



OLD NORTH BRIDGE

TOWN OF CONCORD

TOWN HOUSE - P.O. BOX 535
CONCORD, MASSACHUSETTS 01742

To: Historic Districts Commission, Attn: Ann Clifford
From: Mimi Graney, Economic Vitality Manager
Date: February 9, 2026
Re: Public Art Proposal – **Pianos on the Town**

Request for Approval for Public Art in various locations

“Keys to the Community: Pianos on the Town to celebrate Concord250 and 20th anniversary of Concord Conservatory of Music

Sponsor:

Concord Conservatory of Music (CCM)

The organization is working collaboratively with a number of community partners including West Concord Cultural District Committee.

Purpose:

To activate Concord’s public spaces with music and art

Celebrate CCM’s 20th anniversary as a cultural milestone

Unite diverse community groups in celebration of Concord250, particularly in West Concord

Leave a joyful, unifying artistic statement that resonates beyond the anniversary year.

Project Description:

Up to ten pianos, each individually decorated by a local artist, will be placed in publicly accessible areas for up to the month of June, 2026. Pop-up concerts by CCM students, faculty, and other local musicians will be scheduled, and at other times passersby are invited to play and share their music with the community.

This program follows an established model of pianos in public spaces as a means to enrich communities through the arts such as [Newton's Artful Pianos](#), Boston's [Play Me, I'm Yours](#), and the global program [Sing for Hope](#).

Sites:

SITE NAME	ADDRESS	HISTORIC DISTRICT
Concord Visitor Center/Middlesex Bank	58 Main Street Site: lawn in front of the Visitor Center	Main St
Wright Tavern	2 Lexington Road Site: lawn behind the Tavern	Lexington Road
Concord Museum	53 Cambridge Turnpike Site: Patio facing Cambridge Turnpike	Lexington Road
Minute Man National Park/Buttrick Mansion	231 Liberty St To be determined	North Bridge/ Monument Square

Additional locations where pianos are proposed not within an Historic District include:

Concord Conservatory	1317 Main Street
Emerson Hospital (inside)	133 ORNAC
The Umbrella Arts Center	40 Stow St
Bruce Freeman Rail Trail at Nashoba Brook bridge	Behind 80 Beharrel
Crosby's Market	211 Sudbury Road
Outside Hunt Gym/Emerson Playground	90 Stow St
Guitar Museum of New England site	74 Commonwealth Avenue

Funding & Budget:

The primary funding is through Concord250 and private sponsors. CCM's fundraising include sponsorship of the pianos with tiered packages for businesses and individuals.

Description:

A steering committee at the Concord Conservatory is advancing the details of this project. The organization is working closely with Sing for Hope, a New York based organization that has executed the model world-wide. Sing for Hope is providing technical assistance and support, especially in terms of the artist call, artist contracting and logistics.

The preliminary set of locations has been developed and is being refined through conversations with property owners.

A source for upright piano and a contractor for moving the pianos has been secured.

A Call for Art has been drafted and will be distributed in late February through a portal provided by Sing for Hope. In late March, after review by the HDC and finalization of the sites, pianos, artists and sites will be matched. After approval by the Select Board, anticipated at their meeting on April 6, the painters get to work decorating each instrument.

On May 30, a kick-off launch event will be held in West Concord with all the pianos on display. The event will be a showcase of talent from the Concord Conservatory with performances by students and instructors.

A performance schedule will be developed for pop-up events at the individual sites through the month of June, developed in coordination with community partners to leverage existing programming and relationships including Porchfest and Concord Pride (June 6) and OARS' Music on the River. Additional collaborations are anticipated to connect with other local organizations and site sponsors.

Promotional materials will include web resources and QR codes, maps, signage for the individual pianos and press materials.

A small plaque will be affixed to each piano with information about the project and QR codes for more information. No additional on-site signage is anticipated.

Over the period of installation teams of volunteers and other helpers will oversee piano care, coordinate pop-up programming and address any issues that might arise.

An evaluation tool will be developed to measure the impact of the program.

Installation:

The decorated pianos will be tuned then placed in their assigned locations for the installation period.

A piano care plan will be developed and executed, specific to the needs of each installation site. This might entail protective covers for days of rain, a means to lock the piano so it is not played during overnight quiet hours, or deployment for more limited days/times.

Insurance:

Certificate of general liability insurance will be provided by the sponsoring organization, along with the company contracted for moving the pianos to and from each site.

Community:

Partnerships: Relationships will be strengthened as this project collaborates with a wide variety of community members to connect creatives of various disciplines (music, visual arts and perhaps also dance) with neighborhood venues.

Signature Performances: Pop-up concerts by CCM students and faculty

Sponsorship Opportunities: Tiered packages for businesses and individuals, including naming rights and visibility at events and on pianos.

Legacy Plan: After the summer, pianos may be auctioned, donated, or permanently installed, ensuring lasting community benefit.

Terms & Maintenance:

This would be a temporary installation of not more than 5 weeks.

A kick off event in West Concord with all the pianos on display at a single location is planned for Saturday, May 30 (raindate 5/31.) The pianos would then be deployed to their individual locations through the end of June. Anticipated date for removal of the pianos is expected sometime between June 19 and June 30th.

The pianos require no infrastructure. There is no associated sound systems or lighting. For the pop-up programming some equipment may be brought in for those scheduled, supervised activities.

Schedule/Timeline:

December 2025 to February 2026: Planning & Partnerships

- Steering committee formation
- Connect with Town and permitting process
- Volunteer recruitment
- Sponsorship tiers
- Artist call
- Endorsements: Concord250, West Concord Cultural District Committee

March – April 2026: Announcement & Preparation

- Artist reveal event
- Piano procurement
- March 18th, Historic Districts Commission hearing
- Site finalization

April – May 2026: Artistic Creation & Logistics

April 6th, Select Board hearing

Piano painting

Performance schedule

Permits for pop-up programs/concerts

Site logistics

PR Materials: website, map, QR codes, signage, press materials

May 30th – Kick off launch event

June 2026 and beyond: Installation and Programming

Pop-Up performances

Piano care plan

Evaluation of impact

Next life for the pianos (donated, auctioned, permanently installed?)

Administration and Town Responsibilities:

Three proposed sites are on property managed by the Town – Visitor Center, Bruce Freeman Rail Trail at Nashoba Brook bridge, Hunt Gym/Emerson Park. Approval for use of these sites is being sought. The Concord Conservatory is determining needs specific to each site.

Town departments may wish to collaborate such as the Senior Center, Recreation, Visitor Center, etc as this installation overlaps with their mission.

Mimi Graney, Economic Vitality Manager will assist with any permitting.

Examples:



Artful Pianos, Newton. Painted by DaNice Marshall



Artful Pianos, Newton. Painted by Jenn Duan



In Boston, a total of 75 pianos were installed. Sometimes pianos are clustered together to make a bigger impact, highlight the variety of painterly approaches, and allow for musicians to play together.



The public piano in Roswell, Georgia attracted people of all ages.



The public pianos invite people of all skill levels and who might not otherwise play publicly to take a seat at the keys. From Big Fork, MT.



Typically, the pianos deployed are upright pianos but other types might be a part of the mix.



The pianos may be decorated in a variety of mediums including paint, collage, and with sculptural elements.



Often when the pianos are played it's a moment of musical intimacy, only heard by that single musician. Sometimes, the playing will attract a small, spontaneous gathering to listen.