Boston Creates

June 2016

Boston Creates
Executive Summary

My fellow Bostonians,

Arts and culture have always thrived in our city. They are at the heart of everything that makes us the city we are today—from our storied institutions that attract visitors from all over the world to our neighborhood festivals marked by cultural heritage and pride. Arts and culture are the building blocks of community. They help connect us to one another. They teach, inspire, support, and heal us. That's why we are committed to elevating arts and culture in the City of Boston.

We claim a number of American cultural firsts: the first public park, public library, public secondary school, public school for African American students, school for visually impaired students, and the oldest performing arts organization in the nation. We are also home to more arts and cultural organizations per capita than any other metropolitan area in the nation. Clearly, arts, culture, and creativity are in our DNA.

As impressive as Boston's cultural history is, however, we know that we can do better. When I was elected mayor in November 2013, as one of my first actions I formed an Arts and Culture Transition Team and charged it with an important question: "How do we make Boston a municipal arts leader?" At a standing-room-only town hall meeting, we heard the passion of Boston's arts and cultural community. They wanted to see increased support for the arts from City Hall. They asked that we create a sustainable cultural plan, increase performance and work spaces, and embrace the rich diversity of Boston's population by supporting a range of arts and culture traditions.

So, we got right to work. We created an office within City government focused solely on arts and culture. We increased the amount of money that the Boston Cultural Council is able to grant to arts and culture organizations. We appointed the first cabinet-level Chief of Arts and Culture in decades. But the work hasn't stopped there.

In April 2015, we officially launched Boston Creates, the first cultural planning process for the City of Boston. We embarked on an open and inclusive process, guided by a 16-member Steering Committee and a 60-member Leadership Council with representatives across sectors. We formed neighborhood-specific community teams to ensure that the resulting plan would reflect the deep diversity of Boston arts and culture. We were thrilled by the level of engagement. More than 5,000 Bostonians came to town hall meetings, filled out surveys, and participated in community conversations, groups, and individual interviews. You have all taught us how we can find better ways to support artists, organizations, and programs.

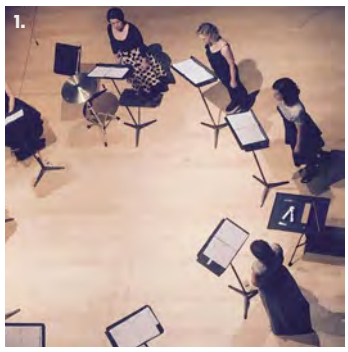
Now is the time to move from gathering input to creating solutions. We have a vision for how to enrich and strengthen our civic fabric as only the arts can.

With the presentation of this plan, we enter a new stage of Boston Creates: making this vision a reality. I want to sincerely thank everyone who has participated in this conversation so far. And I invite all Bostonians, and call on leaders in the cultural and creative sectors, to continue the conversation and work together to achieve the goals of the plan. Together, we can show the world what we mean by Boston Creates.

Mayor Martin J. Walsh

arts, culture, and creativity are in our DNA

Jamaica Pond Lantern Parade, Boston, MA.
Photo credit: Leonardo March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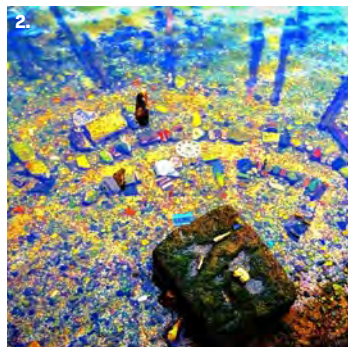
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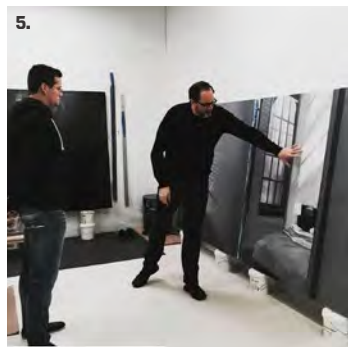
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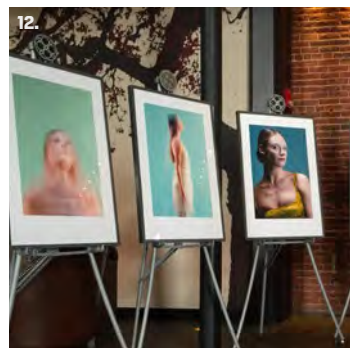
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1. Instagram: @loreleiensemble **2.** Instagram: @nateswainstreetartist **3.** Instagram: @ urbano_project **4. & 18.** Instagram: @dylwitz, Dylan Hurwitz **5.** Midway Artist Studios **6.** Mark Saperstein **7.** Instagram: @mneyid, Leonardo March **8.** Emma Blaxter **9.** Instagram: @brightsavage **10.** Anna Dunbar **11.** Instagram: @jo_dance617 **12.** Portraits by Liza Voll Photography **13.** Photo by Charles G. Baldwin of costume designs by Kaitee Tredway **14.** This World Music **15. & 16.** ©Julia Swanson, 2016, juliaswansonphotography.com **17.** Cara Raskin

Boston Creates: Time for Change

Boston is a city alive with creativity. Creative expression and imagination fuel Boston's ever-growing innovation economy, vibrant arts and creative sectors, and community-based cultural festivals. Artists and residents alike invent, perform, practice, and make new work. Bostonians take great pride in the richness and diversity of the city's arts and culture scene and strongly believe in the transformative power of the arts. Yet, the city has not reached its full creative potential.

Now is the time to maximize arts and culture opportunities for all Bostonians and to harness the power of creativity. The city's commitment to a creative future shows in the rising level of arts education available to all students, the presence of artists as problem-solvers in City departments, and increased municipal funding to arts and culture organizations. This is just the beginning. Mayor Martin J. Walsh has called for an "arts and culture renaissance" in Boston — weaving arts, culture, and creativity into the whole fabric of city life.

This ten-year plan also coincides with, and feeds into, Imagine Boston 2030, the City's first comprehensive planning process in fifty years.

Boston Creates has been one of the most extensive and thorough community engagement efforts ever undertaken as part of cultural planning in an American city. The cultural plan aligns ideas, people, and resources in support of a shared vision and a comprehensive set of goals, strategies, and tactics for putting arts and culture at the very heart of the life of our city.

We Envision a Creative Boston

A Boston:

- in which arts and culture are not just part of a storied past but at the heart of the city's contemporary identity — powerfully expressing who Bostonians have been, who we are, and who we hope to be.
- that demonstrates in concrete ways how it values artists: enabling them to create and showcase their best and most innovative work, grow and develop throughout their careers, and receive the support they need to flourish here.
- that celebrates diversity in all forms by inspiring and empowering all Bostonians to express their individual creativity and cultural identities.
- in which arts and culture are woven into the very fabric of urban living, where Bostonians — residents, workers, students, and visitors — participate and take pride in the vibrant cultural life to be found in every corner of the city.
- that fosters creative thinking as a way of solving our problems great and small.

A New Mindset

Translating this bold vision into reality will take collective work. Bostonians have called for a culture shift; in fact, a whole new mindset.

Arts and culture in Boston must belong to all Bostonians. The once-hard-and-fast boundaries of race, ethnicity, and geography need to be broken down. Formal and informal art, fine art and folk art, traditional and contemporary cultural practices — all need to be valued. We must resource arts and culture organizations of all sizes, whether they are nonprofits or commercial businesses. The essential contributions of artists must be recognized with concrete, meaningful forms of support and assistance.

To make all this possible, City government must take a leadership role — creating policies that facilitate art, culture, and creativity throughout the city, identifying new resources, and forging partnerships across sectors.

Boston Creates has activated this culture shift — giving voice to hopes, framing challenges, identifying assets and deficits, and bringing together diverse city residents as arts makers and arts lovers.

A Process Rooted in Shared Values

openness and transparency

inclusiveness

creativity

collaboration

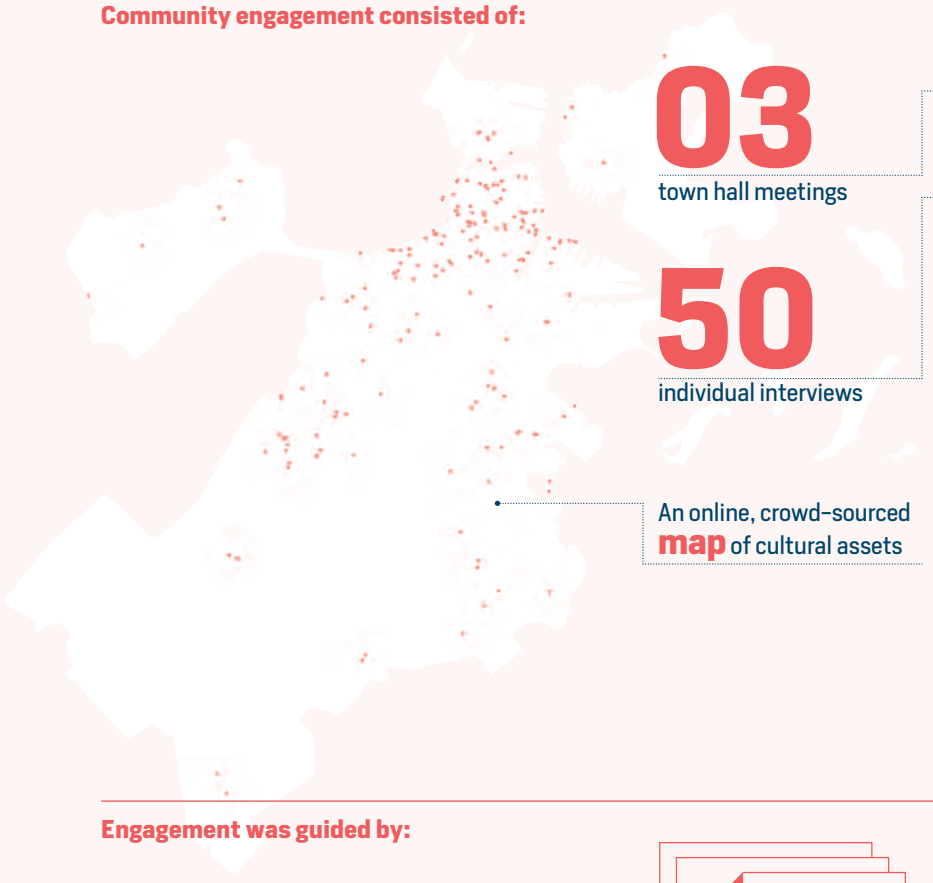
a steadfast commitment to learning

The Community Speaks

We heard from 5,000+ Boston residents and visitors, including:

- Arts and culture audiences and participants
- Artists, creators, makers, performers
- Producers, presenters, programmers, teachers, architects, administrators, designers, media makers, and other representatives of the nonprofit and for-profit arts sectors
- Arts and culture supporters, donors, trustees, foundations, corporate givers
- Youth and young adults
- Young professionals, parents, and seniors
- Representatives of allied sectors such as tourism, higher education, health care, regional planning, public safety, health and human services, real estate development, finance
- Representatives of City government

Community engagement consisted of:



03 town hall meetings

50 individual interviews

An online, crowd-sourced **map** of cultural assets

35 stakeholder focus groups

118 community conversations

3,200 creative-participation surveys issued in 4 languages

Artistic and creative projects for the community by Department of Play, conceptual artist Heather Kapplow, musician Shaw Pong Liu, and photographer Leonardo March

Engagement was guided by:

16 volunteer community teams representing Boston neighborhoods

01 youth-led team engaging young adults from across the city

60 member Leadership Council representing many sectors

16 member Steering Committee representing City government, arts and culture organizations, and philanthropy

What We Heard

Barriers to Boston's Creative Potential

Throughout the community engagement process, a number of needs, concerns, and challenges rose to the top. The issues that surfaced as most pressing are:

1 Fragmentation in the Arts and Culture Sector

Boston residents, artists, and members of the nonprofit and for-profit arts and culture communities experience the city's arts and culture sector as fragmented in ways that isolate neighborhoods, artistic disciplines, and individuals and organizations both inside and outside the sector. Many expressed a desire to overcome this fragmentation and collaborate more fully.

2 Barriers to Attendance and Engagement

Barriers to attending cultural events and engaging in creative activities are complex and differ according to neighborhood and income level. They range from transportation and lack of social support, to affordability and competing time commitments.

3 Equity and Opportunity

Bostonians expressed a desire for diverse cultural heritages and artistic practices to be valued and supported equitably. They see a number of complex issues standing in the way, particularly racism, prejudice, and widening income disparities. People spoke of the need for several improvements in equity and opportunity in the arts and culture sector, including: more funding opportunities for artists, small organizations, and community-based activities; more recognition and valuing of neighborhood cultural assets; and greater exposure to artwork representative of diverse cultures.

4 Spaces and Facilities

The need for affordable spaces for people to work, gather, create, collaborate, and participate in arts and culture is complex and widespread. Bostonians want these spaces throughout their neighborhoods. Individual artists require more affordable living and working options in the city. Arts groups and organizations of all disciplines and budget sizes, particularly small and mid-sized organizations, need access to affordable venues that are appropriately sized and equipped. Large arts and culture organizations described challenges related to the cost of maintaining physical spaces and facilities. Performing arts organizations are particularly affected.

5 Youth Arts and Education

Bostonians called for more comprehensive arts education programs, more equitable access to arts education, and increased opportunities for participation both in and out of school – specifically, expanding the arts education offerings in Boston Public Schools. Boston youth seek opportunities to make art, socialize around arts activities, and enliven public spaces in creative and innovative ways.

6 Access to Information

Residents and visitors want better ways to learn about arts and culture offerings. Artists and presenters seek an effective marketing platform to augment their individual and collective efforts. Youth stated the need for a one-stop source of information for youth-focused arts activities and opportunities.

7 New, Sustainable Resources

Boston's arts and culture sector needs greater public investment as well as private, corporate, and foundation support. New, sustainable streams of public funding must be established for the sector to thrive.

A Plan for Action

Five Goals, Ten Years

The goals, strategies, and tactics of the cultural plan present a set of actions that the City of Boston and its partners must undertake to achieve Bostonians' vision for arts and culture.

Each goal is accompanied by a list of strategies. The proposed strategies respond to the highest-priority needs identified in the Boston Creates community engagement process. They may change over the course of the plan's implementation in response to shifts in the environment.

Each proposed strategy incorporates immediate next steps or tactics. These include program development, advocacy, research, or other initiatives to support the strategies, reflecting current context and existing partners. A timeframe for implementing each tactic is indicated: short-term (0–12 months); mid-term (1–3 years); and long-term (4–10 years).

Goal 1

Create fertile ground for a vibrant and sustainable arts and culture ecosystem.

While many cities approach cultural planning simply as a strategic planning exercise for their arts office, from the outset, our ambitions for Boston were for something greater, more comprehensive — a true citywide vision. To realize that vision, the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture will certainly play a central and active role. Yet leadership and partnership from across the city will be essential for reaching the goals of the Boston Creates cultural plan. Members of the Leadership Council and Steering Committee created the following categories to clarify an appropriate role for the City in each tactic.

- Some proposed tactics will be **City-owned,** with City government both leading and implementing the required actions.
- The implementation of other tactics will be **City-led,** with City government sharing ownership and implementation with partners in arts and culture and/or other sectors.
- Still other tactics will be implemented in a **City-catalyzed** process in which City government endorses ideas and seeks others to own and implement them.

Under the leadership of Mayor Walsh, the City will lead implementation efforts and align partners to convene, think through ideas and solutions, make connections between efforts and individuals, and advocate for arts and culture.

STRATEGY 1 Create partnerships to develop platforms, funding streams, and networks that enable risk-taking and innovation across the arts and cultural sector.

TACTIC 1.1.1 CITY-LED SHORT-TERM
Bring together members of the arts and culture community to catalyze discussion about artistic risk-taking across Boston and provide guidance for the creation of a new grant program in support of artistic risk.

TACTIC 1.1.2 CITY-CATALYZED MID-TERM
Convene funding partners and advocate for a fund for artistic risk-taking to support arts and culture organizations in the creation of new work.

STRATEGY 2 Support the availability, affordability, and sustainability of cultural spaces and facilities for arts and culture organizations of all sizes in Boston.

TACTIC 1.2.1 CITY-OWNED SHORT-TERM TO LONG-TERM
Complete a study of Boston performing arts venues to understand the current and anticipated venue challenges of local performing arts and cultural organizations, followed by an implementation phase for recommendations; provide for periodic assessment of needs based on study findings.

TACTIC 1.2.2 CITY-LED SHORT-TERM
Identify how land use tools and other policies, including financing strategies, can provide incentives and requirements for the creation of new cultural spaces in connection with real estate development or sustained support for existing cultural spaces.

TACTIC 1.2.3 CITY-CATALYZED LONG-TERM
Convene funding partners to create a reliable and predictable source of pooled funding to mitigate depreciation costs and/or invest in facilities reserves for organizations operating arts and cultural spaces and facilities in Boston.

STRATEGY 3 Strengthen small and mid-sized arts and culture organizations in Boston.

TACTIC 1.3.1 CITY-CATALYZED LONG-TERM
Develop a citywide funding initiative to provide more general operating support for small and mid-sized arts and culture organizations.

TACTIC 1.3.2 CITY-LED MID-TERM
Develop strategic partnerships with arts service organizations, foundations, and universities to implement capacity-building programs for arts and culture organizations in response to the needs of the sector.

STRATEGY 4 Enact and coordinate municipal policies to better support creative expressions and endeavors citywide.

TACTIC 1.4.1 CITY-OWNED SHORT-TERM TO MID-TERM
Review and streamline municipal policies and procedures affecting arts and cultural uses including permitting, zoning, and licensing.

TACTIC 1.4.2 CITY-OWNED SHORT-TERM TO MID-TERM
Simplify the Boston Art Commission application process for permanent and temporary public art on City property by creating a more user-friendly application process as well as an insurance waiver for small-scale/low-risk projects.

Goal 2

Keep artists in Boston and attract new ones here, recognizing and supporting artists' essential contribution to creating and maintaining a thriving, healthy, and innovative city.

STRATEGY 1 Invest in individual artists in Boston.

TACTIC 2.1.1 CITY-OWNED SHORT-TERM
Make grants to individual artists living in Boston.

TACTIC 2.1.2 CITY-CATALYZED MID-TERM
Encourage professional development opportunities for teaching artists or artist educators, by partnering with higher education and arts colleges.

TACTIC 2.1.3 CITY-CATALYZED MID-TERM
Provide continuing education opportunities, including high-quality and affordable business and career development training, for early- to mid-career arts and cultural professionals through partnerships with higher education institutions, arts colleges, and arts service organizations.

TACTIC 2.1.4 CITY-OWNED MID-TERM
Encourage developers to incorporate work and presentation space for artists into development efforts.

STRATEGY 2 Make City government more accessible, welcoming, and responsive to artists.

TACTIC 2.2.1 CITY-OWNED SHORT-TERM
Create an Artists Resource Desk within City Hall, centralizing staff support for: permitting, zoning, and other regulatory requirements for arts and cultural uses; communicating professional opportunities; navigating other municipal services and departments.

TACTIC 2.2.2 CITY-OWNED SHORT-TERM
Facilitate exhibition, performance, and convening opportunities for artists in City Hall, libraries, and other municipally-owned spaces in neighborhood settings.

TACTIC 2.2.3 CITY-LED MID-TERM
Facilitate guest curation of local artists' work in City Hall, libraries, and other municipally-owned spaces by partnering with arts and cultural organizations, local galleries, and others.

TACTIC 2.2.4 CITY-OWNED SHORT-TERM
Recognize and promote the significant contributions of Boston artists by expanding on currently bestowed honors such as a Poet Laureate designation, an Emerging Artist Award, and City Proclamations recognizing such contributions.

STRATEGY 3 Identify and pursue opportunities for affordable artist housing and presenting and production spaces.

TACTIC 2.3.1 CITY-LED SHORT-TERM
Increase the supply of affordable live/work spaces for artists by developing strategic partnerships with the Department of Neighborhood Development, Boston Redevelopment Authority, Boston Housing Authority, Boston Society of Architects, and the real-estate development community.

TACTIC 2.3.2 CITY-OWNED LONG-TERM
Create an inventory, and promote the use, of existing City- and privately-owned spaces and buildings that can be made available for individual artists creating and presenting work in Boston.

TACTIC 2.3.3 CITY-OWNED MID-TERM
Explore new housing models supporting artists, such as mixed-constituency housing, artist cooperatives, and university partnerships, in collaboration with the Department of Neighborhood Development.

Goal 3

Cultivate a city where all cultural traditions and expressions are respected, promoted, and equitably resourced, and where opportunities to engage with arts and culture are accessible to all.

STRATEGY 1 Address cultural disparities across race, class, ability, and geographic lines by intentionally bridging divides and promoting cross-cultural exchange.

TACTIC 3.1.1 CITY-CATALYZED SHORT-TERM TO MID-TERM
Advocate for the development of a cultural equity study in Boston as a complement to the disparity study that the Mayor's Office of Economic Development is conducting.

TACTIC 3.1.2 CITY-OWNED SHORT-TERM
Explore how to use arts and culture as a vehicle for dialogue within the citywide conversation about historic race and class divisions in Boston, in partnership with the City's Chief Resilience Officer.

TACTIC 3.1.3 CITY-CATALYZED LONG-TERM
Advocate for the establishment of a fund to support creation or presentation of artwork addressing disparities or deepening understanding across divides.

STRATEGY 2 Advance equity by facilitating creative, cultural, and artistic opportunities in historically underserved communities.

TACTIC 3.2.1 CITY-LED SHORT-TERM
Grow municipal resources for grassroots arts or cultural projects by individual artists, community members, and unincorporated groups.

TACTIC 3.2.2 CITY-LED SHORT-TERM
Create a responsive capacity-building program for community arts and culture organizations, cultural festivals, and projects, in partnership with community leaders; the Mayor's Office of Tourism, Sports, and Entertainment; the Office for Immigrant Advancement; and the Office of Neighborhood Services.

TACTIC 3.2.3 CITY-OWNED SHORT-TERM
Ensure that City funding opportunities are accessible to individuals with disabilities or for whom English is not a first language, and that diverse voices are included in funding decisions.

TACTIC 3.2.4 CITY-CATALYZED MID-TERM
Determine strategies for better serving community arts in historically underserved communities by facilitating strategic partnerships among arts service organizations, advocacy partners, and community-based leaders.

STRATEGY 3 Leverage City departments, resources, and facilities to embed arts and culture opportunities in every neighborhood, opening access to creative engagement and arts participation citywide.

TACTIC 3.3.1 CITY-OWNED SHORT-TERM
Identify opportunities for embedding arts and cultural programs, classes, and activities in municipal spaces by developing strategic partnerships between City agencies and neighborhood facilities or programs.

TACTIC 3.3.2 CITY-LED MID-TERM
Research systemic barriers to participation and engagement in arts and culture activities for persons with disabilities, and identify solutions and opportunities for change, by partnering with the Commission for Persons with Disabilities and VSA Massachusetts.

STRATEGY 4 Increase cultural competency (i.e., fluency in relating across cultural divides) within the arts and culture sector; facilitate learning opportunities among diverse populations and cultures; and promote diverse and inclusive participation in the sector.

TACTIC 3.4.1 CITY-CATALYZED MID-TERM
Provide learning opportunities for the arts and culture sector on demographic changes in Boston, cultural competency, and development of cultural spaces and events welcoming to individuals of diverse backgrounds, through partnerships with arts service organizations and funders.

TACTIC 3.4.2 CITY-CATALYZED MID-TERM
Support the efforts of Boston arts and cultural organizations to better serve and engage diverse audiences and visitors through programming and marketing.

TACTIC 3.4.3 CITY-CATALYZED LONG-TERM
Clarify career pathways in the sector, and determine avenues for stronger recruitment efforts and development of professional networks across specializations and for diverse candidates, by convening arts and culture organizations and arts service organizations.

TACTIC 3.4.4 CITY-CATALYZED LONG-TERM
Increase awareness of the challenges experienced by persons with disabilities seeking to participate in arts and cultural events and activities, and introduce the tenets of universal design, through conversations with arts and culture organizations.

Goal 4

Integrate arts and culture into all aspects of civic life, inspiring all Bostonians to value, practice, and reap the benefits of creativity in their individual lives and in their communities.

STRATEGY 1 Change City policymaking and practice to integrate creative thinking into the work of every municipal department and all planning efforts.

TACTIC 4.1.1 CITY-OWNED SHORT-TERM
Ensure the vision, values, and goals of Boston Creates are embedded in Imagine Boston 2030, the City's first comprehensive plan in 50 years.

TACTIC 4.1.2 CITY-OWNED SHORT-TERM
Building on the Mayor's elevation of Chief of Arts and Culture to a Cabinet-level position; nurture cross-departmental collaboration and the inclusion of an arts voice on each internal task force or working group.

TACTIC 4.1.3 CITY-OWNED SHORT-TERM TO LONG-TERM
Use the Boston Artists in Residence Program to embed working artists in City departments and agencies to promote creative thought in municipal problem-solving and project implementation.

STRATEGY 2 Harness the power of arts and culture to engage Bostonians in civic discourse, planning, and creative problem-solving.

TACTIC 4.2.1 CITY-OWNED MID-TERM
Promote the City's integration of arts and culture into municipal decision-making as a model for the private sector, and enable each sector to learn best practices from the other.

TACTIC 4.2.2 CITY-LED SHORT-TERM
Promote the development of public art and performance opportunities in neighborhood settings, and explore sustainable options for public and private financing of public art, through partnerships with Boston Main Streets, community development corporations, and other community organizations and City departments.

TACTIC 4.2.3 CITY-CATALYZED SHORT-TERM TO LONG-TERM
Support the creation and promotion of arts and cultural districts and creative development opportunities within and across Boston's neighborhoods by partnering with neighborhood, community development, and other civic organizations.

STRATEGY 3 Make Boston a place where arts education and arts-enhanced learning are available citywide and through all stages of life.

TACTIC 4.3.1 CITY-CATALYZED LONG-TERM
Expose families to the benefits of the arts in child and family development, and identify access points for participation, by partnering with universities, hospitals, neighborhood health centers, libraries, and early childhood education and pre-school provider networks.

TACTIC 4.3.2 CITY-CATALYZED MID-TERM
Ensure arts education is a fundamental function of the Boston Public Schools as a foundational element of the City's commitment to youth arts. Communicate the value of in-school arts education for all of Boston's schools through strategic partnerships among the schools, the Mayor's Office of Education, the Boston Public Schools, EdVestors, and in-school arts providers.

TACTIC 4.3.3 CITY-CATALYZED SHORT-TERM
Revise and implement the current Boston Public Schools (BPS) Arts Education Policy to build and sustain BPS arts education, and promote collaborative arts education discussions for all Boston schools.

TACTIC 4.3.4 CITY-CATALYZED LONG-TERM
Enhance and expand arts education for Boston youth, and develop opportunities for youth leadership and youth-led creative activities, by means of strategic partnerships with schools in Boston and out-of-school youth arts organizations.

TACTIC 4.3.5 CITY-CATALYZED LONG-TERM
Promote pathways to creative careers, and support Boston youth and young adults in pursuing them, by developing strategic partnerships with the arts and culture community, higher education institutions, and technical skills and apprenticeship programs, including the Office of Workforce Development.

TACTIC 4.3.6 CITY-CATALYZED MID-TERM
Building on the existing Mayor's Mentoring Movement and My Brother's Keeper initiative, develop an arts and culture mentorship program for youth and young adults, creating a pipeline of future leaders in the arts and culture sector.

TACTIC 4.3.7 CITY-OWNED MID-TERM
Build on the arts and culture offerings and opportunities available to seniors by developing strategic partnerships with the Elderly Affairs Commission.

STRATEGY 4 Integrate arts, culture, and creativity into the public realm and urban environment.

TACTIC 4.4.1 CITY-OWNED LONG-TERM
Encourage designers and developers to embrace the transformative power of public art and the more imaginative architecture the Mayor has called for, by partnering with the Boston Art Commission, Boston Civic Design Commission, Boston Parks and Recreation, Boston Redevelopment Authority, Boston Society of Architects/AIA, Boston Landmarks Commission, and A Better City.

TACTIC 4.4.2 CITY-OWNED MID-TERM
Promote the development of public art and performance opportunities in neighborhood settings, through partnerships with Boston Main Streets, community development corporations, and other community organizations.

TACTIC 4.4.3 CITY-OWNED LONG-TERM
Create a map and inventory of cultural assets across Boston to document and understand the landscape and to assess changes over time.

TACTIC 4.4.4 CITY-OWNED LONG-TERM
Promote the city's rich cultural festivals, in partnership with Boston Parks and Recreation and the Mayor's Office of Tourism, Sports, and Entertainment.

Goal 5

Mobilize likely and unlikely partners, collaborating across institutions and sectors, to generate excitement about, and demand and resources for, Boston's arts and culture sector.

STRATEGY 1 Cultivate and mobilize public support and advocacy for the arts and cultural sector.

TACTIC 5.1.1 CITY-OWNED SHORT-TERM TO LONG-TERM
Engage the Mayor's Office to generate public support for Boston's arts and culture sector.

TACTIC 5.1.2 CITY-OWNED SHORT-TERM
Advocate on behalf of the arts and culture sector with state and federal policymakers, emphasizing the need for sustained support for arts and culture and their integration into other sectors.

STRATEGY 2 Use the convening power of City government and partners to motivate and assist other sectors and professional groups in advocating for arts and culture in their respective domains.

TACTIC 5.2.1 CITY-LED SHORT-TERM TO MID-TERM
Leverage the Mayor's Office to ensure that arts and culture have a seat at the table when other sectors—such as higher education, science, healthcare, and regional planning—are brought together to develop cross-sector approaches to major issues.

TACTIC 5.2.2 CITY-OWNED SHORT-TERM
Model successful integration of arts and culture within private-sector organizations and fields by recognizing the contributions of individual arts advocates and champions within business, finance, and other domains.

TACTIC 5.2.3 CITY-LED MID-TERM
Maximize opportunities for collaboration across the nonprofit and for-profit sectors by developing strategic partnerships with creative industries such as technology, design, and commercial arts.

STRATEGY 3 Develop the partnerships and tools necessary for making Boston a leading cultural destination.

TACTIC 5.3.1 CITY-LED LONG-TERM
Develop strategic partnerships with the Greater Boston Convention and Visitors Bureau, Boston Landmarks Commission, and Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism to improve coordination and collaboration in support of cultural tourism, increased tourism revenues from arts and culture, and greater inclusion of arts and culture in Boston's brand and identity.

TACTIC 5.3.2 CITY-CATALYZED LONG-TERM
Develop strategic partnerships with arts service organizations and media outlets to create an information network for visitors and residents, incorporating event listings, arts learning opportunities, and community-based activities.

STRATEGY 4 Cultivate greater foundation, corporate, and individual philanthropy, and advance public-private and public sector partnerships, in support of the City's ambitious goals for the arts and culture sector.

TACTIC 5.4.1 CITY-CATALYZED SHORT-TERM
Engage civic, business, and philanthropic leaders to create a pooled fund to address critical sector needs identified through the Boston Creates planning process.

TACTIC 5.4.2 CITY-CATALYZED SHORT-TERM
Ensure that Boston arts and culture, and the expansive vision for them developed through Boston Creates, are at the forefront of city and state policymaking by developing strategic partnerships with advocacy groups.

Moving forward

Leadership and Resources for Plan Implementation

Implementation efforts underway

The City of Boston has already taken steps to address a number of urgent issues facing the arts and culture sector, and is taking the lead in finding sponsoring partners to support implementation. A forthcoming City-commissioned Cultural Facilities Study will be an important tool for determining the best next steps for preserving, developing, and sustaining performing arts spaces. City Hall departments have already committed to integrating arts and culture into their agendas; to undertaking broad initiatives such as advocating for artist housing and performance and work space; and to integrating the Boston Creates goals into other planning processes, including Imagine Boston 2030. Additional complex issues identified in the plan — such as cultural equity and the need to make arts venues accessible to the disabled via universal design — will require in-depth research in order for the City and partners to be able to act effectively.

New resources will be essential: Getting started

Achieving the goals of Boston Creates will require new resources. Arts and culture receive much less public- and private-sector support in Boston than they do in other major American cities. In his 2016 State of the City address, Mayor Walsh announced a $1 million additional allocation for the arts that will fund three programs: $500,000 for the expansion of the Boston Artists in Residence program; $400,000 for grants to individual artists; and $100,000 to fund an Artists Resource Desk at City Hall. In addition, the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture is partnering with other City departments to leverage their investments to further the goals in Boston Creates. This is just the beginning of the City's commitment to investing in the plan.

Sustainable revenue streams: The long game

To fully realize the vision underlying Boston Creates, the City will need to identify new sources of revenue and form strategic partnerships with state and federal counterparts as well as with local private, foundation, and corporate supporters.

Mayor Walsh has repeatedly expressed the desire to identify a sustainable revenue stream for the arts and has made great strides in using the restricted tools at the City's disposal. Boston's limitations on increasing its own fiscal resources have serious implications for the City's contributions to arts and culture funding. Under Massachusetts law, cities have only partial control over collecting taxes without state approval. The City of Boston relies heavily on property taxes, one of the few forms of tax it controls, yet 50 percent of land in Boston is owned either publicly or by religious, educational, or medical institutions and is exempt from property taxes. The City's identification of a sustainable revenue stream for arts and culture must therefore be strategic. It will only be achieved with broad public and political support and will take time to establish.

The City will continue to cultivate relationships with potential funders in the philanthropic and corporate arenas. Because of the unique missions and priorities of prospective funding partners, a variety of mechanisms are being explored — for example, direct support to the City or the development of a pooled grant fund. Funding partners may also choose to align their giving with the priorities identified in the plan.

Stewardship of Boston Creates

To be effective, the goals and strategies outlined here must be responsive to new opportunities as they emerge, to changes in the arts and culture sector and environment, and to our understanding of successful strategies as implementation occurs. This will require strong governance. The City will work with partners and participants in the planning process to give shape to an accountability body for the implementation of the cultural plan. Effective stewardship over the next decade and beyond will depend on leadership that can weather political and economic change. The accountability body will monitor progress and keep Bostonians fully informed about, and engaged in, the implementation of their cultural plan.

A Call to Action

Achieving Our Collective Vision

The Boston Creates cultural plan is a living document. Without action it can have no impact.

That is why Boston Creates is calling on you, Boston's community and arts leaders, to come together to make this plan a reality. The plan proposes a host of ways to get involved. Individuals can stand up for arts and culture in local civic groups, on boards, and in city and state public processes. Funders and organizations can align their priorities and programs with the goals of the plan.

Achieving sustainable success with the goals of Boston Creates will take leadership from all of us. We invite all who share in the vision of a thriving, creative Boston to continue the conversation, work together to sustain and strengthen Boston's many creative resources, and realize the collective vision of Boston Creates.

Chinatown Lantern Festival. Boston, MA.
Photo credit: Leonardo March

Puerto Rico Festival Parade, Boston, MA
Photo credit: Leonardo March

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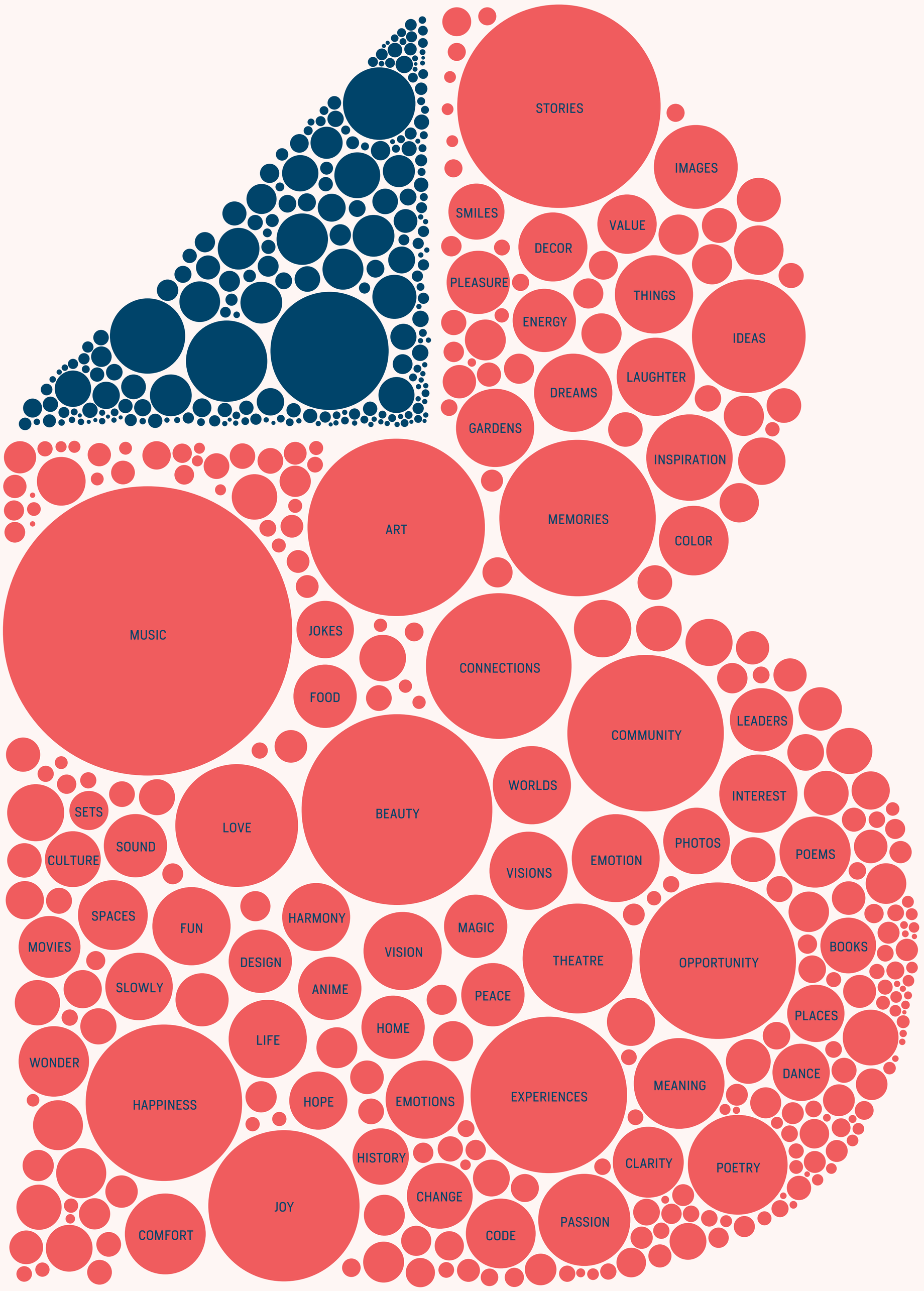
To view the full report, please visit
plan.bostoncreates.org

CITY OF BOSTON
Martin J. Walsh, Mayor

Beach Ball Flash Mob, Boston, MA.
Photo credit: Leonardo March



BOSTON CREATES COMMUNITY SURVEY ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION “I CREATE...”

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