

2019

# West Concord Junction Cultural District ACTION PLAN



Town of Concord, MA

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McCabe Enterprises

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*Cover Image: Musicians at Discover West Concord Day 2018.*

2019

# West Concord Junction Cultural District ACTION PLAN

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# 1 Introduction

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## Introduction

In 2016, the Massachusetts Cultural Commission designated West Concord Junction as a cultural district, creating the second cultural district in the Town of Concord. The Concord Chamber of Commerce in collaboration with the Concord Planning & Land Management Division submitted the district application for West Concord Junction Cultural District. In 2018, the Select Board established a standing WCJCD Committee to promote arts and culture in West Concord Junction.

The Town of Concord received a small grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council to help launch the planning and implementation of the West Concord Junction Cultural District. This was augmented by resources from the Town. In early 2019, the Town retained the services of McCabe Enterprises, an economic development and community planning firm with experience with arts and culture, to conduct four surveys and craft an action plan for the West Concord Junction Cultural District.

This Action Plan examines the rationale and importance of creating and sustaining cultural districts, discusses the assets of the West Concord Junction Cultural District and existing conditions, identifies successful elements and approaches to growing and sustaining a healthy cultural dis-

trict, reviews the input received by four community surveys and feedback from community open house events in West Concord. The Action Plan sets forth a strategy and recommended action steps to strengthen and sustain the West Concord Junction Cultural District.

## Background

West Concord Junction is part of the Town of Concord and is located twenty-two miles west of Boston just southwest of Route 2 at Route 62 (Main Street). West Concord is a mixed-use neighborhood and a commercial village centered around the West Concord commuter rail stop and civic services on Main Street, such as the Fowler Library and the former Harvey Wheeler School, now used as a civic meeting space and community center

Settled in 1635, Concord is home to the Minute Man National Historical Park and the first battle of the Revolutionary War. Concord in the nineteenth century was the locus of progressive agriculture and innovation, transcendentalism, and a literary center. The town was home to Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Louisa

May Alcott. Today, Concord is an upper- middle class suburb of Boston and home to 19,357 residents. Concord is classified as a maturing suburb per the regional plan, MetroFutures, indicating it is a suburban community of moderate density, average growth rates and a dwindling supply of undevelopable land.

West Concord Junction evolved from a small agrarian hamlet to an industrial village in the mid-to-late-nineteenth century. Early industry included a pail factory, a blaine company and the Allen Chair Company. Nearby was the Damon Mill, where an innovative new cotton cloth was woven. The Fitchburg rail line was built in 1844 traversing West Concord with a stop for the Damon Mill. The Assabet River was the source of hydro-power for the local mill.

The northward extension of the Framingham & Lowell Railroad in 1872 to the Fitchburg Railroad created opportunities for industry along the rail line. In 1878, the Commonwealth opened a new state prison in West Concord, and new worker housing was built nearby. Rail line expansion and the prison spurred population growth in West Concord. By 1900, the industrial village at West Concord Junction was more populous than Concord Center. Today, the West Concord census-designated place is approximately one-third of the Town's populace.

At the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century, new frame mill buildings were being erected in West Concord Junction, including one for the Allen Chair Company, along the rail line. The West Concord Junction rail depot, Union Station, was built in 1893. This Queen Anne style depot is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. New church buildings were constructed – a Roman Catholic parish on Church Street and Union Church at the corner of Main and Church Streets. This late nineteenth century-early twentieth century industrial and commercial development provide the framework for today's West Concord Junction.

Many West Concord residents take pride in the legacy of industry, craftspeople, artisans, and woodworkers. Interest in forming the West Concord Junction Cultural District stemmed from a broader understanding of arts and culture, encompassing creative workers, craftspeople, and artisans capitalizing on West Concord's industrial heritage.

In 2007, West Concord was identified as a priority landscape in the Concord Reconnaissance Report and Freedom's Way Landscape Inventory prepared by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation. The Reconnaissance Report identified all three commercial villages in Concord as heritage landscapes. West Concord Village, however, was identified as a "priority because it was considered most vulnerable to change."

This concern about change continues. In early 2019, the Town issued a solicitation for work to conduct local surveys and assess the arts and culture landscape in West Concord to develop an action plan to support and sustain the West Concord artist/ creative community. The West Concord Junction Cultural District (WCJCD) Committee noted that West Concord Junction is thriving as a cultural district, which has sparked growing interest by developers and property owners.

The WCJCD Committee fears "what has brought so many new residents, new businesses, and tourists to our Junction will ultimately be the reason artists and artistic enterprises are driven away. We are bearing witness to this now as property changes hands, buildings are renovated into market-rate residential and commercial spaces with no room for artist spaces. We believe if we don't move quickly in seeking to preserve what we have, it will be lost to us."

These concerns about unguided change inadvertently harming artists, creatives, and cultural organizations over the long-term in West Concord has informed the work and development of the Action Plan for Sustaining the West Concord Junction Cultural District.



Figure 1-1. WC Allen Chair Mill prior to renovation as the Bradford Mill.

“Arts and culture make considerable and necessary contributions to the well-being of communities. Arts and culture are powerful tools with which to engage communities in various levels of change. They are a means to public dialogue, contribute to the development of a community’s creative learning, create healthy communities capable of action, provide a powerful tool for community mobilization and activism, and help build community capacity and leadership.”

– Creative City Network of Canada

Figure 2-1. The West Concord Junction Cultural District.



## 2 The West Concord Junction Cultural District

### The Cultural District

The West Concord Junction Cultural District (WCJCD) is a mixed-use walkable area centered around the Union Station rail depot in West Concord and the village business district along Main Street and Commonwealth Avenue. The WCJCD stretches from the new Bruce Freeman Bike Trail and the Assabet River on the east to the former Bradford Mill that once housed Allen Chair Company to the west, and southwards to the Fowler Library and Union Church at the corner of Main and Church Streets. (Figure 2-1.) The WCJCD encompasses 44.9 acres (exclusive of streets) with a mix of small, many locally-owned businesses and services. The district includes performance venues, galleries, restaurants that feature local artists, artist studios, art and dance schools, the Concord Conservatory of Music, Concord Youth Theater, the Fowler branch of the Concord Free Library, and the Harvey Wheeler Community Center.

Envision Concord reported that West Concord had 139 businesses and 17 individual artists. During the outreach efforts for this Action Plan, twenty-five artists completed the Artists Survey. Additionally, there were residents identifying themselves as artists or a member of their household as an artist or creative (who did not complete the artist survey). The arts businesses and arts-infrastructure noted in West Concord Junction's cultural district application include 1 theater, 1 cultural center, 3 art galleries, ten

performance spaces, 25 work studios, 4 rehearsal spaces, as well as seasonal outdoor movie and concert spaces. In addition, there are over a dozen creative economy businesses, including persons working in the arts, advertising and marketing, architects, cabinetmakers, designers, engineers, software, photography and video in West Concord.

The West Concord Junction Cultural District has sixty-five parcels with principally commercial or mixed-use properties ranging in land area size from 1,742 sf to just over nine acres. Three of the properties have been condo-ized into retail condominiums. The district has 45 property owners. Buildings sizes range from a 656 sf retail condo to Brookside Squares' 116,968 sf mixed-use building. Two-thirds of the buildings in WCJCD have less than 5,000 sf. Half have less than 3,000 sf.

The small scale contributes to the walkability and village ambiance of the WCJCD. The small-scale shops are well-suited for start-up entrepreneurs and small retailers. In today's retail environment, where in-store inventory has been reduced due to online shopping, West Concord's small shops are right-sized for opportunity. The small-scale, however, presents a challenge for growing small businesses which may need additional space to expand. There are limited options for businesses needing a retail storefront to grow and expand within the West Concord Junction Cultural District.

Over half (59%) of the property owners in the WCJCD are locally based in Concord. The largest property owners as measured by assessed value is the recently developed Brookside Square with an assessed value of \$18,367,600. The Volunteers of America's property with the Concord Park Senior Living at 68 Commonwealth Avenue with an assessed value of \$11,541,600 is the second highest valued property. Bradford St. LLC owns four properties with a total assessed value of \$9,676,100, including the Bradford Mill. The Town of Concord owns eight parcels with an assessed value of \$6,169,900. The Concord Free Library also owns one parcel valued at \$1,193,500. The Town and Library's total valuation is \$7,363,400 making Concord the fourth largest property owner in the WCJCD. A & D Real Estate owns the shopping mall at 1200 Main Street, which is valued at \$2,991,700.

These are the five largest property owners, whether measured by assessed value, building size or land area. By assessed value, these five owners own properties which contribute 61% of the overall assessed value of the WCJCD. The five largest property owners control nearly two-thirds (64%) of the land area of the district, as well as 62% of the building area.

Within the past decade, there are two significant development projects which are anchoring West Concord Junction. Opening in 2015 Brookside Square has 82 residential rental units, including eight affordable units and 36,000 SF of commercial space – retail and office. In 2010-2013, the 63,100 sf historic Bradford Mill building was rehabilitated into new co-working space, known as the Wheelhouse, general office spaces which are the home to several small businesses, including engineers, computer programmers, architects, and other professionals, and Artscape, which provides studio space to area artists.

The MBTA's Fitchburg commuter rail stops at Union Station in the heart of the West Concord Junction Cultural District with train service seven-days-a-week to Cambridge/Boston. On week days, there are 17 inbound train

trips daily starting at 5:37 am and continuing to 11:21 pm, providing eighteen-hours of available daily train service. In addition, there are 17 weekday outbound trips from Boston, with the first train arriving in West Concord at 7:28 am. The MBTA commuter rail is the only regular transit service for West Concord. There is no other fixed-route bus or transit service serving West Concord. Uber and Lyft serve West Concord. There is a transportation management association, CrossTown Connect, that focuses on Acton, but is in discussion as to whether this could serve member businesses in Concord, including West Concord. There is also a local on-demand services for persons over 60 with qualified disabilities.

The Bruce Freeman Rail Trail will someday be a 25-mile shared-use path between Lowell and Framingham along the former Old Colony Rail Road right-of-way. The Trail has been completed from Lowell to Wetherbee Street in Acton (approximately 11.5 miles). Construction of the bridge over Route 2 that will connect the Acton and Concord portions of the trail is expected to begin in the spring of 2020, but a 3-mile section of the trail in Concord will soon be open this summer; this section of the trail extends through the center of the WCJCD in West Concord. Future phases of the trail, extending from Powder Mill Road in Concord through Sudbury and into Framingham are in design and planning.

Concord is the only community on the BFRT with state-designated cultural districts, namely West Concord Junction and Concord Center. The BFRT goes directly through the center of the West Concord Junction Cultural District. This provides the district with an excellent opportunity to welcome new visitors to West Concord Junction, as well as opportunities to integrate art with the new rail trail and the commercial district. Public art and interpretative signage on West Concord's cultural heritage and natural history could enhance the WCJCD and provide points of interest to walkers and bicyclists. The BFRT is one more addition to Concord's extensive system of multi-use trails and paths.

# Cultural Inventory

## Historic Resources

The West Concord Junction Cultural District (WCJCD) has a diversity of cultural resources, including historic resources. Several of the prominent historic resources in West Concord are also venues for arts and cultural events, as well as being a building of architectural and historic significance. Heritage and architectural resources add additional interest and depth to an area. West Concord and Concord Junction additionally has an industrial heritage and legacy as a place of makers and innovators that add interest to the area as a cultural district.

Union Station, the historic rail depot at the MBTA commuter rail stop, is the one building listed on the National Register of Historic Places situated within the WCJCD. Union Station is also listed on the Massachusetts State Register of Historic Places, along with three other buildings, namely the former Our Lady Help of Christians Roman Catholic Church at 53 Church Street, the Harvey Wheeler Grammar School at 1276 Main Street, and the Loring N. Fowler Memorial Library at 1322 Main Street.

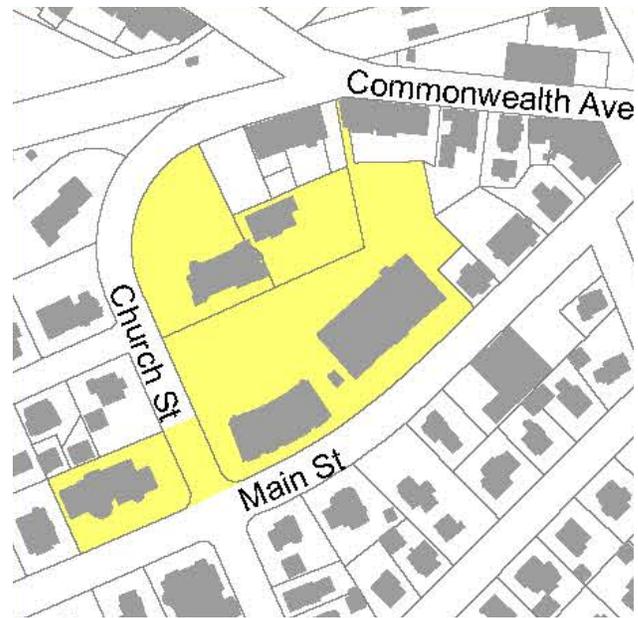


Figure 2-2. West Concord Historic District.

These three buildings form the core of the local Church Street Historic District, which is depicted in Figure 2-2. The Church Street Historic District was created in 2005 by special state enabling legislation and town meeting.

Other historic properties located within the WCJCD, which have inventory forms in the Massachusetts Historical Commission's data base are noted in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1. Historic Resources within the WCJCD.

	Address	Description	Year Built	Status	MHC #
20	Beharrel Ave	Bluine Manufacturing Building	1897	MACRIS Info Form	Con.457
53	Church Street	Our Lady Help of Christians Roman Catholic Church	1903	State Register (NR-eligible)	Con.459
20	Commonwealth Ave	Union Station	1893	National Register	Con.456
75-83	Commonwealth Ave	The Warner Block	1877	MACRIS Info Form	Con.455
1248-1252	Main Street	Conant Rental House	1915	MACRIS Info Form	Con.1383
1264	Main Street	Salvatore Bartolomeo House	c1915	MACRIS Info Form	Con.1385
1276	Main Street	Harvey Wheeler School	1917	State Register	Con.458
1322	Main Street	Fowler Library	1930	State Register	Con.460
1317	Main Street	West Concord Union Church	1909	MACRIS Info Form	Con.461

Source: Massachusetts Historical Commission and McCabe Enterprises.

## Cultural Organizations & Facilities

With eight different organizations or facilities in the district, there is a strong mix of activities that can sustain vibrant cultural programming. These include:

1. **Concord Conservatory of Music at West Concord Union Church:** A non-profit school, CCM strives to create a sense of community through music by providing high-quality 21st century music education and performance opportunities for Concord and surrounding communities. Programs are available for a diverse set of ages and levels of ability.
2. **Fowler Branch Library:** A branch of the Concord Free Library at Main and Church Streets, the current building was dedicated in 1930. With approx. 50,000 items, and programs including book discussions, children's programs, art and photography exhibitions and a Friday film series, the library is a part of the cultural district.
3. **Concord Children's Center:** A non-profit school for early education, focused on children from age 10 weeks through second grade. The center provides daycare, preschool education and after school programming.



Figure 2-3. Union Station, West Concord, circa 1985.

4. **Harvey Wheeler Community Center:** Operated by the Department of Parks and Recreation, programs at the center include Council on Aging services, preschool programs and youth activities.
5. **The New Church of Concord:** The New Church of Concord will soon be the new home of the Concord Youth Theater as it relocates into the cultural district later this year.
6. **West Concord Train Depot:** The renovated station building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1989 and includes the Club Car Café and a commuter rail waiting area.
7. **Concord Youth Theater:** CYT is a “non-profit educational organization committed to making high-quality live theatre accessible, relevant, and memorable for young people and their families.”

## District Contributors

Along with cultural organizations and facilities, the district includes a mix of culturally focused businesses, contributing shops and restaurants.

## Cultural-Focused Entities

Included in the culturally-focused entities grouping are galleries, art studios, art class/maker spaces, dance and athletic studios. In the district these are:

- Artscape Studio & Gallery
- Brock & Company Gallery
- Bradford Street Wheelhouse
- Dance Prism
- Marx Fencing Academy
- Robin Originals Studio
- Three Stones Gallery
- Village Art Room / 152 Commonwealth Ave. Studios
- West Concord Dance Academy

Figure 2-4. Existing Land Uses in the West Concord Junction Cultural District.

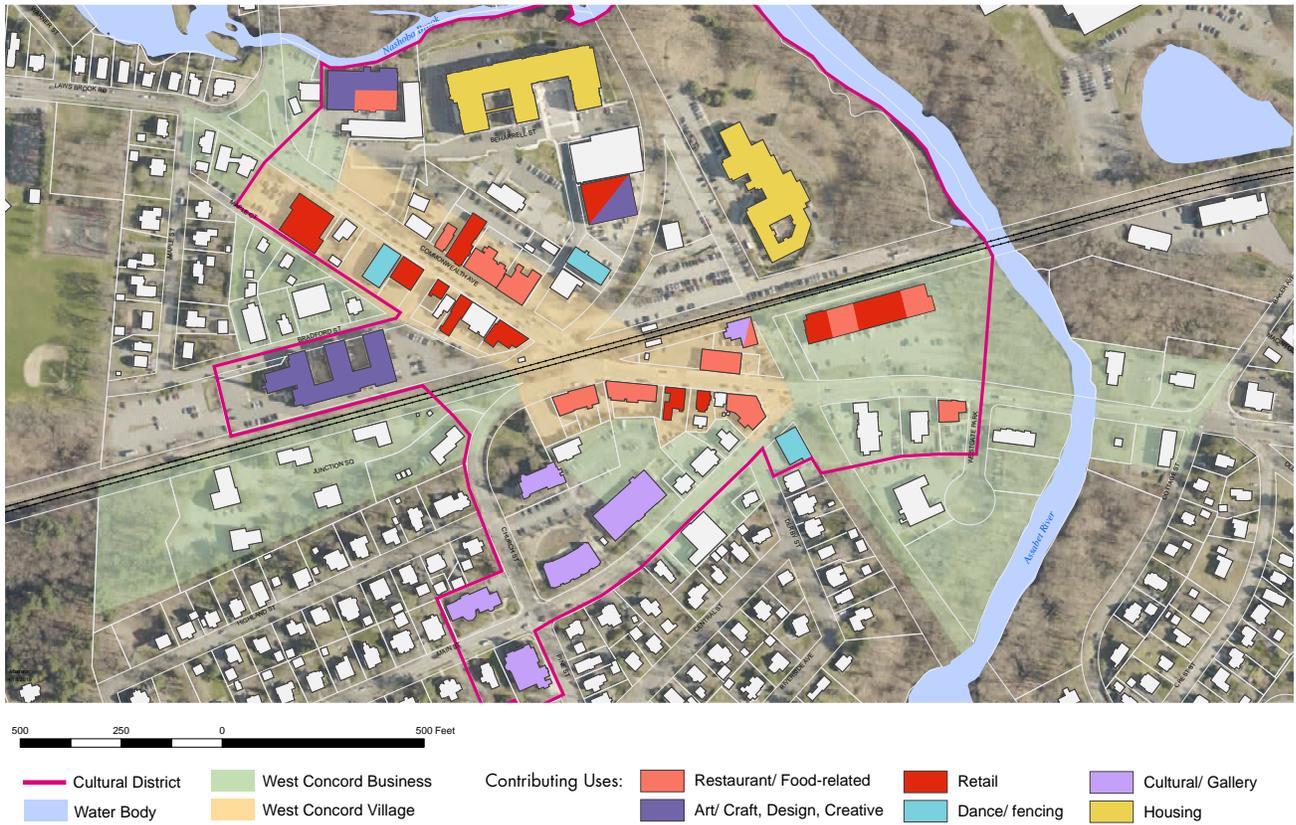
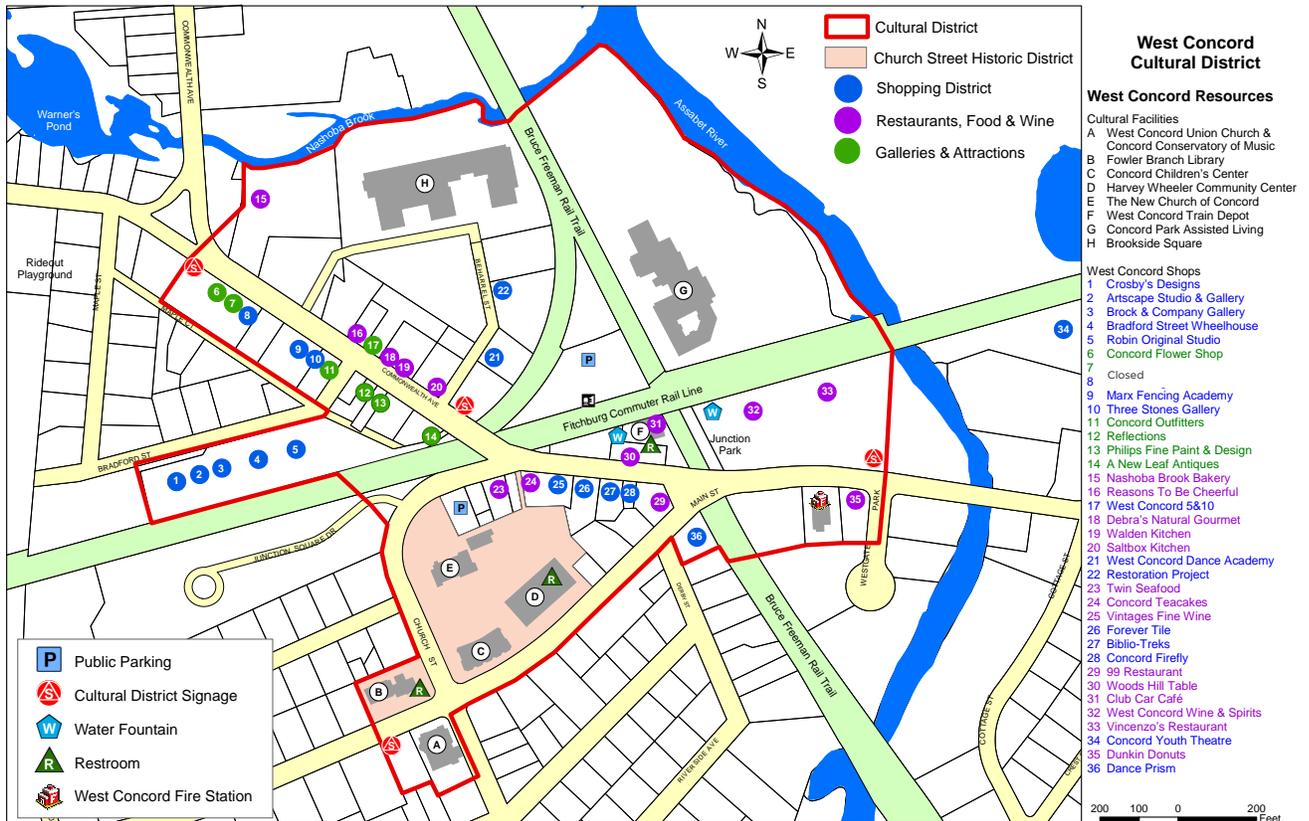


Figure 2-5. West Concord Junction Cultural District Resources.



## Contributing Businesses

In addition to cultural entities, the WCJCD area includes a variety of shops, restaurants and food-related businesses that contribute to the character of the district and its attractiveness to both residents and visitors. A list of these is found in Table 2-2 and on Figure 2-4.

**Table 2-2. Cultural District Contributors.**

Contributing Businesses
A New Leaf Antiques
Concord Outfitters
Crosby's Designs
Biblio-Treks
Concord Firefly
Concord Flower Shop
Forever Tile
Philips Fine Paint & Design
Reflections
Restoration Project
West Concord 5 & 10
West Concord Pharmacy

Food-Related Businesses
Club Car Café
Concord Teacakes
Debra's Natural Gourmet
Dunkin' Donuts
Nashoba Bakery
Reasons to be Cheerful
Saltbox Kitchen
Twin Seafood
Adelita's Restaurant
Vintages Fine Wine
Walden Kitchen
West Concord Wine & Spirits
Woods Hill Table
99 Restaurant

## Employment in the Arts

Town-wide, 4.3% of persons residing in Concord and who are both working and are 16 years or older, are employed in the arts, entertainment and recreation sector. In West Concord, 2.5% of residents who are working are employed in the arts entertainment, and recreation sector per the 2017 American Community Survey (5-year estimates). This compares to 2.0% statewide, and 1.8% of Middlesex County residents. Concord clearly has a higher proportion of residents working in arts-related fields.

2017 employment data from the state's Labor Market Information reported 4.8% of persons working in Concord are employed in the arts, entertainment, recreation sector. This accounts for 621 persons working in Concord. In comparison for the same period, only 1% of state residents and 1.9% of Middlesex County residents are employed in the arts, entertainment, recreation sector.

At the close of the third quarter 2018, the number of persons working in the arts, entertainment, and recreation sector in Concord rose to 776 persons, comprising 6% of persons employed and working in Concord.

The employment data reviewed above does not include artisans and craftspeople employed in manufacturing. Creatives, such as writers and architects, are not counted in the arts, entertainment and recreation sector. Data on number of persons working in West Concord by sector is not available.

## Churches

In the WCJCD, there are two prominent church buildings which have played an important cultural and historical role in the West Concord community. They are both handsome white frame churches with stained glass windows and tall steeples gracing the West Concord skyline. The first is the former Roman Catholic Church (Our Lady Help of Christians). This parish church was closed by the Diocese and has subsequently sold to a private investor. The Concord Youth Theater is planning on occupying this former church structure in fall 2019.

The second is Union Church, which is prominently sited at the corner of Main and Church Streets. Union Church has an active Unitarian congregation. As with many churches today, the congregation is smaller than it once was. So, there is smaller base of regular contributors to support church operations and building maintenance. The Concord Conservatory of Music (CCM) is leasing space from Union Church for music practices and performances. This partnership between the Union Church congregation and Concord Conservancy of Music provides much needed space for a cultural institution, and in turn Concord Conservancy of Music contributes funds to the congregation enabling them to more ably maintain this important historic resource.

### Open Space & Trails

Open space and trails have been included in this cultural inventory for three reasons: they serve as community gathering spaces and often support arts programming and activities; they contribute to visitors to the WCJCD; and many provide information about natural area ecosystems and are opportunities for interpretive information on the history of water power in West Concord’s mill industry. Open spaces and trails in or surrounding the WCJCD include:

- **Bruce Freeman Rail Trail:** This recently created rail trail segment through Concord, begins in Lowell and connects Chelmsford, Westford, Carlisle, and Acton, with future extensions planned south through Sudbury and Framingham. This multi-use path through the heart of the West Concord Junction Cultural District has the potential to bring new audiences.
- **Rideout Playground:** Operated by the Concord Recreation Department, the playground features basketball and tennis courts; softball/baseball fields and a playground. The playground is a short walk to the west of the cultural district on Laws Brook Road.
- **Warners Pond:** Also to the west of the cultural district is the 48-acre Warner’s Pond. A dam in the southeast corner feeds into Nashoba Brook and was once a source of power. The pond is owned by the town with the exception of Scout Island which is owned by the Boy Scouts of America.

- **West Concord Park & Trail:** Revitalized in 2014, this 21-acre conservation area includes woodlands and marsh areas. A trail guide is available on the Town of Concord website. The park is to the west of the Cultural District just beyond the Rideout Playground and across Law’s Brook Road from the Warner’s Pond park.

### Events & Activities

The WCJCDC has been working to support existing events and activities in the district, as well as establish new annual programming. New programs this year included the Art Scramble as part of the 2019 ArtWeek and the upcoming Porchfest scheduled for September.

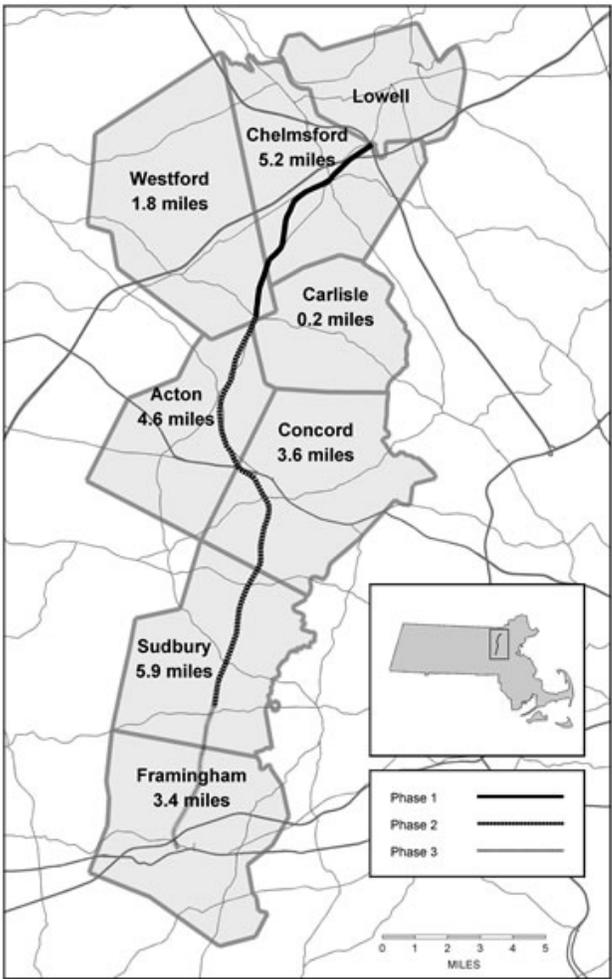


Figure 2-6. Bruce Freeman Rail Trail connectivity.

- **Summer Concert Series** during July and August at the Harvey Wheeler Community Center and organized by the Town's Recreation Department and the West Concord Advisory Committee. WCJCDC helps market the event.
- **Discover West Concord Day:** WCJCDC organized an Open Studios in collaboration with the artists of ArtScape and 152 Commonwealth Ave., created displays and coordinated outdoor music performances in the district.
- **2019 ArtWeek Art Scramble:** includes music performances and art activities.
- **Porchfest 2019:** The first annual porchfest music and street festival is planned for September 2019.

Overall, the WCJCD has an excellent mix of cultural organizations and facilities, culturally focused businesses, as well as shops and restaurants that add to the district vibrancy. The compact, walkable nature of the district and mix of activities and programs is a solid base from which to build a strong cultural district.

## Concord Arts Organizations

The Town of Concord has a rich heritage of arts and culture, including many arts organizations and initiatives within the town. Although many are based in Concord Center, they do serve the entire town, including West Concord. They include:

**Concord Art Association**, known as Concord Art, is a century-old membership-based arts organization in Concord. It operates the Concord Center for the Visual Arts, which features 8 exhibitions annually, offers classes, hosts lectures and tours. Concord Art has 850 members and an outreach program to local schools. [www.concordart.org](http://www.concordart.org)

**Concord Center Cultural District (CCCD)** is one of two state designated cultural districts in Concord. The CCCD receives some administrative support from the Concord Chamber of Commerce.

**Concord Local Cultural Council**, a town-government affiliate, makes very small grant awards for art-related school field trips and small grants for local artists and arts organizations.

**Friends of Performing Arts in Concord (FOPAC)** operates the 51 Walden Performing Arts Center which is the home to the Concord Band, the Concord Orchestra and the Concord Players. A dance studio also uses the center. FOPAC restored this historic property and has been operating the performing arts center for over forty years. [www.51walden.org](http://www.51walden.org)

**The Umbrella Community Arts Center** is a 36-year old organization operating a community-based arts center featuring arts and music education, providing galleries, performance spaces and arts studios, plus offering artist residencies. The Umbrella just completed a \$20 million building program that renovated a former school into a community arts center. <https://theumbrellaarts.org>

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# 3 Cultural Districts

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## Cultural District Components

Cultural districts are broadly defined as a specific area with a high concentration of cultural activities and institutions. In the US, cities have had cultural districts for over the last century. Formal cultural compounds often in park settings formed in some major cities in the early twentieth century were the forerunners of today's cultural districts. Notable examples of these early twentieth century arts and culture districts (compounds) include the Benjamin Franklin Parkway/Fairmount Park in Philadelphia and Forest Park in St. Louis.

More recently (over the past thirty years) there has been a cultural district movement to designate and celebrate arts, culture, creativity and placemaking. Cultural district formation is closely linked with economic development and the desire for communities to develop more attractive places, attract creatives and seek innovative businesses. In 2011, the Massachusetts Cultural Council launched the cultural district program in Massachusetts following enactment of state legislation authorizing the creation of cultural districts. The Commonwealth, like other parts of the country, linked the arts with business development, tourism, and revitalization.

The purpose and goals of cultural districts in Massachusetts include:

- Attracting artists and cultural enterprises;
- Encouraging business and job development;
- Establishing the district as a tourist destination;
- Preserving and reusing historic buildings;
- Enhancing property values; and
- Fostering local cultural development.

Americans for the Arts, a national arts advocacy and research organization composed of leaders in arts, communities and business, has identified six types of cultural districts. They are:

- Cultural Compounds;
- Major Cultural Institutions focus, such as Portland, Maine's Art District and Fort Lauderdale's Arts & Sciences District;
- Downtown-area focus, such as Union Square in Somerville, MA, Northampton, MA, and Coronado, CA;
- Cultural Production-focus, such as Emeryville, CA, and Lowertown Urban Village in St. Paul, MN;

- Arts and Entertainment focus such as the Downcity Arts and Entertainment District in Providence, RI, and the New Orleans Warehouse District, LA; and,
- Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts, such as Rockport, MA, and Provincetown, MA.

West Concord Junction is a hybrid cultural district drawing from elements of the downtown area focus with its commercial center along Commonwealth Avenue and a cultural production focus with its legacy of artisan-workers from the Allen Chair Company to today’s cabinetmakers at JH Klein Wassink.

## Vision

The West Concord Junction Cultural District has established a vision for its future, which follows:

- To put West Concord on the map and develop a strong economic base that will help support the arts & cultural events. We want to continue to provide a “village experience” for the increasing number of residents in the area.
- The District could develop more cross-discipline events, such as summer music series; organize more performance & visual art events; designate areas for Public Art; create a brochure for the district that will help market the area; include more events on Concord Cultural District town-wide events calendar.

The committee charge for the West Concord Junction Cultural District Committee approved by the Select Board expands the purpose of the WCJCDC to include:

The purpose of supporting the artists, cultural centers and businesses within the cultural district to promote the arts and to further the viability of these small businesses and independent entrepreneurs. The district is intended to leverage the unique talents and attributes of all members of the district to generate more public awareness of the value of culture and the arts. Having a vibrant cultural community is a key component to sustaining West Concord as an exciting and enjoyable place to live, work and play.

## Goals

The goals for the West Concord Junction Cultural District are:

1. Stimulate participation in arts and cultural activities.
2. Encourage visitation to the Village to provide economic benefits to the cultural organizations and businesses in the area.
3. Establish the area as a tourist destination.
4. Help create partnerships and activities among the various organizations.
5. Enrich community life.
6. Foster local cultural programming, education and youth programming.

The Select Board’s charge to the WCJDC added two more goals, namely:

7. Encourage the development of new resources. And,
8. Sustain existing culture assets within the district through mutual support and collaboration.

Feedback voiced at the outreach events during the development of this Action Plan at the WCJ Cultural District’s Open House at the Wheelhouse at the Bradford Mill and the West Concord Advisory Committee Open House in May 2019 suggested widening the vision and goals for the West Concord Junction Cultural District to consider developing public-private partnerships, creating an economic development plan to address both arts and business interests, and addressing physical improvements and enhancements to West Concord Junction particularly wayfinding, walkability, art installations, and connectivity. Also mentioned were the desire for performance venues, arts and cultural events, exhibition space, and perhaps an arts co-operative shop.

The challenge of a quickly growing and evolving West Concord Junction with new development was noted. Two

tensions were identified. One tension is seemingly between arts and culture and need for production space for craftspeople. The second closely-related tension between real estate for maker space and production versus real estate for consumer space.

These tensions are confounded by rapidly rising construction costs, which have increased at nearly twice the rate of inflation for the past decade. In many areas in greater Boston, including Concord, residential is one of the few uses that is economically feasible, particularly for renovation and rehab projects. The result is often a loss of work spaces, since uses dependent on lower occupancy costs, such as artist studios and maker workshops, cannot support the post-renovation rent rates needed to recoup construction costs.

Concerns about redevelopment and gentrification were voiced, and questions raised as to whether zoning was the appropriate tool to address these issues. Clearly, how to retain the relaxed, funky ambiance of the village in West Concord Junction with a strong arts and culture sector in a robust real estate market is an important underlying concern of many. This is not a new issue in the discussions about the future of West Concord Junction. The desire to support small independent businesses and the challenges of new development, rising rents were threads of public discussion during the development of the 2009-2010 West Concord Master Plan.

The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies have identified fourteen success factors for local cultural districts (see side bar).

The West Concord Junction Cultural District is already on the road to success having addressed some of these key factors, including strong community support; an authentic identity that is uniquely West Concord Junction; and a clearly defined district area. There is an interest and support amongst the business community, as well as local developers, for arts and culture. Moreover, the WCJCDC and arts organizations have experience with festivals and events. West Concord Junction is fortunate to have strong amenities, such as a variety of restaurants, and new recre-

## Success Factors for Local Cultural Districts

**A unique authentic identity** highlights what is special about the district and community.

**Community support** of a district initiative helps to ensure continued success.

**Strategic partnerships** leverage community resources.

**Inclusive cultural and strategic planning** creates a vision for a cultural district with input from the broader community.

**Sustainable artist live/work spaces** provide artists and entrepreneurs with a productive environment.

**Committed developers** understand the power of arts and culture in community and economic development.

**Anchor institutions and special events** become the cornerstones of a community and cultural district.

**Artists are partners**, not products, and are valued as members of the community.

**Artist recruitment is an organized effort** that shows how a community is willing to welcome new artists and facilitate their establishment.

**High accessibility of venues and events** ensures that arts participation in the district is available to all community members and visitors.

**Clear demarcation** of the district is reinforced through district boundaries, good signage, and consistent use of logos, maps and other visual aids.

**Space planning** sets priorities for land use and designs solutions for housing, transportation and accessibility.

**Marketing and promotion** attract visitors, potential residents and new businesses.

**Strong amenities** such as restaurants, lodging and recreation bolster arts districts and their communities.

*--from the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies' State Policies Briefs, 2018*

ational opportunities with the opening of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail in Concord, which traverses the district.

The West Concord Junction Cultural District is poised for success. The Success Factors for Local Cultural Districts is a good check list and reminders of tasks and attributes that the WCJCDC needs to pursue and sustain in the coming months and year, especially the need for strategic partnerships and sustaining community support and involvement.

# 4 Growing a Cultural District

## District Vitality

“Cultural vitality is the evidence of creating, disseminating, validating, and supporting arts and culture as a dimension of everyday life in communities.”

- *The Urban Institute's Arts and Culture Indicators Project*

Arts and culture have the potential to strengthen the economic vitality and social fabric in a community, creating activity and interest in a place. Arts and culture can be a core component of a placemaking effort in a business

district or neighborhood. A regular offering of quality arts programming can contribute to the vitality by:

- Creating a sense of place,
- Attracting new and encouraging repeat visits, and
- Improving a district's competitiveness.

Cultural activities can also help bring a diverse set of visitors to an area – from children's art and educational activities that can draw both youth and parents, to performances and events that can draw from surrounding communities. Core to placemaking efforts in promoting district vitality are a balance of physical improvements, a mix of cultural uses, programming, and marketing. These elements are discussed further on the following pages.

## District Vitality



Build business synergies with arts programming.



Identify market niche.

Figure 4-1.

# Placemaking

At the core of a sustainable strategy for a cultural district is an effort to redefine its character as a destination and heart of the community. A sense of place develops in a district as people inhabit it over time, and with its long history as a transit-oriented commercial center and industrial hub, West Concord Junction has much to build upon.

The key to placemaking is to identify the elements that are authentic to the existing fabric of a place and in step with the cultural vibe. In considering the district brand, it is important also to ask “what is the WCJCD niche in the greater cultural ecosystem?” and “how can WCJCD differentiate itself from other destinations in the marketplace?”

There are several defining cultural elements – organizations, businesses and programming, that WCJCD can build upon while distinguishing itself from nearby cultural hubs in Concord Center and Maynard. These potential themes include what can be defined as “The Maker Economy” and “Active Art”.

### The Maker Economy:

The maker economy as a theme is grounded in West Concord Junction’s history as an industrial mill town. It builds upon the diverse range of existing artists, artisans, craftspeople and maker-style manufacturing business in the district – from woodworking/ furniture makers to knitwear creators and has the breadth to include food-related production, such as Nashoba Bakery.

### Active Art:

“Active Art” can be viewed in a similar way to the maker ethic in the district but is more grounded in the present-day activities of WCJCD as a community hub. This theme builds upon the large base of arts and cultural programming in the district which includes education, training, or active participation. This theme encompasses music and theater education programs, music events, dance and martial arts type training, book/ poetry readings, events and festivals.

These are just two possible approaches, and to capture the full range of culture and vibrancy in WCJCD, the end definition of place is most likely a harmony of the two. The 2016 site assessment recommended the WCJCDC

# Placemaking



Here simple, bright colored streetscape improvements create a sense of place with minimal cost outlay.



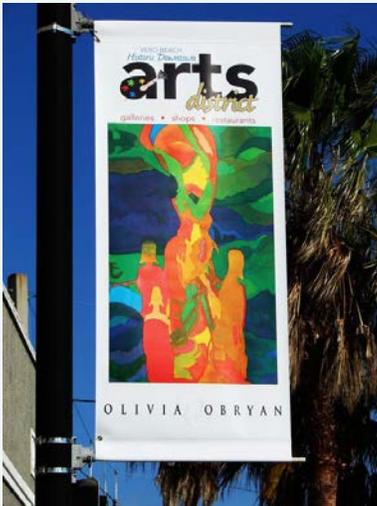
Arts building branding/signage.



Pop-up places and events.

Figure 4-2.

## Wayfinding



Signage and wayfinding can help express the character of the arts district through its design or by incorporating images of art from local artists.

Figure 4-3.

hold a series of discussions to envision what the district will look like in five years. This discussion is a good basis for a 5-year work plan and can serve as a springboard for a discussion of district character.

In order to help foster district character, there are several key tools that WCJCD can use to distinguish its brand as a district with a distinct sense of place. From building facades, to wayfinding signs, to public art, to streetscape improvements, the physical aspects of a district contribute to a sense of place; elements to consider follow below.

## Wayfinding & Signage

Wayfinding systems and signage help people orient themselves in the physical environment. Not only can these elements provide navigational information – such as parking, landmarks and points of interest, they can also contribute to the visual character of a place. Wayfinding systems can also enhance accessibility and make a district more friendly for the differently-abled.

Having a consistent brand identity – logo and color scheme, is an essential to contribution to the character of a cultural district. This consistency of sign elements also can extend to informal items, including banners and sandwich boards (Figure 4-3.). A strong wayfinding system can also include “gateway signage” that welcomes visitors to a district and signals that they have arrived at a “place.”



Figure 4-4. New parking signage in development for West Concord parking lots.

# Asheville, NC

The River Arts District in Asheville, NC, is a good example of a location with highly-tuned placemaking efforts.

Asheville was listed as one of the “40 Most Vibrant Arts Communities in America” in 2018 by the annual Center for Arts Research at Southern Methodist University. It is home to large institutional attractions (Black Mountain College Art Museum + Arts Center, Momentum Gallery and the Asheville Art Museum) as well as the River Arts District.

The River Arts District builds on a regional history of craftspeople and artisans, and includes people working in a range of art, craft and design media. Shops, restaurants and cafés add to the vitality of the area.

Building fronts and signage support the arts district character with well-maintained bright colors and murals. Garage doors and large operable windows open up making the art visible from the street. Storefronts are complemented by quality streetscape elements, planting beds, potted flowers, street furniture and outdoor restaurant seating.

A sandwich board with branded graphics is found across the district and identifies galleries, studios and businesses that are open, making it easy for visitors to navigate the district.

River Arts District is a membership-based arts association and coordinates and promotes events, represents the district on citywide committees and tourism boards. The RAD also provides for collaboration across organizations on programs, curation themes and promotion.



Use of color and consistent signage play a role in placemaking by creating a festive vibe and elevating visibility of studios and galleries.

Figure 4-5. Case Study: Asheville, NC

There are several potential locations for “gateway” type signage with the district name, some of which were outlined in the 2016 Site Assessment; these include: the intersection of Laws Brook Road and Commonwealth Avenue, the corner of Main Street and Commonwealth Avenue, and the entry to the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

A wayfinding system for the West Concord Parking Lot was developed in 2016, and implementation planning is in progress. Figure 4-4 shows the signage that was developed for the parking areas.

### Branding Arts & Culture Buildings

Visibility is key to attracting visitors for any business and is just as important in contributing to overall placemaking as district-wide signage and wayfinding are. Clear identification is particularly important in arts districts where open studios events welcome visitors to explore studios that are many times off the beaten path or do not have typical signage locations available the way other businesses in the

district might. In walking through the WCJCD, the presence of artist studio space is noticeably lacking from the streetscape.

While studios that occupy traditional storefront spaces, such as Three Stones Fine Art Gallery, have storefront signage, buildings such as 152 Commonwealth Ave. are nondescript, have no signage or visibility to indicate the arts activity within. Similarly, while the Bradford Mill buildings are well-designed and maintained, and in keeping with the historic nature of the buildings, there is little sense on approaching the exterior of the maker-activity and arts within. In both cases, the studios and businesses, as well as the overall district would benefit from incorporating an arts presence on the exterior. This can be handled in several ways that are cost effective and maintain the historic integrity of the building, as in the case of the Bradford Mill buildings. Signage can also be incorporated as part of wall graphics as shown in Figures 4-2.

*Refer to the Asheville, NC case study for more ideas on how to brand arts-related buildings and business in a way that supports overall placemaking efforts.*



Figure 4-6. Entry at one of the Bradford Mill Buildings.



Figure 4-7. 152 Commonwealth Ave. studio building.

# Public Art



Whether temporary or permanent; well-planned or impromptu; large or small in scale, public art can surprise and delight visitors. It can help build identity and create a sense of place in a cultural district.



Figure 4-8. Public Art.

## Public Art

Public art installations can provide serendipity and surprise in a cultural district and contribute to creating a sense of place by offering a unique experience. When it comes to opportunities for public art, there are many opportunities beyond traditional murals that can be considered. Public art can be free-standing pieces or can be incorporated as functional street furnishings. A large scale or semi-permanent installation can anchor a district and become a signature attraction; it can also function as wayfinding or district marker signage. Small scale interventions can also make an impact by offering unexpected moments and adding detail to the public streetscape. Small projects can also grow over time into long-term pieces or can become annual events. Public art can be individual efforts, group projects or participatory activities. WCJCD could also benefit from temporary or seasonal installations to keep the streetscape experience fresh and to help develop an audience or reason for repeat visits.

*Refer to the Public Art case study for more approaches to temporary and permanent installations.*



## Streetscape Improvements

People experience a place from the public realm: the sidewalks, parking lots, parks, and streets. West Concord Junction Cultural District residents, workers and visitors all use the public realm, and base their perceptions of the environmental quality of a place and notions of civic pride on its environmental qualities. Attention to the quality of public areas - the sidewalk and the street, is crucial to sustaining a healthy cultural district. Elements in the public realm which contribute to the visual image of a place include:

- Sidewalk elements
- Trees and plantings
- Street lighting
- Mobility: crosswalks, bicycle paths and parking
- Public art

Providing public realm enhancements improves walkability and perceived convenience of a district; provides a place for the social interaction that adds to a sense of community. Greater walkability and convenience promote the district as a desirable destination and can translate to repeat visits and increased sales.

Quality streetscape improvements can help define character and signal the district as a place where pedestrians are a priority; however, improvements need not be large scale



Figure 4-9. Bradford Street looking to Commonwealth Ave. (Top left)

Figure 4-10. Gas station on Commonwealth Ave. (Left)

Figure 4-11. 3-D crosswalk in Iceland painted by Vegmálun GlH. Courtesy of Vegmálun GlH. (Above)

## Belfast, ME



Outdoor arts festivals and music festivals help drive visitation. Many artists' studios are open to the public and double as galleries/shops.

Belfast, ME has a well-planned and coordinated calendar offering a broad range of activities throughout the year. Arts-centered activities are complemented by cultural institutions and include: historical walking tours, museums, and theater venues.

### Walking Tour & Map

To promote the cultural resources and businesses in the area, the BACC produces and maintains a self-guided walking tour available as an interactive online map. The map includes a directories of galleries, art studios and creative businesses, and includes listings of cultural venues and events.

### Arts in the Park Festival

Belfast's annual Arts in the Park Festival features arts, music and food and is sponsored by the Belfast Chamber of Commerce and the Belfast Parks and Recreation Department. The event includes arts, food and music.

### Waterfall Arts

Waterfall Arts is a non-profit community arts venue providing art classes, exhibitions, events, performances, community studios, after school art programs, public art projects, long-term and short-term studio space rentals to artists, performers, and organizations. The center includes four Community Studios that are accessible to the public for use including: Printmaking, Ceramics, Darkroom Photography, as well as the Bridge Studio for Youth & Family programs.

The Belfast Area Creative Coalition is an association of non-profits, artists, creative entrepreneurs, culinary artists and arts supporters that supports creatives and fosters the business of arts and culture in the Waldo County area of Maine. The BACC organizes and supports events, including monthly spring-summer art walks.

In addition to locally based programming, Belfast participates as a location for the Maine Outdoor Film Festival (MOFF) which takes place in over 20 locations across the state.

Figure 4-12. Case Study: Belfast, ME.

interventions to be effective. Small cost-effective improvements – from planters to painted crosswalks, can make a big difference in improving walkability and contributing to overall character of a place. In the WCJCD there is also opportunity to apply creative thinking to streetscape improvements in a way that contributes to the desired image of the cultural district. Painted planters, crosswalk art and public art installations can all help build the sense of a vibrant place.

## Design Guidelines

West Concord Junction already has a solid set of district Design Guidelines in place. The guidelines were developed in 2011, and pre-date the cultural district designation. Once the WCJCDC has taken time to develop a 5-year vision for the district, it would be good for the Town's Planning Division and the WCJCDC to review the existing guidelines for alignment with cultural district vision and goals. Key elements to consider are signage, paint, window displays, and lighting.

WCJCDC could also consider supplemental guidelines to help encourage businesses to provide elements such as visitor-friendly outdoor elements such as benches and seating, clear well-designed places for information (event signage etc.), and sandwich board-style markers as discussed above.

## Programming

Events and activities bring the element of fun to a cultural district. They are important means for making art accessible to a broader segment of the community as they can span age groups and cultural backgrounds, providing a common ground for participants to learn and enjoy. WCJCD already has a number of quality programs developed, that with the right promotional support, over time can build audience and draw new visitors to the cultural district.

West Concord is home to many performance artists including musicians and actors, as well as writers and poets. There are also a number of educational centers for performing arts within the cultural district such as the Con-

## Activities



Both planned and impromptu activities can be created with modest budgets to enliven the district year round.

Figure 4-13. Activities.

## Shelburne Falls, MA



“Shelburne Falls is a walkable village. It is home to more than a dozen art galleries, as well as fine dining, shops devoted to vintage clothing and collectables, bookstores, a Trolley Museum and a pharmacy that still has a working soda counter. The Falls is both an Historic and Cultural District and Franklin County is a designated Rural Arts Haven. Our residents are busy in the performing arts and in making visual art and music. Spend the day or stay the weekend, there is so much to explore.”

In Shelburne Falls arts and culture are well-integrated into the fabric of a revitalized downtown district. Clusters of arts and craft related businesses, galleries, antique shops, restaurants and retail all contribute Shelburne falls as a destination. Streetscape and storefront design create a walkable center where blade signs, awnings, brick sidewalks and streetlights all add to the atmosphere.

A number of arts-related businesses contribute to the draw of Shelburne falls for day-trips and visits. These include the Shelburne Arts Cooperative, a member-owned retail shop, and the Salmon Falls Gallery with rotating exhibits and a shop. The nearby Bridge of Flowers is a regional attraction that adds to the charm of the district.

Art walk events, gallery show openings and artist talks and other cultural activities add to the vitality of the district. Year-round town events help support the business district by bolstering visits. Events include:

- Winter Hoopla at The Art Garden
- Fabulous February Fringe Festival
- Piti Theater's Syrup Festival
- Shelburne Falls Military Band Concerts
- Mohawk Trail Concerts Summer Festival
- Metropolitan Opera Season at Memorial Hall
- Cider Days
- Moonlight Magic & Lighting of the Village

Figure 4-14. Case Study: Shelburne Falls, MA.

cord Conservatory of Music and Concord Youth Theater (CYT). A robust arts program calendar should include integration of music and theater events which can help bring vitality to the district.

Coordinating programming efforts across organizations and businesses in the district and providing a clear public-facing calendar of events and activities will be an important part of the early action items for the WCJCDC.

*Refer to the Shelburne Falls, MA case study for how programming can help support overall placemaking efforts.*

## Promotion

WCJCD would benefit from coordinated promotion activities that position the district as the hub of community activity in West Concord and as a destination for local cultural programs and activities. Building an image of WCJCD as an artsy, funky alternative can help distinguish it as a destination from nearby Concord Center.

Creating a positive image that showcases the unique offerings will help in promoting the district as a destination, and not just a place to stop for incidentals. This is best accomplished by capitalizing on district assets: building on existing destination restaurants and businesses (Nashoba Bakery and Woods Hill Table) and those with programs that draw regular local customers (Concord Conservatory of Music, Concord Youth Theater, West Concord Dance Academy and the Village Art Room).

WCJCD should consider developing niche promotional markets that help draw new visitors. Potential markets include:

- **Bicycle Tourism:** The Bruce Freeman Rail Trail has the potential to bring new visitors to the district and a promotion plan should consider strategies for capturing this market.
- **Culinary Tourism:** Specialty foods, farm markets and culinary tourism is a growing market niche. WCJCD can draw on the strong set of local restaurants, bakeries and food shops with culinary-focused programs such as cooking classes, talks and demonstrations.

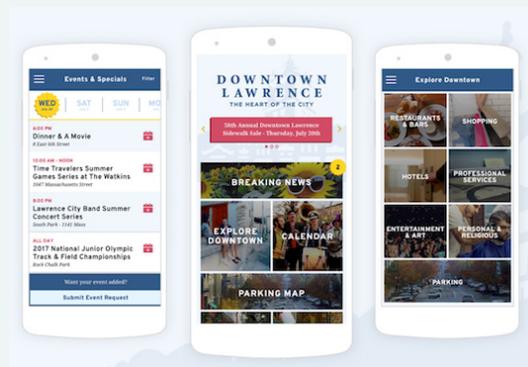
## Promotion



Directories and maps.



Event banners & signage



Website or app with district directory and event info.

Figure 4-15. Promotion.

# Rockport, MA

The Rockport Cultural District sits within the Essex National Heritage Area which includes six additional districts, with the Harbortown and Rocky Neck Cultural Districts in Gloucester just a few minutes from Rockport. A balance of education, history, art exhibits and shops.

The Rockport Cultural District includes a number of well-established institutions and arts organizations. The cultural district manages a Facebook page that promotes the seaside location, arts events, music performances and historic information, however most promotion is handled through Visit Rockport, Rockport Music, and the Rockport Art Association & Museum (RAAM).

The **Rockport Art Colony** includes artists and gallery owners, and coordinates events and promotion among the 30 galleries in the area. The colony sponsors events such as regular “Paint Outs” which increase visibility of the arts in the district.

The **Rockport Art Association & Museum** holds museum shows, events, artist talks and workshops. Rockport Music: The **Shalin Liu Performing Arts Center**, is a major regional destination and hosts music festivals and performances year-round.

There are numerous arts organizations, events, and programs in nearby Cape Ann (6 minute drive) and Gloucester (15 minute drive). The proximity of the three arts areas is convenient for visitors and tourists, which helps bolster the area as a whole.



Figure 4-16. Case Study: Rockport, MA.

- **History Tourism:** Concord already has a well-established network of historic sites and tourism market. West Concord could capitalize on current visitor streams by developing an industrial history tour which can be tied to the present day “maker economy” in the district.

## Branding & Marketing

As previously discussed, it would be beneficial for WCJCD to develop a brand look and a coordinated approach to marketing the cultural district. Developing a consistent brand look (logo, colors and a style guide) and marketing materials will boost the overall presence of the district and recognition among local residents and visitors alike. Coordinating promotion of events with a dedicated WCJCD website and social media will help build recognition, audience and attendance by offering a one-stop information hub for schedules, offerings and opportunities to participate.

Developing a marketing plan is key to the long-range sustainability of a cultural district. A marketing plan identifies strengths and weaknesses in a district, identifies the current customer base as well as new target consumer groups, develops a plan for reaching current residents and lays out plans to sustain visitors and customers over time.

A good marketing plan should identify key areas of focus within the cultural district. In the case of West Concord, these could include:

- Overall brand development
- Communications platforms
- Wayfinding
- Partnerships with Businesses
- Engaging the Public: Public Art, Performance and Activities

A marketing plan should include promoting artists, arts and cultural related businesses/ industries, and restaurants as a way to augment placemaking physical improvements and programming. Key steps for WCJCDC to develop within the marketing plan include:

### 1. **Holistic Promotion Strategy:**

The WCJCD has an eclectic mix of cultural organizations and businesses, shops, restaurants and destinations. Development of a coordinated district promotion strategy that recognizes and celebrates this mix will strengthen the district as a vibrant destination.

### 2. **Coordinated Marketing Platforms:**

A coordinated marketing platform includes development of a WCJCD website and social media pages. A website provides a consistent calendar location that can coordinate publicizing events, volunteer information/ opportunities across organizations, businesses and arts individuals. The use of a coordinated calendar will provide residents and visitors with easy access to information and will help flag and prevent scheduling conflicts. A single calendar will add to the perception of district vibrancy: if all organizations are adding information, it will quickly be evident there is a lot going on in WCJCD!

### 3. **Maximizing Social Media:**

Social media is an excellent, cost-effective way to reach broader markets by leveraging WCJCD stakeholders, friends, visitors, and supporters. WCJCD should consider setting up and using accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. A YouTube channel for posting event videos could also be added as the cultural district programs grow. WCJCDC should encourage businesses and organizations to help promote WCJCD through the use of consistent hashtags and mentions on social media.

*Refer to the Belfast, ME case study for how programming can help support overall placemaking efforts.*

“No one can whistle a symphony.  
It takes a whole orchestra to  
play it.” – H.E. Luccock

## Organization

Furthering the goals and vision of the West Concord Junction Cultural District will require a concerted and sustained effort. The aspirations for West Concord Junction as a cultural district are closely intertwined with West Concord Junction’s success as a thriving village center business district.

In fact, the WCJCD’s vision statement calls for putting West Concord Junction “on the map” and developing a strong economic base that will help support the arts and cultural events. In creating the WCJCD committee, the Concord Select Board charged WCJCDC in strengthening and supporting the arts, cultural centers, and businesses, particularly small businesses and independent entrepreneurs in West Concord Junction. Many of the public comments at the open houses and in the resident and business surveys spoke to community-focused improvements to retain West Concord Junction as a community-serving, “funky,” convenient and comfortable village business district that includes and features arts and culture.

The strategy for advancing the West Concord Junction Cultural District requires an integrated approach with West Concord Junction as the village-center business district. The National Trust for Historic Preservation’s National Main Street Center has developed a proven, highly successful approach to suburban, small-town and village-centers that has worked for communities over the past forty years. The enduring strength of the Main Street approach is that it can be tailored to each unique individual community.

The Massachusetts Cultural Council identifies the Main Street program as “a preservation-based economic development movement led by the National Main Street Center that enables communities to revitalize downtown and neighborhood business districts by leveraging local assets – from historic, cultural, and architectural resources to local enterprises and community pride.”

The Main Street approach has prominently included arts and culture with supporting small businesses, attracting visitors, and creating/ sustaining livable centers. Some examples of Main Street programs that have a focus on arts and culture while marketing, enhancing and managing a local business district include Union Square in Somerville, MA; Silver City, NM (which is both a Main Street district and a state-designated cultural district); and Wausau River District in Wisconsin. These districts are using the comprehensive Main Street approach which requires attention to the four (4) points which are key to sustaining a vibrant, livable and prosperous business and cultural district. The four points are organization, design, promotion and economic vitality.

### The Four Points

**Organization** refers to the local capacity to implement. A public-private partnership involving business and property owners, artists, artisans, creatives, local residents, and government is essential for success. Local business and cultural districts need champions and a public-private partnership using the Main Street approach can be the champion for West Concord Junction village with the WCJCDC.

**Design** addresses physical improvements, including storefront facades, signage, streetscape and walkability, wayfinding and public spaces.

**Promotion** refers to marketing, branding, outreach, special events and promotional programs to bring customers to West Concord Junction.

**Economic Vitality** refers to business retention and recruitment, developing a business, service and product mix that appeals to the local market and customer base, upper story re-use for housing or offices, infill development and redevelopment. Economic vitality with an arts and cultural emphasis can address attracting visitors as well as creating affordable workspaces.

Successful Main Street efforts develop a shared vision with stakeholders – property owners, businesses, government, residents, artists, artisans, creatives and area nonprofits. Transformational strategies, such as arts and culture, are

identified and pursued using the four (4) points of the Main Street approach – organization, promotion, design, and economic vitality – plus the eight (8) principles to guide policies, programmatic activities, physical improvements and enhancements for the district. The principles are: comprehensive, incremental; self-help; identify and capitalize on existing assets; partnerships; quality; change management; and implementation. These principles are described in detail next.

## Organization



Build cultural capacity.



Engage volunteers.



Support & advocacy.

Figure 4-17. Organization.

## The Eight Principles

**Comprehensive** refers to the need for a holistic, systems-thinking, comprehensive approach that is integrative and not piecemeal.

**Incremental** underscores that sustaining a cultural district/business district is often a series of small steps, that in aggregate yields larger more noticeable changes. Focusing solely on the big project often does not yield lasting results, so incremental, sustained steps along with “right-sized projects” can create meaningful, lasting results. Baby steps often need to come before walking, particularly with new endeavors, such as the WCJCD and Main Street program. Successful programs begin with the basics – simple activities, such as Open Studios or banners, that demonstrate that “new things are happening” in the district. As public confidence in the WCJCD/Main Street grows and participants’ understanding of how to best sustain West Concord Junction village, WCJCD/Main Street is able to tackle increasingly complex problems with more ambitious projects. This incremental change leads to much longer-lasting progress that results in the desired improvements and the sustainability of the West Concord Junction village and cultural district.

**Self-help** is the mantra of the Main Street program. Village-centers, communities, artists, and businesses all have a role and must help themselves. Sustainability does not come from the outside. It is created.

**Identify and capitalize on existing assets.** Each place and town is unique. It is this uniqueness that makes a village center, such as West Concord Junction, special and draws people/customers. It is important to build upon existing assets. West Concord Junction is fortunate to be rich in assets, starting with the West Concord Junction Cultural District and a strong civic presence with the Fowler Library, Harvey Wheeler Community Center, and the US Post Office. The MBTA commuter rail station and the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail are assets drawing people to the village. Other assets include long-time local businesses and the many cultural assets, such as Concord Conservatory of Music, Concord Youth Theater, West Concord Dance Academy, Artscape, the Village Art Room, regionally recognized restaurants and the Wheelhouse. A key asset is West Concord Junction’s walkable, human-scale, with a

residential area surrounding the village. In addition, there are nearby churches of architectural significance, and transit-oriented development with Brookside Square.

**Partnerships.** No single sector – business, government, artists, residents, nonprofits – can effectively sustain a village center by itself. It requires cooperation and partnerships amongst the Town – staff, volunteers, boards and committees, small and large businesses, artists, artisans, creatives, property and business owners, residents, nonprofits, regional and state entities. Different players may take the lead on different projects or issues, but there needs to be a shared vision, common goals, involvement by all and partnerships for success. Partnerships are key to successful cultural districts and business districts.

**Quality** should be an attribute describing all of the work focusing on sustaining and enhancing West Concord Junction. The standard of quality establishes the impression that the West Concord community wishes to convey for itself, the cultural district, and its village center

**Change management** refers to the need for continuous improvement and visible changes. Positive changes often require management and don't just happen accidentally. Rather, positive change is the result of planning and continuous, hard work towards implementation. Many cultural districts and Main Street organizations elect to hire staff to coordinate and help bring about sustained change. Staff can be shared, in-kind or on-loan from the Town or other entity. It helps to have a point person to coordinate and work with partners and volunteers on a continuing basis to successfully effect change.

**Implementation** is the eighth principle. Sustaining thriving cultural districts and village centers does not happen without implementation. Improved policies can be adopted, but real-life cultural districts and village centers require physical changes and improvements to both the public and private spheres of the cultural district/ village.

## Creating A Sustainable & Stronger West Concord Junction

Spearheading the strengthening and sustainability of West Concord Junction village for arts, culture, and small businesses will require a concerted and continuing effort in-

volving artists, artisans, creative, businesses, property owners, nonprofits, residents, Town and neighborhood leaders and the public sector. Organization, leadership and investment that is consistent and continuing is required.

To strengthen the organizational capacity of the West Concord Junction Cultural District, the WCJCDC should consider reaching out to businesses, property owners, local leaders and the Town to form a public-private partnership that pursues the Main Street approach for the Village Center. Broadening involvement will enable WCJCDC to more effectively pursue its vision and responsibilities.

The Town of Concord is considering hiring staff to promote tourism and assist with marketing. This provides an opportunity for WCJCDC to secure some in-kind staff support to advance some of its promotion and marketing goals. WCJCDC should work with the new Town Manager and the Director of Planning & Land Development to secure staff time to assist with marketing the cultural district and the village business district.

WCJCDC with its small business, property owner and Town partners should explore establishing a business improvement district (BID) to facilitate management and marketing of the West Concord Junction cultural district/ village business center. Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are authorized by Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40-O. Groups of property and business owners in a contiguous commercial area can organize and form a Business Improvement District which requires the support of the majority of property owners in the district and approval by the Select Board. In a BID, property owners self-assess an additional fee to undertake shared supplemental services above what the municipality provides. Services could include maintenance and landscaping; special events including art and cultural events that benefit the business district; promotions and marketing; public amenities; design assistance; business recruitment and retention activities (including the retention of arts and artisan-related enterprises); planning and feasibility studies; parking and transportation management; and other activities dedicated to supporting business growth. BIDs provide the ability to promote downtown as a whole through a unified system of management, similar to a shopping center and enable property owners and businesses to have a collective voice, effect local changes, and use BID funds to leverage and attract other funding, including grants.

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# 5 District Sustainability

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## Sustainability of the WCJCD

Strengthening the presence of arts and culture in communities has been a successful strategy for revitalization and livability. Historically, artists and creatives have sought lower-cost locations to work and live. Similarly, fabrication businesses and industry seek lower cost space away from downtowns and town centers, since large spaces for supplies, equipment and final products are often needed necessitating a lower rent per square foot cost.

West Concord was the area of industry and worker housing of Concord in the late nineteenth to early twentieth century. In recent years, West Concord Junction has benefited from the presence of artists and cultural organizations, such as Concord Conservatory of Music, West Concord Dance Academy and Concord Youth Theater, and the small galleries, shops and restaurants that feature local art.

Many cultural districts and communities throughout the US have been concerned about the unintended consequences of success, such as gentrification and displacement. Another related concern has been the “mallng” of town and neighborhood centers with national chains and

uninspired new construction and renovation, which erases much of the local character and distinctive qualities of a community, such as those found in West Concord.

In this section, we review the questions of gentrification, displacement, rising rents and retaining community character in West Concord. Concord has been a leader in Massachusetts in protecting the marketplace for small businesses and sustaining community character by limiting formula businesses in the Town’s two villages, West Concord Junction and Concord Center.

Brookside Square’s new development offering 74 luxury apartments sparked concerns about gentrification. Brookside Square advertises available luxury apartments in West Concord Junction for rents ranging from \$1,895 for a studio and up to \$3,070 to \$3,825 for a two-bedroom apartment.

These rent prices can be startling for West Concord residents where the median average gross rent according per the US Census’ 2017 American Community Survey five-year estimates in West Concord CDP is \$1,931. And for homeowners with a mortgage in West Concord CDP<sup>1</sup>, the average monthly mortgage payment ranges between \$2,000 and \$2,499. In Concord, as a whole, the average monthly mortgage payment ranges between \$3,000 and

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<sup>1</sup> The West Concord CDP is a Census Designated Place and encompasses the West Concord Junction Cultural District, the village and surrounding residential areas. It spans 3.378 square miles. A map of the West Concord CDP can be found in the Appendix.

\$3,499. One-quarter (26.5%) of homeowners in West Concord do not have a mortgage, and over a third of Concord homeowners (38.3%) do not have a mortgage. The rents at Brookside Square, in contrast, seem high, based on residents' personal experiences. Is this gentrification?

Merriam-Webster defines gentrification as “the process of repairing and rebuilding homes and businesses in a deteriorating area (such as an urban neighborhood) accompanied by an influx of middle-class or affluent people and that often results in the displacement of earlier, usually poorer residents.”

The City of Portland, Oregon, which has undertaken extensive research and work to address social equity and the

issues of gentrification and displacement has developed a more rigorous definition. Per Portland’s 2035 Comprehensive Plan, gentrification occurs when “an under-valued neighborhood that becomes desirable, resulting in rising property values and changes to demographic and economic conditions of the neighborhood. These changes include a shift from lower-income to higher-income households, and often there is a change in racial and ethnic make-up of the neighborhood’s residents and businesses.”

Portland has developed a series of indicators to ascertain whether or not a neighborhood or census tract is at risk to gentrification and to what extent gentrification is underway. The key indicators include demographic factors and the comparative rate of change as to population, race,

**Table 5-1. Demographic Overview of Concord and West Concord CDP.**

	Town of Concord	West Concord CDP	WC as Percent of Concord
Population	19,337	7,646	39.5%
K-12 School Enrollment	3,654	1,062	29.1%
Median Age	46.6	43.2	
Households	6,720	2,574	38.3%
Average Household Size	2.59	2.41	
Area (acres)	15,688	2,162	13.8%
Density (Households/Acre)	1.23	3.54	

Sources: American Community Survey 2017 (5 yr. estimates) and McCabe Enterprises.

**Table 5-2. Comparative Population Changes and Rates of Change.**

	Massachusetts	Middlesex County	Concord	West Concord CDP
2000 Decennial	6,349,097	1,465,396	16,993	5,632
2009 ACS	6,511,176	1,480,260	17,566	6,335
2010 Decennial	6,547,629	1,503,085	17,668	6,028
2012 ACS	6,477,096	1,479,491	17,373	6,204
2017 ACS	6,789,319	1,582,857	19,357	7,646
Rate of Change 2000 to 2010	3.1%	2.6%	4.0%	7.0%
Rate of Change 2009 to 2012*	-0.5%	-0.1%	-1.1%	-2.1%
Rate of Change 2012-2017	4.8%	7.0%	11.4%	23.2%

\* The Great Recession precipitated migration and changes in living locations and in housing patterns, such as more multi-generational households and apartment/house sharing.

Sources: US Census 2000, 2010, American Community Survey (ACS) 2009, 2012, 2017, 5-yr. estimates and McCabe Enterprises.

educational attainment, median income, persons below the poverty level, and the cost burden of housing. Proximity to more affluent census tracts is also considered a risk factor.

We have undertaken a broad, high-level review of these data points, known as Economic Vulnerability indicators comparing 2012 data with 2017 American Community Survey (ACS) data for Concord and West Concord in relationship to the Commonwealth and Middlesex County for an initial assessment as to whether gentrification is a consideration in West Concord Junction. The data reported here can also be used as a starting point for further in-depth assessment and investigation.

## Economic Vulnerability Indicators

The Portland methodology identified four factors that contribute to economic vulnerability and risk of gentrification. They are:

- Share of Households that are renters which is greater than the share of households renting in Portland or in this case, Massachusetts and Middlesex County;
- Share of the population that are communities of color greater than the Massachusetts and Middlesex County average;
- Share of adults (25 or older) without a four-year college degree greater than the Massachusetts and Middlesex County average.
- Share of households that are lower income (below 80% of the median family household incomes) greater than Massachusetts' and Middlesex County's share of lower income family households.

As shown in the tables on the following pages, the share of renters in both 2012 and 2017 indicate that Concord and West Concord in 2012 had significantly lower share of renters than the Commonwealth and Middlesex County (ACS 2012 and 2017, 5-year estimates). In 2017, the share of renters in Concord was 23.4%, which is significantly lower than the share of renters statewide (37.6%) and in Middlesex County (37.4%). The share of renters,

however, increased in 2017 in the West Concord CDP to 36.8% is close to statewide and Middlesex County rates.

The second indicator of economic vulnerability addresses the relative share of communities of color. In 2012, the share of persons of color (as defined by race) in Massachusetts and Middlesex County were 19.0% and 19.3%. This share increased slightly to 21.2% and 22.1% in 2017, according to ACS five-year estimates. Town-wide, Concord, had a significantly lower proportion of persons of color defined by race in both 2012 and 2017. In 2012, 10.8% of residents identified themselves as persons of color in Concord. This share increased to 15.6% in 2017 for the Town, which is still markedly lower than the state and county rates. The West Concord CDP in 2012 had 17.8% of its population identify as persons of color, which is slightly less than the state and county. In 2017, however, the proportion of persons of color in West Concord CDP rose to 22.7%, slightly exceeding the Commonwealth and Middlesex County.

The share of adults, 25 years-of-age and older, without a four-year college degree is the third indicator. The table on Educational Attainment reports data for persons 25 years-of-age and older. For the Commonwealth in 2012, 61.1% of the populace did not have a bachelor's degree or more, and in 2017 the rate decreased to 57.9%. For Middlesex County in 2012, just under half (49.8%) of the populace had attained less than a bachelor's degree. In 2017, the county-wide rate of persons without a bachelor's degree or more decreased to 45.9%. The share of adults without a bachelor's degree in West Concord CDP in 2012 was 43.3%, less than the statewide and countywide rates. In 2017, this share decreased in West Concord CDP at a rate comparable to Middlesex County to 40.2%. The percentage of persons in West Concord CDP with less than a bachelor's degree continues to be noticeably lower than the Commonwealth and Middlesex County in 2017.

Concord and West Concord CDP have substantially lower percentage of low-income households than Massachusetts and Middlesex County, based on the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's definition of eighty percent of median family household income. HUD identifies 18.1% of persons living in Concord as low-and-moderate income, and 20.8% of West Concord CDP residents as low-and-moderate income.

Table 5-3. Racial Demographics and Change.

		White	Black	Amer- ican Indian	Asian alone	Hawai- ian/ PI	Other Race	Multi- Racial	Total Persons of Color
<b>Massa- chusetts</b>	2012 ACS	81.0%	6.8%	0.2%	5.4%	0.0%	4.0%	2.6%	19.0%
	2017 ACS	78.9%	7.4%	0.2%	6.3%	0.0%	4.1%	3.1%	21.1%
	Rate of Change	-2.5%	8.2%	7.3%	15.3%		2.2%	20.6%	10.7%
<b>Middlesex County</b>	2012 ACS	80.7%	4.6%	0.1%	9.5%	0.0%	2.6%	2.4%	19.3%
	2017 ACS	77.9%	5.2%	0.2%	11.2%	0.0%	2.6%	2.9%	22.1%
	Rate of Change	-3.5%	11.5%	23.5%	18.4%		0.6%	20.1%	14.5%
<b>Concord</b>	2012 ACS	89.2%	2.8%	0.1%	4.7%	0.0%	1.0%	2.2%	10.8%
	2017 ACS	84.4%	3.4%	0.0%	6.3%	0.0%	3.5%	2.5%	15.6%
	Rate of Change	-5.4%	20.7%	-100.0%	33.6%		233.9%	14.8%	45.0%
<b>West Concord CDP</b>	2012 ACS	82.2%	6.1%	0.2%	7.0%	0.0%	2.7%	1.9%	17.8%
	2017 ACS	77.3%	7.4%	0.0%	4.2%	0.0%	7.5%	3.6%	22.7%
	Rate of Change	-5.9%	22.1%	-100.0%	40.3%		180.5%	91.7%	27.3%

Sources: American Community Survey 2012 & 2017, 5-year estimates; McCabe Enterprises.

Table 5-4. Percent of Persons who are Hispanic & Rate of Change.

	Massachusetts	Middlesex County	Concord	West Concord CDP
<b>2012 ACS</b>	9.6%	6.6%	4.2%	7.8%
<b>2017 ACS</b>	11.2%	7.7%	6.4%	12.1%
<b>Rate of Change</b>	16.5%	16.5%	53.2%	55.9%

Sources: American Community Survey 2012 & 2017, 5-year estimates; McCabe Enterprises.

Table 5-5. Housing Tenure and Rate of Change.

		Massachu- setts	Middlesex County	Concord	West Concord CDP
<b>2012 ACS</b>	<b>Owner-Occupied</b>	63.2%	63.2%	81.1%	74.7%
<b>2012 ACS</b>	<b>Renter-Occupied</b>	36.8%	36.8%	18.9%	25.3%
<b>2017 ACS</b>	<b>Owner-Occupied</b>	62.4%	62.6%	76.6%	63.2%
<b>2017 ACS</b>	<b>Renter-Occupied</b>	37.6%	37.4%	23.4%	36.8%
<b>Rate of Change: Renter Units from 2012 to 2017</b>		2.3%	1.7%	24.0%	45.4%

Sources: American Community Survey 2012 & 2017, 5-year estimates; McCabe Enterprises.

Table 5-6. Educational Attainments and Comparative Rates of Change.

		Less than High School	High School Graduate	Some College, No Degree	Associates Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Graduate or Prof'l Degree	Share of Persons without a 4-Year Degree	Share of Persons with Bachelor's Degree or More
<b>Massachusetts</b>	2012 ACS	10.9%	25.9%	16.6%	7.7%	22.2%	16.8%	61.1%	39.0%
	2017 ACS	9.7%	24.7%	15.8%	7.7%	23.4%	18.7%	57.9%	42.1%
	Rate of Change	-10.7%	-4.6%	-5.1%	0.3%	5.4%	11.2%	-5.2%	7.9%
<b>Middlesex County</b>	2012 ACS	8.1%	21.9%	13.7%	6.1%	25.7%	24.5%	49.8%	50.2%
	2017 ACS	7.2%	20.1%	12.6%	6.0%	26.9%	27.2%	45.9%	54.1%
	Rate of Change	-11.7%	-8.3%	-7.7%	-1.3%	4.6%	11.1%	-7.8%	7.8%
<b>Concord</b>	2012 ACS	5.2%	13.9%	10.8%	4.1%	31.3%	34.7%	34.0%	66.0%
	2017 ACS	5.4%	12.5%	7.0%	3.7%	29.3%	42.0%	28.6%	71.4%
	Rate of Change	3.9%	-9.8%	-35.0%	-10.0%	-6.3%	21.1%	-15.7%	8.1%
<b>West Concord CDP</b>	2012 ACS	10.2%	19.2%	11.4%	2.5%	25.4%	31.4%	43.3%	56.8%
	2017 ACS	10.0%	17.6%	9.1%	3.5%	25.7%	34.1%	40.2%	59.8%
	Rate of Change	-1.8%	-8.4%	-20.5%	40.0%	1.2%	8.6%	-7.2%	5.3%

Sources: American Community Survey 2012 & 2017, 5-year estimates; McCabe Enterprises.

Table 5-7. Percent of Persons Below the Poverty Level & Rate of Change.

	Massachusetts	Middlesex County	Concord	West Concord CDP
<b>2012 ACS</b>	11.0%	7.9%	4.5%	2.6%
<b>2017 ACS</b>	11.1%	8.2%	6.3%	5.3%
<b>Rate of Change</b>	0.9%	3.8%	40.0%	103.8%

Sources: American Community Survey 2012 & 2017, 5-year estimates; McCabe Enterprises.

Table 5-8. Percent of Persons Living At or Below 200% of the Poverty Level and Rate of Change.

	Massachusetts	Middlesex County	Concord	West Concord CDP
<b>2012 ACS</b>	24.2%	18.5%	8.8%	8.5%
<b>2017 ACS</b>	23.7%	17.9%	9.8%	11.6%
<b>Rate of Change</b>	-2.2%	-3.6%	10.4%	37.4%

Sources: American Community Survey 2012 & 2017, 5-year estimates; McCabe Enterprises.

Based on the four criteria for economic vulnerability, Concord and West Concord do not meet the criteria. Concord meets none of the criteria. The West Concord CDP meets one criterion, namely a larger share of the population who are persons of color. To be considered economically vulnerable and at risk for gentrification at least three of the four criteria must be met.

Portland also established criteria to ascertain whether a census tract is experiencing demographic changes that may be gentrification related. The criteria are as follow:

- Either three or four of the following four conditions are true:
  1. The share of homeowners increased or decreased slower than the citywide average, or in the case of Concord and West Concord, the state and Middlesex County.
  2. The white population share increased or decreased slower than the state and Middlesex County.
  3. The share of adults with a four-year degree increased faster than the state and Middlesex County average.
  4. Median household income increased faster than the state and Middlesex County average.
- Or the following two conditions (of the four factors above) were true:
  1. The white population share increased or decreased slower than the state and Middlesex County.
  2. The share of adults with a four-year degree increased faster than the state and Middlesex County average.

Reviewing these criteria, the rate of change in homeownership rates in Concord and the West Concord CDP between 2012 and 2017 was -5.6% and -15.4%, respectively. This is definitely faster than the change in the homeownership rate for Massachusetts (-1.3%) and for Middlesex County (-1.0%).

The share of the white population in Concord and West Concord CDP changed from 2012 to 2017 per the five-year ACS estimates -5.4% for the town and -5.9% for West Concord CDP. In Massachusetts for the same period, the rate of change of the white population was -2.5%, and the rate of change for Middlesex County was -3.5%. Both the Town and West Concord CDP’s racial demographics as to the proportion of the white population is changing faster than the state and county in the last five-year reporting period.

The share of adults with a four-year degree or better in Concord in 2017 increased to 71.4% with a rate of change of 8.1% from 2012. In West Concord CDP, the proportion of adults with a four-year degree or better increased to 59.8%, a 5.3% increase from 2012. In Massachusetts and Middlesex County, the rate of increase in the number of adults with a bachelor’s degree or more from 2012 to 2017 was 7.9% to 7.8%. The Town’s rate of increase is a fraction higher than the state and county. The rate of change in West Concord CDP as to educational attainment of a bachelor’s degree or higher is lower than the state and county. Thus, this indicator of changing demographics related to gentrification does not apply.

The rate of change of the median household income in Massachusetts and in Middlesex County from 2012 to 2017 was 11.3% and 14.1%, respectively. For this same period, the rate of change of median household income

**Table 5-9. Median Household Income and Rate of Change.**

	Massachusetts	Middlesex County	Concord	West Concord CDP
<b>2012 ACS</b>	\$ 66,658	\$ 81,420	\$ 131,507	\$ 111,513
<b>2017 ACS</b>	\$ 74,167	\$ 92,878	\$ 137,743	\$ 118,100
<b>Rate of Change</b>	11.3%	14.1%	4.7%	5.9%

Sources: American Community Survey 2012 & 2017, 5-year estimates; McCabe Enterprises.

in Concord and the West Concord CDP was 4.7% and 5.9%. Both the Town and West Concord CDP have substantially slower rates of increase of the median household income for the period 2012 to 2017. Again, this indicator of changing economics related to gentrification does not apply.

Concord relative to Middlesex County, the Commonwealth and the Boston Metro area is considered an upper middle-class community ranking 23rd amongst Massachusetts' 351 cities and towns as to median household income. If West Concord CDP was a separate municipality, it would rank 46th as to median household income amongst cities and towns in the Commonwealth.

Some of the demographic changes in Concord are attributable to Concord and West Concord residents aging in place. The slower rise in median household income is attributable in part to aging households. Concord's median age is 46.6 years. The median age in the West Concord CDP is 43.2. Concord's and West Concord CDP's median age is three to seven years more than the statewide median age of 39.4 years and the countywide median age of 40.9 years.

Based on the Portland approach to analyzing on-going demographic change that may be attributable to gentrifica-

tion, the Town of Concord and the West Concord CDP meets only two of the four indicators – a faster rate of change as to the proportion of homeowners than the state and county and a faster rate of change as to racial demographics. Three criteria must be met to indicate possible gentrification. Thus, the demographic changes in West Concord CDP are not attributable to gentrification.

## Affordable Space

There are noticeable demographics changes and trends occurring regarding income and cost of housing, particularly rental housing and the cost of homeownership for recent and new homebuyers.

A closer look and analysis of the housing cost burden of households in Concord and West Concord reveals that 48% of households in West Concord are housing burdened, meaning that households are expending more than 30% of their income on housing costs. The West Concord CDP has a higher percentage of its households that are housing burdened than the Commonwealth or Middlesex County, as noted in Table 5-10.

Table 5-10. Housing Cost-Burdened Households.

	Massachusetts	Middlesex County	Concord	West Concord CDP
<b>Households</b>	2,585,715	593,784	6,720	2,574
<b>Cost-Burdened Renter Households</b>	684,498	140,643	1,206	811
<b>Cost-Burdened Homeowner Households</b>	449,315	127,413	1,562	430
<b>Total Number of Housing Burdened Households</b>	1,133,813	268,056	2,768	1,241
<b>Percent of Housing Cost Burdened Households</b>	43.8%	45.1%	41.2%	48.2%
<b>Severely Housing Cost-Burdened Households</b>				
<b>Owner-Occupied</b>	229,052	47,061	518	370
<b>Renter-Occupied</b>	8.9%	7.9%	7.7%	14.4%

Source: American Community Survey 2017, 5-yr. estimates & McCabe Enterprises.

Households that rent are especially cost-burdened. In Concord town-wide, 70.6% of renters are cost-burdened paying more than 30% of their incomes on housing costs. In West Concord CDP, 85.6% of renters pay more than 30% of their income. A greater proportion of renter households in Concord and West Concord are cost burdened (30% of income or more on housing) than state-wide and county-wide. One in seven (14.4%) of households in West Concord CDP are severely cost-burdened – paying more than 50% of their income on rent.

Rising rents and housing costs are complex issues in West Concord CDP, Concord, eastern Massachusetts, Boston and many urbanized areas and cities with robust economies. The concerns that residents are expressing are indicative of one of the major challenges facing cities and suburbs alike. Part of the response to the economic inequality and the housing access issues is to provide more affordable housing, including housing opportunities – rental and homeownership – for artists, creatives and the general populace, combined with strategies to retain community character. The challenge of affordability also affects work spaces and commercial areas, particularly for artists and small businesses.

Concerns about rising rents and gentrification have been a theme voiced in West Concord over the past decade,

including during the development of the West Concord Master Plan in 2009-2010. Residents wondered if West Concord will lose its “funkiness” and whether existing residents and small businesses will no longer be able to afford West Concord. This same concern was voiced during the WCJCD’s April 2019 Open House.

A decade ago, in a survey of residents for the West Concord Village Master Plan, the major concerns were “Village” character (94%); sustaining small/local/ independent businesses (86%); open spaces (70%); traffic (69%); and parking (34%). Eighteen percent of respondents in 2009 mentioned maintaining low rents or costs for small, local independent retail and other similar businesses.

The resident and business surveys conducted in the spring of 2019 indicate a clear concern about rising rents for small businesses as well as rising rents for artist and creatives. Three-quarters (75.8%) of the business respondents strongly agreed or agreed that rents are rising in West Concord making it hard for small businesses. Two-thirds (67.2%) of residents also strongly agreed or agreed that rising rents are making it hard for small businesses in West Concord.

The same question was posed about whether rising rents were making it hard for artists and creatives in West Con-

**Table 5-11. Commercial Office Space Asking Rents Comparing 2015 and 2019.**

	2015 Q1	Middlesex County	Concord
128 North	Cost Per SF NNN	2019 Q1	-2.3% to 31.2%
128 West	Cost Per SF	\$28.76 to \$34.06	10.4% to 16.4%
495 North	NNN	Rate of Change	15.0%
495 West	\$ 16.72	\$ 19.54	16.9%

Sources: JLL Market Insight 2015Q2 and 2019Q1, Cushman Wakefield Market Beat Greater Boston, 2015Q1 and 2019Q2.

<sup>2</sup> A triple net rent, sometimes referred to as NNN, is where commercial and industrial tenants are responsible for paying the real estate taxes, building maintenance and insurance for the building. Tenants are also typically responsible for utilities.

# Hatton Garden Affordable Workspace

Hatton Garden is the center of the jewelry trade in the United Kingdom with over 300 jewelers, goldsmiths, shops, and related trade businesses. Hatton Garden is located in the Camden borough of Greater London. Camden, and particularly Hatton Garden is a built-out area where developers have been converting industrial work spaces and commercial buildings to housing, retail and restaurants. This has resulted in a shortage of space for jewelers, silversmiths, goldsmiths, and other artisans. Existing businesses were losing space and could not locate affordable work space in the Hatton Garden district.

The Camden borough government adopted an Affordable Work Space Policy requiring new developments and major rehabilitation projects, inclusive of housing, mixed-use and commercial developments to provide affordable work space in their developments as a condition of permitting.

Unite, a major developer of student housing in the UK, sought approvals for the Arundel House project to build student housing on a former employment site. Camden requested Unite to provide workshop

space for the jewelry industry in accordance with the Affordable Workspace Policy. Initially the borough requested the entire street level be dedicated to affordable work space.

Unite agreed, but then requested a concession to add another floor to its building, Camden agreed with the condition that both the ground level and the lower level be dedicated to affordable work space studios to serve new start-up businesses in the jewelry trade as well as existing artisans. Affordable work spaces were to be leased at £5 per square foot

Camden manage the tender and solicitation for the affordable work space which is now fully occupied of artisans. Camden retained a workshop provider who manages and fills the workshop units with jewelry artisans. In addition to this affordable workspace for jewelry artisans the borough has required the development of additional affordable workspaces for artisans. It is using some of its Section 106, a fund with contributions from developers for mitigation, to finance improvements and operations of affordable work spaces.



Figure 5-1. Case Study: Hatton Garden Affordable Workspace.

cord. Similar responses were expressed. 75% of businesses strongly agreed or agreed and 66.9% of residents strongly agreed or agreed that rising rents made it harder for artists and creatives. The concern about rising commercial rents indicates the need for developing an affordable work place policy.

The survey of local artists conducted in spring 2019 indicated that over one in eight artists noted that affordability of the studio was a concern. Some artists work at home, a couple own their own studios. Most of the responses were from visual artists. Performance artists – actors, dancers, musicians – also need practice spaces, some with large floor spaces and others with high quality sound insulation so as to be a good neighbor.

Given the concerns voiced about rising rents, a more detailed look at rising rents in the commercial and industrial sectors was undertaken.

The review of asking office rents in the north and northwest suburban markets around Routes 128 and 495 over the past five years, 2015 to 2019, shows that commercial office rents are rising faster than the pace of inflation. Ask-

ing office rents around Route 128 in 2015 were ranging from \$23 to \$29 per square foot triple net (NNN)<sup>2</sup>. In the first quarter, 2019, asking commercial office asking rents for the north and northwest suburbs ranged from \$22.50 to \$34 per square foot NNN. Asking rents for all classes of commercial office space increased 10.6% to 31.2% in north and northwest suburbs around Route 128 from 2015 to 2019.

Suburban office rents in the I-495 corridor were slightly lower. Asking commercial office space rents for all classes in 2015 ranged from \$16 to \$18 in the north and northwest suburbs around I-495. Five years later in 2019, asking rents for all classes of commercial office space ranged from the nearly \$20 per square foot NNN to mid \$21 per square foot NNN. This is approximately a 15% to 16.9% increase in commercial office rents for the five-year period.

The rate of inflation for the five-year period of 2015 to 2018 was 8.1%. Commercial office rents rose on average double the rate of inflation in the north and northwest I-495 markets. In the Route 128 north and northwest markets, the average rise in commercial office rents for all classes of office space was somewhat uneven, staying steady in some locales, especially for lower quality office space, and rising nearly four times the rate of inflation for higher quality Class A space.

In addition, the cost of construction has been rising faster than the rate of inflation, particularly in eastern Massachusetts. On a national level, the Turner Index reports that construction costs have risen 16.2% since 2015, which is twice the rate of inflation for the 2015-2019 period.

The Town of Concord, inclusive of West Concord, has limited land zoned for commercial and industrial uses – only 2.4% of the Town’s total land area. The Town has set-a-side 107 acres for industrial uses, which constitutes 0.6% of the Town’s land, and another 305 acres for commercial purposes comprising 1.8% of the total land area of Concord, per Envision Concord. Some of the land zoned industrial, notably in West Concord near the Assabet and Nashoba Rivers, is also within the 100-year flood plain, further limiting available usable land for industrial uses.

The shift from a manufacturing economy to a knowledge-based economy prompted many to overlook the role of industrial and former industrial spaces in communities.

**Table 5-12. Industrial Asking Rents, Comparing 2015 to 2019.**

Cushman and Wakefield's MarketBeat			
	2015Q1	2019 Q1	Rate of Change
<b>128 North</b>	\$5.90	\$14.20	141%
<b>495 North</b>	\$7.10	\$10.14	43%
<b>128 Central (West)</b>	\$7.50	\$28.80	284%
<b>495 West</b>	\$5.78	\$8.56	48%
JLL's Market Insight			
	2015Q1	2019 Q1	Rate of Change
<b>North Suburbs</b>	\$8.23	\$7.89	-4%
<b>West Suburbs</b>	\$4.96	\$6.74	36%

Artists, artisans and small businesses, such as machine shops, construction businesses and fabricators, found cheap usable space in these former industrial buildings. Over the past three decades, there has been a significant loss of industrial sites and buildings, particularly near commuter rail and subway stops due to conversion and redevelopment. Yet, in the last decade there is a renewed interest and need for industrial space with the desire for maker spaces, the rise in creative enterprises and entrepreneurship, and smaller-scale custom manufacturing and fabrication.

Most communities, including Concord, start with a very limited supply of industrial and commercial land. The market demands for industrial and warehouse spaces combined with the pressure to convert older industrial sites into residential and mixed-use development to address the robust market demand for more housing and transit-oriented-development has left very little affordable industrial space for artists, artisans, fabricators, and small crafts-person workshops.

As the West Concord Junction Cultural District moves forward addressing the need for affordability will be important in the long-run for the District. The three legs of affordability strategy for artists, artisans, performers, creatives and cultural enterprises are:

1. Affordable housing for artists, artisans, performers and creatives;
2. Affordable work spaces; and
3. Fair compensation for artists, artisans, performers and creatives.



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# 6 Community Engagement

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“The arts empower. The arts give a voice to the voiceless. The arts help transform American communities and, as I often say, the result can be a better child, a better town, a better nation and certainly a better world. Let’s champion our arts action heroes, emulate them and make our communities everything we want them to be.”

- Robert L. Lynch, President, Americans for the Arts

## Community Engagement

Community engagement is a vital element in the development of an inclusive cultural plan, and the WCJCDC has engaged the community in the cultural district planning process. To ensure broad opportunities for public input, McCabe Enterprises developed a three-part process for engagement: four surveys, an open house and discussion; and a meeting with the WCJCDC. In addition, WCJCDC members participated in the West Concord Advisory Committee’s May 2019 open house using the comment/community input boards.

### Surveys

In early spring surveys of artists, businesses and residents in West Concord were developed. Surveys were distributed via the Town’s web site, and with fliers encouraging survey participation with a QR code for digital responses. Since the artist and business surveys were targeted to defined audiences, these surveys were distributed by email. The business survey was also distributed by hand to businesses within the West Concord Junction Cultural District area. Artist surveys were also distributed by property owners and managers whose buildings/facilities housed a large number of artist studios, such as Artscape.

### The Artist Survey

The artist survey generated twenty-five responses out of a known community of sixty-three artists for nearly a forty percent (39.7%) response rate. Most of the respondents were visual artists, including painters (50%) and a couple responses from performing artists. When artists were asked an open-ended question as to why they chose to locate their art studio in West Concord, the three leading responses were: the availability of studio space; the proximity of the West Concord Junction business district – the village and its amenities; and convenience and affiliation – artists live and/or work in West Concord.

The leading desired qualities for artist studio space expressed by the Artist Survey respondents was natural light

(81%); parking (76.2%); secure building (66.7%) and a location with other artists and creative professionals (66.7%). Additional highlights from the Artist Survey can be found in the Appendix.

## The Business Survey

The Business Survey generated thirty-six responses. Over eighty percent (82.4%) of the respondents identified as business owners. Another 14.2% identified as property owners, and the balance identified either as artists or residents. Nearly all respondents indicated that they were involved in arts and culture. Business involvement in arts and culture ranged from artists as customers to displaying local art work in their business over the past year, to being a sponsor of an art or cultural events.

One-third (32%) of business respondents indicated that would like more involvement with the local arts scene. Just under half (46%) indicated that they would like their business involvement in arts and culture to remain at the same level. Another 21% of respondents noted that arts and culture were not a priority for their business.

The majority (56%) of business survey respondents anticipate that sales at their business will remain steady in the next twenty-four months. Two-fifths (40.6%) of business respondents believe their sales will grow (37.5%) or substantially grow (3.1%) over the next two years. Only 3.1% of business respondents expect a decline in sales.

One in five business survey respondents (21%) indicated that they intend to expand in the next two-to-three years. Two-thirds of businesses planning expansion intend to remain in West Concord. However, one-third of businesses planning expansion indicate that they may need to relocate somewhere beyond Concord. Another 6.6% of business survey respondents indicated that they plan to relocate, but not expand, in the next two-to-three years. Almost three-quarters (73.3%) of business respondents anticipate staying in the same location in West Concord.

Parking was the chief improvement needed in West Concord amongst business survey respondents. Other issues receiving multiple responses were traffic calming, wayfinding, and lower rents for small businesses and artists.

## Residents Survey

A total of 134 surveys were received from local residents. Most of the responses (78.8%) were from residents living in West Concord. The balance was from other neighborhoods of Concord. Survey residents had a mix of longevity of their residence in West Concord and Concord. Ten percent of survey respondents had lived in the community for two years or less. Forty percent had resided in West Concord/ Concord for twenty years or longer. For the remaining three responses – 2 to 5 years of residence; 6 to 10 years of residence, and 11 to 19 years of residence – seventeen percent (17%) responded in each time period.

Although survey respondents to the residents survey spanned age groups from 25 years-of-age to over 80 years old, compared to the proportion of residents living in Concord and West Concord, responses skewed to the older side of the age spectrum. One quarter of respondents (26%) indicated they were between 25 and 49 years old. One third (34.5%) of West Concord residents and slightly more than one-quarter (27%) of Concord residents are between 25 and 49 years.

The largest proportion (47.3%) of residential survey responses were from persons between 50 and 64 years of age. This age cohort represents only one-quarter of the population in West Concord (23.5%) and Concord (25.5%). A quarter (25%) of all survey responses were received by persons 65 to 79 years of age. The share of residents living in West Concord (11.3%) and Concord (13%) is about half of the proportion of respondents in the 65 to 79 years of age cohort. Two percent of the survey respondents were eighty years of age or older, which is a slight underweighting of the share of the very old age cohort (80 years and older) in Concord (6.5%) and West Concord (5.4%).

One quarter of survey respondents indicate that they were retired. Nearly all of the residential survey respondents (91.2%) indicated they intended to continue residing in Concord in the same home in the next two-to-three years.

## The Intercept Survey

The fourth survey conducted as part of the outreach effort were short interviews with the “person on the street” in May 2019 in the West Concord Junction Cultural District. Intercept survey comments can be found at the end of this chapter on page 56.

## Business and Resident Survey Responses Compared to National Responses in the 2018 Americans for the Arts Survey.

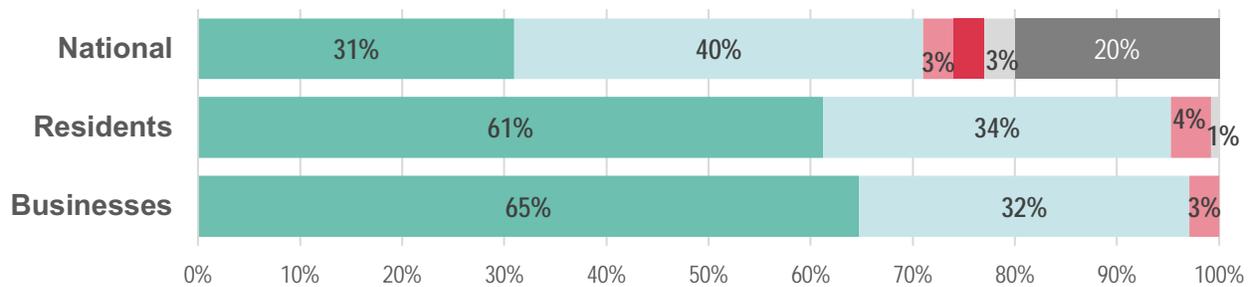
The business and residents survey utilized some questions posed in the 2018 national survey on the arts and American life by the national arts advocacy organization, Americans for the Arts. Questions were often tailored for West Concord, and stated “West Concord” in lieu of my

community, or stated Town instead of local government. The differing responses to each question by respondents to the business survey, the residents survey and the national survey are highlighted below.

Dark green indicates Strongly Agree. Light green indicates Agree. Light red indicates Disagree. Dark red is strongly disagree. Light gray is Don't Know. Dark gray is for responses from the Americans for the Arts survey which provided an additional response option on some questions for the respondent to indicate if they Neither Agreed Nor Disagreed. This response was not offered in the West Concord surveys.

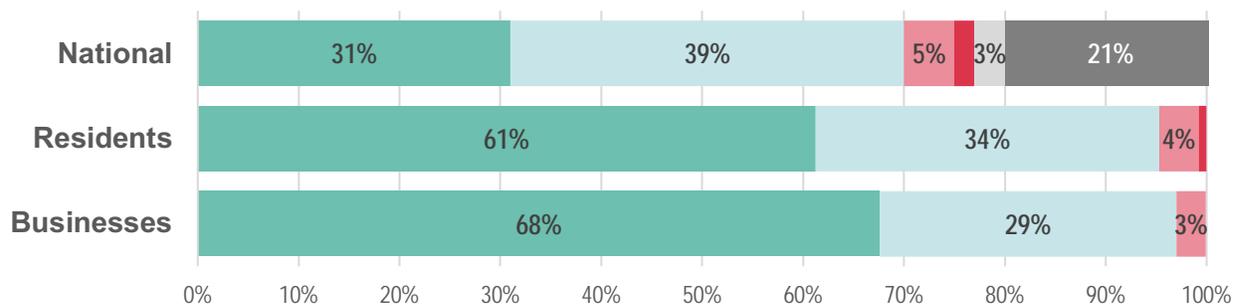
In two questions, the American for the Arts national survey provided respondents only two responses options – favor or oppose. For purpose of graphing comparative responses, this was illustrated as agree or disagree.

Figure 6-1. Arts and cultural facilities add to the quality of life.



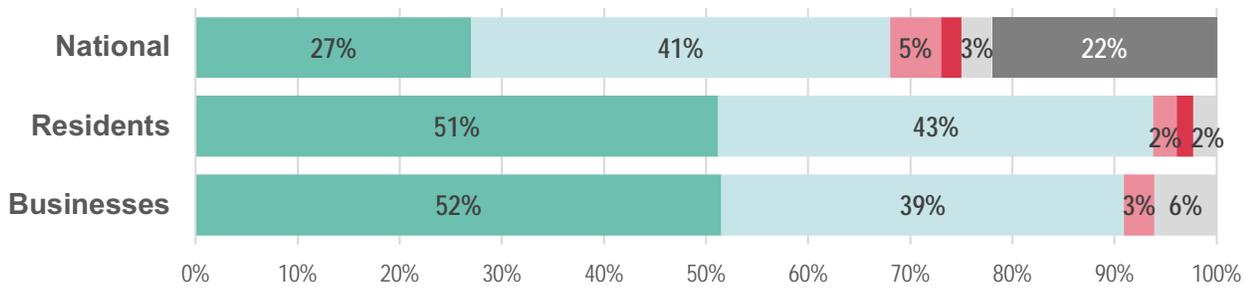
Source: WCJCDC Spring 2019 surveys, 2018 American for the Arts Survey, and McCabe Enterprises.

Figure 6-2. Arts and culture improve the image and identity of West Concord (my community).



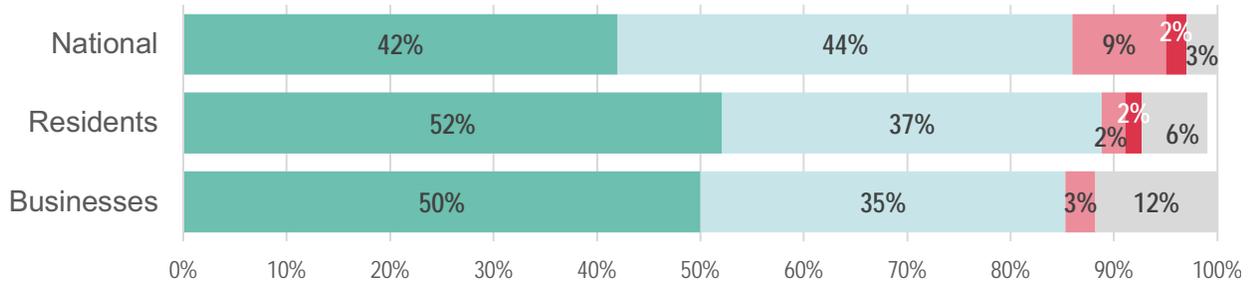
Source: WCJCDC Spring 2019 surveys, 2018 American for the Arts Survey, and McCabe Enterprises.

Figure 6-3. Arts are good for the economy and support jobs.



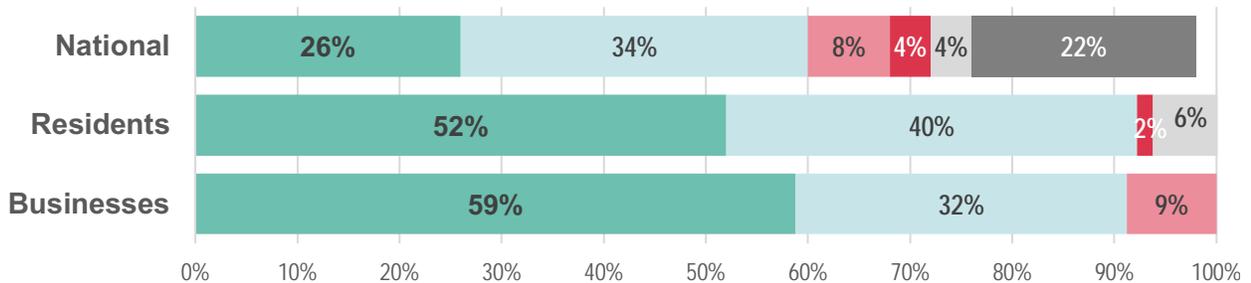
Source: WCJCDC Spring 2019 surveys, 2018 American for the Arts Survey, and McCabe Enterprises.

Figure 6-4. Arts and cultural facilities are important to business and the local economy.



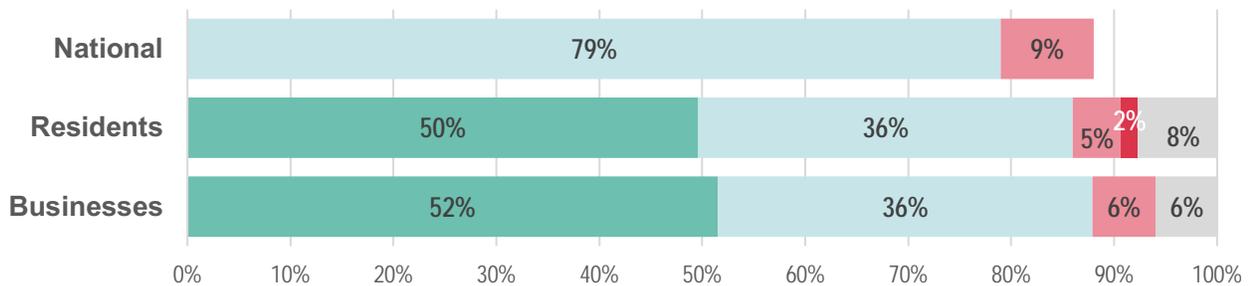
Source: WCJCDC Spring 2019 surveys, 2018 American for the Arts Survey, and McCabe Enterprises.

Figure 6-5. The Town (local government) should support arts and cultural events in West Concord (my community).



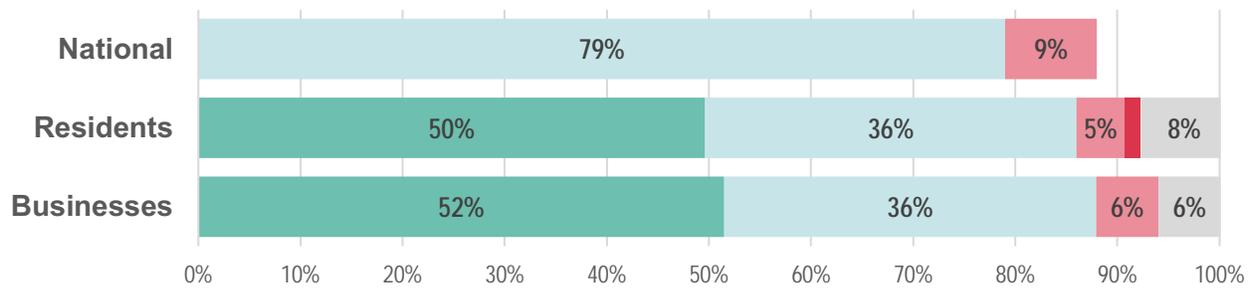
Source: WCJCDC Spring 2019 surveys, 2018 American for the Arts Survey, and McCabe Enterprises.

Figure 6-6. The Town (local government) should support the arts and cultural programming to increase tourism and visitors to West Concord (my community).



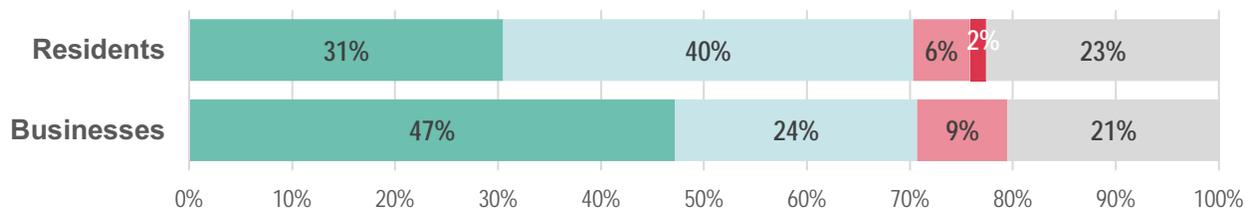
Source: WCJCDC Spring 2019 surveys, 2018 American for the Arts Survey, and McCabe Enterprises.

Figure 6-7. The Town (local government) should support public art and art events in parks and public spaces in and around West Concord (my community).



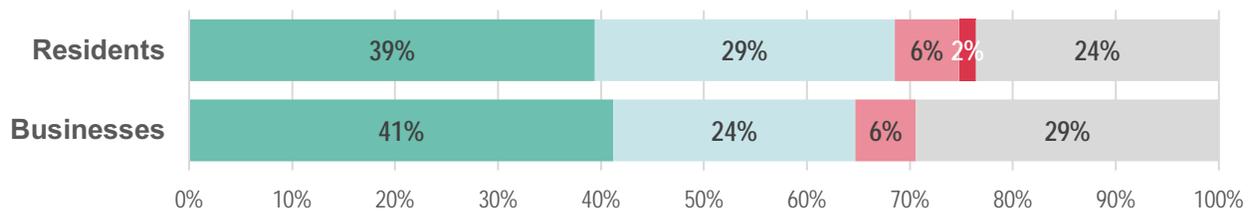
Source: WCJCDC Spring 2019 surveys, 2018 American for the Arts Survey, and McCabe Enterprises.

Figure 6-8. The presence of the arts, artisans and creatives is integral to the success of West Concord as a business district.



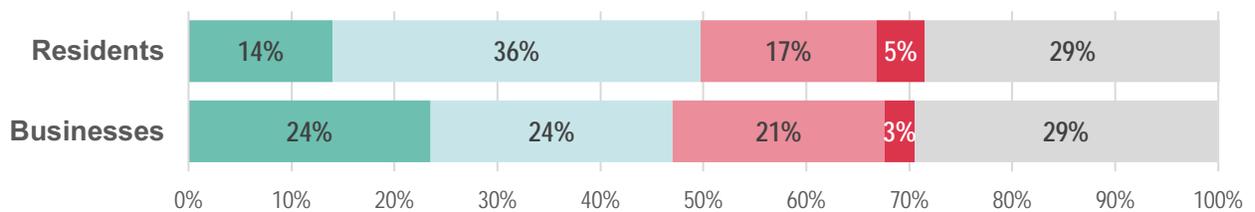
Source: WCJCDC Spring 2019 surveys and McCabe Enterprises.

Figure 6-9. Arts and culture positively affect property values in West Concord.



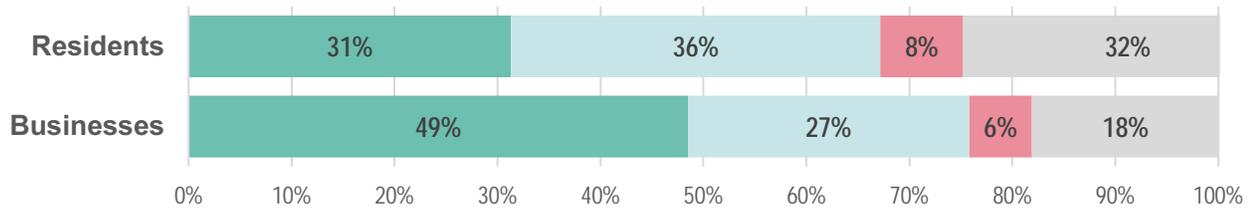
Source: WCJCDC Spring 2019 surveys and McCabe Enterprises.

Figure 6-10. Increased development in West Concord poses a threat to artists in the community.



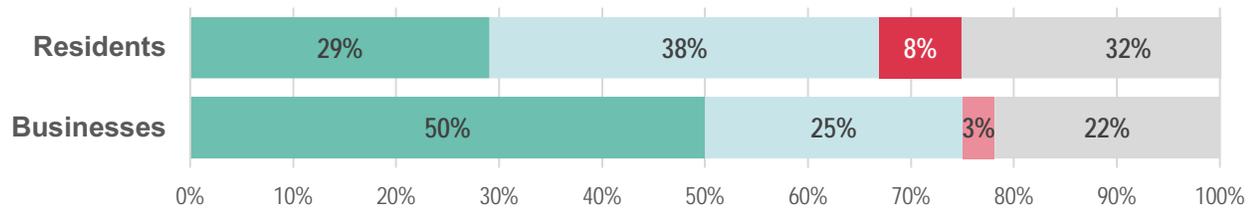
Source: WCJCDC Spring 2019 surveys and McCabe Enterprises.

Figure 6-11. Rents are rising in West Concord making it hard for small businesses.



Source: WCJCDC Spring 2019 surveys and McCabe Enterprises.

Figure 6-12. Rents are rising in West Concord making it difficult for artists, artisans and creatives to remain in West Concord.



Source: WCJCDC Spring 2019 surveys and McCabe Enterprises.

## Open House

The WCJCDC hosted an Open House on April 23, 2019 at the Wheelhouse at the Bradford Mill. Outreach for the event was coordinated by the WCJCDC and included fliers, social media posts and notices in the Concord Journal.

The evening open house (from 4:00-7:30pm) allowed attendees to visit as their schedule permitted. Members of the WCJCDC and town staff were on hand to answer questions from attendees. Comments were captured on three maps, which asked visitors to indicate:

- A special or favorite place in the West Concord Junction Cultural District.
- Points needing improvement in the district.
- Places or things that need to change in the district.

Additionally, copies of the artist, resident, and business surveys were available for those attendees that had not yet had the opportunity to complete one.

The McCabe Enterprises team shared a brief slide presentation that kicked off an informal conversation with the group. Notes from the meeting can be found on page 55.



6-13. Wheelhouse at the Bradford Mill.

## WCJCDC Meeting

The McCabe Enterprises team met with the WCJCDC and town staff June 6, 2019 to review findings from the survey and open house. The group discussed recommendations and implementation strategies for strengthening the cultural district. This discussion informed the summary of recommendations in Chapter 7 of this document.

**Figure 6-14: West Concord Junction Cultural District Plan: Open House, April 23, 2019**



## Figure 6-15. Special or Favorite Place Comments.

Please identify your special or favorite arts and cultural place or program in West Concord. If your favorite has a physical location, please put a blue pin at your favorite spot. If your special or favorite is a program, tell us more with a post-it. Tell us about your special, favorite place or program in the blue notebook below or on a blue post-it and paste it on the board here. This could be a program, a particular place, or whatever you like about arts and culture in West Concord.



### West Concord Junction Cultural District Plan: Open House, April 23, 2019

- Footbridge
- Art exhibits at Nashoba Bakery
- Art Gym
- Artscape
- Riverfront Path
- Mural at Teacakes Plaza
- The train
- Concord Conservatory of Music (CCM)
- 99/ DD
- Assabet Bluffs paths
- 5+10/ Debras
- Mural on prison wall

### West Concord Advisory Committee Open House, Wednesday, May 8th

- Zoning & support for expansion of businesses that serve the community
- Parking! Parking!
- Crosswalks at Church Street and Junction.
- More Benches!
- Debra's is a favorite place! Benches in front of store are great.
- There is too much parking here.
- We need to make all of the cultural district accessible and walkable
- This should be pervious gravel and not parking.

## Figure 6-16. Points of Improvement Comments.

Please identify the point(s) in West Concord where you believe improvements are needed or is a problem area. Place a red pin at the location needing improvement. Tell us about why this point, program, policy or issue needs improvement in the red notebook or on a red post-it. We are particularly interested in learning about what you think needs improvement as to arts and culture in West Concord.



### West Concord Junction Cultural District Plan: Open House, April 23, 2019

- Wayfinding needs to be implemented
- Will there be signage for the rental bikes?
- Restore bridge CPA funding?
- Clean up the riverway.
- Need a bridge from Baker Ave to businesses
- Really need a bridge from Baker Ave Businesses!
- How does the BF (Bruce Freeman) Trail fit in?
- This is a very unique building that's not very attractive today.
- Traffic
- "lower" price-point restaurants
- Connect 152 Commonwealth to Warner's Pond pocket park.
- need a cross-walk at Kenneth Dunn Sq. Agree! Yes please!
- This part of Beharrell is BAD to walk down!
- There needs to be better sidewalk and redesign of Beharrell & 30-40 to commuter parking lot.
- Improve public access! Make W. Concord more walkable.
- Public private partnership to improve lot in front of new leaf (village common?)
- More trees everywhere.
- There is too much parking here destroying vista of stream- it should be removed!

### West Concord Advisory Committee Open House, Wednesday, May 8th

- Under-used space for activities +/- or public art
- We need to improve transit to reduce parking
- A key site front Commonwealth Ave. for activation +/- or development
- New-ish resident of West Concord – loved open studios at Nashoba Bakery building – more please!
- This wetland needs a clean-up – logs, bottles, trash, garlic mustard plants
- Pedestrian committee needed
- Add tables for quick lunch takeout from: Debra's, Nashoba Bakery, Saltbox Kitchen perhaps at the Laws Brook Rd./Commonwealth Ave. triangle
- Bland, massive, imposing prison walls along Commonwealth Ave./Bruce Freeman Rail Trail – We need a bright, fun mural!
- Warner's Pond is getting worse & worse. It needs attention before it becomes prohibitively expensive.

## Figure 6-17. Change Comments.

Imagine that you have a magic wand. What do you wish for arts and culture in West Concord? If this is a place-based wish, please insert a pin at that place. Tell us about your wish in the orange notebook or on an orange post-it.



### West Concord Junction Cultural District Plan: Open House, April 23, 2019

- Concord West Concord shuttle/ditto
- Add “Boulder Creek” path type amenities to Assabet River (e.g. fishing piers, fish observatory, picnic spots, rock playgrounds, exercise sites.)
- Film series@ CYT
- Mural on 5+10 wall in alley next to Debra’s
- Grocery store Hardware store “useful” merchants
- Beharrell Street needs to be made walkable -- Timely!
- Maps and signage indicating local amenities
- Fabricator zoning district
- Mural on 7-11 wall!
- Performing arts venue
- Arts co-op each artist displays items, and works a monthly shift in the store.
- Second that!
- Wayfinding

### West Concord Advisory Committee Open House, Wednesday, May 8th

- No comments added.

## West Concord Cultural District Committee: Open House Notes April 23, 2019

- One attendee said they would like to see some permanent exhibit space in the Village.
- An attendee talked about a tension between arts and culture and production in the Village.
- Another attendee followed on noting a real estate tension between industrial production/maker space production vs. consumer space.
- Concern was voiced that gentrifying forces are afoot and whether zoning changes could/should address that. Specifically discussion was raised regarding the former Starmet site as a potential maker space/artist community space that could be linked with a shuttle service to the district.
- One person mentioned that people are shopping differently now, and suggested that retail and gallery space offer "experiences" rather than "buying opportunities."
- Another person raised questions about parking and suggested helping the town emphasize walkability and building facades that encourage walkability rather than adding more parking.
- The group spent a good amount of time talking about a proposed new bridge over the Assabet River connecting the Baker Avenue businesses to the Village. A "game changer." The major theme of that conversation was encouraging business owner buy-in to the project.
- An attendee suggested that WCJCDC provide the opportunity for a joint meeting with the various constituencies (artists, Village businesses, Barker Avenue businesses) to to further planning and promotion of the cultural district.
- More broadly and collectively, the group discussed how WCJCDC could develop strategies to (1) develop synergies, (2) create opportunities for cross promotion, (3) improve wayfinding, (4) develop some form of arts officer or representative to serve on a town advisory board.
- This conversation morphed into a discussion of creating an economic development council or plan that could include business and artist interests. Players in that conversation would include the Select Board, Planning Board, Natural Resource Commission, as well as people familiar with public-private partnerships.

## Intercept Survey Comments

May 2019

- Would like to see more WC businesses and groups use social media to tell people what's going on.
- Because of a limited income, would like to see more free events, or advertisement of free events in the Village.
- Would like to see more live music and more children's music. Would also like to see a graffiti/art alley such as what's in Central Square. Would like to see a wall where the art changes. Would like to see sidewalk murals, even chalk murals that involve the community.
- Would like to be able to see what's going on. Not going to check the Concord Journal or email lists. Would like to see rather a visible display of what's happening so people who drop by the Village will know about upcoming events.
- Have more open houses of the arts groups that are well advertised.
- More outside wall art. Paint the sidewalks with art. It's ephemeral, but it will draw people. Install sculpture. Keep up the flowers. Beautiful and inviting. Have more green spaces and encourage more family events.
- Make the green space next to the old Church Street church into a publicly accessible park.
- More advertising about what's going on at the Bradford Mill. This respondent feels as though there is probably a lot going on, but she doesn't know about it.
- Loved Bluegrass events and looking forward to upcoming Porchfest event.
- Would love to see a museum in West Concord.
- Would love to see a night once a month when stores are kept open late with entertainment.
- Would love to see art shows in Harvey Wheeler Community Center. Recently attended a Concord Chorus event but in another town (Lexington). Why not here in the Village? Complained that there is no easy way to get (without a car) to Concord Center. Would like to see a bike lane connecting the two centers.
- Would like to see more gallery space. Would like to make sure there are no more chains in the village, such as the 99 or Dunkin' Donuts.
- More concerts.
- Would like to see more art classes offered, especially to seniors and children. Loves the flowers and ambiance of the place.
- Make the crosswalks go where they need to go. Police give tickets but why aren't they trying to slow down cars?
- Would love to see a book store and more gallery space.
- Would love to see more things for kids to do in the Village.
- Would like to see more murals/public art.
- Would like to see more concerts at the Harvey Wheeler.
- Would like to see more murals and paintings. Suggested painting the lampposts.
- Would like to see more art installations such as those in Davis Square.

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# 7 Recommendations

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## Recommendations for the West Concord Junction Cultural District

Recommendations for the West Concord Junction Cultural District encompass the key elements of growing and sustaining a cultural district, namely: district vitality, placemaking, promotion, and organization. Each recommendation is identified as to type – a policy initiative, activity or program, advocacy, or investment. Sometimes a recommendation spans several types.

Time frames for initiating the implementation of various recommendations has been set forth. The specified time frames are:

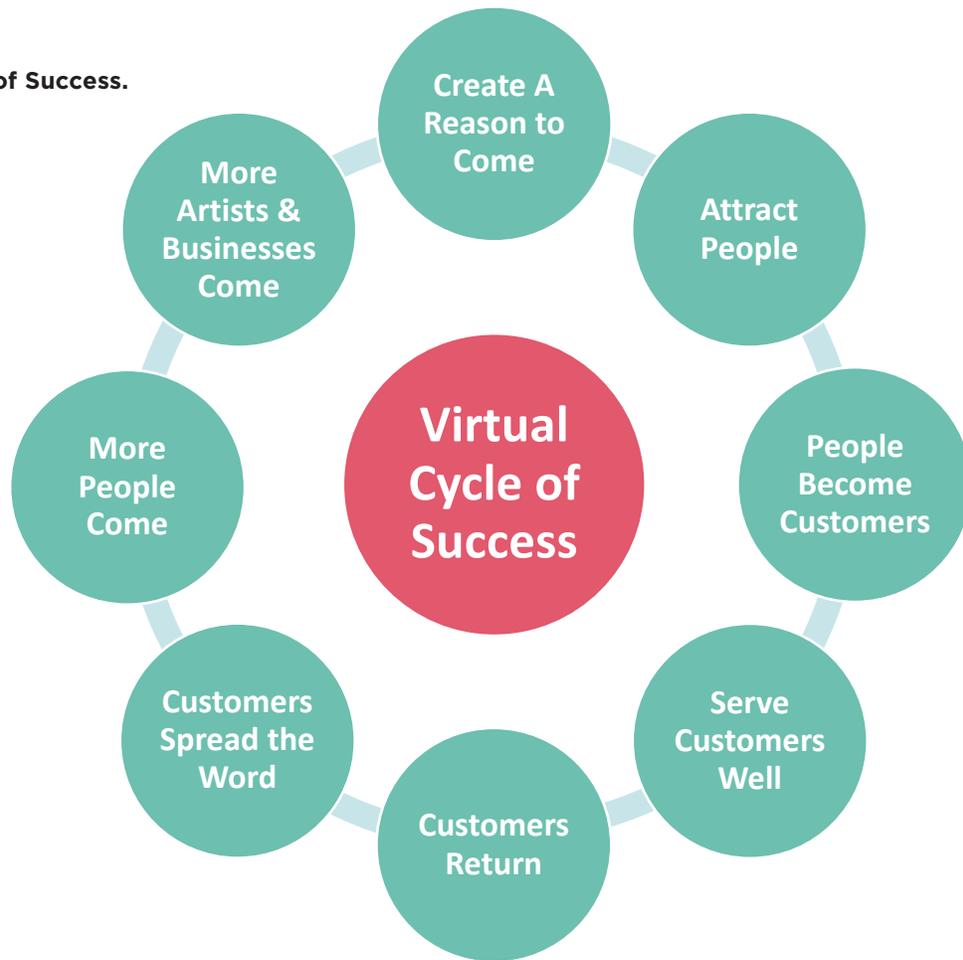
- Immediate – within the next 6 months;
- Short-Term – within 7 to 24 months;
- Mid-term – 3 to 6 years;
- Long-term – 7+ years or longer.

The likely lead or initiating entity is also specified; in many cases the WCJCDC is identified. It is likely for WCJCDC to take the role of initiator and advocate, and may not necessarily be the long-term implementing entity. It

is anticipated that the Town and WCJCDC will involve partners and collaborating organization who may evolve into being the lead. As WCJCDC builds a track record of successful program operations, it will be able to undertake more challenging and complex projects.

- The recommendations have been organized as to thematic emphasis, namely:
- Organizational Capacity and Organization Building;
- Branding Identity;
- Village-Center Focus;
- Artists', Artisans' & Creatives' Concerns – Affordable Space;
- Artists', Artisans' & Creatives' Concerns – Selling Art & Business Viability; and
- Physical Improvements to Foster Placemaking; and
- Strengthen the Presence of the Arts in West Concord.

**Figure 7-1. The Cycle of Success.**



To be successful, WCJCDC needs to initially undertake some organizational work and build capacity. WCJCDC needs to build its engine so that it can realize its vision and goals for the West Concord Junction Cultural District. With the West Concord Junction Cultural District being nearly co-terminus with the West Concord Junction Village business district, it will be imperative for artists, artisans, creatives and small businesses to collaborate and work together. The Cycle of Success will help strengthen both the Village business district and the cultural district.

**Table 7-1. Acronyms:**

<b>A&amp;BC</b>	Arts and Business Council of Greater Boston
<b>SB</b>	Select Board
<b>CCCD</b>	Concord Center Cultural District
<b>CCoC</b>	Concord Chamber of Commerce
<b>DPLM</b>	Department of Planning and Land Management
<b>NEFA</b>	New England Foundation for the Arts
<b>WCAC</b>	West Concord Advisory Committee
<b>WCBA</b>	West Concord Business Association
<b>WCJCD</b>	West Concord Junction Cultural District
<b>WCJCDC</b>	West Concord Junction Cultural District Committee

**Table 7-2. Recommendations for the West Concord Junction Cultural District.**

	Recommendation	Type	Applicable Lead Entities	Timing (Initiation)	Cost
<b>Organizational Capacity &amp; Organization Building</b>					
1.	Institute regular dialogue and collaboration with West Concord Business Association.	Activity	WCJCDC WCBA	Immediate and continuing	--
2.	Explore and take steps to adopt the Main Street approach to developing a joint initiative with WCBA, WCAC, local artists, residents & Town to focus on WCJCD and WC business district.	Policy Action	WCJCDC WCBA WCAC	Immediate to Short-Term; then continuing	--
3.	WCJCDC should work to continue the staff support from the Town's Department of Planning & Land Management and CCoC.	Activity Policy	WCJCDC DPLM CCoC	Immediate and continuing	--
4.	WCJCDC should meet with other local and regional arts organizations to explore collaboration, i.e. Umbrella Community Arts Center, CCCD, etc.	Activity	WCJCDC	Short-term and continuing	--
5.	WCJCDC should secure a commitment from the new Town Manager and SB for the new Director of Tourism & Marketing' work to include West Concord and WCJCD.	Policy	WCJCDC	Immediate	--
6.	Focus on community building activities to build awareness and support for the arts (coffee & conversation gatherings with an arts/culture focus (poetry reading, artist talk, etc.). Build upon and expand programs at Debra's and at Fowler Library.	Program	WCJCDC	Short-term and continuing	\$
7.	Secure assistance to implement the WCJCDC's cultural district organization & programming with interns &/or on-loan executives.	Activity, Program	WCJCDC	Short-term and continuing	\$

**Table 7-1. Recommendations for the West Concord Junction Cultural District. (cont.)**

	Recommendation	Type	Applicable Lead Entities	Timing (Initiation)	Cost
8.	Develop a volunteer program to involve interested persons in WCJCDC's programming.	Program	WCJCDC	Mid-term and continuing	\$
9.	Explore establishing a Business Improvement District (BID) that will support both the WCJCD and the Village business district.	Policy, Advocacy	WCJCDC and partners	Mid to Long-term	
10.	Investigate the possibility of using District Improvement Financing to finance improvements and programs to advance the Village business district and WCJCD.	Policy	DPLM	Mid-term	
<b>Branding &amp; Identity</b>					
11.	Develop a branding identity and image, including a logo, colors and style guide to be used in communications, promotions and marketing.	Policy & Action	WCJCDC	Short-term	\$
12.	Identify the market niche for the Village and WCJCD.	Policy	WCJCDC with partners	Short-term	\$
<b>Village Center Focus</b>					
13.	Promote the WCJ village center as a commercial center with an arts focus. Activities should engage WCJ Village Center district as a whole so that events are more viable amid large number of competing events and activities in the area.	Program	WCJCDC and Town	Short-term and continuing	\$
14.	Develop promotional materials and collaterals that combine the WCJ business district and the arts/ cultural district, perhaps with a "maker" focus/ theme.	Program	WCJCDC WCBA Town	Short-term	\$
15.	Accentuate the accessible nature of the WC village center & WCJCD – commuter rail, Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, walkability, in promotional materials.	Program Policy Advocacy	WCJCDC and Town	Short-term and continuing	\$

**Table 7-1. Recommendations for the West Concord Junction Cultural District. (cont.)**

	Recommendation	Type	Applicable Lead Entities	Timing (Initiation)	Cost
16.	Establish a web site promoting the WCJ Village business district and WCJCD, including an arts and cultural events calendar. Promote web site with social media, email and traditional print and word-of-mouth methods. Become the one-stop information service for what's happening in West Concord Junction.	Program Investment	WCJCDC and Town	Short-term and continuing	\$
17.	Create an on-line directory with links to artists and business' web sites.	Program	WCJCDC	Short-term	\$
18.	Consider food-related/ culinary arts promotion paired with arts and culture as there are many strong food-related businesses in the Village. This could be linked with a future Concord culinary trail with local farms, public art, bakeries, and food-related businesses.	Program	WCJCDC and Town	Mid-term	\$
19.	Develop an annual calendar of events featuring smaller events such as the community-building events and larger arts/ cultural events, such as statewide Arts Week, Open Studios, Riverfest, Porchfest, fall and holiday events. Events should be linked with activities and a presence in the Village/ WCJCD.	Program	WCJCDC		\$
<b>Artists', Artisans, &amp; Creatives' Concerns – Affordable Space</b>					
20.	Ensure that the Concord Zoning Bylaw enables artist and artisan studio spaces as an accessory use as part of all uses within a ½ mile of the WCJCD.	Policy	DPLM	Short-term	--
21.	Advocate for the inclusion of artist live-work spaces as a housing type in WCJ and new developments in and near the Village.	Policy, Advocacy, Investment	WCJCDC and DPLM	Short-term	\$

**Table 7-1. Recommendations for the West Concord Junction Cultural District. (cont.)**

	Recommendation	Type	Applicable Lead Entities	Timing (Initiation)	Cost
22.	Monitor the changes in land uses in the Village and WCJCD as to artist, artisan, creative and maker-type spaces and their affordability.	Policy	DPLM	Short-term and continuing	\$
23.	Preserve and conserve existing spaces used by artists, artisans, creatives and makers in WCJ.	Policy, Advocacy, Investment	WCJCDC and DPLM	Short-Term and continuing	\$\$-\$\$\$
24.	Consider developing an Affordable Work Space Policy for Artists, Artisans, Creatives and Small Businesses.	Policy	WCJCDC and DPLM	Mid-Term	\$
25.	Explore formation of a cultural land trust to facilitate the maintenance of performance spaces and provision of affordable artist studios and venues.	Program Possible Investment	WCJCDC with owners & cultural tenants, DPLM	Long-term	\$
26.	Consider identifying development sites to foster appropriate new development/ redevelopment that can incorporate affordable spaces for artists, artisans, creatives and maker-type or provide financial contributions to provide such space off-site.	Policy, Investment	WCJCDC and WCAC with DPLM	Long-term	\$
27.	Explore developing a Cultural Space Fund to assist in retaining, sustaining and creating affordable housing and work spaces for artists, artisans, creatives and maker-types.	Policy & Program; Possible Investment	WCJCDC and Town	Long-term	\$ -- \$\$\$
<b>Artists', Artisans', &amp; Creatives' Concerns – Sale of Art &amp; Business Viability</b>					
28.	Sponsor an annual or seasonal event that promotes and enables the sale of artists' work. More artists responding to the survey stated a preference for an annual or seasonal event.	Program	WCJCDC	Short-term and continuing	\$
29.	Continue to encourage artist and artisan sales through display and sale of art at local businesses in WCJ.	Program	WCJCDC	Short-term and continuing	\$

**Table 7-1. Recommendations for the West Concord Junction Cultural District. (cont.)**

	Recommendation	Type	Applicable Lead Entities	Timing (Initiation)	Cost
30.	Highlight and promote local businesses that are selling artist and artisan’s art work and crafts through the website and social media.	Program	WCJCDC	Short-term and continuing	\$
31.	Partner with A&BC of Greater Boston, NEFA, Berklee College and Clark Huling Fund to sponsor local training and technical assistance for artists and musicians to strengthen business viability.	Program	WCJCDC	Mid-term	\$\$-\$
32.	If the Town pursues development of a visitor center in West Concord, explore how to best incorporate the display and sale of local artists and artisans’ art work.	Policy, Program & Advocacy	WCJCDC	Long-term	\$
33.	Undertake a feasibility and marketing study for establishing and staffing a local artists cooperative store.	Policy & Program	WCJCDC with DPLM	Long-term	\$
<b>Physical Improvements to Foster Placemaking</b>					
34.	Institute wayfinding signage, including gateway signage.	Investment	WCJCDC and Town	Short-term	\$\$
35.	Make the arts visible in WCJ. Artist buildings need to be easily identified. Consider use of sandwich boards and/or flags with the WCJ branding to highlight artist buildings.	Program & Investment	WCJCDC with DPLM	Short-term	\$
36.	Work with property owners and tenants to upgrade signage and facades to make artists buildings and cultural facilities more visible and identifiable in the WCJCD and the Village.	Program	WCJCDC with DPLM	Mid-term	\$\$-\$\$\$
37.	Develop a street banner program.	Program & Investment	WCJCDC and Town	Short-term	\$\$
38.	Consider supplemental design guidelines to encourage businesses to provide visible elements, and amenities, such as outdoor benches, etc.	Policy	WCJCDC and WCAC with DPLM	Mid-term	

**Table 7-1. Recommendations for the West Concord Junction Cultural District. (cont.)**

	Recommendation	Type	Applicable Lead Entities	Timing (Initiation)	Cost
39.	Make the WCJ Village more walkable by working with the Town to improve/ expand sidewalks and connectivity and assure ADA accessibility	Advocacy, Investment	WCJCDC, WCAC with CPW and DPLM	Short-term and continuing	\$\$-\$\$\$
40.	Make WCJ Village more walkable by improving and defining edges of parking lots and gas stations with paint, curbs, planting areas planters, etc.	Advocacy, Investment	WCJCDC, WCAC with CPW and DPLM	Short-term and continuing	\$\$-\$\$\$
41.	Institute a program of public art and interpretative signage on WC's cultural and natural heritage enhancing WCJCD, the Village and the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.	Advocacy, Program, Investment	WCJCDC with DPLM	Mid-term	\$\$-\$\$\$
42.	Adopt a 1% for art program for public improvements and investments to foster inclusion of public art in West Concord and throughout Town, which will enhance placemaking.	Policy Advocacy	WCJCDC CCoC and Town	Mid-Term	\$\$
43.	Develop and operate a public art initiative by first identifying locations for temporary and permanent public art installations in WCJ and the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.	Program Investment	WCJCDC with DPLM	Mid-term	\$
44.	Consider a storefront improvement program: design assistance for storefronts, lighting and signage.	Program Investment	WCJCDC with DPLM	Mid-term	\$\$
45.	Consider fostering the development of a maker-space in West Concord.	Advocacy. Program, Investment	WCJCDC with DPLM	Mid-term	\$\$ -- \$\$\$

**Table 7-1. Recommendations for the West Concord Junction Cultural District. (cont.)**

	Recommendation	Type	Applicable Lead Entities	Timing (Initiation)	Cost
<b>Strengthen the Presence of the Arts in West Concord</b>					
<b>46.</b>	Work with the Concord Schools, Concord, the Recreation Department, Newbury Court, and/ or the Concord Park for Senior Living Center on arts programming in WCJ.	Program	WCJCDC and Town	Short-term	\$
<b>47.</b>	Consider collaborating with the Concord Schools, the Concord Park for Senior Living Center, and/or the Umbrella Community Center for the Arts to develop an artist-in-residence program specifically for West Concord, perhaps with an emphasis on craft with a maker-orientation.	Program	WCJCDC and Town	Long-term	\$\$

## Resources & Funding

Cultural Districts rely on funding from a wide variety of sources depending upon the specific program or project. A robust cultural district program, as envisioned by WCJCDC focused on arts and culture to sustain and enhance the Village business generally entails developing a strategy for continuing support for operations and augmenting the use of volunteers.

Many cultural districts in Massachusetts rely in large part on local government for in-kind staff support for district operations, often from planning departments. Some communities have also developed municipal offices of Arts & Culture that staff cultural districts. Staffing resources can be augmented with student interns from area colleges.

Since the WCJCD location and vision are very intertwined and integrated with West Concord Village business district, collaboration with business and property owners to use the Main Street approach with an emphasis on arts and culture is strongly recommended. Main Street-style organizations are public-private partnerships that utilize a mix of funding from public and private partners for operations

as well as specific for programs, activities and projects. Often, a Main Street organization received support from local businesses, nonprofits, property owners, corporate entities, as well as local government. Local government contributions can be both allocation of staff resources as well as funding from the general fund, or a tourism fund often funded by hotel (rooms) and meal tax revenues.

Two other tools for providing funding for programs, projects and operations could include the formation of a Business Improvement District, as discussed earlier, or use of District Improvement Financing.

### Business Improvement Districts

Business Improvement Districts, (BIDs) are authorized by Massachusetts General Laws (MGL), Chapter 40-O. Groups of property and business owners in a contiguous commercial area can organize and form a Business Improvement District which requires the support of the majority of property owners in the district and approval by

the Select Board. In a BID, property owners' self-assess an additional fee to undertake shared supplemental services above what the municipality provides. Services could include maintenance and landscaping; arts and culture programming to enhance the district, special events, promotions and marketing; public amenities; design assistance; business recruitment and retention activities; planning and feasibility studies; walkability enhancements, parking and transportation management; and other activities dedicated to supporting business growth, as well as funds for management of the district/the BID.

### District Improvement Financing

District Improvement Financing is a financing tool that utilizes the incremental new real estate valuation and resulting taxes to be dedicated for a period of up to twenty years. DIF is often used for physical improvements and enhancements, including streetscape, public art, district management, training, feasibility and planning studies. DIF funds can also be used in part to manage a DIF district. DIF in Massachusetts has broad purposes as enabled by MGL, Chapter 40-Q.

#### How DIF Works:

In hind sight, Brookside Square could have been a good DIF project. Brookside Square redeveloped a swath of West Concord Junction where many of the properties had relatively low assessed valuations. If Brookside Square had been part of a DIF district, a portion of the incremental new real estate taxes could have been designated for use in the West Concord Junction DIF area. In the future, DIF may be a useful approach if there are additional sites when major redevelopment is anticipated where there will be a significant rise in the assessed valuation from redevelopment. In essence, the Town would be engaged in an advance designation of a portion of the funds for retained use in a West Concord Junction DIF district.

DIF can be helpful in financing public amenities and improvements. In the case of public works type improvements DIF can be used in conjunction with the Local Infrastructure Development program authorized by MGL, Chapter 23L.

### Private Funding

Private contributions for projects and operations of the WCJCD and to advance the work of the cultural district and the Village business center, using a Main Street approach, often requires formation of a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, or use of a financial intermediary. Private funding from businesses and corporations generally takes one of several forms, namely outright contribution, philanthropic contribution from a business' or corporate charitable foundation, an expenditure from the marketing budget, or in-kind services (staff and /or products). Private contributions require cultivation, and enable the business to get to know WCJCD, the goals, programs and activities. Businesses need to be asked, as well as thanked.

Local businesses, such as those in West Concord Junction, often receive an endless series of requests for money for many good causes. Businesspeople want to know the purpose and amount of funding and assurances that funds will be carefully and wisely used. It is often better to make an annual request, rather than a series of small requests, particularly with local small businesses.

Area businesses and corporate entities outside the immediate boundaries of the WCJCD should also be considered potential donors and asked for support. Some corporations provide matching funds to individual employee donations. This is often a useful source of additional funding.

### Philanthropy

Philanthropic contributions/investments are often best suited for program initiatives and projects. Each foundation establishes its own priorities. Some favor one-time capital projects, while others prefer pilot projects. Some like visual arts; others may prefer film or music. Some emphasize arts education, while others focus on the larger community. Foundations typically do not provide operating support, but many will support capacity-building.

Philanthropy Massachusetts, formerly Associated Grant-makers of Massachusetts, provides on-line resources and training for identifying potential charitable foundation

that provide funding for arts and culture, as well as a wide-range of other purposes throughout the Commonwealth. Philanthropy Massachusetts hosts “meet the donors” forums to enable nonprofits to meet and build relationships with the philanthropic community. They have also developed a common proposal format that many foundations have adopted to streamline the application processes and lessen the burden of preparing responses to calls for funding.

Concord is fortunate to be in the catchment area of two community foundations who both provide funding for arts and culture-related programs, namely the Boston Foundation and Foundation for Metro West. WCJCDC should build relationships with both the Boston Foundation and Foundation for Metro West to develop support for local projects and programs in West Concord Junction.

The New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA) provides a clearinghouse of grant and art opportunities for artists and arts-related nonprofits. NEFA also hosts a biennial conference of New England arts and culture related organizations that could provide a helpful networking opportunity for West Concord. The Barr Foundation is a leading funder of the arts in Greater Boston, and could be a resource to WCJCDC, as well. Although a state agency, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, provides resources and funding, as well as information on foundations and philanthropies who fund the arts.

### Collaborative Work Space Program

Collaborative Work Space Program is a grant program operated by MassDevelopment which provides Seed Grants for pre-development and feasibility work, or Fit-out Grants for building improvements and equipment purchases for collaborative work spaces, including co-working art/artisan/musician work spaces and maker spaces. This is an annual grant cycle, with funds up to \$250,000 for seed grants and \$250,000 for fit-out grants. For further information contact: MassDevelopment, [www.massdevelopment.com](http://www.massdevelopment.com).

### Commonwealth Places

MassDevelopment, one of Massachusetts’ quasi-public agencies, has developed a program to provide up to \$50,000 of matching funds to nonprofits and communities which use crowd-funding within sixty days to finance local placemaking projects in downtowns and neighborhood commercial business districts, such as West Concord Junction. Proposed projects should seek to enhance the new or underused public spaces at the pedestrian scale and demonstrate the potential to catalyze economic impact. In the past, Commonwealth Places has funded a wide range of projects, including public art. For further information contact: MassDevelopment, [www.massdevelopment.com](http://www.massdevelopment.com).

### Community Preservation Act

Community Preservation Act (CPA) is a program that has been adopted by the Town of Concord, which assesses an additional fee on real estate tax bills to fund affordable housing, historic preservation activities and open space. Concord has established a CPA Committee to advise Town Meeting on recommended CPA expenditures. Many of the prospective programs and projects of the WCJCD may easily be aligned with these three priorities. CPA is a good source of capital funds for physical improvement projects. For further information contact the Concord Community Preservation Act Committee.

### Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund

The Massachusetts Cultural Council in collaboration with MassDevelopment operates a matching grant program for arts and cultural facilities, the Mass Cultural Facilities Fund. The Fund provides capital grants for acquisition, design, repair, rehabilitation, renovation, expansion, or construction of nonprofit cultural facilities. MCC also provides funds planning and feasibility assessment for cultural facilities. For further information: <https://massculturalcouncil.org/organizations/cultural-facilities-fund/>.

## Massachusetts Downtown Initiative

Massachusetts Downtown Initiative is operated by the MA Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). MDI provides technical assistance and small grants aimed at downtown and commercial district revitalization. MDI provides technical assistance grants on district management, such as creating Business Improvement Districts; the creative economy; design; economics of downtown; housing; parking; small business support; wayfinding and walkability. MDI also sponsors training workshops throughout the year on topics relevant to downtown/commercial district revitalization and cultural districts. For further information contact: DHCD at [www.mass.gov/dhcd](http://www.mass.gov/dhcd). The specific web site for the MDI program is: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/massachusetts-downtown-initiative-mdi>.

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# A Appendix

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- A. Arts & Cultural Events in the West Concord Junction Cultural District
- B. West Concord Cultural District Committee Charge
- C. West Concord Census Designated Place
- D. Reference List for Further Reading
- E. Survey Data Overview

## A. Arts & Cultural Events in the West Concord Junction Cultural District

Table A-1.

Month	Event	Notes
March/ April	<b>Art Scramble</b>	ArtWeek Celebration
July	<b>Summer Concert Series</b>	In conjunction with the Concord Department of Parks and Recreation
September	<b>Porchfest</b>	Community music festival

## B. West Concord Junction Cultural District Committee Charge

Approved: March 19, 2018

### TOWN OF CONCORD West Concord Junction Cultural District Committee Committee Charge

#### **A. Background**

The West Concord Junction Cultural District was created by the Massachusetts Cultural Council in January of 2016. A cultural district is intended to heighten public awareness of the unique cultural features and resources of the district. West Concord Junction is home of many artists, artisans, performance venues, historical points of interest and other cultural resources. One goal of creating the district is to boost visitation to the district and to thereby support local artists and cultural sites.

The intent of forming the West Concord Junction Cultural District is to encourage the development of new resources and to sustain existing culture assets within the district through mutual support and collaboration.

#### **B. Purpose**

The purpose of supporting the artists, cultural centers and businesses within the cultural district to promote the arts and to further the viability of these small businesses and independent entrepreneurs. The district is intended to leverage the unique talents and attributes of all members of the district to generate more public awareness of the value of culture and the arts. Having a vibrant cultural community is a key component to sustaining West Concord as an exciting and enjoyable place to live, work and play.

#### **C. Membership**

The members of the West Concord Junction Cultural District Committee shall be appointed by the Select Board. The term of office shall be three years, and the initial appointments shall be of one, two and three years so that terms of members shall be staggered. The committee shall be comprised of seven members representing a diversity of interests backgrounds involved with cultural. The membership shall be as follows:

- One member to represent of the visual arts entities in the district;
- One member to represent of the performing arts in the district;
- Five citizens at-large with diverse backgrounds interested in promoting culture in West Concord;

#### **D. Duties and Responsibilities**

1. To meet regularly to discuss ways in which the Cultural Committee can be supportive of cultural resources within the district, including listening to sponsors who wish to promote collaborative cultural events;
2. To conduct outreach to learn how the Cultural Committee might be supportive of the artists, businesses, and others working in the district;
3. To visit other cultural districts and become familiar with their practices to consider how the Cultural Committee could use proven successful techniques to support the West Concord Junction Cultural District;
4. To establish working relationships with State officials, local businesses and others who may assist the Cultural Committee in fostering the development of the Cultural District, including a Concord Center Cultural Committee should one be created in the future;

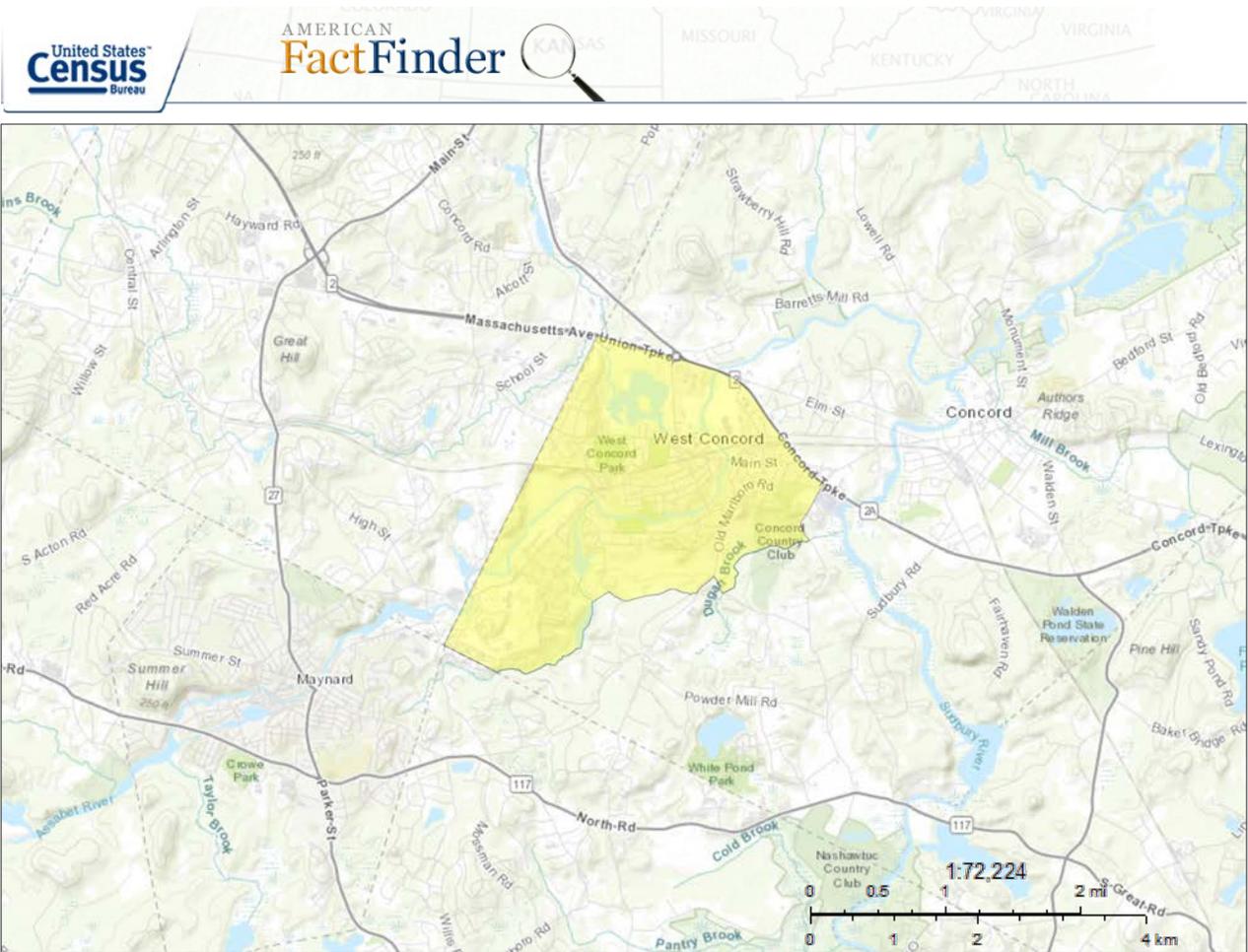
5. Support the Chamber of Commerce in its role as coordinator for the activities of the Cultural District;
6. To explore funding opportunities including state and federal grants, as well as private funding to support the district's activities;
7. To hold a public hearing or forum at least once per year to solicit input from the community concerning how the West Concord Junction Cultural District might function to better serve the town and advance the cause of cultural development;
8. To submit a report for inclusion in the "Annual Town Report" each year, providing a discussion of the Committee's work during the prior year as well as providing an assessment of the community's progress in supporting and enhancing the Cultural District;
9. To meet regularly and annually elect a chair and clerk.

**E. Other Considerations**

The West Concord Junction Cultural District Committee is responsible for conducting its activities in a manner which is in compliance with all relevant State and local laws and regulations, including but not limited to, the Open Meeting Law, Public Records Law and Conflict of Interest Law. The Committee shall consult with the Town Manager concerning the allocation of town staff or financial resources toward this effort.

Attachments:

# C. West Concord Census Designated Place



## Legend

### Selected Geography

West Concord CDP, Massachusetts

Place within State

■ 2018

## D. Reference List for Further Reading

### EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT, GENTRIFICATION AND DISPLACEMENT

Bates, Lisa K. Gentrification and Displacement Study: Implementing an Equitable Inclusive Development Strategy in the Context of Gentrification. Portland, OR: City of Portland's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, May 2013. <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/454027>

Bureau of Planning and Sustainability. 2018 Gentrification and Displacement Neighborhood Typology Assessment, Key Findings and Methodology Report. Portland, OR: City of Portland, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, October 10, 2018 draft. <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/700970>

Kenneth Rainin Foundation. The Rainin Arts Real Estate Strategy. Oakland, CA: Kenneth Rainin Foundation, 2017. <https://krfoundation.org/innovative-strategy-goes-online-to-counter-displacement/>

Rose, Kalima, et al. Creating Change through Arts, Culture and Equitable Development: A Policy Primer. Oakland, CA: PolicyLink, 2017. [https://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/report\\_arts\\_culture\\_equitable-development.pdf](https://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/report_arts_culture_equitable-development.pdf)

### MARKETING

Information available on the Americans for the Arts website:

<https://namp.americansforthearts.org/>

<https://namp.americansforthearts.org/get-smarter/resource-library>

[https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2014/by\\_program/reports\\_and\\_data/toolkits/cultural\\_districts/one-pagers/Cultural\\_District\\_Marketing\\_Plans.pdf](https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2014/by_program/reports_and_data/toolkits/cultural_districts/one-pagers/Cultural_District_Marketing_Plans.pdf)

### ARTS COMMUNITIES

#### Belfast, ME

<http://www.belfastusa.com/art.htm>

<https://belfastcreativecoalition.org/>

#### Asheville, NC

<https://burnaway.org/how-did-asheville-make-list-40-most-vibrant-arts-communities/>

<https://www.riverartsdistrict.com/join-the-artists-association/>

<https://www.exploreasheville.com/things-to-do/arts/>

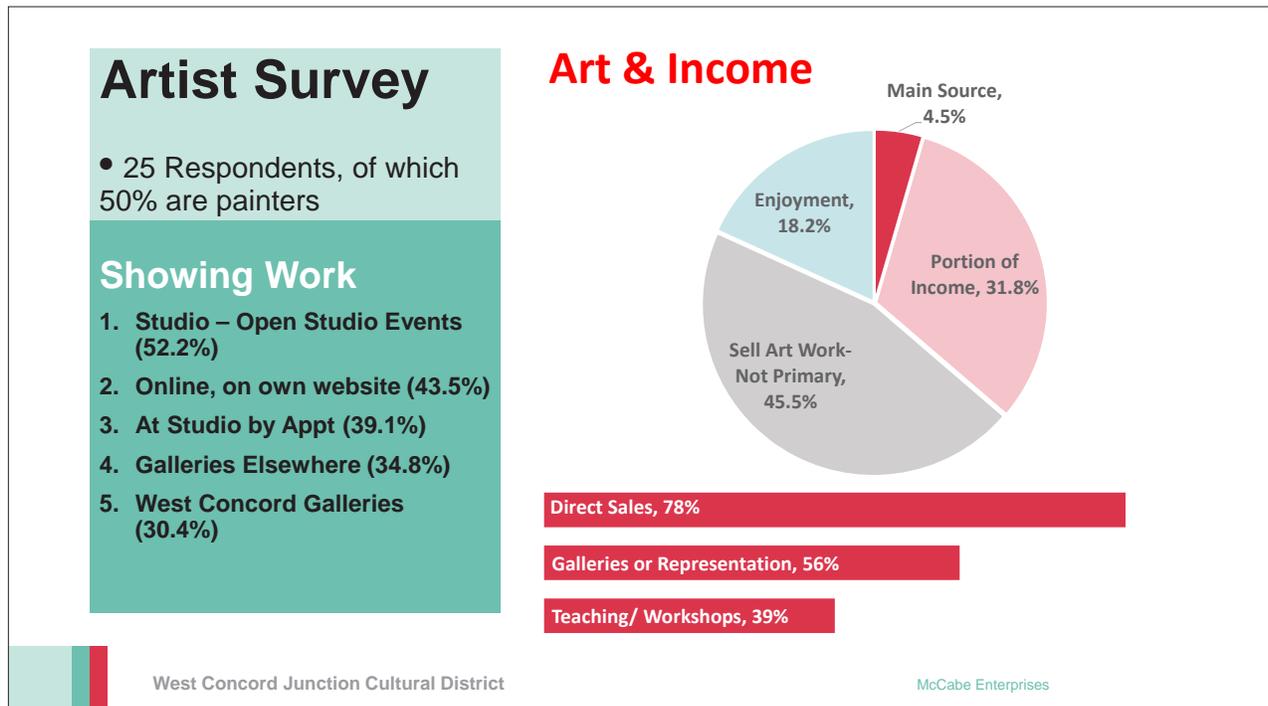
<https://www.exploreasheville.com/stories/post/how-to-rad-a-day-in-the-river-arts-district/>

#### Shelburne Falls, MA

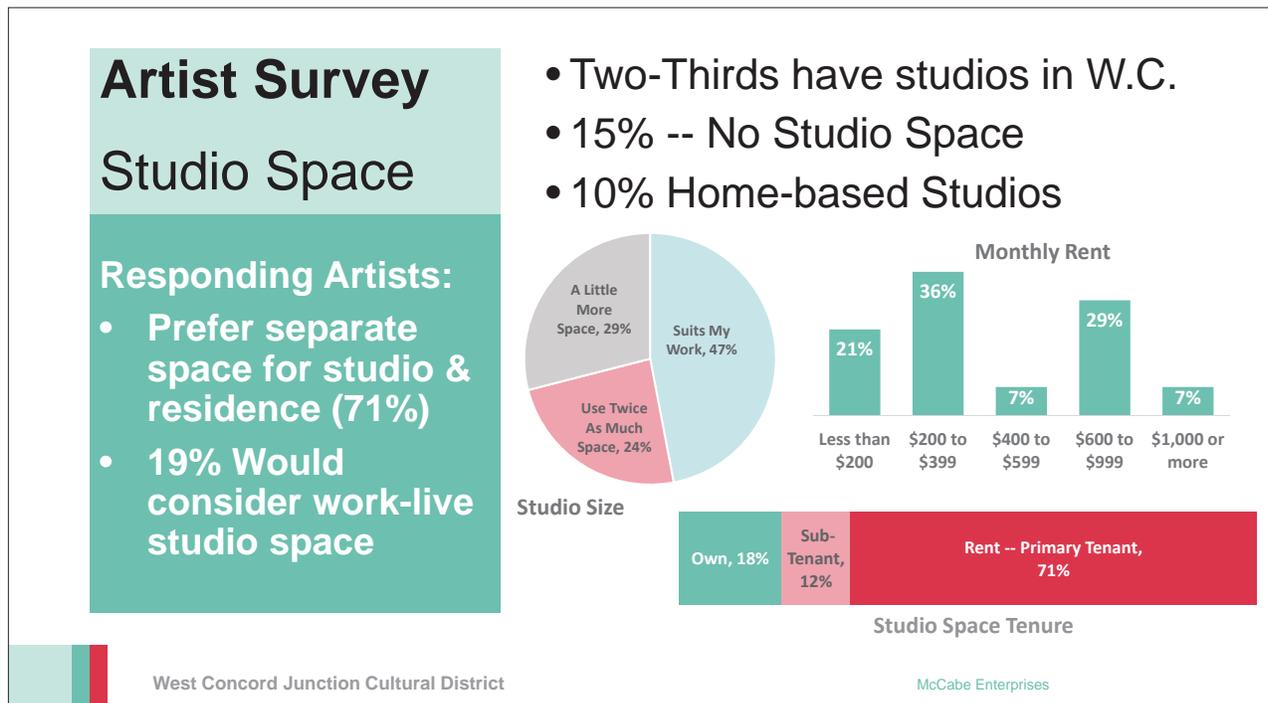
<https://www.shelburnefalls.com/index.php/things-to-do/arts-crafts>

## E. Survey Data Overview

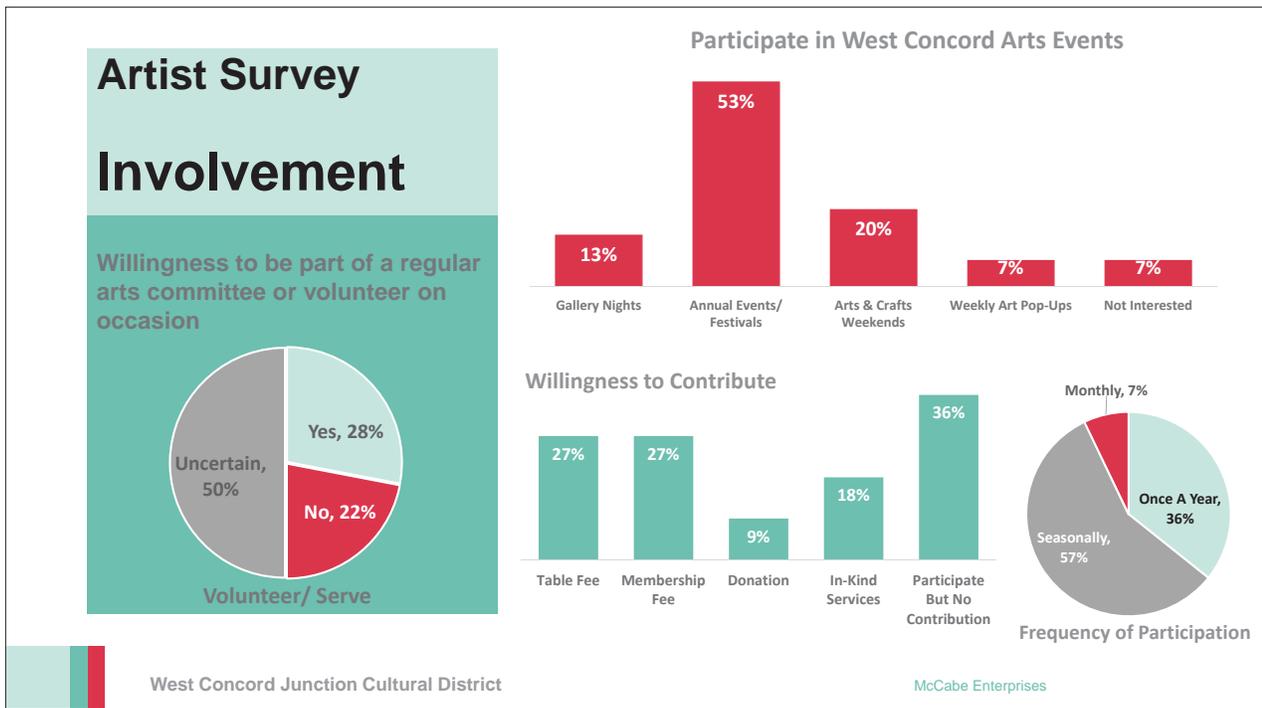
**Figure E-1. Artist Survey Results.**



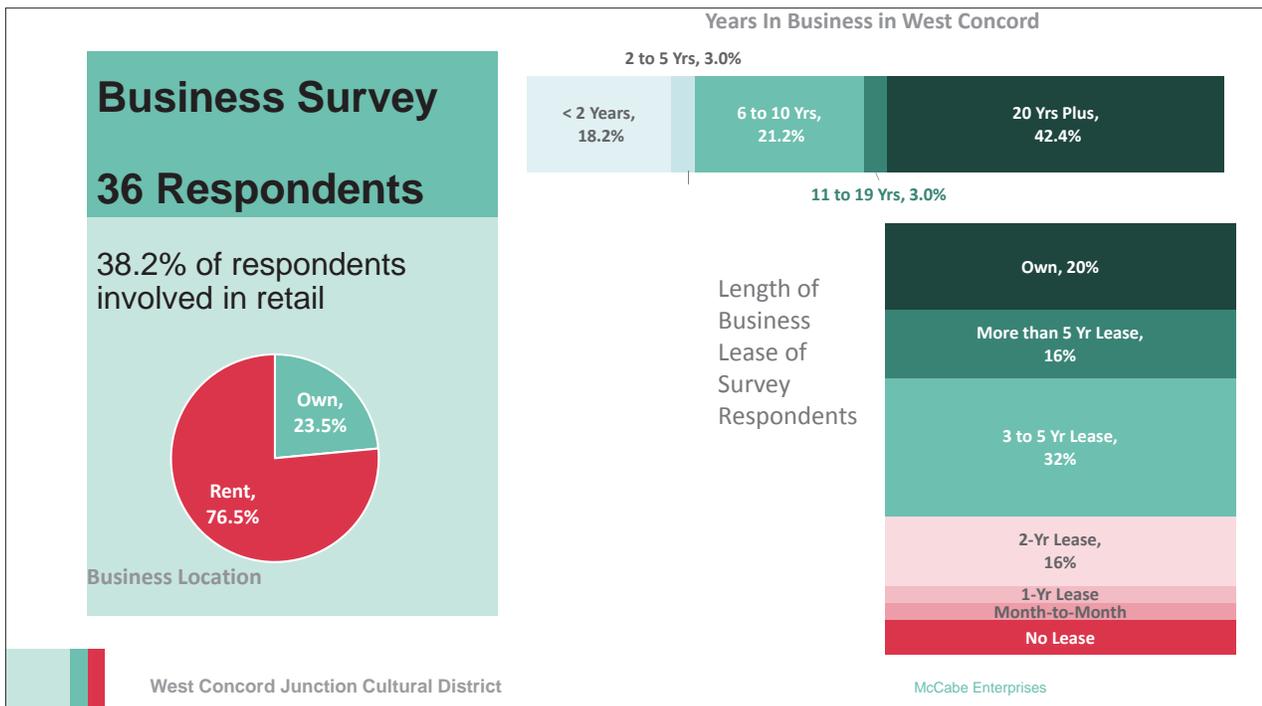
**Figure E-2. Artist Survey Results.**



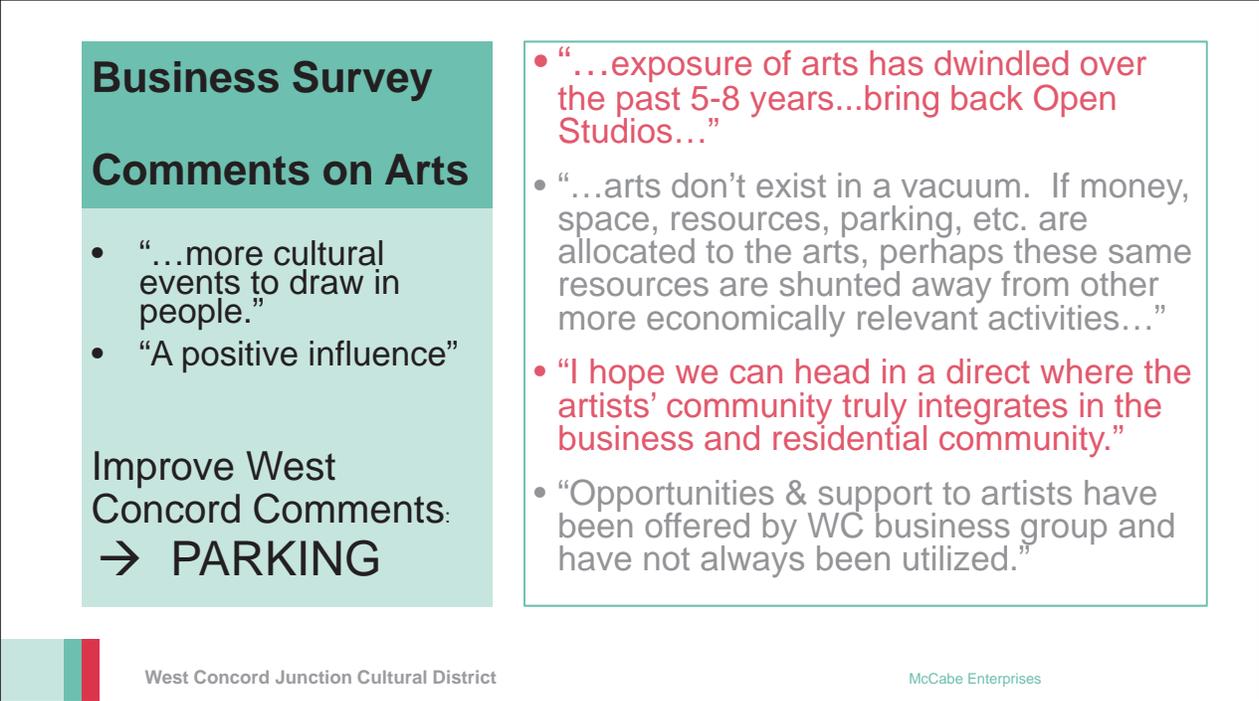
**Figure E-3. Artist Survey Results.**



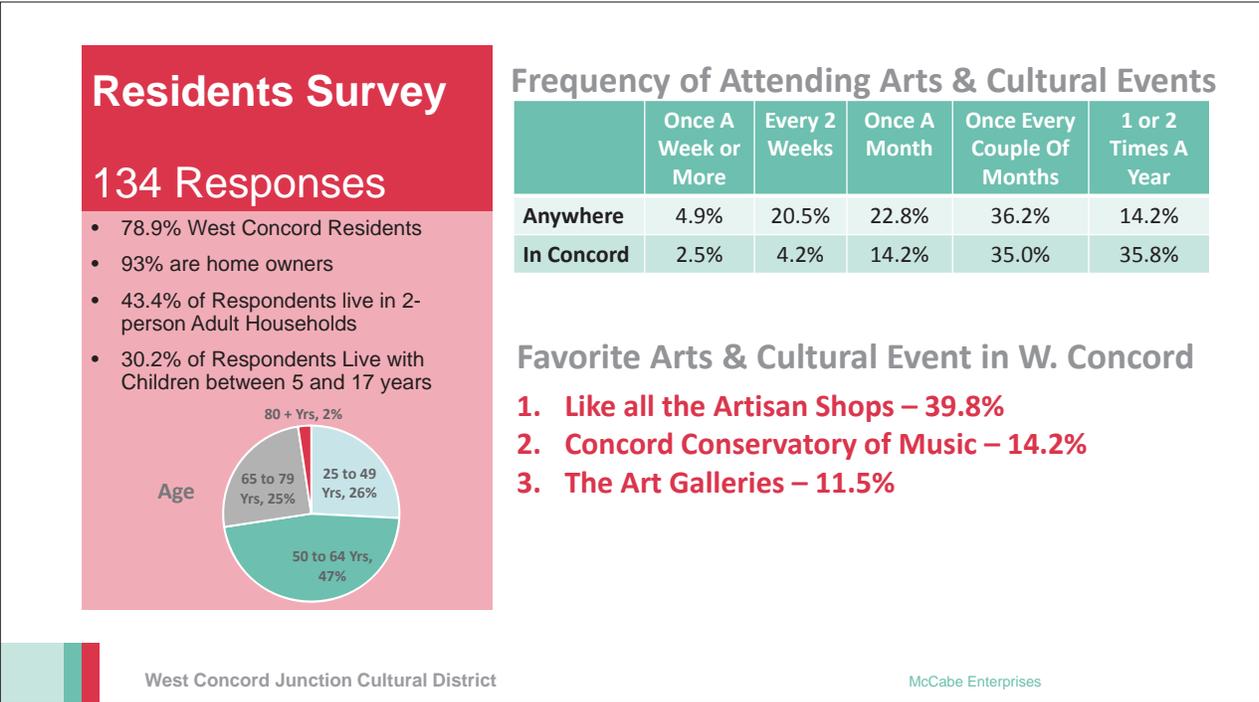
**Figure E-4. Business Survey Results.**



**Figure E-5. Business Survey Results.**



**Figure E-6. Resident Survey Results.**





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## About McCabe Enterprises

McCabe Enterprises provides strategic solutions in public financing, community planning and economic development to public and private sector clients with innovative and award-winning work. A wholly woman-owned consulting firm founded by **Kathleen McCabe, AICP** to work with clients to develop customized solutions addressing the unique needs of each client and community. Our approach encompasses planning and economic analysis, financing, community consultation, with a focus on implementation and community engagement. Our work includes market analysis, feasibility studies, downtown revitalization, public financing, urban renewal, sustainability, neighborhood planning, industrial retention brownfields reuse planning and redevelopment.

**Kathleen McCabe, AICP** has a master's from MIT, a B.U.P in urban and regional planning from the University of Illinois, and a certificate of administration and management from Harvard University. McCabe has over twenty-five years experience working as a planner in community and economic development. She was honored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation with their national award for her work revitalizing Roslindale. She has worked with a wide range of urban neighborhoods, gateway cities, and brownfield sites to develop effective market-based revitalization strategies, including many redevelopment projects. McCabe is an active member of NAIOP and the Urban Land Institute, and a Past-President of the Massachusetts Economic Development Council. McCabe is a certified planner with the American Institute of Certified Planners.

**Jennifer Mecca, Architect** is an experienced urban designer who has worked with downtown, neighborhood revitalization and redevelopment projects, including work with Boston Main Streets, Waterfront Square in Revere, and New Bedford brownfields development planning. She also has an extensive background working with arts non-profits around programming, development of artist work-live space and nurturing the creative economy; she currently serves as President of the Fort Point Arts Community Board of Directors, a 40-year old arts organization on the Boston waterfront. She brings a breadth of experience working to enable communities to understand proposed redevelopment projects and their impacts.

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## McCABE ENTERPRISES

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**West Concord Junction  
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**2019**

**Town of Concord, MA**

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