this vision be realized by leveraging not just the Beachmont Fire Station, but sites and programs across the City?
- ▶ What initiatives can be put in place to ensure that all Revere residents have access to new and existing cultural space, regardless of neighborhood or cultural background?

¹ "RevereTV Doubles Studio Space and Now Focusing on Member Drive. *Revere Journal*. February 26, 2013. [Reveretv Doubles Studio Space and Now Focusing on Member Drive | Revere Journal](#)

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- ² Shuman, "Community Presentation Held for Repurposing McKinley School. *Revere Journal*. May 18, 2022. [Community Presentation Held for Repurposing McKinley School | Revere Journal](#)
- ³ "ConsComm needs more info for McMackin project" *RevereJournal*. August 11, 2023. [ConsComm needs more info for McMackin project | Revere Journal](#)

Appendix 2: Case Studies

Case Study #1: Bartol Library

Freeport, ME

QUICK FACTS

- Town-owned building at 55 Main Street built as Public Library in 1906
 - The library outgrew facility and moved into a new building in 1995
- The Bartol building converted to apparel retail, the focus of Freeport's Main Street, within a few years; its longest retail tenant was Abercrombie & Fitch (2000 - 2018)
- Town put out RFP in 2019 for new use of the historic building prioritizing unique use with community benefit
 - RFP had no responses
- Building remained empty for years; was listed for rent but did not attract a tenant immediately and then the COVID-19 pandemic hit
- In 2021, the Town resumed seeking tenants
- July 2021: The Maine Organic Marketplace opens in Bartol Library
 - Town selected the tenant because it upheld goals of RFP
 - Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association is a 501c3 with long history in Maine and had sustained a presence in Freeport since 2019 (popup)
 - MOFGA operates their online store from this location, features many local crafts and goods of artisans/vendors from their flagship festival, and hosts 1-4 workshops/events per month for the community.
- MOFGA does *not* have a long-term lease, (though they describe it as a permanent store)
 - 18-month lease signed in July 2021, with option to terminate at 6-month (if deemed economically inviable by either party). Presumably renewed in Feb 2023.
- In a July 2023 Town Council meeting, some doubt was cast on the future of MOFGA at 55 Main St.; Noted that L.L. Bean's interest in the property 'has not necessarily declined'.

BACKGROUND

The Maine Organic Marketplace at 55 Main Street in Freeport, ME is the brick-and-mortar retail storefront of the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, a 501(c)3 based out of Unity, ME, 75 miles north of Freeport. While this location has only been operational since mid-2021, MOFGA is the oldest and largest state organic organization in the country (est. 1971). Its broad-based community educates about and advocates for organic agriculture, illuminating its interdependence with a healthy environment, local food production, and thriving communities. MOFGA is well-known state-wide as the organizer of the annual Common Ground Fair.

MOFGA rents 55 Main St. from the town of Freeport, ME, for roughly \$4,500 per month. The Town has owned the building since it was built in 1906 as the town's first public library, with funds from the Andrew Carnegie Foundation and the Barnabas Henry Bartol Estate. Named

for the latter, the Bartol Library was operational until 1995 (at which point it had outgrown the facility and was moved to another location). During its occupancy, the building was renovated once, in 1967.

When the library vacated the building, it was converted to retail uses. The building was first leased to the Vermont Teddy Bear Company in 1997, and a number of other retail tenants followed it. The conversion of 55 Main St. to retail use conformed to a wider trend in Freeport, ongoing since the 1980s. In 1993, Freeport drew more than 4 million visitors to its national outlet stores annually. The conditions that supported this concentrated retail environment may have stemmed from L.L. Bean's long history in the area: its Main Street store has been operating since 1917 and continues to be an anchor establishment in the town. Furthermore, Freeport was one in a string of Maine municipalities along what was becoming a commercial, outlet-fueled corridor. While the late 80's/early 90's marked the peak of this development activity, it also saw concerns about Freeport losing its cultural and local identity at its expense.

55 Main Street's longest retail tenant was Abercrombie & Fitch, from 2000 to 2018. Toward the end of their occupancy, they were paying annual rent of \$350,000, a substantial revenue source for the Town's general and capital budgets. When they resolved to not renew it in 2018, the municipal budget took a palpable hit that continues to surface in budget meetings and documents. Given the general decline in downtown rents for retail purposes, it was immediately obvious to the town council that they would not attract as high paying a tenant. They undertook an RFP process to determine the new use of the building, hoping to attract a unique, community-oriented use, seeking a philosophical "shift from mass market, discount retail-based tourism toward experiential tourism". The RFP described the building as 5,000 square feet of finished retail floor space with 1,500 square feet of utility/storage and included its current conditions along with the RFP criteria.

The RFP, published in March 2019, sought submissions with an April 11 deadline. However, they received no submissions. In July, still with no responses to the RFP, the town listed the building to rent at \$25/SF (roughly \$130,000 annually). During this time, the town hosted small pop-up cultural programming in the building, including local art exhibitions. Due to the real estate market conditions, it remained vacant into the COVID-19 pandemic. A public process followed to solicit community feedback regarding what to do with the space. There was not an appetite within the town government to sell it; the idea of converting it to public housing also came up but had little traction. Community feedback primarily demonstrated a desire to maintain the building as a community asset and a historical site. In December 2020, the town entered into a short-term agreement with Cumberland and Falmouth Farmers Market to set up a temporary winter market in the space.

By May 2021, the town had two tenants interested in leasing the space: MOFGA and Island Treasure Toys. The former was interested in a turnkey agreement with a short-term lease, the latter was interested in a 10-year lease and some internal renovations. Both were willing to pay the base rent, and the toy company had a slightly more lucrative proposal. However, given the alignment of the MOFGA proposal and earlier aspirations for 55 Main Street to be used for broader community benefit, it was ultimately selected as the tenant. They opened their store in July 2021, soon after the agreement was reached. MOFGA had run a popup in Freeport since Nov 2019, featuring vendors who took a hit from the lack of a 2020 Common

Ground Fair (~50-year tradition outside Unity, ME). Its pursuit of a more permanent marketplace/educational outreach location in Freeport furthered an organizational goal to have a bigger presence in Southern Maine.

PROGRAMMING, FUNDING & REVENUE MODEL

The Maine Organic Marketplace sells goods and hosts workshops, including but not limited to crafting and plant-related topics. The workshops are not broadly advertised outside of their local clientele (who they reach through the VisitFreeport tourism website). Since the store's parent organization is a substantial 501c3, its financial information is not easily isolated.

MOFGA is a large nonprofit with 6,300 members, \$11.8M in assets, \$5M in revenue and \$4M in expenses annually (2022 report). Its headquarters and orchards are in Unity, ME. Their primary activities include the annual Common Ground Agricultural Fair (now in its 46th year; serves 60K clients in 3 days), Farmers Programs (technical, marketing, education, business support) for 4,500 clients, a Certification Program (associated LLC) for National Organic Standards, and Community Education. The 55 Main St. location falls under this last activity. They have also held several popups (including a presence in Freeport since 2019, and a previous popup in Portland, ME).

Per a Freeport Town council meeting ([June 1, 2021 Council Meeting, \(p. 5\)](#)), MOFGA pays roughly \$4,500 per month in rent. In 2022 there were **8,272** visitors to the store in Freeport (per 2022 annual report). While reports do not include the 55 Main St. store's balance sheet, prior data indicates that as a popup at 48 Main Street, they earned \$50,138.01 in revenue.

TRANSIT & ACCESSIBILITY

- Ample free public parking surrounds building, parking allotments are an ordinance requirement in downtown Freeport
- There is a bus along Main St. but generally, public transit options are limited

ANALYSIS

- Town's initial RFP process failed – perhaps because its submission period was too narrow, perhaps because it did not generate enough interest proactively within the community, perhaps due to the difficult timing and decline in real estate prospects at the time.
- MOFGA's retail location has been operating for about two years at this location, but its lease term is fairly short, so long-term prospects are uncertain.
- While the operator of 55 Main St, the Maine Organic Marketplace is fairly new on the scene, its parent organization has deep roots in the broader region/state, has a national scope, and significant assets.
- The Town considered investing in the Bartol building without an operator identified, but decided against it, because of the difficulty anticipating what the ultimate operator might need.
- The current tenant does have a community-impact mission; however, the operator is still primarily a retail organization, which the town had hoped to avoid.

IMPORTANT LINKS & SOURCES

- MOFGA
 - <https://www.mofga.org>
 - <https://www.guidestar.org/profile/01-6048322>
- Town of Freeport, ME
 - <https://www.freeportmaine.com>
 - <https://www.freeportmaine.com/town-council/pages/town-council-minutes-1990-2023>
 - <https://www.freeportmaine.com/finance-department/pages/budget-documents-current-and-prior-years>

Case Study #2: Zumix

East Boston, MA

QUICK FACTS

- Engine Company 40 Firehouse was decommissioned in 1977
- In 2005, City of Boston selected Zumix to be the new proprietor through proposal process
- Zumix has been operating since 1991 as community-based, youth-focused music and educational nonprofit
 - Radical arts-centered response to the violence in East Boston
- Major funding was secured by Zumix to renovate firehouse and equip it with classroom, performance, practice, and recording studio
 - The building was made ADA accessible at the time of its refurbishment
 - LEED Gold certified

BACKGROUND

Originally founded in 1991 as "Music Mobile," Zumix has grown from a youth-focused, free program run out of the homes of its co-founders (Madeleine Steczynski and Bob Grove) to a thriving institution with the mission of "empower[ing] young people to build successful futures for themselves, transforming lives and community through music, technology, and creative employment." Its commitment to the youth of East Boston has remained steadfast and its programming has radically expanded over 30 years. Steczynski has continued on as co-founder and Executive Director of the organization.

Zumix's acquisition of the defunct East Boston Firehouse from the City of Boston in 2005 afforded it a home base for its year-round programming and growing youth community. The organization's previous space was a third the size of the 9,000 square foot firehouse. The Engine Company 40 Firehouse had been decommissioned and abandoned in 1977. It was briefly used by the City of Boston Department of Public Works. In 2004, the Department of Neighborhood Development created guidelines for external parties to apply to take on ownership of the firehouse. Zumix, supported by the East Boston Community Development Corporation, made a proposal, and was awarded the building by the city in 2005. Their proposal's key strengths included Zumix's commitment to community engagement and its hyper-local focus. During the application/proposal process, they gathered over 30,000 letters from community members in support of the organization taking ownership of the fire station. With \$3.9M in New Markets Tax Credit financing from the Massachusetts Housing Investment Corporation, among other grants and funding sources, Zumix and the East Boston CDC, along with Utile Design remodeled the facility to host a large performance area on the ground floor, a radio station, a recording studio, music classrooms, and support spaces. They opened the space in 2009. The building was awarded LEED Gold Certification and the Boston Preservation Alliance 2010 Preservation Achievement Award for Significant Neighborhood Rehabilitation.

PROPERTY, PROGRAMMING & GOVERNANCE

The East Boston Fire House was built in 1923. The building is 9000 square feet and occupies most of its .092-acre lot. When Zumix acquired the building from the city, they undertook a significant refurbishment process. Notably, they involved the community – particularly East Boston youth – in the design process, drawing from their ideas, inviting them to see early

renditions, and even bringing them into the renovation site to see progress. The renovation was significant. At the time of the acquisition, the foundation and structure of the building were intact, but the inside was "in shambles," according to the Zumix blog documenting the renovation. Work on the exterior was focused on the roof, the brick, and new windows.

Inside, they put in new HVAC & plumbing systems as well as new electrical infrastructure – all with a focus on sustainability, which garnered LEED Gold certification. Some historical elements were retained including the original fire door, which was preserved and modified for contemporary use. Zumix worked with an additional architectural firm specializing in process-oriented design (flooring, lighting, signage, storage, furnishing concepts). Their acoustic, audio, and design needs—as well as unforeseen structural work—increased the budget from 1.2M estimation to 4.2M. To make the building ADA Accessible, Zumix added an elevator and second staircase, which required extending the building into the back alley.

Notably, during the refurbishment, Zumix removed the third floor of the building, opting for a smaller footprint that better suited the capacity of the organization at the time. What they did not anticipate was the profound future growth of programming which now pushes the boundaries of their physical location.

Given the size of the project and constraints on a ballooning renovation budget, physical upkeep has required consistent attention. Windows have required frequent maintenance because of weak sealants; the bathrooms have required updates. In 2022 the roof was renovated and remodeled to include solar panels.

Today, Zumix uses their facility for youth programming including Music Performance Classes as well as courses focused on Creative Media & Technology. Their *Pathways* program focuses on leadership, mentorship, academic, and career development opportunities for high school students. There are also facilities onsite to operate a youth-powered radio station. Certain spaces in the building are also available for rent for special events.

Offsite, Zumix engages in school partnership to Increase the quality and accessibility of in-school arts programming by complementing classroom instruction. It also provides for-hire services to the community including musician booking, audio/visual technical assistance and documentation, and space rentals.

TRANSIT & ACCESSIBILITY

The Fire House is located downtown in a residential neighborhood. It is close to the MBTA Blue Line's Maverick Station and is serviced by local bus lines, offering multiple access points for program participants across the city.

While the site does not have dedicated parking, Zumix occasionally collaborates with neighboring organizations to "borrow" their lots for events. They also rely on 2-hour street no-permit parking in the vicinity, and have a dedicated drop off/pick up area.

FUNDING & REVENUE MODEL

At the time of the fire house acquisition, Zumix had an annual budget of roughly \$350,000. The City of Boston sold them the property for \$233,000.

The property is owned by Zumix Firehouse Inc, a 501(c)3 that was established to purchase and renovate the Engine Company 40 Firehouse and rent it to Zumix, Inc. Its membership includes Zumix, Inc and East Boston Community Development Corporation.

According to their 990 tax documents, in 2022, Zumix's revenue had grown to \$3.1M (jumping from \$1.5M in 2021). Its contributed revenue totaled \$3M, while earned revenue totaled to \$186K. Expenses in 2022 were 1.5M (1.3M in 2021), of which \$927K were salaries/compensation, \$76K was occupancy costs (48K is paid as rent directly to the related organization Zumix Firehouse Inc). The staff comprised 22 staff members and 32 volunteers.

ANALYSIS

- Zumix was already an established organization with experience operating a physical space when it took ownership of the Firehouse.
- The co-founder Madeleine Steczynski was a major engine in advocating for and funding the acquisition and renovation of its space.
- Zumix is hyper-local in its focus and very mission-oriented, centering youth in all its programming and strategic decision-making.
- The initial cost estimates for the refurbishment were vast underestimates; additional resources were needed, and upkeep is expensive.

IMPORTANT LINKS & SOURCES

- Zumix
 - <https://www.zumix.org>
 - <http://zumixfirehouse.blogspot.com>
- Construction/Development partners
 - <https://www.ebcddc.com/zumix-firehouse>
 - https://www.mhic.com/Development_Detail.cfm?ID=00519
 - <https://www.utiledesign.com/work/zumix/>

Case Study #3: Follow Your Art Community Studios

Melrose, MA

QUICK FACTS

- Founded as FYA, LLC in 2008; opened as 501(c)3 Follow Your Art Community Studios in 2019
- 3170 sq ft Queen Anne-style house built in 1889
- Located on Main Street (Downtown) in a largely residential area with some commercial lots
- Building comprises community programming and events space, six studios for visual artists, shared writing studio, ceramics studio, gallery space
- First floor is accessible (via a 50K+ capital campaign); plans in place to make the second floor accessible via elevator

OVERVIEW

Follow Your Art, LLC was founded in 2008 by artist and art therapist Kristina Rodolico. It was formed as a small studio space with the mission of providing creative art experiences to Melrose and surrounding communities. It sought opportunities to expand; by 2010 FYA had moved from a small classroom to a 2nd floor studio at 414 Main Street that accommodated 12 people. In mid-2013 they took over the first floor (416 Main Street) and converted the upstairs to an annex, available for artists and community groups to rent.

In their fundraising campaign materials, Follow Your Art explained that "as the studio mission grew and adapted to the interests and needs of the community, it felt more like a nonprofit community endeavor than a personal business." Consequently, Follow Your Art Community Studios (FYACS) was founded in March 2019 as a 501(c)3 arts center dedicated to building inclusive community through creative endeavors (arts education, support, programming). They pursued a more permanent, larger space, ultimately landing at 647 Main Street in 2019. At the time of the sale, the property was listed as an eight-bedroom, two-bathroom house.

Between purchasing the property (under an LLC) in early 2019 (announced new space in January, closed on the property in March) and formally opening for fall workshops and programming in September 2019, Follow Your Art Community Studios conducted outreach (ex: community open houses), raised funds, and gradually phased in programming. Refurbishment priorities included making the first floor ADA accessible (accessible bathroom, entrance ramp) and upgrading the electrical system.

The current programming model maintains the earlier format of classes and programming on the ground floor, with six artist studios and a writer's studio above on the second and third floors. There are currently plans to make the second floor ADA accessible by lift.

PROPERTY, PROGRAMMING & GOVERNANCE

The current home of Follow Your Art Community Studios was originally built as a church parsonage for the First United Methodist Church in 1889. In 2018, after decades of hosting Episcopal ministers, it was put up for sale as an 8-bedroom, 2-bathroom property on 0.88

acres, at which point Rodolico pursued the property. It is located at 647 Main Street in downtown Melrose.

The property is owned outright by Art Ventures LLC, a limited liability company with 2 members (both of whom are also board members of Follow Your Art Community Studios Inc.). The 501(c)3 has occupancy costs of \$60K per year, which is likely paid as rent to the LLC.

At the time of purchase, the house was in good condition. The limited renovation efforts were focused on making the first floor (entrance ramp and bathroom) accessible, as well as some cosmetic changes (removing wallpaper, painting walls, minor patchwork). While there are plans to make the second floor accessible by elevator, the second and third floors are currently only accessible by stairs and are rented out as private artist studios.

Since its doors opened in 2019, the building has been used for: classes for all ages, catering to over 1000 individuals; speaker and storytelling series; performances; 12 gallery shows; birthday parties (31 in 2022); and 25 artist residencies. There is also a dues-based writers' studio that is additionally bookable by guest occupants for an hourly fee. Beyond the walls of 647 Main St. FYA Community Studios partners with Melrose schools and local groups primarily for youth programming. It also offers online programming and training for educators. As part of an overarching commitment to equity, the organization offers Tuition Assistance & Adaptive Services (access-related accommodations and services), fellowships for BIPOC creatives, and is working on more outreach programs to underrepresented communities.

TRANSIT & ACCESSIBILITY

There is no parking on site. Instead, community members rely on 1-hour street parking and a nearby municipal lot (3-hour parking). The "Big Yellow House" as it is affectionately known is also accessible by Commuter Rail (Haverhill line, Cedar Park stop) and Bus (#136 and #137).

FUNDING & REVENUE MODEL

According to its 990 IRS tax return, in 2021, Follow Your Art's reported revenue was \$407,403. Of this, \$90,000 was through donations, grants, and fundraising events, whereas \$252,000 was earned program service revenue (class and workshop tuition). The total revenue figure also includes PPP Loan Forgiveness for 2021.

The organization has 5 staff members on payroll and 20 volunteers (2021).

ANALYSIS

- The organization FYA was naturally outgrowing its space and structure and sought a permanent home that matched the scale of its mission, capacity, and potential.
- The space makes use of its non-ADA accessible footprint by using it for non-public artist support spaces, e.g. application-based rentals.
- The space's location in Melrose Square makes it very accessible: by pedestrians; by car-users (who can take advantage of street parking and municipal lots); by regional and local public transit.

- The programming strategies seem to rely on minimal physical infrastructure changes to what was previously a house (perhaps with the exception of the pottery studio).
- The organization was able to fundraise, invest personal finances, and seek out grants to purchase and renovate the property, while keeping accessible pricing for its programming.
- The funding model relies on the majority of their budget coming from program revenue, e.g. class tuition, as opposed to donations and grants.

IMPORTANT LINKS & SOURCES

- Follow Your Art
 - <https://www.fyamelrose.org/>
 - <https://www.guidestar.org/profile/83-1372132>

Case Study #4: Hatch Makerspace

Watertown, MA

QUICK FACTS

- Hatch Makerspace is a Watertown Free Public Library program that began with limited programming on Library premises in 2013 and subsequently expanded, moving to satellite locations
 - 2014: acquired free use of a retail space at Arsenal Project
 - 2017: acquired free use of retail space at Residence at Watertown Square
- The library seeks a more permanent, Town-sponsored location that is larger, better-equipped and closer to the Library's main branch
- Hatch offers free use of equipment and access to training as well as workshops and community programming
- Relies on financial support from the Town, local and state grants, foundation grants, and individual donations

BACKGROUND

The Hatch Makerspace is a programming initiative of the Watertown Free Public Library, whose mission is to “extend beyond its walls to connect people to ideas, information, education, creative opportunities, and to each other. While preserving the rich history of Watertown, the Watertown Free Public Library embraces the advancement of library service, inspires personal development, and promotes community. The library provides free recreation, entertainment, and enrichment. It welcomes and serves everyone.” The Hatch Vision Statement asserts that “Good libraries evolve. Along with the WFPL's traditional services we need to provide for the community as needs change. Now – more than ever – skill development, content creation, and meaningful enrichment is at the center of library services.”

'Maker programming' was already gaining popularity across the country in 2012, when Watertown Library staff began imagining a Makerspace. Initially, WFPL proposed that the new Makerspace inhabit the vacant police department adjacent to the library. The idea was well-received by the Town Council that spring, and WFPL started planning for the facility. For almost a year, the library increased maker-oriented programming in its own building in preparation of opening a formal space. These programs became a popular community asset. However, the Town did not provide a definitive answer on whether the police department space would be dedicated to the Makerspace cause. In 2014, the library was approached by the Arsenal Project, a primarily retail development by Wilder Properties that was looking to develop community space on their premises. They offered free use of storefront space and from there, Hatch was formed.

In 2016, the Arsenal Project underwent major renovations, and the Hatch Makerspace required a new home. The Residence at Watertown Square, a local assisted living facility, offered the library a similar arrangement: a free, street-level retail space. The new location, which formally opened in August 2017, offered a slightly larger floorplan and an open layout to better support the Makerspace activities. While the arrangement with The Residence is free of charge and keeps overhead costs low, the location is neither ideal nor permanent for Hatch, as Library staff feel that the current location is inadequate in terms of its square

footage and its offerings. According to Watertown's 2019 Annual Report, the Library has continued to advocate for a "new, permanent, Town sponsored facility" as a "top priority moving forward" and "that Hatch be included in future plans for the old police station."

The current hours of the Makerspace accommodate students and daytime workers. It is open Tuesday through Thursday, 1:00-9:00PM, Saturdays and Sunday, 1:00-7:00PM and on some Mondays for evening workshops that require advance registration. Hatch hosts several workshops and demonstrations, provides tools and guidance on how to use them, and invites the community to bring their own materials to work in their space.

PROPERTY, PROGRAMMING & GOVERNANCE

Hatch Makerspace is part of an ecosystem of library programming ranging from youth programming to a bookmobile, to a literacy program, to one-off activities and events (examples include: a Halloween costume competition; hosting local teams competing in the World Robot Olympiad; offering workshops taught by visiting artists).

The facility engages in local partnerships and participates in townwide events, coordinating thematic workshops to support wider initiatives in the town. For example, for the past three years, Hatch has partnered with the Watertown Cultural Council to support their YardArt project, hosting workshops for community members to participate in the collective creation of large public art pieces.

The equipment available to community members falls into several categories: 3-D Printing; Arts + Crafts; Electronic + Robotics; Sewing + Textiles; Hand Tools; Laser Cutting and Vinyl Cutting. There are also laptops with design and modeling software available for use while onsite. Hatch allows anyone in the community to use the space, provided that they follow the guidelines. Program participants are permitted to bring their creations home.

In April 2019, when the Watertown FY20 budget was published, Hatch had already welcomed over 4,000 visitors and held over 300 programs that fiscal year (beginning July 1, 2018); they had also recently expanded their hours of operation.

In 2020, to account for public safety during the COVID19 pandemic, Hatch allowed appointment-only access and offered curbside pickup for 3-D printing at no cost.

There are no social media accounts exclusively associated with Hatch, but they do have an e-newsletter. The library itself uses their website, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube for social media outreach.

The WFPL Board of Trustees, which has oversight over the Hatch Makerspace, has six members, each elected for four-year terms.

TRANSIT & ACCESSIBILITY

The Hatch Makerspace and its host facility, The Residence at Watertown Square, are located at 20 Summer Street, between Spring Street and Mt. Auburn Streets. The closest bus stop is located at the intersection of Mt. Auburn and Summer Streets. According to Hatch's website, there is limited free parking, and the best place to park is the municipal lot

of Spring Street, for up to two hours, \$.25 for 30 minutes. Parking is free after 6:00 p.m. and on Sundays.

FUNDING & REVENUE MODEL

Hatch is owned and operated by the Watertown Public Library, with financial support from the Town of Watertown, the Library's fundraising organization (Watertown Free Library Building Committee), the Watertown Community Foundation, state grants, and other sources. It also receives in-kind donations of space and equipment.

When they opened their first location at the Arsenal Project, Wilder Properties extended Hatch free use of the space, 5K in seed money, and offered to cover utilities costs. Hatch also received 8K from the Watertown Community Foundation and additional support from state grants and the libraries fundraising Group, Watertown Free Library Building Committee.

In 2018, as Hatch moved to The Residence at Watertown Square, the library hired a dedicated full-time staff member for Makerspace, Liz Helfer, to support the programmatic and logistical expansion. This allowed Hatch to expand their schedule. Helfer eventually left Hatch for the position of Public Arts + Culture Planner for Watertown. The space is now staffed by full-time Hatch Coordinator Amelia Young, two part-time assistants, and a group of volunteers, who oversee programming and the use of machines.

ANALYSIS

- Hatch has benefitted from years of free space sponsored by private organizations. However, they seek a more permanent space in a publicly owned facility to expand their footprint and offerings and optimize their space.
- The Hatch Makerspace mission fits under the broader mission of the Public Library; the library had the capacity and interest to grow the program and seek the necessary support to ultimately fold it into the Library operating budget.
- Hatch has grown to be a community asset due to its free, accessible nature, because it is responsive to the needs of the community (offers consistent hours, teaching resources), and because it is woven in the fabric of the community, participating in town-wide initiatives, partnering with organizations, and facilitating the town's connection to the greater region and the national landscape (competitions, clubs, etc.)

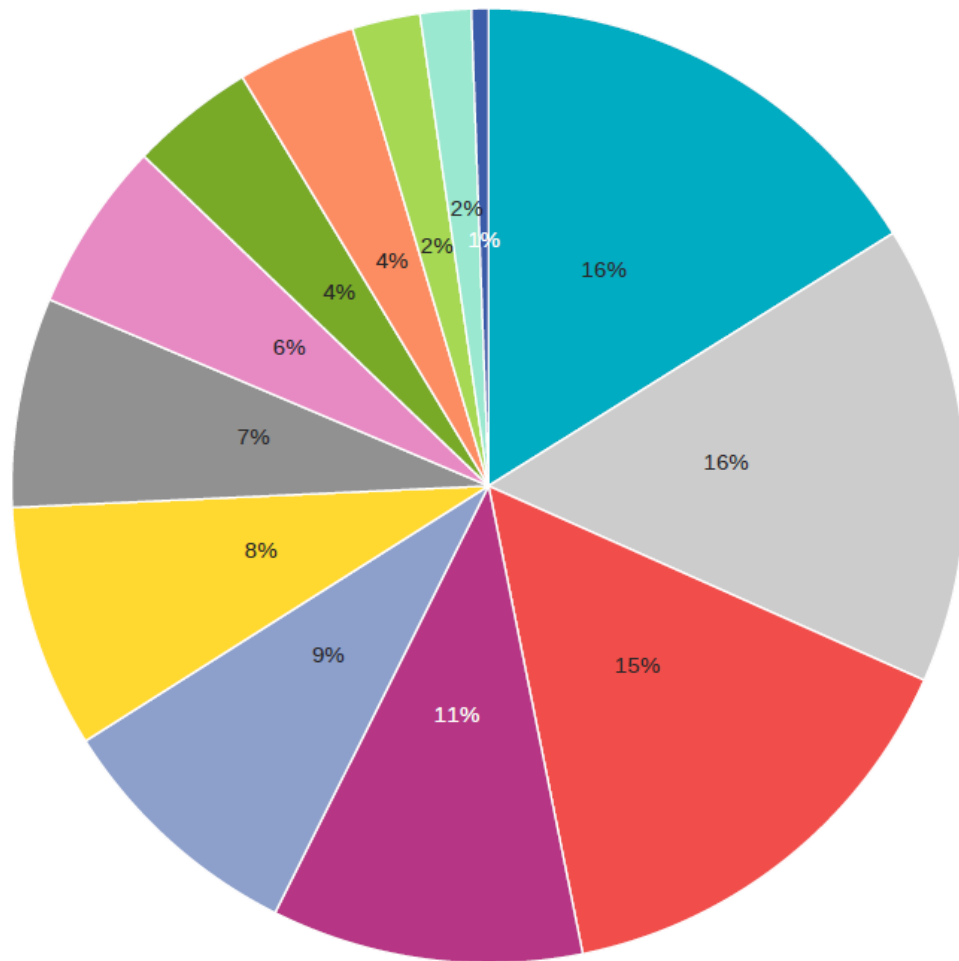
IMPORTANT LINKS & SOURCES

- Watertown Free Public Library/Hatch Makerspace
 - <https://www.watertownlib.org/>
 - <https://www.watertownlib.org/707/Hatch-Makerspace>
- Town of Watertown Budgets/Reports
 - <https://content.civicplus.com/api/assets/6c2dfdde-7667-4961-b5f0-6020f302a041?cache=1800> (2019 Annual Report)
 - <https://content.civicplus.com/api/assets/fe6b97da-a51b-4832-a615-5cccead690bf> (FY20 Annual Budget)

Appendix 2: Survey Questions and Response Report

What would you want to do at a community space on Winthrop Ave in Beachmont? Choose up to three (3).

198 Responses



- Use space to make art (i.e., ceramics, painting, jewelry, candles, etc.)
- Use space to practice art (i.e., dance, music, theater, etc.)
- Take art classes or workshops
- See art from local artists
- Attend or participate in performances
- Purchase locally-made goods
- Attend or send a child to an after-school program
- Host or attend a cultural event
- Watch films
- Other (please specify)
- Host or attend meetings
- Learn about the building's history as a Fire Station
- None or not applicable

Other (please specify) - Responses

20 Responses

Other (please specify) - Text

There is a growing indigenous North Africa or Amazigh community. Unfortunately it is often misrepresented and becomes more invisible. Having Amazigh American community representatives through art and culture will help many residents feel included.

Farmers Market at Beachmont

Free food drive? Free menstrual products?

Clases de gimnasia o zumba para seniors

Please make the space open/available for young adults & adults!!!

Esta es perfecta para el Apollo alas madres de estas áreas

Multi-use space to allow for many of these uses. It will be more successful if it can transform into more than one space.

Gym

Start a community garden. There are so many people on the waiting list and so few gardens available.

Affordable housing

Homeschool classes, makers space, space to teach machine sewing and cooking. Are

Police substation

Arts programs for 12-18 year olds (theatre, music...)

Workshops on entrepreneurship and community advancement

A space suitable for live performances ie concerts much like Natick's TCAN or Newburyports Firehouse center.

A makerspace! Maybe include 3D printers and education on how to use them

Sober Living! Too much drugs going on in Revere

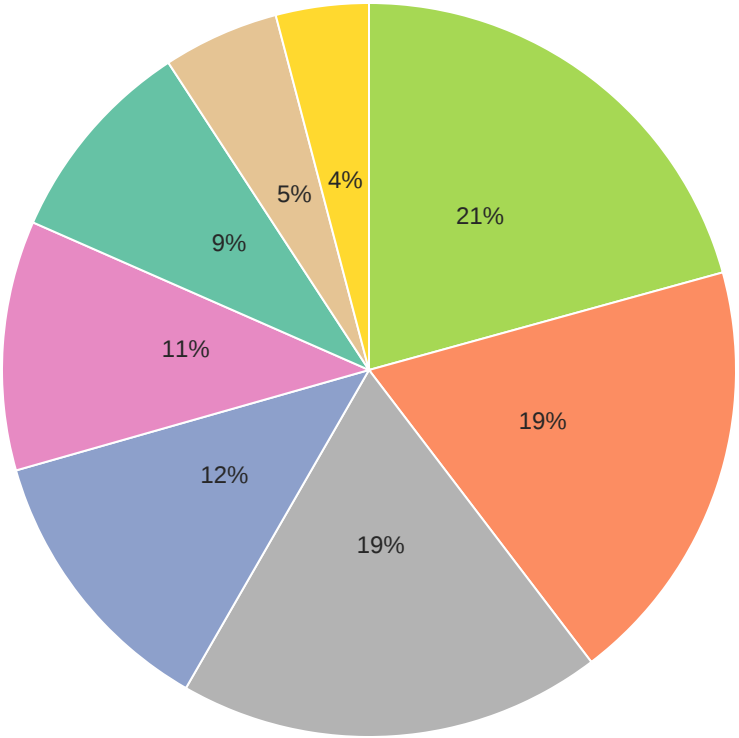
Performance space

YMCA

All

What kinds of opportunities to make art might be of interest to you? Choose up to three (3).

188 Responses



- Create or participate in "coffee house" style music or comedy performance
- Use specialized equipment (like 3D printers or sewing machines)
- Display art or curate an exhibition
- Use rehearsal or practice space
- Use recording/podcasting/broadcasting studio space
- Rent artist studio space
- None or not applicable
- Other (please specify)

Other (please specify) - Responses

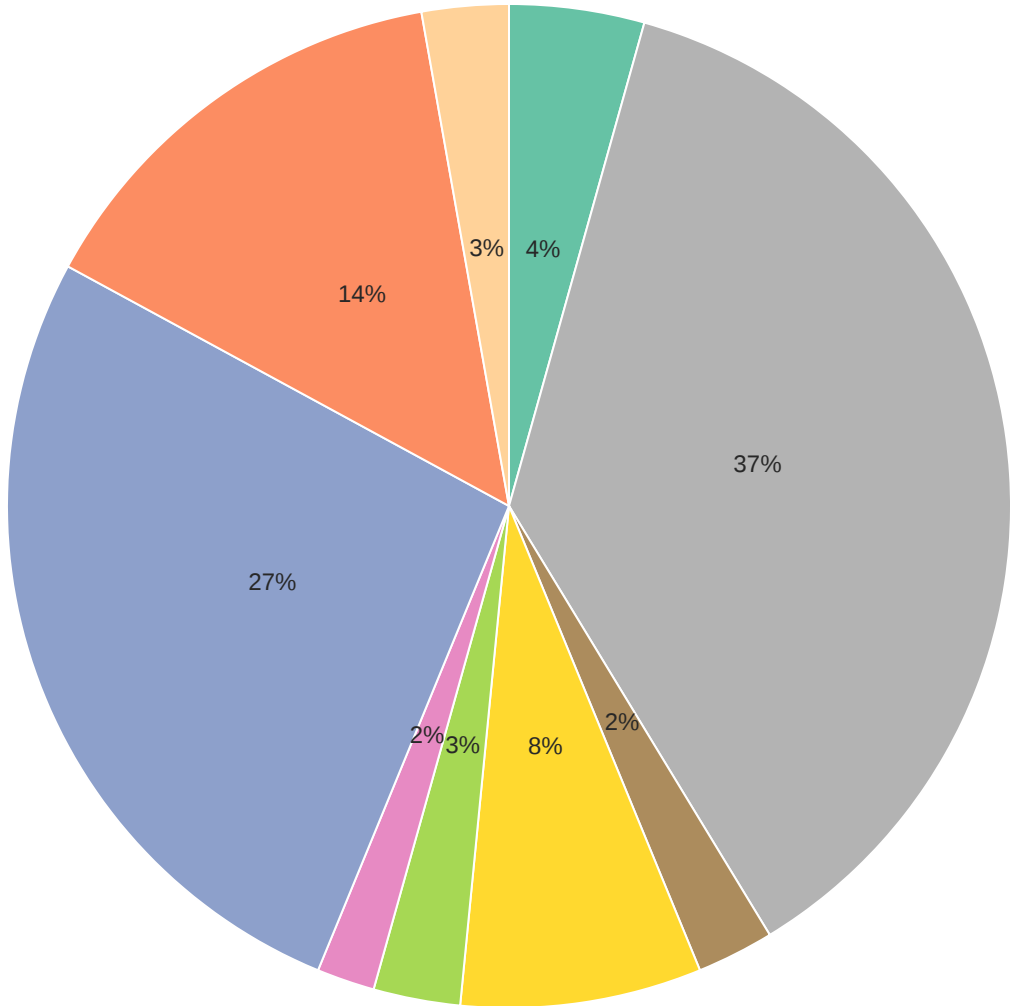
16 Responses

Other (please specify) - Text

Shop classes, demos
Watch films
Live music
Photography and sewing classes for adults as well as children
Turn into loft type housing like the Shirley Ave Station
Teaching art and life skills with storage
have the opportunity to learn how to create art
Public events, social gatherings and workshops
Art classes
Art classes
Black box theatre type space
Community studio space to hold classes in different mediums
Rhs drama performances
Participate in classes
Robotics
All

What is your connection to arts and culture? Choose as many as apply to you.

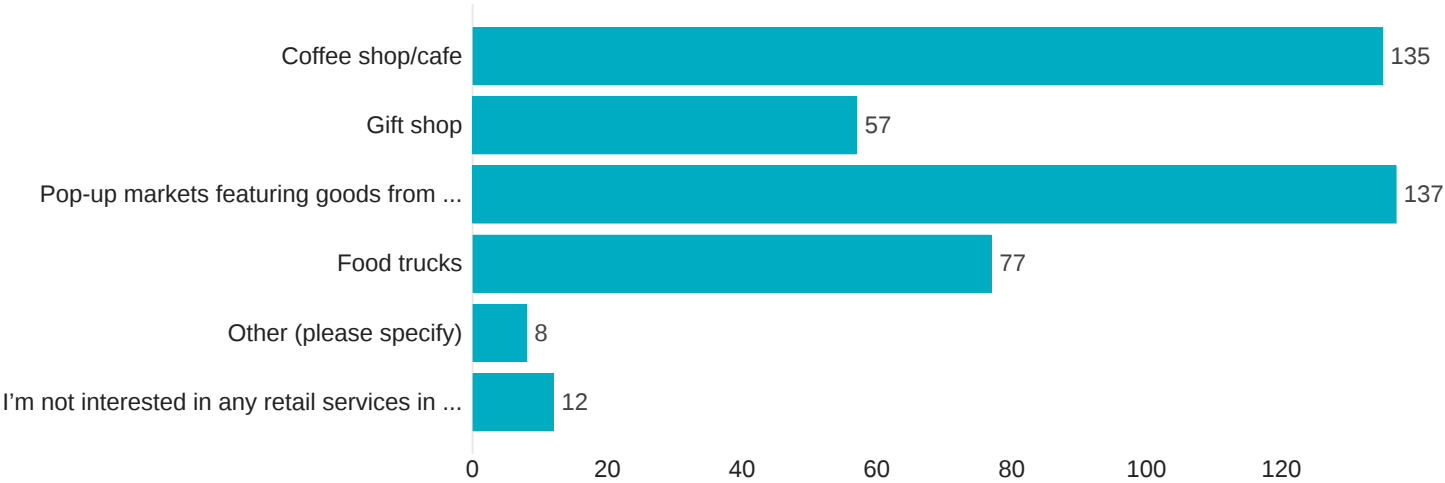
176 Responses



- Other (please specify)
- I am generally interested in this project
- I own a creative or cultural business (i.e. a dance studio, photography business, etc.)
- I participate in programs with a cultural organization
- I work for a cultural organization
- I am an arts educator
- I am a supporter/patron of the arts
- I have an artistic or creative practice, but it is not my primary source of income
- My artistic or creative practice is my primary source of income

What retail services would you want at a Beachmont cultural space? Choose as many as you'd like.

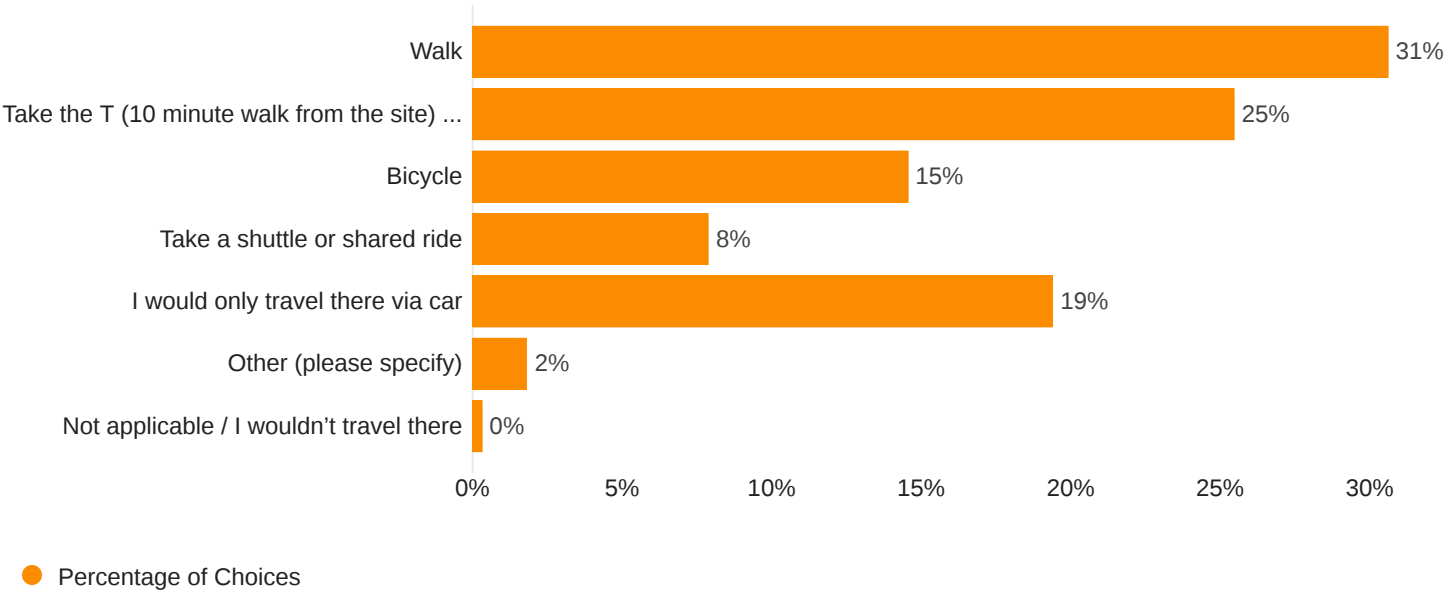
189 Responses



● Choice Count

As non-residential parking options are limited in Beachmont, how would you be willing to travel to the Fire Station at 931 Winthrop Ave? Choose as many as you'd like.

190 Responses



Other (please specify) - Responses

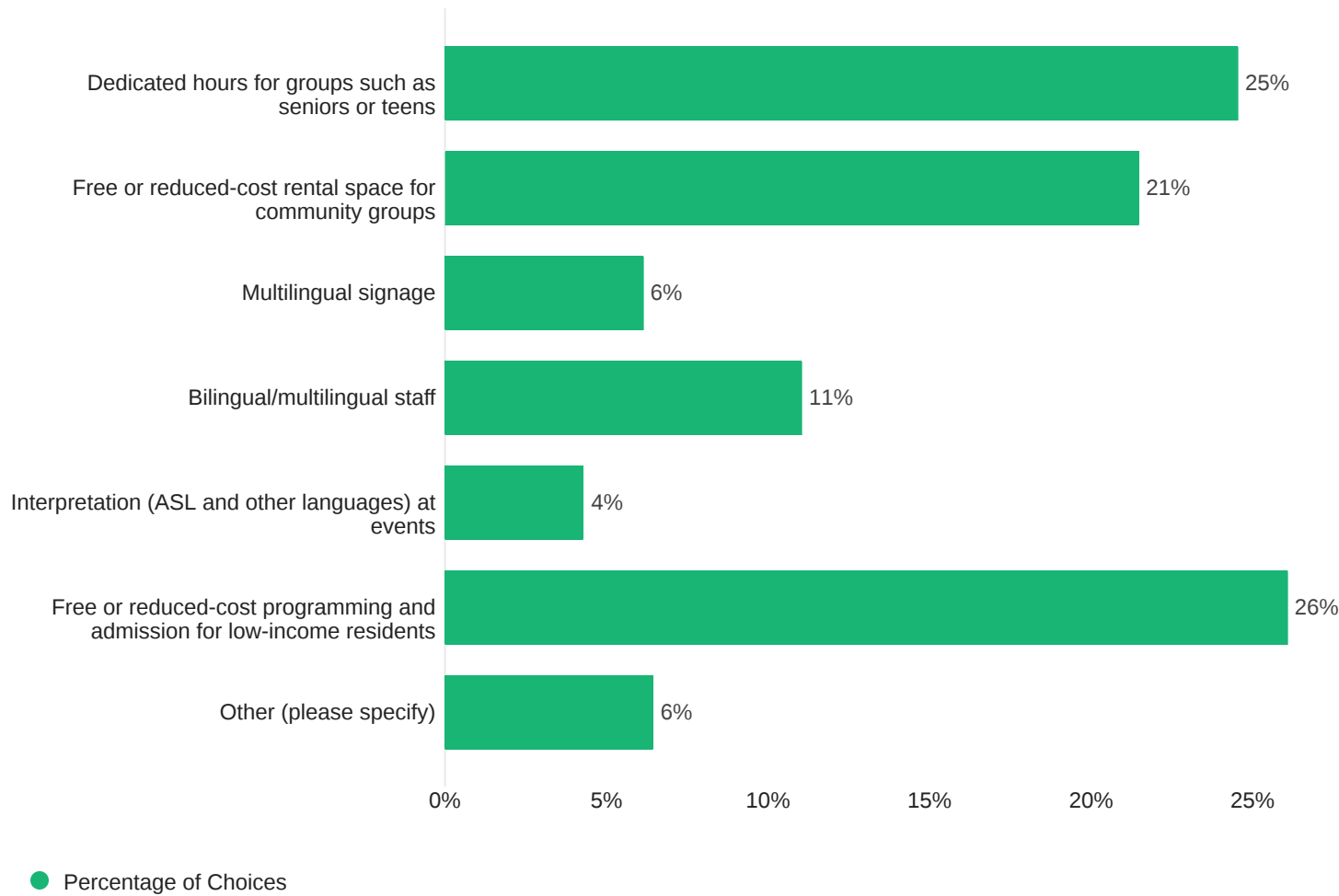
6 Responses

Other (please specify) - Text

- You should actively discourage parking/car transit. Not only is parking limited, the IPCC report in 2010 gives us 11 year remaining (2030) to reduce total CO2 output by half. We have only increased the amount of output in the time since. Any project which accommodates cars is short sighted.
- I'd crawl. Please give us an arts space in Revere
- I would prefer to drive, but could walk or take some sort of ride there.
- Make the space out front into parking spaces! Also, let our resident stickers work here (as well as other gathering places like school and churches).
- The T is currently unreliable and I don't envision people not driving into the area. The area has no available parking and this would make the situation worse for those who live in the area.
- Investigate what works best for you.

What would make you more likely to use the space? Choose up to three (3).

164 Responses



Other (please specify) - Responses

21 Responses

Other (please specify) - Text
Multilingual staff that is Cultural appropriate for instance providing Tamazight
Children's programs
A space that's inclusive that folks, young and old, all incomes, and ethnicities can benefit from and form a better sense of community
Space for child activities
None of these. I would be likely to use the space if it offered an art form that myself or my children could participate in.
Parking, senior access, handicapped access
Young adults/adults programming!!
Food, and community relationship building.
Low income housing
none of the above
Access to equipment and tools and affordable
Interesting stuff
Affordable for now-mid income families
An organized community can be in charge to make this space free and available to the community. Meaning a board.
Interesting classes
If a program me or my family enjoyed was offered at a reasonable price.

N/A

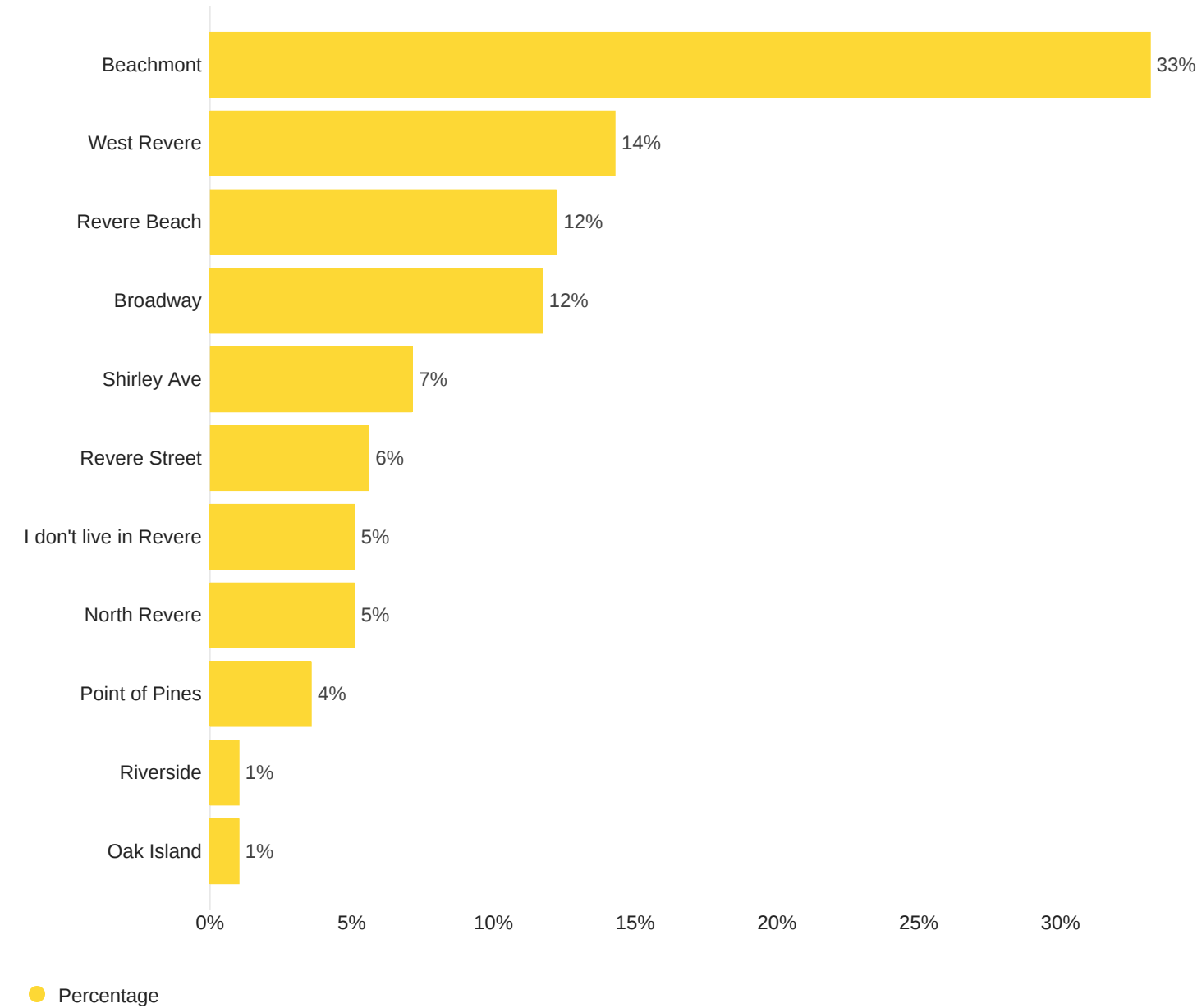
Revere resident discounts.

The proposed purpose...about time revere addressd the arts

I'd like to see exhibits and gallery space available to artists' shows, a gallery shop with items sold on consignment for artists, lectures offered and workshops offered in various art genres. As a local artist with my own studio space at home, I'd like to see a vibrant art local art association for art related social events and networking opportunities.

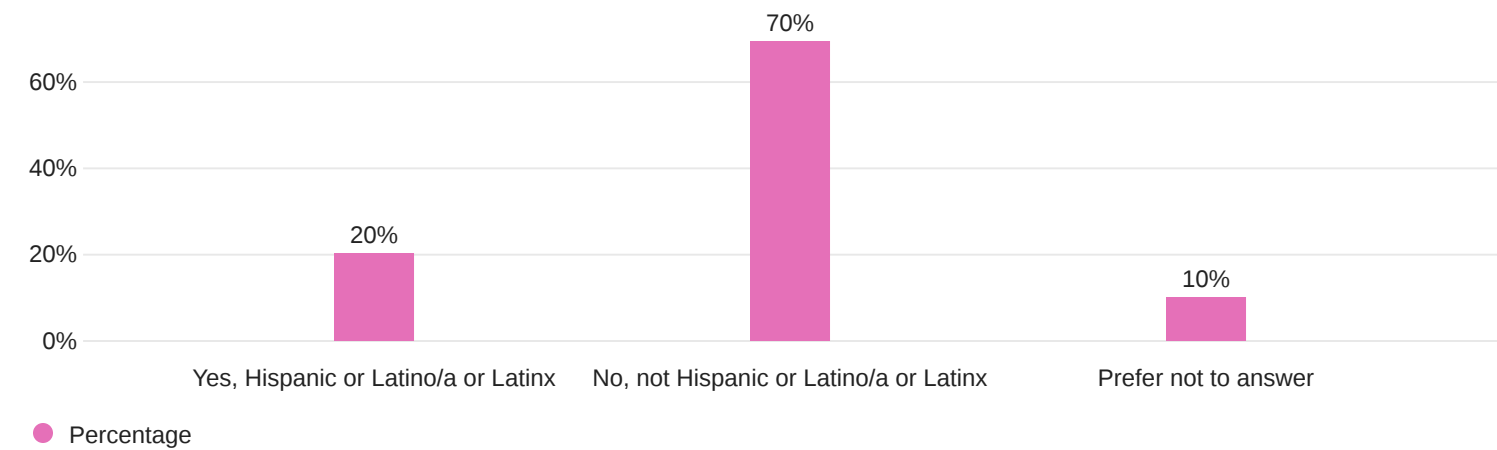
What neighborhood do you live in? Choose one (1).

196 Responses



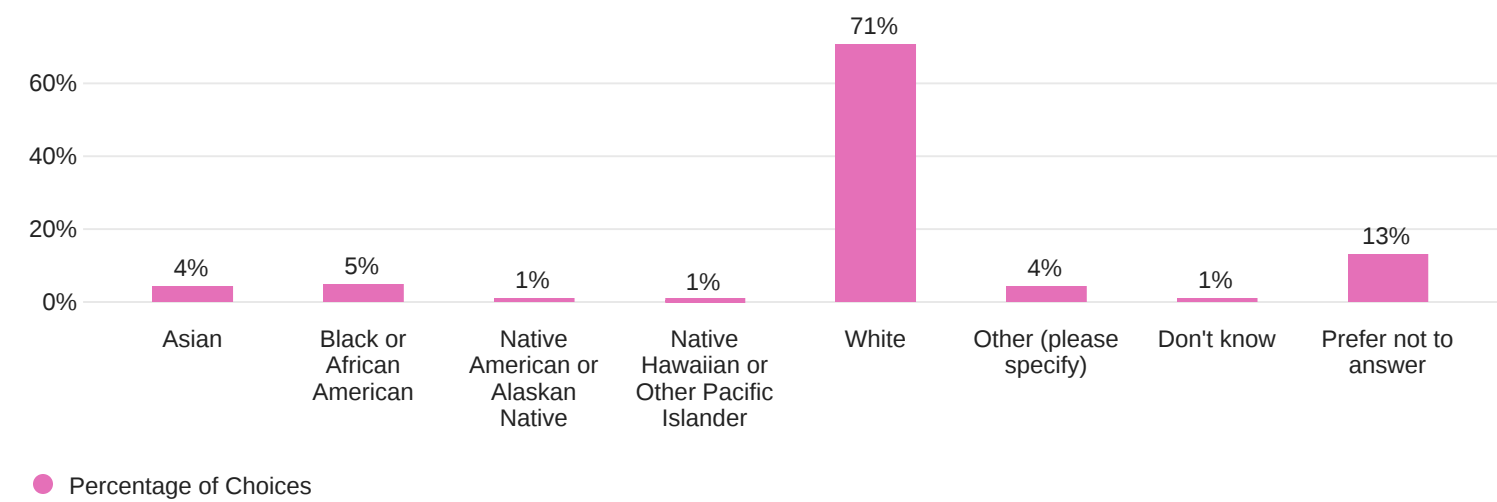
Do you consider yourself Hispanic or Latino/a or Latinx?

187 Responses



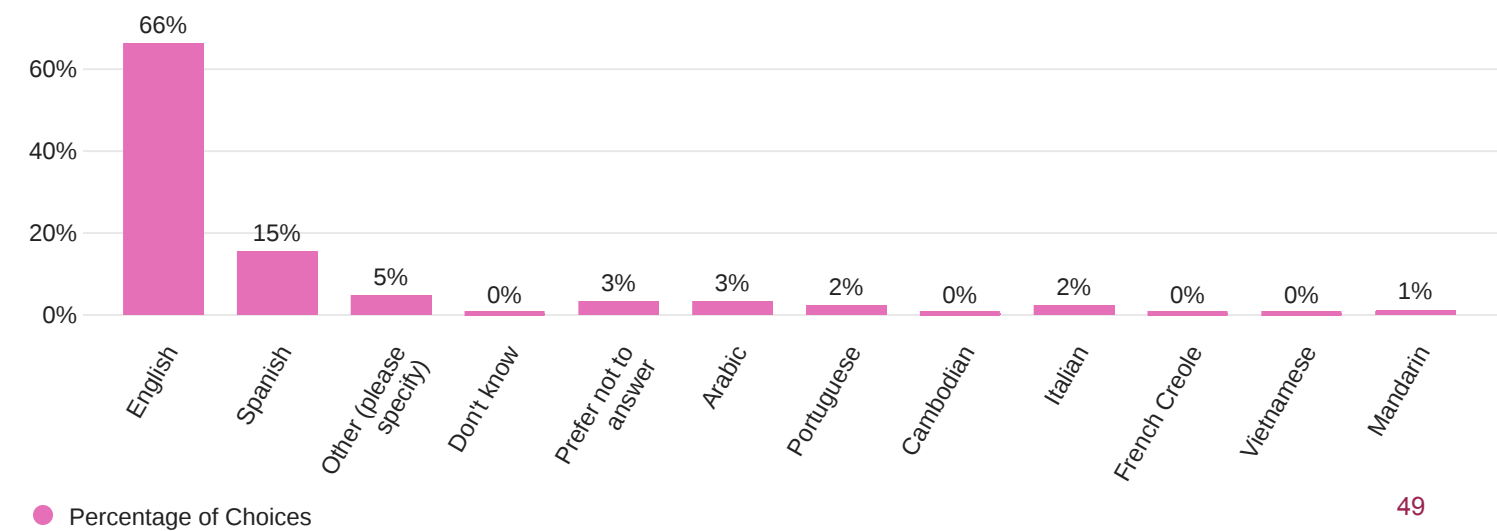
How do you describe your race? (choose any/all that apply)

184 Responses



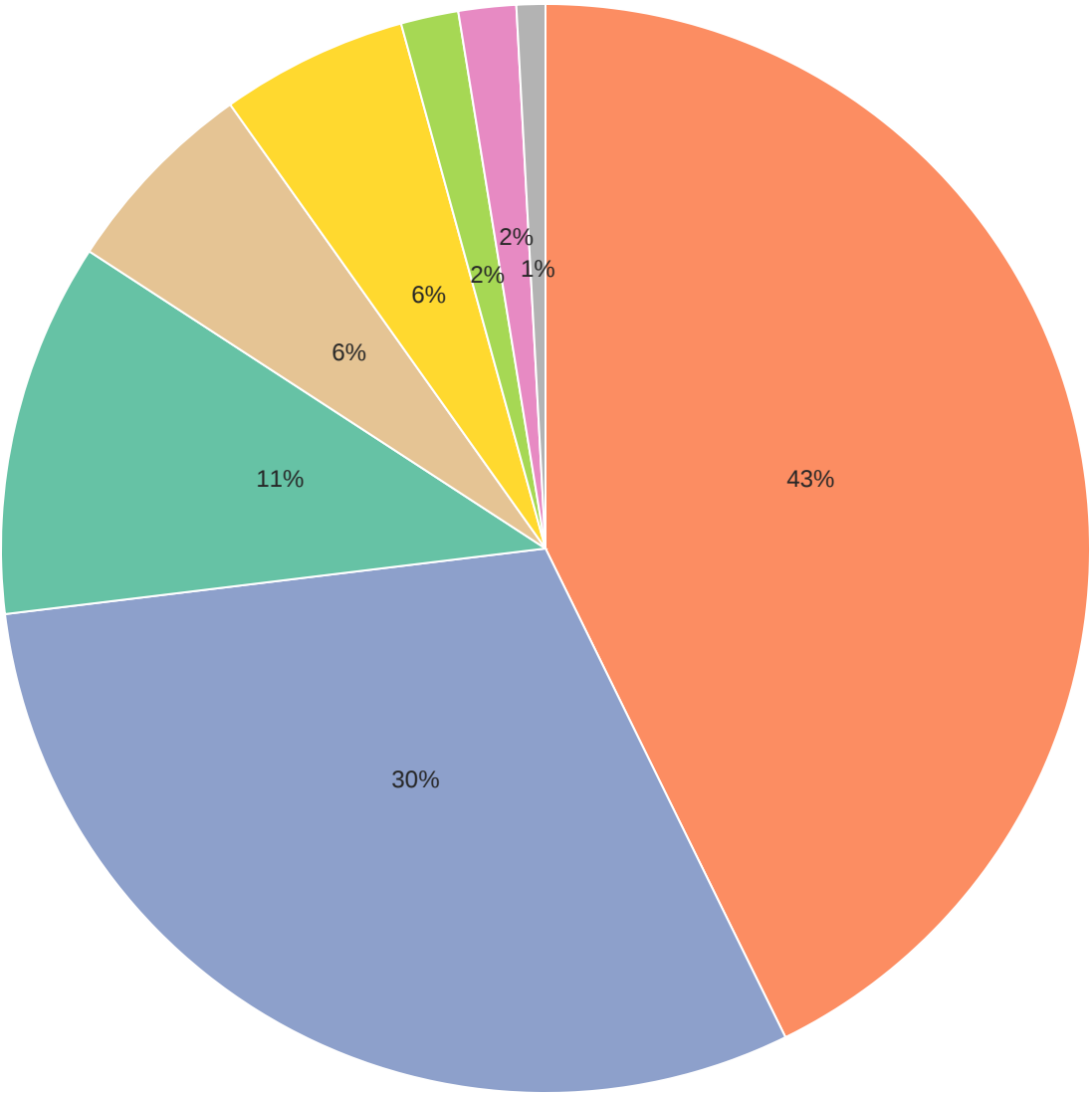
What language(s) do you speak at home? (choose any/all that apply)

188 Responses



How did you hear about this project? (choose any/all that apply)

191 Responses



- Social media
- City of Revere
- Word of mouth
- Other (please specify)
- Community organization (please specify)
- Member of Working Group (please specify)
- Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)
- Don't know

Appendix 4: Focus Group Feedback Summary

Beachmont Fire Station Arts & Culture Concept Plan

Focus Group Engagement Summary of Feedback/Themes

Focus Group 1	Focus Group 2	Focus Group 3
Revere Public Art Commission members	Beachmont Improvement Committee members and Beachmont residents	Arabic-speaking Revere residents
January 31, 2023	March 1, 2023	March 2, 2023

What spaces/venues do you consume or make art in now?

- Outdoor annual events (e.g. Sand Sculpting Festival, Moroccan Festival, Christmas Tree Lighting)
- Commercial businesses showing artwork (restaurants)
- Private arts-related businesses (dance studios)
- Senior Center
- There is no dedicated arts or cultural space in Beachmont, and very little available in Revere as a whole

What type of arts or cultural space or programming is missing/needed in Revere?

- Lack of YMCA drives residents to surrounding towns
- Cultural and ethnic communities have more dedicated space and programming in other towns
- Residents go to Malden, Lynn, Chelsea, and Everett for arts and cultural events and classes
- Former spaces/organizations that are now closed used to offer arts programming for youth (Boys and Girls Club, former Roman Catholic Church)
- Meeting space for community and cultural groups is at a premium
- There is a general lack of activities for children and families on weekends
- Lack of space for young adults to pursue creative endeavors after high school

What are barriers to accessing public space in Revere?

- Lack of parking is an issue at public events
- Meeting space is often available adhoc only when events aren't booked.

Appendix 4: Focus Group Feedback Summary

Beachmont Fire Station Arts & Culture Concept Plan

Focus Group Engagement Summary of Feedback/Themes

What are uses you'd like to see in this space?

- Classes/workshops/arts learning opportunities
- Makerspace/equipment for use
- Practice rooms
- Recording studio(s)
- Artist studio(s)
- Artist/artisan marketplace
- Gathering place for the community
- After-school youth programming
- Cultural classes or activities (cultural music, artwork, calligraphy, etc.)
- Movie nights

How do you see residents getting to the Beachmont Fire Station?

- Beachmont residents walk everywhere in Beachmont
- Shuttles from schools and/or Senior Center
- Impulse for most people will be to drive
- Suggestion for parking to be validated at any nearby city-owned lots
- Some residents use public transit a lot and some rarely use it

Space/physical/infrastructure considerations:

- Space should be flexible to be set in multiple configurations/for multiple uses
- Accessibility to second floor is a barrier
- Access to parking is a big concern
- Availability of storage space, electricity, and sinks are all important for various uses
- Suggestion to include basement as a space use, even if just for storage

Other:

- Timing of programming is important, given residential neighborhood
- Noise of programming is important, given residential neighborhood
 - Soundproofing considerations as part of renovations
- Space and use(s) need to be sustainable

Appendix 5: Lead Analysis Findings

TABLE 1
LEAD PAINT TESTING RESULTS BY SOP BASED ON SW846-7420/3051
931 WINTHROP STREET, REVERE, MASSACHUSETTS.

Sample #	Component	Location	Substrate	Color	Flame AAS Results (% Weight)
Pb1	Door Frame	Left Exterior Man Door	Wood	Red	6.66
Pb2	Roll Up Door	Left Front Roll Up Door	Wood	Red	<RL
Pb3	Wall	Basement	Plaster	Green	0.075
Pb4	Upper Wall	Apparatus Bay	Plaster	Green	6.38
Pb5	Lower Wall	Apparatus Bay	Brick	Red	0.142
Pb6	Ceiling	Apparatus Bay	Tin	White	0.380
Pb7	Ceiling	First Floor Office	Tin	White	0.230
Pb8	Wall	Kitchen	Plaster	White	0.478
Pb9	Ceiling	Kitchen	Plaster	White	0.090
Pb10	Wall	2 nd Floor Hallway	Plaster	Tan	3.12

Lead Analysis In Paint Using SOP Based on SW846-7000B/3051
Results in weight percent on an "as received" weight basis

Lab ID	Client ID	Sample date	Description	Result	Reporting Limit	Comments
C 711557	PB1	9/2/22	Red Paint Front Door Frame	6.66	0.021	
C 711558	PB2	9/2/22	Red Paint Front Left Roll Up Door	<RL	0.012	
C 711559	PB3	9/2/22	Green Paint Basement Wall	0.075	0.022	
C 711560	PB4	9/2/22	Green Paint Apparatus Bay Upper Wall	6.38	0.015	
C 711561	PB5	9/2/22	Red Paint Apparatus Bay Ceiling Paint	0.142	0.014	
C 711562	PB6	9/2/22	White Paint Apparatus Bay Ceiling Paint	0.380	0.009	
C 711563	PB7	9/2/22	White/Gray Paint Office Ceiling	0.203	0.016	
C 711564	PB8	9/2/22	White Paint Kitchen Wall	0.478	0.015	
C 711565	PB9	9/2/22	White Paint Kitchen Ceiling	0.090	0.017	
C 711566	PB10	9/2/22	Tan/Green Paint 2nd Flr. Hallway	3.12	0.010	