



Final Report of the Mayor's Arts Task Force

*Recommendations from the Arts community to increase City
support and investment in the Arts in Cambridge*

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MISSION

Artists have been engaged in a decades-long dialogue about the challenges they face in Cambridge and the lack of support from outside their own community to overcome them. For too long, artists have been plagued with obstacles, many of the City's own making: an intense focus on growing an innovation economy without the same focus on protecting and fostering our creative economy; Arts as an underfunded afterthought in a City budget that allocates hundreds of millions of dollars; an over-reliance on personal networks and insider knowledge to access opportunities; a lack of support for local artists; barriers in the licensing and permitting process; and the stifling of creativity that comes from "art by committee", and how that prompts questions of representation, equity, and bias in who gets to define "Art."

These issues combined have caused great losses in our historically vibrant arts community. Although displacement due to the skyrocketing cost of housing affects every low and middle-income family, artist displacement in particular is a problem in Cambridge. *One of the reasons the artist community has been hit so hard is that they are one of the only professions where paying to exist in multiple spaces is required to practice a craft.* The cost of paying high market rent for increasingly disappearing arts space combined with the lack of affordable housing Citywide is overly burdensome, if not impossible, for artists to shoulder.

Years of advocacy and direct community engagement work have cemented longstanding arts institutions as experts in this work, as they fill gaps left by the City. The [Community Art Center](#) is one anchor institution, serving The Port neighborhood to promote creative youth development in kids ages 5-19, as well as bringing arts straight to the neighborhoods to address racial and socioeconomic diversity gaps in the existing arts community. [The Dance Complex](#) is another - as the hub of dance-making in the entire Greater Boston Area, their executive staff regularly travels to other cities to consult about creating a vibrant dance community, but seldom is their advice sought by their own home city. Both organizations have been leaders in conversations about the issues of equity, funding, City-erected barriers, and displacement, but they have also been echoed by other arts organizations and independent artists alike.

In 2017, Olivia D'Ambrosio, the Executive Director of Bridge Repertory Theater, ran for City Council. Arts advocacy was the driving force of her campaign, and her belief that the City should be dedicating serious financial resources to the Arts was her consistent message. Her often-cited statistic, that the money dedicated to the Arts was one-tenth of one percent of the entire City budget highlighted how neglected the Arts were by a wealthy City. The 2017 election was the first time many in Cambridge outside of the Arts community became keenly aware of how this lack of systemic support has caused widespread displacement of artists in Cambridge.

The lack affordable arts space in the City of Cambridge was further highlighted in 2018 by the displacement of 200 musicians from what was formerly known as the "EMF building" in Cambridgeport. Though the building had been sold years before, the new owner began taking initial steps to redevelop this recording and rehearsal studio into office space by removing the musician-tenants in March of 2018. With no affordable rehearsal space available to move to and the discovery of how dilapidated the EMF building was, it became clear that the City had missed a major opportunity before the sale of this building to invest in and preserve not only a space, but a community.

In response to working with several long-standing arts organizations, the Central Square Business Association, and to the sale of the EMF building, Councillor Mallon submitted a Policy Order

asking that an Arts overlay zoning district be created in Central Square to incentivize developers to create and preserve arts spaces. Though this had Council support, it quickly became clear that the loss of this arts space was only scratching the surface of the challenges the Arts community faced City-wide. Cambridge is a wealthy city that is world-renowned for both innovation and creativity, but if we aren't funding priorities and intentionally looking to fill gaps, problems and inequities in our community will persist. This was an opportunity to have a much larger conversation about the City's lack of support for the Arts, and how that could change going forward.

To ensure Cambridge was focusing on this critical issue in our community, Mayor Marc McGovern called for an Arts Task Force to be convened and meet over a period of nine months to look deeply at how the City could focus on and invest in our artist community.

The Mayor's Arts Task Force was the first time that working artists from the community were brought to the same table as City leaders and key community stakeholders to address artists' most pressing concerns.

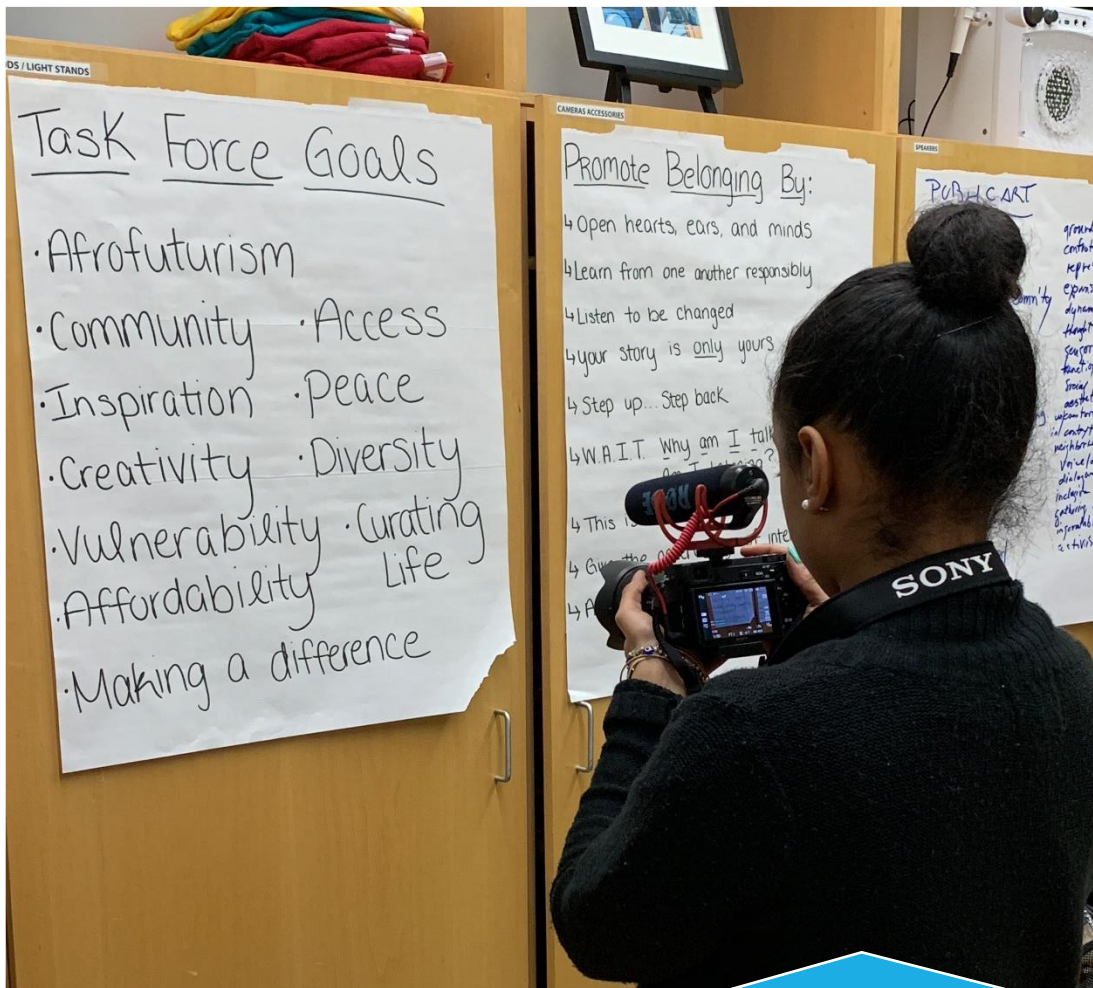
After over 50 letters of interest from qualified applicants City-wide, a 21-member task force was appointed by Mayor Marc McGovern and chaired by Councillor Alanna Mallon. The Task Force included working artists in the disciplines of dance, music, music production, theater, and visual arts, as well as specialists in developing arts spaces like studios and housing. Members all brought their individual expertise to collectively identify and address three key themes to set their agenda:

1. Policies that the City can pursue that will continue to foster and promote arts that are reflective of the diverse communities that live in Cambridge;
2. Ensuring a robust funding source for our arts community using both City resources and the resources of local companies;
3. Collaboration between the City, the Central Square Business Association, and local artists to strengthen Central Square as an Arts and Cultural District.

These goals were kept at the forefront over the 9 months the Task Force met, and every issue was approached through the lens of diversity and equity. By having a clear agenda that was crafted with input from all members, as well as representing artists of all disciplines and socioeconomic backgrounds, the group moved forward with action-oriented recommendations that will help all members of the arts community thrive.

View the Mayor's Arts Task Force member announcement [here](#).

View the Mayor's Arts Task Force website [here](#).



A Loop Lab student documents our goals

MEMBERS

COUNCILLOR ALANNA MALLON, CHAIR

Councillor Alanna Mallon is serving her first term on the Cambridge City Council and was appointed by Mayor Marc McGovern to chair the task force after introducing a policy order to write Arts Overlay Zoning for Central Square. Her work is centered around closing gaps in social services, economic development, and the revitalization of Central Square.

LIANA ASCOLESE, LEGISLATIVE AIDE TO COUNCILLOR MALLON & EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE TASK FORCE

Liana Ascolese is Councillor Mallon's Legislative Aide. Her responsibilities include taking meeting minutes, helping to plan meetings, and keeping in touch with all members with follow-ups, supplemental readings, and feedback before and after each monthly meeting.

AFIYAH HARRIGAN, MAYOR'S OFFICE LIAISON

Afiyah Harrigan works in the Mayor's Office and attended each Task Force meeting to keep the Mayor updated on its progress. She also provided logistical support for meeting locations.

JASON WEEKS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CAMBRIDGE ARTS COUNCIL

The Cambridge Arts Council both commissions and conserves public art, supports local artists through grants and professional development programs, and initiates City-wide arts programming and events. The Arts Council is a key partner in the operation of the Central Square Cultural District, and Jason Weeks is a Co-Director.

LISA PETERSON, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER

The City Manager's Office provided guidance about general City government, maximizing the use of public dollars, and ideas for additional mechanisms to support the arts community. Lisa Peterson's presence also served as a direct connection between the City Manager's Office and the arts community.

KHALIL MOGASSABI, DEPUTY DIRECTOR AND CHIEF PLANNER – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

The Community Development Department provided expertise on land use, zoning, development, and neighborhood planning. Khalil Mogassabi educated members on these topics while hearings directly from the arts community about their needs and ideas for community preservation.

OLIVIA D'AMBROSIO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF BRIDGE REPERTORY THEATER

Founded in 2012, Bridge Rep. Theater company produces intimately staged plays to connect audiences with artists, and theater to the city. Olivia D'Ambrosio brought her expertise as an actor, director, and playwright to advocate for the specialized needs of theater.

DAVID DE CELIS, PUBLIC ARTS COMMISSION

The Public Arts Commission provides guidance and advice for administration and implementation of the City's public art program and Percent for Art Ordinance. As a member, David De Celis informed the task force of the public art process and arts in relation to development and urban design.

PETER DIMURO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE DANCE COMPLEX

Celebrating 25 years, the Dance Complex is the hub of dance-making in the Greater Boston Area. Peter DiMuro is not only the Executive Director but also a nation-wide consultant specializing in the needs of the dance community, the integral work of longstanding nonprofits, and connecting and caring for the artist community, and brought this expertise to the Task Force.

SARAH GALLOP, GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AT MIT

MIT began the first private percent for arts program in the country and is Cambridge's largest land owner. University partnership is critical for partnerships with artists and arts organizations, arts spaces, and student engagement. Ms. Gallop brought both her passion for the arts and experience with the private percent for Art program to the Task Force.

ERYN JOHNSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE COMMUNITY ART CENTER

The Community Art Center is based in The Port, and connects youth ages 5-19 to arts, programming, and creative youth development. Eryn Johnson is particularly focused on equity, diversity, and community engagement. She informed the Task Force's work on both these topics and keeping equity at the forefront of public-private partnerships.

CHRISTOPHER HOPE, CO-FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE LOOP LAB

Focused on workforce development, The Loop Lab helps youth in The Port build audio/visual skills and connects them with paid internships. Christopher Hope brought the first Loop Lab cohort to actively participate by recording and editing meeting videos.

KRISTINA LATINO, CEO OF CORNERSCAPE

Cornerscape is a music events company that collaborates with artists and creators to put on their own events, or partners with companies to find music for their events. Kristina Latino provided her perspective on removing barriers to small arts organizations and festival organizing.

KATHERINE SHOZAWA, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AT LESLEY UNIVERSITY & MEMBER OF THE FOUNDRY CONSORTIUM

Katherine Shozawa brought her dual role as a university representative and member of the Foundry Consortium to inform the Task Force about connecting universities with the arts, developing community supported creative spaces, and effective community outreach.

MICHAEL MONESTIME, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRAL SQUARE BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Also serving as Co-Director of the Arts and Culture District, Michael Monestime is an advocate for intersecting arts and urbanism through large scale public art like the Mural Project, preserving public art landmarks like Graffiti Alley, and enhancing the cultural identity of Central Square, especially as the Business Improvement District comes online.

JERO NESSON, FOUNDER OF ARTSPACE

Artspace was an artist development collective which repurposed old buildings for artist studio and live/work space. Jero Nesson's work focused on rezoning, development incentives, and municipal partnerships. His old-fashioned slide show presentation to the Task Force showcased his past work, and was informative about artists as developers, and a memorable presentation for Task Force members.

JAMES PIERRE, VISUAL ARTIST & MANAGER OF THE PUBLIC ART PROGRAM AT THE COMMUNITY ART CENTER

James Pierre is a visual artist working out of the Community Art Center who works to connect under-served youth with the arts. Direct neighborhood engagement and making art accessible in schools are his particular areas of focus on the Task Force.

GEETA PRADHAN, PRESIDENT & CEO OF THE CAMBRIDGE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

CCF serves as the fiscal agent for a variety of community interests, including arts and culture and Central Square. Geeta Pradhan's experience in nonprofit management, giving platforms, community investment, and culture informed many of the Task Force's recommendations.

ELLEN SHAKESPEAR, CO-FOUNDER OF SPACEUS

Spaceus is a pop-up facility that displays, supports, and serves as a work and community space for artists in the Greater Boston Area. Ellen Shakespear co-founded

the organization as an MIT grad student to address both arts space needs and filling vacant storefronts in Cambridge. Her experience in serving artists' needs first hand and permitting throughout different parts of the City informed many recommendations.

KELLY SHERMAN, VISUAL ARTIST & INNOVATION CONSULTANT

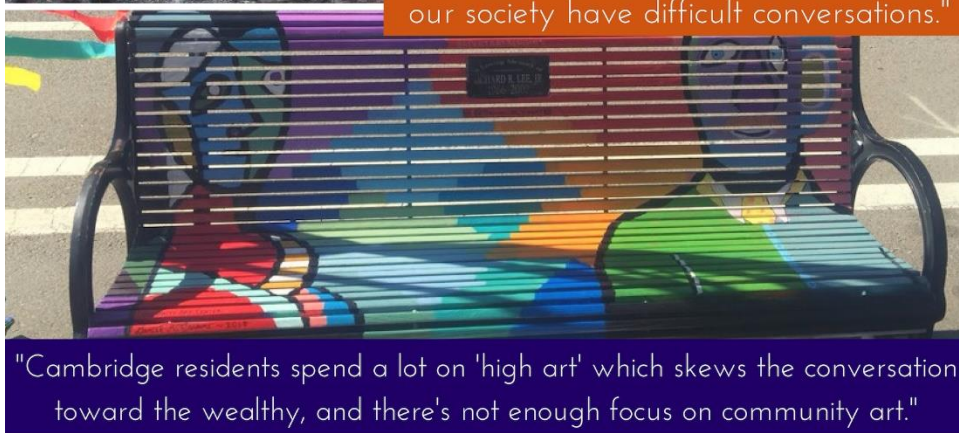
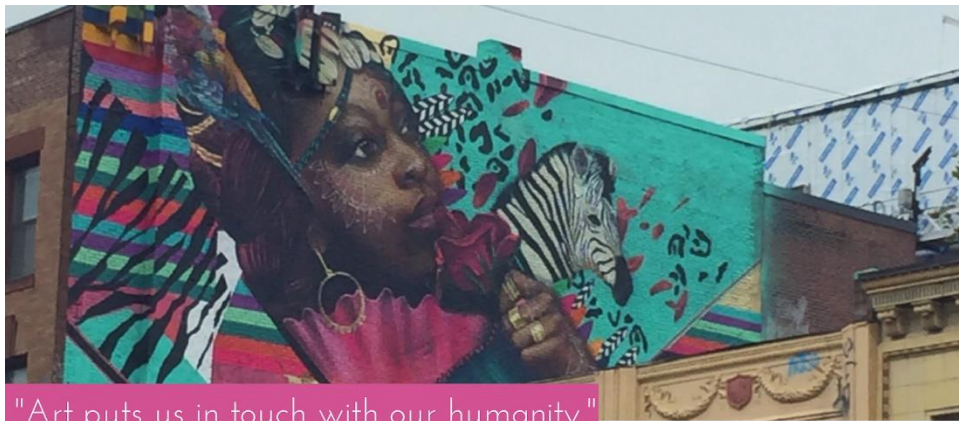
Kelly Sherman has done several projects in partnership with the City as a visual artist and is particularly interested in the connection between arts and innovation. She brought her expertise in creatively using public funding to directly support the arts community.

BEN SIMON, EMF MUSICIAN & CAMBRIDGE ARTS COALITION MEMBER

After the closing of the EMF building in Central Square, the Cambridge Arts Coalition formed to raise awareness of artist displacement in Cambridge. Ben Simon informed the group of the specialized needs of musicians and the importance of affordable spaces.

SETTING THE AGENDA

Bringing artists to the table started before the first meeting was convened. Councillor Mallon held 30-minute phone calls with each of the members appointed to the Task Force to hear their individual perspectives, take note of common themes and concerns, and begin to lay out an agenda that was based on these conversations. Each artist had a personal experience with barriers to practicing their craft, some of which were put up by the City. Our members and their relationship with the arts are quoted below:





HOURS OF CONVERSATION SET THE AGENDA FOR 1 INTRODUCTORY MEETING, 7 WORKING MEETINGS, AND 1 WRAP UP/FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS MEETING. THE TASK FORCE OFFICIALLY BEGAN IN OCTOBER OF 2018 AND CONCLUDED IN JUNE OF 2019.

ADDRESSING RACIAL EQUITY AS A KEY COMPONENT OF THE TASK FORCE'S WORK

A common theme from conversations with almost every Task Force member was the lack of diversity and racial equity in the Cambridge arts community. Because many projects, benefits, and professional opportunities come from personal networks, there was no directive or concerted effort towards inclusion, which fostered an environment of exclusivity and resulted in a lack of socioeconomic diversity in the arts community.

As a high-income community with access to world renowned arts institutions like the Museum of Fine Arts, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and others, there is an underlying bias in what the well-connected arts supporters in the Cambridge community even considered "art". Both local, independent artists and artists from underrepresented socioeconomic backgrounds had trouble navigating this arts landscape, which they often referred to as "elitist." To address equity, it was essential to address the institutional, structural, and implicit bias that would inevitably surface during topical meetings, such as public art, licensing and permitting, or the direction of the Cultural District.

"WHAT IS CONSIDERED ART? WHO IS IT FOR? WHO GETS TO DECIDE?"

These became essential questions for the Arts Task Force to address, not just as a lens to use during topic-centered meetings, but as a topic in and of itself. To get everyone on an equal playing field and give everyone the same language tools to address these issues, the Task Force engaged Malia Lazu of [The Urban Labs](#) to lead members in a deep discussion about bias, diversity, and inclusion for the entirety of their second meeting.

The Urban Labs specializes in diversity and inclusivity training for private companies and nonprofits, but Malia Lazu's additional background in the Arts allowed her to adapt anti-bias training models to fit the work of the Task Force. Members were encouraged to point out both individual and institutional biases in the Arts in a way that was reflective and invited dialogue. Members were invited to share their own personal experiences with bias in Cambridge, and whether they were a member of the City staff or a working artist, every member had a story to offer which connected them to the rest of the group, and the discussion as a whole.



She also engaged the Task Force in additional goal setting by asking breakout groups to answer the following questions:

- **What are some opportunities for the Task Force to promote belonging?**
- **What do you think is the biggest challenge the Task Force has to overcome to be successful?**
- **How will we know if we succeed?**

For many members, these breakout groups reaffirmed the upcoming topical meetings on the agenda. Groups came to a consensus that opportunities for the Task Force included eliminating the "inner circle" that was institutionally supported by the City, especially by creating and broadening access to funding and public art opportunities for a wider variety of artists. Challenges identified were: the inability for honest conversations in many public venues, the intrinsic, societal belief that art is not valuable, or that artists do not deserve to be well-compensated, and how art is siloed instead of integrated into all parts of public life. Markers of success included people of more diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and art disciplines seeing themselves represented throughout the community, and our ability to hold each other accountable to achieving our set goals.

By dedicating an entire meeting to racial equity, diversity, and inclusion, these topics were not "othered" or discussed after the fact: they became front and center in the policy discussion.

INCLUDING ALL STAKEHOLDERS TO REDUCE BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION

This Task Force was the first opportunity for many working artists to interact with City leaders and advocate for real policy changes to support their community. Many of these changes would involve various City departments whose department heads were not familiar with the needs of the artist community and did not regularly interact with or receive feedback from artists.

Ahead of topical meetings that pertained to their departments, City leaders were invited to attend and participate in the Task Force meeting. This served several purposes: 1) City leaders actively listened to the dialogue and could hear about needs, feedback, and possible means of support directly from the artist community; 2) artists could hear directly from City leaders, learn more about the operation of each department, and engage in a productive discussion about how to move forward with recommendations; and 3) after listening to and engaging directly with the artist community, City leaders felt as though they had a stake in the policy process and its outcomes.

Below is a list of City leaders and other key stakeholders who generously accepted our invite to join Task Force meetings, and who have already begun work within their departments to support the arts:

GREG LAIKOS, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR: MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL COUNCIL

Greg joined us for our introductory meeting in October, which was spend orienting Task Force members on the mission of the Task Force, each other's work, the Arts Council, and the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC). Mr. Laikos gave a brief overview of the MCC's history, the establishment of Cultural District statewide, and best practices from other municipalities.

MEMBERS OF THE DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

The Task Force was joined by members of the development community at our third meeting regarding funding. Presently, the only private 1% for art program in the City is administered by MIT, and other developers were brought to the meeting to learn about how and why MIT runs this program in hopes of replicating it. Developers were also looking for connections to the Arts community, both to incorporate into their projects and to fulfill community benefits, but often had to rely on personal networks or "gatekeeper" organizations, often leading to the bypassing of local artists. Finally, developers needed to hear from artists about the effects of displacement and acknowledge their responsibility in this process. Every Task Force member and developer agreed that arts could no longer be an after-thought in development projects, and that artists needed to be brought in at the beginning of the process.

LILLIAN HSU, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC ART: CAMBRIDGE ARTS COUNCIL

One of the goals of the Task Force was to broaden the definition of public art and expand the types of art that the City funded. Ms. Hsu attended our fourth meeting on Public Art, and presented on the City's current process while hearing feedback about the desire to incorporate the public's ability to enjoy art and the protection of artist communities into the definition of "public art."

JEFF ROBERTS, ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Mr. Roberts joined us at the February meeting of the Task Force, which was the topic that had led to the convening of the group – the lack of availability of artist studio, rehearsal, practice, and live/work space. Most Task Force members were unfamiliar with zoning and planning, and Mr. Roberts was able to give the group a “Zoning 101” class on how zoning could be used as a tool to incentivize the development of arts spaces.

NICOLE MURATI-FERRER, CHAIR: LICENSE COMMISSION

Ms. Murati-Ferrer joined us for our March meeting on licensing and permitting, which was a main concern of many artists on the Task Force, especially those in performance-based disciplines such as music and dance. The dialogue between her and the artists on the Task Force immediately led to the License Commission addressing a layout issue on their website – which was a major source of confusion for performers being able to delineate which activities needed one-day vs. annual permits.

PARDIS SAFFARI, SENIOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION


Ms. Saffari also joined us for our March meeting on licensing and permitting and was there to provide a critical perspective on the business side of Arts. CDD is in the midst of an update to the Zoning Table of Land Uses, which is a hindrance for many small businesses, but particularly for artists whose highly-specific design needs to practice, rehearse, and perform, were not taken into account during the last update in 1961. Ms. Saffari was present to hear artists' land use concerns, but also provided her expertise on small business resources the City offers.

LUIS COTTO, PROGRAM MANAGER: MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL COUNCIL

Mr. Cotto joined us for the April meeting on the Cultural District both as the Program Manager of the MCC, but also as a resident of Central Square. He discussed the State's new initiative to fund Cultural Districts as well as best practices from other districts. He also participated in the working group regarding arts programming and cultural events.

THE FULL AGENDA

meeting dates	October	11	Introduction
	November	8	Racial equity training
	December	13	Funding mechanisms
	January	10	Public art
	February	7	Artist live/work, studio space
	March	13	Licensing & Permitting
	April	11	Cultural District
	May	9	Envisioning new programs
	June	10	Final recommendations



“Artists, more than any other profession, are asked to volunteer their time, talents, and crafts, so it is vital that this Task Force is action-oriented and produces immediate results.”

Councillor Mallon at the Task Force's first meeting

AN ACTION-ORIENTED MODEL TO GET IMMEDIATE RESULTS

Displacement and the high cost of both living and practicing art in Cambridge is an ongoing crisis that demands immediate action. Unlike other task forces, which followed a model of meeting for a period of time and producing a report with recommendations to be acted upon at a later date, the Arts Task Force acted as a live advisory body, producing real-time recommendations that Councillor Mallon introduced at Council meetings following Task Force sessions.



The Task Force comes to a consensus on a Policy Order to submit. The Order will go to the City Manager's Office as recommendations come out of the Task Force.

Policy orders came out of topic-based meetings and focused on short term recommendations that the City could implement in a timely manner. This was particularly true of items that would be part of the FY20 budget, as the Council held hearings on department line items in May of 2019. Topical meetings having to do with the budget, such as increasing and reallocating sources of municipal funding, were held early on in the Task Force process to give City Departments time to incorporate these new revenue streams into the FY2020 budget.

THE FOLLOWING SECTION OF THIS REPORT LISTS SHORT TERM ACTIONS RECOMMENDED BY THE TASK FORCE, AND PROVIDES UPDATES ON THEIR PROGRESS THROUGH THE CITY'S LEGISLATIVE PROCESS.

SHORT TERM ACTIONS TAKEN

DECEMBER - MEETING #3: FUNDING MECHANISMS

In preparation for the FY2020 budget, Task Force members focused on creating additional municipal funding streams and reallocating existing municipal funds specifically to the arts. The following short-term actions were recommended by the Task Force and introduced as Policy Orders at the Council's January 21st meeting:

1. Allocate 15% of the City's hotel/motel tax revenue to the Arts

The Arts are an economic driver in the City of Cambridge. According to a study by Americans for the Arts, ("[Arts and Economic Prosperity](#)") the Arts are a \$174 million dollar industry in our City alone, bringing in about \$13 million in municipal revenue annually. Since artists are playing a key role in generating this revenue, some of the money should be reinvested directly back into our arts community. A significant amount of this revenue comes from tourism; according to the same study, over 80% of nonresidents surveyed stated that an Arts event was the primary reason for their visit to Cambridge. Read a copy of this order [here](#).

STATUS: Complete ✓

The Council adopted the order and the City Manager's Office allocated 15% of the anticipated hotel/motel tax revenue from FY20 to the Arts, totaling an additional \$2 million in funding.



2. Reevaluate the City's 1% for Art Ordinance

Cambridge's [1% for Art Ordinance](#) applies to the 1% of hard construction costs for all municipal projects, but funds have historically been capped at \$100,000, with only a few exceptions. The upcoming Tobin School renovation is expected to cost \$230 million, and the City should commit the full 1% to that project – approximately \$2.3 million. The Ordinance traditionally calls for site-based art, however grants were allocated for The Port's sewer separation project - a highly

successful model the Task Force wants to move toward. A [grant-based model](#) would allow the City to fund more artists with one project, also allowing for a diversity of mediums with each funding allocation. Read a copy of this order [here](#).

STATUS: Complete ✓

The Council adopted the order and the City Manager's Office has agreed not to cap the Arts allocation at \$100,000, but to allot the full 1% of construction costs to the Arts. This additional \$2.3 million from the Tobin School Renovation will not be online until construction begins.

3. Establish the Central Square Improvement Fund

Developers who do not meet minimum parking requirements can pay into a fund where the money is reinvested directly back into Central Square. Since the City is focused on reducing single-car trips, emissions, traffic congestion, and the cost of producing housing, parking relief is increasingly granted to developers in lieu of other benefits such as the Improvement Fund. Arts, events, and programming are stated uses for this fund, but it has not yet been established despite the rezoning of the Square in 2013. With several development projects in the pipeline, the fund needed to be established immediately so that it is available for developers to contribute to. Read a copy of this order [here](#).

STATUS: Ongoing →

The Council adopted the order, but the City Manager's Office has not yet established the fund. However, no development projects that require a parking exemption are currently under review.

JANUARY - MEETING #4: PUBLIC ART

The Cambridge Arts Council oversees the creation and development of over 200 pieces of public art, largely funded by the City's Percent for Art Ordinance. As a result, the vast majority of these public art projects are site-based, visual pieces. During their discussions, the Task Force used a broader definition of public art to be inclusive of all arts disciplines, as well as the public's ability to enjoy art, the protection of the artist community, and support of arts organizations. Cambridge is a City known for innovation, but the constant push to "reinvent the wheel" can sometimes hamper the work of established non-profits doing meaningful work in the community. The following Policy Order was submitted to the City Council for their February 18th meeting:

1. Take inventory of all existing arts organizations in the City of Cambridge and their funders

There is no central location or database that keeps track of all arts organizations and arts-related nonprofits working in Cambridge. Therefore, they are often siloed, and have trouble connecting with the innovation economy – or even with each other – when new ideas, projects, and programming are sought out by the City or private entities. Often, projects that are billed as “new” are the same work that an already established arts nonprofit or organization has been doing for years. An inventory will centralize all organizations under one umbrella and help build a network of resources to connect the arts community with the public and each other.

The funding piece also presents a problem for arts organizations in the Greater Boston Area, as there are 1 or 2 large funders: The Barr Foundation and the Boston Foundation. Additionally, 80% of private donations go to large institutions like the MFA or Boston Symphony Orchestra. The inventory would help publicize small arts organizations to potential donors. Read a copy of this order [here](#).

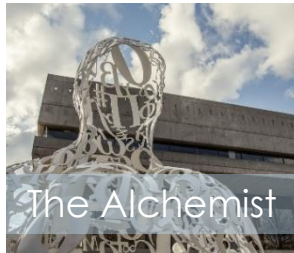
STATUS: Ongoing →

The Council adopted the order and the City Manager's Office will be consulting with the Arts Council on the best way to implement this order.

Here's something fun to watch: The Loop Lab's student cohort recorded, edited, and produced their own video of this meeting. Check it out [here!](#)



A FEW EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC ART IN CAMBRIDGE



During this meeting, members were also asked to look at and react to existing public art in the City (both City-owned and privately funded), and ask important questions about which artists were showcased, whose art was represented, and how to broaden and diversify this process. This provoked an interesting discussion about what we should define as public art – more on that later in this report! To see more examples of the City's public art collection [click here](#).

MEETING #6: LICENSING AND PERMITTING

Initial phone conversations with Task Force members revealed that the licensing and permitting process was one of the main barriers to practicing as an artist in Cambridge. Outdated use categories, conflicting information from different departments, and confusing fee structures were only some of the barriers identified, especially for individual artists or small arts organizations who were inexperienced with the licensing and permitting processes. The following Policy Orders were submitted to the City Council as short-term actions for their March 18th meeting:

1. Build an arts-friendly, “one stop shop” on the Licensing Commission website

The License Commission plays an important role in ensuring safety and respect for residential neighborhoods, but focuses too much on what is not allowed, rather than encouraging approved activities and events. The layout and explanation of licenses, particularly the one day vs. annual entertainment licenses, was also a source of great confusion for artists. Many expressed their desire to attempt to “fly under the radar”, or not have events at all, because of the perception that their proposed performances or showcases would be off limits.

Task Force members used Austin Texas's [City Stage](#) platform as an example of an arts-friendly platform. City Stage features arts in a proactive way and shows how permitting platforms can have the dual task of ensuring safety and compliance while promoting and informing the public of arts events. Read a copy of this order [here](#).

STATUS: Ongoing →

The Council adopted the order, but the process of building a website like this is a long one. In response to the meeting, the License Commission did make an immediate change in the layout of their page to avoid further confusion about which events needed one day permits vs. which events needed annual permits.

2. Establish an arts liaison in the Community Development Department's Economic Development Division

The content of this meeting also focused on the artist and arts organizations as a business, and how artists are a unique subset of our small business community. The Table of Land Uses is undergoing its first update since 1961, as it was written with traditional retail, not arts or experience-based business models in mind.


Combined with a cumbersome permitting process and the unique needs of artists, a need for more inter-departmental connections was identified, as well as the opportunity to create a new position or additional capacity for a point person in the Economic Development Division with the expertise to address artists' specific questions.

This process has been particularly complicated for artists or arts organizations who want to open a physical location or an arts-related business, as building permits, licensing, and zoning all interact in ways that often put up more roadblocks than artists can overcome. A designated arts liaison will be an asset to the business side of the arts so that they can successfully navigate the permitting process and become part of our small business community. Read a copy of this order [here](#).

STATUS: Ongoing →

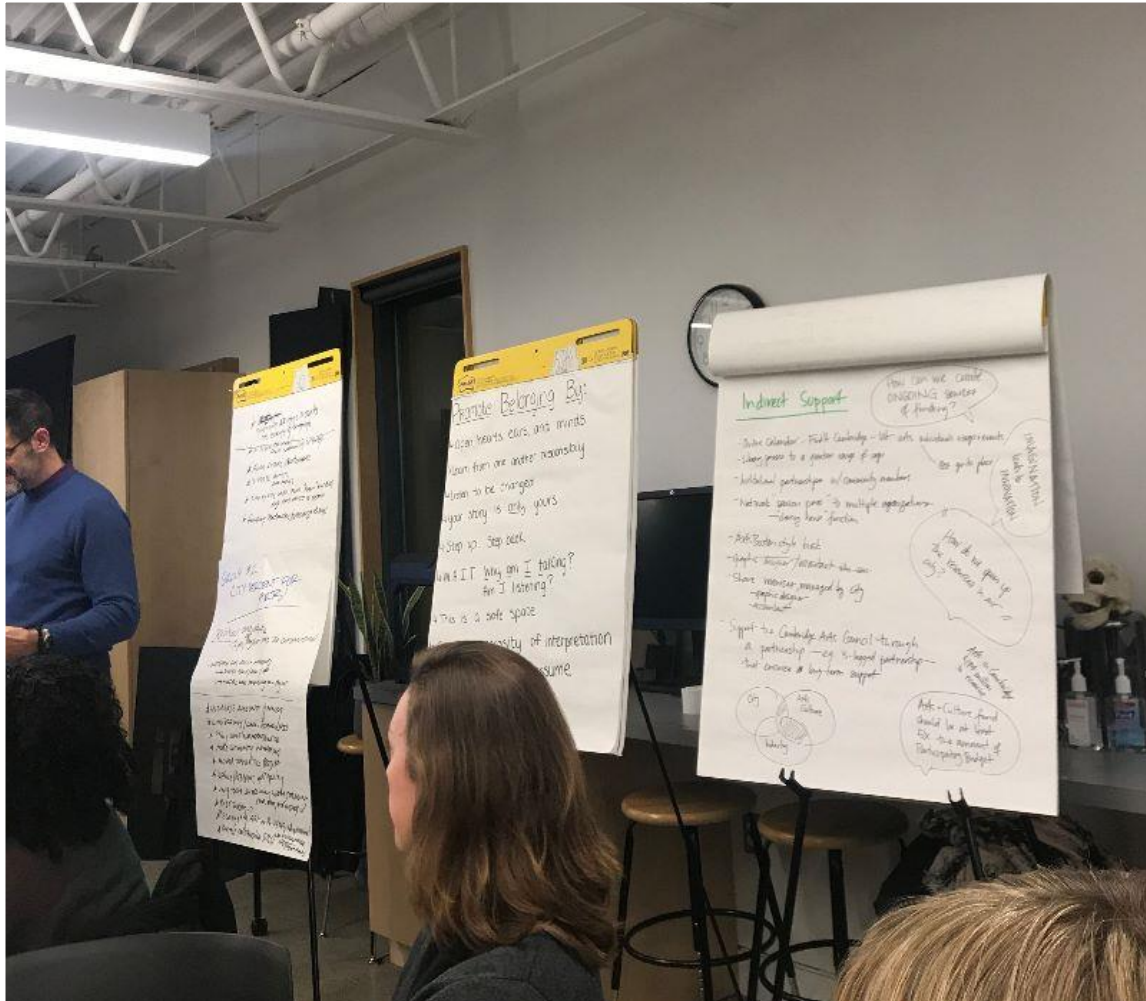
The Council adopted the order, and steps are already being taken to establish connectivity between the Arts and the Economic Development Division. During budget hearings, Councillor Mallon also suggested that the Arts Council, Office of Tourism, and Economic Development Division meet quarterly to strengthen the relationship between the three departments that are vital to Cambridge's creative economy.

**THIS SEEMS LIKE AN ISSUE OF
COMMUNICATION, AND WE
NEED TO BE ABLE TO
COMMUNICATE ENTHUSIASM
FOR EVENTS THAT ARE ALLOWED.
MOST PEOPLE IN THE ARTIST
COMMUNITY ARE NOT EXPERT
USERS FAMILIAR WITH THIS
PROCESS**



~Task Force Member Kelly Sherman

Recommendations



BUILDING A CONSENSUS

The Task Force's final meeting in June focused on long-term recommendations to serve as a living Arts Plan for the City. In preparation for the last meeting, Councillor Mallon and Ms. Ascolese reviewed all previous meeting notes for common ideas and concerns among members. They were all individually noted, and similar topical areas were all placed into "buckets" corresponding with larger themes. There was also an open call via email so that Task Force members could submit their own recommendations ahead of the final meeting.

Recommendations were sorted and placed on to large poster boards so that the meeting could be visual and interactive, and fell under the following categories:

- **Public Art**
- **Cultural District**
- **Arts Economy**
- **Licensing and Permitting**
- **Nonprofit Sector Support**
- **University Responsibility**
- **Racial Equity**
- **Other Ideas**



Drafting an outline for the last meeting

"WE NEED TO TAKE CARE OF OUR ARTISTS WHO HAVE MADE A LIFE OUT OF THEIR CRAFT. WE CAN'T JUST GO FOR THE LOW-HANGING FRUIT – REAL CHANGE NEEDS TO HAPPEN."

~Task Force member Peter DiMuro

PUBLIC ART

ADD A VALUE STATEMENT ABOUT ARTS TO THE ZONING ORDINANCE

Developers have no incentive to create or preserve arts spaces, and the Planning Board's job is to adhere to the Zoning Ordinance and encourage the community benefits that are outlined there. The City's Zoning Ordinance does not list the Arts as a community benefit that developers should be providing but adding a section regarding Arts to either the General Development Standards or Design Guidelines would signal to both developers and the Planning Board that Arts should be prioritized as a community need.

BROADEN THE DEFINITION OF PUBLIC ART IN THE 1% FOR ART ORDINANCE

The City's current Percent for Art Ordinance allows an over-emphasis on site-based, visual art. This often allocates only enough funding to a single artist for a single project, while performing arts such as music, dance, and others are left unfunded by this program. The FLOW grant program that was connected with The Port's sewer separation project funded a greater variety of public art, but this was a one-off funding allocation, as the sewer separation project was not "site-based", so alternatives had to be explored. Expanding the definition of Public Art in the Ordinance will create a better roadmap for the allocation of funding for various disciplines, as well as funding multiple artists with one project.

The Task Force also discussed the idea of Art as a public good in and of itself, and that Arts are an essential part of life in any society. Members strongly believed that in addition to a diversity of art-mediums, the definition of Public Art should also include "the public's ability to consume and enjoy art", as well as the protection of artists and Arts communities themselves. A broader definition like this in the Ordinance would allow a more flexible use of public dollars, and a greater ability to fund many of the recommendations outlined in this report.



Graffiti Alley is alive with art. It embodies the urbanism, creativity, and spontaneity of the Cultural District.

ENCOURAGE THE CITY TO CONSISTENTLY COMPLY WITH ALL FUTURE PERCENT FOR ART ORDINANCES

The City's Percent for Art Ordinance was designed to allocate a total of 1% of hard construction costs on municipal projects to the Arts, but at some point, the allocation began being capped at \$100,000, no matter what the total cost of the project. Members of the Task Force could not find an explanation from City officials as to where this artificial cap had come from, but it has costs hundreds of thousands of dollars in losses to the Arts community. This arbitrary cap should be immediately lifted.

INCREASE THE PERCENTAGE ALLOCATED FOR ART IN THE PERCENT FOR ART ORDINANCE

Many Task Force members believed that only 1% of the total hard construction costs was still not enough to adequately fund the Arts. Performing Arts, such as theater and dance in particular are extremely expensive to produce well. Members expressed interest in raising this percentage. 2% was given as a starting point.

START A PRIVATE PERCENT FOR ART PROGRAM

Our Zoning Ordinance can be amended to require private developers to pay a percentage of their hard construction costs into a fund for the Arts. MIT has the first private percent for art program in the country, paying 1% of its hard construction costs for educational buildings to a public art program, which has helped them build a large collection of public art on their campus. Private money also comes with less restraints, opening up additional possibilities for projects and initiatives in the Arts community.

REVAMP THE PUBLIC ART PROCESS

Cambridge is known for its politically active community which actively engages in both community and political processes, and it's no different when it comes to public art. However, it is important for us to ask who shows up to community meetings, whose voices are heard with the greatest weight, and whether "art by consensus" yields the kind of creative and thought-provoking art that we want to see in our community.

There are alternative models for creating public artwork that don't involve checking boxes off criteria lists or holding multiple stakeholder meetings. This Spring's Mural Masters competition used that model in action: artists were given key words and concepts, and then asked simply to create. A similar model could be used here, especially for site-specific art, where a community narrative could play a key role in not only educating an artist about a particular site, but also about inspiring them to create a piece that reflects and represents the community.

PRIORITY BUMP FOR LOCAL ARTISTS

When selecting artists for public art opportunities, we can use a similar local priority bump that we do for our housing lists. This will allow Cambridge to prioritize the hiring of local artists so both opportunities, a decrease in costs associated with time and travel for visiting artists, and funding remain with artists working in our community.

MAINTAIN AND UPDATE THE PUBLIC ART WEBSITE

The City's Public Art map indicates the location, medium, artist(s), and a photograph for each piece of public art in our collection, however, the site has not been updated since the early 2000s. It is also exclusive to visual art, and therefore no other mediums that have received public funding (even if they have already been presented) are represented or advertised as funded opportunities. The site is useful for finding art in your neighborhood or exploring the City, but needs constant updating and the full representation of art mediums.

"Who are the arbiters of what public art is in Cambridge? Who gets to make art? Who gets to display art and receive commission for art? We need to especially stick up for black and brown folks who are in this critical space. We need to look around the room and ask ourselves who the gatekeepers are, and if we have the courage to help others be represented."

~Task Force member
Christopher Hope



This public art piece is a staple of our collection and one of the most widely recognized in Cambridge.



A DJ performs at the first ever Fifth Friday in Central Square.

CULTURAL DISTRICT

RECONVENE THE CULTURAL DISTRICT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The committee is co-chaired by Arts Council Executive Director Jason Weeks and Central Square Business Association Director Michael Monestime, but it has not met since the Cultural district was redesignated, a process that happens every 5 years. The Arts Task Force members recommend regular meetings of this committee, with expanded membership from The Port and Cambridgeport neighborhoods. The committee should be focused on backwards-mapping from every redesignation so that operation of the District is goal-oriented.



CREATE A CIVIC OR CULTURAL COMPACT FOR THE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Central Square just began operation as a Business Improvement District, or (BID), a type of public-private partnership that allows property owners to pay extra fees to provide supplemental services. The Central Square BID is focused on being a “clean, safe, and welcoming” place as well as enhancing its identity as the Arts and Culture District. But BIDs have had a history of promoting gentrification and displacement in the past, and we want to ensure that the BID in Cambridge is inclusive, intentional, and has a conscience. A cultural compact, written with the Cultural District Advisory Committee, will keep the focus on the BID from “placemaking” to “placekeeping”, and ensuring the BID operates through a lens of equity and respect for the Arts community.

ENSURE PLACES FOR THE COMMUNITY, PARTICULARLY YOUTH, TO INCLUDE THEM IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THAT COMES WITH THE ARTS

A BID and the economic activity that comes with arts and culture events will generate prosperity in Central Square, and we want to make sure that our most vulnerable populations also share in this success. The neighborhoods in and around Central Square have a high concentration of “opportunity youth”, who often are not sought out for opportunities in the Arts. Arts Organizations such as the Community Art Center and The Loop Lab should be supported in their creative youth development work, but the Arts and Cultural District should be intentional about additional ways to conduct arts-related outreach to these communities.

CREATE AN ARTS AND CULTURE ANCHOR OR COLLABORATIVE

Arts space, particularly in the Cultural District, comes at a premium, and we are running out of spaces where artists are free to work and practice their crafts. St. Paul AME Church in Central Square is a venue that could become more accessible to the Arts community. Church leaders have been looking for opportunities for their unused space. This could open up the potential for an arts collaborative at this location. The City should also be vigilant in working with both the BID and local property owners for the availability of other spaces.

CONCENTRATE ARTS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITY IN AND AROUND THE DISTRICT

Entering Central Square should feel like an arrival, and residents and visitors alike should know that they are in an Arts and Culture District. Events such as the Jazz Festival, Riverfest, and the World's Fair have been moved out of Central Square in recent history, though Riverfest made a triumphant return this past Spring. We should do more to retain these events in the Square, as well as add new festivals and celebrations to enhance the Square's cultural identity.

THINK ABOUT THE 5 MINUTE "PEDESTRIAN SHED" WHEN PROGRAMMING AND CREATING SPACES TO KEEP THINGS ACCESSIBLE

Most people are comfortable with a 5-minute walk, and Central Square has the unique advantage of being located near a major transit node. Better wayfinding and informing visitors of all of the exciting places and events available to them in just a 5-minute walk will help drive up traffic. When programming special events, organizers should also think about the 5-minute walk to keep their event accessible to the largest audience.

UPDATE ZONING AND DESIGN GUIDELINES TO INCENTIVIZE ARTS-RELATED USES

The lack of affordable arts space is a continued challenge in Central Square, but the development community can be partners instead of adversaries in this regard. The Arts Overlay District as originally proposed serves as a blueprint for this, especially if General Development or Design Guidelines are updated to include arts as a community benefit. But developers need more "hard tools", such as FAR bumps, GFA exemptions, or height increases to produce arts space, and that's where Central Square specific zoning can help increase the availability of these spaces. Unlike many below-market arts spaces, these spaces should be safe, functional, and worthy of the artists who practice in them.

*Watch another video from The Loop Lab!
They came to our February meeting on artist
studio & live/work space to record, edit, and
produce a video recap. View it [here!](#)*



ARTS ECONOMY

OFFER SOFT SKILLS CLASSES PROVIDED BY THE ARTS COUNCIL

Many artists are skilled in their own crafts, but don't have soft skills knowledge to access funding, promote their business, or win public art opportunities. The Arts Council should offer and promote soft skills classes that focus on presentation skills, preparing budgets, community engagement, entrepreneurship, business development, grant writing, and accessing seed funding. These classes should be free and open to all artists, but especially marketed to local artists who are from underrepresented socioeconomic groups.

ARTS SPECIFIC OFFICE HOURS WITH THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Office hours are already offered to small business owners, but artists often do not think of themselves as a business and have additional concerns that need to be addressed. EDD should begin marketing arts-specific office hours, so that artists have a go to place where they can drop in and ask questions about the building permit process, licensing and permitting process, and other business-oriented questions.

PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE OFFICE OF TOURISM AND ARTS COUNCIL

Local artists and arts events are a driving force for our tourism industry, as they are part of what makes Cambridge unique. However, tourism in Cambridge now focuses heavily on our institutions like Harvard and MIT, who have no true incentives for promoting tourism or the City of Cambridge itself as a destination. The Office of Tourism has a unique platform to help promote local artists, whether it's maintaining an active calendar of cultural events and festivals, highlighting an upcoming performance or showcase, or advertising new public art like Central Square's Mural Project.

PUBLIC MARKET IN CENTRAL SQUARE WITH VENDOR SPACES THAT PRIOTIZE LOCAL CULTURE MARKETS

Pop up markets like the Central Flea, Mexican Street Food Festival, and Dumpling Festival attract thousands of visitors to the Square and provide local artists with opportunities to sell their items or provide food and entertainment. Themed festivals like these are successful on occasion, but Task Force members are looking for a more permanent, artist-owned market – perhaps owned as a community land trust – that would be a permanent space for artists to have their own mini “storefronts” and vendor booths.

LICENSING AND PERMITTING

CREATE A TIERED PERMITTING FEE STRUCTURE

For-profit businesses, nonprofit entities, and small arts organizations currently all pay the same licensing and permitting fees in the City. This is a source of inequity, especially for smaller organizations or individual artists that budget carefully and don't have a lot of financial capital. Even the category "nonprofit" is huge – describing entities from MIT to The Dance Complex to an individual artist. The IRS already distinguishes tax categories for nonprofits with operating budgets over \$500,000 and those with operating budget less than \$500,000. We should make the similar distinctions in our licensing and permitting fee structure as well by implementing a sliding scale where smaller organizations pay smaller fees.

MAKE AND DISTRIBUTE A PERMITTING "TREE CHART" INFOGRAPHIC

Many independent artists and small arts organizations start the permitting process only to abandon it when things get unclear or complicated. A simple infographic that sends users down a yes/no path before they start the process would likely answer many questions ahead of time and be a proactive resource from the Licensing Commission about how to navigate the process.

STREAMLINE THE PERMITTING PROCESS FOR EVENTS AND ART INSTALLATIONS

Cambridge's special events committee meets twice per month to assist organizations that are having large events like street parties or concerts and is a streamlined venue for getting all involved parties in one room to answer questions and speak to concerns. Artists who are having smaller-scale events don't have a resource like this, however, their events are not requiring any additional City resources or likely to generate any noise or safety concerns. There should be a "small events" category with a much simpler outline and process.

ENACT AN ACOUSTIC PERFORMERS' ORDINANCE

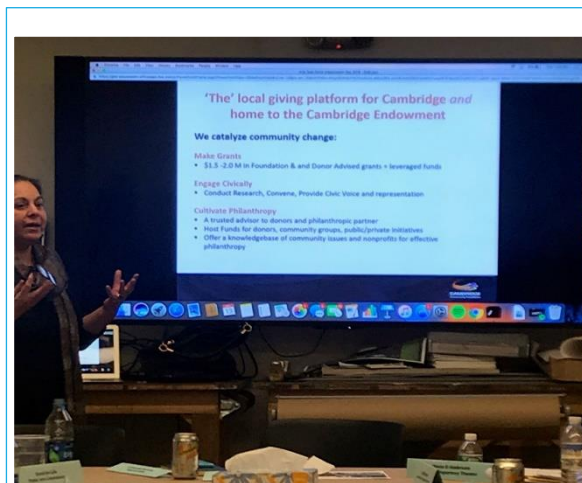
The City of Boston has enacted an Acoustic Performers' Ordinance that allows performances without amplification in business districts without a permit. The Ordinance had a sunset clause built in for 2017, but there were no major issues with its implementation, and the clause was removed, and ordinance made permanent. Vice Mayor Jan Devereux first introduced the idea during the 2016-2017 Council session and refiled it again this session with Councillor Mallon. The initiative should be discussed again and implemented.

NONPROFIT SECTOR SUPPORT

CAMBRIDGE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION (CCF) SHOULD TAKE A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN AIDING THE ARTS

The Cambridge Community Foundation (CCF) already funds a number of major community initiatives, and has expressed interest in aiding the Arts community as well. Most notably, CCF can serve as a fiscal agent for the funds from a private percent for art program, so that money is more flexible, and we reduce the occurrence of “art by consensus.” CCF can also act as a giving platform, allowing the community to set up an arts displacement fund, or start and promote a giving campaign to benefit small arts organizations.

Geeta Pradhan, the President and CEO of CCF, also expressed interest in cultural planning, especially in Central Square. Culture itself did not have as much discussion time as the Arts, but it is still an essential part of our community and integral to the operation of the Central Square BID. CCF can be an active participant and supporter of the backwards mapping work of the Cultural District Advisory Committee.



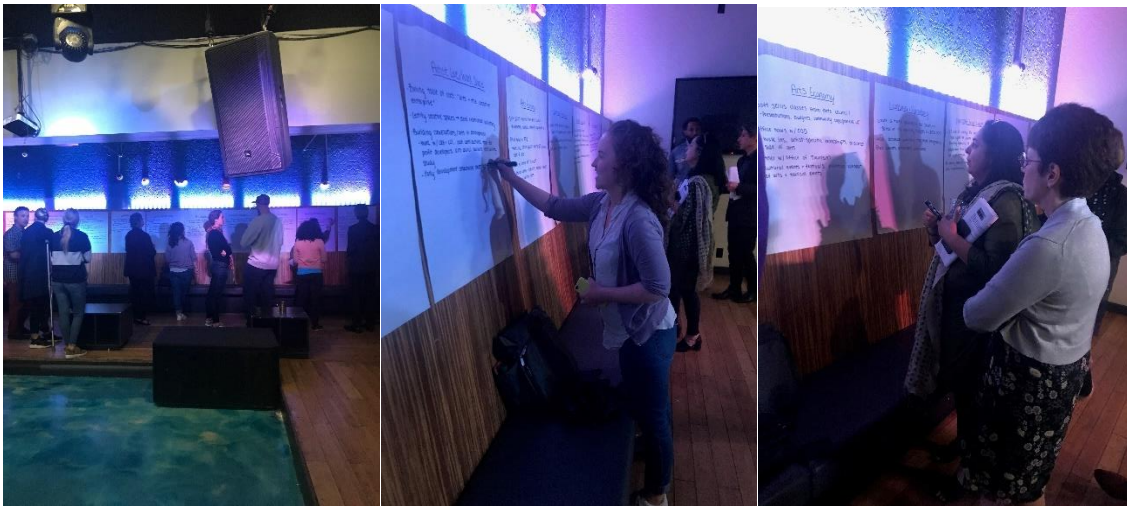
Task Force member Geeta Pradhan presents on how CCF can greater support the Arts community.

MENTORING NETWORKS BETWEEN ESTABLISHED AND EMERGING ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

Longstanding arts organizations like The Dance Complex are staffed with national experts and arts-consultants who want to share their knowledge with smaller, local arts organizations in Cambridge. Unfortunately, they lack the capacity to seek them out, or their willingness to mentor and provide knowledge is unknown to these smaller organizations. The Arts Council can help facilitate these relationships, as well as build other platforms (as discussed in later recommendations) to create networking and knowledge-sharing opportunities.

GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT FROM THE CITY

The City allocates too few line items to the Arts, but especially to longstanding Arts organizations that are doing vital work in the community. Outside of the Arts Council, the only entity that receives direct funding is the Multicultural Arts Center, but this should be expanded to include other organizations that have a proven track record of community engagement, affordability, and access for a diverse group of artists.



Members gather at our last meeting in June, held at La Fabrica Central, to collaborate and finalize recommendations for the final report of the Task Force.

UNIVERSITY RESPONSIBILITY

PROVIDE LIVE/WORK, AND REHEARSAL SPACE FOR ARTISTS – PERMANENCE PREFERRED

Our local universities: MIT, Harvard, and Lesley, have both funds and space to spare. They can partner with our artist community to offer space for live/work studios, musician rehearsal spaces, galleries, showcases, and more. Tools like the Space Finder in the City of Seattle can help local artists find available spaces at the different universities. They should also be obligated to offer a designated amount of free or reduced-cost space for artists every year.

EMPLOY LOCAL ARTISTS

Whether it's for entertainment at an event, artwork for a new building, or an opportunity for site-based public art, universities should actively seek to employ local artists when possible. The universities have ample opportunities to increase art on their campuses, and the ability to pay a living wage, or market rate, for artists' work.

SUBSIDIZE STUDENT ATTENDANCE AT LOCAL ART VENUES AND EVENTS

A trip to AS220 in Providence informed Task Force members that Brown University subsidizes their students' attendance at local arts events. Students need only show their Brown ID, and the venue bills the university for the number of tickets used. Not only would local artists have a guaranteed, paid audience, but students who are new to the community and often seen as transient, would have a new door into Cambridge, and Arts could potentially serve as an anchor to keep them involved and invested in their new home.



AS220 is a local Arts collaborative in Providence, Rhode Island

INCREASE ENGAGEMENT BY MUSEUMS RUN BY UNIVERSITIES

University-owned museums should be constantly engaging with the Cambridge community, especially neighborhoods who are unaware that these institutions exist and are open to them. In public schools where this isn't already happening, students in particular should have easy access or even subsidized attendance, and partnerships should be established between the City and these museums so that programs like low or free admission for public housing residents can be facilitated, for example.

SHARE PARTNERSHIPS WITH EXISTING INSTITUTIONS

Too often in Cambridge, new initiatives are created without recognizing work that's already happening, especially by our universities. When beginning "new" initiatives, universities should be checking in with existing Arts institutions to see if there's an opportunity for partnership, rather than replication of work and division of resources.

RACIAL EQUITY

UPDATE ARTS COUNCIL MISSION STATEMENT AND BUDGET NARRATIVE TO INCLUDE DIVERSITY AND EQUITY GOALS

No organization can achieve racial and socioeconomic equity without those values being part of its mandate. Since representation is such a powerful part of the art and what it means to be an artist, equity and diversity should be key objectives of the Arts Council, and there should be set metrics to understand how or if they are being achieved. The mission statement and budget narratives are good places to lay this important foundation, which will help inform future progress on this issue.

HIRE A CONSULTANT TO CONDUCT AN EQUITY AUDIT

The Arts Council maintains and updates a database of all artists who receive updates and outreach regarding public art opportunities. The database is open to everyone, but many Task Force members were unaware of its existence or how to be added and expressed concern that it was not well publicized or accessible to the community as a whole, and therefore excluded many artists – especially from underrepresented socioeconomic backgrounds. A quick look at artists who have recently received direct support and funding from the City revealed a lack of diversity that Task Force members found troubling.

There also remained a discrepancy between the Arts Council and Public Art Commission as to which artists from the database received outreach regarding public art opportunities. Two methods were described: one where every artist received notice, and a second where the Arts Council vetted artists for certain criteria (medium, experience, etc.) and then did outreach to a narrowed down list.

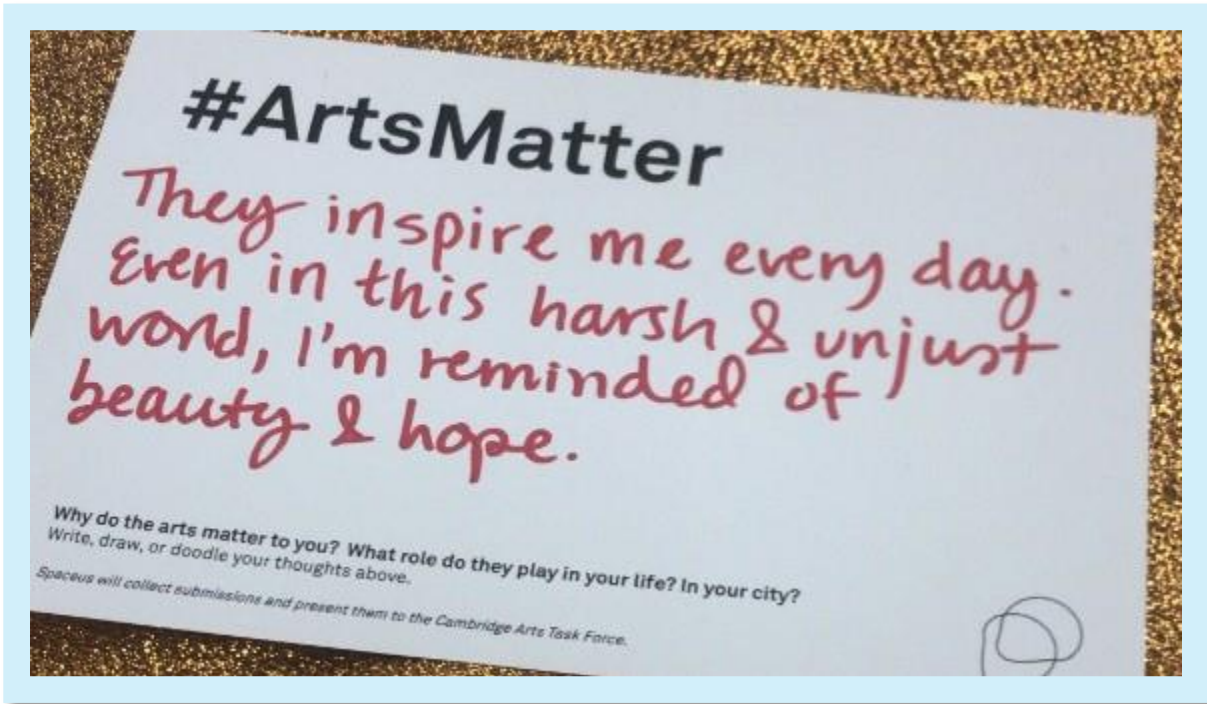
Task Force members wanted to ensure that this process was equitable, prioritized local artists, was not dependent on having inside relationships or knowledge, and was representative of the diverse community and art disciplines in Cambridge.

The City needs to take a holistic look at its diversity and equity practices in this regard. An independent consultant should be hired to examine what artists are included in the database, who receives the most outreach, whether art juries – boards of local artists and project stakeholders who select public art – are inclusive and representative of the community, and community outreach processes. Intentionally examining our practices and laying the right groundwork will benefit the whole City, by adding vibrant, diverse art to our public art collection, and by increasing well-funded arts opportunities for a more representative artist community.

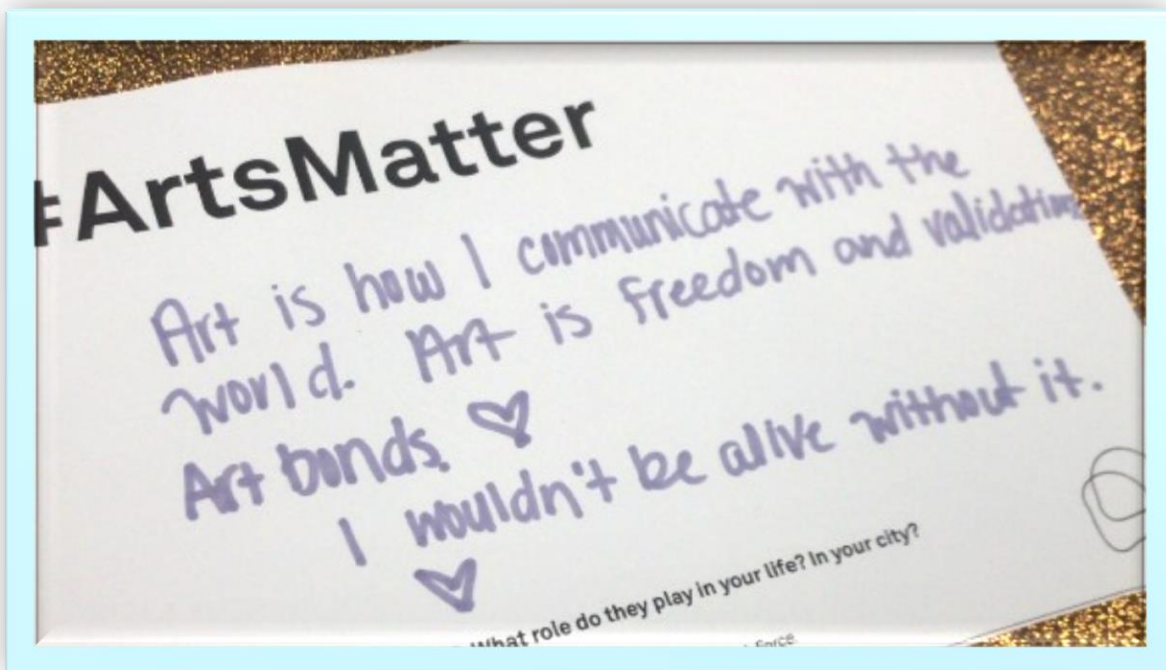
CREATE A NEW POSITION IN THE ARTS COUNCIL TO ACT AS A LIAISON TO UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

Pathways for “opportunity youth” often center on workforce development, public safety, or trade programs, but many of these young people are creative, expressive, and are looking for opportunities in the Arts. There are already anchor institutions that are neighborhood-based, but the City and the Arts Council have the opportunity to connect with these institutions and the youth that they serve, giving youth opportunities City-wide and beyond. We need to make art accessible to youth who didn’t know that these

opportunities existed, or thought they were inaccessible to them. A community outreach liaison would help to build these relationships.



Members of Spaceus share why Arts matter to them. Several of these cards were left out for the Task Force at the meeting hosted by Spaceus to remind us of the importance of our work.



OTHER IDEAS

Some of the Task Force's recommendations don't fit neatly into "buckets" but are supplemental to many of the recommendations listed above. Here are some additional recommendations:

ARTIST NETWORKING PORTAL

Artists not only feel siloed from the community as a whole, but oftentimes, they have trouble networking within themselves. In place of, or in addition to, the database maintained by the Arts Council, there should be a public listing of artists practicing in Cambridge – a "LinkedIn" for local artists. Not only would this allow artists to network with each other, but they could also indicate whether they are open to partnerships or mentorships, as discussed in a recommendation above. The development community and others looking to hire local artists also expressed an interest in this as well. Instead of relying on gatekeepers to connect them with artists, they would be able to connect directly with artists themselves to offer opportunities.

ARTS AND CULTURE OFFICE DIRECTOR

Culture is a vital aspect of the Arts community that often does not get enough thoughtful discussion, even within the Arts Task Force. The City hosts cultural celebrations related to Italian and Irish heritage that are consistently held annually, but events such as the Community Iftar and Caribbean Heritage celebration have been dependent on Councillors who identify with those communities. An Arts and Culture Office Director would ensure that a greater variety of cultures are recognized and celebrated, and that City resources are not distributed inequitably in this regard. They would also have the capacity to liaise with various cultural communities in Cambridge so that they are involved in the planning and celebration of their own holidays.

SEPARATE ARTS AND PUBLIC CELEBRATIONS INTO ITS OWN CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE

The Council forms committees at the beginning of every new term, and one such committee is "Neighborhood and Long-Term Planning, Public Facilities, Arts and Celebrations." The primary focus on this committee is general neighborhood concerns, like traffic calming, street safety, community development, and other neighborhood-specific concerns that arise over the course of a term. Especially with the emergence of this report, Arts and celebrations should be broken off into its own committee, so that both neighborhoods and the Arts can have committees dedicated to their issues. It is especially effective to have a Councilmember dedicated to Arts advocacy, as many of the recommendations in this report require action by the City Manager and partnerships facilitated by the City.

IMMEDIATE RESOURCES DEDICATED TO THE ACQUISITION OF REAL ESTATE FOR ARTIST SPACE

Artist displacement will continue so long as the cost of living continues to rise, and affordable artist spaces close. The City has the money in its budget to begin preserving artist spaces that are in danger, such as the dance studios at Green Street, and replacing spaces that have been lost, such as EMF. The City has already invested in The Foundry, which is a multi-use STEAM building in East Cambridge, as well as the

Multicultural Arts Center in East Cambridge, but we can do more to fill vacant City spaces with a vibrant arts community. CDD is actively conducting an inventory of vacant retail properties, and this same method could be used to identify unused City-owned spaces that could be repurposed for Arts.

DISPLAY LOCAL ART IN MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

We have an opportunity to use more of our municipal spaces as living Arts spaces and galleries to promote local artists. The City does display art in select venues, such as the gallery at 344 Broadway or at the Water Department, but these are not particularly high-traffic areas where artists can truly showcase their work. Art should be prominently displayed and publicly accessible, and artists' biographies and information about their work should always be included.

SEEK OUT SPACES THAT CAN BE USED AFTER-HOURS

What would CRLS or other municipal buildings look like if they were used in their "second shifts" by artists? Many of our schools and municipal buildings are beautiful facilities that go unused after 6pm but could serve as temporary practice or crafting spaces for artists. Some members of the Task Force did express concern about this recommendation, and urged that it be used as a supplement, not a band aid. We shouldn't be looking to "squeeze artists in" to after-hours space only.

START AN "ARTIST IN RESIDENCE" PROGRAM

Cities like New York and Boston have started Artist in Residence programs not only to offer benefitted City employment to local artists, but also to enhance services provided by City departments. Embedding artists directly into departments that may not immediately have to do with the arts encourages creative problem solving and allows Arts to be truly integrated into the fabric of our community and operation of our City. In fact, Danahy Park was created by artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles after she was embedded with both the Department of Public Works in New York and in Cambridge. Arts and artists have the potential to improve many of our City departments if we are open to this creativity.

INVEST IN PEOPLE ACROSS THE ARTS-SPECTRUM

This recommendation goes hand-in-hand with broadening the definition of Public Art to include both the "public's ability to consume and enjoy art" and the ability of artists to exist and create in our City. One of the main focuses of this Task Force was how fund artists at a level where they can afford to live and are properly compensated for their labor and creativity. With the additional funding and flexibility that many of these recommendations allow, we can invest in the actual people who are doing the creating, art-making, dance-making, and music-making.

CONCLUSION

“Don't create programs for us without us” is a philosophy often used by the nonprofit sector, particularly the social services community, but it also applies to the Arts as well. That's why it was so vital to bring working artists to the table, so that City leaders and policy makers could hear from real experts in the Arts and implement community-driven solutions.

At the second meeting of the Task Force, Malia Lazu asked members to identify markers of success, and these included: people of more diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and art disciplines seeing themselves represented throughout the community, and the ability of the Task Force to hold each other accountable to achieving our set goals. Although no long-term recommendations have started the City's legislative process, it is still possible to look back on the Task Force process itself to answer this question.

The Task Force was the first time that many working artists in the community saw themselves not only represented in the policy process but driving it. Members were selected intentionally to represent different art disciplines, socioeconomic backgrounds, and management and work experiences. Every month, members brought their lived experiences to the table, spoke with honesty, and were unafraid to offer constructive criticism. *The Task Force wants this report to serve as the document that holds us accountable for making substantive change for artists in Cambridge. This report cannot sit on a shelf; it must remain a living document that responds to the changes, challenges, and opportunities that will be presented to the Arts community as our City evolves.*



THANK YOU TO ALL TASK FORCE MEMBERS FOR SHARING YOUR IDEAS, CREATIVITY, AND EXPERTISE OVER THESE LAST NINE MONTHS!

